

REPORT

# 2024 General Assembly Meeting

Tuesday, 7 May 2024 – 13:30-15:30 Zoom Meeting:

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### Zoom Meeting:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85764000811?pwd=M3gwY21SRkVROXZIU0ZoYk8rUWZRQT09>

### Present:

Alejandro Bonilla Garcia (Greycells), Ann Lindsay (WFMH), Donatella Benjamin (Sorooptimist International), Elizabeth Williamson (WWSF), Ina Voelcker (BAGSO), Kala Madhav (WFMHX), Kelly Fitzgerald (IFA), Kim Stoeckel (UMBC), Liat Ayalon (BIU), Silvia Perel-Levin (INPEA + ILC GA), Sophia Casale (UMB), Valerie Bichelmeier (MMM), Vitalija Gaucaite Wittich (AAFI AFICS), Xenia Scheil-Adlung (IFA), Hans Peter Graf (FAAG), Mary Liling (ICJW), Brigitte Leroy (IFSW), Margaret Gillis (ILC Canada)

### Apologies:

Bridget Penhale, (UEA), Andrea Ferendzi (MNSKZ), Raymond Saner (CSEND), Lichia Saner-Yiu (CSEND)

### Agenda

## Part 1. General Assembly (13:30 - 14:30)

### 1. Welcome/ Apologies/ Adoption of the agenda (Kelly)

- a) Kelly welcomed members to the meeting and invited everyone to introduce themselves. Members who sent apologies were listed.
- b) Adoption of Agenda was made with the following additions to the draft agenda: Donatella Benjamin was added to the nominations for executive committee position of treasurer. For point 5, Sophia is added as the presenter.
- c) Valerie did a role call of the paid committee members present at the meeting. 13 members were present: UMBC, MMM, Bar Ilan University, WWSF, WFMH, Aafi-Afics, FAAG, IFSW, GreyCells, INPEA, ILC, BAGSO, IFA

### 2. Minutes of the Previous GA.

The minutes of the previous GA meeting held on 28 September 2024 were adopted. No issues with the minutes were raised. Kala confirmed that the new statutes that were approved at that GA meeting have been uploaded to the committee website.

### 3. Annual Report.

The committee's Annual Report 2023, prepared by Kim, was provided to the committee members for review prior to the meeting. It was reported that the annual report has been submitted to CoNGO, per requirements.

## 4. Membership (Valerie)

- a) There are currently 19 paying members of the committee. AWCDH (Hungary), UMBC, MMM, Bar Ilan University, ADI, WWSF, FIAPA, WFMH, Aafi-Afics, ADI CH, FAAG, Age Platform Europe, Cognitive Solutions LLC, IFSW, GreyCells, INPEA, ILC, BAGSO, IFA
- b) Valerie thanked the NGO representatives for the prompt membership due payments this year by so many.

## 5. Finance (Valerie)

- a) The financial report for the 2023 fiscal year is straightforward: income comes essentially from membership fees (20 members) plus the interests of our savings account for a total of 1140.60 CHF. Expenses in 2023 were limited to the costs of our website, our Zoom subscription and our Postal address fee for a total of 391.55 CHF. As a result, the 2023 year generated a profit of 749,05 CHF. The financial situation of the Committee is healthy as there was 9'473.89 CHF on our account at the end of 2023.
- b) WHO payment – will get settled in 2024.
- c) Accounting has been audited by Hans Peter Graf and Sabine Kinzer. Thank you to both for this service.
- d) Financial report is approved.

