TAKEAWAYS

▶ VIRTUAL ROUNDTABLE SERIES

MAINSTREAMING KNOWLEDGE ON AGEING

First event

"The Human Rights of Older Persons and Frontier Issues: Building Capacities for Effective Protection from Multilateral Scenarios"

📅 **26** May 2022   🕐 **9:00 - 10:40 (NY time)** **15:00 - 16:40 (CET)**

With the support of:

This document has been prepared by the Division for People and Social Inclusion at UNITAR, Ms. Analucía Jácome, Senior Project Leader and Human Rights Expert, Ms. Beyzanur Alada, Project Assistant, and Mr. Israel Ledesma, Graphic Designer. We hope you enjoy it!

Moderator

Ms. Mónica Ferro
Director of the United Nations Population Fund, UNFPA, Office in Geneva

Keynote Speaker

H.E. Amb. Federico Villegas
President of the United Nations Human Rights Council (HRC)
Permanent representative of Argentina to the UN and other International Organizations in Geneva

"We need to continue fostering special international protection for the Rights of Older Persons"

1. The work to enforce the UN system pillars shouldn't be in silos. Mainstreaming Human Rights is essential for peace, security, and development.

2. Older Persons are a Human Rights issue, and they shouldn't be seen as a mere population or development issue. The HRC has a specific role as the hub for the progressive development of Human Rights.

3. Ageing and the situation of older persons have been addressed for many decades, including through the creation of the mandate of the UN Independent Expert on the full enjoyment of the Human Rights by Older Persons in 2013.

4. A group of countries has proposed the elaboration of a specific international instrument for the protection of the Human Rights of Older Persons. The question rising is the necessity, looking at the covenants and the civil and political rights and the social-economical rights and other treaty bodies, we could start saying that every human being is covered by those covenants, why do we need something specific?

5. A substantive resolution on the Human Rights of Older Persons was approved by consensus with over 50 co-sponsors at the Council last year, A/HRC/RES/48/3. The text not only focused on substantive ideas but also about something that even during the negotiation was not easy to explain, which is the discrimination based on age. It was hard at the beginning because the term ageism was not even clear in all languages, was not even translated into some of them; finally, it was clearly recognized that ageism is a Human Rights issue.

HIGHLIGHTS ON THE UN HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL AND OLDER PERSONS

It is an inter-governmental body within the United Nations system responsible for strengthening the promotion and protection of human rights, where the mandate of the "Independent Expert on the enjoyment of all human rights by older persons" was created in 2013, as well as several resolutions, panels, reports, and other initiatives on the rights of this group have been developed.

UNITED NATIONS
HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL

Speakers

Focus: Human Rights

Mr. Rio Hada
Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) Focal Point on the Human Rights of Older Persons

"We need to jettison our old-age mindsets and promote new narratives on ageing"

1. Older Persons are a diverse group that significantly contribute to society. We need to embrace their value and support their contributions.

2. There is a pattern of discrimination that is deeply rooted in ageism reflected in inadequate health services for older persons, gaps in social protection, earlier death and intersecting discrimination based on age, gender, disability, and many other grounds.

3. We need wider, active, and more constructive engagement from all stakeholders in efforts to strengthen systems to protect the Human Rights of older persons. An international instrument dedicated to the Human Rights of older persons would offer a comprehensive framework and avoid that fragmented approach that we currently have.

4. International legal frameworks which should protect everybody without discrimination still render older persons invisible and that the root of this is ageism which takes on different forms across the life course devaluing the contributions the present can make to society and eroding solidarity between generations.

5. We have a lot to learn from the experience of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and how the adoption of a specific instrument like this has led to more visibility and impact in terms of changes in policies, and laws at the national level. We need to promote more discussions at the national level and gather more evidence and data that can feed into that debate both nationally and globally.

HIGHLIGHTS ON THE OHCHR & OLDER PERSONS

Over the last two years, OHCHR has undertaken a major initiative to analyze the normative and protection gaps in the enjoyment of all human rights of older persons, and develop options to address such gaps, and produced a working paper in 2021 and a report of the High Commissioner (A/HRC/49/70) presented to the Human Rights Council in March 2022. OHCHR actively collaborates with UN partner agencies to support the implementation of the UN Decade of Healthy Ageing 2021-2030 and the mainstreaming of human rights of older persons in the work of the UN system.

