

Appendix B

Letter of Invitation

Agenda

Participant Kit



CPRN RCRPP

What Matters to Canadian NGOs on Aging

Agenda

Introduction (30 minutes)

- Welcome and Introductions
- Overview of the Session and Topic
- Pre-dialogue Questionnaire
- Dialogue and Ground Rules Chart

Section 1 (85 minutes total)

Part 1: Dialogue on Theme 1 (35 minutes)

- Explore values and trends underlying theme 1

Part 2: Dialogue on Theme 2 (30 minutes)

- Explore values and trends underlying theme 2

Part 3: Dialogue on Theme 3 (20 minutes)

- Explore values and trends underlying theme 3

Break (15 minutes)

Section 2 (55 minutes)

- Common Ground

Wrap Up (25 minutes)

- Closing
- Post-dialogue questionnaire
- How to keep informed

February 4, 2001

Dear Dialogue Participant:

Thank you very much for agreeing to participate in a **Public Dialogue on What Matters to Canadian NGOs on Aging: Canada's Response to the United Nations International Strategy for Action on Ageing 2002**. You are part of a group of Canadian NGO representatives who will be meeting over the next few weeks to share views on how Canada should plan for an aging society. We hope you will have fun and perhaps come away from the session with some new insights into aging in Canada.

When and where

Thursday, February 7, 2000
8:30 a.m. – 12 noon
Room 873, 250 Albert Street
Ottawa, ON

You will be asked to obtain a security pass at the reception desk upon entering the building.

In preparation

Before you arrive at the session, please take some time to review the materials in this kit. You will find some background information on the project, as well as a discussion of three themes that have an essential role to play in developing Canadian policies and programs for an aging society. Also included are a glossary of terms and a statistical snapshot of older Canadians. These materials are intended provide you with an orientation to the project and to stimulate your thinking about how Canada might plan for an aging society.

What to expect

You will be one of about 10 participants representing a range of Canadian NGOs. The session will last three and a half hours, including a short break in which light refreshments will be provided. A moderator will give an overview of the session, and will guide you and the other participants through the process using activities, questions and prompts designed to stimulate discussion. Dress is casual.

The attached agenda will give you an idea of what is planned for the session; a more detailed description of the process is included in the participant guidebook (*An Overview of the Dialogue Session*). Please note that the timing for individual sections may be adjusted as the dialogue unfolds.

Questions?

Once again, thank you very much for your participation. In the meantime, if you have any questions about the materials or the process itself, please contact me, at (613) 688-5534 or by e-mail at szagon@cprn.org or **Jacque Dale, 562-4073, ext. 318 or email: jdale@owi.ca.**

Sincerely yours,

Sandra Zagon
Public Involvement Program
Aging dialogues - CPRN team leader

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I An Overview of the Project

Background

We're getting older. In fact, the average age of the world's population is higher today than ever before. And this aging trend is likely to continue; over the next fifty years, the number of people worldwide who are aged 65 or more is expected to increase from about 600 million to 2 billion. At the same time, many developed countries are experiencing slowing population growth, which has far-reaching impacts, including slowing labour force growth.

In 1982, the United Nations (UN) hosted the first World Assembly on Ageing in Vienna, producing an International Plan of Action on Ageing. As a result, issues of human rights for older persons were incorporated into the UN Principles for Older Persons (1991), the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1995) and the 1999 International Year of Older Persons, which celebrated the theme of "a society for all ages."

In April 2002, the UN will host the Second World Assembly on Ageing in Madrid, during which the General Assembly will respond to and adopt a UN International Strategy for Action on Ageing 2002, now in draft form. The Strategy's goal is to ensure that people everywhere can age with security and equality, continuing to participate in society as citizens with full rights. The Strategy calls for changes in attitudes, in national and international policies, and in community and corporate practices that support the aging population in reaching its full potential.

As a member of the General Assembly, Canada is preparing a response to the draft Strategy. Part of this process involves seeking input from non-governmental organizations (NGOs) on how the Canadian government should continue to plan and ensure readiness for an aging society. As a first step, representatives from NGOs and government developed the three broad themes on aging used in these dialogue sessions. Targetting a broader group of Canadian NGOs, these dialogue sessions will focus on a range of factors affecting aging over the course of a lifetime. Input from the dialogues will be one source of data used in preparing Canada's submission to the UN Strategy.

