

**Report of the Expert Group Meeting on
Human Rights of Older Persons**

**Organized jointly by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs
and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights**

Geneva, 25-26 May 2010

Summary

The expert group meeting on “Human Rights of Older Persons” was organized jointly by Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat (Division for Social Policy and Development) and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (Research and Right to Development Division) and took place in Geneva on 25-26 May 2010.

The meeting was convened in preparation for the Secretary General’s *comprehensive report on the current status of the social situation, well-being, development and rights of older persons at the national and regional levels* to be submitted at the sixty-fifth session of the General Assembly as per GA resolution 64/132 on the Follow-up to the Second World Assembly on Ageing.

The Meeting had four objectives: (i) to document the current international and regional human rights norms and standards as they pertain to older persons; (ii) to review the contribution of existing treaty bodies and special procedure mandate-holders to the interpretation of the content of the rights of older persons; (iii) to document general trends in national legislation and policy approaches to the human rights of older people through the analysis of selected country examples and; (iv) to discuss implementation gaps and interpretation issues.

The meeting also discussed specific issues and rights that were critical to the enjoyment of all rights by older persons such as discrimination and violence against older persons; the right to health; the right to work and: the right to social security.

Presentations on each topic preceded discussion by participants.

Three background papers were prepared ahead of the meeting: two papers were drafted by consultants, e.g. (1) “Closing the gap between human rights and human lives: domesticating human rights obligations to older persons” and (2) “National and regional trends in the Latin American and Caribbean region regarding the human rights of older persons” and one paper was written by OHCHR on “Human rights of older persons: international human rights principles and standards”. Additional UN reference documents were distributed during the meeting.

The findings of the meeting will be reflected in the comprehensive report of the Secretary-General as well as in a longer conference room paper, which will both be submitted to the sixty-fifth session of the General Assembly.

The High Commissioner for Human Rights, Ms. Navi Pillay addressed the gathering. The High Commissioner underscored the critical importance of addressing the rights of older persons and noted that older persons were the fastest growing and largest group of rights holders without a specific human rights instrument.

Annex I Programme of work

DAY 1, 25 May 2010

- 10:00 OPENING SESSION
Opening statement on behalf of OHCHR by Mr. Ibrahim Wani, Chief,
Development and Economic and Social Issues Branch
- Opening statement on behalf of DESA by Mr. Jean-Pierre Gonnot, Chief,
Social Integration Branch
- 10:30-11:30 SESSION 1: Setting the scene: International and regional human rights
standards
Chair: Mr. Ibrahim Wani, OHCHR
- Mr. Craig Mokhiber, OHCHR, Chief, Human Rights, Economic
and Social Issues Section on International human rights standards
and older persons
 - Ms. Jill Adkins on the European and African regional human rights
systems
 - Mr. Alejandro Morlachetti, on the Inter-American human rights
system
- 11:30-11:45 *Coffee break*
- 11:45-13:00 SESSION 2: Violence and discrimination against older persons
Chair: Ms. Rosemary Lane, DESA, Senior Social Affairs Officer, Social
Integration Branch
- Ms. Ferdous Ara Begum, Expert member of the Committee on
the Elimination of Discrimination against Women
 - Ms. Jane Connors, OHCHR- Director Special Procedures Branch
 - Mr. Albert Evrard, Facultés Universitaires Notre-Dame de la Paix
- 13:00-15:00 *Lunch break*
- 15:00 – 16:15 SESSION 3: Right to health, and human rights of persons with disabilities
Chair: Mr. Jean-Pierre Gonnot, DESA
- Dr. John Beard, WHO- Department on Ageing and Life Course
 - Ms. Silvia Lavagnoli, OHCHR- Advisor on human rights and
disabilities, Human Rights, Economic and Social Issues Section
- 16:30-18:00 SESSION 4: National legislation and policy approaches to human rights of
older people (models, trends, gaps)
Chair: Ms. Wan-Hea Lee, OHCHR, Chief Groups in Focus Section,
Human Rights Treaties Division

Presentation of Background papers prepared by OHCHR-DESA
Consultants

- Ms. Jill Adkins
- Mr. Alejandro Morlachetti

DAY 2, 26 May 2010

10:00-11:15 SESSION 4 (cont): National legislation and policy approaches to human rights of older people (models, trends, gaps)
Chair: Ms. Wan-Hea Lee, OHCHR
Open plenary discussion, including participants experiences at national level

11:30-11:45 *Coffee break*

11:45-13:00 SESSION 5: Right to work
Chair: Mr. Israel Doron, University of Haifa; Department of Gerontology and School of Social Work

- Mr. Peter Abrahamson, University of Copenhagen

13:00-15:00 *Lunch break*

15:00-15:20 Address by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Ms. Navanethem Pillay

15:20- 16:45 SESSION 6: Social protection & right to social security
Chair: Mr. Craig Mokhiber, OHCHR- Chief, Human Rights, Economic and Social Issues Section

- Ms. Virginia Bras Gomes, Expert Member Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
- Ms. Magdalena Sepulveda, Independent Expert on the human rights issues of extreme poverty
- Ms. Corina Rodríguez Enríquez, Interdisciplinary Centre for the Study of Public Policies (CIEPP) Argentina

16:45-17:30 Conclusions and closing remarks by participants
Identification of steps forward
Mr. Craig Mokhiber, OHCHR and Mr. Jean-Pierre Gonnot, DESA

17:30 *End of meeting*

Annex II List of participants

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Annex III List of documents

Draft Background Papers:

- Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), May 2010. Human rights of older persons: International human rights principles and standards.
- Jill Adkins, May 2010. Closing the gap between human rights and human lives: Domesticating human rights obligations to older persons.
- Alejandro Morlachetti, May 2010. National and Regional Trends in the Latin American and Caribbean Region Regarding the Human Rights of Older Persons.

Reference Materials (in chronological order):

Report of the Independent Expert on the question of human rights and extreme poverty, Magdalena Sepúlveda Carmona, to the Human Rights Council, A/HRC/14/31, March 2010

General Assembly resolution 64/132: “Follow-up to the Second World Assembly on Ageing“, February 2010

Report of the Secretary-General to the General Assembly , Follow-up to the Second World Assembly on Ageing, A/64/127, July 2009

Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, General Comment no. 19
The right to social security (article 9), E/C.12/GC/19, February 2008

Report of the Secretary-General to the Economic and Social Council, *Abuse of older persons: recognizing and responding to abuse of older persons in a global context*, E/CN.5/2002/PC/2, January 2002

Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights: General Comment no. 6
The economic, social and cultural rights of older persons, 12/08/1995