



Statement by BAGSO

United Nation's General Assembly Open-Ended Working Group for the purpose of strengthening the protection of human rights of older persons

Speaker: Ina Voelcker

Item 6. Focus area: Accessibility, infrastructure and habitat (transport, housing and access)

22 May 2024

Dear Chair, Moderator, excellencies,

Dear panellists, many thanks for your valuable contributions that have shown how many gaps and deficiencies there are, when it comes to this focus area. Before coming to my question, allow me a short comment from a German perspective.

The increasing digitalisation is of growing concern for older persons in relation to this focus area. As Federal Association representing over 120 member organisations, we understand these concerns as an infringement of older persons' right to autonomy and independency. Frequently, when older persons face structural discrimination, they are told to ask a grandchild or child for help. It is unacceptable to create such barriers that force older persons to rely on others.

We therefore recognise the decision agreed upon by Member States yesterday as an important step to tackle these gaps in the international human rights framework. We are pleased with this development, in particular because the call for a UN convention on the rights of older persons is gaining increasing support in Germany. Just yesterday, the German Trade Union Confederation, representing 5.7 million people, called upon the German Government to take a clear position in favour of a convention.

In sake of all the efforts undertaken for over a decade now, there is no more time for individual member states to hesitate and wait for other states to express their support first. In any further action, the full, effective and meaningful participation of older persons, their representative organisations, civil society organisations and NHRIs must be included.

Let me conclude by addressing a question to Alexandre Kalache: Already in 1996, the WHO Brasilia Declaration on Ageing contributed to advancing a human-rights based approach. Since then, many efforts have been made to create a stronger human rights framework for older persons at the UN. From your historical perspective, what should the international community do to not waste any further time to move towards a UN convention?

Many thanks, Mr. Moderator.

For more information:

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