



VIRTUAL ROUNDTABLE SERIES / 5 FREE EVENTS

TAKEAWAYS

MAINSTREAMING KNOWLEDGE ON AGEING

Second event

“Two worlds, same goal: Ongoing efforts at the UN General Assembly and the UN Human Rights Council for the rights of older persons”



30 June 2022



9:30 - 11:10 (NY time)
15:30 - 17:10 (CET)



With the support of:

A special acknowledgement to Ms. Julia Ferre, Social Affairs Officer, Programme on Ageing Unit, Division for Inclusive Social Development, UNDESA, for her notes on the 2nd. event of the series, that served as the basis for preparing these takeaways. The document has been put together by Ms. Analucía Jácome, Senior Project Leader and Human Rights Expert, and Mr. Israel Ledesma, Graphic Designer, Division for People and Social Inclusion at UNITAR. We hope you enjoy it!

Moderator



Mr. Alex Mejía

Director, Division for People and Social Inclusion,
UNITAR

Welcome Remarks



H.E. Ambassador Luis Gallegos (Video-message)

UNITAR's Chair of the Board of Trustees,
President of the Global Initiative on Ageing Foundation (GIA)

*“People should age healthy, active,
free of anguish and with dignity.”*

1. Raising awareness on ageing as well as on the strengths and challenges of older persons pursues the elimination or at least mitigation of discriminatory social institutions, laws, cultural norms, and community practices, such as those limiting the promotion and protection of Human Rights and sustainable development.

2. Fostering equal and adequate conditions for the development of their autonomous and independent life, as needed, represents an essential step forward towards their integral protection and participation.

3. It is quite relevant the inclusion of older persons, not only as beneficiaries of capacity building activities but also as speakers or trainers from their experience on a wide range of topics addressed to different profiles.

4. The UN Decade of Healthy Ageing as well as the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development represent an important motivation to keep reinforcing capacities as a powerful resource towards transforming lives of individuals and societies.

HIGHLIGHTS ON UNITAR, GIA, AND OLDER PERSONS

UNITAR has been working on capacity building initiatives focused on ageing and older persons, as an autonomous UN body with the mission of developing capacities of different stakeholders. The Institute envisions these initiatives as an opportunity to learn from some good practices and challenges towards the effective protection and participation of older persons from a comprehensive perspective.

GIA is focused on 4 pillars: Multilateral Affairs, Public Policies, Capacity Building as well as Advocacy and Action. It works on an articulated strategy to address ageing issues from different perspectives, including human rights, labor, health, education, and science, towards the adoption of an International Convention on the rights of older persons as an ulterior objective.



Keynote Speaker

Focus: General Overview**Mme. Claudia Mahler**

UN Independent Expert on the full enjoyment of the Human Rights by Older Persons

“Yet, older persons are often not mentioned in many Human Rights resolutions and such gaps need to be addressed.”

Efforts to promote and advance the agenda of the human rights of older persons are taking place in New York and Geneva:

1. In New York, the Open-ended Working Group for the purpose of strengthening the protection of the human rights of older persons (OEWG-A) was established by the General Assembly in 2010, and its twelve sessions have produced ample material on a broad range of topics that should be used.
2. The OEWG-A has brought awareness to the topic of older persons and in the last session a proposal was made to establish a cross-regional core group to bring even a stronger voice to the General Assembly and the UN at large regarding older persons.
3. In Geneva, which brings a human rights perspective, relevant reports have been produced, including specific reports from the mandate of the Independent Expert on the enjoyment of all human rights by older persons, as well as reports of the Human Rights Council.
4. In 2021, an important substantive resolution on ageism and age discrimination that counted with general agreement among Member States was adopted at the Human Rights Council.

HIGHLIGHTS ON THE MANDATE OF THE INDEPENDENT EXPERT

Since the establishment of the mandate by the HRC in 2013, the IE has assessed the implementation of national, regional, and international standards relevant to the rights of older persons and identified, exchanged, and promoted best practices relating to the promotion and protection of these rights, including through 13 official country visits. The mandate has also prepared and presented several thematic reports and recommendations to the HRC and to the GA.