## 6. Elections

- a) Ina, a member of the nominations committee, presented the slate of nominees for the executive committee. Valerie reminded that only members of paid organizations can vote. Ina thanked Ann for being an active member of the nominating committee and also thanked all members who agreed to be nominated. Kelly (outgoing chair) and Liat (outgoing co-secretary) were thanked for their work on the executive committee for the previous 2 years. The slate of nominees had been sent out and stated that Donatella had been added as a nominee for treasurer since that slate had been distributed to members. The nominees stand as follows:
  - Chair - Alejandro Bonilla Garcia (Greycells)
  - Vice-Chair - Ann Lindsay (WFMH)
  - Secretary - Kim Stoeckel (UMBC)
  - Treasurer - Donatella (Soroptimist International Geneva)
- b) No committee members raised any questions or concerns about the nominations slate. Elections were held and all voting members voted for the individuals on the nominations slate.
- c) Auditors for the committee were also discussed and Hans Peter Graf and Sabine Kinzer agreed to continue in their role as auditors.
- d) Donatella thanked the committee for the election and announced that Valerie Bichelmeier (MMM) will serve as assistant treasurer for one-year to support the transition.
- e) Kelly Fitzgerald will also serve in a support role to the executive committee, in

her role as past chair.

- f) Alejandro thanked everyone for the trust to be nominated into the role of committee chair. He expressed his love of challenges and that he recognizes that “selling” ageing is a challenge. He stated he is not an expert in ageing and will need and desire help from the committee.
- g) Alejandro proposed having two additional vice-chairs serve on the executive committee - Silvia Perel-Levin and Hans Peter Graf who are present or often present in Geneva, in order to strengthen relationships in Geneva. Hans Peter Graf stated he is happy to support but does not want to be in a vice-chair position. Silvia Perel-Levin stated she is happy to support with or without a title. Per Kelly’s proposal, the committee agreed that this will be discussed with the executive committee and appointments could then follow.
- h) Alejandro explained his wish to interview each committee member individually to identify member concerns, wishes and opportunities for committee involvement, with a goal to develop a plan of action for the committee. He will send out a calendar with dates for scheduling meetings. A summary of these individual meetings will be given at the next committee meeting.

## 7. Farewell message.

Kelly thanked everyone who has worked with her on the Executive committee and for all the help and support given to her over the past two years.

**The General Assembly Meeting was concluded.**

## Part 2. General updates and upcoming events (14:30 - 15:30)

### 1. Adoption of minutes from 27 February 2024 (Kim)

- a) Three edits were requested for the 27 February minutes.
- b) Anne requested a change on point 6.e.v. to: Tension between member states linked with the current conflicts makes reaching consensus on many issues very difficult.
- c) Silvia clarified that in point 5.a.1. that the Human Rights Council hybrid session will have pre-recorded statement available, not pre-recorded sessions as was stated in the minutes.
- d) Vitalijia Gaucaite Wittich requested that her NGO affiliation be added to her name in the attendee list. Her affiliation is AAFI AFICS.
- e) The minutes were adopted.

### 2. Task Force / Focal points brief reports

- a) **Human Rights (Silvia).** A virtual meeting of experts on violence, abuse and neglect will be held the first week of June. The meeting was to be in-person but lack of funds has made it necessary to organize it as a virtual event. Final date will be confirmed. Several consultations have been held on the centrality of care and support from a human rights perspective. One in-person event is scheduled

for 23 May and committee members Silvia, Ina and Margaret have been invited to participate. The purpose is to be sure older people are included in all the language formulated, as both receivers of care and providers of care. There will be an annual day on women at the HRC in June. The focus will be half a day on violence and half a day on economic development. Economic violence will be a session topic and will include older women.

- b) **OEWG will be held on 20-25 May.** Discussions will be had about the future and possible need for reframing of OEWG or to delegate the work to Geneva. Committee members Ina, Margaret, Sophia, Silvia will be present and will represent Geneva.

OEWG highlights can be found here: [Interessional work up to fourteenth OEWG session – The Global Alliance \(rightsofoldpeople.org\)](https://rightsofoldpeople.org/interessional-work-up-to-fourteenth-oewg-session-the-global-alliance)

- c) **Member Questionnaire results (Ina/Sophia/Alejandro/Ann/Kim).** Kim thanked the survey task force for their work in developing and administering the survey and explained her role in helping to analyze and synthesize the findings. She shared a short report that highlighted the strengths and weaknesses of the committee that were shared by the 7 members who took the survey.

