

Statement to Fourth Working Session of the Open-ended Working Group on Ageing, 12-15 August 2013

The Open-ended Working Group on Ageing was established with the purpose of strengthening the protection of the human rights of older persons. This focus of UN Member States on the human rights of older persons is unique, justified, necessary and fundamental for achieving the ambitions set out in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

The Global Alliance for the Rights of Older People (GAROP) was set up to help give expression to the views of civil society and older persons that should underpin all of these deliberations. We are clear that a global human rights instrument that articulates how human rights apply to older people and provides a legal basis that enables them to claim these rights at the national and international level is absolutely necessary.

The general human rights standards enshrined in existing UN instruments and existing soft law, such as MIPAA, are not sufficient for protecting against particular and unique forms of discrimination and do not provide adequate guidance, implementation mechanisms and enforcement processes to ensure equal and full enjoyment of rights by older persons. The persistent violations of their rights and the discrimination they face on the basis of their old age can only be addressed by a dedicated, binding instrument that provides the level of clarity, legal certainty and accountability necessary to do this.

We urge Member States both to work towards a new global legal instrument to clarify how human rights apply to older people and to take the necessary measures at national and local level to translate these rights into concrete improvements for older people.

The Global Alliance for the Rights of Older People believes that to be effective, any international human rights instrument for older persons must:

- Be universally applicable to all older persons;
- Reaffirm and articulate the rights of older people and States Parties' human rights obligations towards them without diluting existing human rights standards in any way;
- Recognise and prohibit all forms of discrimination on the basis of old age, including multiple discrimination;
- Provide for a comprehensive range of substantive rights for older persons;
- Establish implementation, monitoring and accountability mechanisms that provide citizens with national-level recourse on the implementation of these agreements, including the collection, analysis and dissemination of data that is disaggregated by age and sex in 5-year periods and includes people over the age of 100 years.

Finally, we remind Member States that any process to consider the rights of older people that does not actively include older persons themselves from all parts of the

globe and from a wide range of backgrounds cannot be considered legitimate. The UN must recognise and act upon the need for engaging more actively with civil society globally and create the mechanisms whereby older people themselves and other civil society actors, including National Human Rights Institutions and Equality Bodies, can meaningfully participate in articulating the rights and standards intended to protect them.

The Global Alliance for the Rights of Older People urges UN Member States to:

- Remain focussed on the urgent task of strengthening human rights standards for older persons, by working towards a comprehensive legally binding mechanism on the rights of older persons, so that people of all ages can benefit from the aspirations of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.
- Ensure that the positions presented at the OEWG and other for a for discussing how to strengthen the human rights of older persons are informed by the views of older persons and civil society by organising large consultations at national level
- Support the effective participation of older persons at the OEWG and other relevant UN meetings, by including older persons' representatives in their national delegations

About the Global Alliance for the Rights of Older People:

The Global Alliance for the Rights of Older People was born out of the need to strengthen the rights and voice of older people globally. The Alliance is the result of the collaborative efforts of the nine organisations that currently form its Steering Group:

International Network for the Prevention of Elder Abuse (INPEA)
International Longevity Centre (ILC) Global Alliance
International Federation on Ageing (IFA)
International Association of Homes and Services for the Ageing (IAHSA)
International Association of Gerontology and Geriatrics (IAGG)
HelpAge International
AGE Platform Europe
Age UK
AARP

Through its membership, the Alliance reaches out to older people in all regions of the world to ensure their voices are heard by United Nations (UN) and its member states nationally, as well as regionally and internationally, through UN institutions, UN Commissions and the UN General Assembly.

The Global Alliance for the Rights of Older People supports the creation of new international and regional human rights instruments as powerful tools for strengthening the rights of older people.

The Alliance is committed to building national-level capacity to work towards more effective human rights instruments for older people.