



საქართველოს სახალხო დამცველი  
PUBLIC DEFENDER (OMBUDSMAN) OF GEORGIA

**Eleventh Session of the UN OEWGA**

**General discussion**

**Monday, 29 March 2021**

**Statement Delivered by the Georgian National Human Rights Institution**

Your Excellences,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Distinguished Participants,

It is my great pleasure to address you today on this truly important occasion and discuss briefly the challenging human rights situation of the elderly population in Georgia and worldwide.

At the outset, I would like to underline that the Office of Public Defender of Georgia as an “A” status National Human Rights Institution is of the firm view that a binding international instrument will provide the strongest protection for the rights of elderly people. Therefore, we fully support the joint statement of the NHRIs and CSOs delivered for the 11th Session of the UN Open-ended Working Group on Ageing. The Convention will be a crucial mechanism for protecting the rights of elderly persons around the globe.

Let me point out that the population is aging rapidly in Georgia and the demographic dynamics have a growing impact on the socio-economic developments of the country. In 2020, the share of the population aged 65 and older was 15.1% of the total population.

In Georgia, the elderly are one of the most vulnerable groups and are at higher risk of poverty and human rights abuses. They are often dependent on social assistance and pensions and have to live in difficult conditions. Discrimination based on age, neglect, maltreatment, abuse, violence, the risk of poverty and homelessness, lack of targeted programs and a shortage of measures taken towards the welfare of the elderly at the local level, represent the main challenges faced by the elderly. We discuss these problems annually and provide the responsible state institutions with relevant recommendations. Nevertheless, the state fails to take effective measures to improve the well-being of elderly people.

The Covid -19 pandemic worsened the human rights situation of elderly people and made the challenges faced by this vulnerable group even more vivid. The global health crisis showed us clearly that there is an urgent need to strengthen the international mechanisms and frameworks for protecting the elderly population.

Therefore, we believe that the adoption of the binding international instrument is a crucial element in gaining the strongest protection for the rights of elderly people.

Thank you very much for your attention!