GANHRI Opening Statement – for delivery

Organizational Meeting of the Intergovernmental Working Group on Older Persons

18 February 2026

Delivered by: Anna Chabiera, Office of the Commissioner for Human Rights of Poland

Thank you, Chair.

I have the honour to speak on behalf of GANHRI, the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions, representing 119 independent NHRIs across all regions.

We welcome the establishment of this Intergovernmental Working Group and stand ready to contribute actively and constructively, as envisaged by Human Rights Council resolution 58/13.

National Human Rights Institutions are uniquely positioned at the national level, operating at the interface between States, civil society and rights-holders. Through our independent mandates, we facilitate dialogue, convey lived experience, monitor violations and bring the realities faced by older persons into engagement with public authorities. This bridging role enables NHRIs to support both the effective protection of rights at national level and the development of international standards that are grounded in practice.

Building on this role, GANHRI and its members have been actively engaged in advancing the rights of older persons at national, regional and international levels, including through sustained participation in the Open-Ended Working Group on Ageing.

At the outset, we wish to underline a core principle that should guide this process. Ensuring procedural guarantees—including participation, accessibility and inclusiveness—throughout the drafting process is essential to ensuring that these guarantees are reflected in the new legally binding instrument as substantive human rights obligations, rather than merely technical arrangements.

In this regard, the organization and conduct of the IGWG should be guided by transparency, accessibility and the meaningful participation of older persons and their representative organizations. Accessibility should be ensured through age-friendly communication, accessible formats and effective hybrid modalities, with NHRIs contributing, within their mandates, by helping to relay the perspectives and lived experience of older persons.

GANHRI
Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions

As the process moves forward, continuity and coherence with existing work will be essential. We strongly encourage the Working Group to build upon the outcomes of the Open-Ended Working Group on Ageing, relevant Human Rights Council resolutions, and established regional instruments and standards, while avoiding duplication or regression.

Thank you.