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### **Promoting a Multigenerational Society CASW Marks International Day of Older Persons**

According to the 2006 Census, the fastest growing age group between 2001 and 2006 consisted of individuals aged 55 to 64. Globally, the proportion of persons aged 60 years and older is expected to double between 2000 and 2050.

With such unprecedented growth in the older population, the Canadian Association of Social Workers (CASW) marks International Day of Older Persons by highlighting the need for governments and society to promote a multigenerational society and to respond to the opportunities and challenges of population aging.

While each country will face unique experiences in response to this trend, the United Nations notes that the situation of older women must be a global priority. In light of a report on the financial security of women seniors to be released by CASW in November, CASW couldn't agree more. CASW President Veronica Marsman states, "While the government of Canada has been praised for the balance it has achieved between public and private arrangements in its retirement income system, this upcoming CASW report indicates that improvements are necessary to ensure an adequate financial situation for women who have already reached age 65 as well as for the future."

While steps such as the banning of mandatory retirement have been taken in some provinces to acknowledge the contributions of older persons, there must be assurance that people will not be forced to go on working as they grow older. In addition, many concerns still exist. We cannot forget the serious needs related to obesity, cancer, and heart disease that remain the leading causes of death among seniors, as well as the high prevalence of mental illness and cognitive disorders. Accessible, timely, and adequate services that focus on prevention as well as on intervention are essential to meeting the needs of Canada's aging population.

A society that invests in every generation, that believes in reciprocity and equity, and that respects the contributions of all members of society will ensure an environment that meets the economic, social, civil, and political needs of all.

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