A dialogue is a collaborative discussion in which core ideas are worked through in-depth. It is different from standard consultation approaches. For more information on the process of dialogue and its suggested ground rules, see Section III.

The Issue

More than ever before, Canadians are living longer, more fulfilling lives, maintaining their health and functioning independently well into their later years. The majority of Canadian seniors also enjoy relative financial security from private income sources, employment pensions and public income security programs.

While most Canadians expect to be active and healthy as they age, not all of us will be successful. Aging is a lifelong process and differing life circumstances, both past and present, limit the potential of some Canadians to make the most of their senior years. Especially vulnerable are single, divorced or widowed women, people with low incomes, low education or literacy, and those who are socially or geographically isolated. Ethnic and cultural differences may also play a role, as Canadians from a range of backgrounds are supported by their varied traditions and values.

In the face of these challenges, how can the federal government continue to plan for active and healthy aging for all Canadians? In this dialogue process, participants will explore three themes that play an essential role in the development of policies and programs for an aging society:

- > maximizing participation
- > enhancing well-being
- > respecting diversity

These themes — which were developed jointly by representatives of Canadian NGOs and government — are interrelated and overlapping in their relationship to healthy, active aging. For example, diversity is clearly an important component of both “maximizing participation” and “enhancing well-being” as they relate to healthy aging. Each of the three themes is explained more fully in the following pages.

Three Themes

The World Health Organization defines active aging as the “process of optimizing physical, social and mental well-being throughout the life course in order to extend health life expectancy, productivity and quality of life in older age.” The following three themes contribute substantially to realizing this vision of active aging.

Maximizing participation:

As Canadians age, they should have the opportunity to be active participants in their families and communities, as well as in the workplace and society at large.

Enhancing well-being:

Ensuring the well-being of older Canadians requires a holistic approach that recognizes the spiritual, social and physical factors that influence people over their lifetime.

Respecting diversity:

Canadians – including Canadian seniors – are a diverse people, reflecting both sexes and a range of lifestyle, geographic, and ethnic and cultural differences. Respecting these differences is an essential component of healthy, active aging.

Theme 1: *Maximizing Participation*

As Canadians age, they should have the opportunity to be active participants in their families and communities, as well as in the workplace and society at large.

One widely recognized component of healthy, active aging involves ensuring that seniors maintain clearly identifiable roles in relation to their family, friends, community, workplace and society. This means providing older Canadians with a range of choices and the flexibility to determine how and to what extent they will participate in three key aspects of life – work, learning and volunteering.

Work

According to Statistics Canada, the labour force participation rate for people aged 45 and over was 48.5% in 2000, while the participation rate for those 65 and older was 6%. About 13% of the 45-64 age group who were in the workforce were employed on a part-time basis, compared to 42% of those aged 65 and older. (Source: *Labour Force Historical Review 2000*. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 71F0004XCB.)

Some views to consider:

- ***Some older Canadians face attitudinal barriers in the workplace*** that stem from their being stereotyped as “over the hill” – less adaptable in the face of changing work practices and new technologies. In the absence of a coherent system for recognizing prior learning, their accumulated skills and knowledge are often discounted. However, middle and older aged Canadians may need to play an increasing role in the labour force because of potential labour shortages in the coming years. Moreover, many seniors choose to remain in, or return to, the workplace as a way of contributing to society, and staying active and involved as they age – even though their work patterns may change from full-time to part-time employment, or to more flexible hours. This freedom to choose is increasingly important as Canadians are living longer and healthier lives.
- The way in which some ***retirement/pension packages*** are structured ***can be a financial disincentive for seniors to continue working***. There may need to be increased flexibility in work-to-retirement plans. For example, consideration should be given to extending benefits into retirement and part-time employment situations.

- One view holds that *older Canadians are sufficiently well off as it is and are taking much-needed jobs from younger people*. However, some older Canadians may need to continue working because their existing incomes are inadequate. Retirement policies that target specific age groups can have an even greater negative impact on women than men, as many will not have accumulated sufficient years of service to qualify for pension incomes. Notably, older Canadians who lose their jobs have an above-average chance of experiencing long-term employment.

