

CONCEPT NOTE and AGENDA

Global Consultation: Towards new Convention on the Rights of Older Persons - NHRIs' Engagement Opportunities and Why It Matters

Co-host by GANHRI, OHCHR & UN Human Rights Special Procedures

**Thursday, 17 February 2022
14:00 - 16:30 CET**

I. Introduction and background

The world population is [ageing rapidly](#) and it has an unprecedented impact on the socio-economic development of the countries. The challenges of an ageing population are being actively debated around the world. For instance, [the enjoyment of basic human rights and freedoms by older persons](#) during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic revealed many shortcomings in the human rights protection systems of many countries worldwide. Besides, the COVID-19 pandemic has made violations of the rights of older persons even more visible and serious.

The UN Secretary-General António Guterres stated in his [policy brief on older persons](#) that the COVID-19 pandemic has aggravated the existing challenges of older persons in terms of healthcare, medical services, social exclusion, economic poverty, inequality and ageism. Thus, older persons are at higher risk of poverty and human rights abuses, as they are often dependent on social assistance and pensions and have to live in difficult conditions. As underlined in the [WHO Global Report on Ageism](#) and confirmed by the UN Independent Expert on the enjoyment of all human rights by older persons, the COVID-19 pandemic has also intensified [ageism and age discrimination](#) that was already deeply rooted in society.

The global health crisis showed us clearly that there is an urgent need to [strengthen the international and national mechanisms](#) and frameworks for protecting older persons. It is essential that each country ensures a comprehensive institutional response in order to guarantee the protection of older persons' rights. International, as well as regional cooperation and coordination is also vital.

For this purpose, the UN Open-Ended Working Group on Ageing (UN OEWGA) represents the specialized international forum for voicing concerns regarding the protection and promotion of the rights of older persons and, simultaneously, for discussing ways forward and opportunities

to improve and strengthen the respect for the rights of older persons. It was established in December 2010 by the UN General Assembly and brings together all Member States (MSs) of the UN. In 2012 UN General Assembly in the Resolution A/RES/67/139 included a clear task for OEWGA:

- *Requests the Working Group to present to the General Assembly, at the earliest possible date, a proposal containing, inter alia, the main elements that should be included in an international legal instrument to promote and protect the rights and dignity of older persons, which are not currently addressed sufficiently by existing mechanisms and therefore require further international protection.*

Unfortunately, this mandate has not been fulfilled by OEWGA so far. Therefore, National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs) as well as civil society organizations have been urging UN MSs to complete this task.

Additionally, important work on the human rights of older persons has been conducted last year at the UN Human Rights Council level. The HRC Resolution on the human rights of older persons (A/HRC/RES/48/3) has been adopted in October 2021. This was the first substantial resolution in this area that introduced ageism to the agreed language used in international legal instruments.

NHRIs play a key role in promoting and protecting the rights of older persons. Given their unique mandate, NHRIs bridge international standards within their national frameworks. NHRIs play a critical role in advancing the rights of older persons, including by presenting credible and relevant information about the situation on the ground to the UN and other international and regional fora, and by promoting implementation on the ground of international norms and standards and relevant recommendations. NHRIs, working collectively through GANHRI, are also well-placed in identifying global trends and gaps and in informing global policy development to address these.

Consultations ahead of upcoming 12th UN OEWSGA Session

NHRIs have demonstrated their willingness and interest to take an active part in the UN OEWSGA and contribute to ways of addressing the existing challenges and, as a result of sustained advocacy from GANHRI to rules and procedures of the OEWSGA, allow for broad participation of NHRIs in its work. With [the 12th Session of the UN OEWSGA taking place from 11 to 14 April 2022](#), this consultation will provide a unique opportunity to GANHRI members, to learn more about the OEWSGA's work and discuss opportunities for engagement of NHRIs in its work, both individually and collectively through GANHRI.

In addition, pursuant to the HRC resolution 48/3 on the human rights of older persons, the OHCHR will be convening during the second quarter of 2022 a multi-stakeholder meeting to

discuss the report of the High Commissioner on normative standards and obligations under international law in relation to the promotion and protection of the human rights of older persons requested by the same resolution. This will be another important opportunity for NHRI engagement in UN discussions on strengthening the human rights of older persons.

Based on this, the key objective of the consultation is to enable the exchange of knowledge and good practice, and to strengthen the expertise of NHRIs to work on the rights of older persons within UN OEWSGA and learn on the role of the HRC in strengthening the human rights of older persons and explore opportunities to engage in this regard in the work of the HRC and UN Special Procedures, especially with regards to presentations of reports of the [UN Independent Expert on the Enjoyment of all human rights by older persons](#). In addition, the event is to raise awareness among NHRIs about the UN OEWSGA, to discuss the existing opportunities, the experiences of previous years and a crucial role of NHRIs in participating actively in the UN OEWSGA.

II. Objectives of the consultation

- Sharing detailed information about the UN OEWSGA and its role in strengthening international protection mechanisms of the rights of older persons as well as the role of the UN HRC and UN Independent Expert on the enjoyment of all human rights by older persons in this regard;
- Identify opportunities of all NHRIs' engagement during the UN OEWSGA and UN HRC and why it is important;

- Facilitate discussions among NHRIs to reinforce their roles at the UN level in the promotion and protection of older persons' rights;
- Exchange of experiences, expectations, sharing priorities and approaches, discussing dilemmas and agreeing on some future steps/actions for the upcoming 12th Session of the UN OEWGA.

