

Joint statement of the Global Alliance for the Rights of Older People (GAROP) for the 13th session of the Open-Ended Working Group on Ageing (OEWGA) (3-6 April 2023)

This statement is made on behalf of the [400 member organizations](#) of the Global Alliance for the Rights of Older People.

In this year's Global Rally that took place between 27th February and 5th March older persons, civil society organisations and National Human Rights Institutions mobilised support for older persons' rights in unprecedented numbers and solidarity. Hundreds of people participated in over 30 campaign actions in at least 23 countries. The Rally reached 2.8 million people on social media where more than 10,000 interacted directly with our campaign. What unites all participants is the call for a new United Nations (UN) convention on the rights of older persons to ensure that we can all age with rights.

The [report of the Multi-stakeholder Meeting on the Human Rights of Older Persons from the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights](#) confirms the inadequacy of the existing international framework and strongly reinforces the urgent need to develop and adopt a comprehensive human rights legal binding instrument for older persons. As advocates for human rights in older age around the world, we stand ready to engage actively in the implementation of its concrete recommendations.

The Global Review of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing also concluded that a new convention is necessary. It found that “the *persistence of the same challenges over the 20 years of the implementation of the Plan constitutes a failure of 'business as usual'*”¹. The development of an international legally-binding instrument on the human rights of older persons, as noted by all of the UN regional commissions, would complement and reinforce the Plan.

We congratulate the informal cross-regional Core Group on presenting a draft decision that sets out a clear way forward.

¹ [E/CN.5/2023/6](#)

We welcome the opportunity that the draft decision provides for the Open-Ended Working Group on Ageing to progress and as civil society we are ready to contribute to this work and insist on our full inclusion in those processes. However, in light of Argentina's proposal at the 12th session to work in collaboration with civil society, we are disappointed at the lack of communication and consultation with older persons and civil society throughout the intersessional period.

Inadequacies in the international human rights framework are well-documented and public and political support continues to grow². In continuing to fail to fulfil its mandate the Working Group is now increasingly lagging behind this broader movement, including the progress in the Human Rights Council. As members of the Global Alliance for the Rights of Older People, we call upon Member States to start drafting a UN convention on the rights of older persons without delay.

To quote Krishna Gautam, a 70-year-old campaigner from Nepal, *“failure to act is costly and unjust, for us older people today and for coming generations. It is immoral to see the problem but not do anything about it.”*

Thank you.

² Statement from August 2022 by over 20 states on the content of a convention was the first of its kind and shows growing political support: <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/documents/issues/olderpersons/multistakeholder2022/2022-09-06/multi-stakeholder-meeting-Joint%20Statement%20States.docx>