

The conclusion of the UN Open-ended Working Group on Ageing process and what it means for our campaign for a UN convention

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. Why has the Open-ended Working Group on Ageing process ended?

During the 14th session of the Open-ended Working Group on Ageing, Member States adopted [Decision 14/1](#) by consensus. Although the language used in the Decision was not as strong and focused as we wanted, the Decision importantly identified possible gaps in the protection of the human rights of older persons and included an international legal instrument (a term that can be used to describe a UN convention) as one of the recommended options to address those gaps.

Subsequently in August 2024, the General Assembly adopted [Resolution 78/324](#). This resolution stated that in consideration of Decisions 13/1 and 14/1, it was decided that the Open-ended Working Group on Ageing has **completed its work and concluded its mandate**. It also urged relevant UN bodies to further consider the recommendations made in Decision 14/1. The requests in the resolution were not as concrete as we would have liked, but relevant UN bodies, which includes the Human Rights Council, are urged to further consider the recommendations, which includes a UN convention as one option.

2. Is it a good thing for our campaign that the Open-ended Working Group on Ageing process has ended?

YES! This is an exciting new phase of our campaign. Given that the Open-ended Working Group on Ageing process has been taking place in a highly political environment in New York where it was challenging to get governments to agree concrete outcomes, it makes sense for other relevant UN bodies, particularly the **Human Rights Council** in Geneva, where human rights expertise sits, to move this work forward from there.

It was positive that the process concluded with a concrete General Assembly resolution and its decision that were adopted by consensus, requested further work, and kept the door open to moving towards a UN convention. We need to capitalise on this important political momentum to advocate strongly for a convention.

There will still be other work and discussions in New York around older persons' rights (the high level meeting to be hosted by the President of General Assembly requested in Resolution 78/324 and in the context of discussions on ageing issues by other intergovernmental bodies), but the focus now for our campaign for a UN convention is very much at the Human Rights Council in Geneva.

3. Why is the Global Alliance now focusing on the Human Rights Council?

The Human Rights Council is in Geneva and generally is where governments' human rights expertise is held. The Human Rights Council has already done some dedicated work on older persons' rights, including the establishment and renewal of the Independent Expert on the enjoyment of all human rights by older persons' mandate. There have also been two substantive resolutions calling for a Multi-Stakeholder Meeting on the human rights of older persons and an Expert meeting on the human rights obligations of States regarding violence against, abuse and neglect of older persons in all settings, both of which have recommended a new international instrument.

The Human Rights Council has now been asked by the General Assembly to consider the recommendations from Decision 14/1 of the Open-Ended Working Group on Ageing. This is the best place for a decision to be made to start drafting a convention. The Human Rights Council has 47 Members drawn from all regions. This allows us to be more focused and targeted in our advocacy with Member States. The Human Rights Council has the mandate to make its own decision to establish a drafting process for a convention.

4. What do we want to happen in 2025?

We want the Human Rights Council to adopt another resolution on the human rights of older persons, which would include a specific recommendation to establish a drafting mechanism of some kind. Our preference is for an **intergovernmental working group** to lead the drafting process to encourage Member States' engagement and ownership. This would be more likely to get support from States and secure more ratifications over the medium to long term.

We want to see the representation and participation of civil society and NHRIs included in the resolution. Pushing the Human Rights Council to take this step as early as possible in 2025 is what our advocacy and campaigning must focus on urgently now.

5. How can civil society be involved in the Human Rights Council's work?

Advocates for the human rights of older persons need to be as visible as possible at the Human Rights Council when it discusses any issues that have implications for the rights of older persons. UN ECOSOC consultative status is required for NGOs to participate directly in the formal Human Rights Council sessions. We can explore other ways to support the wider participation of non-accredited NGOs but going forward the more NGOs that apply for ECOSOC consultative status the better. To see how to apply for ECOSOC status, view [GAROP's webinar](#) and this [OHCHR briefing](#).

The Human Rights Council sessions take place over four to five weeks and discussion of older persons' rights might take place a few times over that period. In Geneva, NGOs can access information about who the relevant contacts of a government mission are for the

drafting of a particular resolution online. NGOs can even attend and make interventions at the informal negotiations on resolutions. Civil society can also participate in the negotiation of resolution text even if not physically present in Geneva.

We will need strong and diverse NGO voices with ECOSOC status to participate at the Human Rights Council, advocate for further consideration of the recommendations adopted in Decision 14/1, and champion the drafting of the UN convention.

6. How can NGOs engage with the process of drafting a UN convention?

We will aim to advocate for civil society engagement to be as inclusive as possible, so that even NGOs without [ECOSOC consultative status](#) can participate in any new drafting process or mechanism that might be established by the Human Rights Council in Geneva. Building a strong relationship and constructive dialogue with your government contacts at the national level will be vital to contribute to the negotiation process. The Global Alliance is also committed to involving a wider cross-section of civil society and older persons in the conversations about the purpose and content of a new UN convention.

7. What can civil society do now to support the campaign for a UN convention?

If you are not already a member, [apply to join](#) our Global Alliance! You can also follow our Global Alliance and Age With Rights campaign updates on our [website](#) and social media. The Global Alliance provides updates about UN processes, information about how to get involved, advocacy tools and templates for civil societies, and useful contact information. Please also [sign and share our Age With Rights petition](#) for a UN convention.

If you are a member, you can also join our briefings and webinars and use our templates and materials in advocacy with your government at national level. Contact the Global Alliance [Secretariat](#) if you have specific questions, or to offer time, expertise or funding!

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