REPORT
Intergovernmental Working Group on the Human Rights of Older Persons (IGWG-HROP)

SECOND SUBSTANTIVE SESSION



Geneva, Switzerland | 26–30 October 2026

Content

Executive summary 2

Part I | Civil society preparatory meeting — 26 October 2

A substantive beginning to the week 2

Coordination, institutional exchange and substantive proposals 3

Working groups and IFA engagement 3

Part II | Intergovernmental negotiations — 26–30 October 4

1. General Debate 4

IFA's contribution – Alejandro Bonilla Garcia 4

Main issues and differences 4

2. Elements of the Preamble 5

IFA's contribution — Helen Meenan 5

3. Definitions 5

IFA's contribution – Sue Hendy 5

4. State Obligations 5

IFA's contribution – Craig Gear 6

5. Catalogue of Rights 6

IFA's contribution – Alejandro Bonilla Garcia 6

6. Implementation, Monitoring and International Cooperation 6

IFA's contribution — Helen Meenan 6

7. Preliminary Remarks by Facilitators and Closing Proceedings 7

IFA's contribution – Craig Gear 7

8. The Road ahead 7

Part III | Assessment and next steps 8

Annexes | IFA statements and opening remarks 9

Annex 1 — Opening remarks at the NGO preparatory meeting — October 26 — Alejandro Bonilla García 9

Annex 2 — General Debate — October 27 — Alejandro Bonilla García 14

Annex 3 — Elements of the Preamble — 27 October - Helen Meenan 16

Annex 4 — Definitions — October 28 — Sue Hendy 18

Annex 5 — State Obligations — October 28 — Craig Gear 19

Annex 6 — Catalogue of Rights — Alejandro Bonilla García 20

Annex 7 — Implementation, Monitoring and International Cooperation — Helen Meenan 21

Annex 8 — Response to Preliminary Remarks by Facilitators — 30 October — Craig Gear 23

Executive summary

The International Federation on Ageing (IFA) actively participated in the second substantive session of the Intergovernmental Working Group on the Human Rights of Older Persons (IGWG), held in Geneva from 26 to 30 October 2026, under Human Rights Council Resolution 58/13. The week combined substantive civil society preparation, intergovernmental negotiations and a final NGO–NHRI debriefing.

The preparatory meeting on 26 October, jointly organized by the Global Alliance for the Rights of Older People (GAROP) and the NGO Committee on Ageing (Geneva), was an integral part of the process. It strengthened coordination, examined substantive proposals for the future Convention and supported effective participation, including that of newcomers.

IFA contributed actively through its delegation, comprising Sue Hendy, IFA Board Member; Dr Helen Meenan, IFA Representative to the United Nations in Geneva; Craig Gear OAM, Chief Executive Officer of the Older Persons Advocacy Network (OPAN), Australia; and Alejandro Bonilla García, IFA Main Representative to the United Nations in Geneva and Chair of the NGO Committee on Ageing (Geneva).

Together, they delivered statements across the principal thematic discussions, emphasizing the need for a comprehensive, rights-based Convention addressing ageism and discrimination, social protection and income security, autonomy, clear State obligations, effective monitoring and meaningful participation of older persons.

The negotiations revealed broad convergence around dignity, equality, autonomy, non-discrimination and the universality of human rights. Differences remained concerning the added value of a dedicated treaty, definitions, the scope of State obligations, implementation capacities and monitoring arrangements.

An important outcome was the appointment of ten countries as co-facilitators, working in five pairs, and the establishment of a proposed roadmap towards a negotiating text. Consultations are expected throughout 2027, with draft elements to be considered at IGWG3 in July and a zero draft envisaged for IGWG4 in November 2027. Brazil will chair the process in 2027, succeeding Argentina, while The Gambia has been proposed for the 2028 Chairmanship.

The second session therefore marked an important transition from discussing the principles of a future Convention towards developing its substantive legal provisions. IFA remains committed to working with GAROP, Member States and other partners to ensure that older persons and their representative organizations participate meaningfully throughout the drafting, implementation and monitoring process.

Part I | Civil society preparatory meeting — 26 October

A substantive beginning to the week

The morning meeting at the Palais des Nations was jointly organized by GAROP and the NGO Committee on Ageing (Geneva). Moderated by Belén Martínez, it opened with Nataša Todorović of GAROP and Alejandro Bonilla García, Chair of the NGO Committee on Ageing (Geneva) and Main Representative of IFA to the United Nations in Geneva. Both underscored the collective effort that had brought the process to this stage and the importance of maintaining momentum.

Bonilla recalled the adoption of resolution 58/13, the organizational meeting in February and the first substantive session in July. He stressed that the process was not starting from scratch: the task was

to move from established principles to concrete treaty proposals, keeping older persons' lived experiences and participation at its centre. He recognized the leadership of Argentina and the five-country core group, the contribution of OHCHR and the Secretariat, and GAROP's consensus-building work, including consultations involving almost 200 older persons across 12 countries.

The full text of the opening remarks is reproduced in Annex 1.



Coordination, institutional exchange and substantive proposals

Ellen Graham presented arrangements for coordination during the week, including communication channels and daily bulletins. The programme included contributions by Khaled Hassine of the IGWG Secretariat and Peter Litschke of the German national human rights institution. Sebastián Kobaru of Argentina's Permanent Mission also addressed the meeting and responded to questions, adding a direct exchange with the Mission leading the process.

