

Open-ended Working Group on Ageing for the purpose of strengthening the protection of the human rights of older persons

Item 7 – The way forward - 1st April 2021

Statement by **International Network for the Prevention of Elder Abuse (INPEA)**

Read by Silvia Perel-Levin

INPEA thanks the Secretariat, the Bureau and all the panelists for their efforts in holding the session in very difficult circumstances with multiple technical challenges.

We are encouraged by the increasing number of NGOs attending and requesting accreditation, even though we have been largely invisible in this session due of unreasonable limitations imposed on our meaningful participation.

We regret the low participation of delegations at the interactive discussions. Despite so many having supported the Secretary-General's policy brief and having pledged commitment, Member States have been largely absent from this session.

[The OHCHR study on normative standards](#) and several experts in the panels have provided ample overwhelming indisputable "clear and convincing evidence of how existing mechanisms fail to protect human rights in older age. They underscored the imperative for an international legally binding instrument.

The ageism that we all condemn as we witness its pervasive reach during the current pandemic, has permeated this Working Group. Only two MS spoke during the interactive debate on normative elements. Only four, on the right to work. There is no justification for not attending and for not doing the work mandated by General Assembly resolutions that Member States endorsed.

It has become apparent that the current format of the WG may not be fit for purpose. Enough is enough. We must make a significant step forward.

The lack of access to justice impacts upon the enjoyment of all rights by older persons, and vice versa. We call on the Member States who are in favour of protecting the rights of **all** their citizens to enable **our** access to justice.

Enough talking, let's start drafting. Let us work together on a legally binding instrument.

We call on this Working Group to:

Create a multistakeholder task group with the participation of human rights experts from Member States, Civil Society, National Human Rights Institutions, the Independent Expert on the rights of older persons and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, to engage in the mandate given by the General Assembly of drafting elements for a legally binding instrument. This multistakeholder group could meet in Geneva, where delegations have their human rights experts who participate in multiple human rights mechanisms throughout the year.

This task group would focus solely on drafting a proposal for a legally binding instrument and should present their drafts to the 12th session of this Open-ended Working Group in 2022.

Enough stalling, enough blocking. Let's start drafting a Convention now.