

**An Open Letter to the United Nations General Assembly's Open-Ended Working Group on Ageing for the Purpose of Strengthening the Protection of the Human Rights of Older Persons (OEWGA)**

First launched on 20<sup>th</sup> of September 2021

**Background**

As human rights advocates from different backgrounds and regions of the world, we want a world where we can all age with rights, dignity and respect. The OEWGA can help to make this vision a reality by fulfilling its mandate to consider proposals for an international legal instrument to promote and protect the rights and dignity of older persons and to present to the UN General Assembly a proposal containing the main elements of such instrument.

Since its creation in 2010, the OEWGA has held 11 working sessions. Throughout these discussions, the OEWGA has seen a wealth of evidence confirming the glaring deficiencies in the international human rights system as it relates to the human rights of older persons. This material has been presented by older persons themselves, experts from the UN system, civil society organizations, academia, governments, and national human rights institutions, who are also calling for the adoption of a convention to address these shortcomings.

The study launched by the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in the 11<sup>th</sup> session confirms that the development of more specific norms and standards within a new dedicated international instrument is required to ensure that no older person, regardless of circumstance, is left behind.

Despite this evidence in support of a UN convention and the further impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, the OEWGA has made little concrete progress towards identifying the elements of a possible new instrument and has not yet fulfilled its mandate in this regard. While there are many Member States which have actively supported a convention, the lack of consensus has prevented clear outcomes from the OEWGA.

While we recognize the importance of consensus and the need to continue to build this in the OEWGA, we also note that 146 States formally supported the Secretary General's Policy Brief on the impact of COVID-19 on older persons and committed to fully promoting and respecting the dignity and rights of older persons. This is a strong foundation from which the OEWGA must now seek to move forward.

A new UN convention would explicitly and unambiguously recognize older persons as rights holders and strengthen our understanding of human rights in older age. It would provide valuable guidance for governments and others to ensure that age discrimination is prohibited in the law, services uphold the dignity of older persons, and attitudes and behaviors towards older persons are respectful.

The OEWGA Bureau, chaired by the Permanent Mission of Argentina since the OEWGA's first session, is in a pivotal position to drive progress in this work. Thus, we call on the Bureau to take concrete steps to progress the work of the OEWGA in the inter-sessional period between the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> sessions of OEWGA and we call on Member States to support the Bureau in taking those steps.

### **Recommendations for next steps**

**We support the proposal made by Argentina in the 11<sup>th</sup> session to establish an inter-sessional group to advance the work of the OEWGA. This group should be composed of experts from member states, civil society organizations, and national human rights institutions, with the involvement of the UN Independent Expert on the enjoyment of all human rights by older persons as well as other relevant experts among the UN human rights mechanisms and special procedures mandate holders. This group should be tasked to commence the drafting of the main normative elements of an international legal instrument during the inter-sessional period.**

We believe that the OEWGA will greatly benefit from commencing the drafting of a proposed binding instrument without delay in an open and inclusive platform that places the participation of older persons, their knowledge, expertise and experiences at the centre of discussions.

The 12<sup>th</sup> session of OEWGA presents the Bureau with opportunities to take concrete steps. **To advance a critical discussion of the adequacy of the normative framework of the international human rights system and its implementation mechanisms for the promotion and protection of the rights of older persons, the Bureau should include in the agenda of the 12<sup>th</sup> session a substantive discussion of the OHCHR's analytical paper. Also, in moving forward, the Bureau should present a proposal containing a program and the modalities for the drafting of a new instrument to start no later than six months after 12th session of OEWGA.**

We call on the Bureau to take up these recommendations and urge Member States, particularly the members of the Group of Friends of Older Persons, to engage actively in with the process to bring about these outcomes.

It has been a decade since the OEWGA commenced its work. The need to fulfill the OEWGA's mandate has never been more urgent if we want to build the just and equal world we need for older persons today and for all generations to come.

We submit this open letter to the Bureau and to Member States of the UN as an expression of our steadfast commitment to assist in the fulfillment of OEWGA's mandate. In this inter-sessional period leading to the 12<sup>th</sup> session of OEWGA, we will continue to seek and build

opportunities for formal and informal spaces for constructive discourse, including following up on these recommendations and call to action.

