

UNITED NATIONS



NATIONS UNIES

THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

--

MESSAGE ON WORLD ELDER ABUSE AWARENESS DAY

15 June 2012

The World Health Organization estimates that between 4 and 6 per cent of older persons worldwide have suffered from a form of elder abuse -- physical, emotional, financial. Furthermore, emerging research suggests that abuse, neglect and violence against older persons, both at home and in institutions, are much more prevalent than currently acknowledged.

Such abuse is an unacceptable attack on human dignity and human rights. Making matters even worse, cases often remain unreported and unaddressed.

Alarmed at this widening problem, the United Nations General Assembly has proclaimed World Elder Abuse Awareness Day, a new observance to be marked annually on 15 June.

Respect for elders is an integral part of many societies. As people live longer, and as we strive for sustainable and inclusive development, it is time to revive and expand our appreciation for those who have advanced in years. A modern civilization can only live up to that name if it preserves the tradition of honouring, respecting and protecting society's elders.

As we commemorate the Day for the first time, let us all join in reaffirming that the human rights of older persons are as absolute as those of all human beings.

I call upon Governments and all concerned actors to design and carry out more effective prevention strategies and stronger laws and policies to address all aspects of elder abuse. Let us work together to optimize living conditions for older persons and enable them to make the greatest possible contribution to our world.