

NGO Committee on Ageing

GENEVA

Annual Report

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Executive Summary

This Annual Report of the NGO Committee on Ageing Geneva (NGOCOA-GVA) provides a comprehensive overview of the Committee's advocacy, coordination, and strategic engagement from May 2024 to June 2025. The reporting period was marked by significant milestones for the rights of older persons at the United Nations and across global, regional, and local platforms.

The Committee's primary focus was its proactive role in the 58th Session of the UN Human Rights Council (HRC58), which resulted in the adoption of Resolution 58/13. This landmark resolution established an intergovernmental working group to draft a new international convention on the rights of older persons. The Committee coordinated civil society participation in debates, led a high-level side event, supported national advocacy in Switzerland, and co-hosted a virtual debrief following the resolution's adoption.

Complementing these efforts, NGOCOA-GVA celebrated the International Day of Older Persons 2024 with a high-level event in Geneva themed "Geneva Calls," drawing attention to the momentum for a convention and showcasing cross-sectoral commitment to ageing rights.

The Committee's leadership was also visible at the 8 May 2025 UN General Assembly High-Level Meeting on Ageing, where its Vice-Chair addressed global audiences and reaffirmed civil society's key role in shaping the emerging legal instrument.

Organizationally, the Executive Committee met regularly to guide strategic direction, strengthen partnerships, and manage governance matters. The 2025 Annual Meeting of Members, held virtually, ensured broad participation and alignment across affiliated organizations.

NGOCOA-GVA remained an active contributor to the Joint Programme on Ageing (JPA) and the Stakeholder Group on Ageing (SGA), sharing Geneva-based insights and promoting coordinated global advocacy. Collaboration with sister NGO Committees in New York and Vienna strengthened shared visibility and thematic coherence.

The Committee's relationship with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) deepened through joint events, expert meetings, and contributions to the #Agency&Dignity newsletter. Engagement with the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions (GANHRI) reinforced links between civil society and national institutions.

NGOCOA-GVA further amplified its voice through work with the International Federation on Ageing (IFA), contributions to the UN Today magazine, and participation in the 78th World Health Assembly (WHA78) side event on healthy ageing.

Locally, the Committee enhanced cooperation with Geneva authorities and the Plateforme du Réseau Seniors Genève, and globally it contributed to the Conference of NGOs (CoNGO), the

International Gender Champions (IGC), and intergenerational and digital inclusion dialogues through the WSIS+20 Forum and UNITAR.

The report also details participation in key multilateral processes including the UNECE Regional Forum on Sustainable Development, GAROP's events, and coordination with the UN Inter-Agency Group on Ageing (UN IAGA) toward the upcoming Second World Summit for Social Development (WSSD2) in Qatar.

Introduction

This annual report of the NGO Committee on Ageing Geneva (NGOCOA-GVA) covers the period between the 2024 General Assembly (May 2024) and the 2025 General Assembly (June 2025). It presents the wide-ranging activities, advocacy, and partnerships carried out by the Committee to promote and protect the rights of older persons, with a strong focus on supporting the adoption and implementation of international frameworks that reflect the realities and aspirations of ageing populations around the world.

While the Committee's highest priority over the reporting period was its strategic engagement in the Human Rights Council's 58th session (HRC58)—which culminated in the successful adoption of Resolution 58/13 establishing an intergovernmental working group to draft a UN convention on the rights of older persons—the Committee also actively contributed to a broad array of events and platforms. These included ongoing consultations for the Second World Summit for Social Development (WSSD2) and the upcoming 17th International Federation on Ageing Conference (IFA 2025) in Cape Town.

This wide-ranging engagement reflects a deliberate and coherent strategy: the Committee views participation in global, regional, and interagency fora not as competing agendas, but as complementary opportunities to ensure that the momentum generated at HRC58 is sustained and expanded. The Committee's consistent presence across UN platforms has helped reinforce the central message that older persons' rights must be integrated into the international human rights framework and embedded across the sustainable development agenda.

The report highlights the Committee's participation in UN processes in Geneva, New York, Vienna, and the UNECE region, as well as its sustained dialogue with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), the Global Alliance for the Rights of Older People (GAROP), CoNGO, UNITAR, UNECE, and others. It also documents the Committee's increasing recognition as a trusted voice in shaping intergovernmental processes and promoting inclusive, rights-based ageing policies.

By coordinating advocacy with UN agencies, Member States, NGOs, national human rights institutions, and grassroots actors, the Committee continues to work toward a global environment in which the rights, dignity, and contributions of older persons are recognized and protected—now and in the future.

