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**The International Federation on Ageing (IFA) oral statement at the  
68th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW68)**

**11 – 22 March 2024**

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The International Federation on Ageing (IFA) supports the acceleration of achieving gender equality and the empowerment of ALL women and girls by addressing poverty and strengthening institutions and financing with a gender perspective. The IFA, whose membership base comprises of government, NGOs, industry, academia, and individuals in over 75 countries, is a voice alongside and on behalf of older persons globally.

With the global megatrend of population ageing, it is critical that we acknowledge and respond to the intersecting barriers that limit girls and younger women's ability to age well into older adulthood. The World Report on Ageing and Health shares that intrinsic capacity, comprised of all the mental and physical capacities that a person can draw on, is clearly influenced by socioeconomic position, with those in a low socioeconomic position having a far lower intrinsic capacity than those in a higher socioeconomic position.<sup>1</sup> Those who lack sufficient income, social protection, and compensated work are at high risk for poor health and destitution.<sup>2</sup> Older women disproportionately belong to this group while also being significant providers of care to their communities.<sup>3</sup> Governments need to adopt programs that embed gender equality as a requirement for social justice and development while also recognizing the root causes of poverty. Eradicating harmful attitudes, norms, and stereotypes about girls and women begins with each of us. Unfortunately, a lifetime of such attitudes and discrimination is cumulative for older women. Older women are often the caregivers of current and younger generations placing them in positions without choices, without income and in some cases

without basic necessities and any voice. In environments of war and conflict, it is often the older women who are left behind without the resources to survive. Similarly climate change has been shown to impact older women more severely due to increases in health conditions and lack of mobility and income to remain safely in their environments and/or relocate.

It is time to recognize that a lifecourse approach is essential to eradicate poverty and the ever-present sexism and ageism that impacts all individuals across the lifespan. We have the opportunity to ensure that current and future generations of women can grow older in a global society that offers equality and social justice. The International Federation on Ageing, urges member states to support a comprehensive international legally binding instrument to promote and protect the human rights and dignity of all older persons, including older women, during the 14<sup>th</sup> Open-ended Working Group on Ageing convening in May.

**International Federation on Ageing**

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<sup>1</sup> World Health Organization. (2015). World report on ageing and health. <https://apps.who.int/iris/handle/10665/186463>

<sup>2</sup> World Health Organization. (2002). Active Ageing: A Policy Framework. <https://extranet.who.int/agefriendlyworld/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/WHO-Active-Ageing-Framework.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> Age International. (2021). Older women: the hidden workforce. <https://www.ageinternational.org.uk/policy-research/publications/older-women-the-hidden-workforce/>