

Dear participants of the regional workshop on “Evidence-based ageing-related policies in Sub-Saharan Africa”,

It is a great pleasure to welcome you to this meeting, especially given that the COVID-19 pandemic has made it much more difficult to convene in-person events nowadays. Let me express our gratitude to the Government of Kenya for partnering with the United Nations in organizing this timely event.

While the demographic profile of societies in Africa is rather young, the decrease in fertility rates that we observed in the recent past will cause accelerated ageing and a sharp increase of the number of older persons in the future. It is only prudent to start planning now not only for individuals who are above the age of 60 today, but for many more who will reach older age in the next decades. Our workshop aims to do exactly that as it intends to strengthen the capacity of participants to formulate, implement, monitor and review policies on older persons at regional, national and local levels.

The topics that we will address and discuss range from UN mandates, such as the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing and the 2030 Agenda, to social protection and care services,

from supporting older persons in their homes and communities to health and wellbeing. We will hear about the current situation of older persons in various African countries and policies that address their needs. We will hear about the human rights of older Africans, healthy ageing, the role of civil society organizations, empirical data, statistics and demographic trends, the role of the family and how COVID-19 impacted the lives of older persons. At the end of the workshop, we will hear about the status of the AU Revised Draft Policy Framework and Plan of Action on Ageing and the fourth review and appraisal of the Madrid Plan, which will lead us into the years ahead.

I wish to acknowledge the professional caliber of the presenters who came to Kenya to talk about their respective areas of expertise working for Governments, statistical offices, academia, civil society organizations, and human rights organizations. I hope and expect lively discussions and that everybody will come away from this meeting enriched and with new ideas on how to address the needs of older persons in Africa. Thank you!