

COMMITTEE ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN
Geneva October 31st

EMERGING ISSUE FOR THE ECE

WIDOWHOOD

The financial crisis and the reduced actual value of pensions and reduction of social benefits has exacerbated poverty among widows of all ages whose numbers have increased unprecedentedly in recent years, due to , inter alia, armed conflict, ethnic violence, the AIDS pandemic, the age-differences between marriage partners, and the lesser life-expectancy of men compared to women. This poverty has exposed widows to economic and sexual exploitation, and to violence.

Government must gather quantitative and qualitative information to identify and address widows' needs and acknowledge and support their roles as sole supporters of dependents, especially in the context of gender-equality in inheritance, property and land rights across the ECE region, access to training and employment, and protection from stigma, abuse and marginalisation.