

**Ageing and  
the human rights  
of older persons  
A Global Perspective**

What can a retired ILO official do about it?

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Chair, NGO Committee on Ageing, Geneva  
UN representative, International Longevity Center, Global Alliance (ILC GA)  
*Geneva, October 2016*

**Join the campaign  
against ageism**

## Dispelling some myths

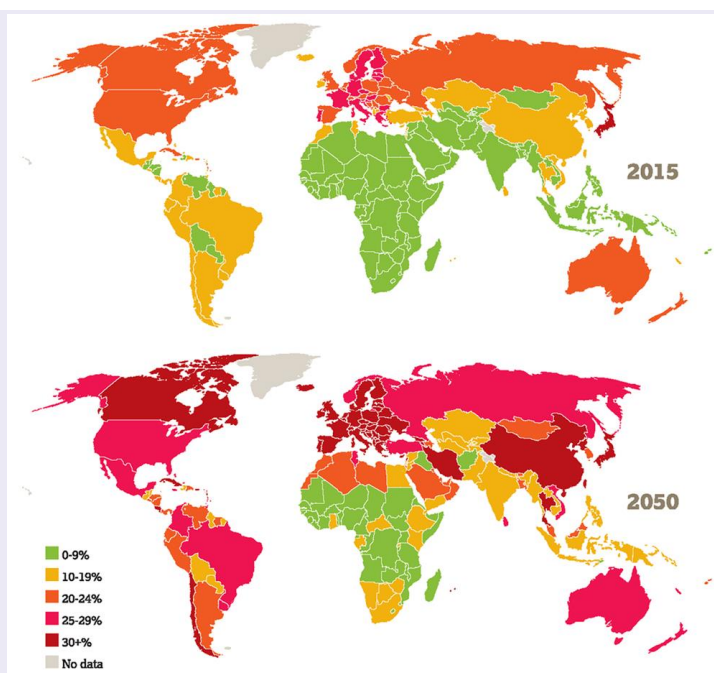
- ✗ Ageing is an issue of developed countries

✓ Population ageing is a global issue
- ✗ Older persons do not contribute to society

✓ They contribute to family, community, the economy and society at large
- ✗ In our culture we respect our elders

✓ Discriminatory practices and elder abuse happen in all cultures

### Population ageing



Source: [www.helpage.org/global-agewatch/](http://www.helpage.org/global-agewatch/)  
 from UNDESA Population division, World population prospects: the 2015 revision,

# Disproving Beliefs About the Economy and Aging

Retiring

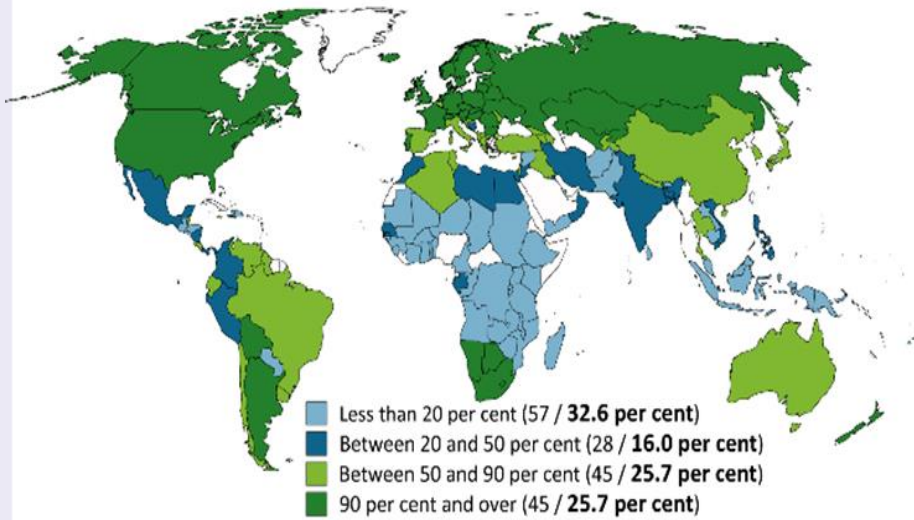
By CHRISTOPHER FARRELL MAY 13, 2016

The New York Times



## A Right Unfulfilled for half of the world - **Only 51% Older Persons Receive a Pension**

Population above retirement age receiving an old age pension (%) | 2010-2012



Source: ILO, 2014

It is time that older persons  
are seen as full citizens with full  
enjoyment of human rights  
and participation in  
society, community, own lives

