

25th Anniversary of the United Nations International Day of Older Persons

#UNIDOP2015

15 October 2015, 10AM – 1PM
ECOSOC Chamber, United Nations Headquarters, New York



Organized by

The NGO Committee on Ageing in New York in partnership with
United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs Focal Point on Ageing

Sponsored by

The Permanent Mission of Argentina to the United Nations

www.ngocoa-ny.org

Archived Webcast of Event
<http://bit.ly/UNIDOP2015UNWebTV>

LIST OF CO-SPONSORS

The Group of Friends of Older Person, Permanent Missions of:

Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Indonesia, Kenya, Malaysia, Mexico, Panama, Peru, Qatar, Slovenia, South Africa, Trinidad and Tobago, Turkey and Uruguay

The Permanent Missions of: Japan, Singapore, Spain, Thailand and the United States.

WITH GENEROUS CONTRIBUTIONS FROM

AARP
Global Coalition on Aging
Pfizer Corporation
Skanska USA Building Inc.
Laurie Norris, in memory of Clarence Pearson

And other private contributions

INFORMATION PACKAGE

- Programme for the UNIDOP 2015 event
- United Nations Principles for Older Persons [GA Resolution 46/91](#)
- Population Ageing and Sustainable Development www.unpopulation.org
- Our Urbanizing World www.unpopulation.org
- Report of the NGO Committee on Ageing/Subcommittee on Intergenerational Relationships on its event held on 7 May 2015 www.ngocoa-ny.org
- Secretary-General's message for UNIDOP 2015 [Secretary-General's Message](#)
- Media statement "Re-think Our Cities – UN Expert Calls for Older Persons' Accessibility to All Urban Settings" Ms. Rosa Kornfeld-Matte [Message of Independent Expert](#)
- Transforming Our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development - list of 17 Sustainable Development Goals [GA Resolution 70/1](#)
- "Did you know?" – some basic facts about older persons
- NGO Committee on Ageing brochure www.ngocoa-ny.org

Also distributed were copies of HelpAge International report [Global AgeWatch Index 2015](#)

Special thanks to Laurie Norris for serving as Rapporteur

UNITED NATIONS
**INTERNATIONAL DAY OF
OLDER PERSONS**

2015

Sustainability and
Age-Inclusiveness
in the Urban Environment

On 15 October 2015, the United Nations International Day of Older Persons marked its 25th anniversary with a dynamic program and panel discussion, “Sustainability and Age-Inclusiveness in the Urban Environment,” in anticipation of the forthcoming United Nations Habitat III conference to be held in Ecuador in October 2016.

The NGO Committee on Ageing in New York organized the event in partnership with the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) Focal Point on Ageing, and with the sponsorship of the Permanent Mission of Argentina. Over 350 people attended the event, including representatives of several Permanent Missions to the United Nations.

OPENING SESSION



Ms. Janet Sigal, Chair of the NGO Committee on Ageing opened the program and paid tribute to all the sponsors and contributors to this 25th anniversary celebration of the International Day of Older Persons (IDOP). She referenced Habitat III, the United Nations Conference on Housing & Sustainable Urban Development, scheduled to take place 17-21 October 2016 in Quito, Ecuador.

A focus of the conference will be to develop a “New Urban Agenda” for the 21st century. She noted that over half the world’s population lives in cities, including almost one billion slum dwellers. The urban population is projected to rise to 70 per cent by 2050: over 900 million of these urban dwellers will be older persons. She stressed that it was very timely that this year’s UNIDOP focused on age-inclusiveness in the urban environment.

Dr. Cynthia Stuen, Co-Chair of the UNIDOP Planning Committee, in her introduction to the UNIDOP 2015 program, reminded the audience that the theme of Habitat III (2016) echoes the Madrid Plan of Action on Ageing (2002)—“All are entitled to live in an environment that enhances their capabilities.” Age-friendly cities, social protection, the challenges and opportunities of ageing, the global refugee crisis, the environmental effects on how older persons live - all these issues were part of the broad backdrop for presentations and discussion.



