

**ORAL STATEMENT BY THE INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION ON AGEING**

**MULTISTAKEHOLDER MEETING, Geneva, 29-30 August 2022**

**The human rights of older persons**

I am Frances Zainoeddin, speaking on behalf of the International Federation on Ageing, whose vision is a world of healthy older people whose rights and choices are both protected and respected.

The prohibition of discrimination is one of the pillars of international human rights law, so what is being done about discrimination against older persons?

It is time for Member States to address what civil society has known and given voice to for decades. We are the ones who know who is left behind. Member States must ask themselves – at what age is a person of no economic or social value? A burden on society? At what age is a person not entitled to learn, to work, to have food security and decent housing, to have access to justice, to have access to healthcare and palliative care, to be free from violence, abuse and neglect? At what age is a person less-deserving of a safe, secure and dignified life? 50? 60? 70? 80 and beyond?

How many more preventable deaths need to occur for Governments to take note of the disregard for the value of an older person? It is time to recognize older persons as rights holders and not merely recipients of medical rehabilitation and social welfare.

We have more than enough evidence to show that a separate legal instrument to protect the rights of older persons is necessary – the evidence is as stark as the many stories that we regularly offer to give life to what we all know as tired facts. Older persons have waited long enough.

A convention would establish legal and minimum standards of practice that would challenge and replace stigmatizing and dehumanizing ageist attitudes and behaviour towards older persons. It would signify a country’s respect for the dignity of a person throughout the life course.

The International Federation on Ageing urges Member States to coordinate their important work with the work of the Open-ended Working Group on Ageing, which has yet to fulfil its mandate after 12 years of deliberations.

The International Federation on Ageing also acknowledges those countries that have legislation, policies and programmes that address the concerns of older persons, but the time has come for all Member States of the United Nations to recognize and codify, in one single international legal instrument, the rights of all older persons , everywhere, irrespective of their economic and social situation.

Thank you

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