Learning

Increasingly, seniors are taking advantage of formal and informal training and education opportunities to pursue new careers for supplementing their income and savings. Others want to continue learning for personal interest and as a way of keeping abreast of new knowledge and thinking. In 1997, five percent of Canadian adults aged 65 and over took part in formal adult education and training programs, up from three percent in 1989-90. In fact, the only increases in participation in adult training and education in recent years have taken place in the 45-54 and 55-64 age groups – all other age groups have experienced declining rates. In the same year, 25.6% of the employed population aged 65 and over participated in employer-supported training. (Source: Statistics Canada and Human Resources Development Canada. *A Report on Adult Education and Training in Canada: Learning a Living, 2001.*)

In addition to formal training, many older Canadians are engaged in informal and self-led learning, either on their own or as part of a group. Focus areas include mastering new computer technologies to support their creative activities, for communicating with family and friends and as a means of accessing health and wellness information.

Some views to consider:

- The Canadian economy is in a period of rapid change, adapting to emerging global opportunities, new technologies and innovative ways of doing business. Lifelong learning is essential for keeping up with the pace of change and maintaining Canada's productivity and standard of living. A mature system of adult learning in Canada would facilitate ongoing learning by Canadians of all ages, including seniors, both for enhancing work skills and personal improvement.

- There is a perception that employer attitudes towards providing training opportunities for older workers is a barrier to seniors staying in the workplace. Particularly vulnerable to negative attitudes are those working in low skilled jobs. Employers – and the rest of society – need to be more aware of the value of retaining older workers and their ability to learn, adapt and contribute. Older workers themselves may be unaware of their transferable skills. There is also a good argument for supporting on-going training opportunities throughout an individual’s lifespan.
- The classroom has traditionally been a young person’s domain. As a result, older adults may have to overcome attitudinal barriers – their own and others – in their pursuit of on-going learning. Teaching styles may also need to be adapted to better accommodate older learners.

Volunteering

Seniors are generally active in the volunteer sector. A study in the *Canadian Journal of Policy Research* reported that, in both 1987 and 1997, the volunteer participation rate and hours volunteered were fairly evenly distributed across age groups, except for people aged 65 and over. This group participated at a lower rate, that is fewer individuals volunteered. However, those who did, contributed more hours than any other age group. (“What We Should Know About the Voluntary Sector but Don’t,” *Canadian Journal of Policy Research, ISUMA*, Vol. 2, No. 2 (Summer 2001):, (2) 13). As well, a 1998 study by Health Canada found that about half a million seniors provided unpaid care to other seniors and 400,000 provided such care to children. Women aged 65 and over were slightly more likely than men of the same age to be unpaid caregivers. (Source: *Canada’s Seniors at a Glance*.)

Some views to consider:

- Some older people feel ***they are stereotyped as a pool of ready volunteers***, able to work for free and more than willing to transfer their skills and knowledge at no charge. On the contrary, many would like to be compensated in some way as an acknowledgement of their time, effort and considerable skills and experience.
- ***Acknowledgement can take many forms*** – for example, tax concessions, compensation for out-of-pocket expenses, or public ceremonies or awards celebrating senior volunteers’ essential contribution to Canada’s social and economic life.

Ask yourself ...

- What types of barriers might be encountered in attempting to realize this vision for maximizing the participation of older Canadians in all aspects of life – including family, community, through to workplace and the larger society?
- Can you foresee any opportunities that we might be able to build on?

Theme 2: *Enhancing Well-being*

Ensuring the well-being of older Canadians requires a holistic approach that recognizes the spiritual, social and physical factors that influence people over their lifetime.

Research shows that many factors work together to determine people's overall well-being, including level of education, employment status, income, housing, social networks, and access to health and social services. A 2001 report by the National Advisory Council on Aging noted that "improvements in health have not been shared by all and gaps remain significant. Seniors with low education and low income are more likely to have chronic conditions or long-term activity limitations."

Factors such as poor diet, inadequate housing, unemployment and meager income, personal and family problems, and limited access to health care combine to make the life expectancy for Aboriginal men and women lower (10 and 7 years, respectively) than for non-Aboriginal peoples.

More than 90% of Canadian seniors live at home. But a large and growing number – especially women – are living alone without the support of a shared household. In 1997, 82% of all seniors living at home reported that they had been diagnosed with at least one chronic health condition. Arthritis and rheumatism are the most common chronic health problems reported by seniors (Source: Statistics Canada, taken from Health Canada. *Statistical Snapshot No 42: Seniors with chronic health conditions*). In 1996, 84% of seniors received assistance with household or personal chores in the previous 12 months.

Sixty-one percent of all senior households – those led by someone who was 65 years old or more – were homeowners and mortgage free in 1996. About 18% of all senior households paid 30% or more of their income for suitable, adequate housing (*Seniors in Canada: A Report Card* by the National Advisory Council on Aging, 2001).