Dr. Stuen also remarked that all 17 of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development are important to older persons' lives of peace and dignity; especially pertinent are Goal 2, to end hunger, and Goal 11 which deals with urbanization, where references to “older persons” are specifically included. Dr. Stuen drew attention to the information package containing the IDOP programme and other information concerning issues related to older persons, including the message from the Secretary-General and the statement of the Independent Expert on the Enjoyment of all Human Rights by Older Persons.



H.E. Mr. Diego Morejon, Charge d’Affaires of the Mission of Ecuador and Vice President of the General Assembly, delivered the statement of the President of the 70th session of the General Assembly, **H.E. Mr Mogens Lykketoft**.

Mr. Morejon noted that many older adults, in both developed and developing countries, are unable to meet their basic expenses and are struggling with rising housing costs, health care bills, and inadequate nutrition.

persons made up the fastest growing section of the general population and to the need to empower and improve the lives of older persons. It was necessary to take a multi-stakeholder approach in implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development to ensure that all people, including older persons, can live in peace and dignity.

Ms. Rosemary Lane, United Nations Focal Point on Ageing, acknowledged the NGO Committee on Ageing's tireless work in support of ageing issues, in collaboration with the Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA).

She drew attention to the upcoming third review and appraisal of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing and expressed the view that the effects and issues of global ageing were coming to the fore.



Secretary-General for UNIDOP 2015 delivered on 1 October 2015 that called on Governments to make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable so that no one – of any age – is left behind.



Ms. Laura Flores, Permanent Representative of the Permanent Mission of Panama to the United Nations, spoke on behalf of the 21 members of the Group of Friends of Older Persons.

She paid tribute to the role of older persons in society and their contributions to households and the workplace.

Ms. Flores drew attention to the need to ensure that challenges faced by older persons in an urban environment are adequately addressed. She also reminded participants about advocacy efforts for the creation of an international convention to protect and promote the rights of older persons.

KEYNOTE VIDEO MESSAGE

In a video message prepared specially for the IDOP event, Dr. Joan Clos, UN Habitat III Executive Director called longevity “the positive transformation of our times....This will challenge the quality of our future society.” As a former mayor of Lisbon, Portugal, he appreciates the importance of considering the needs of older persons in urban planning, especially the fact that the numbers of older persons are increasing in urban settings.



Urbanization in the future will be the norm - by 2050, 60% of the global population will be living in cities. Governments cannot ignore the demographic trends and must pay close attention as it is difficult to correct bad

Unplanned growth of cities can be disastrous. Mr. Clos stressed the need to pay attention to qualitative aspects of urbanization as well. Governments must implement policies to ensure that the benefits of urban growth are shared equitably and sustainably. Dr. Clos welcomed the efforts of the NGO Committee on Ageing to bring attention to age-inclusiveness in urban environments and looked forward to collaboration for better cities for older persons. The Keynote Video Message of Mr. Joan Clos <http://bit.ly/UNIDOP2015HABITAT>

PANEL SESSION: KEY COMPONENTS FOR AGE INCLUSIVENESS IN URBAN ENVIRONMENTS



Jorge Bravo, Chief of the Population and Development Section of the Population Division, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, previewed the forthcoming World Population Ageing 2015 report, providing a background to the discussions of the Panel. By the end of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the global population aged 60+ will reach 1.4 billion from its current 901 million (outnumbering children aged 0-9 years) , and by 2050 older persons will make up approximately 22% of the total global population. The trend of

older persons living in mostly urban areas of developing countries will intensify. Older persons in developing countries--who were outpaced by the number of children decades ago--will soon outnumber youth. The concentration of an older population will continue in Asia, reaching 60% by 2050. The gradual effect of extended longevity is everywhere. Because women tend to live longer than men, they comprise a larger share of the older population, especially at advanced ages. Moreover, improvements in survival at advanced ages mean that the older population is

itself ageing. The share of the older population that is aged 80 years or over is projected to grow from 14 percent in 2015 to 21 percent in 2050. Highlights of the World Population Ageing 2015 report also discusses policy implications of population ageing – for housing, employment, health care, infrastructure and social protection. Mr. Jorge stressed that action is needed now to pay attention to the demographic trends to prepare for young people entering old age at the turn of the midcentury.

