



Statement in the frame of interactive dialogue with civil society

Mr. Chair,

Allow me to share some good news. Yesterday the European Parliament adopted a resolution, calling on the EU and its Member States to be actively involved in the UN Open-Ended Working Group on Ageing and to step up their efforts to protect and promote the rights of older people, including by considering the elaboration of a new legal instrument. This marks the increased recognition across the EU to move forward and we hope that it will be taken seriously, in discussions at UN but also regional level and that more EU Member States will participate in the next OEWG.

For our next steps we need to revisit the original principles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and address the imbalance between its intentions and the reality experienced by older people today. We need to ask:

- Why are general rights ineffective in the context of old age?
- How can they be tailored to address the particular challenges of older people?
- And how can we do this in a way that underpins mainstream rights and not fragment them?

Mr. Chair, there are many critical areas of older people's lives that need to be addressed in a new instrument, but for the immediate steps, we would like to submit some tentative ideas for consideration, while at the same time supporting the proposals made by other NGOs today.

Equality and non-discrimination

Currently there is no general prohibition of age discrimination, but only 'in several contexts'. Age proxies that lump together a wide range of abilities, needs and situations remain unquestioned. While age may be a good proxy at some times and for some things, it is by no means a good proxy at all times and in all circumstances. In our discussion we need to ask how appropriate using such proxies is? Do they reflect useful assumptions, or out-dated stereotypes about old age? Are there circumstances in which differential treatment and age limits are necessary?

Elder Abuse

So far, there is no universal (legally binding) definition of elder abuse. Depending on the adopted definition, certain forms of abuse may fall in or out of the scope of protection. Elder abuse occurs in different settings, but our discussion should not focus only in one setting, since wherever it happens and whatever forms it takes, sexual, financial, physical, psychological, neglect or exploitation, elder abuse is wrong. We should ask: what is the definition of elder abuse? Is only deliberate





violence or also unintentional maltreatment covered by the definition? What are the contexts within which states should be required to protect olderpersons from elder abuse? Should the extent of state obligations vary depending on the form or setting of abuse?

Mr. Chair the reason why these areas make good starting points is because they are very specific in the experience of old age. While, there is gap in the universal normative framework to address them, regional standards provide an excellent basis for further discussion based on some agreed language.

We share the ideas shared by other NGOs and regardless of the choice of initial themes, AGE looks forward to contributing constructively to the next OEWG.