1. International Day of Older Persons 2024¹

Geneva Calls: A Pivotal Moment for Older Persons' Rights

1 October 2024 – Palais des Nations, Geneva

To mark the International Day of Older Persons (IDOP) 2024, the NGO Committee on Ageing Geneva organized a high-level commemorative event under the theme “Geneva Calls: A Pivotal Moment for Older Persons' Rights.” The session was held at the Palais des Nations on 1 October 2024, in Room XXIII, from 15:00 to 16:30, and brought together diplomats, UN officials, experts, and civil society leaders to reflect on recent developments and call for concrete actions to advance the rights of older persons.

The event was made accessible online and in French thanks to the generous support of the City of Geneva, allowing both local and international audiences—especially those working and advocating for the rights of older persons—to follow and engage with the discussions. The NGO Committee on Ageing Geneva extends its highest recognition and heartfelt appreciation to the City for its contribution to this international event. This support adds meaningfully to the City of Geneva’s longstanding commitment to older persons and complements the wealth of initiatives it leads in their favor.

The 2024 celebration took place at a decisive time for the international community. Earlier in the year, in May 2024, the 14th session of the Open-Ended Working Group on Ageing (OEWGA) in New York had produced bold recommendations, including a call for a new international legally binding instrument to protect the rights of older persons. These recommendations were later submitted to the President of the UN General Assembly in June 2024. The momentum built by the OEWGA process was seen as a major turning point in global efforts to recognize and safeguard older persons’ rights.

Against this background, the Geneva commemoration was designed as a political and strategic moment to:

- Reflect on the OEWGA’s outcomes.
- Emphasize the role of the Human Rights Council (HRC) and Geneva-based organizations in advancing older persons’ rights.
- Showcase ongoing advocacy efforts.
- Address the barriers to progress.
- And above all, issue a call to action for civil society, governments, and the wider public.

The event opened with statements from Ambassador Anita Pipan of Slovenia and Ambassador Carlos Mario Foradori of Argentina, underlining the importance of collective efforts and multilateral engagement on ageing issues.

The panel discussion featured influential speakers:

¹ <https://ageingcommitteegeneva.org/idop-2024/>

- Ambassador Francisca Elizabeth Méndez Escobar of Mexico on the centrality of care and support.
- Alana Officer from WHO on demographic change and healthy ageing.
- Kari Tapiola, former ILO Deputy Director-General, on labour and social protection.
- Pernille Fenger from UNFPA on the rights of older persons and development.
- Silvia Perel-Levin, Vice-Chair of NGOCOA-GVA and representative of INPEA, on participation and representation.

Spotlight interventions followed from Ambassador Héctor Virgilio Alcántara (Dominican Republic) and Chitrakha Marie Massey (OHCHR). Closing remarks were offered by Todd Howland, Chief of the Development and Economic and Social Rights Branch of OHCHR. The session was moderated by Alejandro Bonilla Garcia, Chair of NGOCOA-GVA.

The event helped build momentum and visibility for older persons' rights and made a strong case for the adoption of a UN convention.

2. Participation in the 58th Session of the UN Human Rights Council (HRC58)²

February–March 2025 | Palais des Nations, Geneva

In collaboration with the Global Alliance for the Rights of Older People (GAROP)

The NGO Committee on Ageing Geneva (NGOCOA-GVA), in close collaboration with GAROP, played an active role in the 58th session of the Human Rights Council (HRC58), which took place from 24 February to 28 March 2025 in Geneva.

A. General Activities at HRC58

A.1 – Joint Advocacy and Participation in the HRC Debate. Silvia Perel-Levin delivered a civil society statement at the High-Level Segment of HRC58. Bolivia, Slovenia, and the Philippines supported calls for a UN convention. INPEA and other GAROP members engaged in advocacy during the first weeks.

A.2 – Monitoring and Engagement in Informal Negotiations. NGOCOA-GVA and GAROP participated in informal negotiations on 13, 17, and 19 March. Despite some opposition, the final resolution was successfully revised and retained key references to dignity and equality.

A.3 – Civil Society Briefings and NGO Lobbying Efforts. NGOCOA-GVA supported NGO coordination, encouraged participation in oral statements, and provided real-time

² <https://www.ohchr.org/en/hr-bodies/hrc/regular-sessions/session58/regular-session>

updates and resources. Several statements were delivered in the UPR and other formal segments.

A.4 – Pre-HRC58 Civil Society Briefing: Setting the Stage. On 5 February 2025, NGOCOA-GVA and GAROP held a virtual briefing session for NGOs and NHRIs, introducing strategy, procedures, and speaking opportunities ahead of HRC58.