The office of UNDESA Focal Point on Ageing introduced a short video entitled “International Day of Older Persons 2015” with some demographic data and photos of older persons around the world. It called for celebration of ageing, which is a success, not a burden. The Link to International Day 2015 Video is <http://bit.ly/UNIDOP2015Video>

The Panel was moderated by **Ms. Jan Peterson**, Global Chair, Huairou Commission, and featured speakers representing global urbanism, perspectives from children and youth, connections between ageing and technology, and the state of aging and urbanization in such wide-ranging environments as Japan— industrialized and rapidly aging—and Cameroon, with its development and urbanization challenges.



Ms. Peterson opened the discussion, observing that she was impressed by the power of older persons, reflected in the IDOP event. “When we’re talking about demographics, we’re also talking about power.” She made a particular point about women’s power in this regard. She referenced issues related to SDGs and Habitat III: “What do we want to see in cities? Policy, planning, architecture-- but empowerment is the key.” She asked the panelists, “How are older persons setting their own agenda and being involved in the process?”

Panelists were:

- Dr. Eugenie Birch, Chair, UN-HABITAT’s World Urban Campaign, and Nussdorf Professor of Urban Research and Education at the University of Pennsylvania
- Dr. Toshio Obi, Director, e-Government Research Center, Waseda University, Japan
- Ms. Louissette Fomba, Director, National Development Partners, Cameroon
- Mr. Hirotaka Koike, UN Major Group for Children and Youth.



Dr. Eugenie Birch: Planning, Policy, and Partnerships

Dr. Birch identified the connection between a growing urbanism and the steep nature of the aging curve. She cited Goal 11 of the Sustainable Development Goals as especially pertinent to the IDOP event: “Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable.” She described different types of cities in terms of their rate of growth and aging of the urban dwellers and made reference to health indicators, including 50% as

environmental.

According to Dr. Birch, national policies should include aging issues across the board. For example, The London Revised Plan 2015 contains a national strategy for housing in an ageing society—“neighborhoods for a lifetime.” The UK’s National Health Service (NHS) is also attuned to health care as a factor in urban planning and design for an ageing population. Dr. Birch pointed out that we have the knowledge: OECD’s Aging in Cities and WHO’s global age-friendly cities network. “Good planning involves integrating systems and people”, she said. “We have the tools and we need the context to keep systems integrated“, she added, mentioning policies in Lisbon in this regard.

In addition to policy integration and cultivating age-friendly cities, Dr. Birch emphasized partnerships as “incredibly important.” How to harness resources of various partnerships is a “highly tailored” process.

Dr. Toshio Obi: Better Aging through Technology

Dr. Obi focused on Japan as “the number one super ageing society—a population of 25 million now, with the highest ageing rate among advanced economies; 90% will live in cities by 2050. He also brought news of innovation in information and communications technologies (ICT) that could transform the lives of older people and people with disabilities in the future.



According to Dr. Obi, ICT innovation—a priority in the Sustainable Development Goals --is a tool to counteract some of the urban challenges related to ageing. Key factors in ICT are: accessibility, availability, affordability, and usability for ageing and disability. For example, an ICT disaster early-warning system may help older persons evacuate in the face of an earthquake; prevention could focus emergency preparation by age as part of an inclusive pre-

disaster plan of action. An e-aging project involving OECD and Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) is currently developing applications for people with special needs, with specific reference to ageing and disabilities. According to Dr. Obi, social inclusion could also be promoted via a smart community.

He envisioned ICT as linking many industries to serve the evolving needs of an ageing world. For urban inclusiveness, he anticipates a renewal of urban infrastructure and support of the “silver economy” and the inclusiveness of older persons. The so-called “silver” industries will grow to \$27 billion by 2050, touching everything from home electronics to healthcare to other innovations to enable older persons to lead better lives with dignity. To make such innovation happen, there is a need for a paradigm shift in approaching the challenges of an ageing society and in improving and strengthening global partnerships. Dr. Obi felt that it was time to discuss the possibility of holding a World Summit on an Ageing Society.



