

**WRITTEN STATEMENT FOR 11TH SESSION OF THE OPEN-ENDED WORKING GROUP ON AGEING**  
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**COVID19, OLDER PERSONS AND HUMAN RIGHTS**

This statement is made on behalf of Governing Council and members of Global Vision India Foundation NGO from India. We support the statement made by the Global Alliance for the Rights of Older People (GAROP).

As UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres has rightly said, that “the COVID-19 pandemic is one of the most dangerous challenges the world has faced in our lifetime, and it is a humanitarian crisis with severe health and economic consequences”. Particularly the older persons are facing many challenges like higher mortality risk, instances of neglect or mistreatment, and many ways. We are concerned about the human rights of older people on various continents. Many countries lack adequate legislation to protect the rights of older people and to prevent discrimination, exclusion, marginalization, violence, and abuse.<sup>1</sup>

In India also there are instances where there are discrimination and a lack of recognition of old people. In India, there are more than 100 million old people and more than 65% are poor. Indian Supreme Court declared that children should maintain their old parents and shelter them. Mandatory social distancing has psychological and physical effects on the health of older people. About 29.5 percent of the respondents said COVID-19 and the resultant lockdowns affected their social lives, psychological issues, and health conditions.<sup>2</sup>

There is a serious need to address the issues by UN and civil society organizations. Measures can be enforced by proper domestic legislation and international convention. In India, though the pandemic is being regulated through the Epidemic diseases Act and Disaster management Act, there is no specific law or policy to protect and support older people. In many undeveloped countries high illiteracy among elderly women, lack of awareness about their rights, and social norms add to the misery. Even if some provisions are there, they are not adequate to protect their rights. Special Fund and dedicated helpline should be created for them. Subject to physical fitness, they can be engaged in lighter work, so that they can earn remuneration and will feel engaged. Respect, care, and recognition emotionally matters for old people.

The Open-ended Working Group can play an important role if given the responsibility by the concerned States or UN agencies. UN can call on the Member States through this Open-ended Working Group to fulfill their mandate and take necessary remedial measures, to protect the rights of older people. We strongly support the slogan “Age with Rights”.

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<sup>1</sup> . Statement by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Michelle Bachelorette. May 12, 2020

<sup>2</sup> . A study was conducted by NGO Age Well Foundation, India. March 18, 2021