Nena Georgantzi presented GAROP's four discussion papers. They proposed a preamble recognizing structural ageism, diversity and the universality of rights; State obligations involving concrete laws, resources, participation and remedies; a treaty scope driven by the risk of discrimination associated with actual or perceived older age rather than a single numerical threshold; and a comprehensive catalogue of civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, responsive to emerging challenges. These papers were presented as material for consultation and future consensus-building, not final positions. Tanja Venišnik addressed key advocacy messages for the week.

Working groups and IFA engagement

Three parallel working groups addressed civil society coordination and collective decision-making, GAROP's substantive discussion papers, and support for newcomers. Bonilla facilitated the English-language newcomers' group, giving first-time participants an opportunity to ask questions and explore practical ways to engage. The meeting demonstrated that effective participation requires preparation, access to information and mutual support, as well as speaking opportunities during formal negotiations.

Part II | Intergovernmental negotiations — 26–30 October

1. General Debate

The General Debate provided governments, international organizations, national human rights institutions and civil society with an opportunity to present their overall approach to a new legally binding instrument. The opening exchanges considered whether a dedicated treaty would strengthen protection, how it should relate to existing international law, and which gaps require particular attention. OHCHR emphasized that persistent barriers reflect structural weaknesses in making universal rights effective for older persons.



IFA's contribution – Alejandro Bonilla Garcia

In the General Debate, Alejandro Bonilla García spoke for IFA, drawing attention to the work already completed in identifying protection gaps and urging progress toward concrete standards. The Federation's intervention placed the diversity of older persons and inequalities accumulated over the life course within the rights-based rationale for the convention.

The full IFA General Debate statement is reproduced in Annex 2.

Main issues and differences

Ecuador, Slovenia, Chile, Malta, Austria, Spain, Mexico, the Philippines, Kenya and other delegations supported progress toward a convention. Malta argued that the debate over its necessity had been exhausted. India reported submitting a model text and suggested a global fund for dignified ageing and care systems; Kenya proposed treaty-monitoring arrangements. Norway explicitly reserved its position on a new binding instrument and highlighted duplication, resources and national policy choices. Egypt stressed implementation of existing obligations and the eventual role of the General Assembly; Japan emphasized universal rights and timely circulation of documents. Pakistan, China

and Algeria raised questions about feasibility, resources, legal systems and implementation. The general debate continued on 27 October, when civil society and NHRIs were able to contribute more extensively.

2. Elements of the Preamble

This segment considered how the preamble should explain the purpose of the convention, recognize ageism and discrimination, acknowledge the diversity and contributions of older persons, and affirm universality and non-regression. The preamble also offers a way to connect the treaty with demographic, social, environmental and technological changes without reducing older age to care or dependency.

IFA's contribution — Helen Meenan

IFA called for a preamble grounded in dignity, autonomy and the universality of rights throughout life. Helen Meenan emphasized confronting ageism and intersecting discrimination, recognizing older persons' diversity, and safeguarding access to care and support while respecting individual preferences and participation.

A central drafting question was how to make the rationale for a dedicated instrument clear while remaining consistent with existing international human rights law. The GAROP discussion paper offered a complementary civil society framework emphasizing structural ageism, intersectional and cumulative discrimination, and the need to transform narratives about ageing.

The full IFA statement on the Elements of the Preamble is reproduced in Annex 3.

3. Definitions

The discussion of definitions concerned who the treaty would protect and how age-based discrimination and related concepts should be expressed. Delegations and civil society considered the tension between legal certainty and inclusive coverage. A fixed age threshold could provide administrative clarity but risk excluding people experiencing discrimination because they are perceived as older before reaching that threshold. A contextual or rights-based approach would better reflect the diversity of ageing, but requires careful drafting to be legally workable.

The debate also addressed the relationship between ageism, direct and indirect discrimination, multiple discrimination and the interaction of age with disability, gender and other characteristics. These choices will influence the treaty's reach, implementation and access to remedies.

IFA's contribution – Sue Hendy

IFA emphasized the importance of clear and inclusive definitions that recognize the diversity of older persons and avoid relying exclusively on chronological age or assumptions of vulnerability and dependency. The Federation called for definitions of ageism, age-based discrimination and intersecting forms of discrimination that provide effective legal protection without reinforcing stereotypes.

The full IFA statement on Definitions is reproduced in Annex 4.

4. State Obligations

The State obligations segment examined how governments would be required to respect, protect and fulfil rights in older age. The questions included anti-discrimination legislation, duties affecting public and private actors, institutional and budgetary measures, participation in decision-making, accessible information, data protection, remedies and accountability. Differences concerned the balance between immediately applicable duties, progressive realization and national implementation capacities.

IFA's contribution – Craig Gear

IFA called attention to the need for obligations that translate recognition of rights into laws, institutions and effective practice. The Federation emphasized that a treaty should not stop at general commitments: it must make protection against discrimination and the meaningful participation of older persons operational.

The full IFA statement on State Obligations is reproduced in Annex 5.

A key challenge for the drafting process is to distinguish legitimate implementation flexibility from provisions so general that they would fail to close existing protection gaps. International cooperation and technical assistance can support implementation without replacing the primary responsibilities of States.

5. Catalogue of Rights

This segment considered the substantive rights to be protected in the convention and the relationship between universal guarantees and older-age-specific provisions. Discussion encompassed equality, autonomy, legal capacity, freedom from abuse and neglect, access to justice, participation, health, care and support, housing, work, social security and an adequate standard of living. Participants also addressed emerging concerns such as digital exclusion, artificial intelligence, privacy, climate change and humanitarian emergencies.