## Signatories

(by country or country of HQ)

List of 31 March 2022

### **Afghanistan**

1. Lawyers Union of Afghanistan

### **Albania**

2. ASAG-Albanian Society for All Ages

### **Argentina**

3. INPEA – Argentina
4. ILC - Argentina

### **Australia**

5. Advocare Incorporated
6. Capacity Australia
7. Commonwealth Association for the Ageing - CommonAge
8. Community Legal Centres Australia
9. Elder Abuse Action Australia
10. EveryAGE Counts
11. International Longevity Centre Australia
12. LGBTIQ+ Health Australia
13. National Older Women's Network Inc.
14. NSW Ministerial Advisory Council on Ageing
15. Older Persons Advocacy Network (OPAN)
16. Peninsula Advisory Committee for Elders (PACE)
17. Seniors Rights Service
18. Senior Women 's Advocacy Network - Asia Pacific
19. SWAN- Asia Pacific
20. The Benevolent Society
21. The Senior Agenda Inc.

### **Bangladesh**

22. ASD-Bangladesh (Association for Sustainable Development in Bangladesh)
23. Forum for the Rights of Elderly, Bangladesh (FREB)
24. HelpAge International Ba
25. KOTHOWAIN (Vulnerable Peoples Development Organization)

26. Nagorik Odhikar Sangrakkhan Forum (NASAF)
27. Participatory Human Rights Advancement Society
28. Resource Integration Center RIC
29. Sir William Beveridge Foundation
30. UTTHAN (Unprivileged To The Humanitarian Action Need)
31. Young Power in Social Action (YPSA)

#### **Barbados**

32. Barbados Association of Retired Persons

#### **Belarus**

33. Public Union of Belarusian pensioners "Nasha Pakalenne"

#### **Belgium**

34. ABVV Senioren
35. AGE Platform Europe
36. Entr'âges
37. Finance Watch
38. GroenPlus
39. Neos vzw
40. OKRA, trefpunt 55+
41. S-Plus
42. Unia (Interfederal Centre for Equal Opportunities)
43. Vief vzw
44. Vlaamse Ouderenraad vzw

#### **Belize**

45. HelpAge

#### **Brazil**

46. Instituto Qualivida
47. Vitrine100Idade

#### **Bulgaria**

48. Tulip Foundation

#### **Burundi**

49. Alzheimer Community Support of Burundi
50. Human Health Aid Burundi

#### **Cameroon**

51. ACAMAGE
52. Ageing and Health Cameroon Association
53. Association pour la diffusion des droits humains aux peuples autochtones  
(Humanitarian Law Agency)
54. Nehelp Cameroon

55. Positive and Healthy Ageing Association Cameroon

## **Canada**

- 56. Active Aging Canada
- 57. Age Knowble
- 58. Business Launch Solutions
- 59. Canadian Academy of Geriatric Psychiatry
- 60. Canadian Coalition for Seniors' Mental Health
- 61. Canadian Federation of University Women (CFUW)
- 62. Canadian Geriatrics Society
- 63. Canadian Network for the Prevention of Elder Abuse (CNPEA)
- 64. Council of Senior Citizens Organizations of British Columbia FAO
- 65. Elder Abuse Prevention Ontario
- 66. FAO
- 67. Fountain of Health Association
- 68. Grandmothers Advocacy Network
- 69. Health Promotion Canada
- 70. Institute of ethno-gerontology-Toronto, Canada
- 71. INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION ON AGEING
- 72. International Longevity Centre Canada
- 73. LoveSong Housing
- 74. National Initiative for the Care of the Elderly (NICE)
- 75. National Pensioners Federation
- 76. Near North Palliative Care Network
- 77. Ontario Association of Councils on Ageing
- 78. Pass It On Network
- 79. School of Nursing, Univ of Victoria
- 80. Women10 Living Fit Inside Out

## **China**

- 81. Hong Kong Polytechnic University

## **Congo**

- 82. Association Amitié Seniors et Jeunes

## **Costa Rica**

- 83. AGECO

## **Croatia**

- 84. Association for the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Elderly People

