

# Open-Ended Working Group on Ageing questionnaire on the identification of gaps in the protection of rights of older persons

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## **About this consultation**

The UN Open-Ended Working Group on Ageing has issued a call for contributions on the gaps in the protection of rights of older persons and how best these could be addressed in international frameworks. They have invited contributions from governments, human rights institutions and civil society organisations.

## **About Age International**

Age International is dedicated to responding to the needs, and promoting the rights, of older people in low and middle-income countries across the world. We support older people in the poorest countries to improve their income, escape poverty, receive the right kind of healthcare, survive emergencies, and have their contributions to families and communities recognised and valued. Our vision is a world in which women and men everywhere can lead dignified, healthy and secure lives as they grow older. Age International is the international arm of Age UK and the UK member of the HelpAge International global network.

## **For more information**

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## **Identification of gaps**

Age International aligns itself with the responses to this questionnaire made by both Age UK and HelpAge International with regards to the identification of gaps in the normative framework and practical implementation for the protection of the human rights of older persons.

Significant, persistent, and unaddressed gaps exist across all the topic areas identified in the questionnaire (as identified by HelpAge International and Age UK) and the implementation of the existing international human rights framework is insufficient to address the protection of the rights of older persons in these areas.

## **Options on how best to address the gaps**

### **1. How has your organisation engaged with international and regional human rights mechanisms**

Age International has participated fully in the Open-Ended Working Group on Ageing since its inception, both as part of the Age UK group and as an independently accredited NGO to the OEWG.

We contributed to a shadow report of the UK Government's UPR, focussing specifically on the rights of older women, and contributed to a CEDAW review of the UK Government.

Age International was part of the drafting committee that led to the creation of the Council of Europe Recommendation CM/Rec(2014)2 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on the promotion of human rights of older persons.

Age International has also contributed to the collective efforts of the HelpAge International global network and the Global Alliance for the Rights of Older People to engage with human rights mechanisms internationally.

### **2. Have those engagements resulted in positive impact in strengthening the protection of the human rights of older persons?**

Despite the sustained efforts of Age International and its partners over many years to create greater awareness and commitment to strengthening the protection of the human rights of older persons, we have found the international response to be overwhelmingly insufficient. The rights of older people continue to be deprioritised at national, regional and international levels. Insufficient funds and resources are dedicated to supporting the only UN processes with a specific focus on the rights of older persons (Independent Expert, OHCHR, DESA, and the OEWG itself).

This de-prioritisation has had practical implications with real-life consequences for older persons: insufficient attention has been given to older persons in humanitarian response; underinvestment in improving the collection and analysis of disaggregated data on older persons; lack of recognition of older persons as a stakeholder group in consultations and policy decision-making at all levels.

### **3. What other options can be considered to strengthen the protection of older persons?**

Attention and resources must be given immediately to the creation of an international universal legally-binding human rights instrument for older persons. This is necessary to help the international human rights system to mobilise more effectively in strengthening the protection of rights where older persons are concerned. It is also necessary to create the guidance and legal certainty that national governments require to put more effective policies into place. And it is necessary to help inform all members of society that older persons are equal members of society, entitled fully to their rights and deserving of the same opportunities as all other parts of society to lead lives of dignity.

The creation of a convention would help establish obligations and responsibilities on the UN system as a whole, helping to ensure that all multilateral agencies take older persons' rights and needs into account in their policies and programmes.

And the process of creating and implementing a convention would help generate greater awareness of the need for tackling ageism and negative attitudes towards older people. The process would support greater constructive engagement and dialogue between older persons and decision makers generating greater accountability and more effective policy making. It would also help educate people of all ages in society of the importance of taking population ageing into account, thereby helping governments to prepare more effectively for the demographic transitions taking place across all regions.