



SGA Africa Opening Statement for the 10th Session of Open-Ended Working Group on Ageing April 15th-18th 2019

I make this statement on behalf of the Stakeholder Group on Ageing Africa (SGA Africa) of which my organization the Dave Omokaro Foundation is a member and the co-chair. SGA Africa is a coalition of more than 70 mostly network organizations (and growing) in Africa, and a member of the African Regional Civil Society Engagement Mechanism on SDGs Agenda 2030 and African Union Agenda 2063

We congratulate the Chair and members of the Bureau on the occasion of the 10th session of the OEWGA and commend the 73th UN General Assembly for upgrading the status of the OEWGA by its inclusion in the official UN Calendar. This is significant.

For the 69 million older persons living in Africa, a number which, with a projected 269% increase in growth rate, will be about 266 million in 2050 (fastest growth), ten (10) unbroken sessions of the Open Ended Working Group signify the commitment of the bureau and member States to the mandate contained in UN Res 65/182 2010. Ten unbroken sessions, affirm the unalloyed investments of NGOs, National Human Rights Institutes and older persons themselves, in the process of the OEWGA and our faith in the expected outcome. We commend the Working Group for the gradual progression of work; for increasing interactive substantive debates on focused areas and for the discussion of normative elements on the rights of older persons.

We believe that these in themselves, as necessary steps towards a legally binding instrument, hold out hope. We support the furtherance of the substantive discourse and pray for the enlargement of the space already created for interactive debates on normative elements.

SGA Africa believes that inter-governmental agreements on timeline and on what should constitute forward leaning actions or strategy, including collective fairing of the normative elements so far considered, towards the drafting, would speak to the impact of time and process –now 2010-2019. For older persons in their diversities and varying capacities; for all who are ageing, and indeed for all of us; **BECAUSE WE ALL ARE; Human Rights, Justice and Time are of the essence**

Overwhelming evidence from research on ageing and inclusion, and from our national and regional campaigns/consultations within the civil society engagement mechanism on SDGs, buttress the **NECESSITY** for an internationally binding legal instrument, which would recognize and affirm the rights of older persons, which would define the scope of those rights and measures to challenge systemic drivers of age discrimination. SGA Africa is hoping it will be on time to effectively steer the prospects of inclusion of older persons in SDGs Agenda 2030. **Time is ticking.** For Africa's older persons, compelling legal framework, and access to justice are critical to reinforcing commitment to universality and the pledge to 'Leave No one Behind'

SGA Africa Statement therefore aligns with the Statement made by Global Alliance for the Rights of Older Persons (GAROP), and underlines the urgency of the need to strengthen the promotion of the rights of older persons. We reiterate that these three things: **Rights, Justice and Time are of the essence and thank the chair, the bureau and member states for endeavoring to fast track the process towards a UN Convention on the rights of older persons. Thank you for listening.**

STAKEHOLDER GROUP ON AGEING AFRICA

76B, Ebitu Ukiwe Street, Jabi District, Abuja, Kenya
Telephone: +234 803 724 2629 | +234 809 651 2536
Email: sga.africa@gmail.com
www.sgafrica.org

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