

2 October 2014

**Statement of H.E. Mr. Sam Kahamba Kutesa,  
President of the 69<sup>th</sup> Session of the General Assembly,  
on the International Day of Older Persons**

*Delivered by H.E. Alavaro Jose Costa de Mendoca E Moura, Vice-President of the 69th session of the GA, on behalf of the President of the GA*

**Excellencies,  
Distinguished Delegates,  
Ladies and gentlemen,**

I am honoured to speak to you today, on behalf of H.E. Sam Kutesa, President of the 69th Session of the General Assembly, in celebration of the International Day of Older Persons. At the outset, I wish to congratulate the NGO Committee on Ageing for organizing this important event and for its excellent work in bringing attention to the issue of ageing.

As we are about to open a new chapter in development history, the theme of this year's commemoration, "Leaving No One Behind: Promoting a Society for All", calls on us to design a truly inclusive development framework.

By 2050, 22% of the world population will be over 60 year old, 80% of them living in low or middle income countries. If we are to uphold our pledge to leave no one behind, we must hear the voices of our elders, including women and those with disabilities. We must ensure that their specific needs and challenges are reflected in the post-2015 development agenda.

Indeed, older persons have unique concerns and vulnerabilities on a number of issues such as healthcare and the treatment of non-communicable diseases, social protection, employment, access to technology and financial resources.

We must pay special attention to the situation of older women and widows, who are particularly vulnerable to poverty, discrimination and violence. The specific challenges of older persons who are disabled must also be an integral part of our discussions on the future development agenda.

**Excellencies,**

While we must ensure that older persons can share in the benefits of our new sustainable development agenda, we should also celebrate their many contributions to our societies and allow them to fully participate in its implementation.

We should acknowledge and harness their unique wisdom and knowledge. Tapping into their wealth of experience and know-how could lead to important solutions for sustainable development challenges. This is particularly true in indigenous communities, where older persons could offer invaluable insight for solving some of the most pressing sustainable development issues.

The international community must embrace and take advantage of the valuable knowledge and contributions of older persons, while at the same time, addressing their particular needs and vulnerabilities. With an ever-growing ageing community, we simply cannot afford to overlook this important part of our population.

Through our collective efforts and determination, we can build a transformative post-2015 development agenda that will open a new era of peace and prosperity for us.

Thank you.