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Report of the 2014 Social Forum (Geneva, 1–3 April 2014)*

Chairperson-Rapporteur: Mónica Roqué (Argentina)

Summary

The present report contains a summary of discussions and recommendations of the 2014 Social Forum. In accordance with Human Rights Council resolution 24/25, the Forum was held in Geneva from 1 to 3 April 2014, and focused on the rights of older persons, including best practices in that regard.

* Annex II is circulated in the languages of submission only.

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I. Introduction

1. The Human Rights Council, in its resolution 6/13, preserved the Social Forum as a space for dialogue between the representatives of Member States and civil society, including grass-roots and intergovernmental organizations, on issues linked with the promotion of the enjoyment of all human rights by all.¹
2. In accordance with resolution 24/25 of the Council, the Social Forum was held in Geneva from 1 to 3 April 2014 and considered “the rights of older persons, including best practices in this regard”. The President of the Council appointed Mónica Roqué, National Policy Director on Older Persons at the Ministry of Social Development of Argentina, the Chairperson-Rapporteur of the 2014 Social Forum.
3. The programme of work² for the Social Forum had been prepared with guidance from the Chairperson-Rapporteur and input from Member States and other relevant stakeholders. Background reports, made available by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) pursuant to paragraph 8 of Council resolution 24/25, informed the discussions.³ The present report contains a summary of the proceedings, and its conclusions and recommendations.

II. Opening of the Social Forum

4. In her opening remarks, the Chairperson-Rapporteur observed that humanity faced unprecedented changes as ageing populations produced both new challenges and opportunities.⁴ She called for action to protect older persons from poverty, marginalization, discrimination, inadequate access to health and social services, negative stereotypes, abuse, maltreatment, and other threats to their well-being and autonomy. Noting that population ageing trends would continue to accelerate, she recommended immediate action to respect, protect and fulfil the human rights of older persons. Here, she noted with approval the appointment by the Human Rights Council of an Independent Expert on the enjoyment of all human rights by older persons, while calling for further action to develop and implement a binding treaty on the rights of older persons.
5. Navi Pillay, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, delivered opening remarks. She observed that the ongoing demographic transformation throughout the world would result in older persons outnumbering children by 2050. Older persons were often subjected to abuse, discrimination, neglect, exclusion and other violations of human rights. Noting the absence of an explicit prohibition of age discrimination and other specific forms of protection for older persons in international human rights law, the High Commissioner called for the articulation of clear and coherent standards on their human rights through the drafting of a dedicated instrument. She encouraged participants to actively engage in dialogue on that issue and to support the future work of the Human Rights Council, the new Independent Expert on the enjoyment of all human rights by older persons (Independent Expert), and the Open-ended Working Group on Ageing for the

¹ For further details on the Social Forum, see www.ohchr.org/EN/issues/poverty/sforum/pages/sforumindex.aspx.

² Available from: www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Poverty/SForum/Pages/SForum2014.aspx.

³ A/66/173, A/HRC/24/25, E/2012/51 and A/AC.278/2013/CRP.1.

⁴ Full versions of statements and presentations made available to the Secretariat are posted on the OHCHR website at www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Poverty/SForum/Pages/SForum2014.aspx.

purpose of strengthening the protection of the human rights of older persons (the Open-ended Working Group on the Human Rights of Older Persons (the Working Group)).

6. Baudelaire Ndong Ella, President of the Human Rights Council, commended the Social Forum as a subsidiary body of the Council that served as a think tank and permitted interactive dialogue on complex and salient issues affecting the full enjoyment of human rights. The implications of population ageing were only beginning to be addressed. Mr. Ella stressed the need to remove legal and social obstacles to the realization of the rights of older persons and noted the efforts of the General Assembly and the Human Rights Council to address that subject by respectively establishing the Working Group and an Independent Expert. He hoped that the Forum would produce concrete recommendations for action and provide a platform for an exchange of views on challenges, opportunities and best practices on the realization of the rights of older persons.

7. During the general statements segment, representatives of Age International, Coordinación Regional de Organismos de la Sociedad Civil de América Latina y el Caribe sobre Envejecimiento y Vejez (CORV), Autistic Minority International, the International Coordinating Committee of National Institutions for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights, the Global Alliance for the Rights of Older People, South Africa, Older Women's Network Europe, Argentina, the International Longevity Centre Global Alliance (ILC GA) the International Network for the Prevention of Elder Abuse (INPEA), Slovenia, the Council of Europe, International-Lawyers.Org, Ecuador, Venezuela, Brazil, Ligue Marocaine pour la Citoyenneté et les Droits de l'Homme (Ligue Marocaine) and the Red Cross of Serbia took the floor. Speakers emphasized the growing challenges posed by population ageing, and called for immediate action to respect, protect and fulfil the rights of older persons. They welcomed the establishment of the new mandate and supported the drafting of a dedicated international instrument on the rights of older persons. Participants recommended further research and monitoring of the situation of older persons, including through disaggregated data collection and empowerment of national human rights institutions. They stressed the need to promote the participation of older persons in society and prohibit age discrimination, expressing particular concern about multiple discrimination.

8. Several speakers shared examples of best practices. For example, regional groups of States had adopted, or were debating, instruments to protect the rights of older persons and prohibit age discrimination. Some States had drafted similar national legislation and implemented universal social protection schemes for older persons. Speakers supported the participation of older persons as valued independent members of society, and not merely as recipients of social welfare programmes. They called for a productive exchange of ideas that would yield concrete, action-oriented recommendations for the consideration of States and the Human Rights Council.

III. Summary of proceedings

A. The human rights of older persons: Challenges, opportunities, gaps and promise

9. Craig Mokhiber, Chief of the Development and Economic and Social Issues Branch of OHCHR, stated that normative gaps on the rights of older persons led to gaps in implementation of those rights. Noting that existing laws and policies at all levels failed to address multiple human rights concerns related to older persons, including age discrimination, he called for urgent action to address those normative gaps and prevent the continuing violations of older persons' rights. In the context of ageing populations, the

economic crisis and changing societal values, it was essential to address the fragmented and unsystematic character of the limited existing references to the human rights of older persons (such as in the Convention on Migrant Workers, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, by creating a binding, universal, international instrument on the rights of older persons. Such a treaty should permit legal planning, promote equality before the law, prohibit elder abuse, facilitate the participation of, and promote respect for, older persons in society, and serve as an instrument for accountability, monitoring, data collection and reporting.