UNITED NATIONS HUMAN RIGHTS
OFFICE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

There is a serious problem, in the current international framework of Human Rights, there's no explicit guarantee and protection against ageism and no explicit obligation on States to take active measures to eliminate ageism and its discriminatory consequences. This is a significant gap and is at the root of many of the gaps that older people face in the exercise of their rights.

DID YOU KNOW?

Last year under the Decade of Healthy Ageing, the UN launched the new global report on ageism with new evidence is about the prevalence and impact of ageism as well as possible strategies to address them, the report found that ageism is everywhere, half of the world population have ageist attitudes against older people.

Find the report here:
https://tinyurl.com/mrwawprj

TO BEAR IN MIND!

Over the last 10 years, the HRC has conducted studies on the normative and protection gaps in the enjoyment of Human Rights of older persons. The latest report of the High Commissioner submitted to the last Human Rights Council session, A/HRC/49/70, concluded that:

1. The existing human rights framework provides only fragmented and inconsistent coverage of the Human Rights of older persons, both in terms of law and practice.

2. The engagement by international Human Rights mechanisms on the rights of older persons consequently has been far from systematic, coherent, or sustained. The lack of dedicated normative instruments and conceptual limitations on existing investments will continue to hinder the effective protection of Human Rights of older persons.

Find the A/HRC/49/70 report here:
https://tinyurl.com/28pa9ntm

Find the Resolution A/HRC/RES/48/3 that requested the report here:
https://tinyurl.com/4tztnyyw

You can learn more about the work of the OHCHR on the Human Rights of Older Persons:
https://www.ohchr.org/en/topic/older-person

Focus: Migration

Mr. Daniel Silva y Poveda
Policy Officer, Migration and Sustainable Development Division, IOM

"We need to promote and protect the human rights of older migrants, and we need to have more tailored responses and solutions that enable the contributions of all the migrants to societies"

1. Migration has been historically and continues to be analyzed through the lens of demography and it is not a surprise that population aging, which is a real experience in almost every country, would interact with and affect migration in many different ways. There is still a relatively little knowledge on this, therefore it's important to bring it to light further.

2. Migrants contribute to the welfare systems of the receiving countries where they work through labor which translates into social benefits for the whole population as well as through human capital and they contribute to increasing the birth rate of aging societies. Older migrants have many skills and capacities, they provide leadership and influence decision-making. They can encourage conflict resolution and foster problem-solving

3. When returning to their countries of origin or when retirees migrate to another country, in their own country of origin older migrant investment, savings, and pensions in the local economy, contribute to form networks that lead to the development of businesses and services opportunity.

HIGHLIGHTS ON THE IOM & OLDER PERSONS

The Migration and Sustainable Development Division, at the IOM has the lead institutional role for the implementation of IOM's Strategy on Migration and Sustainable Development and represents the organization's direct contribution to the Decade of Action to fast-track progress for reaching the SDGs, which includes older persons.

4. Their sense of history also has preserved the communities, cultural and social identity, especially in cases of displacement where identity can erode. We see the quite broad and diverse set of contributions that migrants can make to aging societies and the contributions of all the migrants throughout the migration cycle.

5. We should embrace migration as a sustainable development strategy, including meeting and addressing some of the challenges that aging brings to our world. We need migration to be well managed; we will not achieve the ambition of the 2030 Agenda by leaving aside older persons and SDGs without consideration of migration.

CURIOUS FACT!

Despite the Covid 19 pandemic, International Migration has been quite resilient. Many of the migration trends that we observed frequently, we likely to accelerate and will also continue to be very much influenced by demographic shifts.

DID YOU KNOW?

Older persons already are overrepresented in the migrant population compared to the general population. Out of the close to 8 billion people that we have in the world, slightly over 9% are above 60 years old, whereas in the international migrant population that percentage is 12%.

TO BEAR IN MIND!

Older migrants are often isolated from the rest of society. Digital exclusion, the distance from support networks, ageist stereotypes, to be sometimes incrimination based on their origin are just some of the factors that undermine their psychological well-being and that actually prevent all the migrants from meaningfully participating in different facets of community life.

Their contributions could be hindered in many ways. When migrant workers lose legal status in their country of destination upon retirement or in the case of job loss may have to return home to their countries. Older migrants often struggle to recoup the social security contributions post-retirement and even struggle to move pensions with them if they choose to retire in a country in their country of birth.