- 
- *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*  
*“All human beings are born free and equal in  
dignity and rights” (Art. 1)*
  - UN principles of Older Persons
  - Madrid International Plan of Action
  - Human Rights Treaty Bodies
  - Human Rights Council
  - Universal Periodic Review
  - Special Procedures

## **Older Persons Human Rights Include**

### **The right to:**

- Equal recognition before the law
- Autonomy and independence
- Housing
- Lifelong education and learning
- Work and employment
- Social protection
- Health and care
- Freedom from violence and abuse
- Personal liberty

## **Older Persons Human Rights Include**

### **The right to:**

- Leisure
- Full and effective participation
- Age in place of choice
- A safe environment
- Personal mobility
- Accessibility
- Freedom from torture, cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment
- Information
- Justice

## **Why do we need a Convention on the Human Rights of Older Persons?**

### **What would a Convention Do?**

- Help to reduce age discrimination and ageism
- Oblige ratifying states to adopt non-discriminatory laws
- Draw attention to multiple and intersecting discrimination
- Provide basis for advocacy, public awareness and education
- Strengthen societies' responses to the challenges of demographic changes
- Provide a reporting and accountability mechanism

## What can Civil Society do?

- Interact with human rights mechanisms, through communications and reports
- Engage with the Open-ended Working Group on Ageing and the Independent Expert
- Make oral or video statements at the Human Rights Council
- Lobby governments to include older person in policies and to report to the HR mechanisms

## What can Civil Society do?

The screenshot shows the UNOG website interface. At the top, there are navigation links for 'Email Alerts', 'Site Map', 'Page Alert', 'Site Search', 'Advanced Search', and 'Language (English)'. The main header includes the UNOG logo and the text 'THE UNITED NATIONS OFFICE AT GENEVA'. Below this is a horizontal menu with categories: 'I AM A ...', 'ABOUT UNOG', 'THE PALAIS DES NATIONS', 'WHO IS WHO?', 'WHAT'S ON?', and 'DISARMAMENT'. A secondary navigation bar includes 'Working for Peace, Rights and Well-being' and 'ACCESSIBILITY AT UNOG'. The main content area features a large image of a globe with a 'CCW' cap, followed by the title 'Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW)'. Below the title, there are several news items: 'Protocol V - 10th Conference of the High Contracting Parties (29 August - Palais des Nations)', 'Amended Protocol II - Annual Conference of the High Contracting Parties (30 August - Palais des Nations)', and 'Preparatory Committee for the 5th Review Conference of the High Contracting Parties (31 Aug. - 2 Sept. - Palais des Nations)'. To the right, there is a 'UN News' section with a 'More ...' link and a list of recent news items. At the bottom, there are several columns of links: 'I am a ...' (Member of a Permanent Mission, Delegate, Student or Researcher, etc.), 'About UNOG' (Welcome to the UNOG Website!, The Director-General, News and Media, etc.), 'The Palais des Nations' (Map of the Palais, Strategic Heritage Plan, History, etc.), 'Who is Who?' (UN Family in Geneva, Permanent Missions, Host Country, etc.), and 'What's On?' (Calendar of Meetings, Daily Bulletin of Conferences, Cultural Activities, etc.). The footer contains the address 'Palais des Nations, 1211 Geneva 10, Switzerland', phone numbers, and email addresses.

