

Selection of civil society speakers to make oral interventions at the 11th session of the Open-ended Working Group on Ageing (OEWG)

Background

The COVID-19 pandemic is impacting the way UN meetings are being run. This year the majority of the 11th OEWG session (29 March – 1 April) will be held virtually. The time dedicated to each panel discussion is shorter than usual. There are only a limited number of speaking slots for civil society organisations (CSOs) under the different agenda items.

UNDESA/the OEWG Secretariat has asked the Global Alliance for the Rights of Older People (GAROP) and the three NGO Committees on Ageing in New York, Geneva and Vienna to jointly coordinate a process to determine which civil society organisations will speak at the session.

A number of possible approaches were considered by GAROP and the three NGO Committees on Ageing and the final process is detailed below. This does not set a precedent for future years, it is a response to a request made by UNDESA/the OEWG Secretariat on an exceptional basis.

Details of the process

(A) Sessions with Speaking opportunities

1. General Discussion (video statements)
2. High-level Panel on COVID-19 and older persons
3. Discussion on normative inputs:
 - a. Education, training, life-long learning and capacity-building
 - b. Social protection and social security (including social protection floors)
4. Focus area: Right to work and Access to the Labour Market
5. Focus area: Access to Justice
6. Way forward

(B) Description of Sessions

- **General Discussion (Monday 29 March 2021, a.m. and p.m.)**

There will be an opportunity, time permitting, for 10-15 CSO speakers to participate via pre-recorded video statements during the general discussions on day 1 of the Working Group. Video statements delivered by CSOs are limited to 3 minutes. The video should be uploaded no later than Wednesday, 24 March 2021. Specifications and an upload link will be shared soon. The Secretary of the Working Group will not be able to accommodate video submissions after Wednesday, 24 March 2021.

All other CSOs will be able to attend the virtual meeting by viewing the webcast of proceedings (<http://webtv.un.org/>)

- **Panel Discussions (Tuesday 30 March, Wednesday 31 March)**

Taking into account capacity limitations within the virtual platform, there will be space for five CSO representatives to pre-register for each panel session and participate in the interactive discussions with panelists (total of 20 representatives). Interventions during the interactive discussion are limited to 3 minutes. All other participants will be able to attend the virtual informal meeting by viewing the webcast of proceedings. The panels are:

2nd March 2021

- High-level Panel on COVID-19 and Older Persons (30 March, AM meeting)
 - Follow-up to resolution 75/152: Follow-up of the focus areas of the tenth working session – Discussion on normative inputs (30 March, PM meeting):
 - Education, Training, Life-long Learning and Capacity Building
 - Social protection and social security (including social protection floors)
 - Focus area: Right to work and Access to the Labour Market (31 March, AM meeting)
 - Focus area: Access to Justice (31 March, PM meeting)
- **Way Forward Discussions (Thursday 1 April, AM meeting)**

In accordance with the decisions taken at the organizational and seventh sessions of the Working Group, representatives of civil society will be able to participate in the discussion on the way forward. Taking into account capacity limitations within the virtual platform, there will be space for fifteen CSO representatives to pre-register for and participate in discussions on the way forward. Interventions are limited to 3 minutes. All other participants will be able to attend the virtual informal meeting by viewing the webcast of proceedings (<http://webtv.un.org/>).

(C) Decision-making body

A CSO selection committee made up of four representatives with knowledge of the Open-Ended Working Group process and an understanding of human rights will be appointed from GAROP and the each of the three NGO Committees on Ageing. This selection committee will review the applications and select the CSO speakers. Any affiliations that any selection committee representatives have to CSOs applying to speak will be declared and made public on the GAROP website.

(D) Eligibility

You can only apply for a CSO speaking slot if you are an NGO with UN ECOSOC status or if you are an [OEWG-accredited NGO](#). If you applied for OEWG accreditation in the last year and are still waiting for your accreditation to be confirmed, then you can still apply for a speaking slot although this will be subject to your accreditation being approved on the first day of the 11th session.

The selection committee may select reserve CSO speakers for each panel to ensure that all available speaking slots can be used in the event that a speaker withdraws or is unable to speak for any reason.

(E) Application process

If you wish to apply to speak at the OEWG 11th session under any of the above sessions, **please complete the application form in Annex I and return it to the GAROP Secretariat at ellen.graham@rightsofpeople.org by no later than Friday 12th March at 12:00 EST.**

Please note that any CSO speakers selected must be willing to undergo several hours on UN training on how to access the virtual platform that will be used for the session. Pre-recorded video statements will be used for CSO speakers in the opening ‘General Discussion’ panel. All other CSO statements must be made live on the virtual platform and CSO speakers must have access to a reliable internet connection.

If you wish to speak under more than one agenda item, please complete a separate application form for each agenda item. Applications can be submitted in any of the six official UN languages (Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian, Spanish). All applications will be made accessible on the GAROP website for transparency.

(F) Criteria for selection

The primary criteria for selection will be:

1. **Relevance to the topic being discussed under that agenda item**

2. Clear human rights focus

The selection committee will also seek to ensure a geographic, age and gender balance across the selected speakers as well as a mix of small, locally based CSOs to international networks and that a range of issues are covered within each topic across the CSO statements for each panel.

(G) Notification

Successful applicants will be informed directly of the outcome at least one week before the OEWG begins. The decision of the selection committee is final. There is no appeals process. A list of the selected speakers will be posted GAROP website and their respective CSOs will be included, as per previous practice, in the report of the session.

ANNEX I – application form

[Only the information shaded in grey will be made public].

OEWG 11th session CSO speaker application form	
Organisation name	
OEWG Accredited / ECOSOC status	
Country	
Name of speaker	
Gender of speaker	
Age of speaker	
Email address of speaker	
Telephone number of speaker	
Under which of the six sessions listed under (A) above do you wish to speak?	
Brief summary of content (bullet points/maximum 100 words)	