Focus: Digital Inclusion

Ms. Roxana Widmer-Iliescu
Senior Coordinator Digital Inclusion, ITU-D Focal Point for Older Persons - ITU-D Focal Point for ICT/digital accessibility

"In order to achieve digital inclusion for all, the condition is to guarantee the Human Rights to access and use technology by everyone"

1. Equal and equitable access to information and communication technologies (ICTs) is a human right because we live in a digital world. The information and communication technologies are embodied in the way we learn, travel, and interact with each other. In short, ICTs affect how we leave as humans.

2. If we want to be relevant when it comes to the Digital Inclusion of all people the holistic approach is key: we should avoid working in silos, as the young of today are the old of tomorrow and anyone can face disability challenges or be in a vulnerable situation in a moment of life.

3. To successfully achieve the goal of Digital Inclusion, we should ensure that ICTs are available, affordable, and digitally accessible for everyone regardless of our age, gender, location, or ability to use the technology.

4. Ageing is a privilege, and ageing in a digital world is a chance. By working together to mainstream ICT/digital accessibility and knowledge on ageing cross-sectoral, jointly with all involved stakeholders, we can build opportunities to attain an active, healthy, and happy ageing for present and future generations, as well as economic contributions to societies to leave our lives to the fullest.

5. The availability of access to digital infrastructure fundamental but having a plug or having the Wi-fi doesn't mean digital inclusion. We have to ensure the affordability, to be able to pay for this access. The most important is the accessibility part. To be accessible, in addition to available and affordable technology should ensure that have embedded all the accessibility features from the design stage so that means to be accessible technology, like the smart technology. We have to ensure that everyone is capable to have the necessary skills, and knowledge to use the technology.

HIGHLIGHTS ON THE ITU & OLDER PERSONS

ITU-D has been developing key tools and resources, such as the Ageing in the Digital World from Vulnerable to Valuable guideline report and the online self-paced training course ICT for better ageing and livelihood in the digital landscape. These resources aim at strengthening capacity on why, what, and how to make technology digitally accessible, universally designed, and people-centered. ITU supports global efforts in ensuring that no one is left behind in the digital age and promotes ICTs for happy and healthy ageing of present and future generations.
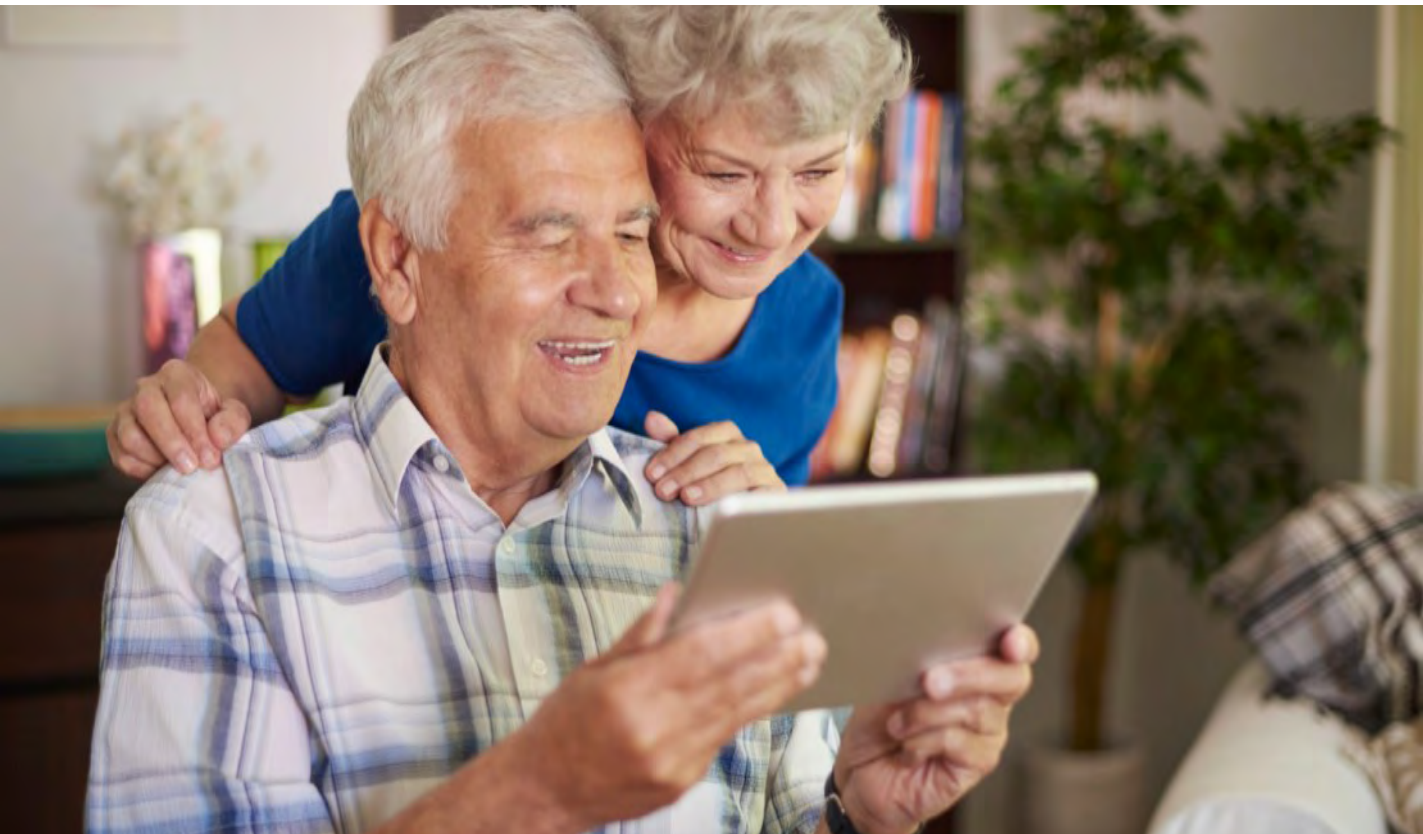
CURIOUS FACT!

