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STATEMENT ON AGEING POLICY IN THE REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA

Mr. Chairman,
Distinguished colleagues,
Ladies and gentlemen,

It's a great honour for me to address this Session of the Meeting.

First of all, let me extend my gratitude to the United Nations Economic Commission for Asia and the Pacific for excellent organisation of the Meeting and warm welcome.

The meetings held within the context of review and appraisal of the Madrid International Plan of Action have a unique role for promotion and reinforcement of affirmed ideology and principles and provides an important platform to review the achievements, identify and address the gaps towards ensuring a sustainable society for all ages.

The current demographic trends present challenges for policymaking and a more comprehensive and multilayer approach is required to better address emerging needs in ageing society, to promote and ensure ageing with dignity.

The Government of Armenia is committed to the consistent reforms in compliance with international standards to ensure the protection of older people's rights and their participation in society, to combat discrimination and to promote the realization of United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development at the national level.

The Armenian Development Strategy for 2014-2025 defines the growth of employment, elimination of poverty, enhancement of social protection system as priorities for perspective development of the country. Overcoming the consequences of the population ageing as well as the issues of social protection of the elderly are also among the priorities of the state social policies of the Republic of Armenia.

Realizing the importance of the issue, as well as based on the provisions of the Regional Implementation Strategy for the Madrid International Plan of Action, and in line with the current trends and challenges of ageing society, this year the Government of Armenia has adopted a new Strategy and Action Plan for Overcoming the Consequences of Ageing and for Social Protection of the Elderly for 2017-2021. The main principles and targets of the Action Plan are the improvement of care and social services system, promoting healthy and active life, ensuring economic safety and social inclusion, participation in community life and decision making processes. The other important component is the relevant support to the families which will enable the older persons to stay in a family environment. Overall, 39 activities are envisaged by the Action Plan to be implemented under priority areas of the Strategy.

During the implementation of the Strategy, a priority attention will be given to monitoring and evaluation activities and a comprehensive and multifaceted analysis of the results of these activities. Monitoring should target to evaluate the effectiveness of the strategy activities and identification of and possible solutions to the problems arisen during their implementation.

In 2019, it is planned to carry out an interim evaluation of the strategy activities, and in 2021, a final summary evaluation, on the basis of which an appropriate report will be published.

The Interagency Committee, including non-governmental and international organisations, for ensuring the implementation of the Action Plan on Ageing has been established by the Decree of the Prime Minister of Armenia.

In the meantime, new standards of care in the institutions and home-services for older persons are developed in compliance with best international practices.

Last year in cooperation with international organisations we have carried out survey in the country to assess and identify the needs of older persons related to required services. The main goal of the survey was to clarify the framework and models of services necessary to be provided to older persons throughout the country in order to ensure more accessible and targeted community-based services, to promote their autonomy and participation in society. The results of survey have been used for further policy development.

The Government of Armenia has initiated large-scale reforms to introduce the system of integrated social services system in the country. Eighteen integrated centers are already functioning in the capital and certain regions of the country. The works are in the process to establish more than fifty such centers throughout the country. The core achievement in this context is the development of social workers institute which ensures the individual work with older persons and their families to promote provision of community services based on real personal needs.

High importance is given to training of social workers and care givers which is being conducted on a continuous basis.

Realizing the importance of joining efforts of state and non-state actors, the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs of Armenia in 2016 has come forward with an initiative for unification of partners around the National Agreement on Social Cooperation. It is a new model of cooperation which will give an opportunity to put the traditional relationships of social partnership on the new institutional dimension and expand the scope of partners including state governing bodies, communities, non-governmental organisations, all service providers in order to have better coordination of works and to achieve more targeted results in addressing social needs and risks. The core objectives of this

mechanism include, inter alia, ensuring participatory approach in the development, implementation and monitoring of public policy in social protection field. Up to date, 47 organisations have joined the Agreement which membership is open to all those concerned.

In 2015 the network on ageing issues was established which includes state bodies, civil society and international organisations. Regular meetings are conducted within this framework to discuss the legislative changes, reform packages, existing issues and gaps, to introduce suggestions and recommendations for further development in the sphere, to implement joint projects targeted to the needs of older persons.

To foster the efficient implementation of Madrid Plan of Action targets, there is a need for continuous coordinated work in all levels by consolidating the efforts and resources of state, civil society, international community and older persons themselves.

In the end I would like to stress that the priorities and directions defined in the Draft outcome document of this Meeting are essential guidance for all of us to continue our work in line with current challenges and to ensure ageing with dignity.

Thank you for your attention.