

## **Factsheet on the Open Ended Working Group on Ageing**

### **What is the OEWG on Ageing?**

The OEWG on Ageing is a new UN working group that was established by a decision made in a resolution at the 2010 General Assembly. You can read the resolution A/RES/65/182 at: <http://social.un.org/ageing-working-group/>

### **Why has it been set up?**

A number of Member States, particularly from Latin America, have been pushing for a discussion at the UN on older people's rights and the possibility of human rights mechanisms on the rights of older people. Setting up this working group will enable that discussion to take place.

### **What has it been set up to do?**

Its main purpose is strengthening the protection of the human rights of older people. Not all Member States agree that we need a new convention and so the working group has been given a wider mandate than just discussing a convention. It will examine the existing international framework in relation to the human rights of older people, and identify possible gaps and how best to address them, including the possibility of new human rights instruments.

### **Why is this important?**

Attention to older people's rights by governments, those working on human rights and NGOs has been woefully inadequate. This OEWG is the first time a process has been set up for UN Member States to examine and explore how to better protect older people's rights.

### **Who can participate?**

The OEWG is a working group of the UN which is made up of Member States and so any Member State of the UN can participate in the OEWG.

It will have a Bureau to manage its work. His Excellency Mr. Jorge Argüello, Permanent Representative of Argentina, was elected as President of the 2011 session. The vice-chairs are Luxembourg and Qatar. Bureau members for the Eastern European and the African regional groups have yet to be decided.

### **When are its meetings?**

First Working Session: 18-21 April 2011

Agenda

- a) Existing international framework on the human rights of older persons.
- b) Existing regional framework or mechanism on the human rights of older persons.
- c) Existing gaps at the international level.

Second Working Session: 1-5 August 2011

Agenda to be confirmed

### **Where will it meet?**

It will meet at the UN headquarters in New York. No additional funds have been allocated to the OEWG and so it has to have its meetings at times when a room and translators at the UN are not being used for other meetings.

### **How can civil society get involved?**

The resolution that set up the working group specifically invites civil society organisations to contribute. Civil society has a critical role to play in informing the work of the OEWG and advocating for it to address the issues that older people say are critical to them. Too often the voices of older women and men go unheard in debates on issues that directly affect them.

### **At a national level:**

Although the OEWG will meet New York, Member States' UN Mission staff take their instructions on policy positions from their governments in capital cities. The most effective way to influence government positions is, therefore, by providing information on older people's rights and through advocacy by civil society at a national level.

There are a number of ways civil society organisations can do this:

- Inform government representatives in capital cities about the OEWG.
- Provide information on discrimination against older people and violations of their rights to government representatives in capital cities and to their UN Missions in New York.
- Meet with government representatives to discuss issues that you think need to be raised in the OEWG.
- Work with journalists on media articles on older people's rights.
- Encourage older people's groups and associations to advocate for their rights.

### **In New York:**

NGOs with ECOSOC observer status can register to attend the meetings. NGOs without ECOSOC observer status can apply for accreditation and register to attend the meetings. A list of applicants will be presented to the OEWG to be approved before the meeting.

- Deadline for online accreditation for NGOs without ECOSOC observer status: 28 March 2011.
- Deadline for online pre-registration for NGOs with ECOSOC observer status: 10 April 2011.

Information on how to do this is available at <http://social.un.org/ageing-working-group/ngosfirstsession.shtml#accreditation>

### **Where can I find more information?**

- On the OEWG:

<http://social.un.org/ageing-working-group/>

<http://www.globalaging.org/agingwatch/index.htm>

- On older people's rights:

<http://www.helpage.org/what-we-do/rights/>

<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/OlderPersons/Pages/OlderPersonsIndex.aspx>

AARP, Age UK, Global Action on Ageing, HelpAge International, International Association of Homes and Services for the Ageing, International Federation on Ageing, International Network for the Prevention of Elder Abuse, International Association of Gerontology and Geriatrics, NGO Committee on Ageing in New York.