In the next 30 years, more than 2 billion people will be over the age of 60. Technology advancement has radically changed many of our activities that take place in the digital space. To ensure that everyone, including older people, is fully included in these digital economies and societies, it is vital to ensure that everyone is digitally included.

DID YOU KNOW?

For the very first time in the history of the ITU, this year the World Information and Telecommunications society day, on the 17th of May, was focused on digital technologies for the older person and healthy aging. This was an opportunity to raise awareness on the importance of these global megatrends, arrays of technology and aging of the population, as well as on the impact this creates.

DO YOU WANT TO LEARN MORE ON AGEING IN THE DIGITAL WORLD AND TO ICT/DIGITAL ACCESIBILITY?

You are warmly invited to visit: ITU-D's website on Ageing in the digital world: and ITU-D website on ICT / digital accessibility:

You can also consult, use, and feel free to share all ITU resources (over 65 available), which are free of charge, in multiple languages, and available in digitally accessible formats (can be also used by deaf, blind, or illiterate persons):

• ITU Guideline Report "Ageing in the digital world: from Vulnerable to Valuable"
• ICT for better ageing and livelihood in the digital landscape online self-paced training available in English, French and Spanish (register in ITU Academy)
• ICT/Digital Accessibility Resources: over 60 resources are at your disposal including Toolkits, Guidelines, Thematic Reports, online self-paced training, video tutorials, etc.)

Focus: Climate Change and Healthy Ageing

Ms. Alana Officer
Unit Head, Demographic Change and Healthy Ageing

"We need to build awareness about the links between climate change and healthy aging as well as climate change and the human rights of older persons"

1. Climate change and rapid population ageing are paired together. Older people are an incredibly diverse group, the reality is that many of them are disproportionately affected by climate change. That is happening because as we age, we have slightly greater physiological susceptibility, for example, to heat and cold. Pre-existing health conditions or disabilities can also increase risks with regard to climate change.

2. Air pollution related to climate change exacerbates poor health in older people, particularly cardiovascular and respiratory diseases. Things like rising sea levels and extreme weather events like storms and typhoons and hurricanes can have serious impacts on older people such as physical and mental health. Those types of events also can be incredibly damaging in terms of influencing the health and social support of older people and leaving them much more vulnerable.

3. The challenge is that older people have been neglected and excluded in all of the studies related to climate change, that needs to change. Policymakers and planners need to better understand and hence respond to the effects of climate change on the health and well-being of older people.

4. We need to protect old people, the current and future generations from climate work-related threats, and that means integrating healthy aging and Human Rights for older people internationally. We need to be doing this around the intergenerational communication, and the collaboration and solidarity that's needed to include all the people in supporting climate action rather than piecing generations in a very ageist way against each other.

5. Things like housing and private and public buildings need to be much more accessible, and much more energy-efficient in cooling and installation. These are opportunities to get synergies, whereby we bring synergies between what needs to happen around climate change and what needs to happen around healthy aging.

