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**Multi-stakeholder meeting on the human rights of older persons, 29-30 August 2022**

***Session 1: Limitations and gaps of selected human rights norms and obligations***

Oral statement delivered by: Associazione Comunità Papa Giovanni XXIII (APG23)

*Check against delivery*

Good morning,

The COVID19 pandemic has had a tremendous impact on the elderly population. It has been devastating not only from a physical health point of view but also from the perspective of mental health and social well-being, especially for those without access to digital technology and therefore in peril of being fully isolated from help and support.

The COVID-19 crisis has unveiled the condition of many older persons in care homes, where the same structures and measures that were supposed to protect them, have failed them instead.

Yet we foresee new crises for which we might not be fully equipped.

In this regard, we would like to draw attention to the issue of climate change and ask ourselves whether the human rights of older people are duly considered by the policies facing it.

Although climate change is a “slow motion” crisis compared to COVID 19, it is time we organize, for example, the places where we live to better support and protect the vulnerable from within the society, without isolating or discharging them when they are not productive anymore according to mere economic views.

Are States doing all that they can to put in place and implement policies that will allow the aging population of our world to be able to face problems connected to climate change?

If it is true that every crisis also represents an opportunity, we think that the time to act in this direction is now.

Furthermore, we would like to underline the issue of the digital divide, which became strikingly clear during the pandemic. No solution can properly be implemented if we do not acknowledge and face the gaps/difficulties that might occur for the older population in accessing digital technology.

In conclusion, we would like to ask the panellists: what can be the role of NGOs in advocating for Governments to recommit themselves to protecting, respecting, and fulfilling the rights of older persons, by listening to their needs and demands, favouring their autonomy, and developing people-centred policies, including, inter alia, appropriate strategies that support families and communities in which older people live and are integrated?

Thank you!