



**United Nations Commission on Population and Development
Fortieth Session
9 April –13 April 2007
Item 4 of the Provisional Agenda**

AARP Statement

**To the Fortieth Session of the Commission on Population and Development
“The Changing Age Structures of Populations and their Implications for Development”**

Mister Chairman let me congratulate you on your election.

AARP, a non-governmental organization in Consultative Status with ECOSOC, congratulates the Commission on Population and Development and the United Nations Secretariat on the theme of this year’s meeting and the two Reports of the Secretary- General on “Changing Age Structures of Populations and their Implications for Development” (E/CN.9/2007/3 and E/CN9/2007/4).

The two reports bear witness to the fact that population aging constitutes one of the most significant global trends which will impact each individual regardless of whether we live in the more or less developed parts of the world. As an organization of 38 million members representing the needs and interests of persons 50 and over and through our international outreach and research, AARP is keenly aware that in order to formulate consistent, effective and appropriate policies at the regional, national and local levels, we cannot take a narrow approach when we look at the aging of our societies. All our countries have an increasing numbers of older persons. We must follow the example of this year’s Commission theme and take a holistic view, by looking at the entire changing age structures in our societies and the effects on different age groups. Only then can we begin to understand the impact of trends in population aging and to formulate the policies that will enhance the quality of life for all persons as we age.

Much has been written and said for example in the United States (US), Europe and Japan, about the coming “age wave” of baby boomers (i.e. the generation born after 1946) and the fact that this very large cohort will enter into retirement during the next few decades. Presumably, this will put enormous financial pressures on health and retirement systems. But AARP believes that ultimately countries will be able to cope with the pressures that longevity will bring to bear on social protection systems and seize this as an opportunity for new growth and involvement. AARP also believes that there are important lessons to be learned for countries which will experience similar or even accelerated trends like Asian countries in the future...ten, twenty or even thirty years from now.

We believe that access to affordable quality health care is a fundamental right, and poverty alleviation and indeed income security at older ages for all are the cornerstones for ensuring the well-being for our societies as we age. Older people who are in good health will be able to continue to work and contribute to the well-being of their families and communities in many different ways. Maintaining good health throughout the life course is therefore of paramount

importance as it will result in a lower prevalence of disability in later life. Allowing persons to remain in the labor force as they age and if they choose, and providing access to training and continuing education in order to keep ones' skills current, will improve income security for older persons and their families over the life course. Last but not least, the role of older persons as caregivers of the young and the disabled, especially female caregivers, is significant and should be recognized and supported whenever possible in all societies.

Recent surveys conducted by AARP confirm that people everywhere expect clear thought through policies to enhance the opportunities of aging. Countries now preparing for the future aging of their populations have a unique opportunity to learn from the experiences – both positive and negative – of countries where population aging is already more advanced. Countries, which are already older in demographic terms and which have already gained significant experience in finding solutions in the areas of income security and health care for their older populations must be willing to assist those countries still struggling to provide these basic benefits to both younger and older persons. Countries that are already old also often have much to learn from societies where older people continue to play essential roles in caring and income generation.

AARP International stands ready to continue to provide a platform for the international exchange of knowledge on policies, research and practice which will benefit an aging world, where the concerns of both the young and the old are taken into account.

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