HIGHLIGHTS ON THE WHO & OLDER PERSONS

The role of the WHO in the framework of ageing and older persons has been quite active and inspiring. WHO with other UN agencies recently released the UN Global Report on Ageism. Likewise, they have addressed how is the health and wellbeing of older people affected by climate change and what opportunities exist to foster healthy ageing and also adapt to, mitigate, and build resilience for the climate crisis in the UNs work to implement the Decade of healthy Ageing.

World Health Organization

DID YOU KNOW?

We've got the **United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change**, but it doesn't mention older people and or healthy aging, so this is an opportunity for us to get those synergies and to get those efforts to adopt a life-course approach. We need to develop new opportunities for collaboration and multi-stakeholder action to address climate change and foster healthy aging. A great place to start with would be the older people are actually included in assessments that take place on the vulnerability and adaptation to climate change. There are heat mapping surveys, and awareness and prevention programs for heating cold waves, and old people should be needed to be included in those processes.

TO BEAR IN MIND!

Older people aren't just vulnerable to climate change, but they're actually agents of change in terms of taking action around climate change and social transformation that are absolutely necessary to adapt to mitigate and build the sort of resilience. **UN Decade of Healthy Ageing** is intended to improve the lives of older people, their families, and their communities. We are doing that through a range of areas in terms of building physical and social environments and improving integrated health and social care.

All of those actions need to take a Human Rights-based approach. The intent is that we improve the Human Rights of older persons, so the next nine years are going to be absolutely critical from both the agendas on climate change and healthy aging and the Human Rights of older people and migration.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT!

The next 9-10 years are going to be absolutely crucial for the agendas of both climate change and for healthy aging, and stakeholders in both agendas need to understand those interconnections and find ways to amplify and reinforce these two agendas such third both current and future generations of older people can benefit, as well as our home now Planet Earth.

EAGER TO KEEP LEARNING ON CLIMATE CHANGE AND AGEING?

Decade of Healthy Ageing. The Platform. Here, all stakeholders can find and share knowledge
https://www.decadeofhealthyageing.org
https://tinyurl.com/3a5xyvx7

The UN Decade of Healthy Ageing 2021-2030 in a Climate-changing World
https://tinyurl.com/2nwycwru

Remember! We need to improve our understanding and sharing of knowledge on the science, the policies, on the best practices for healthy aging and climate change, and with a large range of stakeholders.

Wrap Up Message

Ms. Silvia Perel-Levin
INPEA, ILC GA, & Geneva NGO Committee on Ageing

"Aging is natural, ageism is not"

1. Ageism rules our lives, we know that ageism is probably one of the last frontier "isms" not contested by people, we assume it as something natural when we know it's not.

2. The existing mechanisms, including the covenants, are far from systemic in the way that they approach older persons. We need a dedicated legal instrument. Having an instrument on the older persons' rights does not mean that older persons are being segregated, on the contrary, they are further included. Older people are not included in so many international law and government topics and that needs to change. We want to mainstream the knowledge of older persons and ageing. We need a specific instrument, a convention specifically on the rights of older persons so that we can focus on what we need and what we want.

3. Some people migrate by choice, others by necessity; we need to be very mindful of especially those who really do it by necessity. Older migrants may be discriminated against because in those places where they go, discriminatory laws regarding employment for all the ages, but he also mentioned the important issue when they go back to their countries that they have to struggle to get their pensions. We tend to forget about the older persons who stay behind when we talk about migration.

HIGHLIGHTS ON INPEA/ ILC GA & OLDER PERSONS

The NGOs International Network for the Prevention of Elder Abuse (INPEA) and the International Longevity Centre Global Alliance (ILC GA) have been actively advocating for the inclusion of ageing and older persons across the UN and promoting a UN Convention on the rights of older persons.

4. Older persons are not the majority, however, their contributions to society and work on the economy are much more than what we talk about. The aging of the society is not a problem, it is probably one of the biggest achievements of the humanity of development, and also the fact that there are fewer babies being born also is not a problem. It is a result of women having more choice on their own, in deciding how many children they want to have. The whole issue of the rights of migrants is so interlinked with the rights of having children, the right to grow older, wherever you are, whatever your age, your gender, or your state's economic status.

5. What connects us all together is technology. Half of the population of the older people in the world don't have access to technology, and many who have access may not have the literacy on how to use it. We need access, we need the right to the information, and we need the right to be able to connect with our families. This is what we have to ensure, we are not talking about technology only as a means for healthcare or services or industry, we want technology to everyone to maintain their autonomy and independence.

