

**OPEN-ENDED WORKING GROUP ON AGEING, 14TH SESSION
20-24 May 2024**

STATEMENT BY THE INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION ON AGEING

My name is Frances Zainoeddin, representing the International Federation on Ageing, a member of the Global Alliance for the Rights of Older People.

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The vision of IFA is a **world of healthy older people whose rights and choices are both protected and respected.**

After thirteen years of discussion by this Open-Ended Working Group, with close to 900 documents submitted for its consideration, we have arrived at a crucial time when gaps in the international framework of the human rights of older persons and options on how best to address them have been identified by the Co-Facilitators, Brazil and Portugal.

We thank them for the intergovernmentally negotiated recommendations that will be considered at this session. We particularly welcome the inclusion of an international legally binding instrument as one of the options.

We applaud governments that have legislation, policies and programmes for older persons, but there are many governments that do not ensure that the rights of all older persons are legally protected.

It took a convention in 1979 to put the world on notice to condemn discrimination against women and to the need to protect their human rights.

It took a convention in 1989 to put the world on notice that children also have rights that must be protected.

It took a convention in 2006 to put the world on notice that persons with disabilities also have rights which must be protected.

Those three international legal instruments focused on specific groups that had been not only overlooked and ignored, but had been discriminated against,

mistreated and abused. Governments agreed that indeed the human rights of women, children and persons with disabilities needed specific protections. Most Member States in this room have ratified those conventions.

Another group of people – older persons - are also suffering violations of their human rights. They are often considered of no value, of no consequence and a burden on society. It is critical that the rights of all older people are fully protected.

We call upon Member States to decide that the best option is an international legally binding instrument to protect the human rights of older persons. It would codify their rights in one single document, recognizing the specific challenges related to ageing. It would establish a common, global understanding of definitions and minimum standards of practice and it would act as an anti-discriminatory tool to challenge prevailing negative stereotypes about old age. It would protect not just those who are currently old, but also the future old.

Let 2024 be the year when Member States choose the option to start drafting an international legally binding instrument to protect the rights of older persons. It is time.

Thank you.