**d) Intergenerational Activities (Sophia/Rasha/Alejandro)**

- Sophia reported on behalf of the work she and Rasha have done to create a short video clip about the work of the committee. The purpose of the video is to share with graduate level students as a way to recruit young professional members. They are looking for an editor for the content which has been difficult to find. Alejandro offered to help with the editing and suggested that in the future it could be considered to translate the video clip into other languages to expand its reach. Kelly thanks Sophia and Rasha for their hard work on the project.
- Sophia shared that for the Global International Week (24-30 April), she had prepared social media content about the committee's commitment and focus on international work. This was shared on the committee's Facebook and X accounts.
- Kelly announced that Sophia has been accepted into the UMass Boston PhD Gerontology program.

### 3. Updates on committee member activities

a) **GAROP and the Global Rally (Ina/Ann).**

- GAROP is busy preparing for the upcoming session of the Open-Ended Working Group (OEWG) which will take place from 20 to 24 May in New York (see update provided by Silvia on 2a).
- GAROP organised a virtual briefing session for NGOs and NHRIs. In this briefing the co-facilitators provided an update on the intersessional process in general and the intergovernmental negotiations on the recommendations to be presented at OEWG.
- GAROP also developed a toolkit containing template letters to be sent by its members and other NGOs to ministries with the aim to draw their attention to

OEWG and the need for strong language around a UN convention for the rights of older persons.

- The GAROP Steering Group is in close contact with the co-facilitators, participated in a briefing by the co-facilitators in which they presented the draft recommendations on May 1 and shared comments on the zero draft with the co-facilitators and its members for national advocacy action in “friendly member states”.
- A joint statement has also been developed and will be presented at OEWG14. During OEWG14 GAROP will also organise a side event on imagining a world with a UN convention and is supporting three older campaigners to participate in the debates.

<https://rightsofolderpeople.org/intersessional-work-up-to-fourteenth-oewg-session/>

<https://rightsofolderpeople.org/preparing-for-the-fourteenth-oewg-session/>

- During the Global Rally in April activities around the globe took place to raise awareness around the human rights of older persons. As part of the Global Rally further signatures for the virtual petition were collected. The petition can still be signed: <https://rightsofolderpeople.org/age-with-rights-petition/>

### **b) Standing Working Group on Ageing (SWGA) update (Ina)**

A bureau meeting took place in April. Heidrun Mollenkopf, who is the representative of civil society within the Bureau, will soon send an update to NGOs. This will also contain more information on the process of updating the Regional Implementation Strategy of the 2002 Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing (MIPAA). Civil society will have an important role to play in this updating process.

BAGSO organises a series of events on "**An engaged civil society as engine for an age-friendly society: an international exchange**" together with AGE Platform Europe, the NGO CoA Geneva and UNECE. The second event of the series took place on April 18 and was moderated by Silvia Perel-Levin. The virtual event focused on civic and political participation in older age, with a practical focus on experiences from Israel, Poland, Spain and Germany. A summary report will be published on BAGSO's website. The next virtual event will take place on 11 December.

<https://www.bagso.de/english/events/promoting-civil-and-political-participation-of-older-persons/>

### **c) UNITAR 3rd cycle of sessions on mainstreaming ageing (Silvia)**

This is the third cycle of virtual roundtables on mainstreaming knowledge on ageing. A certificate of attendance is available for 75% participation in the cycle.

