WHY WE NEED A CONVENTION TO PROMOTE AND PROTECT THE RIGHTS OF OLDER PERSONS

- There are gaps in protection of older persons in existing human rights standards and laws.
- “Age” is not recognized as a category of discrimination – unlike gender, race, ethnicity, language, religion.
- Age discrimination and ageism are widely tolerated throughout the world.
- Older persons are often treated as subjects or objects of welfare instead of as rights holders.
- Older persons are often vulnerable to deprivation and exclusion, disproportionately during times of crisis.
- Single most pressing challenge to the welfare of older persons is poverty, characterized by homelessness, malnutrition, unattended chronic diseases, lack of access to safe drinking water and sanitation, unaffordable medicines and treatments, income insecurity.
- Older persons are at higher risk of abuse and violence – physical, verbal, sexual, psychological or financial – and the consequences are often more severe.
- Respect for older persons’ rights also benefits society as a whole.

WHAT IS THE ADDED VALUE OF A SPECIFIC CONVENTION TO PROTECT AND PROMOTE THE RIGHTS OF OLDER PERSONS?

A new, legally binding instrument would bring clarity to both the nature of older persons’ rights and the responsibilities necessary to protect them (think of specific conventions for children, women and persons with disabilities, which have made a HUGE difference to their lives and to society as a whole, around the world).

A convention on the rights of older persons would, among other things:

- View older persons as rights-holders.
- Codify the rights of older persons in one single document, recognizing the specific challenges related to ageing and serving as a tool for both empowerment and protection.
- Act as an anti-discriminatory tool to challenge prevailing negative stereotypes about old age.
- Require governments to collect data, develop indicators, establish laws and policies, develop programmes that take into account the concerns of older persons.
- Improve State accountability and transparency with respect to actions taken for older persons, including with their active participation.
- Raise public awareness in respect of older persons’ rights.
- Create societies and environments for all ages, where older persons are able to contribute, prosper and enjoy their rights.

SUPPORT US !!!!

If your NGO does not have ECOSOC status, accredit your NGO to the Open-ended Working Group on Ageing process (OEWGA); next session will take place from 12-15 December 2016. Deadline: 31 October 2016. ECOSOC consultative status is not required to participate in the OEWGA process. NGOs with an interest in older persons’ rights can be accredited to attend sessions, and submit statements, information and reports. Deadline for registration by NGOs with ECOSOC status is 6 December 2016.

Become a member of the Global Alliance for the Rights of Older People (GAROP) and contribute to the unified voice around the world advocating for a convention to protect the rights of older persons: www.rightsofolderpeople.org.

Contact your government authorities and urge them to support a convention.

General Assembly resolution A/RES/70/164 on measures to enhance the promotion and protection of the human rights and dignity of older persons.

Reports of the OEWG: A/AC.278/2011/4; A/AC.278/2011/5; A/C.278/2012/1; A/AC.278/2013/2; A/AC.278/2014/2; A/AC.278/2015/2.

Reports of the Secretary-General: A/65/158; A/66/173; A/67/188; A/68/167; A/69/180; A/70185.

General Assembly resolution 46/91 on United Nations Principles for Older Persons.

Reports of the Human Rights Independent Expert on the enjoyment of all human rights by older persons, and of experts and rapporteurs: A/HRC/27/46; A/HRC/30/43, A/HRC/30/43/Add.1; A/HRC/30/43/Add.2; A/HRC/30/43/Add.3; A/HRC/14/31; A/HRC/18/37; A/HRC/33/44 (Sep. 2016)


Useful Websites

https://www.un.org/development/desa/ageing - United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Focal Point on Ageing
http://www.ohchr.org - Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)
http://www.who.int/ageing - World Health Organization (WHO)
http://www.rightsofolderpeople.org - Global Alliance for the Rights of Older People (GAROP)
http://www.helpage.org/what-we-do/rights - HelpAge International (HAI)
http://www.iagg.info – International Association of Gerontology and Geriatrics (IAGG)
http://www.ilc-alliance.org - International Longevity Center, Global Alliance (ILC, GA)
http://www.ifa-fiv.org - International Federation on Ageing (IFA)
http://www.inpea.net - International Network for the Prevention of Elder Abuse (INPEA)

Contact Co-Chairs, NGO/CoA-NY, Subcommittee to Promote a Human Rights Convention for Older Persons: Susan Somers: sbsomers5@aol.com and Frances Zainoeddin: fzainoeddin@msn.com. 24 October 2016