III. Methodology

The consultation will have an informal open plenary and break-out group sessions. The organizers aim for a highly interactive event with interaction and exchanges from all participants from the four GANHRI's regions.

Proposed guiding questions for break-out group discussions will be developed and proposed ahead of the consultation. The consultation is open to all GANHRI members and invited partners.

Simultaneous interpretation will be provided in English, French, and Spanish.

IV. Organizing team

This consultation is co-organized by GANHRI (Working Group on Ageing and the Human Rights of Older Persons), OHCHR and UN Human Rights Special Procedures.

V. Expected outcomes and next steps

The following are the outcomes expected from the consultation:

- Identify areas of interest, experience and expertise on the rights of older persons that NHRIs in different regions have;
- Develop key messages and GANHRI's position to be presented at the UN OEWGA 12th Session and for future engagement with the UN HRC and other UN Human Rights mechanisms.

AGENDA

Thursday, 17 February 2022, 14:00 – 16:30 (Time is displayed in CET)

14:00-14:15	<p><u>Opening Remarks</u></p> <p>Moderator: Commissioner Karen Gomez-Dumpit, NHRI Philippines</p> <p>Mr. Carlos Ernesto Camargo Assis, GANHRI's Chairperson, NHRI Colombia</p> <p>Mr. Song Doo-hwan, Chair of GANHRI's WG on Ageing and the Human Rights of Older Persons, NHRI Korea</p> <p>Ms. Ilze Brands Kehris, Assistant-Secretary-General for Human Rights, OHCHR</p>
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<p>14:15-14:20</p>	<p>Moderator: Commissioner Karen Gomez-Dumpit, NHRI Philippines</p> <p>Video message: H.E. María del Carmen Squeff, Ambassador of Argentina to the UN New York and Chair of UN OEWSGA</p>
<p>14:20-15:00</p>	<p>Panel I. The UN OEWSGA and UN Human Rights Council – Where are We and Why does NHRIs’ Engagement Matter</p> <p>Moderator: Ms. Liz Vela, NHRI Peru</p> <p>Mr. Rio Hada, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), Geneva Information about the UN OEWSGA, working methods, upcoming 12th Session of the UN OEWSGA, and possible engagement of all NHRIs during this Session</p> <p>Ms. Silvia Perel-Levin, NGO Committee on Ageing, Geneva Information on the recent developments at HRC regarding rights of older persons and its meaning in the context of the debate on the new convention on the rights of older persons</p> <p>Dr. Claudia Mahler, The Independent Expert on the enjoyment of all human rights by older persons Information on the importance of NHRIs engagement at the 12th Session of the UN OEWSGA and at HRC Sessions also regarding co-operation with UN Special Procedures</p> <p>Q&A Session</p>
<p>15:00-15:30</p>	<p>Panel II. Engagement with the UN OEWSGA, UN HRC and National Governments - Good Examples and Experiences of NHRIs’ Engagement and Advocacy</p> <p>Moderator: Dr. Tamar Gvaramadze, First Deputy Public Defender of Georgia</p> <p>Examples from the NHRIs and introduction to the discussions. NHRI representatives could describe some good examples, experiences and positive results of engagement with the UN OEWSGA, UN HRC and national governments and CSOs.</p> <p>Ms. Karen Gomez-Dumpit, Commissioner NHRI Philippines</p> <p>Mr. Tony Ojukwu, NHRI Nigeria</p> <p>Ms. Anna Chabiera, NHRI Poland</p>
<p>15:30-16:00</p>	<p>Round Table Discussion</p> <p>Moderator: Dr. Tamar Gvaramadze, First Deputy Public Defender of Georgia</p> <p>Moderators round tables:</p> <p>Mr. Peter Litschke, NHRI Germany</p>

	<p>Ms. Liz Vela, NHRI Peru</p> <p>Mr. Bernard Mogesa, NHRI Kenya</p> <p>Ms. Nina Belen, NHRI Philippines</p> <p>4 break-out rooms, covering different regions of GANHRI's WG with NHRIs, representing discussing regional perspectives and challenges faced by them. Conclusions and inputs may be incorporated in GANHRI's Statement for OEWGA12.</p> <p>Lead questions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Please introduce yourself and say a few words about your work on the Human Rights of Older Persons within your NHRI, also on the international level? 2. What are the main challenges regarding human rights of older persons in your country /your region which could be highlighted in the GANHRI Statement for OEWGA12? 3. Does your NHRI have a position on the proposed new convention on the human rights of older persons? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. If yes, how are you advocating for this position? What are the main challenges encountered, if any? b. If not, after this global consultation, would you be willing to advocate within your NHRI to take a position? What can other NHRIs or the GANHRI WGA offer as support? 4. Will you be available to engage during upcoming events? HRC 49th Session / OEWGA12 later for instance for preparing and/or presenting statements on behalf of your NHRIs, or to follow the relevant discussions?
<p>16:00-16:20</p>	<p><u>Way Forward</u></p> <p>Moderators: Ms. Anna Chabiera, NHRI Poland</p> <p>Presentations from break-out rooms by moderators</p> <p>Next steps</p> <p>How is GANHRI WG supporting / coordinating the participation of NHRIs in OEWG and next steps in developing a GANHRI contribution to the OEWG session, also to be used by NHRIs at the national level in their advocacy. This part will also cover the summary of discussions in the previous part (regional challenges and perspectives).</p>
<p>16:20-16:30</p>	<p><u>Closing Remarks and end of the Consultation</u></p> <p>Speakers: Ms. Claire Sookhyun OH, NHRI Korea</p>