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**4<sup>th</sup> Session United Nations Open Ended Working Group on Ageing  
August 12 to 15, 2013**

**Joint Statement**

**INTERNATIONAL NETWORK FOR THE PREVENTION OF  
ELDER ABUSE (INPEA) and the INTERNATIONAL LONGEVITY  
CENTER, GLOBAL ALLIANCE, (ILC, GA)**

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**An URGENT NEED FOR A HUMAN RIGHTS INSTRUMENT FOR  
OLDER PERSONS**

INPEA, is an international NGO whose mission is to work toward the prevention of elder abuse world-wide, adds its voice with the ILC GA on behalf of older persons globally to call for a new International Instrument to protect the Human Rights of Older Persons. The challenges facing older persons globally have been well - documented and should be addressed by a legally binding global human rights instrument that addresses gaps in existing instruments and consolidates non-binding human rights documents like the Madrid International Plan of Action on Aging (MIPAA) and the Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) General Recommendation No. 27 on human rights of older women.

**EQUALITY AND NON-DISCRIMINATION AS APPLIED TO  
OLDER PERSONS**

Age and gender are two underlying issues that result in marginalization of older persons, particularly women. Ageism is a term coined by Dr. Robert Butler in 1968 to describe the "systematic stereotyping of and discrimination against older people because they are old, in much the same way as racism and sexism are responses to skin color and gender (Butler, 1989). Mistreatment of older people has been linked to ageism, age discrimination and age prejudice (International Longevity Center, 2006). Ageism can be manifested in the home, institutions and the workplace, and is both a civil and human rights issue. Elder abuse is considered the most egregious type of hurtful behavior directed at older adults (Pasupathi and Lockenhoff, 2004).

August 12, 2013

Gender discrimination interacts with age discrimination for women. In the CEDAW General Recommendation No.27, under specific areas of concern, it is stated (11): "While both men and women experience discrimination as they become older, older women experience ageing differently. The impact of gender inequality throughout their lifespan is exacerbated in old age and is often based on deep-rooted cultural and social norms. The discrimination that older women experience is often a result of unfair resource allocation, maltreatment, neglect, and limited access to basic services."

INPEA and the ILC GA support incorporation of statements in the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing (MIPAA) and the CEDAW General Recommendation No. 27, into a binding Convention for the Human Rights of Older Persons. INPEA also supports the mandate that there be the inclusion of language in all UN human rights programs and policies especially in the Post 2015 Development Agenda identifying adults "of all ages".

### **SPECIFIC HUMAN RIGHTS TO BE INCLUDED**

The human rights identified in the Universal Principles of Older Persons (1991): specifically the principles of independence, participation, care, self-fulfillment, and dignity. **DIGNITY:** Older people should be able to live in dignity and security and be free of exploitation and abuse. Older people should be treated fairly regardless of age, gender, racial or ethnic background, disability or other status, and be valued independently of their economic contribution.

From the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, (MIPAA) Priority Area III, Issue 1, Objective 1, there should be the elimination of all forms of neglect, abuse and violence of older persons. Harmful traditional and customary practices, exacerbated by poverty and lack of access to legal protection, resulting in the abuse and violence against older women and widows should be abolished.

INPEA and the ILC GA strongly urge that a carefully considered Convention on the Rights of Older Persons be enacted. When all older adults are deemed worthy of protection and valued as contributing members of society, all society will benefit.

Thank you,