

Concept note
Human rights in older age:
Towards the elimination of ageism and age discrimination

Virtual side event during the 48th session of the Human Rights Council (HRC)
Tuesday 21 September 2021 14:00-15:15

Organizers: UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, the Independent Expert on the enjoyment of all human rights by older persons, NGO Committee on Ageing (Geneva), HelpAge International, AGE Platform Europe, Human Rights Watch,

Co-sponsors: Group of Friends of the human rights of older persons, Geneva (TBC), INPEA, ILC GA, WHO, UNFPA, UN DESA, NGO Committee on Ageing NY, International Disability Alliance

Platform: Zoom Webinar. The event will have closed caption, International Sign language and interpretation

Background

Ageism is a global phenomenon, which has serious consequences for individuals and society at large. According to the UN Global Report on Ageism, half of the world's population is ageist against older persons. The COVID-19 pandemic brought to light entrenched ageism and age discrimination in many areas. The Secretary General's Policy Brief on COVID-19 and older persons recognised that COVID-19 escalated ageism and stigmatization of older persons, including hate speech in public discourse and on social media. 146 states signed a statement of support to the Policy Brief and echoed concerns over the intensification of ageism. Despite its scale and harmful impacts, ageism remains largely unknown and is often considered more acceptable compared to other forms of discrimination.

Against this background, the report of the UN Independent Expert on the enjoyment of all human rights by older persons to the 48th session of the HRC (A/HRC/48/53), examines and raises awareness of the prevalence of ageism and age discrimination, analyses their possible causes and manifestations, and reviews the way the existing legal and policy frameworks at the international and regional levels protect against ageism and age-discrimination.

This side event during the 48th session of the HRC will bring to the fore real-life experiences of ageism and age discrimination faced by older persons and will take stock of the Independent Expert's conclusions and recommendations with the aim to discuss strategies to address and prevent ageism and age discrimination and to ensure the promotion and protection of the rights of older persons.

Rationale/Objectives:

- Disseminate the findings and recommendations of the Independent Expert's report;
- Raise awareness of ageism and age discrimination;
- Give voice to older persons to share real life experiences of ageism;
- Create synergies with ongoing work of Human Rights Council, in particular around the possible substantive resolution on the human rights of older persons and the International Day of Older Persons, 1st October.

Programme:

Moderator: Monica Ferro, Director, UNFPA Geneva office

Opening remarks: Michelle Bachelet, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights

Voices of older people – Local experiences of ageism and how to address them, older persons from all UN geographic regions with different experiences

Report on ageism and age discrimination: Claudia Mahler, Independent Expert on the enjoyment of all human rights by older persons

Respondent/discussant: World Health Organization – how can age-friendly communities, public campaigns and advocacy raise awareness and promote participation of older persons to help fight ageism

Q&A session

Concluding remarks: Member of the Group of Friends, Geneva (TBC)

Issues to be covered by speakers

- How does ageism/age discrimination affect daily life?
- Has the COVID-19 pandemic exposed and/or enhanced inequalities experienced by older people?
- How can policies and legal frameworks help address ageism?
- How can the United Nations system work together with States, civil society and other stakeholders to further protect the human rights of older persons?

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