Ms. Louissette Fomba: Assessing a City in Cameroon for Age-friendliness

“Cities are options for better lives,” declared Ms. Fomba. “There are better opportunities for education, health, and employment.” From her perspective on Central Africa, she described the Bamenda Experience in Cameroon. She conducted research through her organization, National Development Partners (NADEP) and applied WHO’s Age-friendly Cities methodology to see whether it is relevant to the lives and experiences of ageing residents in Bamenda’s unplanned urban environment.

Ms. Fomba wanted to discover what a good quality of life meant to older persons in Bamenda, what were the opportunities and barriers—including gender-based barriers—to good health and well being. Focus groups and interviews assessed both physical and social aspects of the environment, with an explicit focus on gender differences. Research discovered numerous reasons for

Bamenda’s age-unfriendliness, including age- and disability-unfriendly outdoor spaces, transportation and housing, lack of employment or bank credit opportunities, and lack of respect from younger generations. According to Ms. Fomba, the city of Bamenda was constructed for the young. Absent from the environment were many necessities for health and well being: sidewalks and traffic lights, rest areas and public toilets, limited funding for older persons, hospital care services for Alzheimer’s or dementia patients, overcrowded mass transit and young people oblivious to giving a seat to older persons or people with disabilities. Beyond these physical barriers, there are no leisure activities to speak of. Respect for and social inclusion of older persons is disappearing, fueling their feeling of disappointment and powerlessness.

NADEP’s report developed recommendations so Bameda’s older population can realize their human rights, benefit from innovative service delivery, and improve their livelihood and well being. According to Ms. Fomba, advocacy will be an important and significant tool, that will help

change ageing policy for the better in Cameroon and influence more studies, funding, and support in Cameroon and elsewhere in the world.

Mr. Hirotaka Koike: An Intergenerational Approach to SDGs

Mr. Hirotaka Koike's presentation served as a reminder of the intergenerational aspect of achieving sustainable development goals. He explained the vision of the UN Major Group for Children and Youth (UN MGCY) and drew attention to the fact that children and youth are planning, designing, implementing, monitoring, reviewing and evaluating sustainable development policies. Members include individuals age 30 or younger and organizations with policymaking control by people up to 30 years old. He focused on age-inclusiveness. According to Koike, age issues are not just age issues; they are sustainable development issues that need to be 'age-proofed.' Older persons are not only recipients of social security, but are valuable resources of knowledge and expertise. They are also affected by unsustainable consumption and production patterns as well.



Mr. Koike identified the availability of public spaces, as well as accessibility by people of all ages and abilities, as an emerging and critical priority in the Habitat III process. He explained that accessibility to all is what makes a space public. Mr. Koike recommended building statistical capacity to support disaggregated data to inform the whole process of sustainable urbanization. He stressed that stakeholders on ageing are key partners with the youth group – both are needed, one is not a substitute for the other. He emphasized that an intergenerational approach should not imply that the older generation owes something to the younger generation - youth can also play a role in designing agendas and implementing projects for all ages and abilities.

Q and A SESSION

Some conclusions that could be deduced from the lively Q and A session include: demographic trends must not be ignored; older persons should not only be viewed as vulnerable or as victims, but also as an important resource for their families, community and the global economy; attitudes towards older persons must change – society must be more inclusive; many ICT innovations can play a crucial role in improving the lives of older persons; the “silver economy” cannot be ignored; challenges for developing as well as developed countries; advocacy for the concerns of older persons must be strengthened and intensified – partnerships with all groups must be improved; older persons must be given attention in areas of conflict and natural disasters; in terms of intergenerational issues, attention must have “from cradle to grave” approach; recommendations from HABITAT III must be inclusive of all people of all ages. The delegate from Permanent Mission of Thailand stressed that older persons must not be left behind and their human rights and dignity must be protected; he drew attention to his Government's Department of Older Persons, that is dedicated to promoting and improving the lives of older persons in a sustainable manner through active participation from all sectors of society; he thanked the organizers for the event and for drawing attention to the important issues concerning older persons.

UPDATES AND RECENT DEVELOPMENTS



Mr. Mateo Estrémé, Deputy Permanent Representative of the Permanent Mission of Argentina and Chair of the General Assembly’s Open-Ended Working Group on Ageing (OEWG), provided an update on the work of the OEWG, having held six sessions.