Upcoming events in the 3rd cycle:

- 30 May - The impact of including older persons in the implementation of multilateral agreements

- 27 June - The use of new technologies for promoting mental health, accompaniment, and support to improve the lives of older persons
- 19 September - The implications of demographic shifts on social and economic security through labor markets and leisure activities
- 17 October - The intersectionality of discrimination faced by older persons
- 21 November - Protection of older persons in times of peace and war
- More information about the Roundtable Series on Mainstreaming Ageing and all upcoming sessions can be found here:  
[https://www.age-platform.eu/content/uploads/2024/05/BROCHURE\\_3rd-Mainstreaming-knowledge-on-ageing-UNITAR.pdf](https://www.age-platform.eu/content/uploads/2024/05/BROCHURE_3rd-Mainstreaming-knowledge-on-ageing-UNITAR.pdf)

#### **d) WSIS / ITU (Alejandro)**

Alejandro has been invited by Lichia and Raymond to participate in a session at the WSIS+20 Forum High Level Event 2024 on 30 May in Geneva. The session title is “Embracing Multigenerational Digital Collaboration: Shaping the Future of Work”.

Vitalija commented that the focus of the session is multigenerational workforce and if generated AI can help it or not.

Ina offered to send links and information about a current BAGSO project about AI and older people. A statement on BAGSO position on the topic is yet to be formalized.

#### **e) Stakeholder Group on Ageing’s (SGA) preparation for the High Level Political Forum (HLPF) in July 2024 (Ina)**

The SGA is part of the Major Groups and other Stakeholders and represents the interests of older persons in the implementation process of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). As such the SGA develops position papers for the High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) taking place in July in New York. The summary paper has already been submitted. The SGA also submitted a concept note to organise a side event during the HLPF.

#### **f) Pact for the Future and Summit September 2024, ICPD +30 (Alejandro/Silvia)**

UNFPA is organizing a series on global dialogues and Silvia has been invited to participate in mid-May in a panel on population aging in Bangladesh.

Next year there will be a social summit for development in September 2025. Silvia will try to meet with Guy Ryder, who has communicated he will do his best to include older people in the Summit. It is important to start now so that in April/May 2025 something will be matured to have an effective impact.

### **4. International Day of Older Persons planning (Kelly/Alejandro)**

- a) Kelly discussed the need to form an IDOP committee task force. No theme has yet been announced for the International Day of Older Persons and stated need to reach out to the NY and Austria committees about news about a theme.

- b) Alejandro announced that section of former officials of the ILO Staff Union would prefer to celebrate the IDOP as a closed ILO event in 2024 but that would be happy to consider joint celebrations/activities in the future.
- c) Committee members agreed to think about possible themes and to discuss and finalize the topic at the next meeting. One possible theme is to frame the event around the 2025 Social Summit for Development.
- d) Kelly discussed the need to identify the best format for the event as several versions have been recently tried (hybrid, online, in-person). There is a concern for the number of people who can physically be present in Geneva for the event. Also, UNECE has been very supportive to work with the committee for the IDOP even and may be willing to support it again for 2024.
- e) Silvie raised the importance of considering member status support.

## 5. Social media plan (Sophia)

- a) Sophia discussed the possible benefits for the committee to have a presence on LinkedIn. Developing a strategic plan for social media would be important to help streamline content to be about committee specific events and side events and any UN updates/work about ageing.
- b) Question posed if a LinkedIn profile would benefit the committee. Sophia offered to write a concept note and share it.

## 6. Past events (Open)

Historic decision about Human Rights and the ruling that the Swiss government has not been active enough to protect against the effects of climate change. The involved group in the case, KlimaSeniorinnen, was a participant in the committee's IDOP event 2 years ago. A news media report can be found here: [European court rules human rights violated by climate inaction \(bbc.com\)](https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-60444444)

## 7. Upcoming events (Open)

- a) UN Civil Society Conference, Nairobi, 9-10 May (Alejandro)
- b) Donatella - Side event planned 1st week of HRC. Soropotmist International is co-sponsoring it. The theme is widows. Among members of the committee in Geneva, is anyone interested to participate in the panel? Silvia suggested checking with the independent expert.

**Date of next meeting:** TBD