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NGO Committee on Ageing events October 2017 – September 2018

2017 celebration of International Day of Older Persons, 5 October 2017

- Topic:** **Stepping into the Future: Tapping Talents and Participation of Older Persons**
- Welcome remarks:** Ms. Janet Sigal, Chair of the NGO Committee on Ageing, New York
Ms. Sandra Timmermann and Ms. Rebecca Riger Tsurumi, Co-Chairs, UNIDOP Programme Sub-Committee
- General remarks:** H.E. Mr. Frantisek Ruzicka, Chef de Cabinet to the President of 72nd session of the United Nations General Assembly
H.E. Mr. Frederico S. Duque Estrada Meyer, Deputy Permanent Representative of the Mission of Brazil to the United Nations, on behalf of the Group of Friends of Older Persons
Mr. Thomas Gass, Assistant Secretary-General for Policy Coordination and Inter-Agency Affairs, UN/DESA
Ms. Lakshmi Puri, Assistant Secretary-General of the United Nations and Deputy Executive Director of UN Women
- Formal Launch: World Population Ageing 2017 Highlights**
Ms. Sara Hertog, Population Affairs Officer, UN/DESA Population Division
- Keynote address:** Mr. Marc Freedman, Founder and CEO, Encore.org
- Panel theme:** “Stepping into the Future – Tapping the Talents and Participation of Older Persons”
- Moderator:** Ms. Donna Butts, Executive Director, Generations United
- Panelists:** Mr. Frank Leyhausen, General Manager, MedCom International, Germany
Mr. Edward Rogoff, Dean at LIU Brooklyn School of Business, Public Administration and Information Sciences, USA
Mr. Livingstone Bartholomew Byekwaso, Executive Director, Saidia Wazee Karagwe (SAWAKA), Tanzania
- Closing session:** Ms. Lidija Dravec, Vice-Chair of the General Assembly’s eighth session of the Open-ended Working Group on Ageing
Ms. Rosemary Lane, Focal Point on Ageing, UN/DESA

The 2017 UNIDOP showcased cutting-edge research, age-related technological innovations and models of civic involvement and entrepreneurship. Attention was drawn to the contributions made by older persons, including their current roles as family caregivers, community leaders and entrepreneur of business start-ups. It was pointed out that with the demographic trends showing a huge increase in the population of older persons, older persons must be enabled to fully participate in their communities and societies, and should be recognized as agents of change and valuable contributors to society.

Commitment was expressed for the full participation of older persons in social, economic, cultural and political life, without discrimination or violence. Instead of focusing on adding years to life, emphasis should be given to adding life to those years. There is a need to dispel the notion that all older persons are sick, frail and incapable. Many remain active, healthy and independent, working for many years beyond “retirement age”. Many undertake entrepreneurial activities and should be encouraged and given opportunities to do so. The intergenerational aspect of teamwork is a winning combination - senior entrepreneurs teaming up with younger people brings together different skills and a built-in succession plan.

Full report can be accessed on the NGO CoA website: ngocoa-ny.org.

2 November 2017

Topic: **Work of the NGO Committee on Ageing**
Janet Sigal: NGO CoA strategic goals for 2017-2018
Cynthia Stuen: Review of previous year’s programs and events
Frances Zainoeddin: Overview of UN intergovernmental bodies; ECOSOC status; role of NGOs

11 January 2018

Topic: **Representation of a Centenarian: Dagny, blogger, aged 105**, presented by Ms. **Maud Bruce-About** who discussed whether a 105 year-old’s blogging can change the way older persons are viewed; the impact Dagny had at the national level (Sweden) in terms of her active engagement, abilities and the need to view older persons as a heterogeneous group (not all are frail, incompetent, sick, inactive); the need to combat ageism.

The Committee also discussed the upcoming meetings of the ECOSOC functional commissions: Commission on Social Development (29 January – 7 February 2018), Statistical Commission (6-9 March 2019), Commission on the Status of Women (12-23 March 2018), Commission on Population and Development (9-13 April 2018) and the related side events, where issues concerning older persons can be raised by NGO-CoA members. Members were urged to access relevant websites to determine whether or not they would like to submit oral or written statements (there are deadlines). During the months of February and March, the CoA would not be convening monthly programmes because of the UN events.

The Chair of the Committee for the International Day of Older Persons, Mr. James O’Neal (representative of the International Federation on Ageing) was introduced.

5 April 2018

Topic: **Global Vision/Urban Action**
Speaker: **Ms. Alexandra Hiniker**, Strategic Relationships Manager for the NYC Mayor’s Office of International Affairs. Ms. Hiniker highlighted the work of her office in connection with engagement with all 193 Member States – “Local to Global” activities which included linking Permanent Missions to city events; “NYC Junior Ambassadors” programme to which Permanent Missions are invited to discuss their work; work on the SDGs – decent work, fairness in the workplace, education, energy, water and waste treatment; and will be presenting a voluntary review for New York City to be submitted to the High Level Political Forum.