The time has come, he said, for concrete proposals to be presented as possible elements for a convention to protect and promote the rights of older persons. He also stressed that “no one must be left behind”, which becomes more urgent in

the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and particularly in terms of rapid urbanization and need for social change.

CLOSING SESSION

Change the way you think about age – centenarians answer the right questions

Mr. Estreme introduced a video entitled **Change the way you think about age – centenarians answer the right questions** that had been prepared by the UN Focal Point on Ageing in collaboration with Mr. Jack Kupferman, President of Gray Panthers, New York and representative of Gray Panthers to the United Nations.

In this very special interview, four exceptional women over the age of 100 addressed the common misconceptions about growing older by sharing their personal stories and why it’s great to be a centenarian.



Ms. Helen Hamlin, representative of the International Federation on Ageing to the United Nations, also participated in the centenarian video but at only 92 years of age, “did not make the cut” for the interview. Four centenarians, Ms. Ida Keeling, Ms. Maude Pettus, Ms. Lillian Pollak and Ms. Madeline Scotto, were interviewed and gave lively, amusing responses to a series of questions about being a centenarian, their thoughts for the future, opportunities still available for them, the meaning of wisdom and advice to young people. All but Ms. Pettus (who had a prior engagement at another event) were present to be honoured. They received a standing ovation. **Link to Centenarians Video** <http://bit.ly/CentenariansVideo>



Ms. Frances Zainoeddin, Co-Chair of the IDOP Planning Committee, thanked everyone for attending the event and gave special thanks to the guest speakers and panelists, the staff of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Mr. Estreme and his staff, and members of the IDOP Planning Committee. She concluded by recalling that the event drew attention to the fact that older persons should be seen not only as dependent individuals who rightly need care and attention, but also as healthy and active individuals who

have much to offer to their families and their communities. She stressed the fact that older persons count and older persons should be counted.

Photos of the event are available at <http://bit.ly/UNIDOP2015Photos>

FUNDRAISING LUNCHEON “Changing How we View Older Persons”



Mary Mayer (1925-2015)

A career in economic and social research including positions at the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Girl Scouts of America, Director of Research, Planning and Policy and then Deputy Commissioner of the New York City Department for the Ageing. In retirement, Mary was an NGO representative of the International Federation on Ageing (IFA) at the United Nations and a board member of Selfhelp Community Services Inc.

Mr. Greg Shaw and Ms Helen Hamlin of IFA paid warm tribute to their longtime colleague, an activist who, according to Mr. Shaw, had the ability “to get things done quietly.” Ms. Mayer was a highly respected member of the NGO community that addressed ageing issues.

Mr. Josh Collett, Vice President, Office of International Affairs, AARP, said “It’s not about aging, it’s about living” as he described AARP’s Disrupt Aging program and AARP’s work fostering age-friendly environments around the US via 67 communities. He talked about AARP’s CEO and her notion of owning your own age---“65 is the new 65.” Changing perceptions (he noted the need to address such pejorative terms as “Age Wave” and “ageing tsunami”) and changing behavioral, and social norms open the way for opportunities that are the “exciting part of aging.” Mr. Collett informed the audience that AARP is conducting a campaign called “Fearless at 50”, which is about experiences of ageing.



Mr. Michael Hodin, CEO, Global Coalition on Aging, noted that advancing an optimistic perspective on ageing is “a huge opportunity” and a basic principle, according to reflecting the view of its member companies across many disciplines and sectors. He sees this perspective as necessary in corporate culture, workplace values, and social responsibility. Mr. Hodin announced that a white paper on age-friendly business principles, in partnership with the World Economic Forum, would be publicized in several weeks: he noted that by 2035, the economic activity of people 55+ will reach \$20 trillion and that companies need to rethink both workforce participation and retirement as well as caregiving; many employees are involved in caregiving of parents and their workday is often influenced by this. “Care is a component of productivity and competitiveness,” he said.