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FOOD FOR THOUGHT

While the dynamics are different in New York and Geneva, there are possibilities to complement and align efforts for the human rights of older persons, including by bringing human rights experts in Geneva to the OEWG-A. The Group of Friends of Older Persons in New York and Geneva should also work more closely to ensure they align their agendas, for instance by holding joint meetings.

TO BEAR IN MIND!

Beyond the OEWG-A and Human Rights Council, efforts need to be devoted to reaching other constituencies and to better include older persons in other processes and agendas, such as the High-Level Political Forum and the Secretary General's Common Agenda.

Find Resolution A/HRC/RES/24/20 here:
[Human Rights Documents \(ohchr.org\)](https://www.ohchr.org/en/hrbodies/hrc/resolutions/resolutions2019)

Find the IE's latest thematic reports here:
[OHCHR | Documents Listing](https://www.ohchr.org/en/hrbodies/iaeg/iaeg-reports)



Speakers

Focus: The work of the Friends of Older Persons in New York



H.E. Ambassador Paula Narvaez Ojeda
Permanent Representative of Chile to the UN
and other International Organizations in New York,
Chair of the Working Group of Older Persons in New York

An International Convention for the Rights of Older Persons would be the greatest advance that can be achieved for this group

H.E. shared her insights on behalf of Chile as President of the Group of Friends of Older Persons in NY.

1. The Group recognizes that there is a need to build on the work of the OEWGA in order to further bolsters the International Human Rights protection and the well-being of older persons in concrete ways. It has been working towards streamlining the rights of this group in the framework of the UN General Assembly in New York, particularly through the different issues handled by the Third Committee, and the Commissions of the ECOSOC.

2. The Group has been fostering coordination among different stakeholders; including, like-minded member states around the work of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, the UN Decade of Healthy Ageing, the SDGs, and the outcomes of the consultative agenda of the Secretary General's Common Agenda. The Group has strived to ensure that the rights of older persons remain relevant to the UN in the future of the organization.

3. Chile, in its national capacity and as chair of the Group of Friends of Older Persons in NY, stresses the importance of the work of the OEWG-A and supports Argentina's efforts to establish a cross-regional core group to provide the space to explore the possibility of developing an International Convention for the Rights of Older Persons.

4. While much remains to be done in promoting the rights of older persons, the substantive resolution adopted by the Human Rights Council on ageism and age discrimination and the efforts of the OEWG-A constitute important advancements.

HIGHLIGHTS ON THE GROUP OF FRIENDS OF OLDER PERSONS IN NEW YORK

The Group of Friends of Older Persons in NY was created in August 2013. Since then, it has been proactively participating in activities related to Older Persons in the context of the General Assembly; specifically, in the negotiations of the Third Committee that take place on a yearly basis for the resolution "Follow up to the Second World Assembly on Ageing"; as well as in the Open-ended Working Group for the purpose of strengthening the protection of the human rights of older persons.





FOOD FOR THOUGHT!

During the OEWG-A considerable gaps to protect the rights of older persons in existing international standards have been clearly identified.

DID YOU KNOW?

The establishment in 2010 of a UN Open-Ended Working Group on Ageing (OEWGA) set a milestone at the United Nations towards the objective of strengthening the protection of the Human Rights of older persons and their empowerment and participation in all aspects of society.

Learn more about the Group of Friends here:
<https://www.un.org/development/desa/newsletter/trends/2013/09/8133.html>



Focus: Snapshot on the efforts and challenges to the effective promotion and protection of the rights of Older Persons from NY



Mme. Amal Abou Rafeh

Chief of the Programme on Ageing Section Social Inclusion and Participation Branch Division for Inclusive Social Development, UNDESA

“Both, Development and Human Rights approaches are required to adequately address the needs of older persons.”

1. The demographic realities of population ageing are often not understood at the society and global level. The pace of population ageing in the coming years is unprecedented, with virtually every country in the world experiencing growth. In 8 years – when the world reaches the milestone of the SDGs: 2030- older persons will globally outnumber youth, with the most rapid growth experienced in low- and middle-income countries.

2. Despite this context, one of the main challenges that efforts both in New York and Geneva face is the fact that ageing as an issue is not on the political radar of Member States, with many Governments around the world focused on young people and youth.

