

GAROP Three Year Strategy (2020-2023)

Introduction to GAROP

Established in 2011, the Global Alliance for the Rights of Older People (GAROP) was born out of the need to strengthen the rights and voice of older people globally. The membership of GAROP is open to non-governmental organisations who support GAROP's mission, vision and values and comply with the relevant member application process.

GAROP's work is guided by the following Mission, Vision and Values:

- GAROP's Mission is to support and enhance civil society's engagement at national, regional and international levels on the need for a new international instrument on the rights of older people. The main focus for this engagement is the UN Open-Ended Working Group on Ageing process (OEWG).
- GAROP's Vision is a world in which older people live free from discrimination and are able to fully enjoy their rights.
- GAROP's Values are partnership with, inclusion of, and the promotion of participation by older people in decisions that affect their lives. We respect the rights of all persons regardless of age, race, color, disability, gender, language, religion, sexual orientation, political views, national or social origin, class and birth or property status.

Where we are now

Attention to the rights of older people has significantly increased in the last ten years. Discussions in the UN have deepened with the establishment of the UN Open-Ended Working Group on Ageing, a new UN Independent Expert and panels and sessions at the Human Rights Council.

GAROP too has achieved a significant amount since it was established and has contributed to this growing attention to older people's rights. GAROP has strengthened the voice and visibility of older people and civil society organisations within the OEWG process. It has trained older activists and enabled them to engage with UN Member States directly in various official meetings. It has created a platform in which GAROP members can learn from each other and come together to work more strategically. GAROP members have influenced the positions of their governments. It has increased its membership to over 340 organisations from around the world, ranging from grassroots organisations to global umbrella bodies, and is recognised as a broad-based civil society platform by UN agencies, Member States, National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs) and civil society organisations.

Nonetheless, there are still considerable challenges to overcome. These include the lack of a critical mass of Member States supporting a convention; the potential that a Third World Assembly on Ageing and a new International Plan of Action on Ageing will undermine progress towards a convention; insufficient financial and human resources within the GAROP Secretariat; insufficient geographic diversity of GAROP's membership; and inadequate engagement at national level between civil society, governments and human rights stakeholders.

The following strategy is proposed to address these challenges and create the conditions to move to drafting a convention.

A three year goal – getting consensus to draft

By 2023, UN Member States agree that a legally binding convention on the rights of older persons is necessary and that a formal drafting process should start without delay.

2023 is a critical point in our campaign for a UN convention. By 2023, the OEWG will have completed discussing its current list of issue areas. The 20th anniversary review of Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing (MIPAA) will have been completed. If there is a Third World Assembly on Ageing, Member States will be negotiating the contents of a new plan of action on ageing. Agreement by Member States to draft a convention is essential at this point for the process towards a convention to move forward. To achieve this, GAROP must strengthen its efforts in the following six areas:

- 1) Strategic outcomes
- 2) Membership and governance
- 3) Secretariat
- 4) Financial resources
- 5) National engagement and GAROP representation
- 6) Communications

1) Strategic outcomes

We remain focused on achieving advocacy outcomes that will lead to a convention. GAROP has played a strong facilitative role, creating a civil society platform and making resources available to its members. GAROP members have consistently requested that GAROP plays a greater coordinating role.

Four strategic outcomes will guide GAROP through the 11th, 12th and 13th OEWG sessions towards our goal for 2023:

- a. Greater political support for a UN convention
- b. Content developed for a UN convention that advances the protection of the rights of older people

- c. Intergovernmentally negotiated recommendations adopted at the 11th, 12th and 13th sessions
- d. Effective engagement of a coordinated civil society platform.

a. Greater political support for a UN convention

For the Chair to propose a formal drafting process, there needs to be a clear consensus from Member States across all regions.

