

Topic: Rights of older persons: Sign an Open Letter and prepare for 12<sup>th</sup> UN OEWGA Session

Dear GANHRI Members,

We are writing to you in our capacity as members of the GANHRI Working Group on Ageing and the Rights of Older Persons.

The United Nations, under the auspice of the UN's Open Ended Working Group on Ageing (OEWGA), is currently debating on the development of a new international human rights treaty on the rights of older persons.

We are writing to encourage all GANHRI members their active and continuous engagement in this important global process.

We are at a critical time.

As members of the GANHRI Working Group together with civil society organizations we have identified stagnation of the work of the OEWGA - at a time when the human rights of older people are particularly challenged by the ongoing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and states' measures to contain it.

The debate on the need of a Convention of the rights of older persons has been engaging actors at all levels for a decade. The UN General Assembly requested in 2012 that the OEWGA present at earliest possible date the elements of a new international instrument<sup>1</sup>, yet the OEWGA is still to advance its mandated activities, so as to comply with this request.

Despite concrete proposals made by Argentina, Germany, and Austria during the 11<sup>th</sup> OEWGA Session held in April 2021, as of 5 December 2021 actions were yet to be undertaken by OEWGA's Bureau to advance its leading role in the fulfilment of its mandate and related tasks.

NHRIs can play an important role in supporting the work of the OEWGA.

- 1) At this point in time, your role could usefully include: Signing an [Open Letter to UN OEWGA Bureau Members](#) as National Human Rights Institution as soon as possible and before March 2022. The Open Letter urges UN Member States to take concrete actions for the rights and dignity of older persons and advance in the proposals for an international legal instrument. It has been first published in September 2021 with over 200 signatories from 62 countries. NHRIs from Germany, Georgia, Myanmar, Philippines, Poland, Serbia, Slovakia, Thailand, Timor – Leste have already signed it. The Letter has been reopened for more signatures to make the voice of NHRIs and civil society organizations stronger before the upcoming 12<sup>th</sup> OEWGA Session.
- 2) Designating a representative of your NHRI who could take a lead role in engaging on related meetings at global level, including the 12<sup>th</sup> UN OEWGA Session, in 2021. Please share their contact details with GANHRI Head Office ([info@ganhri.org](mailto:info@ganhri.org)) as this will greatly assist coordination.
- 3) Considering attending the:

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<sup>1</sup> A/RES/67/139 Towards a Comprehensive and Integral International Legal Instrument to Promote and Protect the Rights and Dignity of Older Persons, point 2 p.3, <https://undocs.org/A/RES/67/139>.

- **12<sup>th</sup> UN OEWGA Session 11-14 April 2022** – UN Headquarters New York, which will possibly take place in hybrid format.

Supported by the GANHRI Head Office, the GANHRI Working Group is planning to host an **online webinar for NHRIs to discuss the work of the OEWGA** and identify the roles and opportunities for NHRIs. Further information will be announced in due time. We encourage NHRIs to continue efforts in protecting the human rights of older persons.

Your engagement will be much appreciated.

With best regards,