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Mr. Robert Venne
Social Affairs Officer
Division of Social Policy and Development
Department of Economic and Social Affairs
United Nations Secretariat
Room S-2979, New York, NY 10017

**AARP INPUT FOR OPEN-ENDED WORKING GROUP ON AGEING
REGARDING HUMAN RIGHTS INSTRUMENT FOR OLDER PERSONS**

Dear Mr. Venne,

AARP is a nonprofit, nonpartisan, social welfare organization with a membership of more than 37 million, that helps people turn their goals and dreams into real possibilities, strengthens communities and fights for the issues that matter most to families such as healthcare, employment and income security, retirement planning, affordable utilities and protection from financial abuse. For more than 50 years, AARP has been serving our members and society by creating positive social change. AARP's mission is to enhance the quality of life for all as we age, leading positive social change and delivering value to all people 50+ and to society through advocacy, service and information. AARP works tirelessly to fulfill the vision of a society in which everyone lives their best life with dignity and purpose, and in which people can fulfill their goals and dreams.

In response to the recent "Call for non-governmental organizations to provide their input to the open ended working group on ageing, AARP has identified issues which should be addressed in the work of the Group toward a Human Rights instrument in order to protect the Rights of Older Persons.

a) Purpose

For the first time in history we are faced with a landscape never witnessed before in our world. The aging of the world's population coupled with its significant increase. UN Population Division numbers give credence to this phenomenon, "World population grew to 7.06 billion in mid-2012 after having passed the 7 billion mark in 2011. Developing countries accounted for 97 percent of this growth because of the dual effects of high birth rates and young populations. Conversely, in the developed countries the annual number of births barely exceeds deaths because of low birth rates and much older populations." However less developed countries will experience an accelerated aging process in a shorter period of time. Many countries will get old before they get rich.

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As the aging of the world increases so do the abuses, many older people in many countries are victims of abuse and experience discrimination and violation of their rights at a family, community and institutional level.

b) Principles

Should be based on Human Rights principles but not limited to the value and contributions of older people; respect for the inherent dignity of all people, including older people; equality and non-discrimination; independence; autonomy; full and effective participation and inclusion in society; access to information; self-fulfillment; personal development; and intergenerational solidarity

c) Definitions

We at AARP support as we all grow old, we all experience getting older differently. Different societies, cultures and religions around the world view old age and what it means to be an older person in different ways. Because of this we cannot use a single age (for example 55 or 60 or 65) or one particular view to say who is old and who is not. As society changes and more and more people live longer, how we view old age and what it means to be an older person will change.

d) Equality and non-discrimination as applied to older persons

AARP is committed to a life course approach to aging which is validated in our mission to enhance the quality of life for all as we age. Therefore, we take a more holistic approach in our work to ensure that families are protected. In the current economic climate we see the increase of governments to cut programs and we need to ensure that older person's rights are protected. Barry Rand, our CEO has stressed the interconnectedness of families, both in their successes and in their struggles. "In the United States, there are 42 million Americans who are informal caregivers most of whom take care of older family members. There are 7 million children who live in households that depend on Social Security to support the family. There are 5 million widows and widowers and 2 million children whose parents have died and who rely on Social Security survivors' benefits. There are 6.5 million people 50-plus who have told us they are concerned that Social Security and Medicare will not be there for their kids and grandkids. The tens of millions of 50-plus Americans who, through their tax dollars and voluntary contributions, support our public schools, children's health programs and grandparent guardianship programs. The high cost of health care hurts everyone. We need to focus on helping people of all ages attain long-term health and financial security and live their best lives, not argue over who is hurt or helped more. That doesn't solve the problems we face as a society; it only promotes conflict and encourages antagonism."

Therefore a convention on the rights of older persons would provide clarity on governments' human rights obligations towards older people. It would create an enforceable monitoring mechanism to hold those in authority to account for their actions towards older people. Encourage a shift in attitude from older people being considered recipients of welfare to rights holders with responsibilities. We need to make it clear that human rights apply to older people the same way as they apply to people of all ages and to make it illegal to treat people unfairly because of their age. This should be in line with

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the international human rights treaties which already exist and not weaken the rights in any way.

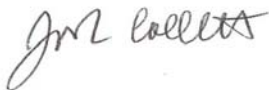
e) Specify Rights to be included

Right to quality of life, Right to health, Right to Support and services, Right to Live Independently, Nobody has the right to hurt, humiliate, punish or torture older people, Right to be protected against all forms of violence, Right to work, Right to an adequate standard of living, Right to education, Right to own, sell or give away and inherit property, right to be recognized as a person who has rights under the law, Right to access to the Justice System, Right to live freely and Safely, Right to meet with who they want, freedom of speech as long as it does not harm others, Right to respect for Privacy, home and family life, Right to free movement, Rights in times of natural disasters, humanitarian emergencies or armed conflict.

f) National and international Supervisory Mechanisms

Make sure that a focal point is set up in the government to ensure different parts of government put the rights in the convention into practice and that older people can complain to the authorities and have their complaints dealt with should they feel their rights are denied. Set up national commissions to ensure that governments fulfil their obligations. Recognize that countries must support each other to put these rights into practice.

Sincerely,



Josh Collett,
Vice President
AARP Office of International Affairs