## **Czech Republic**

- 85. CELLO ILC

## **Dominican Republic**

- 86. ILC-DR

**Fiji**

87. Asia Pacific Forum on Families International

**Finland**

88. Svenska pensionärsförbundet

**France**

89. FIAPA

90. OLD'UP

91. International Inner Wheel

92. International Longevity Center- France ( ILC-France)

93. 2Y2R Too Young to Retire - Pass It On Network

**Gambia**

94. Ageing with a Smile Initiative

**Ghana**

95. Source of Hope Foundation

**Georgia**

96. Association Anika

97. Centre for Training and Consultancy

98. Coalition Homecare in Georgia

99. Faculty of Medicine, Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University

100. Georgian Association of Social Workers

101. Georgian Young Lawyers' Association

102. Georgian Platform on Care

103. Hand in hand

104. IDP Women Association Consent

105. Mac Georgia

106. Taoba

107. The Center of Strategic Research and Development of Georgia (CSRDG)

108. The Public Defender (Ombudsman) of Georgia

109. TSU Georgian National Association for Palliative Care

110. Young Pedagogues Union

**Germany**

111. BAGSO - Bundesarbeitsgemeinschaft der Seniorenorganisationen

112. German Institute for Human Rights

113. HelpAge Deutschland

**Greece**

114. 50plus Hellas

115. ANTAMA

116. GIVMED | Share medicine Share life

117. People Behind

## **Iceland**

118. U3A Reykjavík

## **India**

119. Agewell Foundation
120. Ashakiran JHC Hospital
121. Association for Social Solidarity and Empowerment Training Trust
122. DadiDada Foundation
123. Dignity Foundation
124. ELDER'S CLUBS INTERNATIONAL FOUNDATION
125. Federation of senior citizens' associations of Tamilnadu
126. FREMSS ODISHA
127. Gharonda
128. Govt KNM Arts and Science College, Kanjiramkulam Trivandrum
129. GRAVIS
130. Indian Society of U3As
131. International Association for Religious Freedom Co-ordination Council  
for South Asia
132. International Longevity Centre India
133. JSS Medical College and Hospital, JSSAHER, Mysore
134. JYESTH Nagarik Sanghatana, Royal College, Mira Road
135. NIMHANS
136. Peace Rural Development Society
137. Shehjaar Homes for Senior Citizens
138. Silver Inning Foundation
139. Sneha Sandhya Age Care Foundation
140. Society for Community Organization and Rural Education (SCORE)
141. Society for Serving Seniors

## **Iraq**

142. Wasit Health Organization

## **Israel**

143. ILC – Israel
144. The Association of Law in the Service of the Elderly

## **Italy**

145. ANAP - Confartigianato
146. Anziani e non solo soc. coop. soc.
147. ATDAL OVER 40
148. Helpage Italia
149. International Youth and Student Movement for the United Nations  
(ISMUN)
150. MOVIMENTO GIOTTO
151. TAM telefono anziani maltrattati
152. 50&Più

- Japan**
153. Japan Support Center for Activity and Research for Older Persons
- Jordan**
154. Amman Center for Human Rights Studies
- Kenya**
155. Ageing Concern Foundation (ACF)  
 156. KARIKA AGEING & HIV/ AIDS PROGRAMME  
 157. Kenya Small Scale Farmers Forum  
 158. MICOP CBO Kenya  
 159. OPRANE Kenya
- Liberia**
160. Liberian Association of Retired Persons  
 161. National Senior citizens Organization of Liberia  
 162. National Old Folks of Liberia  
 163. Liberia United to Promote Society Safety and Development
- Madagascar**
164. Dis Moi Madagascar
- Malawi**
165. Help the Aged Malawi
- Malaysia**
166. World Silambam Association (WSA)  
 167. World Yoga Association  
 168. Silambam Asia
- Malta**
169. University of Malta
- Mauritius**
170. Agalega Island Council  
 171. Halley Movement Coalition  
 172. Droits Humains Ocean Indien (Dis-Moi)  
 173. Dis-Moi, Rodrigues  
 174. Global Rainbow Foundation  
 175. Senior citizens council  
 176. State and Other Employees Federation
- Moldova**
177. Association Women for the Contemporary Society
- Myanmar**
178. Myanmar National Human Rights Commission
- Nepal**



- 179. Ageing Nepal
- 180. Dilasa Abhiyan
- 181. Free Forum for Rights
- 182. National Senior Citizen Federation
- 183. Senior Citizens Welfare Association