10. Leyla Alyanak, Deputy Director of the Geneva Office of the United Nations Population Fund, stated that population ageing was a modern reality that reflected development successes and presented unique challenges, particularly for older women, who outnumbered older men and often faced greater hardship. Population ageing, particularly in developing countries, demanded immediate action, and the rights of older persons must not be neglected in the post-2015 development agenda. Action would require working with governments, supporting research and data collection, and measures to protect older persons' rights. Ms. Alyanak suggested that those efforts should focus on three key areas: (a) income security, training, and employment for all, (b) widespread participation by all, including the aged and (c) affirmative measures and instruments to address ageing. In a more equitable world, older persons could live in happiness and dignity.

11. Isabel Ortiz, Director of the Social Security Department of the International Labour Organization (ILO), reported that the global financial crisis had had substantial negative impacts on the rights of older persons, including through changes to employment status and income, pension reforms, lower remittances, increased costs of basic necessities, reduced access to credit, loss of savings, and decreased government spending. That situation was exacerbated because only about 50 per cent of persons worldwide had access to pensions. Coverage was lowest in Africa and the Middle East. The main sources of income for older persons' work and pensions were both under threat. In 131 countries public expenditures were being contracted in moves that often had significant impacts on older persons. Pension reforms currently taking place in 86 countries were one clear-cut example. The social and economic crisis involved individuals, particularly older persons, paying the cost of bailing out the financial sector. Ms. Ortiz called for an immediate reversal through implementation of the ILO recommendation on social protection floors. A large number of developing countries were expanding pension systems in spite of substantial challenges. Ms. Ortiz proposed the adoption of a post-2015 target based on the number of persons of retirement age receiving an adequate pension.

12. In a video address, Dirk Jaspers, Director of the Latin American and Caribbean Demographic Centre, Population Division of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, stated that there had been substantial progress in several countries in the Latin American region towards the realization of the rights of older persons. He argued that development, growth and well-being required the explicit inclusion of older persons and pointed to recent progress throughout the United Nations system. Although the work of the Organization of American States to prepare a draft Inter-American Convention on the rights of older persons and the increased visibility of older persons' issues more generally represented positive developments, Mr. Jaspers decried the continuing difficulty faced by the international community in moving from words to actions to protect the rights of older persons. He called for the adoption of an international treaty on the rights of older persons.

13. In the interactive dialogue, representatives of Care Rights, INPEA, the Grupo Interinstitucional sobre Envejecimiento y Derechos, Argentina and International-Lawyers.Org called for the elimination of gaps in the rights-protection framework for older persons, the extension of health care and social protection to older persons in migrant and

minority communities, the adoption of a social protection floor, and the drafting and implementation of a treaty on the rights of older persons. Participants asserted that measures to implement the social protection floor were feasible in all States and should not be rejected for economic reasons. They pointed to the need to re-examine neoliberal policies, pension systems, workforce discrimination, and the effects of the global financial crisis.

14. In her concluding remarks, Ms. Ortiz argued that older persons should not be seen as a burden and that pensions represented a right rather than a cost. She called for attention to growing inequalities and social debts, noting that policymakers had an obligation to create viable alternatives to dysfunctional systems and put people at the centre of development. Ms. Alyanak compared the movement for the rights of older persons to the world AIDS campaign, noting that, by standing together for their rights, older persons could drive change. Mr. Mokhiber emphasized the importance of eliminating age discrimination in employment decisions. He stated that obstacles to the adoption of a convention on the rights of older persons could and should be overcome and called for a redeployment of existing resources toward the realization of the human rights of older persons.

B. Ageism and age discrimination

15. Bridget Sleep, Senior Rights Policy Adviser at HelpAge International, stated that discrimination against older persons occurred in all aspects of life, was universally prevalent and took many forms. It could be compounded by other forms of discrimination based on gender or other status. For example, older women might be denied access to sexual reproductive services or employment because of their age or appearance. Ms. Sleep highlighted the need for an explicit prohibition of age discrimination, noting the absence of such a prohibition from human rights treaties, apart from the Convention on the Rights of Migrant Workers. Filling that gap would ensure that Member States properly addressed age discrimination, which was at present only infrequently addressed by States, during the first cycle of universal periodic reviews or during treaty body reviews of periodic reports. A new treaty that specifically covered older persons could correct that oversight.

16. David Obot, Chairman of the Uganda Reach the Aged Association, discussed the situation of older persons in Uganda. Younger people were leaving rural areas to look for employment in urban areas, leaving behind older family members. The HIV and AIDS epidemic had also killed thousands of people, placing an extra burden upon older persons, who often cared for the children of deceased or sick parents. Although Uganda had worked to improve protection of older persons, implementation and enforcement of existing laws had been lacking. Consequently, older persons might suffer from serious rights violations including rape, loss of property (particularly land), physical violence and inadequate access to health care. Those problems were worsened by conflicts such as that in Northern Uganda. Inadequate human rights protection, insufficient financial resources, and the lack of participation of older persons in development planning also affected the aged. Mr. Obot advocated an international legally binding instrument on older persons, improved legislation and policies at the national level, the sharing of experiences at the regional level, compliance monitoring, the strengthening of national human rights institutions and improved access to justice.

17. Jorge Plano, a member of the Executive Board of CORV, stated that age discrimination was the last socially accepted form of discrimination. He defined such discrimination as the process of systematic stereotyping of people because they were old. Common misconceptions about older persons included the beliefs that they were mentally impaired, diseased, unproductive, asexual, anti-technology, waiting to die, childish, inflexible and a burden upon their families. Referring to the European Commission's 2012

report on discrimination in the European Union, he highlighted that 45 per cent of survey participants believed that being 55 years and older would result in discrimination. Research in the United Kingdom demonstrated discrimination against older persons in policies and practices, including in the health sector. Mr. Plano viewed discrimination as the fundamental obstacle to improving the lives of the aged. He voiced support for a legally binding international instrument on the rights of older persons.

18. In the interactive dialogue, representatives of CORV, China, the International Longevity Centre Global Alliance, INPEA and AIDE-Fédération took the floor. Speakers discussed the potential of new technologies and communication tools to combat age discrimination. The role of the State and the importance of employment, anti-discrimination legislation and data collection were also discussed.

19. In her concluding remarks, Ms. Sleep stated that low literacy levels could make it difficult for elderly persons to access information and that poverty was often a root cause of problems for older persons. Mr. Obot highlighted the importance of civil society and faith-based organizations in addressing age discrimination and the role of education in enabling older persons' political involvement, employment and entrepreneurship. Mr. Plano agreed that education was critical for addressing age discrimination and that digital accessibility was also essential.

