



Open-Ended Working Group on Ageing (OEWG-A) 12th Session

BAGSO – German National Association of Senior Citizens' Organisations

Oral statement by Heidrun Mollenkopf to

OEWG-A Item 5 – General discussion, 11 April 2022

Dear Madam Chair, Excellencies, and delegates,

Allow me to make a brief statement as an older person – as one of 727 million older persons worldwide.

Yes, there are many of us, and we are many very different persons. We live in different parts of the world and under very different living conditions. Some of us are healthy and economically well off, but many suffer from poverty and physical or health impairments.

Many of us don't even have a secure roof over our heads, no heating and power supply, and no access to clean water.

But we are all human beings with the claim to the same protection of our rights as everyone else, and we suffer from multiple disregards and violations of those rights.

We are outraged that we are often only seen as a burden on our economic and social systems, even though we make a significant, mostly unpaid contribution to the functioning and social cohesion of our families, clubs, communities, and societies.

We resent being considered too old and stupid to be able to use new technical devices and media, instead of offering us adequate learning opportunities.

We feel deeply hurt that especially the women among us are often robbed of their belongings, their independence and their dignity as soon as they have to live alone or become dependent and in need of care.

It has been horrific for us to see how many of us have died lonely, agonizing deaths in social isolation during the pandemic, and we suffer with those who are still suffering the consequences of this disease and the measures taken.

As members of a generation that experienced the horrors of World War II in their childhood, it pains us immensely to see the human suffering in natural disasters, which are becoming more and more frequent, and above all in the terrible wars and military interventions in many parts of the world from which many of us cannot save ourselves on our own.

And so I ask you, as the representatives of the UN member states, who are sitting here in the hall or at home in front of screens: When will you finally recognize us as equal human beings with the same rights as those of all other human beings?

When will you finally close the legal loopholes that exist in the human rights system to protect us from injustice, violence, neglect, and the violation of our rights?

How much longer should we put up with half-way or interim solutions instead of receiving comprehensive, internationally valid and binding protection?

When, if not in this 12th session of the Open-Ended Working Group, will you agree to a convention on the rights of older persons and help us to convince reluctant or blocking states?

I urge you to think seriously about these questions. Thank you.