Mr President,

The Human Rights Commission of Malaysia (SUHAKAM) congratulates the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights for organising a public consultation earlier this year on the promotion and protection of the human rights of older persons, and notes with appreciation the summary report of the consultation.

This initiative is a positive indication of the increasing recognition of the need for discussion and debate on issues relating to rights of older persons, which is in tandem with the growing percentage of the older person population worldwide.

Older persons should not be seen as a liability or a burden on a country’s economy but should be treated as an important asset, whose expertise and experience can be utilized to contribute to society.

While existing human rights instruments and standards can serve as a framework for addressing rights of older persons, SUHAKAM is of the view that the development of a specific international convention on older persons is apt, as it would further reinforce these standards and provide for a more focussed and integrated mechanism, leading to greater respect and fulfilment of their rights.

At the national level, the Commission commends the Government of Malaysia for its Policy on Older Persons and Plan of Action, adopted in 2011, and for the steps taken to look into rights of older persons. Nevertheless, more effort needs to be given to ensure the full and effective implementation of this policy and plan of action as well as to overcome gaps and challenges.

SUHAKAM also urges the Government to consider positively drafting a law on older persons and to give particular attention to issues related to care services, employment, healthcare, social security and non-discrimination of older persons.
The Commission hopes that the Council will continue to include the rights of older persons on its agenda as we seek possible solutions to existing and impending challenges relating to rights of older persons.

Thank you Mr President.