All in all, the majority of seniors consider themselves to be in good health. In 1997, 78% of seniors said that their health was either "good," "very good" or "excellent." Those in the oldest age groups (85+) were the most likely to describe their health as "poor" (Health Canada, 1999, *Statistical Snapshot of Canada's Seniors*). In 1996, heart disease and cancer – which are in part attributable to lifestyle choices – accounted for the majority of all deaths among Canadian seniors (30% and 26%, respectively). About 11%

of senior deaths were from respiratory diseases and 9% from strokes. Death rates from both heart disease and cancer were much higher among senior men than women.

Some views to consider:

- Many decisions made early in life will play an important role in determining well-being as we age. For example, ***early lifestyle choices*** related to smoking, physical activity level and diet ***can have a substantial impact in later years***. There is also a growing body of evidence showing the beneficial effects of health practices started later in life. Providing adequate supports and services to ensure healthy aging may require investments in many sectors, targeting people throughout their life stages. This includes the senior years, when access to fitness and education programs may be limited because of financial constraints, cultural differences, transportation barriers or availability.
- ***Financial and physical security are essential*** to a sense of well-being. However, financial security in a person's later years is generally determined by decisions and plans made years earlier. Educational efforts aimed at ensuring seniors' financial well-being must be directed at younger age groups as well as seniors. This includes retraining and upskilling of older workers.
- Maintaining autonomy is an important element of seniors' well-being. Seniors are acutely aware of the possibility that ***declining abilities and energy, as well as society's attitudes, can erode their sense of autonomy***. It is important to encourage autonomy among older adults with respect to housing and living conditions, social and physical activities, and health and financial decisions.
- Isolation and loneliness can have a significant negative impact on well-being. ***A key element of well-being among older Canadians is "aging in place,"*** that is, staying at home or living within a familiar community where social networks exist. Seniors' physical environment, as well as access to senior-friendly products and services, are also important elements in maintaining well-being. For those living alone, the increasing physical limitations resulting from disability or illness require both formal and informal caregiving that is flexible to their circumstances. For seniors requiring more intensive care, the availability of suitable nursing homes and residences close to home is an important issue.

- There is often a *huge emotional and financial strain on family members providing care* as older relatives age. Caregiver support is required to allow some balancing of work and caregiving, and to provide respite. Of note, family members and other potential caregivers may live a great distance from those needing care.

Ask yourself ...

- What kinds of attitudinal and structural barriers might be encountered in taking steps to enhance seniors' spiritual, emotional and physical well-being?
- What opportunities might present themselves?
- What are the potential benefits, costs and consequences of implementing the kinds of strategies proposed?

Theme 3: *Respecting Diversity*

Canadians – including Canadian seniors – are a diverse people, reflecting gender, lifestyle, geographic, and ethnic and cultural differences. Acknowledging and respecting these differences is an essential component of healthy, active aging.

Older Canadians are a diverse group, with experiences, circumstances and needs reflecting the rich ethnic and cultural heterogeneity found in the general population. A 1998 report prepared for Health Canada found that 6% of seniors belong to visible minority groups, compared to 13% of persons under age 45 (Source: Health Canada: *Canada's Seniors at a Glance*). The same report predicted that, over the next two decades, the number of seniors who are members of visible minority groups is likely to increase, due to changing immigration patterns. By far the largest number of visible minority seniors in Canada is Chinese, followed by South Asian, Black, Filipino, Arabic or West Asian, and Japanese. Smaller percentages of visible minority seniors were Southeast Asian, Latin American or Korean.

Seniors currently make up a relatively small proportion of the Aboriginal population in Canada. In 1996, just 4% of people who reported they were First Nations, Métis or Inuit were 65 or older, compared with 12% of the general population. However, the number of Aboriginal seniors is expected to grow rapidly in the next several decades (Source: Statistics Canada, taken from Health Canada. *Canada's Seniors, Statistical Snapshot No.15: Aboriginal Population*).

Gender is another factor contributing to seniors' diversity. In 1998, women constituted a majority (57%) of the total senior population; for those over age 85, the proportion of women rose to 70%.

Geographic location (urban versus rural and remote) and the availability of social support also affect the types of services available to seniors. The 1996 census found that 78% of the total Canadian population lived in urban areas; 22% in rural areas.