IFA's contribution – Alejandro Bonilla Garcia

IFA's participation highlighted the importance of social security, income security and social protection in older age, and the value of coherence with relevant International Labour Organization standards. These rights should be understood within a comprehensive life-course approach, alongside autonomy, participation and protection from discrimination. The catalogue should recognize rights rather than substitute general policy aspirations for enforceable guarantees.

The discussion showed that the issue is not simply how many rights to list, but how to articulate their content, connect interdependent guarantees and ensure that the new instrument strengthens rather than dilutes existing protections.

The full IFA statement on the Catalogue of Rights is reproduced in Annex 6.

6. Implementation, Monitoring and International Cooperation

The implementation segment examined how treaty obligations could become effective in practice. Options included national coordination and independent monitoring, periodic reporting, complaints and remedies, participation by older persons and their organizations, and international cooperation. Delegations also considered how to avoid unnecessary duplication with existing treaty bodies in a period of acute UN financial pressure.

IFA's contribution — Helen Meenan

IFA emphasized that the effectiveness of the Convention will depend on clear reporting, follow-up and accountability mechanisms. Helen Meenan proposed serious consideration of a dedicated Committee on the Rights of Older Persons, supported by meaningful participation, age-disaggregated data and international cooperation.

The full IFA statement on Implementation, Monitoring and International Cooperation is reproduced in Annex 7.

A recurring negotiating issue was whether a dedicated monitoring mechanism would provide the necessary visibility and expertise, or whether a more integrated model would better respond to

financial and institutional constraints. The adequacy of international assistance, including technical cooperation and capacity-building, was also central.

7. Preliminary Remarks by Facilitators and Closing Proceedings

The final meeting of IGWG2 marked an important transition from the discussion of substantive principles towards the preparation of concrete provisions for the future Convention. The preliminary remarks by facilitators and subsequent exchanges provided an opportunity to reflect on the week's discussions, identify emerging areas of convergence and outstanding questions, and establish the next steps in the drafting process.

Ten countries were appointed as co-facilitators, working in five pairs: the Philippines and Serbia; Slovenia and Uruguay; The Gambia and Qatar; Australia and Brazil; and Malta and Lesotho. Their role will be central to advancing consultations and preparing the substantive elements of the future instrument.

IFA's contribution – Craig Gear

IFA welcomed the broad support expressed during the week for a legally binding Convention and reaffirmed its readiness to assist the co-facilitators in future consultations. Craig Gear emphasized the importance of meaningful participation of older persons and their representative organizations across regions, cultures and languages, not only in drafting the Convention but also in its implementation and monitoring. He highlighted IFA's commitment to working with GAROP and the Older Persons Advocacy Network (OPAN) in Australia to support this process.

IFA's response to the facilitators' preliminary remarks is reproduced in Annex 8.

8. The Road ahead

The proposed timeline establishes a structured process for moving towards the preparation of a first draft of the Convention:

- **November 2026:** A new call for written inputs from Member States and other stakeholders.
- **December 2026–April 2027:** Consultations led by the co-facilitators.
- **May–July 2027:** Preparation and presentation of draft elements at the third substantive session (IGWG3).
- **August–October 2027:** Regional consultations and preparation of a zero draft.
- **November 2027:** Presentation of the zero draft at the fourth substantive session (IGWG4), together with the nomination of The Gambia for the 2028 Chairmanship.

The closing proceedings also marked the transition from Argentina's leadership to Brazil's chairmanship in 2027. Ambassador Ricardo de Souza Monteiro of Brazil will succeed Ambassador Carlos Mario Foradori of Argentina as Chair-Rapporteur.

Ambassador Foradori concluded his mandate with a powerful reminder of the collective responsibility to sustain the process:

"This Chair passes on. Our responsibility does not."

The session also provided an opportunity to acknowledge the contributions of OHCHR, the IGWG Secretariat, interpreters and supporting staff, whose work was essential to the organization and conduct of the negotiations.

The second substantive session therefore concluded with an important procedural achievement: a clearer roadmap, designated co-facilitators and a timetable for moving towards a negotiating text.

For IFA and its civil society partners, the next phase offers important opportunities to contribute substantive proposals, support consultations across regions and ensure that older persons remain actively involved in shaping the Convention.

The challenge for 2027 will be to turn the progress achieved in Geneva into a strong, inclusive and effective legally binding instrument that makes a tangible difference in the lives of older persons.

Part III | Assessment and next steps

The strongest convergence concerned the universality of human rights, older persons as rights holders, dignity, autonomy, non-discrimination and meaningful participation. Many delegations also supported a non-regression principle. The more consequential divergences concerned whether a dedicated treaty adds sufficient value, how inclusive its definitions should be, the strength and specificity of obligations, the role of families and States, financing, and whether monitoring should involve a dedicated mechanism.

IFA's engagement combined substantive advocacy, participation in formal sessions and practical civil society coordination. The preparatory meeting was an essential part of this contribution, not a secondary event. The Federation's continued priorities include life-course inequalities; social security and income security; legal capacity and autonomy; health, care and support; digital inclusion and privacy; protection in emergencies; and effective accountability and participation.

After the formal proceedings ended on 30 October, NGO and NHRI representatives met for a final debriefing. Together with the opening preparatory meeting, this reflected continuous civil society engagement before, during and after the intergovernmental negotiations.

The next stage will require focused written proposals, sustained engagement with facilitators and Member States, and close coordination among IFA, GAROP, the NGO Committee on Ageing (Geneva) and other partners. The measure of progress will be whether the emerging text turns the universal promise of human rights into concrete and effective protection throughout older age.