3. Another challenge lies in disagreements on how to approach ageing issues within the United Nations, with stakeholders often disagreeing on whether issues of ageing are best approached from a development or a human rights perspective. This is a false dichotomy, as both development and human rights approaches are required to adequately address the needs of older persons. Indeed, the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, MIPAA, –considered a development framework- recognizes the importance of human rights and, conversely, an international human rights standard would advance the implementation and the accountability of this Plan.

4. The OEWG-A is characterized a unique format that allows a truly interactive discussion, with National Human Rights Institutions allowed to actively participate in the discussions, contrary to format of other OEWGs of the General Assembly. The working sessions of the OEWG-A aim to strengthen the protection of the human rights of older persons. In 2010, the General Assembly requested this working group to consider and present proposals for an international legal instrument, yet after years of working sessions, no concrete proposal has been made.

HIGHLIGHTS ON THE WORK OF UNDESA AND OLDER PERSONS

In accordance with the Madrid International Plan of Action, UNDESA, based in NY, is the focal point on ageing in the United Nations system; likewise, together with OHCHR, serve as the Secretariat of the UN General Assembly open-ended working group on ageing. UNDESA provides technical support to the negotiations of the annual UN General Assembly resolution on ageing.



United Nations

Department of Economic and Social Affairs





DID YOU KNOW?

“During the discussion on the way forward, a delegation announced that a group of Member States would create a cross-regional informal core group to work during the intersessional period with the main objective of preparing a draft decision to be submitted for the consideration of the Working Group at its thirteenth session in 2023. The draft decision could contain a proposal for the establishment of an intersessional Working Group with the objective of preparing and presenting a draft text determining the main gaps in the international human rights system for older persons, which would be the basis for the further negotiations of instruments and measures to close these gaps by Member States and Observers in the Working Group.” Source: A/AC.278/2022/2.

TO BEAR IN MIND

The above-mentioned initiative, supported by thirty Member States, could increase negotiations that could advance the conversation.

Learn more about the Programme on Ageing from UNDESA here:

[United Nations For Ageing | Ageing](#)

Learn more on the UN Open-Ended Working Group on Ageing here:

[United Nations Open-ended Working Group on Ageing](#)

Find the last report of the 12 Session of the OEWG-A, A/AC.278/2022/2, hold from the 11th to the 14th April 2022 here:

[Twelfth Session of the United Nations Open-ended Working Group on strengthening the protection of the human rights of older persons](#)



Focus: The work of the Group of Friends of the Rights of Older Persons in Geneva



Mme. Sabina Carli

Permanent Mission of Slovenia to the UN and other International Organizations in Geneva Co-chair of the Group of Friends of Human Rights of Older Persons in Geneva, at experts' level

The topic, as such, ageing and the additional layer of the Human Rights of older persons is a multi-sectorial matter that may be addressed by a number of Ministries...and stakeholders.

The Group has as main tasks:

1. To support the mandate of the Independent Expert on the enjoyment of all human rights by older persons, which is expected to be extended in the upcoming session of the HRC in September-October 2022.
2. To act as an amplifier of the human rights of older persons and attempts to mainstream such concerns in different documents and resolutions across the work of the Human Rights Council, emphasizing the role and participation of Older Persons in different contexts, and seeking engagement with the Universal Periodic Review from the 4th cycle of the UPR.
3. It serves as a space for discussion and collaboration, including on advancing and complementing efforts in both New York and Geneva. How? interalia, through public events, joint statements, champions, informal conversations to raise awareness, advocating and mainstreaming the topic, and connecting dots in capitals, New York, and Geneva.

HIGHLIGHTS ON THE GROUP OF FRIENDS OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS OF OLDER PERSONS IN GENEVA

The composition of this Group is different than the one in NY. This group was launched in 2016; they promote and support initiatives on the Human Rights of older persons, including through resolutions and the UPR process and look even further into possibilities to complement efforts that the international community is making at the UN in New York and Geneva.





CURIOUS FACT!

The Group of Friends of Older Persons in Geneva is a multistakeholder group; while its nature is intergovernmental, it also welcomes and counts with the participation of International Organizations, Civil Society, National Human Rights Institutions, representatives from OHCHR and Special Procedures and other mandates.

DID YOU KNOW?

The language used for Resolutions on the topic is quite important to land on specific issues, including labour, the impact of covid on older persons, etc.

