

## United Nations Marks the International Day of Older Persons

### Highlights the Different Impact of Ageing on Women and Men

VIENNA, 30 September (UN Information Service) -- "Ageing in the New Millennium: Focus on Poverty, Older Women and Development" is this year's theme of the International Day of Older Persons, which is observed by the United Nations annually on 1 October. The majority of the world's older persons are women. This year's emphasis on the differences in the phenomenon of ageing between women and men serves to encourage the integration of gender and age perspectives into legislation, programmes and efforts to eradicate poverty.

"As the number of older persons increases over the next generation, more of the people living in poverty will be older than 60 years of age. But they will also be ever more involved in efforts to eradicate poverty," said United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan, in his message on the International Day of Older Persons. He urged governments not to overlook older persons and their potential contribution. "We will not eradicate poverty or achieve our other goals, without understanding how older persons - and women in particular - experience poverty, and unless we promote the active participation of older people in the design and implementation of appropriate programmes and activities," said the Secretary-General.

In Austria, the International Day of Older Persons will be celebrated by the senior citizens' association Seniorenbund on Sunday, 9 October, in Deutsch-Brodersdorf, Lower Austria. A special mass will be held by Vicar-General Father Amadeus Hoerschlaeger in the local church. The congregation will be addressed by the guest speakers Paul Renner, Mayor of Deutsch-Brodersdorf; Nasra Hassan, Director, United Nations Information Service Vienna, who will deliver the Secretary-General's statement; and Edmund Freibauer, President of the Lower Austria regional assembly.

In 1990, the United Nations General Assembly designated 1 October the International Day of Older Persons, following up on initiatives such as the Vienna International Plan of Action on Ageing, adopted by the 1982 World Assembly on Ageing and endorsed later that year by the General Assembly. At the 2005 World Summit, world leaders reaffirmed their determination to realize the development goals and objectives agreed in the major UN conferences and summits, including the Millennium Development Goals. An important part of this effort will involve the 2002 Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, by which Governments pledged not only to work for the security of older persons, but also to empower them, so that they can participate fully in the economic, political and social lives of their societies.

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