[www.unog.ch](http://www.unog.ch)

# What can Civil Society do?

HOME ABOUT US ISSUES HUMAN RIGHTS BY COUNTRY WHERE WE WORK HUMAN RIGHTS BODIES NEWS AND EVENTS PUBLICATIONS AND RESOURCES

English > About Us > Civil Society Section

**Civil Society**

*"The determination and integrity of civil society actors working for human rights bring me, and perhaps bring to you, a sense of humility, a feeling of a great and powerful debt being owed, and the will to continue working for the equal and inalienable dignity and rights of every human being."*

**Zeid Ra'ad Al-Hussein, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights**

Every day in every part of the world, civil society contributes to the promotion, protection and advancement of human rights. Whatever they call themselves -- human rights defenders, human rights NGOs, bar associations, student clubs, trade unions, university institutes, bloggers, or charities working with discriminated groups -- civil society actors work for a better future and share the common goals of justice, equality, and human dignity.

OHCHR's cooperation with civil society remains a strategic priority because it bolsters our shared objectives, helps to address our mutual concerns, and supports the Office's human rights mission and initiatives.

A dynamic, diverse and independent civil society is able to create a better future for all.

**About us**

The Civil Society Section is the unit in OHCHR dedicated to strengthening engagement between civil society and the United Nations human rights programme.

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**United Nations Human Rights Council - A Practical Guide for NGO Participants**

[www.ohchr.org](http://www.ohchr.org)

# What can Civil Society do?

French | Spanish


**In this section**

- Introduction
- Mandate
- Historical background of the mandate
- International standards
- Annual reports
- Country visits
- Videos

**Issues in Focus**

- Best/Good practices
- Climate resilience and older persons
- Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing
- Open-ended Working Group on Ageing
- 2014 Social Forum
- World Elder Abuse Awareness Day (15 June)
- World Alzheimer's Day (21 September)

**The Independent Expert on the enjoyment of all human rights by older persons**



**In May 2014, the Human Rights Council appointed Ms. Rosa Kornfeld-Matte as the first Independent Expert on the enjoyment of all human rights by older persons (HROP).**

Ms. Kornfeld-Matte served as the National Director of the Chilean National Service of Ageing where she designed and implemented the National Policy of Ageing.

She has a long career as an academic and is the founder of the programme for older persons at the Pontifical Catholic University of Chile.

**Background**

For human rights purposes, age is not merely a numerical designation, but a social construct based on custom, practice and the perception of the role a person plays in his or her community. The specific vulnerabilities of older persons can be the result of physical and mental conditions, but can also result from the obstacles encountered due to societal perception and the interaction of an individual with his or her environment.

Population ageing constitutes one of the most significant

**Latest news**

UN human rights expert deplores ageist attacks sparked by Brexit  
5 July 2016

UN Experts Statement on Habitat III: New Urban Agenda Must be Based in Human Rights  
29 June 2016

**More press releases and statements**

**Highlights**

**New!!** Responses to the questionnaire on best/good practices

**New!!** Responses to the questionnaire regarding the human rights implications of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing

**On International Day, UN highlights urban sustainability and inclusiveness of older persons, 1 October 2015**

<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/OlderPersons/IE/Pages/IEOlderPersons.aspx>



## **What can Civil Society do?**

**International NGOs in Geneva advocate  
for many topics:**

**Ageing  
Disaster Risk Reduction  
Environment  
Women and Gender  
Children and Youth  
Business and Human Rights  
Human Rights Defenders**

.....

**<http://www.unog.ch>**

## **Concluding remarks**

*The challenge is how to better understand,  
shape and value this new old age. Older  
persons themselves should define this  
portion of their lives, and not passively  
allow the culture to do so.*

*Robert (Bob) Butler  
founder of ILC US*

In Achenbaum,

Visionary of Healthy Aging

# Thank you

## **NGO Committee on Ageing**

GENEVA

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