

UNITED NATIONS



NATIONS UNIES

THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

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**MESSAGE ON THE INTERNATIONAL DAY OF OLDER PERSONS
1 October 2013**

The global community has reached a critical moment in our collective efforts to address poverty and usher in a better future. The 2015 deadline for achieving the Millennium Development Goals is fast approaching while discussions on shaping a vision for development beyond that date are intensifying. In this effort, we must address shifting demographics, especially the needs and concerns of the world's increasing number of older persons.

By 2050, the number of older persons will be twice the number of children in developed countries, and the number of older persons in developing countries is expected to double. This trend will have profound effects on countries and individuals.

There is broad recognition that population ageing presents both a significant opportunity and a challenge. The opportunity is to benefit from the many contributions older persons make to society. The challenge is to act on this understanding now through the adoption of policies that promote social inclusion and intergenerational solidarity.

We often hear people talk about revering older persons for their wisdom, but older persons also want to have a voice. In our consultation process for the post-2015 development agenda, the United Nations has heard from more than a million people, including many older persons. They are calling for a world where all have food, shelter, clean water and sanitation, and access to basic health services and education. I have included these messages in my vision for a transformative post-2015 development agenda, which is set out in my report, "A Life of Dignity for All."

On this International Day of Older Persons, I call on countries and people to commit to removing barriers to older persons' full participation in society while protecting their rights and dignity.