

**General Statement for UNECE Ministerial Conference on Ageing**  
**15-17 June 2022 – Rome, ITALY**  
**H.E. Ms. Derya YANIK, Minister of Family and Social Services**

*Honorable Ministers,  
Distinguished Guests,  
Esteemed Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,*

Ageing is a global trend. Türkiye has been experiencing this demographic transformation process at a fast pace. The share of older persons in total population has risen from 8.3% in 2016 (**6.651.503**) to 9.7% (above 8 million – **8.245.124**) in 2021. Over the last five years the number of older persons has increased by 24%. As it can be referred from this change, Türkiye is among the most rapidly aging countries. This demographic transition process that we have been experiencing led us to plan an inclusive, holistic, general policy framework on aging.

Aging as a field of social policy in Türkiye has been focused since 2002. The social policies on aging, developed for the demographic structure of the period, first developed with a care-oriented approach. However, as a result of the rapid aging of the population, the necessity of diversifying social services and long-term care models has emerged. This situation brought with it the necessity of working together and in coordination with all the stakeholders regarding aging on the national level.

*After this point, the developments in our country in the last 5 years can be summarized as follows.*

Social service models for the older persons have been diversified and expanded to meet the personal and regional needs of the population. In order to develop social services for the older persons, the number of qualified personnel and the quality of these personnel have been increased. “Quality Standards for Care Services” have been developed and extended to improve the quality in the long-term care system.

In order to train more qualified personnel in the field, the curricula of disciplines such as social services, geriatrics, and gerontology have been arranged. Studies and research in the field of aging in universities and opening of aging research and application centers have been encouraged. Sustainable training programs were carried out to improve the capacity of caregivers in the institutions and within the families. To strengthen intergenerational solidarity, voluntary activities and projects have been supported. The universities, civil society organizations, local governments, and central administration have worked in coordination to raise awareness on topics within active and healthy aging, and the rights of older persons.

In order to encourage the implementation of policies for older persons, including the central government, municipalities, universities and civil society organizations, the projects of stakeholders for older persons have been supported by the State. Within this context, projects of municipalities have been supported to develop home care and day care services since 2016.

In addition, projects aiming to provide home care and day care services for older persons in the most vulnerable segments of society were developed, namely “Improving Day Care and Home Care Services for the Elderly Project” and “Increasing Accessibility of the Social Services by the Most Vulnerable Segments of the Turkish Citizens and Persons under Temporary Protection and Persons under International Protection Project”.

All kinds of policies and services that actively recognize the capacities and abilities of older persons, respond to their needs and choices, respect their ideas and lifestyles, protect the vulnerable, and encourage participation in all areas of community life make very important contributions to healthy aging. Practices to create age-friendly living spaces that fulfill the requirements of such policies and services have gained momentum in Türkiye. Within this context, accessibility has been one of the focus points in terms of aging policies. Awareness of designing barrier-free and age-friendly environment has increased significantly over the past two decades. Especially, in the last five years, national high-level policy documents also consider transportation, housing, environment, urbanization, information and communication technologies within the context of aging.

Free or discounted transportation services are offered in order to ensure the active participation of older persons in social life. To increase the participation in social and cultural activities, older persons are provided with discounted or free benefits as well.

All these services have been developed as a result of the active and healthy aging perspective adopted by considering international and regional developments, together with the rapidly aging demographic structure of our population. In this context, we follow the policies and services of countries whose population has entered the demographic aging process before us. We pay attention to good practice examples and experiences of them in the field of aging. Policy documents have been published regarding the revision of policies for the older persons and the development of new policies such as Final Report of the I. Aging Council and Active Aging Strategy Document.

With of all these, we attach great importance to international and regional cooperation within the field of aging and value the work that has been carried out. We are keen to continue our active participation in the Standing Working Group on Ageing and to exchange relevant experience and views on ways to make tangible progress in the realization of the human rights of older persons and the views on a legally binding instrument.

I thank you.