

UNITED NATIONS



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**THE SECRETARY-GENERAL**

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**MESSAGE ON THE INTERNATIONAL DAY OF OLDER PERSONS**

**1 October 2012**

*“Longevity: Shaping the Future”*

Rapid population ageing and a steady increase in human longevity worldwide represent one of the greatest social, economic and political transformations of our time. These demographic changes will affect every community, family and person. They demand that we rethink how individuals live, work, plan and learn throughout their lifetimes, and that we re-invent how societies manage themselves.

As we embark on shaping the post-2015 United Nations development agenda, we must envision a new paradigm that aligns demographic ageing with economic and social growth and protects the human rights of older persons. We are all -- individually and collectively -- responsible for the inclusion of older persons in society, whether through developing accessible transportation and communities, ensuring the availability of age-appropriate health care and social services, or providing an adequate social protection floor.

This year marks the 10th anniversary of the adoption of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing. As the proportion of older persons in society grows, the bold vision it put forward -- of building a society for all ages -- is more relevant than ever.

Longevity is a public health achievement, not a social or economic liability. On this International Day of Older Persons, let us pledge to ensure the well-being of older persons and to enlist their meaningful participation in society so we can all benefit from their knowledge and ability.