#### **Netherlands**

- 184. JNF50PLUS Foundation
- 185. Older Women's Network, the Netherlands
- 186. Stichting Mission Lanka

#### **New Zealand**

- 187. Fantsuam Foundation
- 188. New Zealand Society of Diversional and Recreational Therapists Incorporated

#### **Nigeria**

- 189. Age Nigeria Foundation
- 190. Alternative Health care Initiative
- 191. Azar Initiative Empowerment for the Less Privileged
- 192. EL-AGED CARE LTD/GTE
- 193. DAGOMO Foundation Nigeria
- 194. Sound Health Development Initiative(SHIN)
- 195. Universal Peace and Violence Amelioration Centre

#### **Pakistan**

- 196. New World Hope Organization (NWHO)

#### **Peru**

- 197. Nietos Itinerantes

#### **Philippines**

- 198. Coalition of Services of the Elderly (COSE)
- 199. Commission on Human Rights of the Philippines
- 200. Confederation of Older Persons Associations of the Philippines, Inc. (COPAP)
- 201. Seniors sa Panahon ng COVID - SENIORS for SENIORS (SPC-S4S)

#### **Poland**

- 202. Centrum Inicjatyw Lokalnych
- 203. Commissioner for Human Rights of the Republic of Poland
- 204. ELELEOS Prawosławny Ośrodek Miłosierdzia
- 205. Fundacja DOM
- 206. Fundacja Ukryte Skrzydła
- 207. Foundation Center for Initiatives for Society
- 208. Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights
- 209. KSP2050 Białystok

210. Miejska Rada Seniorów w Sejnach
211. Miejska Rada Seniorów w Sokółce
212. Ogólnopolska Federacja Stowarzyszeń Uniwersytetów III Wieku
213. Ośrodek Wspierania Organizacji Pozarządowych
214. Podlaska Redakcja Seniora
215. Polska 2050
216. Polski Związek Emerytów Rencistów i Inwalidów w Białymstoku, Koło nr 15 w Choroszczycy.
217. Polski Związek Emerytów, Rencistów i Inwalidów Oddział Okręgowy w Białymstoku
218. Rada Seniorów Miasta Augustowa
219. Rada Seniorów w Dąbrowie Białostockiej
220. Rada Seniorów Gminy Czarna Białostocka
221. Rada Seniorów Gminy Podgórzyń
222. Rada Seniorów Gminy Supraśl
223. Rada Seniorów Reda
224. Rada Seniorów przy Marszałku Województwa Podlaskiego
225. Stowarzyszenie mali bracia Ubogich
226. Stowarzyszenie Podlascy Seniorzy
227. Stowarzyszenie Szukamy Polski
228. Stowarzyszenie UTW w Augustowie
229. Stowarzyszenie Uniwersytet Trzeciego Wieku w Sokółce
230. Świętokrzyski Uniwersytet Trzeciego Wieku
231. Towarzystwo Inicjatyw Twórczych „ę”
232. UMK Toruń
233. Warszawska Rada Seniorów
234. WRZOS
235. Wydział Nauk Politycznych i Studiów Międzynarodowych, Uniwersytet Warszawski
236. Związek Tatarów Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej Oddział Bohoniki

#### **Portugal**

237. Adult development and aging research team University of Minho
238. APRe!
239. ASSOCIAÇÃO PORTUGUESA DE PSICOGERONTOLOGIA
240. Sociedade Portuguesa de Psiquiatria e Saúde Mental (Secção de Psiquiatria Geriátrica)
241. University of Coimbra

#### **Romania**

242. Romanian Institute for Human Rights

#### **Russia**

243. Primorsky region veteran Fund "Soldier"
244. Regional Public Foundation Assistance for the Elderly Dobroe Delo

#### **Rwanda**

245. NSINDAGIZA

### **Serbia**

- 246. Gerontological Society of Serbia
- 247. HumanaS Network
- 248. Red Cross of Serbia
- 249. Redefinisanje
- 250. The Protector of Citizens of the Republic of Serbia

### **Slovakia**

- 251. Slovak National Centre for Human Rights

### **Slovenia**

- 252. Slovenian Federation of Pensioners' Associations

### **Somalia**

- 253. African Relief Development Initiative (ARDI)
- 254. Somali HelpAge Association