We will achieve this by:

- Helping GAROP members to act strategically throughout the year to convince more Member States to support a convention
- Prioritising support to our members with their year-round national advocacy work, including through further developing the tools and guidance that we provide to our members (including webinars and advocacy materials).
- Putting particular emphasis on regions where there is currently no or very little support (Western European and Other Group and the Eastern European Group), targeting key Member States and prioritising support to members in those countries.
- Making resources available in different languages
- Strengthening GAROP members' engagement with the Permanent Missions of Member States, for example facilitating mutually beneficial links exchange of intelligence and briefing notes between members working in the capitals and members based in Geneva and New York.

b. Content developed for a UN convention that advances the protection of the rights of older people

We will achieve this by:

- Supporting members to make substantive and normative written submissions and oral statements to the OEWG and influence more Member States to do the same
- Strengthening the role played by older people in GAROP's advocacy and our internal structures and processes, including participation in our members' Workgroups and Technical Groups and representation among our election candidates and on our Steering Group
- Seeking to influence the format and quality of the sessions and the methodology of the OEWG process if necessary, including lobbying for more voices of civil society and older people themselves to be on the panels, to ensure the debate better addresses how rights apply in older age.

c. Intergovernmentally negotiated recommendations adopted at the 11th, 12th and 13th sessions.

The decision of the UN General Assembly in December 2019 to consider intergovernmentally agreed recommendations for each OEWG session is an opportunity to build consensus among Member States and secure concrete outcomes that strengthens UN Member States' commitment to the rights of older people.

We will achieve this by:

- Accessing up-to-date intelligence about the process and supporting members in an effective coordinated advocacy response
- Supporting members to convince governments to participate in this intergovernmental process, and to consult civil society and older people in preparing inputs.

d. Effective engagement of a coordinated civil society platform.

We will achieve this by:

- Better coordination of NGOs throughout the session in New York, and NGOs being better equipped and prepared to respond to what is playing out in the room, including when there are unexpected developments or interventions.
- Investing in the further development of our internal structures, including our Workgroups and Technical Groups to ensure we provide the level of coordination that our members need.
- Understanding how and when to engage with non-OEWG processes
- With the NGO Committees on Ageing, creating spaces in which GAROP members can come together and engage more strategically

GAROP will develop a more detailed action plan with targets setting out how we will achieve these strategic outcomes.

Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning

A Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) plan will be put in place to complement our action plan and help us to measure our impact. Elements of the plan will include: an activity timeline setting out roles and responsibilities for delivery, an indicator framework, and data collection and feedback surveys from our activities. We will seek to continually generate valuable learning and best practice for GAROP going forward. The indicator framework will set out what will be measured, targets, data sources and means of verification in order to measure progress towards our goals and strategic outcomes.

Examples of indicators include:

- Number of members actively participating in the work of the GAROP Technical Groups and National Advocacy Working Group

- Number of Member States who have voiced support for a UN convention in the OEWG sessions
- Number of GAROP members and Member States who make substantive and normative written submissions to the OEWG online consultation
- Number of Member States who make substantive and normative statements in the OEWG sessions
- Number of civil society and older people's organisation representatives on expert panels at the OEWG session
- Presentation of joint consensus GAROP oral statements at the 11th, 12th, 13th OEWG sessions
- Adoption of intergovernmentally agreed recommendations at 11th, 12th and 13th OEWG sessions

2) Membership and governance

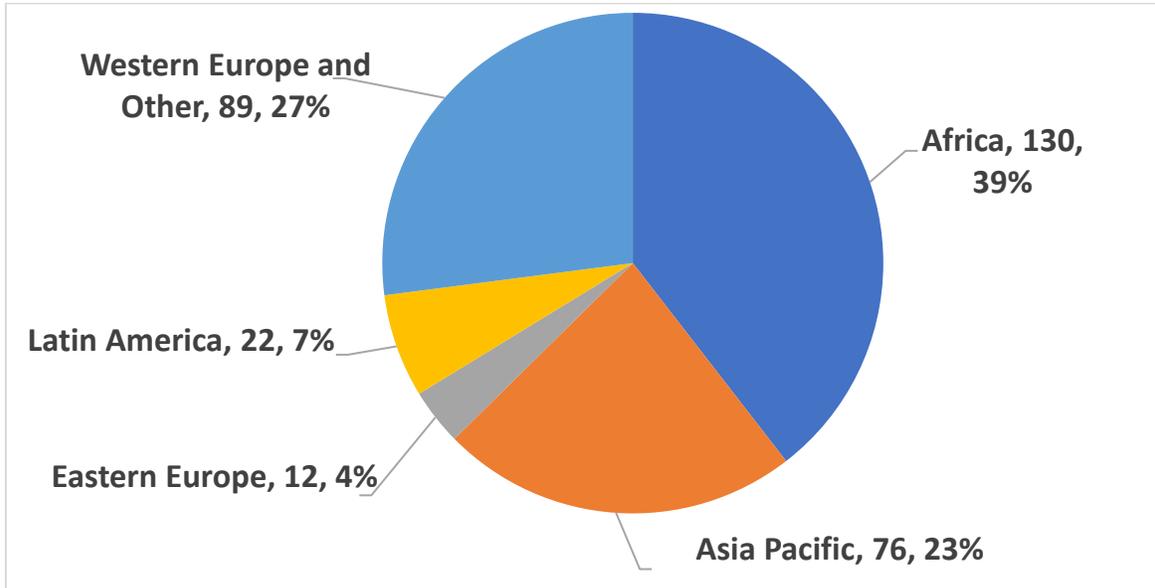
GAROP's current membership is growing, but we need to ensure there is a geographic balance, that we are including a wide range of CSOs, and that we have sufficient numbers of active members mobilised in every region to create a global movement.