REMEMBER! *"We fight together alongside to the young, we fight for the young we fight for ourselves and we fight for everybody. We need to see each other as peers, as friends and partners in everything that happens in the world. We want to be partners in all policymaking, on everything, because everything affects us just like it affects everybody else. We need the attention that serving as full and subjects of Human Rights in equal with everybody else throughout our lives until our last breath."*

Extra Bonus!

Older persons and COVID19

• Older persons have suffered the most from the Covid 19 pandemic which is also a reflection of the long-standing systemic inequalities and a lack of sufficient attention to Human Rights challenges faced this group. *(Mr. Rio Hada, OHCHR)*

• As the Covid 19 pandemic is shown, migrants, particularly, migrant women have been at the front line to deliver services and care, notably elderly care, in economic sectors where there's no sufficient availability of national workers. *(Mr. Daniel Silva y Poveda, IOM)*

• During the pandemic, we all testified to the critical situation of those who didn't have access to digital technologies, people could not access the information by medicine or connect with the doctors or be able to subscribe to be vaccinated. Most of these basic needs were almost done exclusively through the digital space and the acceleration of Internet was just absolutely impressive. Therefore, ensuring digital inclusion for all is ensuring that this right is respected for all people, including older persons without any discrimination. *(Ms. Roxana Widmer-Iliescu, ITU)*

Human Rights

Everything what we do has to be in a partnership, for example, OHCHR has learned a lot from the WHO and IOM on how international standards and principles can be implemented on the ground.

It is important to establish standards and principles informed by data evidence and practices. It is necessary to have more dialogues, discussions, and disagreements. Likewise, education is need; in this regard, the global report on ageism. has many suggestions for possible strategies, including education. Finally, we need the bridge between the old and young generations. *(Mr. Rio Hada, OHCHR)*

Migration

There are ways to maximize the benefits of migration, the benefits for the migrants, also for the communities where they come from, where they transit, and where they're going. How?

1. Ensuring that migration is a choice.
2. Those who choose to migrate should be empowered as actors for development.
3. Migration should be well-governed. Most of the migrants, 60% of the migrants in the world migrate for the purpose of work. This is an important group of migrants in itself, and one in every four of those migrants is in a country that has a mechanism of access and portability of social security contributions. That means the rest of every migrant doesn't have full and quality. (Mr. Daniel Silva y Poveda, IOM)

Digital Inclusion

Digital inclusion should be implemented in a holistic vision. It should be holistic, regardless of gender, age, or disabilities. It is not possible to achieve this goal otherwise. Each of us has to concretely contribute. In addition to raising awareness for everybody can have access to the digital world and through our respective works and activities try to contribute on a personal level. Intergenerational support is critical, in particular for this part of the aging, by trying the young generation to be a little bit closer to the older generation to share abilities and skills. Also, if technology, industry, the private sector, and governments work and want to have accessible technology for all, this will facilitate a lot of access to information and communications technology. *(Ms. Roxana Widmer-Iliescu, ITU)*

Climate change

The UN Decade for Healthy Ageing is intended to improve the lives of older people, their families, and their communities and all 193 countries, in terms of low- and middle-income countries. One of the key strategies for doing that is around building communities that can foster the abilities of older people. Creating opportunities for employment and volunteering, improving access to social protection, and improving lifelong learning are key determinants of healthy aging, all of those factors enable people to live well. The Decade intends to create more age-friendly cities and communities as an opportunity to try and bridge that gap for people who are in a position to continue to work and for those who can't; what can be done around improving social protections. *(Ms. Alana Officer, WHO)*

You can get more information on our Common Agenda here:
https://www.un.org/en/un75/common-agenda

Last year the Human Rights Council had a discussion about the impact of climate change on older persons. They are likely to face negative impacts on their health, access to food, land, water, sanitation, housing, livelihoods, and fundamental wellbeing. Against all these global challenges, we now have our common agenda, a unique and historic opportunity to forge a world, built upon a foundation of universal Human Rights, where every person's dignity shall be respected throughout the lifecycle. *(Mr. Rio Hada, OHCHR)*

Learn more about the impact of climate change on the Human Rights of Older Persons:
https://www.ohchr.org/en/climate-change/impact-climate-change-rights-older-person

▶

Find here the video of the whole event!:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ypzpBGiJPKk

Decade of healthy ageing

Thank you for joining us in this learning experience!