

THE SECRETARY-GENERAL
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**MESSAGE ON THE INTERNATIONAL DAY
OF OLDER PERSONS**
1 October 2020

The world marks the 30th anniversary of the International Day of Older Persons as we reckon with the disproportionate and severe impact that the COVID-19 pandemic has wrought on older persons around the world – not only on their health, but on their rights and well-being.

Older people must be a priority in our efforts to overcome COVID-19. In keeping with the theme of this year's commemoration, we must also examine how the pandemic might change how we address age and ageing in our societies. Expanding opportunities for older persons and increasing their access to health, pensions and social protection will be crucial.

This year's observance falls as the world is also marking the *International Year of the Nurse and Midwife*, which highlights the vital role of health and social workers, such as nurses and midwives, in responding to the pandemic. The majority of them are women, including many older persons. These are the people who devote their lives to our care, and to the care of older persons, mothers and children, and deserve far greater support.

As we seek to recover better together, we must make concerted efforts across the *Decade of Healthy Ageing 2020-2030* to improve the lives of older persons, their families and communities. The potential of older persons is a powerful basis for sustainable development. More than ever, we must listen to their voices, suggestions and ideas to build more inclusive and age-friendly societies.