We will achieve this by:

- a. Addressing linguistic barriers that make it difficult for non-English speaking CSOs to benefit from what GAROP has to offer
- b. Revisiting the governance structure of the Steering Group to accommodate geographic representation
- c. Setting goals for increasing GAROP membership diversity and size

Steps will also be taken to ensure that GAROP's governance remains in-line with the needs of its membership. The Steering Group will review its composition and make recommendations to the members if changes are considered necessary.

Figure 1 - GAROP members by region (October 2019)



3) Secretariat

A driving force behind GAROP’s success in creating a meaningful platform of support for its members has been the creation of its Secretariat and the work of the Secretariat Coordinator. In order to respond to the needs of its members and to keep pace with the demands of the external environment, the Secretariat will work to increase its capacity. Several options have been proposed and these will be revisited in light of our current situation.

A further consideration that will remain under review is the establishment of GAROP as its own separate legal entity. Such a move could provide opportunities, but also significant challenges. Any steps in this direction will need to weigh carefully the added value of GAROP’s having a legal identity to achieving its objectives against the costs that would be incurred.

4) Financial resources

GAROP currently relies on the financial contributions of a very limited number of members, with significant responsibility being shared by two organisations. This model carries a significant risk if sufficient cost-sharing does not take place. Efforts will be made to find further funding to support the strategic activities identified elsewhere in this strategy.

Maintaining the minimum core Secretariat functions (Coordinator salary and employer-related costs, Coordinator travel and IT budget for the Secretariat) over the three year strategy requires the following financial resources:

2020/2021	£52,057.52
2021/2022	£57,262.52

These figures do not include activity costs for providing direct support to GAROP members that were possible with the project funding from the Swedish Postcode Foundation. Further fundraising is necessary for these type of activities.

The Secretariat's work and the impact of this strategy would also be greatly enhanced with the additional support of a full-time Communications Officer. This would require approximately an additional £38,676 per year (based on UK salary scales estimated for 2020 and including all tax and employment-related costs).

5) National, regional and other engagement and representation

UN Member States, UN Agencies and civil society stakeholders have all identified the importance of GAROP members generating greater and more visible national-level advocacy and engagement. GAROP has been successful in developing a range of ways to support its members to do more in this area, but we must go further. In this connection, a National Advocacy Working Group has been established to facilitate advocacy efforts at the national level.

As GAROP develops over the next three years, we will look at the role GAROP members can play at the regional level.

The GAROP Steering Group will also consider carefully how GAROP is represented in different fora, and the role that GAROP members and the Secretariat play in this regard. Guidelines will be developed to ensure clarity for all GAROP members on how GAROP's name and brand should be used and how GAROP is represented.

6) Communications

How we communicate about a convention is vital to our success in creating influence with governments, civil society actors, NHRIs and the public. Are the language and arguments we are using compelling and convincing enough? GAROP's identity, and its ability to engage effectively, are intimately linked with the tone of voice and style of our communications. We will review how we communicate to ensure that we are having greatest impact in our advocacy efforts.

Our website is one of our key assets and work will have to continue to make sure it is renewed and evolves in line with our strategic objectives. We will also explore the growth of GAROP's social media presence beyond Twitter.