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Day of Older Persons should put spotlight on equality of people at every age

As world ages, risk of exploitation increases

Today, October 1, is the annual [International Day of Older Persons](#). The celebration was established by the United Nations in 1990 to recognize the importance of older people, the contributions they make to society, and the issues and dangers they face in today's world. This year's theme is "The Journey to Age Equality."

"On International Day of Older Persons, we ought to recognize the equality of all human beings regardless of age, or ability, or health, or dependency," says Scott Fischbach, executive director of Minnesota Citizens Concerned for Life Global Outreach (MCCL GO). "We must work to ensure that we treat older people with the honor and care that they deserve."

As the world's population ages, the risk of exploitation and dehumanization of older persons increases. According to the U.N., the number of people over the age of 60 is expected to grow to 1.4 billion by 2030. Seniors who live with illness or disability can be subjected to pressure to end their lives prematurely by assisted suicide, euthanasia, or the involuntary withholding of medical treatment.

In 2002, the U.N. adopted the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing. It included a call to ensure "the full enjoyment of all human rights" of older persons and to combat "all forms of discrimination."

"Our older people are human beings who have human rights that require protection," Fischbach says. "The first of these rights is life itself."

MCCL GO is the U.N.- and OAS-accredited global outreach program of the Minnesota Citizens Concerned for Life Education Fund. Our goal is to protect as many human beings as possible from the destruction of abortion, infanticide, and euthanasia. Learn more at www.mccl-go.org.