

**Welcoming Remarks, Rosemary Lane –  
3 February 2010 AARP-UN Briefing Series on Global Aging**

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, colleagues,

Welcome to the second day of this year's AARP-UN Briefing Series on Global Aging which the programme on ageing of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs is proud to be co-sponsoring for the fourth year. I think at this point we can say it has become an annual tradition and the programme on ageing thanks AARP for that.

These briefings have proven to be an excellent forum for bringing together Government Officials, UN staff, civil society, academia and the private sector to discuss key issues surrounding global ageing. The panels feature speakers who each bring their particular expertise and knowledge to expand our thoughts on this critical issue. I like to think that by listening and discussing, each of us learns something new about a subject that many of us are very familiar with – and I know that we all certainly expand our networks.

As my Under-Secretary-General, Mr Sha noted yesterday in his opening remarks, the themes of the briefing series this year are central to the current session of the Commission for Social Development and its focus on social integration. But the briefings with their rights-based focus this year are also important within the context of on-going discussions on ageing within both the Commission for Social Development and the General Assembly.

As many of you know, we have a report before the Commission this year that among other things presents the results of a questionnaire sent to Member States earlier this year. This solicited views on possible mechanisms to improve the implementation of the Madrid Plan of Action by highlighting the rights of older persons as one of the priority themes.

55 responses were received from Member States and Permanent Observers from all regions. The conclusion is that there was near universal support from respondents to focus on human rights and older persons as a priority. But it is also clear that Member States also have varying views about how they should practically approach promoting this issue. There is no doubt that at this point, more time and information are needed by Member States to study the issue.

However, in that vein, the Secretariat has been requested by the General Assembly to produce a comprehensive report on the current status of the social situation, wellbeing, development and rights of older persons at the national and regional levels, to present to its the next session later this year.

We have also requested Member States at the Commission to agree on a theme for the next review and appraisal of the Madrid Plan of Action. The Report of the Secretary-General has suggested the theme “Empowerment, protection and promotion of human rights for older persons”.

So, with that background information from the intergovernmental side here at the UN, I am pleased to now hand over to Jennie Chin Hansen, President of AARP to make the opening remarks that will introduce today’s panel discussion on “Empowerment in Aging: Human Rights of Older Persons”.

Thank you.