B. Side Event: Lived Experiences, Collective Advocacy³

On 13 March 2025, NGOCOA-GVA and GAROP co-organized the side event "*Lived Experiences, Collective Advocacy: Towards an International Legally Binding Instrument on the Rights of Older Persons*" at Room XXIV of the Palais des Nations. The event was co-sponsored by HelpAge International, INPEA, IFA, AARP, and BAGSO, with notable support including financial assistance, campaigner preparation, and streaming services facilitated by these organizations. The event was sponsored by the Permanent Mission of Argentina.

The event was moderated by Alejandro Bonilla Garcia, Chair of NGOCOA-GVA. It featured personal and powerful testimonies from older human rights campaigners:

- Ms. Ermira Pirdeni, Albanian Society for All Ages
- Mr. Elijah Mwegu, KARIKA, Kenya
- Dr. Halida Akhter, Bangladesh

Opening remarks were delivered by Ambassador Carlos Mario Foradori (Argentina), and closing reflections came from Ms. Rose Gahire, Co-Chair of GAROP, and Ambassador Anita Pipan (Slovenia).

More than 30 Member States were represented at the event. Many diplomats spoke positively about the proposed resolution and civil society's role. The panelists' contributions moved the conversation from abstract legal frameworks to lived human experiences.

This side event:

- Amplified the urgency of drafting a convention on the rights of older persons.
- Showcased interregional solidarity.
- Delivered a visible moment of NGO leadership in a formal UN setting.
- Cemented NGOCOA-GVA's reputation as a convening voice for global advocacy.

The event was recorded and distributed widely through networks and social media.

Summary of Achievements

- Civil society address at HRC58 High-Level Segment
- Over 30 Member States attended a successful side event
- Advocacy helped secure adoption of HRC58/13 resolution
- 34 Member States co-sponsored the resolution by end of March

³ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fBj0uTfHTuY>

- Strengthened hybrid access and NGO visibility at negotiations

C. Virtual Debrief on the Adoption of HRC Resolution 58/13

Co-organised by GAROP and the NGO Committee on Ageing Geneva

On 30 April 2025, GAROP and the NGO Committee on Ageing Geneva (NGOCOA-GVA) co-organised a high-level virtual debrief meeting to reflect on the historic adoption of Resolution 58/13 by the Human Rights Council (HRC), which established a new intergovernmental working group to begin drafting a United Nations convention on the rights of older persons. Held via Zoom, the event gathered a broad cross-section of civil society, National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs), UN experts, and government representatives.

The meeting was convened to:

- Celebrate the political success of the adoption of the resolution;
- Clarify the expected next steps in Geneva;
- Reinforce civil society’s role in the forthcoming drafting process;
- Promote transparency and early coordination among stakeholders.

The session was opened by **Alejandro Bonilla Garcia**, Chair of the NGO Committee on Ageing Geneva, who welcomed participants with a message of determination and vision. He underscored that this achievement was “not the conclusion of our journey—but the beginning of a new chapter,” and called on all actors to prepare for the long road ahead, with perseverance and collaborative strategy.

The meeting was moderated by **Ina Voelcker**, Co-Chair of GAROP, who introduced a distinguished panel of speakers. Government representatives from the **core group** on the rights of older persons in Geneva offered reflections:

- H.E. Mr. Carlos Mario Foradori, Permanent Representative of Argentina.
- Minister-Counsellor Andre Simas Magalhães, Permanent Mission of Brazil.
- H.E. Mr. Muhammadou M.O. Kah, Permanent Representative of The Gambia (TBC);
- H.E. Mrs. Kristine Leilani R. Salle, Deputy Permanent Representative of the Philippines.
- Charge D’affaires Petra Trkov, Permanent Mission of Slovenia.

They were followed by **Chitra Massey**, Chief of the Rights of Older Persons Unit at OHCHR, who affirmed the Office’s support for the new intergovernmental working group and its intent to facilitate an inclusive and transparent drafting process.

Elijah Mwega, grassroots campaigner from **KARIKA Kenya** and member of the GAROP Steering Group, provided a compelling reflection from the perspective of an older activist. He emphasized the importance of lived experience, and the credibility older persons bring to the advocacy movement. Elijah shared his journey from participating in older campaigner training to directly influencing negotiations in Geneva and meeting his national representatives who supported the resolution.

The meeting also welcomed representatives from **GANHRI**, reaffirming the importance of coordinated engagement between NHRIs and civil society.