Annex 1 — Opening remarks at the NGO preparatory meeting — October 26 — Alejandro Bonilla García



Alejandro Bonilla García
Chair, NGO Committee on Ageing (Geneva)
IFA Representative to the United Nations in Geneva

1. The People and the Moment

Good morning, everyone!

Looking around this room, I must say that you all look wonderful!

And perhaps it is just my imagination, but I can almost see a positive aura surrounding this group. An aura of energy, commitment, solidarity and, above all, hope.

And I think we have good reasons to feel positive about the week ahead.

We are not here simply for another United Nations meeting. We are part of an important journey, a journey that could lead to a new international convention on the human rights of older persons.

A convention that could make a real difference, not only for today's older generations, but also for those who will follow us.

It is my great pleasure to welcome you to this preparatory meeting, organised by GAROP, with the active support and collaboration of the NGO Committee on Ageing in Geneva, which I have the privilege of chairing.

I also have the honour of representing the International Federation on Ageing, IFA, at the United Nations in Geneva, and I am particularly pleased to see so many colleagues and organisations coming together around our shared commitment to the human rights of older persons.

I would like to recognise Ambassador Carlos Mario Foradori of Argentina, Chair-Rapporteur of the Intergovernmental Working Group, for his leadership and commitment.

Our appreciation also goes to the five countries of the core group — Argentina, Brazil, The Gambia, the Philippines and Slovenia — and to all the other countries supporting this important initiative.

I would also like to thank OHCHR and the IGWG Secretariat for their work in supporting this process.

And, of course, a very special welcome to all of you — colleagues from NGOs, National Human Rights Institutions and civil society organisations who have come to Geneva, sometimes from very far away.

We also recognise our colleagues who cannot be here today but will follow the IGWG discussions online from different parts of the world.

Your presence matters. Your experience matters. And your voices matter.

2. Where We Are in Our Journey

Dear colleagues,

We have already travelled an important part of this journey. But we also know that there is still a long road ahead.

Let us remember how we arrived here.

In April 2025, the Human Rights Council adopted Resolution 58/13, establishing the mandate for the Intergovernmental Working Group to elaborate an international legally binding instrument on the human rights of older persons.

This was a historic achievement, made possible through years of advocacy and the commitment of Member States, civil society organisations, older persons and many other stakeholders.

In February 2026, we had the organisational meeting, where the leadership, procedures and ways of working were agreed.

Then, in July, we had the first substantive session, with important discussions on the conceptual framework, guiding principles and possible scope of the future Convention.

And now, in October, we are reaching another important, perhaps pivotal, stage.

We are building on what has already been achieved. We are not starting from scratch.

Many of the principles and concerns that we will raise this week have already been discussed in earlier meetings. And that is perfectly normal.

We need to reaffirm our commitments, build on previous discussions and gradually move towards more concrete proposals.

This is a process of continuity, learning and progress.

3. The Main Issues Before the IGWG This Week

This week, the Intergovernmental Working Group will address five important substantive areas.

First, the **elements of the preamble**, which will explain why we need the Convention and the values and principles behind it.

Second, **definitions**, to clarify important concepts and provide a common understanding of the issues being addressed.

Third, **State obligations**, to establish what governments must do to respect, protect and fulfil the human rights of older persons.

Fourth, the **catalogue of rights**, to ensure that the Convention provides broad and effective protection, taking into account the diversity of older persons and their experiences.

And finally, **implementation, monitoring and international cooperation**, to help turn legal commitments into real improvements in people's lives.

These subjects may sound rather technical.

But behind every definition, every obligation and every proposed right, there are real people, real lives and real expectations.

We are not simply discussing legal provisions. We are discussing human dignity, equality, autonomy, participation and human rights in older age.

This week will not produce the final Convention. But it can help shape the foundations on which that Convention will be built.

4. The Contribution of Civil Society and GAROP

Many of our organisations have worked hard to prepare statements and proposals for this week. I have done the same on behalf of the International Federation on Ageing, IFA.

We come from different countries and organisations, with different experiences and perspectives, but we share a common objective: a strong, inclusive and effective Convention.

Our contribution is not limited to making statements during formal meetings. We also bring knowledge, practical experience, research and, most importantly, the voices and lived experiences of older persons.

And here, I would like to express our special appreciation to GAROP, particularly to its Content Working Group, for the important work it has been doing.

In July 2026, GAROP presented a Joint Consensus Position on the conceptual framework, underlying principles and possible scope of the future Convention.

This document was developed through consultations with GAROP's member organisations, as well as grassroots consultations in 12 countries involving almost 200 older persons.

It was an important achievement and a valuable foundation for the work ahead.

The four new Discussion Papers that you will find here today build on that earlier work.

They address the elements of the preamble, State obligations, the scope of the treaty and the catalogue of rights.

These papers are not final positions, and they are not intended to provide all the answers.

They are part of an ongoing process of discussion, consultation and building consensus.

And I think this is particularly important.

We are not starting from zero, and we are not expected to have all the answers today.

We are building on what has already been achieved, learning from one another and gradually developing stronger proposals.

GAROP will continue preparing further Discussion Papers, which will support wider consultations and the development of future consensus positions.

I would therefore like to thank everyone who has contributed to this important work and encourage all of us to read these papers, discuss them and help improve them.

After all, a strong Convention needs not only strong legal provisions, but also strong participation from the people whose rights it seeks to protect.

