

A statement on the 30th UN International Day of Older Persons by the Steering Group of the Global Alliance for the Rights of Older People (GAROP)

Now's the time to act on a UN convention

This pandemic has shone a spotlight on the systemic inequalities and discrimination faced by older people around the world. A new UN convention would lay the foundations to make sure such violations never happen again.

On this 30th anniversary of the UN International Day of Older Persons, we acknowledge the activism and dedication of older people and the organisations who work with and for them in their communities. We celebrate the commitment of GAROP members around the world in raising awareness of the everyday ageism and discrimination faced by older people and campaigning for the stronger protection of older people's human rights. We also welcome the progress made with the Decade of Healthy Ageing 2020-2030 and look forward to supporting this global initiative to have a positive impact.

The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated entrenched inequalities and affected the most marginalised individuals disproportionately. This has been particularly stark for older people all around the world. Government responses have discriminated against them, their rights have been denied and they have been subjected to stigmatisation and dehumanising and hateful language. The pandemic has exposed the universal nature of ageism and the systemic and persistent denial of older people's rights, reinforcing the evidence and growing concerns around older people's rights that has built up over the last ten years and been discussed at the UN Open-Ended Working Group on Ageing (OEWG).

Now more than ever we must work together to make sure this never happens again. We support the UN Secretary-General's call to build stronger legal frameworks at the national and international level and for States to accelerate proposals for an international legal instrument dedicated to the rights of older people. Older people's voices and experiences must be at the heart of the planning and response to pandemics as well as the international discussions about their rights.

We believe a UN convention on older people's rights will lay the foundations necessary to ensure that the violations of older people's human rights seen during the COVID-19 pandemic never happen again.

About GAROP

The Global Alliance for the Rights of Older People (GAROP) is a network of over 380 civil society organisations from 80 countries working together so that all older people can live free from discrimination and are able to fully enjoy their rights. We believe a UN convention on the rights of older persons is essential for older people to fully enjoy their rights.