Updates were provided on the work of the:

- (a) Commission for Social Development – third review and appraisal of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing (MIPAA).
- (b) Commission on the Status of Women – two separate paragraphs on older rural women in outcome document.

- (c) Statistical Commission – approved establishment of the Titchfield Group, UK) on older persons, to develop standardized tools and methods for producing data disaggregated by age.

3 May 2018

Topic: The New Retirement !

Speaker: Ms. Pam Ramsden, Coordinator of Coming of Age/NYC, Presbyterian Senior Services, who pointed out that the question was no so much “health or wealth” but “breadth of social network”. The work of her organization focused on helping people look forward to the future – “don’t retire, rewire”. Ms. Ramsden spoke about the work of her organization, which includes partnering with other organizations to share best practices, to advance the positive ageing movement, and to combat ageism; conducting workshops on positive ageing; connecting organizations.

Three youth representatives (**Roxanne Moadel-Attie**, Doctoral Candidate, Social and Health Psychology, Stony Brook University; **Annisa Triyathi**, Representative of the Young Scientists in the UNISDR Science and Technology Advisory Group, and **Marwan Bishtawi**, Representative of the Islamic Youth Center of Morrisville Youth Organization) commented on how most young people do not think about getting older and “retiring”; most were focused on getting employment, where to live, and independence. They noted that many older persons were providing child-care for their grandchildren, because their children could not afford to have baby-sitters. It was also pointed out that while some people have the means to “retire”, there are, at the same time, a lot of people who are not able to retire because of the lack of pensions. All agreed that there must be better economic and social policies to address issues faced by people throughout their life-course; and that it was important to understand their concerns and support each other.

Attention was called to upcoming meetings of interest to CoA members:

- (a) **14 June**: World Elder Abuse Awareness Day, organized by International Network for the Prevention of Elder Abuse (INPEA).
- (b) **9-18 July**, High Level Political Forum to discuss Sustainable Development Goals; the Stakeholder Group on Ageing, of which the NGO CoA is a member, has submitted a position paper on SDG 11 (cities) and will be participating in various events.
- (c) **23-26 July**, Open-ended Working Group on Ageing, 9th session – continuing discussions on the possible elaboration of a convention to protect the rights of older persons.
- (d) **4 October**, International Day of Older Persons.

July - the focus of the CoA’s activities was on participation in the:

- (a) High Level Political Forum which met to discuss implementation of Sustainable Development Goals (9-18 July); website for details: <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/hlpf/2018>
- (b) 10th session of the Open-ended Working Group on Ageing (OEWGA) (23-26 July); website for details: <https://www.un.org/development/desa/ageing/news/2018/07/owega9/>

12 September

NGO CoA/Executive Committee’s Annual Retreat: review of past year’s activities; plans for the period November 2017 to October 2019.

13 September

Topic Updates and next steps.

Members were informed of the CoA's goals:

- (a) Facilitate the OEWGA's work
- (b) Strengthen and broaden global alliances to promote concerns of older persons
- (c) Increase membership;
- (d) Fundraising

Updates were provided on the results of the High Level Political Forum and the Open-ended Working Group on Ageing. Member organizations were also encouraged to join the Global Alliance on the Rights of Older People (GAROP). .

Co-sponsorship of events

- 11 December 2017: NGO Committee on Intergenerational Solidarity, "The contribution of intergenerational Relationships to the promotion and protection of the human rights of older persons".
- 1 February 2018: International Federation on Ageing (IFA), during the 56th session of the Commission for Social Development, "Ageism: a prejudice against our future selves"
- 2 February 2018: UN/DESA, Focal Point on Ageing, during the 56th session of the Commission for Social Development: "Why are digital skills critical for older persons?"
- 14 March 2018: International Network for the Prevention of Elder Abuse (INPEA), during the 62nd session of the Commission on the Status of Women: "Rural Older Women/ Widows: beyond poverty and violence – programs/policies"
- 14 June 2018 International Network for the Prevention of Elder Abuse (INPEA): Observance of World Elder Abuse Awareness Day, "Moving from Awareness to action through a human rights based approach".

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NGO Committee on Ageing, Executive Committee:

Chair:	Ms. Janet Sigal
Co-Chair:	Ms. Cynthia Stuen
Treasurer:	Ms. Katie Weiss
Recording Secretary:	Ms. Sandy Timmermann
Corresponding Secretary:	Ms. Martha Bial
Members-at-Large	Ms. Erica Dhar, Ms. Ranjit Jayanti, Ms. Nelida Quintero, Ms. Rebecca Tsurumi, Ms. Frances Zainoeddin

The NGO Committee on Ageing usually meets the first Thursday of the month. Join us by checking out our website and calendar of events. We welcome new members anytime !

www.ngocoa-ny.org