



601 E Street, NW
Washington, DC 20049

T 202-434-2277
1-888-OUR-AARP
1-888-687-2277
TTY 1-877-434-7598
www.aarp.org

**Oral Statement by AARP at the 45th Session of the Commission on Population
and Development April 2012**

On behalf of AARP I would like to thank you for giving us an opportunity to partake in the 45th Commission for Population and Development. For those of you unfamiliar with AARP, we are the leading nonprofit membership organization for people age 50 and over in the United States, with close to 38 million members. We strive to lead positive social change and enhance the quality of life for all as we age through social policy, advocacy, and community service. Internationally, we act as a partner and as a catalyst to decision-makers in all sectors to favorably shape the social and economic implications of aging worldwide.

In accordance with the theme of the commission "Adolescents and youth" I would like to present excerpts from the following statement made by our Chairman of the board **at the OECD Forum in Paris, last year.**

"Global aging is rapidly changing the way societies think about social and economic policies. Fewer workers are entering the workplace to support larger numbers of retirees, who are living longer and healthier lives. Governments are responding to fiscal pressures by shifting more responsibility on individuals to ensure dignity in old age for themselves and their families.

Facilitating harmony and positive transfer between generations is going to be critical in responding adequately to demographic change. Younger generations will be called upon to devote more time to caring for aging family members. Older persons will often need to play a greater role in raising grandchildren, as both parents participate in the workforce. People will need to work longer to save a larger share of their retirement income in the face of declining public benefits.

Perhaps nowhere are intergenerational issues playing out more interestingly than in the workplace. The Global Recession has taken a great toll at the workforce's demographic poles - hitting young and mature workers with devastating impact.



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Fortunately, research indicates that the antipathy between the generations is far less dire than headline writers would have us believe. While it can be difficult to measure Intergenerational Solidarity, attitudinal surveys do indicate that relations between the generations today are positive.

The notion of a fixed sum of jobs is wrong -- this is the "lump of labor fallacy". While there might be only a set number of positions within an employing organization, it is not true for the economy as a whole.

Hard as it is to imagine, labor shortages that were looming when the recession interrupted will come back to haunt us. Once growth picks up, waves of baby boomers will once again be considering retirement, and many experts predict that we will soon be facing growing shortages of talented and skilled workers in many developed countries.

If nothing is done to integrate increased participation of older workers into the workforce, the total number of workers in the labor market will shrink, driving up costs and restricting economic growth. Increased labor force participation of older workers can also help strengthen our tax base and alleviate pressure on our public pension and health care systems. Keeping older workers economically active will mitigate pressure on younger generations to support longer lives in retirement and reduce perceptions of older persons as a burden on society.

Further, employers who learn how to make the most productive use of both younger and older workers are going to enjoy a competitive advantage. This recognition is especially important in a global economy that places a great premium on knowledge and skill."