

**Mr. Wu Hongbo Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs, Secretary-General for the International Conference on Small Island Developing States**

**World Elder Abuse Awareness Day Event**

*14 June 2013, New York*

Secretary Greenlee

Minister Wong

Excellencies, Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good afternoon.

I am honoured to be with you on the occasion of World Elder Abuse Awareness Day. I thank the Governments of Canada and the United States for taking the initiative to organize this important event in cooperation with my Department.

As you know, the General Assembly designated 15 June as World Elder Abuse Awareness Day.

The General Assembly's concern with elder abuse dates back more than a decade to the adoption of the 2002 Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing.

Recognizing the scope of the problem, the Madrid Plan included a specific section on Neglect, Abuse and Violence. Since then, research and work to combat the various forms of elder abuse has grown considerably. And much of the drive to raise awareness has come from civil society organizations.

This year's 57th session of the Commission on the Status of Women specifically recognized the additional vulnerability of older women and the particular risk of violence they face. It stressed the need to address violence and discrimination against older women, especially in the light of the growing proportion of older people in the world's population.

Elder abuse used to stay largely hidden, and its very existence denied. Emerging research suggests that abuse, neglect and violence against older persons, is much more prevalent than previously acknowledged.

It is still not easy for societies that traditionally hold their older citizens in reverence to admit that elder abuse occurs.

While physical violence against older persons is the extreme face of 'ageism', emotional, mental and financial abuse or neglect are all too common. They cut across social, economic and national boundaries.

I believe that speaking out about elder abuse on a global stage opens the door to recognition, debate and solutions.

It also signals to older persons that elder abuse is an issue that societies take seriously. It is not just something they must accept as the price of growing old.

The speakers at this event will provide us with a global overview of the types and prevalence of elder abuse. They will share a wealth of good practices, from awareness raising and legislation, to the provision of effective services, programmes and training. They will also highlight what remains to be done.

I want to thank them for sharing their knowledge, experience and insights with us and for supporting our work.

Thank you.

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