

International Human Solidarity Day (IHSD) Commemoration 2010

The International Human Solidarity Day was established by the General Assembly in 2005 in resolution 60/209, as an initiative in the fight against poverty.

On 16 December 2010 the Division for Social Policy and Development, in collaboration with the Permanent Mission of Tunisia to the United Nations, and the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations held a press briefing in commemoration of International Human Solidarity Day on 20 December 2010. The briefing focused on the place of solidarity in achieving social development with a special focus on Intergenerational solidarity.

The main presenter was His Excellency, Mr. Ghazi Jomaa, Ambassador, Permanent Mission of Tunisia to the United Nations, who spoke from the Member State perspective. Ambassador Jomaa focused his presentation on relevant Tunisian initiatives, built on the concept of solidarity, effecting positive national development. He highlighted the Tunisian National Solidarity fund, noting the tremendous commitment of the population to the fund, with more than half the population currently contributing. He noted also that through the application of the fund and other social policy initiatives, Tunisia had been effectively raising the national well-being, with more than 8 per cent of the population currently classified as middle-income earners.

Also addressing the press, were Ms. Jessica Frank, Chairperson, NGO Committee on Aging to the United Nations, and Ms. Sara Reef, Director of Cross Cultural Initiatives at Intersections International who spoke of the application of intergenerational solidarity in projects and programmes.

Ms. Frank spoke on Intergenerational solidarity from the perspective of older persons and the aging, noting the importance of including the needs and perspectives of older persons in social development policies and programmes. She reminded the audience, that in 2040, the global population will, for the first time, have a greater proportion of older persons, than children, and this could have significant social repercussions, if a cross-generational approach to development is not taken from now. She emphasized the importance of a rights-based approach to the inclusion of older persons in policies and programmes, and commended the move of the United Nations toward a Convention on the Rights of Older Persons.

Ms. Sara Reef, presented the TE'A Project of Intersections International which uses community-oriented, interactive, documentary theater to initiate conversation around harmful divisions that persist in society. She gave examples of how the project has worked to stimulate Intergenerational dialogue and promote a cross-generation approach to addressing social problems.

Mr. Donald Lee, Chief of the Social Perspective on Development Branch, DESA/DSPD, served as moderator.