5. Why Today's Preparatory Briefing Matters

And this brings me to the importance of our meeting this morning.

GAROP has also prepared an important document entitled *Working Together in Geneva*, which provides practical guidance on how civil society organisations can coordinate their participation and work effectively throughout the IGWG process.

I would like to encourage everyone to read and make use of this document.

It reminds us that cooperation is not simply about sharing common objectives. It is also about sharing information, supporting one another, respecting different perspectives and finding practical ways to work together.

This morning, we will have the opportunity to hear updates from the IGWG Secretariat and from our colleagues in National Human Rights Institutions.

We will discuss the key messages for this week, exchange information and explore how we can better coordinate our work.

We will also discuss practical arrangements for the coming days, including communication channels, daily bulletins and opportunities to meet informally throughout the week.

Another important part of today's programme is the opportunity to support colleagues who are participating in the IGWG process for the first time.

We want everyone to feel welcome, informed and able to contribute, regardless of their previous experience with United Nations procedures.

The small-group discussions will give us an opportunity to exchange ideas, ask questions and identify practical ways to strengthen our collective participation.

I believe this is extremely valuable.

The better we prepare and the better we work together, the stronger our contribution can be.

And while we may not always agree on every detail, we can certainly agree on the importance of listening to one another, learning from different experiences and keeping our shared objectives in mind.

6. The Road Ahead

Dear friends,

We should be proud of how far we have come.

But we should also be realistic about how much remains to be done.

This week is another step in a much longer process.

There will be further discussions, consultations, proposals, drafting and negotiations.

And eventually, we hope, the adoption of a strong international Convention and, most importantly, its implementation.

Because our responsibility does not end on Friday afternoon.

Our advocacy must continue.

Our cooperation must become stronger.

Our proposals must continue to improve.

And the voices and lived experiences of older persons must remain at the centre of this process.

In the end, our success will not be measured only by the number of meetings we attend or the statements we deliver.

It will be measured by the contribution we make to the Convention that will eventually emerge, and by the difference that Convention can make in people's lives.

We have already demonstrated our commitment.

We have gained valuable experience.

We have built strong partnerships.

And we share a vision of where we want to go.

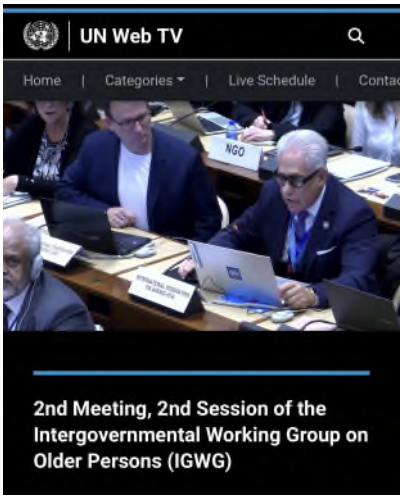
And looking around this room once again, I believe we also have the positive energy to continue this journey together!

Thank you all.

I wish us a productive, inspiring and successful week.

Together, we can make it real!

Annex 2 — General Debate — October 27 — Alejandro Bonilla García



General Debate

Statement by the International Federation on Ageing (IFA)

Gracias Presidente-Relator,

Before beginning my statement, allow me to express our sincere appreciation for your firm and principled stand in calling for appropriate facilities for our deliberations. The importance of this historic process deserves to be reflected in the conditions under which we conduct our work. Please be assured, Mr. Chair, that your call to civil society has been heard. **You can count on our support, and we will act accordingly.**

Thank you for your leadership and commitment.

With that, Mr. Chair, allow me to turn to the substance of my statement.

The International Federation on Ageing representing 400 members around the world aligns itself with the statement to be delivered by INPEA on behalf of the Global Alliance for the Rights of Older People (GAROP) and warmly acknowledges GAROP's leadership in mobilizing and coordinating civil society engagement in this historic process.

We welcome the progress achieved by this Working Group and thank the Chair-Rapporteur, OHCHR, the Secretariat, participating delegations, NGOs and National Human Rights Institutions for their continued commitment.

Mr. Chair, when we say that we are not starting from scratch, we mean precisely that. For many years, the Open-ended Working Group on Ageing in New York examined and extensively documented the gaps in the international protection of older persons' human rights. Human Rights Council Resolution 58/13 marked a decisive step forward by establishing the mandate to elaborate a legally binding instrument.

We have already identified the gaps. The time has come to act, not to restart the exercise. Our task now is to develop a Convention that builds on existing international human rights law and delivers clear, tangible added value in both real legal protection and practice.

In this context, IFA wishes to highlight four considerations.

First, universality and diversity must go hand in hand.

Older persons are not a homogeneous group. Their circumstances differ not only between individuals, but also across and within countries, reflecting substantial differences in life expectancy, healthy life expectancy, socioeconomic conditions and access to essential services.

Gender inequalities, disability and other forms of discrimination, often intersecting and accumulating throughout the life course, further shape these differences, particularly for older women and older persons with disabilities.

Armed conflicts, natural disasters and the impacts of climate change may further exacerbate existing inequalities. Universal human rights standards must recognize these diverse realities without compromising equal protection for all.

Second, we should build on the experience of existing international human rights conventions.

The Conventions on the Rights of the Child and of Persons with Disabilities offer particularly relevant precedents for developing a comprehensive, coherent and forward-looking instrument.

Our objective should not be merely to restate existing rights, but to ensure their full and equal enjoyment in older age, addressing ageism, discrimination and the specific barriers older persons face.

Third, rights must be translated into effective State obligations.