Here you can find one of the last statements of the Group of Friends on the Human Rights of Older persons in Geneva, in the framework of the Multi-stakeholder meeting on the human rights of older persons:

[multi-stakeholder-meeting-Joint Statement States.docx](#)



Focus: Snapshot on the efforts and challenges to the effective promotion and protection of the rights of Older Persons from Geneva



Mr. Rio Hada

Focal Point on the Human Rights of Older Persons
of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights,
OHCHR

“A dedicated International Convention would be the best way to achieve the respect, protection, and promotion of the Human Rights of older persons.”

1. In Geneva, OHCHR prepared a paper in 2012 as a contribution to the Open-Ended Working Group on Ageing of the General Assembly on the gaps in the international human rights system, as a way to inform discussions among Member States. Several years later, OHCHR saw the need and demand to update this study and to look deeper into different issues. With support from Austria and Germany, OHCHR has produced an updated study that brings some findings:

2. While there has been progress in some areas, for instance in the establishment of human rights mechanisms at the regional levels and the establishment of the mandate of the Intendent Expert on the enjoyment of all human rights by older persons, the progress does not measure up to existing challenges in the field of population ageing and older persons, challenges that have been amplified by the pandemic.

3. Policy frameworks such as the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing has progressed on some areas but has not delivered on its promise to raise accountability and to achieve progress in many areas.

4. Therefore, it is clear from OHCHR analysis that existing mechanisms have limitations, and that a significantly different approach is needed.

HIGHLIGHTS ON THE WORK OF OHCHR AND OLDER PERSONS

In the *Takeaways* of the first event of these series we have already learned something about the work of the OHCHR; now, let's learn a little bit more of their important role. The Office aims to ensure a voice for all, especially for those whose voices are seldom heard, such as those of older persons. It works to ensure that governments take all measures required to protect and promote the human rights of older persons, and to support their autonomy and independence. It supports the work of Special Procedures and other mechanisms working to protect and promote the rights of older persons.



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TO BEAR IN MIND!

Besides of an International Convention, there is an opportunity to improve existing human rights frameworks, despite their limitations, such as the Universal Period Review process. Age discrimination account for less than 1% of all the recommendations of Treaty Bodies.

DID YOU KNOW?

In its resolution 48/3, the Human Rights Council requested the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human to convene a multi-stakeholder meeting to discuss the report of the High Commissioner on the normative standards and obligations under international law in relation to the promotion and protection of the human rights of older persons. It was held on 29-30 August 2022.

Find information on the work of OHCHR and older persons here:

[OHCHR | OHCHR and older persons](#)

Find the information related to the above-mentioned multi-stakeholder meeting, including its videos on the 4 sessions here:

[Multi-stakeholder meeting on the human rights of older persons | OHCHR](#)



Focus: The work of the National Human Rights Institutions on Older Persons



Mme. Anna Chabiera
National Human Rights Institution
of Poland

At national and international level NHRIs advocate for the need to establish a binding treaty for the effective promotion and protection of the Human Rights of older persons.

1. National Human Rights Institutions, NHRIs, are state bodies with a constitutional and/or legislative mandate to protect and promote Human Rights. At international level, they are associated in four regional networks as well as in one alliance at global level: The Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions, GANHRI.
2. GANHRI devotes a working group to issues of population ageing and human rights of older persons. It focuses its activities mainly at the OEWG-A and the Human Rights Council in order to influence these processes.
3. In the context of the OEWG-A, NHRIs regularly submit written statements on the topics under consideration in each session, provide oral statements during sessions and call for a new International Convention on the Rights of Older Persons.
4. These efforts attempt to bridge the gap between the international and national level, by posing questions to Member States that specifically address what progress Governments foresee in the OEWG process and how the outcomes of its session concretely contribute to advances in the drafting of a binding treaty.

HIGHLIGHTS ON THE WORK OF OHCHR AND OLDER PERSONS

NHRIs are associated in regional networks as well as in a Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions (GANHRI). As of April 2022, GANHRI is composed of 120 members: 90 “A” status accredited NHRIs (fully compliant with Paris Principles) and 30 “B” status accredited NHRIs (partially compliant with Paris Principles). One of GANHRI Working Groups focuses and acts on the field of ageing and human rights of older persons. They exchange their knowledge based on their work on national level and co-ordinate their interventions on international level.



