

Statement submitted by AARP, Global Action on Aging, HelpAge International, International Association of Gerontology and Geriatrics, International Federation on Ageing and the International Network for the Prevention of Elder Abuse, non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council

Statement

Formally protecting the rights of older people globally

1. The International NGO Coalition for the Rights of Older People stands ready to support and inform the work of the Open-Ended Working group whose purpose is not only to consider the existing international frameworks but to consider, as appropriate, the feasibility of further instruments and measures.
2. Civil society has a long and important history of advocating for the rights of older people globally.
3. In 1982 we were present when the Vienna International Plan of Action on Ageing was endorsed by the United Nations in 1982 (resolution 37/51). It aimed to strengthen the capacities of Governments and civil society to deal effectively with the ageing of populations and to address the developmental potential and dependency needs of older persons. The Plan was to be considered in relation to agreed standards and strategies in specific areas including human rights and the advancement of women. The Plan is not binding.
4. In 1991 we were present when the United Nations General Assembly adopted the UN Principles for Older Persons (resolution 46/91). The Principles have provided a framework on which to base national ageing strategies. The Principles are not binding.
5. In 2002 we were present when the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing was endorsed by the United Nations in 2002 (resolution 57/167). A central theme running through the Plan is 'the full realization of all human rights and fundamental freedoms of all older persons.' The Plan is not binding.
6. In 2010 we were present at the sixty-fifth session of the Third Committee, Follow-up to the Second World Assembly on ageing when Member States were called upon to develop their national capacity for monitoring and *enforcing the rights of older persons*, in consultation with all sectors of society, including organizations of older persons through, inter alia, national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights where applicable. A call for action is not binding.
7. In 2011 we are present at the first session of the Open-ended Working Group to provide evidence and insights with and on behalf of older people globally whose rights are being violated.
8. *Older people have a right to freedom from discrimination*
Older men and women are often denied access to services and jobs and treated without respect because of their age and other factors such as gender or disability.

9. *Older people and a right to freedom from violence*
Older men and women are often subjected to abuse including verbal, sexual, psychological and financial abuse.
10. *Older people have a right to social security*
Older men and women often do not have financial protection such as pensions and other forms of social security. Without a secure minimum income older people and their families fall into poverty.
11. *Older people have a right to health*
Older men and women may not receive appropriate health and social care because of their age. Treatment can be denied and older people can receive poor or insufficient service.
12. *Older people have a right to work*
Older men and women may be deemed 'unemployable' because of their age and forced to stop working because of mandatory retirement ages. This is a violation of a person's rights in the workplace; everyone has the right to free choice of employment.
13. *Older people have a right to property and inheritance rights*
Older men and women, in many parts of the world, succumb to inheritance laws, both statutory and customary, which deny women of all ages the right to own or inherit property when their husband is deceased. Violations of an individual right to equality of ownership, management and the disposition of property exists
14. New human rights instruments are necessary to not only clarify Government responsibilities towards older women and men and improve accountability, but to provide a framework for policy and decision-making. Application of such a framework to the MIPAA priorities and issues would ensure that strategies take into account the impact of the interdependence of rights on older people and that of the households and communities in which they live.