**IAGG’s written statement to the XTH OEWGA on**

**Education, Training, Life-long Learning and Capacity-building**

IAGG provides input from several member countries:

1. **Legal Framework**:

In the Republic of Korea, three laws address education for older persons: (1) A Public Employment Insurance Act partly reimburses educational costs for older workers’ self-development. (2) A Life-long Education Act provides that all adults have learning opportunities through public and private educational institutes with or without tuition. (3) An Elder Welfare Act encourages and supports older persons to utilize “elder education” programs through community senior centers.

In USA, the Higher Education Act of 1965 defined lifelong learning as education, training, and activities, for personal and professional development, in the context of the workplace.

In Colombia, a 2009 law requires all cities to create educational and cultural programs for older people. Through universities in Medellin, “Classes for Older People” offers workshops and cultural classes for older people.

**2. Key Issues and Challenges:**

In Korea, (1) Ageism often prevents older persons’ active participation in education. (2) Most educational programs for older persons focus on adaptation to life in retirement and old age, not toward self-development and capacity building. (3) “Elder education” tends to be treated differently from life-long education, though in principle life-long-education includes elder education. (4) Research on brain plasticity indicates that learning ability can be maintained or improved through individual exercises, potentially combating ageism while stimulating policy makers to address life-long learning and capacity building in ageing persons. (5) Retraining older workers will provide workers for the labor market, a pressing need given the ageing population, decreasing fertility rate, and decreasing working-age population.

In USA, policy, programs, and legislation are needed to support lifelong learning, through national organizations, colleges and universities, community non-profit organizations, public libraries, museums, and trade unions. Lifelong learning is best understood within lifespan development theory. There is a call to move toward an age-integrated view, which recognizes the role of education, work, and leisure across the life course. The link between lifelong learning and work cannot be ignored. To remain competitive both as a nation and as individuals, learning cannot end after formal education. It is critical to invest in human capital through ongoing education/training in order to maintain a successful workforce.

**3.  Education Services:**

In Korea, previously ageing was considered a social issue with education for older people treated as the purview of welfare services, focused only on adaptation to retirement. Despite the rapid ageing of Korean society, public policies on education for older persons remained fixed within this ageist framework. The 2000s Act on Public Employment Insurance was amended to enhance competitiveness of workers of all ages by reimbursing costs of education and training. Nevertheless, the proportion of older persons regularly employed remains low, as does the proportion of older workers interested in education and training.

Uruguay has an innovative program of digital inclusion called Plan Ibirapitá. Retired people receive a scholarship, a tablet with mobile internet, as well as a course to learn how to use digital devices.

In Brazil, the Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul has a project “University for the Elderly” which provides classes and workshops related to ageing themes.

In Canada, the “Lifelong Learner Plan” allows Canadians to withdraw up to $10, 000 per year from their Registered Retirement Savings Plan on a tax-free basis to facilitate continuing education and retraining at all ages. This is available to both the individual and a spouse/common-law partner.

In the European Union, e-health and m-health tools are used by older adults in diverse health promotion programs, but also outside formal programs to monitor and improve their health.

**4.  Data on Access to Right of Education:**

In Korea, there is no reliable data on right to education; however, periodic national surveys provide some data on the current state of older workers’ participation in educational programs.

In the US some states have relevant laws, e.g. in Ohio older people are welcome to all university classes on a space available basis.  We have limited information about other countries.

**5. Age Discrimination:**

In Korea, there is no age limit to education. However, educational providers neglect development of elders’ capacity, and most ageing workers do not attempt to enroll in educational programs. This lack of concern and low demand for education creates a vicious cycle, attributable to ageism, which limits educational opportunities and, in fact, discriminates against older persons in education.

**6. Mechanisms to Lodge Complaints and Seek Redress:**

In Korea, without a specific legal framework to protect and promote the rights of older persons, there are no specific mechanisms to lodge complaints and seek redress for denial of rights to education. However, those who seek redress may appeal to the National Human Rights Commission of Korea (NHRCK). The NHRCK may need to devote more attention to promoting rights of older persons, including the right to education.