

The Global Alliance for the Rights of Older People

Opening Session of 3rd Open-ended Working Group on Ageing

21 August 2012

Statement by AARP, Age UK, Global Action on Aging, HelpAge International, International Association of Gerontology and Geriatrics, International Association of Homes and Services for the Ageing, International Federation on Ageing, International Longevity Centre Global Alliance, and International Network for the Prevention of Elder Abuse.

The Global Alliance for the Rights of Older People, as civil society organisations, welcomes the opportunity to engage UN Member States on how to strengthen the protection of human rights for older persons.

Through the establishment of the Open-ended Working Group on Ageing (OEWG), the UN has created a constructive space for dialogue between UN Member States and citizens on older persons' rights. We recognise the value of the OEWG and conclude that its work is not yet finished.

The informed debate of the Open-ended Working Group and UN documents demonstrate that current human rights instruments are not sufficient for protecting the rights of older persons. For example, the Report of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights of 20 April 2012 and the Secretary General's Report on the Situation of the Rights of Older Persons (2009), among others, conclude that:

- There is no dedicated protection regime for older people's rights;
- There are clear gaps in protection for older persons rights in existing human rights standards: provisions for specific issues like elder abuse, long-term and palliative care are absent;
- Older persons' rights are neglected in the current human rights framework: we find very few mentions of older people in the Human Rights Council's Universal Periodic Review;
- National protections of the rights of older persons are inconsistent and few countries collect data on violations of the rights of older persons;
- Age discrimination and ageism are widely tolerated across the world and older people are highly vulnerable to abuse, deprivation and exclusion.

It is our conviction that the protection of the human rights of older persons can only be assured through the establishment of a Convention on the Rights of Older Persons.

We urge Member States to take all necessary actions to continue and support the dialogue through the OEWG and to ensure that older persons' needs are not forgotten in the protection of human rights, in national and international development policy, and in the planning and delivery of services at all levels.

Recalling the United Nations General Assembly's original commitment to strengthening the rights of older persons, we ask Member States to ensure the important work of the OEWG continues.