Lifestyles also vary considerably among older adults, as do tastes, interests, education, abilities, talents and backgrounds. Age differences within the seniors cohort must be considered as well, as the experiences of someone 55 years old will likely be significantly different those of an 85-year-old.

Some views to consider:

- Numerous agencies at all levels of government provide a range of services to seniors. While these services are generally available to the majority of the seniors population, ***some seniors*** – due to their geographic location, or religious, or ethnic and cultural circumstances – ***may not be aware of services or are unable to access them.***
- ***Information materials may be culturally or linguistically inappropriate***, or unavailable at a level of literacy that can be read by seniors.
- ***Those responsible for interacting and working with seniors may not have appropriate training or resources***, or lack access to interpreters and translators. Ideally, those designing programs and services for a diverse senior population should engage or involve seniors in developing programs and services.
- Ensuring that ***services and supports*** are easily accessible to all Canadian seniors ***will involve a major financial investment*** – some people think that these funds may be used more effectively elsewhere.
- ***Many cultural groups work hard to maintain their own traditions, practices and support networks.*** Their members may not wish to be involved in “mainstream” support programs and services. Women from some cultural groups may be more reluctant to engage, as they may be restricted from various activities or even more limited by language barriers than their male counterparts. This might be addressed by providing financial support for cultural centres and retirement housing targeting a specific religious, ethnic or cultural community.
- One view holds that older adults’ lives are settled and static, and that their well-being depends only on having good health, adequate housing and financial security. But ***seniors continue to change, strive, achieve and plan for the future.*** Like their younger counterparts, they marry, divorce, separate, move, retire from their job and take on another, and embark on new relationships, often in a climate of disapproval and discrimination. Loss is also an important part of older adults’ lives, as partners and long-time friends pass away, and they lose their role and identity in the larger society.

Ask yourself ...

- What sort of roadblocks might get in the way as we try and make this vision “actionable?”
- Can you foresee any opportunities to build on?
- What are the possible benefits, costs and consequences of implementing strategies for this theme? What trends should the strategies be reinforcing/countering?

Glossary of Terms

Life expectancy at age 65

Average number of years of life remaining after age 65

Older adult

A mature adult in his/her later life stage

Perceived health status

How people assess their own health

Rural

All territory outside urban areas is considered rural. Included in rural areas are:

- small towns, villages and other populated places with less than 1 000 population according to the previous census
- rural fringes of census metropolitan areas and census agglomerations that may contain estate lots, agricultural, undeveloped and non-developable lands
- remote and wilderness areas
- agricultural lands

Senior

A person aged 65 or older

Urban

*Urban Areas have minimum population concentrations of 1,000 and a population density of at least 400 per square kilometre, based on the previous census population counts
Taken together, urban and rural areas cover all of Canada.*

Older Canadians – A Snapshot

Older adults are a fast-growing segment of the Canadian population. In 2000, almost 36% of Canadians were aged 45 and over, while 12.5% of the population were aged 65 and over. By 2016, it is expected that Canadians aged 65 and over will make up about 16% of the population. Table A, below, provides a breakdown of the population of older Canadians by sex and age at the start of the new millennium. Table B provides a breakdown of the seniors population by province.