C. Older persons and the right to health

20. John Beard, Director of the Department of Ageing and Life Course with the World Health Organization (WHO), stated that people were living longer than ever before and straining health-care systems. He encouraged relevant stakeholders to make the human rights case to encourage governments to improve public health. States must move past knee-jerk reactions and make considered policy choices that accounted for individual circumstances. Mr. Beard called for a rights-based approach to ageing based on capabilities and the elimination of enforced retirement. It should focus on good health, which entailed physical, cognitive and emotional well-being, financial security, education, social relations and social attitudes. Mr. Beard suggested a coordinated response to ageing to maximize resources and described efforts by WHO to promote that approach.

21. Astrid Stuckelberger, a lecturer at the Institute of Global Health at the University of Geneva, observed that the global population was growing, particularly in developing countries. She decried the inadequate attention and resources dedicated to the issue of ageing by the United Nations and Member States, calling for a change in societal attitudes towards ageing and the refutation of common misconceptions about older persons. She advocated the use of science to help older persons and urged OHCHR to lead on older persons' issues, including at upcoming United Nations conferences.

22. Sooyoun Han, a founding member of Care Rights, described difficulties in caring for older persons and in their end-of-life care and decision-making in the Republic of Korea, including challenges faced by returning migrants. The Korean Government was taking action, including through financial assistance for end-of-life care. However, there was no specific health legislation in place and returning migrants were not eligible for that benefit. Ms. Han called for the adoption of a new international instrument to spur government action to protect and provide for older migrants and their family caregivers' rights to information on end-of-life care and decision-making.

23. Abdulaziz Zguiouar, a representative of AIDE-Fédération, described changing demographics in Morocco over the past 50 years. Despite a population ageing trend, older persons' issues had been generally overlooked in social policies and Morocco had only recently begun to take specific measures. Those included the extension of health coverage

to persons with low income, measures to ensure the affordability of medicines, and the creation of social assistance units by the Ministry of Health. However, public policies still needed to be adapted to the specific health issues linked with ageing. For example, growing life expectancies also involved increased morbidity rates, particularly given the prevalence of poverty among older persons.

24. In the interactive dialogue, representatives of Alzheimer's Disease International, World Network of Users and Survivors of Psychiatry, AGE Platform Europe, Age International and Argentina raised various issues regarding the health of older persons including dementia and mental illness, neglect and abuse including torture and degrading treatment. Speakers called for an international instrument to address those issues and for measures to improve the treatment of older persons. They noted that during times of conflict and economic crisis older persons were disproportionately impacted and might be unable to afford health care or health insurance. They highlighted the need for comprehensive measures to promote the health of older persons, including through continuing education and employment.

D. Older persons and the rights to social security and to work

25. Emmanuelle St-Pierre Guilbault, a legal specialist in the Social Protection Department at the International Labour Organization, discussed the right of older persons to work and their rights at work. The rights to work and social security were formulated in general terms in human rights instruments and did not address the specific situation of older persons. ILO standards defining the content of social security for all population groups addressed some older persons' issues, taking into account best practices at the country level. ILO social security standards addressed the rights of older persons at work, social security and an adequate standard of living. Recommendation No. 162 (1980) concerning Older Workers specifically addressed older workers, pensions and age discrimination. Social Security (Minimum Standards) Convention No. 102 (1952) defined social security benefits that people should have throughout their lives, including in old age, in the event of disability or for other contingencies. Recommendation No. 202 (2012) concerning National Floors of Social Protection called for social protection floors and health-care coverage to keep people out of poverty and ensure a life of dignity. Ms. Guilbault concluded by describing efforts at the most recent international labour conference to address employment in the new demographic context which had resulted in a call for a new research agenda and further standard-setting.

26. Odile Frank, a representative of the Global Coalition for Social Protection Floors, described the efforts of that coalition of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and trade unions to promote social protection floors worldwide. Of the world population, 80 per cent was living in income insecurity. That situation had seriously worsened as a result of the economic and financial crisis. The concept of social protection floors had been made explicit in the United Nations system and had broad support, including from the Bretton Woods institutions, ILO and the human rights community. Social protection floors included universal access to essential health care and basic income security for children and in cases of maternity, unemployment, sickness and disability, and for older persons. Ms. Frank called for States to take a comprehensive approach to social security systems that would contribute to social justice and the enjoyment of human rights.

27. Marlene Márquez Herrera, a member of the executive board of CORV, commended the academic work on social protection floors but stressed the importance of including the perspectives of older persons themselves in the development of international plans to address ageing. She called for an increased focus on social security as a fundamental human right and a reconceptualization of how societies viewed ageing and older persons. She

highlighted the need to re-evaluate retirement ages, cope with increasing numbers of persons with dementia and Alzheimer's disease, address the uneven gender distribution of care burdens and improve the quality of care. There could be no limitations placed on human dignity, which necessitated integral social security without restrictions. Ms. Márquez Herrera appealed to States to redistribute resources so that everyone was guaranteed a life of dignity in their old age.

28. Maryam Al-Ansari, director of the Research and Development Department of the Qatar Foundation for Elderly People Care, discussed the efforts of Qatar to promote the rights of older persons at the national and international levels. The national Constitution protected older persons and discrimination against them was prohibited. The State provided a dignified life for older persons, including through social housing and the guarantee of a basic income. A wide array of services including employment training and medical care was available to older persons. There was an extensive and evolving system of laws and policies designed to protect older persons and the Government engaged with regional and international mechanisms addressing older persons' issues. Ms. Al-Ansari anticipated that Qatar would remain at the forefront of developments in that regard.

29. In the interactive dialogue, representatives of Alzheimer's Disease International (ADI), Venezuela and CORV discussed pension reforms to protect older persons' rights. Speakers also emphasized the importance of social protection floors, and the challenges faced by migrants and persons suffering from Alzheimer's disease. They called for a multi-track pension system that would permit and promote individual retirement plans while also guaranteeing access by all, regardless of contributions, to the bare necessities for a life of dignity.

30. In her concluding remarks, Ms. Al-Ansari called on States to respect the rights of older persons and to provide for them. Ms. Márquez Herrera emphasized the complexity of social security, its importance and the need to prevent interference from political and economic interests with the rights of all persons to live with dignity. Ms. Frank advocated improved monitoring and implementation of ILO conventions on social security. She noted that, in addition to representing a moral and legal obligation, the social protection floor would have economic benefits in most States. Ms. Guilbault called for a binding instrument on the implementation of social security standards. Although current ILO recommendations were not binding, widespread support for them indicated their normative character. ILO recommendations also called for the equal treatment of migrants.

