

**Age UK Opening Statement, 1 August 2011**  
**Opening Session of 2<sup>nd</sup> Open-ended Working Group on Ageing**  
**1 – 4 August 2011**

I represent Age UK, a UK-based NGO working to improve the lives of older people and I am presenting this statement on behalf of the Global Alliance for the Rights of Older People. The Global Alliance is a social movement with reach to millions of older people and organisations working with older people in all regions of the world.

We would like to warmly welcome the continuing work of the Open-ended Working Group on Ageing. We would also like to call attention to the UN General Assembly's commitment to addressing the needs of older people, and in particular to the dedication and efforts of Member States taking part in the Open-ended Working Group discussions, members of the Bureau who have guided this process, and the UN secretariat staff through whose tireless efforts these meetings have been made possible.

The Global Alliance for the Rights of Older People hopes that the discussions over the next few days will illustrate the realities older people are experiencing and the overwhelming need to strengthen human rights mechanisms that are supposed to protect them. The themes covered by this session of the Open-ended Working Group on Ageing point directly to the lived experience of older people in all parts of the globe, and of the importance of making the realities of ageing visible in all our discussions of human rights.

As civil society organisations, we welcome the opportunity to engage with UN Member States in this important process and believe that the direct involvement of older people themselves in the proceedings will enhance immeasurably the quality and effectiveness of the discussions taking place.

By establishing the Open-ended Working Group on Ageing, the UN has created a formal space for dialogue between citizens and UN member states on matters of older persons rights. We would like to say to you that older people's groups and organisations working with older people have taken notice and are committed to working with member states to ensure the best possible outcome for strengthening older people's rights globally, which we believe to be a Convention on the Rights of Older Persons.

We remain convinced that a Convention on the Rights of Older Persons would enhance the existing international framework of human rights, but we also encourage UN member states to take all necessary action to ensure older person's needs are not forgotten in the protection of human rights, national and international development policy, planning and the delivery of services at all levels. We fully support the establishment of a Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Older Persons, providing that this contributes to the longer-term goal of improving and strengthening the international human rights system and does not preclude the establishment of a Convention.

The Global Alliance for the Rights of Older People urges the General Assembly to renew the mandate of the Open-ended Working Group, and to strengthen its work through the allocation of dedicated financial resources for facilitating greater member state and civil society participation, and to ensure that the activities of the Working Group are fully supported by the UN Secretariat.

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