The Convention should provide for appropriate legislative, administrative and other measures, adequate resources, accessible information, effective remedies and accountability.

It should also promote the collection and use of appropriately disaggregated data, without arbitrary upper-age limits, to identify inequalities and evaluate progress.

Implementation must respond to different national circumstances without weakening universal human rights standards.

We must also recognize that the cost of failing to protect older persons' human rights may far exceed the cost of establishing and implementing an effective Convention. Discrimination, exclusion and inadequate protection carry substantial human, social and economic costs that cannot be overlooked.

Fourth, meaningful participation is indispensable.

Older persons and their representative organizations, in all their diversity, must be actively involved not only in drafting the Convention, but also in its implementation and monitoring.

Their participation must be accessible, inclusive and supported by the necessary resources.

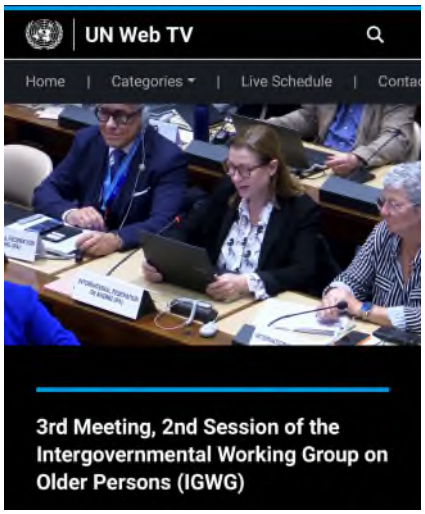
Mr. Chair,

IFA remains committed to working constructively with GAROP and all partners towards a comprehensive and effective Convention that makes a tangible difference in people's lives, today and for generations to come.

Human rights do not expire with age.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Annex 3 — Elements of the Preamble — 27 October - Helen Meenan



Statement by the International Federation on Ageing (IFA)

Mr. Chair,

The International Federation on Ageing believes the Preamble should clearly establish the principles and aspirations guiding the future Convention. We align with the opening statement of the Global Alliance of the Rights of Older Persons and welcome its discussion paper on this topic.

The preamble should:

1.1 Emphasise that human Rights do not expire at any age.

1.2 Recall that the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing **recognised that the foundation for a healthy and enriching old age is laid early in life and** encourage prevention and preparedness throughout the life course.

1.3 Recognize the **dignity, autonomy, independence and diversity of older persons**, and their contributions to families, communities, economies and societies and **affirm that dignity and rights do not depend on health, functional ability, economic contribution or need for support.**

1.4 Recognize the cross-cutting nature of ageism and all the levels in society where it manifests.

1.5 Articulate the need to eliminate ageism in all its forms, acknowledge that it can even lead to **hatred of older persons which may need to be recognised in law**

understand that **prohibiting age discrimination, will not be successful without efforts to also eliminate ageism**.

1.6 Acknowledge **the persistent impact of ageism, discrimination and inequalities accumulated throughout life,** particularly those affecting older women, and persons facing multiple forms of discrimination.

1.7 Recall the former UN Independent Expert on the rights of older persons recommended that legislation **'avoid exceptions, exemptions or justifications that mask age biases that limit the autonomy of older persons and their ability to participate in society on an equal basis with others.'**

1.8 Recognise the 'inherently **intersectional** nature of age discrimination' including intersections between age and disability.

1.10 Recognise that **older persons with disabilities comprise those with lifelong disabilities and persons who acquire disabilities at older ages**

affirm equal protection and access to support, regardless of when disability begins.

1.11 Recognise **States' responsibility to ensure access to affordable, accessible, quality long-term care and support for older persons who require it, respecting their will and preferences, dignity, autonomy and inclusion in the community, including during crises**.

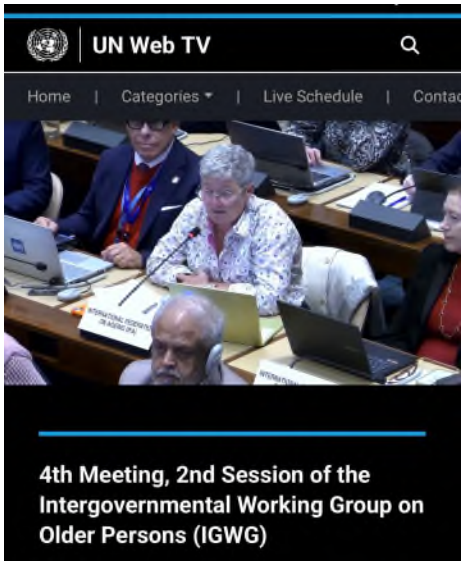
1.12 Recognise the right of care staff to decent work and the rights and support needs of unpaid carers, including **older persons and acknowledge the unequal distribution of care responsibilities.**

Finally, **the Preamble should recognize the importance of solidarity between generations and the meaningful participation of older persons in all decisions affecting their lives,** including involvement in designing, implementing and monitoring policies affecting them.

IFA believes these elements will provide a strong foundation for a Convention that promotes not only protection, but also inclusion, participation and equal opportunities.

Thank you.

Annex 4 — Definitions — October 28 — Sue Hendy



Statement by the International Federation on Ageing (IFA)

Mr. Chair,

The International Federation on Ageing considers that clear and inclusive definitions will be essential for the effectiveness of the future Convention.

Ageing is a universal and lifelong process, but older persons are not a homogeneous group. Their situations, capacities, needs and contributions vary considerably across countries, communities and individuals.