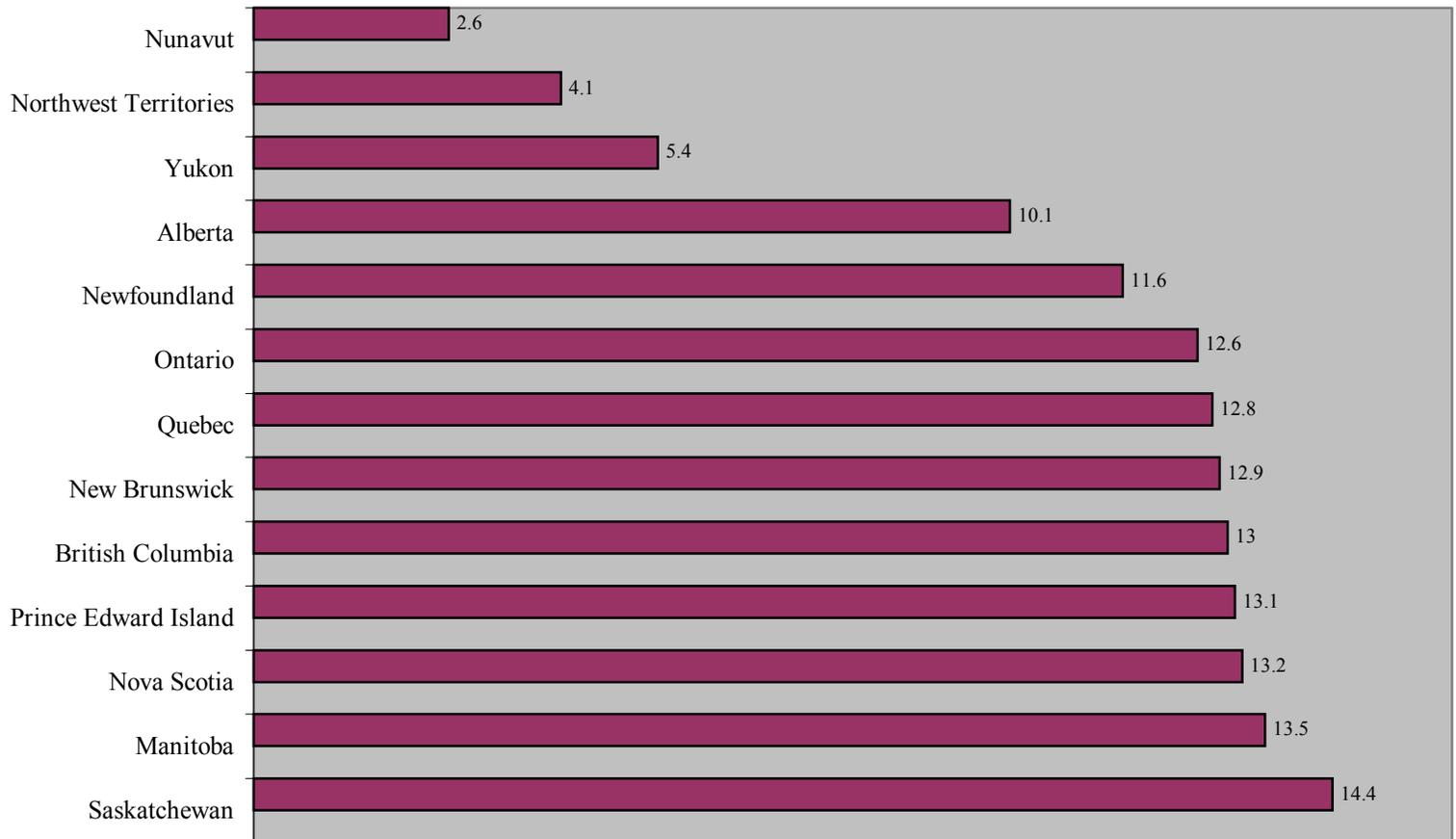
Table A:
Population aged 45 and over, by sex and age, 2000

	2000					
	Both sexes	Male	Female	Both sexes	Male	Female
	Number			% of total population		
<i>All ages</i>	30,750,087	15,232,909	15,517,178	100.0	49.5	50.5
<i>All over 45</i>	11,026,659	5,206,064	5,820,595	35.9	35.2	37.5
45-49	2,319,848	1,157,288	1,162,560	7.5	7.6	7.5
50-54	2,045,093	1,019,061	1,026,032	6.7	6.69	6.6
55-59	1,555,248	769,591	785,657	5.1	5.05	5.1
60-64	1,256,573	614,659	641,914	4.1	4.04	4.1
<i>All over 65</i>	3,849,897	1,645,465	2,204,432	12.5	10.8	14.2
65-69	1,136,889	546,454	590,435	3.7	3.6	3.8
70-74	998,277	454,269	544,008	3.3	2.9	3.5
75-79	804,364	333,670	470,694	2.6	2.1	3.0
80-84	494,406	184,658	309,748	1.6	1.2	2.0
85-89	282,415	91,455	190,960	0.9	0.6	1.2
90+	133,546	34,959	98,587	0.4	0.2	0.6

Source: Statistics Canada, last modified August 30, 2001.

Table B:

Seniors as a Percentage of the Population by Province, 2000. Source: Statistics Canada, taken from Health Canada
Division of Aging and Seniors, Snapshot No.3: Many Seniors in All Provinces



II An Overview of the Dialogue Session

As one of the participants, you'll probably want to know a little more about what will be involved in the aging dialogue sessions and what sort of input you will have. The entire session will last approximately three and a half hours, with about half an hour for filling in questionnaires and the rest for group discussion. Following is an overview of the session, including the timing, objectives and activities for each major section.

