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**HelpAge International statement to the OHCHR Multi-Stakeholder Meeting on the Rights of Older Persons, 29-30 August 2022**

**Session 4. Towards strengthening the protection of the human rights of older persons**

*Tuesday 30 August 2022 (15h-16h45)*

Throughout every panel discussion of this meeting, UN special procedures mandate holders, UN treaty bodies, human rights experts, civil society and academics have supported one clear, central recommendation: the development and adoption of a new normative instrument on the rights of older persons.

As the High Commissioner for Human Rights, Michelle Bachelet, highlighted in her opening statement: “A dedicated, comprehensive and integrated international legal framework on the rights of older persons, provided it responds to the specific human rights challenges and protection gaps that older persons face, would allow them to enjoy and exercise their rights and contribute to sustainable development in all its dimensions.”[[1]](#footnote-1)

An independent international human rights instrument would clarify States’ legal obligations towards older people in different areas of life; improve understanding of equality concepts such as ageism, elder abuse and age discrimination; offer increased impetus for legal reform at the national level; and facilitate the shift towards a human rights-centred approach.[[2]](#footnote-2)

The need to develop a new normative instrument is presented very clearly in the OHCHR report on normative standards[[3]](#footnote-3) and has been confirmed in countless other studies, including the thematic reports by the UN Independent Expert on the enjoyment of all human rights by older persons[[4]](#footnote-4) and HelpAge’s own research.[[5]](#footnote-5)

The evidence is overwhelming.

HelpAge International fully supports and aligns itself with the Joint Statement of the Global Alliance on the Rights of Older People,[[6]](#footnote-6) which urges Member States to acton this evidence without delay.

We call on the Human Rights Council to adopt at its 52nd session a new substantive resolution that recognizes the findings of the High Commissioner’s report on normative standards, and that defines further concrete steps to close the protection gaps for older persons.

HelpAge International welcomes the joint contribution by Argentina, Slovenia and other Member States, which gathers some of the main points a convention on the rights of older persons should include. We urge the Human Rights Council to establish a Working-Group for further discussions of those elements, in close cooperation with civil society and older persons themselves.

We also stress the continued importance of the mandate of the UN Independent Expert for the full enjoyment of all human rights by older persons.

Finally, we call on the Human Rights Council to urge Member States in the General Assembly Open-Ended Working Group on Ageing to move expeditiously towards developing and adopting a coherent, comprehensive and integrated human rights framework.

**Contact**

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1. Statement delivered by UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Michelle Bachelet at the Multi-stakeholder meeting on the human rights of older persons, 29 August, available here: <https://www.ohchr.org/en/statements-and-speeches/2022/08/multi-stakeholder-meeting-human-rights-older-persons> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. HelpAge International (2022), [Advancing equality for older people](https://www.helpage.org/what-we-do/society-for-all-ages/age-equality/), London, HelpAge International. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (2022), Normative standards and obligations under international law in relation to the promotion and protection of the human rights of older persons**,** *UN Doc.* A/HRC/49/70. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. <https://www.ohchr.org/en/special-procedures/ie-older-persons> [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. See, for example, HelpAge International (2021), [Unequal treatment: What older people say about their rights during the COVID-19 pandemic](https://www.helpage.org/what-we-do/un-convention/unequal-treatment-report/), London, HelpAge International; HelpAge International (2022), [Advancing equality for older people](https://www.helpage.org/what-we-do/society-for-all-ages/age-equality/), London, HelpAge International. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. <https://rightsofolderpeople.org/garop-members-publish-joint-statement-ahead-of-key-un-meeting-on-older-peoples-rights-in-geneva/> [↑](#footnote-ref-6)