E. Violence, neglect and abuse against older persons

31. Viviane Brunne, from the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) Population Unit, whose main focus was on population ageing, discussed the work of UNECE on violence, neglect and abuse of older persons, including its policy briefs. She spoke of physical, psychological, sexual, financial and material abuse, neglect and self-neglect. Older persons and their caregivers might be susceptible to certain risk factors which must be mitigated. Older persons became more susceptible if they lived alone, were dependent on one family member for care, or had a limited social network. Ms. Brunne called on States to ensure a better quality of life for older persons. She described good practices, including the promotion of intergenerational programmes, the use of volunteer networks to report abuse, and the monitoring, vetting and training of care providers. She advocated a client-centred approach to older persons' care that was sensitive to language, culture, ethnicity and religion, promoted better evaluation of interventions, and was based on relevant data.

32. Svetlana Bashtovenko, president of the Resource Centre for the Elderly, gave a presentation on the situation of older persons in Kyrgyzstan, where older persons

constituted more than 9 per cent of the population. Roughly 40 per cent of older persons in Kyrgyzstan received pensions, some of which were insufficient to satisfy their subsistence needs. That rendered them vulnerable, a problem compounded by discrimination. There had been no State surveys of domestic violence against older persons, but NGOs had identified substantial problems not reflected in government statistics. Analysis by the Resource Centre showed that violence against older persons was prevalent, and that most did not know their rights. Older persons, particularly those living in remote, rural areas, also had limited recourse. The abuse of older persons could take many forms (sexual, physical, economic and psychological), women's limited access to land and property could exacerbate abuses, societal norms and shame hinder the reporting of and action against elder abuse, and problems with substance abuse, unemployment, availability of housing, and limited State capacity all further compound the challenges. Ms. Bashtovenko called for increased scrutiny of the problem, improved training of health-care specialists, law enforcement and State agencies, human rights education, and new prevention centres.

33. Silvia Perel-Levin, a representative of INPEA and ILC GA, emphasized the need to define elder abuse within the wider contexts of violence, cultural norms, sexism and ageism. Violence against older women was often the culmination of lifelong abuse and demanded greater attention to the circumstances of older women. Practices such as witchcraft accusations and forced remarriages which were used to dispossess women of their land and property must be stopped. Ms. Perel-Levin called for a holistic human rights approach, noting that society was responsible for the problem and must provide the solution. She recommended improved screening of, and monitoring by, health-care professionals, social workers and law enforcement, better data collection, and the creation of a United Nations dedicated mechanism similar to the Special Representative of the Secretary General on Violence against Children to promote United Nations interagency collaboration on those issues.

34. In the ensuing discussion, representatives of ADI, AGE Platform Europe, CORV, and the Red Cross of Serbia and of Switzerland discussed the problem of neglect, violence and abuse against older persons. They emphasized the need to address the structural causes of those issues (i.e. poverty, gender and age discrimination, societal norms, and inadequate health care among others). For older persons with dementia, problems were exacerbated. Speakers called for improved analysis of violence, neglect and abuse against older persons through a more systematic international approach to data collection and monitoring. They also insisted on the importance of participation by older persons in addressing those issues.

35. In her concluding remarks, Ms. Perel-Levin agreed that addressing structural and societal forms of violence was a top priority. Referring to a Swiss study on the subject, she called for greater participation of older persons in policymaking. Ms. Brunne called for improved standards across the 56 UNECE member States.

F. Older persons, autonomy and independent life

36. Nena Georgantzi, Legal Officer at AGE Platform Europe, explained through examples that societies and legal and social protection systems perceived declining abilities and dependence as the inevitable destiny of old age and restricted the autonomy of older persons. Informal restrictions based on stereotypes could also pose difficulties to maintaining autonomy as, for example, when older persons were not able to express wishes or were dependent upon the schedules and routines of carers. Maintaining the independence of older persons was about crafting inclusive solutions to permit them to contribute to society and maintain their independence, including during times of economic difficulty. Ms. Georgantzi stressed that the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities did

not have a specific consciousness of ageism and called for a new framework to address discrimination against older persons.

37. Raymond Jessurun, representing ADI, the Central Latinoamericana y del Caribe de Trabajadores Jubilados, Pensionados y Adultos Mayores (CLATJUPAM) and CORV, described efforts to realize older persons' rights and promote their autonomy as part of an ongoing process that included efforts to draft an Inter-American Convention on the right to live independently and with autonomy. In the Caribbean, the population of older persons was growing and many lacked the necessities for subsistence. That problem was compounded by discrimination, which could be particularly problematic in the Caribbean, due to differing treatment for older persons of different nationalities or citizenship status. The lack of social insurance schemes and pensions, particularly for persons who worked in the informal sector, caused further difficulties, as did the disparate quality of health care depending on nationality and residence, particularly for older persons suffering from dementia. Mr. Jessurun advocated implementation of the United Nations principles for older persons, measures to ensure social inclusion, the adoption of a legally binding instrument on the rights of older persons and equality.

38. Susan Somers, Secretary General and Team Leader of INPEA activities at the United Nations, criticized many current social welfare systems and adult protective services as being based on outdated English poor laws that failed to adequately address contemporary issues. She discussed the difficulty of balancing autonomy and independence with legitimate safety and health concerns for some older persons who were at high risk of domestic violence, neglect, and/or self-inflicted harm. The fact that many violent deaths (over 3,000 a month) were suicides raised the question of when and how society should intervene to protect older persons. Ms. Somers supported further consideration of that issue in connection with principles of autonomy, independence and self-determination, including the potential implications of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

39. In the interactive dialogue, representatives of CORV, AIDE-Fédération, Care Rights and International-Lawyers.Org discussed the issue of continuing autonomy in old age. It was suggested that the concept of equal judicial capacity found in the Convention could be extended to older persons. The support system to facilitate decision-making regarding the capacity of older persons in Argentina, which included an appeals mechanism, was highlighted as one example of that approach. Speakers argued that personal assistants could contribute to continuing autonomy, called for intergenerational solidarity, emphasized contributions that older persons could make to society and discussed the importance of autonomy near the end of life, particularly for older women, often faced with multiple discrimination, especially in parts of Asia. The question was posed as to whether autonomy could be considered as a component of the right to life.

40. In her concluding remarks, Ms. Somers observed that there was much work to be done to empower older women in end-of-life decision-making in certain countries. Mr. Jessurun stated that the proposal to address autonomy in the drafting process of an Inter-American instrument on the rights of older persons had been inspired by the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. He emphasized however that poor people required a social protection floor to be free to make their own decisions and called for intergenerational solidarity. He also expressed concern that the Convention might grant too much power to trustees in the event of memory disabilities. Ms. Georgantzi stated that cultural assumptions often led to discrimination against older persons, which could affect how issues such as ageing, dementia and socio-economic status influenced their continuing independence.