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DID YOU KNOW?

NHRIs have the potential to speak with a unified voice and influence the global policy agenda; and can contribute towards a world where everyone everywhere fully enjoys their human rights. They also foster collaboration with civil society and brings international debate to the public debate at the national level.

TO BEAR IN MIND!

NHRIs were granted a status of monitoring bodies of Convention of the rights of persons with disabilities. This allows to presume that if a new convention of the rights of older persons will be adopted, that there will be NHRIs responsible for monitoring of its implementation as well. Therefore, it's crucial that NHRIs are aware of the ongoing process and involved in works of OEOWGA. One of GANHRI Working Groups focuses and acts on the field of ageing and human rights of older persons. They exchange their knowledge based on their work on national level and co-ordinate their interventions on international level.

Learn more about GANHRI here:
<https://ganhri.org/nhri/>

Find here the submissions by A-status NHRIs for the 12th Open-ended Working Group for the purpose of strengthening the protection of the human rights of older persons:
[Twelfth Session of the United Nations Open-ended Working Group on strengthening the protection of the human rights of older persons](#)



Focus: The work of the NGOs on Older Persons in New York and Geneva



Mme. Silvia Perel-Levin

INPEA, ILC GA, & Geneva NGO Committee on Ageing

“We must address the need to bridge the gaps across silos while adequately including and engaging older persons in such processes.”

1. Civil society working on older persons, through the NGO Committees on Ageing advocate for a Human Rights approach with the full and meaningful participation of older persons themselves in the different processes. Often, intergovernmental and/or United Nations processes around older persons do not ensure their meaningful participation.

2. Successful examples of an adequate inclusion of organizations that represent the needs of older persons in international and intergovernmental processes include efforts in the context of the 2030 Agenda where the Stakeholder Group on Ageing (SGA) serves as an interface between civil society and the United Nations System. In the high-level political forum and related processes, civil society submit papers, deliver oral statements, and organizes relevant side events to bring awareness among member states and other stakeholders.

3. Regional fora, such as mechanisms of UN Regional Commissions, also have specific groups on older persons in which civil society actively participate. GAROP, the Global Alliance for the Rights of Older People, is an umbrella network of over 300 local, national, regional, and global NGOs promoting an International Convention on the Rights of Older Persons.

4. While procedures for the participation of civil society in the Human Rights Council (Geneva) differ from those in the Open-Ended Working Group on Ageing (NY), civil society is eager and strives to participate to the greater extent possible in all processes and networks. The formalization of the active participation of Civil Society should be mainstreamed in all processes.

HIGHLIGHTS ON THE WORK OF OHCHR AND OLDER PERSONS

An NGO Committee on Ageing, which encompasses civil society organizations with an interest on older persons and population ageing, exists in each of the Headquarters of the United Nations (Geneva, New York, and Vienna) and while each Committee specializes in the processes that are based in its respective location, there is interaction and collaboration among them on many topics and initiatives across the United Nations.



GLOBAL ALLIANCE
INTERNATIONAL LONGEVITY CENTRE
Designing the Future of Ageing

NGO Committee on Ageing
GENEVA





DID YOU KNOW?

For the International Day of Older Persons (UNIDOP), on October 1st, this year it will address the resilience of older persons in a changing world, with Geneva focusing on older persons as agents in a changing climate, while New York will zoom in the resilience and participation of older women.

TO BEAR IN MIND!

Human Rights do not expire with age, older persons have the right to participate in all spheres of life. Older persons wish to be equal partners, to have a say and be heard, to have a platform for redress from the human rights violations and discrimination they

are subject to. To this end, civil society mainstreams knowledge on ageing, and also mainstream human rights in all activities at the United Nations and at the national level. An international convention can guide governments to design and implement human rights-based policies.

Find here the submissions by Accredited NGOs for the 12th Open-ended Working Group for the purpose of strengthening the protection of the human rights of older persons:

[Twelfth Session of the United Nations Open-ended Working Group on strengthening the protection of the human rights of older persons](#)



Find here the video of the whole event!:

https://youtube.com/watch?v=-Q7qn_W1vw4&feature=share





Decade of healthy ageing

*Thank you for joining us
in this learning experience!*



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