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THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

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MESSAGE ON THE INTERNATIONAL DAY OF OLDER PERSONS
New York, 1 October 2014

Older persons are playing an increasingly significant role in society as they grow in number and as healthcare improves in some parts of the world.

The number of older persons is expected to more than double, globally, from 841 million people in 2013 to more than 2 billion in 2050. By that year, nearly 8 in 10 of the world's older population will live in the less developed regions.

The steady increase in human longevity represents one of the greatest transformations and challenges of our time. However, failure to keep pace with changing demographic trends will make it difficult to achieve a sustainable, secure and fulfilling future for people of all ages.

Older persons make wide-ranging contributions to economic and social development. However, discrimination and social exclusion persist. We must overcome this bias in order to ensure a socially and economically active, secure and healthy ageing population.

The post-2015 development agenda offers a historic opportunity for the United Nations and its Member States to strengthen the rights and role of older persons in society as an integral part of our commitment to "leave no one behind".

On this International Day, I encourage governments and people everywhere to ensure the full participation of older persons in society while protecting their rights and dignity.