G. Long-term care

41. The Chairperson Rapporteur of the 2014 Social Forum, who served as moderator of the panel on long-term care, introduced the discussion with a presentation of the Argentine long-term care model. She discussed the difficulties of providing long-term care for older persons, noting that the care burden often fell largely upon women. She emphasized the importance of social pensions and universal public health care, which could reduce that burden. In Argentina, efforts had been made to move the care burden to the public sphere by providing unemployed persons with the necessary training to be caretakers. That addressed employment issues and allowed many older persons to remain in their homes. For those who could no longer live on their own, efforts had been made to develop appropriate care institutions. There, the informed consent of the person was critical, as was the proper monitoring, maintenance and care of the facility and its charges. Efforts had to be made to ensure that all older persons could age with dignity and, to the fullest extent possible, depending on their circumstances, with autonomy.

42. Erica Dhar, Senior Advisor for the AARP Office of International Affairs, discussed the analysis by AARP of the costs of caregiving for older persons in the United States. The study found that there were over 42 million family caregivers in the United States, whose paid work had been reduced, as a result of their obligations, by an average of 41 per cent, making their unpaid contributions worth around US\$450 billion. Ms. Dhar noted that, with the population continuing to age, the unpaid care burden would rise. She cited the need to improve upon the Affordable Care Act and recent efforts in a number of states to further improve the social welfare system for long-term care and reduce the burden of unpaid care-work. In order to finance long-term care and to ensure its adequacy, AARP advocated for, inter alia, improved affordability and access, choice of setting and provider, quality of life and quality of care, support for family caregivers, and effective transitions and organization of care.

43. Claudia Mahler, a senior researcher at the German Institute for Human Rights, discussed long-term care in Germany from a human rights perspective. Inhumane conditions had been prevalent in private homes, including lack of autonomy for older persons and instances of caregivers working daily 12-hour shifts. In 2001, the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights had expressed serious concern over those conditions and recommended urgent measures for improvement. The Institute had focused on those issues and produced a study in 2006 on the social human rights of older persons. Despite that, significant problems still persisted in the care of older persons, both in family care and in institutions. That was particularly true in the case of older persons with dementia. Ms. Mahler called for further public debate to promote a rights-based approach to long-term care that would permit all older persons a life of human dignity.

44. Maude Luherne, Policy and Project Officer at AGE Platform Europe, presented AGE Platform's efforts to promote a rights-based approach to long-term care for older persons, including the European Charter of the rights and responsibilities of older people requiring assistance and long-term care. AGE Platform was a network of over 160 organizations representing more than 30 million older persons. It supported a holistic approach to the health of older persons that encompassed prevention, rehabilitation and enablement, cure and care, including end-of-life care. In the European Union, approaches to long-term care were highly variable between countries but common problems related to inadequate coordination of health and social care, financial pressure, lack of support for family care-givers, quality of care and elder abuse. AGE Platform, in its European Quality Framework for long-term care services, called for a common analysis and vision to address those issues, increased participation by older persons in identifying needs and solutions, better coordination and exchange of information in order to improve long-term care systems in Europe and older persons' quality of life, and a rights-based approach to long-

term care based on principles for improved quality of service and priority areas for action set out in the WeDO project.

45. In the interactive dialogue, representatives of Care Rights, INPEA and the Older Women's Network, Europe discussed long-term care and end-of-life decisions. Speakers raised the implications of migration for long-term care, the lack of adequate protections of older persons' rights, including legal protections of their independence and autonomy, inadequate or unaffordable long-term care solutions, and the absence of an explicit right to long-term care. They called for the establishment of a new instrument on the rights of older persons. One speaker noted that progress was also necessary at the national level, citing the example of stalled legislative reform to protect persons living in long-term private residential care homes in the United Kingdom under the national human rights act.

46. In her concluding remarks, Ms. Dhar emphasized the complexity of long-term care and called upon governments to increase financing. Ms. Mahler explained that, while the German Institute for Human Rights was aware of the need for culturally sensitive long-term care for migrants, the capacity to address those needs, particularly in the palliative care sector, was lacking. She emphasized that private care institutions were also subject to human rights responsibilities. Ms. Luherne claimed that end-of-life care was part of palliative care and referenced current work at the European level to integrate palliative care into all health-care systems. On quality of care concerns, she recommended that the European quality framework become the standard in all care settings, public and private.

H. Experiences and opportunities for bilateral cooperation on the rights of older persons

47. Ms. Bashtovenko, president of the Resource Centre for the Elderly, described the organization's work to promote continuing independence and autonomy for older persons through cooperation with other organizations. The Resource Centre provided legal support, training, and information, and organized self-help groups to give medical and social support to older persons in Kyrgyzstan. It also lobbied at the local, national and international levels for policy changes, and participated in government working groups on policy issues affecting older persons. It was a member of a number of coalitions of NGOs, including the Age Net International network, which was active in 10 countries in the region. Age Net International held monthly coordination meetings, lobbied with State agencies, developed a culture of philanthropy, and provided humanitarian assistance to members. Among other successes, the network had successfully lobbied for a bill on social protection in Kyrgyzstan, which was currently being implemented.

48. Mr. Jessurun, representing ADI/CLATJUPAM/CORV, recounted 25 years of experience working on older persons' issues through grass-roots organizations in Latin America, first at the national level, and then in an international coalition. Following the Madrid Action Plan, the coalition aimed to realize all human rights of older persons by 2012. All organizations and national federations were autonomous, but coordination meetings allowed for sharing information and adopting common action plans. Through participation in intergovernmental meetings, the coalition successfully lobbied for a commitment from regional governments to protect the rights of older persons. It had developed a digital bulletin to reduce the costs of cooperation, and online forums to share experiences. Since 2012, the coalition had increasingly focused on international cooperation to share the experience of the Latin America and Caribbean region and provide input to United Nations processes that might lead to the development of a binding instrument on the rights of older persons. The coalition had also developed a regional strategy on dementia and planned to continue its advocacy in relevant forums.

49. David Obot, chairman of the Uganda Reach the Aged Association, described the work of his organization, including through international cooperation, to champion the realization and preservation of a dignified quality of life for older persons. The organization conducted participatory research, contributed to national policy development, campaigned for changes in policy and allocation of dedicated budget lines, supported projects, and contributed to joint NGO reports to United Nations treaty bodies. A 400-kilometre walk had been organized to raise awareness of older persons' issues and the organization trained paralegals to intervene to prevent the displacement of older persons from their land. It also cooperated with HelpAge International to improve access to donor funds. Ongoing challenges to those efforts included the lack of a binding international convention on the rights of older persons, inadequate awareness, persistent violations and the combination of high expectations and limited resources. Mr. Obot called for continued advocacy, evidence-based research to improve and inform policy-making, and increased bilateral cooperation.

