

Age UK
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Open-ended Working Group on Ageing, 1 – 4 August 2011

I am speaking on behalf of Age UK, an NGO in the United Kingdom dedicated to improving the lives of older people in the UK and globally. Age UK helps over 5 million people in the UK every year and works with HelpAge International to support more than 300 partners in over 40 countries. Age UK is a member of the IFA and the Global Alliance for the Rights of Older People.

I would like to commend Member States for their active participation and robust discussions in the Open-ended Working Group. I would also like to thank the Bureau, DESA and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. The importance of this process cannot be underestimated. I recognise the diversity of views expressed here in this room these past four days and during the previous session of the Open-ended Working Group and believe that these are positive steps leading to a better understanding of how to protect the rights of older people.

These discussions are relevant in the UK, where malnutrition in hospitals of older people and poverty forcing older people to choose between heating their homes in winter and putting food on their table are but two examples of how the implementation of older people's rights needs to be strengthened. We are fortunate to have mechanisms for addressing these problems in the UK and a vibrant civil society that can work with Government, but human rights awareness is very low.

These discussions are relevant for all countries, which is why we are encouraged member states are continuing to look for ways to strengthen the rights of older people through the Open-ended Working Group and are looking at additional measures such as a Special Rapporteur to look for solutions. We are firmly of the belief that a gap remains in the ability of the international human rights system to strengthen the rights of older people's rights and the way of addressing this will be through a Convention.