Introduction (30 minutes)

An orientation to the *What Matters to Canadian NGOs on Aging* project and to the public dialogue session.

- Welcome and introductions
- Overview of the session and topic
- Pre-dialogue questionnaire
- Dialogue and ground rules chart

Section 1: What is healthy, active aging? (85 minutes total)

Moderated discussion examining three themes that contribute to healthy, active aging in Canada.

Part 1: Dialogue on Theme 1 – *Maximizing Participation* (35 minutes)

- Explore values and trends underlying theme

Part 2: Dialogue on Theme 2 – *Enhancing Well-being* (30 minutes)

- Explore values and trends underlying theme

Part 3: Dialogue on Theme 3 – *Respecting Diversity* (20 minutes)

- Explore values and trends underlying theme

Break (15 minutes)

Section 2: Common ground (55 minutes)

Moderated discussion exploring key values, trends, barriers and opportunities, and the role the federal government can take in planning for healthy and active aging.

Wrap Up (25 minutes)

A review of the session, completion of post-dialogue questionnaire and a discussion of follow-up activities.

III The ‘What and Why’ of Public Dialogue

A public dialogue is a process that brings together a group of people to work through an important issue. The group moderator’s role is to encourage participants to consider various viewpoints and to help establish common ground rather than emphasizing the choices to be made among them.

There are many benefits to the public dialogue process, including:

- Public dialogue can reach and involve large and diverse groups of people.
- Public dialogue allows for reflective discussion that examines various perspectives, generating a rich body of research to inform the policy-making process.
- Citizens have input into important decisions on national issues by helping to clarify core values, set priorities and establish strategic directions.
- The participating public is informed about decisions they have had a chance to shape and therefore are likely to accept and act on them.

Following is an excerpt about the public dialogue process that has been adapted from Public Dialogue: A Tool for Citizen Engagement — A Manual for Federal Governments and Agencies. Centre for Public Dialogue. January 2000.

A public dialogue group brings together a group of ten to twelve people to work through a workbook or guide that includes basic information on the issue to be discussed, an issue statement and a number of viewpoints. The viewpoints represent divergent, sometimes opposing perspectives on the issue statement, pushing participants to consider the very real tensions that exist in public policy formation. The group moderator encourages participants to consider and reflect on each of the viewpoints provided. Other viewpoints and alternatives often get discussed in the course of the dialogue.

A dialogue session can last up to four hours and in this time, participants move from defining values and identifying common ground to putting forward concrete ideas that can constructively inform policy development.

Used as one of a number of possible research tools, public dialogue offers a means to add to the existing knowledge around any given policy issue. It can be used in combination with other research methods, thereby strengthening the quality of information in and

capacity for solid analysis. Public dialogue is one way to help departments develop advice for their ministers and contribute to the overall policy-making and program development function.

When governments are looking for a deeper understanding of core values or for guidance on priorities, they need a process that provides time and space for deeper reflection and deliberation. The more deliberative tools, like public dialogue, require listening, learning, working through, and building respect for the views of other people. In doing so one can get closer to true dynamics of opinion, confront biases, and hear alternative points of view from all involved in the process. Dialogue is not about position-taking or debate. To understand dialogue further, take a look at the Dialogue vs Debate chart and the suggested Ground Rules for dialogue, which follow.

Dialogue vs. Debate*

Dialogue	Debate
Collaborative	Oppositional
Common ground	Points of divergence
Listening to find meaning	Listening to find flaws
Listening to find agreement	Listening to find points to argue
Openness to being wrong	Determination to be right
Weighing alternatives	Winning
Assumes others have pieces of the answer	Assumes there is one right answer and someone has it
Involves concern for the other Person	Involves countering others
Seeks not to offend or alienate	Belittles others

* Adapted by CPRN

Ground Rules for Dialogue*

- The moderator guides the discussion, yet remains objective.
- The dialogue follows the process outlined in the agenda.
- Everyone is encouraged to participate, but you have the right to pass.
- Speak your mind freely, but don't monopolize the conversation.
- This is not a debate — there are no winners or losers.
- Listen carefully to others and maintain an open mind.
- Help to develop one another's ideas. Ask clarifying questions.
- Engage in friendly disagreement, but don't personalize a conflict.
- Value each other's experiences and your own.
- Don't spend time arguing about facts. You may just have to agree to disagree.

* Adapted by CPRN