50. Abdelaziz Zguiouar, representative of AIDE-Fédération, described his organization as a humanitarian and development aid non-governmental organization, with a branch in Morocco since 1998. In Morocco, the organization had embarked on initiatives to promote the rights of older persons, in collaboration with government authorities. These included a home and care facility for 60 older persons near Rabat, and an observatory for the rights of older persons. The home and care centre project had been launched by the King of Morocco.

51. In the ensuing discussion, representatives of the Ligue Marocaine, the Association of World Citizens, AIDE-Fédération, and CORV addressed the important role of bilateral cooperation in strengthening the enjoyment of older persons' rights and how it could be further reinforced. One suggestion was to promote the participation of older persons and their representative organizations, including through improved access to digital technology. Another was to establish regional councils of older persons on every continent with special attention to migrants and other vulnerable groups. Widespread support had been voiced for an international convention to guarantee the rights of older persons. Speakers called for intergenerational solidarity, improved data collection to inform cooperative efforts and the use of national observatories to study relevant issues and share good practices.

52. In her concluding remarks, Ms. Bashtovenko highlighted the importance of improved cooperation and organization for older persons' rights at the local level and for the participation of older persons and civil society. She advocated improved access to funding through self-assistance networks and councils, which could develop proposals to promote cooperation with governments. Mr. Obot stated that collaboration must be global, with well-known organizations taking a lead role to ensure transparency and accountability. Mr. Jessurun observed that public meetings, marches and other activities could be used to increase awareness of older persons' rights and were particularly powerful when organized by coalitions that represented a broad spectrum of society. He reiterated the importance of intergenerational cooperation, citing the successful engagement of his organization with labour unions. Mr. Zguiouar stressed the need for everyone, including philosophers, researchers and doctors, to think about providing long-term care with dignity and intergenerational solidarity.

I. Experiences and opportunities for regional cooperation

53. Matthias Kloth, an administrator in the Directorate General of Human Rights and Rule of Law of the Council of Europe, discussed the recently adopted non-binding recommendation of the Council of Europe regarding older persons' rights. He called for the closing of the implementation gap on those issues, stressing that the new recommendation could constitute a step forward. The recommendation was grounded in the provisions of

binding instruments, such as the European Convention on Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, and the European Social Charter. It stated general principles, while not including an exhaustive definition of “older persons”. It included chapters on non-discrimination, autonomy and participation in decision-making (including issues of legal capacity inspired by the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities), protection from violence and abuse, social protection and employment, appropriate and affordable health care, and access to justice for older persons (including conditions of detention). States might participate in a voluntary follow-up process five years after adoption of the recommendation.

54. Jorge Plano, a member of the Executive Board of CORV, expressed his belief that strong governmental commitment to societal transformation in Latin America and the Caribbean combined with coordinated advocacy by civil society would lead to the eventual adoption of a binding regional instrument on the rights of older persons. The 2012 Santiago Civil Society Declaration stressed the role of civil society organizations in the region, and called for increased cooperation with governments. Other civil society and intergovernmental conferences on ageing had produced important outcomes, such as the Brasilia Charter and Declaration. Regional meetings included the participation of older persons, academics and NGOs. Civil society organizations had contributed by monitoring the situation of older persons, proposing changes in their treatment, and participating in intergovernmental processes at the Organization of American States. Mr. Plano advocated for the development of a universal, legally binding convention on the rights of older persons to promote a rights-based approach to public policies affecting them. Civil society and regional cooperation would be essential for the development of the convention.

55. Vitalija Gaucaite-Wittich, Chief of the Population Unit at UNECE, observed that UNECE included 56 countries (including all 47 members of the Council of Europe) in which one third of the global population of persons over 65 resided. UNECE therefore served as an important platform for sharing good practices on social policies, labour market participation and mobility of older persons, the growing base of older consumers, sustainability of pension systems, including through fiscal reform, long-term care and health provision, and documented and undocumented migrant care workers. Regionally, UNECE was in charge of the review and appraisal of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, and cooperated with the Council of Europe, *inter alia*. It also had national focal points on ageing, and monitored progress through its Working Group on Ageing, including tools such as the Active Ageing Index and longitudinal data of the Generations and Gender Programme.

56. In the interactive dialogue, representatives of the Ligue Marocaine, ADI, the German Institute for Human Rights, AGE Platform Europe, CORV, HelpAge International and the Association of World Citizens raised several issues, including the situation of older persons in Palestine, Syria and Iraq; how to move the discussion on a convention on the rights of older persons forward; the planned future work of UNECE on the rights of older persons, institutionalizing civil society participation in regional mechanisms, the draft protocol to the African Charter on the rights of older persons, and the situation of migrant workers upon retirement.

57. In his concluding remarks, Mr. Kloth stated that, beyond the adoption of a European non-binding instrument, there were discussions in the Latin American and African regions on binding instruments on the rights of older persons. The follow-up process to the Council of Europe recommendation on older persons would consist of State responses, which would be made public, but there was no mechanism for NGO participation. He suggested that NGOs advocate at the national level. Mr. Plano stated that, even if some regional initiatives were valuable, there was no equality between regions with regard to the realization of the rights of older persons. He called for a universal approach to older persons and the prohibition of age discrimination. Ms. Gaucaite-Wittich voiced the possibility that the

Council of Europe recommendation could provide inspiration for a draft convention but noted that some States did not support conventions aimed at specific target groups. She recalled that the UNECE Working Group on Ageing allowed NGOs to participate as observers and that UNECE closely cooperated with all relevant stakeholders in intergovernmental forums.

J. The universal human rights system: new opportunities for participation

58. Rosemary Lane, Senior Social Affairs Officer with the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs and United Nations Focal Point on Ageing, discussed the work of the Open-ended Working Group on the Human Rights of Older Persons, which had been established by the General Assembly in its resolution 65/182 “to consider... the existing international framework of the human rights of older persons and identify... possible gaps and how best to address them”. The Working Group’s gap analysis had so far identified the following priority areas (a) discrimination and multiple discrimination, (b) enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health including access to palliative care, (c) violence and abuse, and (d) social protection and the right to social security. Ms. Lane noted that there remained disagreement among Member States about the need for and scope of a new convention to address those gaps but that the reception of the Working Group had been positive. While some Member States were not convinced of the need for a new instrument devoted to older persons and called for mainstreaming of relevant issues in existing human rights mechanisms, others were calling for a specific convention on the rights of older persons because few existing human rights instruments specifically mentioned older persons, and protection mechanisms for that group were fragmented and did not sufficiently address critical issues. They claimed that there was a need to improve the accountability of, and implementation efforts by, States, and that a new convention would reframe the perception of older persons by society. Widespread participation by all relevant stakeholders in the Working Group was essential.

