

GUIDELINES II

Contributing to the substantive debate on the focus areas

In order to build the consensus among Member States that a convention is necessary, it is important that the debates on the specific areas of rights in the OEWG sessions are focused and substantive. Civil society has a vital contribution to make to this and should focus efforts on bringing valuable substantive inputs to the process.

The UN issues an annual [call for written submissions](#) to support the preparation for the next session of the OEWG. The call is usually for substantive inputs on two new focus areas (for the 11th session **Access to justice** and the **Right to work and access to the labour market**). There has also been a call for inputs in the form of normative content for a possible international instrument on the two focus areas that were discussed in the previous session of the OEWG (for the 11th session **Education, training, lifelong learning and capacity building** and **Social Protection and Social Security, including social protection floors**).

Below is a list of suggested actions and approaches to take in developing substantive thinking and positions. Most of these points apply to both OEWG-accredited and non-accredited NGOs although there are some additional actions highlighted that accredited NGOs can take. If you are not already accredited, you can learn more about the benefits of accrediting and how to apply for accreditation [here](#).

<p>Research and consultation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research the legal and policy frameworks that apply in your country in the specific areas of rights. • Gather the views and experiences of older people in the selected areas of rights through direct consultation with older people if possible, and/or by researching recent studies or consultation reports. Focus on understanding how older people are denied their rights in the specific areas or are being excluded from services that they require. Refer to the guiding questions (listed below) to plan these consultations. • Look at existing legislation and assess how well it addresses these specific areas of rights, whether it includes older people's rights explicitly and is positively protecting those rights. • Contact people working in the specific focus areas to hear their views and experiences and verify your findings. • The UN issues guiding questions with its call for submissions which can act as a guide and reference point for these discussions (see the resources list below).
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<p>Develop a substantive position</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is helpful to develop a substantive position even if you are not yet accredited to the OEWG. Having clear positions on the specific focus areas of rights will help to frame and inform your advocacy at national level and can still be shared more widely and contribute to the international discussions. • Using the data you have gathered and referring to the UN Guiding questions, prepare a brief on each focus area of rights. This could be a shorter paper of no more than 800 words per focus area (in line with the UN submission requirements) or a longer more detailed document if you have the capacity and time. • Be as concrete as possible in terms of what a new convention should include on the specific areas of rights based on the research you have done. This GAROP webinar provides advice on how to develop suggestions normative content in particular (English only). • Some of the OEWG focus areas of rights have also been covered by GAROP webinars. Look out for upcoming webinars relevant to the topics you are working on. • Share the document(s) you produce with your government contacts, National Human Rights Institutions, other civil society networks and older people’s organisations and other stakeholders working with older people and/or human rights to stimulate further debate around the specific areas of rights. • If you are an NGO with ECOSOC consultative status or if you have been previously accredited to the OEWG then you can also submit your paper in response to the formal UN call for submissions. More details of how to submit your inputs are here. Note that submissions to the UN can be no more than 800 words per focus area. • Accredited NGOs can also submit longer written documents, reports or studies that are relevant to the specific areas to be discussed to the UN team in advance of the OEWG session. These will be shared on the official website in due course. • If you are not already accredited, you can learn more about the benefits of accrediting and how to apply for accreditation here. The GAROP Secretariat will share updates with members about the accreditation process including when it will next be possible to apply for accreditation.
<p>Influence your government</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is important that more Member States make substantive submissions and statements in the OEWG process that also reflect the experiences of older people in their country. • Using the positions you have developed on the focus areas of rights, you can seek to influence your government’s submissions and statements to the OEWG. • Governments’ policy positions and decisions are made in the capitals and therefore national level advocacy is crucial.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Older people’s storytelling can be important and powerful in influencing a government’s position. Tripartite meetings (see Guidelines I) could be helpful in creating the space for this kind of direct interaction and dialogue between governments and older people themselves.• When this kind of storytelling is combined with timely relevant research findings and concrete evidence, it can be very persuasive.
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Further resources

See other GAROP Guidelines:

- [Guidelines I – National advocacy](#)
- [Guidelines III](#) – Preparing oral statements for the OEWG session

See also the [E.A.I.R. Guidelines](#) from HelpAge International about how to effectively argue your case in your national advocacy on a UN convention.