

## Open-Ended Working Group on Ageing

### Eleventh session, 29 March – 1 April 2021

#### - Discussion on the way forward –

April 1<sup>st</sup>, 2021 – morning session

Dear Madame Chair,  
Excellencies,  
Distinguished panelists  
Dear friends of the OEWG-A,

This is a statement by HelpAge Deutschland on the way forward.

In his policy letter, Secretary-General Antonio Guterres pointed out the obvious discrimination of older persons and called on the international community to put an end to it immediately.

In his opening statement on Monday, the office of the General Secretary reiterated his recommendation to adopt a Convention on the Rights of Older Persons. The policy letter was written under the impression of the pandemic, but the discrimination of older people existed before COVID-19 and is not likely to cease after the pandemic.

The recent paper by UNDESA and OHCHR has confirmed that existing legal instruments have critical gaps regarding older persons. Yesterday, a side event in the ongoing 11<sup>th</sup> Session of the OEWG-A has restated this finding. Last year, the EU Presidency pledged to identify gaps and assist in eliminating them. We also heard this on Monday from Portugal in its capacity as Chair of TRIO.

However, over the last days, only few states have explicitly committed themselves to a new convention. Many states remained vague. Over the past eleven sessions of the OEWG-A a broad range of *normative elements* has been elaborated, but no-one came up with better ideas than drafting a convention.

Over 1 billion older people are discriminated against, be it in health policy, in access to justice, and in their right to work and lifelong learning and personal development.

Women, children and persons with disabilities are enjoying human rights under their own conventions. Why should we leave older people behind?

Therefore, given the evidence for the need of a convention, we vividly urge the OEWG-A to formally decide to start drafting a UN Convention on the Rights of Older Persons now - without any further delay.