



**Statement from the Global Ageing Network to
the United Nations Open-Ended Working Group on Ageing (OEWGA)**

December 2016

The International Association of Homes & Service for the Ageing (IAHSA) is pleased to present a statement to the U.N. Open-Ended Working Group on Ageing (OEWGA).

IAHSA is a global network of organizations that provide care and services to people as they age. With a presence in over 50 countries, we are dedicated to enabling older adults to live their best lives as they age, with access to high quality services and supports. They deserve nothing less after a lifetime of making their communities vibrant.

A number of things stand in the way of achieving this vision, not the least of which is the insidious ageism that permeates countries around the world. Older people are largely undervalued, lumped together because they have reached a certain age and are assumed to be unproductive and a burden. Age discrimination is widespread. Our collective attitude about ageing and the elderly remains negative and largely unchecked.

We know, through the work of IAHSA and its members, that we have not adequately tapped the energy, the experience and the wisdom that comes with age. We, at IAHSA, believe that *all* deserve respect, dignity and choice as they age. And, we believe that ageing is an opportunity for growth, fulfillment and joy.

Changing attitudes takes time and a movement. We are committed to being part of that movement. It needs to be coupled with a clear conceptual, legal and accountability framework to assist governments, the private sector and NGO's in making decisions that positively address population ageing, eliminate age discrimination and better protect older women and men's rights. The time has come for an international convention on the rights of older people.

Such a convention would ensure that violence against older people is prosecuted, that older people can get and *keep* jobs, that they have social assistance or pension access to affordable health services and that caregivers are supported. Such a convention would level the playing field between older people and other generations, recognizing that human rights are the rights people are entitled to simply because they are human irrespective of their age, citizenship, nationality, race, ethnicity, language, gender, sexuality, HIV status or abilities.

IAHSA stands ready to work with the United Nations and other NGO's to advance these issues. The right to choice equality and dignity does not change in old age. We need—as a community of nations—not to only believe this, but to affirm and enforce it through a convention on human rights and the elderly.

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