### **South Africa**

- 255. International Longevity Centre - South Africa
- 256. Samson Institute for Ageing Research

### **South Korea**

- 257. ASEM Global Ageing Center
- 258. HelpAge Korea

### **Spain**

- 259. Asociación Ciceron
- 260. Confederación Española de Organizaciones de Mayores (CEOMA)
- 261. Fundación 26 de Diciembre
- 262. Grupo Servicios Sociales Integrados (Grupo SSI)
- 263. HelpAge España
- 264. International Sociological Association

### **Sweden**

- 265. PRO Global/Pensioners without Borders

### **Switzerland**

- 266. Alzheimer Switzerland
- 267. dream plan live it coaching
- 268. FAAG - Fondation pour la formation des aînées et des aînés de Genève
- 269. Greycells. Association of Former International Civil Servants for Development
- 270. NGO Committee on Ageing, Geneva
- 271. Union for International Cancer Control
- 272. WPA Section of Old Age Psychiatry

**Tanzania**

- 273. CSYM HUDUMA\*
- 274. ELIMINATE GENDER BIAS ORGANIZATION
- 275. The Goodsamatan Social Services Trust

**Thailand**

- 276. National Human Rights Commission of Thailand (NHRCT)

**Timor -Leste**

- 277. Provedor de Direitos Humanos e Justiça (Provedor for Human Rights and Justice)

**Togo**

- 278. NGO: ADET

**Turkey**

- 279. Türkiye emekliler derneği
- 280. Women's Coalition -Turkey (Kadin Koalisyonu)

**Uganda**

- 281. Community Restoration Initiative Project
- 282. Semuto Older Persons Development Association (SOPEDA)
- 283. URAA

**Ukraine**

- 284. D. F. Chebotarev Institute of Gerontology of the National Academy of Medical Sciences of Ukraine

**United Kingdom**

- 285. Age International
- 286. Alzheimer's Disease International
- 287. HelpAge International
- 288. CEDAWinLAW.COM
- 289. OLDALONE UK
- 290. Older Women's Network, Europe
- 291. Prama Foundation
- 292. Soroptimist International GBI
- 293. Soroptimist International

**United States of America**

- 294. AARP
- 295. Active Aging Consortium Asia Pacific
- 296. Alzheimer Association
- 297. Amer. Assoc of Family and Consumer Sciences
- 298. AMDA - The Society for Post-Acute and Long-Term Care Medicine
- 299. CHANGING THE NARRATIVE

- 300. Community Networks for Aging in Place Alliance
- 301. Dementia Alliance International
- 302. Duluth Aging Support
- 303. Encore Network
- 304. Global Action on Aging
- 305. Global Ageing Network, DBA International Association of Homes and Services for the Ageing (IAHSA)
- 306. Global Social Service Workforce Alliance
- 307. Gray Panthers
- 308. Human Rights Watch
- 309. International Association for Hospice and Palliative Care
- 310. International Association of Gerontology and Geriatrics
- 311. International Network for the Prevention of Elder Abuse
- 312. International Society on Aging and Disease
- 313. Long Term Care Community Coalition
- 314. National Association of State Long Term Care Ombudsman Programs (NASOP)
- 315. National Consumer Voice for Quality Long-Term Care
- 316. New Aspect Coaching
- 317. PAHO/WHO Association of Former Staff
- 318. Sanctuary for Longevity Project
- 319. Seniors Circle of the People's Party
- 320. Sisters of Charity Federation
- 321. The Dayton Foundation Del Mar Encore Fellows Initiative UNANIMA International
- 322. United Methodist Church-General Board of Church and Society
- 323. United Nations Association - Orange County
- 324. Wisdom of Age
- 325. Word of Life International Inc

**Uruguay**

- 326. Centro de Servicio Social El Pastoreo
- 327. REDAM - CAAM
- 328. REDAM - Cerro Largo

**Venezuela**

- 329. Convite AC

**Zambia**

- 330. Alzheimer's Disease and Related Dementias In Zambia -ADDIZ
- 331. Ricard Banda Foundation
- 332. Senior Citizens Association of Zambia
- 333. Support To Older People-Zambia
- 334. Zambian Center for Poverty Reduction and Research Limited

**Zimbabwe**

- 335. HelpAge Zimbabwe

336. Foundation Activus