



General Assembly

Distr.: General
26 February 2025

English only

Human Rights Council

Fifty-eighth session

24 February–4 April 2025

Agenda item 3

**Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil,
political, economic, social and cultural rights,
including the right to development**

Written statement* submitted by International Longevity Centre Canada, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[25 January 2025]

* Issued as received, in the language of submission only.



Call for an United Nations Convention on the Rights of Older Persons

The horrific impact of ageism on the human rights of older persons is well documented in research, including in the rich evidence compiled in the report of the Office of the High Commissioner of Human Rights (A/HRC/49/7) and by the United Nations Open-Ended Working Group on Aging (UN OEWGA) which over 14 years illustrated that there are gaps in the human rights of older persons. Indeed, the World Health Organization reports that one in two person is ageist making it one of the most prevalent and unaddressed “ism”.

Older people in Canada, despite living in one of the richest countries in the world, have seen their human rights violated. In this decade we have seen horrendous deaths in long-term care homes during the pandemic with little effort since to address long standing problems in the system. Older Canadians have died disproportionately in climate events and have faced ageist policies in health care with older people denied treatments or offered different screening or medical treatments. There has been a continual rise in elder abuse with an estimated 1 in 10 Canadians facing some form of abuse, and an equally unacceptable rise in number of older people facing homelessness. Indeed, older Canadians are experiencing homeless at a rate higher than any other cohort.

In Canada and around the world, ageism is affecting every aspect of the quality of life of older persons, reducing longevity, increasing poor health and poverty, and yet it remains socially acceptable and largely unaddressed, including at the United Nations

Last year at the UN OEWGA a decision was adopted (14/1) which recognized that the international human rights system does not adequately protect the human right of older persons and that additional steps are needed. Including among the recommendations was the possibility of a new legally binding instrument. Moreover, the UN General Assembly in resolution 78/324 (August 2024) and resolution 79/147 (December 2024) concluded that the work of UN OEWG was finished, and the other bodies of the UN needed to consider UN OEWGA’s recommendations in 14/1.

As a result, this 58th Session of the Human Rights Council is an unprecedented opportunity to address the injustices faced by older persons and an opportunity for Canada and other Member States to take definitive steps to remedy longstanding gaps in the human rights of older persons.

International Longevity Centre Canada support the work in this session on a resolution establishing an inter-governmental working group on aging. We strongly recommend that such a working group include the voices of older people and suggest that NGOs on aging who do not have ECOSOC status be part of those attending working group sessions (nothing about us without us).

Most importantly we call for the drafting of a legally binding instrument for older persons as the only solution to the human rights violations faced by older people around the globe.

HelpAge Canada, NGO(s) without consultative status, also share the views expressed in this statement.