59. Karim Ghezraoui, leader of the Groups and Accountability Section, Special Procedures Branch of OHCHR, discussed the work of the human rights treaty bodies and of the special procedures of the Human Rights Council on the rights of older persons, including the recent establishment of the Independent Expert on the enjoyment of all human rights by older persons. He noted that, while the Independent Expert would work specifically on the rights of older persons, other mandate-holders would continue to look at older persons through their own lenses (i.e. from the perspective of health or extreme poverty) and the treaty bodies would also remain engaged. The Independent Expert could help advance international standards on older persons and would aim to (a) assess existing laws, (b) investigate the views of stakeholders, and (c) take a gender/disability perspective. Mr. Ghezraoui concluded by referencing the new website for the Independent Expert and calling upon civil society to seize opportunities to raise older persons’ issues in all relevant forums.

60. Bridget Sleaf, Senior Rights Policy Adviser at HelpAge International, discussed human rights mechanisms and how they could be used by civil society organizations to address possible violations of the rights of older persons. She pointed out that the universal periodic review, the special procedures mechanism of the Human Rights Council and the human rights treaty bodies had not consistently addressed older persons’ issues, leaving room for improvement. Ms. Sleaf opined that existing mechanisms and texts were insufficient to fully protect older persons’ rights and called for a new instrument. That would promote uniform standards on the rights of older persons throughout the world, addressing geographic disparities in the current enjoyment of those rights, and would allow for monitoring through a dedicated specialized body. Ms. Sleaf called for further engagement by all relevant stakeholders on those issues.

61. Erica Dhar, Senior Advisor for the AARP Office of International Affairs, described the development and work of the Global Alliance for the Rights of Older People. The Alliance had been created to strengthen the rights and voices of older persons on a global scale. It represented the collaborative efforts of numerous organizations and advocated for a legally binding instrument to consolidate the rights of older persons in one instrument. It also coordinated advocacy efforts and educated older persons on their rights. The Alliance engaged with the Working Group and other relevant mechanisms to ensure that older persons' issues were addressed in the post-2015 development agenda, including the sustainable development agenda.

62. In the ensuing dialogue, representatives of the International Association of Gerontology and Geriatrics, the Conference of NGOs, the Law Association for Asia and the Pacific, the Ligue Marocaine, the Uganda Reach the Aged Association, ADI, Argentina, AIDE-Fédération, and International-Lawyers.Org considered ways to promote the human rights of older persons within the human rights system, including through the creation of a new instrument and engagement with existing mechanisms such as the Independent Expert and the universal periodic review. Speakers raised issues such as improving advocacy efforts on behalf of older persons, promoting evidence-based policymaking, establishing intergenerational solidarity, increasing the participation of older persons in relevant international forums, and addressing the impacts of conflict and climate change on the rights of older persons. Concerns were expressed regarding the necessity for action in Asia because of its rapidly ageing population. The need for more discussion between civil society organizations and States was emphasized. The Working Group was viewed as a potential platform for that engagement.

63. In her concluding remarks, Ms. Dhar noted that AARP was concerned about the effect of climate change on older persons and provided support through its Foundation for older persons affected by natural disasters. She welcomed the participation of youth to establish intergenerational solidarity, as on International Older Persons' Day and highlighted the role of civil society as a champion of older persons' rights. She observed that, increasingly, Member States were taking up that cause and encouraged States and NGOs to work together and across regions to build consensus. Mr. Ghezraoui stressed that there would be discussion on the human rights of older persons, prompted by the annual thematic report of the new mandate-holder and relevant country visits at each September session of the Human Rights Council. That offered the opportunity to raise specific issues, such as discriminatory practices, detected at the national level. Ms. Lane emphasized the need to improve the visibility of older persons' issues and the significant role that civil society must play in that regard. She described progress in some United Nations intergovernmental bodies through the intervention of Member States, for example on the situation of older women, and noted that most of the changes were fostered by pressure from civil society organizations.

K. Final observations from participants

64. **At the conclusion of the 2014 Social Forum, the Chairperson-Rapporteur opened the floor for any final interventions from participants.**

65. **Ms. Slep from HelpAge International delivered a joint final statement on behalf of a majority of the participating civil society organizations. The organizations emphasized the importance of addressing all forms of discrimination against older persons and improving the collection and analysis of data regarding their experiences. They highlighted that the 2014 Social Forum had reaffirmed the need for a new convention on the rights of older persons to address existing gaps in the human rights framework and rejected economic arguments for not protecting these rights. They**

called on Member States to ensure that the Working Group on the Human Rights of Older Persons fulfilled its mandate and that the new Independent Expert of the Human Rights Council promoted and conducted substantive exploration of relevant issues. They called for widespread engagement with and participation by older persons in relevant forums and decision-making processes.

66. InternationalLawyers.org requested that the widespread support for a treaty on the human rights of older persons and the need for recommendations of the Social Forum to receive serious consideration by the Human Rights Council be communicated in the report. They also called upon Member States to heed the progress on older persons' rights being made in regional bodies such as the Inter-American Commission and the African system and to follow those examples at the global level.

IV. Conclusions and recommendations

67. The Chairperson Rapporteur then offered a summary of the proceedings, conclusions and recommendations, which are reflected in the sections that follow.

A. Conclusions

68. The 2014 Social Forum comprised a three-day discussion in which States, international organizations, NGOs and other stakeholders shared their visions about the needs of older persons, the challenges they faced, and the obstacles to the exercise of their rights. All participants agreed that there must be greater protection of the rights of older persons at the national and international levels. The deliberations made it clear that this need would continue to grow as population demographics changed to reflect longer life expectancies for people worldwide. In those circumstances, it was not enough that people lived longer, they must also live better.

69. It was manifestly clear that existing mechanisms for guaranteeing older persons the exercise of all their rights were insufficient, as many continued to suffer from neglect, abuse, social exclusion, discrimination, deprivation, stigmatization, poverty and inability to meet their basic needs.

70. The deliberations identified the absence of an express prohibition of age discrimination in most human rights instruments as one obstacle to the exercise of older persons' rights. Consequently, the issue lacked visibility and coherence, and was not a central theme of review in international mechanisms even though it was a root cause of many of the problems and challenges discussed in the Social Forum.

71. That deficiency in the human rights framework was evident throughout the presentations and related dialogues, which addressed a series of interlinked issues crucial for the understanding of the circumstances of many older persons. Those included poverty, employment discrimination, inadequate systems for long-term care, violations of informed consent, scarcity and inadequacy of services for persons with dementia, restricted autonomy and decision-making, discrimination, including multiple discrimination against women and others, partial or total lack of pension coverage, abuse and neglect, inter alia. Many older persons, where not excluded by discrimination from employment and social participation, were productive members of society.

