

HUMAN RIGHTS AND OLDER PERSONS

(Adopted at the fourth plenary session, held on June 4, 2009)

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY,

BEARING IN MIND:

That the Universal Declaration of Human Rights proclaims that all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights and that everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in that instrument, without distinction of any kind, such as race, color, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth, or other status; and

That the American Declaration of the Rights and Duties of Man establishes that every human being has the right to life, liberty, and the security of his person;

REAFFIRMING the importance of the principles of universality, indivisibility, and interdependence of human rights;

CONSIDERING that the Charter of the Organization of American States proclaims that the historic mission of the Americas is to offer to man a land of liberty and a favorable environment for the development of his personality and the realization of his just aspirations and that the elimination of extreme poverty, equitable distribution of wealth and income, and the full participation of peoples in decisions relating to their own development are, *inter alia*, basic objectives of integral development;

RECALLING the results of the Second World Assembly on Ageing (Madrid, 2002) and the two regional intergovernmental conferences (Santiago, 2003, and Brasilia, 2007);

EMPHASIZING that in the Declaration of Commitment of Port of Spain,^{1/} the Heads of State and Government of the Americas pledged to continue “working to incorporate issues of aging into public policy agendas” and to promote “in the regional framework and with support from PAHO and ECLAC, a review of the feasibility of preparing an inter-American convention on the rights of older persons”;

NOTING that population aging is a complex age-related reality that poses new challenges for states as to the particular way in which the specific needs of older persons are addressed, and that therefore their rights warrant special international promotion and protection;

^{1/} The Government of Nicaragua places on record its express reservation to the Declaration of the Fifth Summit of the Americas, held in Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago. During that event, Nicaragua expressed its view that the Declaration of the Fifth Summit of the Americas was unacceptable and inadequate as it did not resolve a number of matters that were extremely important for the Hemisphere and were still under discussion. Nor does Nicaragua accept that references may be made to that Declaration in the resolutions to be adopted by the OAS General Assembly. Nicaragua reaffirms that the items on the General Assembly agenda should be derived from the debates and deliberations of the Heads of State and Government in Trinidad and Tobago.

RECALLING that many countries have special laws and regulations to benefit older persons and that specific needs and concerns have been incorporated into public policies, which could be shared and articulated through dialogue and through more intensive and more effective cooperation; and

REAFFIRMING full respect for the rights of all persons, with inclusion and equity, and without discrimination by reason of age,

RESOLVES:

1. To express concern over the lack of studies and reports at the hemispheric level on specific institutions and mechanisms related to the problems of older persons, especially violations and infringements of their rights, which makes it necessary to move forward in the creation of international instruments for proper evaluation of their problems and in the adoption of measures for their protection.

2. To instruct the Permanent Council to include on its agenda consideration of the problems affecting older persons in the Hemisphere, with a view to promoting regional cooperation to identify their specific needs and appropriate public policies for addressing said needs.

3. To urge the Permanent Council to convene, with assistance from the Secretariat for Legal Affairs and the Executive Secretariat of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) if possible, a special meeting of national representatives and experts from the academic sector and civil society, as well as from international organizations, for the purpose of sharing information and best practices and also of examining the feasibility of preparing an inter-American convention on the rights of older persons.

4. To request the Permanent Council to report to the General Assembly at its fortieth regular session on the implementation of this resolution, the execution of which shall be subject to the availability of financial resources in the program-budget of the Organization and other resources.