



Real Possibilities

Statement of AARP at the Open Ended Working Group on Ageing at the United Nations – August 12, 2013

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.

One social issue that spans the entire globe is elder abuse and affects the health and human rights of millions of elders around the world. The issue is especially in need of urgent attention as an estimated 84% of cases go unreported. We at AARP believe there is no room for Ageism in today's world whether it is in the workplace or in health systems.

For the first time in history we are faced with a landscape never witnessed before in our world, the rapid aging of the global population. 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. In developing countries in 2050 projections estimate a growth of 50 percent of persons over the age of 60. Policies and systems must be put in place now to manage this unprecedented development in mankind’s history.

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 accountable for their actions towards older people. It encourages a shift in attitude from older people being considered welfare recipients 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 the international human rights treaties which already exist and not weaken the rights in any way.

On behalf of AARP, we urge the UN Member States to continue the work of the Open Ended Working Group and to ensure that citizens all around the globe have the protections which are their right, and that countries be made accountable by a Convention which ensures these protections.

Thank you