72. The discussion addressed the epidemiological changes that had coincided with population ageing trends. Increasing rates of acute and chronic illnesses and disability

combined with limited human and economic resources were straining health and social welfare systems. Participants agreed that long-term care was a fundamental right for older persons and that its inadequacy had become a grave problem.

73. The discussion throughout the Forum produced a consensus call for addressing the insufficient protection of the rights of older persons with a new, legally binding instrument that affirmed and consolidated those rights, and for the further monitoring, study and analysis of issues relating to older persons.

B. Recommendations

74. All relevant actors must strive to realize the principles of equality and non-discrimination with regard to age and to implement the concrete obligations of States, including through the development and implementation of rights-based laws and policies on behalf of older persons. In so doing, it must be recognized that all human rights are interconnected and interdependent. The exercise of civil and political rights cannot take place in the absence of economic, social and cultural rights, and vice versa.

75. In going forward, international organizations and mechanisms must be more involved in the debate regarding ageing and the rights of older persons. The violation of these rights should not be seen merely as a moral failing but also as a justiciable violation of international human rights law at both the national and international levels.

76. Older persons can and do contribute to economic and social development, where they are not prevented from doing so through discriminatory laws, policies or attitudes. As such their right to do so must be protected and promoted.

77. A paradigm change is needed to enable older persons to enjoy their rights regardless of whether or not they are able to contribute to society economically. The realization of rights must not be seen as a public expense but rather as an investment in a more just society with a better quality of life for everyone. Additionally, the many non-economic contributions of older persons to society should be recognized and affirmed as part of our moral and legal obligation to contribute to a conscientious society that promotes active ageing and the empowerment of older persons. In this regard, the participation of older persons in decision-making that affects them and promotion of their independence and autonomy is critical.

78. Member States should commence work on drafting a legally binding human rights instrument that can facilitate efforts to respect, protect and fulfil the rights of older persons. Improved mechanisms for data collection, and further discussion and research should inform these efforts and constitute an ongoing objective of efforts to protect the rights of older persons.

Annexes

Annex I

Provisional agenda

1. Opening of the session.
2. Implementation of Human Rights Council resolution 24/25 entitled “The Social Forum” on the theme “The rights of older persons, including best practices in this regard”.
3. Closure of the session.

Annex II

[English/French/Spanish only]

List of participants

States Members of the Human Rights Council

Algeria, Argentina, Austria, Brazil, Chile, China, Cuba, France, Germany, India, Japan, Mexico, Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, United Kingdom, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Viet Nam.

States Members of the United Nations represented by observers

Colombia, Ecuador, Greece, Guatemala, Iraq, Mali, Qatar, Slovenia, Spain, Sri Lanka, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Tunisia, Turkey, Uganda, Ukraine, Uruguay.

Non-Member States represented by observers

Holy See.

Intergovernmental organizations

Council of Europe.

United Nations

Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, United Nations Environment Programme, United Nations Non-Governmental Liaison Service, United Nations Population Fund, United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs.

Specialized agencies and related organizations

International Labour Organization, International Telecommunication Union, World Health Organization.

Non-governmental organizations

Age International, Al-Hakim Foundation, American Association of Retired Persons, Association of Former International Civil Servants in New York, Association of World Citizens, Association Pour La Prevention de la Torture, Ariel Foundation International, Autistic Minority International, China Ngo Network for International Exchanges, CONGO Committee on Ageing, New York and Geneva, Conference of NGOs in Consultative Relationship with the United Nations, Congregation of our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd, Dominicans for Justice and Peace (Order of Preachers), Fédération des Agences Internationales pour le Développement (AIDE-Fédération), Geneva for Human Rights-Global Training NGO, Global Alliance for the Rights of Older People, International

Association of Gerontology and Geriatrics, International Coordinating Committee of National Institutions for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights, International Longevity Centre Global Alliance, International Human Rights Observer NGO (Pakistan), International-Lawyers.Org, La Compagnie des Filles de la Charité de Saint Vincent de Paul, Latter-day Saint Charities, Ligue Marocaine pour la Citoyenneté et les Droits de l'Homme, Law Association for Asia and the Pacific, Miraísmo Internacional, Mouvement contre le racisme et pour l'amitié entre les peuples, National Alliance of Women's Organizations, Older Women's Network, Europe, Organisation Camerounaise de Promotion de la Coopération Economique Internationale, Organisation of Islamic Cooperation, Red Cross of Serbia, St. Maarten Seniors and Pensioners Association, Solidarité pour un Monde Meilleur, Sovereign Military Order of Malta, VIVAT International, World Future Council, World Network of Users and Survivors of Psychiatry.

National human rights institutions

Ukrainian Parliament Commissioner for Human Rights.

National ministries and departments

Federal Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Consumer Protection, Austria; Ministry of Social Development, Argentina.

Academic institutions

Université de Genève, University of East Anglia.

Independent experts and activists

Maryam Al-Ansari, director, Research and Development Department, Qatar Foundation for Elderly People Care; Abdessadek Atlas, AIDE-Fédération (Geneva); Svetlana Bashtovenko, president, Resource Centre for the Elderly (Kyrgyzstan); Erica Dhar, Senior Adviser, American Association of Retired Persons (United States of America); Odile Frank, representative, Global Coalition for Social Protection Floors (France); Nena Georgantzi, legal officer, AGE Platform Europe (Greece); Sooyoun Han, founding member, Care Rights (Republic of Korea); Raymond Jessurun, representative, Alzheimer's Disease International, Central Latinoamericana y del Caribe de Trabajadores Jubilados, Pensionados y Adultos Mayores and the Coordinación Regional de Organismos de la Sociedad Civil de América Latina y el Caribe sobre Envejecimiento y Vejez (St. Maarten); Matthias Kloth, Council of Europe; Maude Luherne, AGE Platform Europe (France); Claudia Mahler, German Institute for Human Rights; Marlene Marquez Herrera, member, executive board, Coordinación Regional de Organismos de la Sociedad Civil sobre Envejecimiento (Colombia); David Obot, Chairman, Uganda Reach the Aged Association; Silvia Perel-Levin, representative, International Network for the Prevention of Elder Abuse, International Longevity Centre Global Alliance (Switzerland); Jorge Plano, member, Executive Board, Coordinación Regional de Organismos de la Sociedad Civil sobre Envejecimiento (Argentina); Bridget Sleaf, Senior Rights Policy Adviser, HelpAge International; Susan Somers, Secretary General, International Network for the Prevention of Elder Abuse; Astrid Stuckelberger, lecturer, Institute of Global Health, University of Geneva; Abdelaziz Zguiouar, representative, AIDE-Fédération (Morocco).