We therefore encourage the Working Group to avoid definitions based exclusively on chronological age or assumptions of vulnerability, dependency or declining capacity.

Definitions should recognize the diversity of experiences in later life and the intersection of age with gender, disability, socioeconomic status and other circumstances.

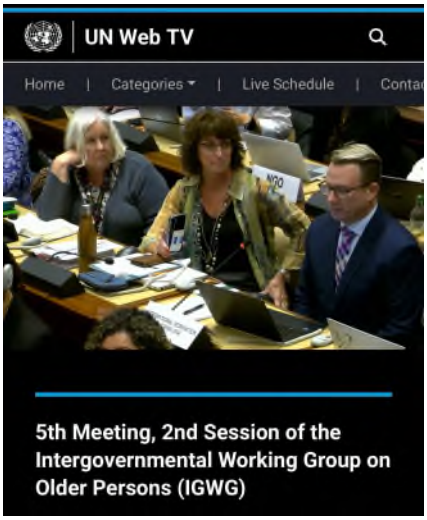
Particular attention should be given to defining ageism, age-based discrimination and multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination, ensuring that these concepts can be translated into effective legal protection.

IFA believes that definitions must be sufficiently clear to guide implementation, while remaining flexible enough to respect different national contexts.

Our goal should be language that protects rights without reinforcing stereotypes.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Annex 5 — State Obligations — October 28 — Craig Gear



Statement by the International Federation on Ageing (IFA)

Thank you Mister Chair,

The International Federation on Ageing believes that the future Convention must clearly define the obligations of States to respect, protect and fulfil the human rights of older persons in all their life experiences and diversity.

We align ourselves to the opening statement by the Global Alliance on the Rights of Older People and welcome its Discussion Paper on this topic.

State obligations should go beyond general commitments and must provide a practical framework for legislation, public policies, institutional arrangements and accountability.

States should take effective measures to:

prevent age-based discrimination,

eliminate ageism and other barriers to equal participation, and

ensure access to justice and effective remedies.

Attention should be given to social protection, income security, health and long-term care, accessibility, and participation in public life.

States must remove barriers to older people achieving ongoing and equal recognition under the law and must support older people in their ability to maintain autonomy and continue to make decisions that affect their lives.

The Convention should also recognize that the realization of rights requires:

appropriate resources,

education programs for public officials and service providers,

information and awareness-raising initiatives to ensure that older persons, and themselves are aware of their rights and how to exercise them.

Coordination across all government institutions and systematic evaluation of results is also required.

While implementation will necessarily reflect national circumstances, the fundamental obligation to respect and protect human rights, must remain universal.

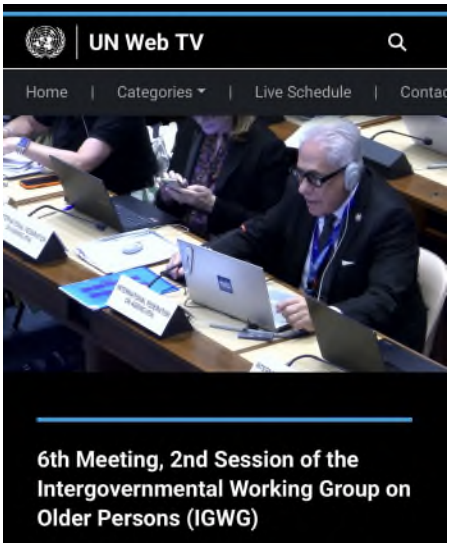
The human rights of all older people, including indigenous peoples, older people with intersectional diversity and other cultures, must be recognised and promoted by States.

IFA encourages the Working Group to formulate obligations that are clear, measurable and capable of producing tangible improvements in the lives of older persons.

Thank you.

Annex 6 — Catalogue of Rights — Alejandro Bonilla García

Statement by the International Federation on Ageing (IFA)



Mr. Chair-Rapporteur,

The International Federation on Ageing aligns itself with the statement of the Global Alliance for the Rights of Older People and welcomes its Discussion Paper on the Catalogue of Rights.

To complement other contributions, IFA will focus on **social security, social protection, income security and their contribution to sustainable development** issues raised by Member States, civil society and the Independent Expert.

The **ILO Social Security (Minimum Standards) Convention, 1952 (No. 102)**, covers old-age pensions and medical care and is the subject of an ongoing global ratification campaign. As mentioned in previous interventions, other ILO instruments on social security and social protection provide further standards for older persons.

Importantly, ILO standards are and have been adopted through a **tripartite process involving governments, workers and employers**. This distinctive consensus deserves careful consideration.

The catalogue should draw on UN and regional human rights instruments and relevant standards developed at the ILO and other UN agencies, including WHO and ITU, while reflecting the 2030 Agenda's commitment to leave no one behind.

It is essential to distinguish **a catalogue of rights from a catalogue of policies and strategies needed to implement them and close identified protection gaps**. The objective should be to build on existing agreements and strengthen the protection of older persons.

Mr. Chair-Rapporteur,

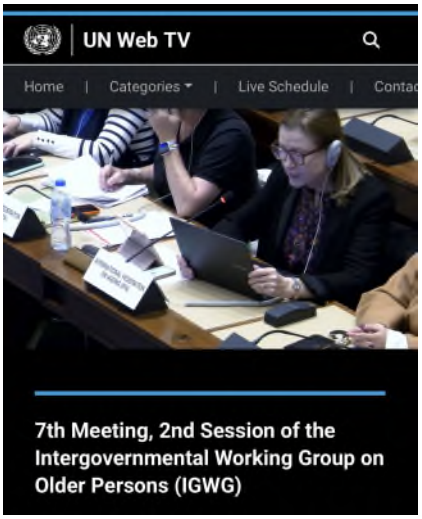
Within my remaining time, and as this may be my last intervention on behalf of IFA this week, allow me to express our sincere appreciation for your effective, diplomatic and elegant leadership.

