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Statement from the GAROP Steering Group on UNIDOP 2024

On the United Nations International Day of Older Persons 2024 (UNIDOP 2024) we celebrate the immense achievements of campaigners for the human rights of older persons around the world as our global campaign goes up a gear.

Older persons around the world face a common struggle in fully claiming their human rights. Intersecting discrimination on the grounds of multiple characteristics, including but not limited to age, gender and disability, can leave some older persons disproportionately marginalised. It has been found that the international human rights framework has conceptual limitations and fragmentation in its coverage and protection of the human rights of older personsⁱ.

Older persons must be empowered as rights holders and not seen as passive recipients of charity and welfare. This must also include older persons who are in need of care and support services. We are deeply concerned by further recent findings about the prevalence of abuse in institutional care and support facilities globallyⁱⁱ and the multiple threats to older persons' legal capacity inherent in residential facilitiesⁱⁱⁱ.

A new comprehensive international legally binding instrument (UN convention) would provide much-needed clarity around the concept of autonomy and ensure that older persons' will and preferences are fully respected^{iv}. A UN convention could also guide the reorientation of government investment in strengthening care and support provision for older persons^v.

On this UN International Day of Older Persons, we celebrate those campaigning for the human rights of older persons around the world, including older people and diverse advocates of all ages. We welcome the recent developments at the international level with the clear recognition by governments at the UN that there are gaps in the international human rights framework and that an international legally binding instrument is one way to address these gaps. This was the outcome of 14 years of discussions among governments and other stakeholders in which older persons and civil society have played an active and vital role.

Margaret Young, Chair of GAROP, said *'We call on the UN Human Rights Council to respond to these recent international developments and urgently take the next concrete steps towards drafting a new international instrument on the human rights of older persons'*.

The Steering Group of the Global Alliance for the Rights of Older People and our network of 400 member organizations stand ready to engage actively and constructively with Member States and other stakeholders in future processes relating to the human rights of older persons.

ⁱ [A/HRC/49/70 \(undocs.org\)](https://undocs.org/A/HRC/49/70)

ii [g2413094.pdf \(un.org\)](#)

iii [g2411623.pdf \(un.org\)](#)

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