**SPEECH TO SESSION 4 OF THE UN OHCHR** **MULTI-STAKEHOLDER MEETING: TOWARDS STRENGTHENING THE PROTECTIONS OF HUMAN RIGHTS OF OLDER PERSONS**

I am here today as an older Canadian who has learned during the pandemic that according to the policies and programs of my country, I am of no value.

Indeed, I now know, to my deep shock, that I would not be accorded the most basic human rights enjoyed by younger citizens in my normally compassionate and just country.

Basically, evidence has shown I am not worthy of the right to life, the right to health and the right to be protected during an emergency.

And by the way, while I will work with Canadian data, any advice you may have for me to move elsewhere is unfortunately useless, since what happened in my country reflected similar and sometimes worse situations around the world.

Let’s start with the right to life. Luckily I was not in a care home where two thirds of the deaths occurred during the pandemic (CIHI) - reflecting the sorry state of Long Term Care in Canada.

I was also not worthy, because of my age, to the right to health, as evidenced by ageist triage protocols in a number of Canadian provinces that stated that people over 60 would be denied care if a medical surge occurred in the pandemic.

In my own province of Ontario a Bill tabled last week proposes forced relocation of older people from hospitals into long term care. A cruel practice that violates the right to consent, the right to autonomy, and the right to choose where you live. It could result in the separation of older Canadians from their families and support systems.

And if that is not enough, the 2021 British Columbia heat wave, illustrated human rights violations that resulted in the ridiculously high and completely avoidable death rate of citizens over 60 in that province.

So I stand here in the worlds pinnacle of human rights, to tell you I am not lesser than you, not less deserving of the right to life, the right to health or the right to support in disasters.

We need immediate action: including annual resolutions on the rights of older persons, a platform for dialogue in 2023, meaningful involvement of civil society and a renewal of mandate of the UN Independent Expert on the Enjoyment of all Rights of Older Persons.

And of course, given the clear finding of the OHCHR Normative Report, I am demanding my right to a Convention on the Rights of Older Persons and I demand it now.