Ambassador Foradori, your guidance has been instrumental in advancing this historic process.

Thank you.

Annex 7 — Implementation, Monitoring and International Cooperation — Helen Meenan

Statement by the International Federation on Ageing (IFA)



Mr. Chair,

1.1 The International Federation on Ageing considers that effective implementation and monitoring will be essential to the success of the future Convention.

1.2 The true test of the Convention will not be its eloquence. But whether its provisions can be operationalised to reverse the pernicious effects of ageism, render older persons visible in law, policy and society, sustain a process of change and above all, improve the lives of older persons everywhere.

1.3 The first session of this Working Group highlighted broad support for monitoring arrangements capable of translating international commitments into practical results.

1.4 IFA believes that the Convention should establish clear reporting, follow-up and accountability mechanisms, while drawing on the experience of existing human rights treaty bodies.

1.5 The usual requirement of periodic state reports with an optional complaints or petitions mechanism should be considered as a baseline.

1.6 The relevant treaty monitoring body might be empowered to ask for reports on specific topics from States parties with a view to identifying common problems which might then lead to targeted recommendations for collective action, especially at the global or regional levels (in addition to the usual national level).

1.7 The IFA recommends that serious consideration be given to the establishment of a Committee on the Rights of Older Persons by the Convention, with regional representation, to monitor its implementation by State Parties.

1.8 By 2050 the global population of persons over 60 will rise to 2.1 billion people. They will be highly heterogeneous and ageing in places and under conditions of maximum diversity.

1.9 The Committee on the rights of older persons would advocate for the rights of older persons worldwide, ensure constructive dialogue with States and provide recommendations to support implementation of the provisions in the Convention.

1.10 Full and meaningful participation of older persons and their representative organizations should be guaranteed throughout implementation and monitoring, at both national and international levels.

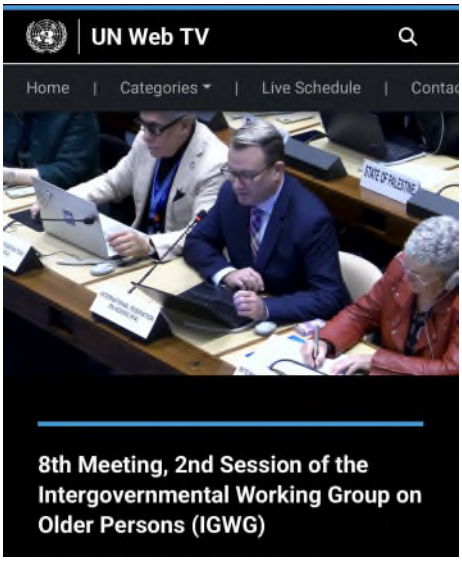
1.11 We also encourage the inclusion of age-disaggregated data, appropriate indicators and regular assessments of progress to identify gaps and guide public policies.

1.12 International cooperation will be particularly important in supporting countries with different institutional and financial capacities, including through technical assistance, knowledge sharing and capacity building.

1.13 Above all, monitoring should not become an end in itself. Its purpose must be to ensure that the rights recognized in the Convention are effectively enjoyed by older persons in their everyday lives.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Annex 8 — Response to Preliminary Remarks by Facilitators — 30 October — Craig Gear



Statement by the International Federation on Ageing (IFA)

Thank you Mr. Chair,

The International Federation on Ageing (IFA) thank the Core Group, States, NHRI's and fellow civil society organisations and older people here for their contributions and interventions this week.

The IFA is a founding member of the Global Alliance on the Rights of Older People (GAROP). IFA has over 400 members across all regions and stands ready to assist the Intergovernmental Working Group and the cofacilitators with engagement and participation activities with civil society and older people.

The second session demonstrated broad support for developing a legally binding international instrument on the human rights of older persons. We now have an opportunity to translate this momentum into concrete provisions over the coming months.

IFA believes the discussion this week has shown strong commitment to the future Convention and that it should be firmly grounded in the universality and indivisibility of human rights, recognize the diversity of older persons, and address the gaps that continue to limit their full enjoyment of these rights.

IFA looks forward to working with the co-facilitators to support your work, in every region and with cultural diverse groups and by engaging people of different languages. This will ensure the voice of all older people are brought forward into your work. There must be meaningful participation of the people this convention who's human rights we have all spoken about this week and seek to uphold, promote and enhance – that is older people themselves who demand nothing about them without them.

Older persons and their representative organizations must remain at the centre of the process, not only as participants in consultations but as active contributors to the drafting, implementation and monitoring of the Convention. IFA, GAROP and the Older Persons Advocacy Network in Australia look forward to supporting and promoting future consultations. Our common objective should be a strong, practical and effective instrument that makes a *real difference* in people's lives.

As Margaret an older person I know in Sydney said to me when I asked "What would upholding human rights in a convention mean to you? And she answered "It would mean I would be respected, and I would be happy"

Finally, thanks to you Ambassador Foradori and the independent experts for your continued efforts, and welcome Ambassador de Souza from Brazil as the incoming chair. And thanks especially to the Secretariat for your tireless work and commitment to engaging civil society - we appreciate it, more importantly older people appreciate it.

Thank you