Dr. Juby Jacob-Nara, Vice President of Global Medicine, Pfizer. She said that Pfizer wants to make an impact by helping people to age “as they should,” and that “self-care” is a vital part of those efforts. Pfizer’s commitment to healthy aging focuses increased attention on non-communicable diseases. She cited rising rates of heart disease, dementia, and cancer, but also noted that self-care is a way to help reduce the rising costs of health care. She stressed that the continuum of care starts with prevention and noted that developing “novel medicines” as needed leads to increased health care costs.



EVENT AGENDA

International Older Persons Day Event 2015

*ECOSOC Chamber, UNHQ, New York
15 October 2015 (10 AM – 1 PM)*

Opening Session

- Introduction Ms. Janet Sigal, Chair of the NGO Committee on Ageing in New York
- Messages from: H.E. Mr. Mogens Lykketoft, President of the 70th session of the General Assembly
Mr. Ban Ki-moon, Secretary-General of the United Nations
- Welcome address: Ms. Laura E Flores, Permanent Representative of the Permanent Mission of Panama to the United Nations
- Remarks by Ms. Rosemary Lane, Focal Point on Ageing, Department of Economic and Social Affairs
- Keynote video message: Mr. Joan Clos, Executive Director, UNHABITAT

Panel Session

- Remarks by Mr. Jorge Bravo, Chief, Population and Development Section, Population Division, DESA
Highlights on World Population Ageing 2015 Report
- Panel discussion **“Key Components for Age Inclusiveness in Urban Environments”**
- Moderator Ms. Jan Peterson, Global Chair, Huairou Commission
- Panelists Ms. Eugenie Birch, Chair, World Urban Campaign
Mr. Toshio Obi, Director, e-Government Research Center, Waseda University, Japan
Ms. Louissette Fomba, Director, National Development Partners, Cameroon
Mr. Hirotaka Koike, UN Major Group for Children and Youth
- Interactive dialogue

Updates and Recent Developments

- Remarks by Mr. Mateo Estrémé, Deputy Permanent Representative of Permanent Mission of Argentina and Chair of the General Assembly’s Open-ended Working Group on Ageing

Closing Session

- Video **Change the Way You Think About Age**
Centenarians Answer the Right Quest

NGO COMMITTEE ON AGEING, NEW YORK

Executive Committee

Chairperson:	Janet Sigal , American Psychological Association
Vice-Chairperson:	Cynthia Stuen , International Federation on Aging
Treasurer:	Katharine Weiss , International Association of Homes and Services for the Aged
Corresponding Secretary:	Martha Bial , International Association of Gerontology & Geriatrics
Recording Secretary:	Katherine Kline , AARP
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Members-at-Large	Bethany Brown , HelpAge USA, an affiliate of HelpAge International Erica Dhar , AARP Jack Kupferman , Gray Panthers Peter Walker , International Council of Psychologists Frances Zainoeddin , Gray Panthers

International Day of Older Persons Planning Committee, 2015

Cynthia Stuen (International Federation on Aging) and **Frances Zainoeddin** (Gray Panthers), Co-Chairs

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Susan Bleiberg-Seperson, Generations United
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Dominick Martino, AFSCME, District Council 37
Elizabeth Nolasco, Instituto Qualivida
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Nelida Quintero, American Psychological Association
Rosa P. Resnick, International Network for the Prevention of Elder Abuse
John Seidler, 2Morrow Inc.
Janet Sigal, American Psychological Association
Norma Simon, International Council of Psychologists
Arlene Tuff, AFSCME, District Council 37
Peter Walker, International Council of Psychologists

NGO COMMITTEE ON AGEING – NEW YORK

Organizational affiliations

AARP
AFSCME-DC37 Retirees

Ageing, Work and Health Research Unit,
University of Sydney
Alzheimer's Disease International
American Psychological Association
Armenian International Women's Association
Care Rights
Center for Advanced Study in Education (CASE)
Dobroe Delo Civic Foundation
ElderCare Buddy
Elders Share the Arts
European Federation of Older Persons (EURAG)
Fordham University – Graduate School of Social
Service
Fordham University – Global Healthcare
Innovation Management Center
Generations United
Global Action on Ageing
Global Alliance on Women's Health
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