



51st Regular Session of the Human Rights Council, 12 September – 7 October 2022

Item 3: Interactive dialogue with the Independent Expert on the enjoyment of all human rights by older persons

Joint Oral statement delivered by: Associazione Comunità Papa Giovanni XXIII (APG23)

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Mr. President,

APG23 thanks the Independent Expert on the enjoyment of all human rights by older persons for her report.

The COVID19 pandemic had a tremendous impact on the elderly population in care homes. In many cases, the same structures and measures that were supposed to protect older persons, have failed them instead. It has been devastating not only from a physical health point of view but also from the perspective of mental health and social well-being.

Pope Francis reminded us: “Many people are afraid of old age. They consider it a sort of disease with which any contact is best avoided. The elderly, they think, are none of their concern and should be set apart, perhaps in homes or places where they can be cared for, lest we have to deal with their problems. This is the mindset of the “throw-away culture”, which leads us to think that we are somehow different from the poor and vulnerable in our midst, untouched by their frailties and separated from “them” and their troubles.”¹

There is the need for policies that underpin the value of each and every person, even during ageing. There is the need to support older persons, in cultivating emotional and social relationships, spiritual life, and favouring their autonomy, because life does not end with ageing.

Madame Independent Expert, what role can digital technology play, in particular now in which the digital divide is so evident, in supporting a dignified life for older persons, especially in different situations of deprivation of liberty,

Thank you!

¹ <https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/messages/nonni/documents/20220503-messaggio-nonni-anziani.html>