In her closing remarks, **Rose Gahire**, Co-Chair of GAROP, praised the collaborative spirit behind the resolution's success and reminded participants that GAROP and NGOCOA-GVA remain committed to guiding and supporting NGO engagement throughout the next phases of the process. Participants were invited to consult key documents including the **“Working Together⁴ in Geneva” guidance note**, GAROP's **3-Year Strategic Framework⁵**, and links to forthcoming high-level meetings, including the 8 May High-Level Meeting of the UN General Assembly.

The event reaffirmed the **value of coordination between Geneva- and New York-based actors**, and the pivotal role that civil society—particularly older persons—must play in shaping the future international convention. With around 100 participants and widespread engagement, the briefing helped set a strong collaborative tone for the early stages of the drafting process.

D. National-Level Advocacy in Switzerland: The Engagement of Hans Peter Graf

Although Switzerland served as President of the Human Rights Council (HRC) during its 58th session in early 2025, it did not support, speak on, or vote for Resolution 58/13, which created an intergovernmental working group to draft a UN convention on the rights of older persons. This stance, particularly surprising given the consensus adoption by nearly all other Council members, raised significant concerns among ageing advocates in the country.

In this context, Hans Peter Graf, a long-time member of the NGO Committee on Ageing Geneva (NGOCOA-GVA) and the “Fondation pour la formation des aînés et des aînées de Genève” (FAAG), took initiative to lead a sustained and constructive engagement effort with Swiss federal authorities and parliamentarians.

Hans Peter's actions included:

- Communicating with Swiss parliamentarians such as Laurent Wehrli and informing members of the Swiss National Council and civil society networks about the implications of Resolution 58/13;
- Highlighting the contradiction between Switzerland's refusal to support the resolution and the country's stated commitment to older persons' rights, particularly considering its previous ratification of the CRC and CRPD;
- Promoting the idea of a national inquiry into age-based discrimination in Switzerland, following the example of a German federal study that found that 45% of adults in Germany had experienced age-based discrimination, with young people (52%) reporting more discrimination than older adults (35%);

⁴ https://rightsofolderpeople.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/Working-Together-in-Geneva_FINAL_2.pdf

⁵ <https://rightsofolderpeople.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/GAROP-Strategy-2024-2027.pdf>

- Sharing these findings and related commentary via platforms such as the FAAG blog, REISO, and FARES, encouraging transparency and a broader societal conversation about ageism and policy accountability.

It is also worth noting that, thanks in part to Hans Peter Graf's exchanges with National Councillor Nicolas Walder, a key parliamentary intervention (question 25.7228) was made, which contributed meaningfully to this context. This question prompted the Swiss Federal Council to clarify its position and likely influenced Ambassador Jürg Lauber's decision to ultimately support the consensus adoption of the resolution, despite Switzerland's initial reservations. This alignment with broad international support was both welcome and significant.

Hans Peter's letters and statements were well-informed and referenced the precise language of the HRC resolution, which explicitly "invites Member States... and civil society to contribute actively to the intergovernmental process" — a provision the Swiss government had chosen not to act on. His advocacy also included contributions to public awareness campaigns, articles, and strategic exchanges with like-minded actors in Geneva and beyond.

While this work was carried out independently, the NGO Committee on Ageing Geneva fully recognizes and commends his initiative. His commitment is a clear demonstration of how individual civil society actors, drawing on organizational affiliations and evidence-based arguments, can engage constructively with national authorities, even in complex diplomatic contexts.

The inclusion of this initiative in the present report reflects not only the relevance of Swiss national policy to the Committee's broader advocacy goals, but also the importance of local engagement as a complement to international diplomacy. Hans Peter's work — together with the parliamentary support expressed by Nicolas Walder — stands as a valuable example for other NGOs and national actors seeking to bridge the national–international divide in ageing policy advocacy

3. UN General Assembly High-Level Meeting on Ageing⁶

On 8 May 2025, the President of the United Nations General Assembly convened a landmark High-Level Meeting at UN Headquarters in New York to discuss the future of ageing policy, review the recommendations of Decision 14/1 of the Open-Ended Working Group on Ageing, and explore next steps for the rights and well-being of older persons. Among the featured speakers was Silvia Perel-Levin, Vice-Chair of the NGO Committee on Ageing, Geneva (NGOCOA-GVA).

Silvia was invited to speak in her capacity as representative of the International Network for the Prevention of Elder Abuse (INPEA) and the International Longevity Centre Global Alliance

⁶ <https://webtv.un.org/en/asset/k11/k11u3rl9xq>

(ILC GA). However, in her intervention, she clearly underscored her role as Vice-Chair of NGOCOA-GVA and highlighted the Committee’s long-standing contributions to advancing older persons’ rights within the Human Rights Council, the OEWGA, and other UN platforms.

In her powerful remarks, Silvia emphasized the crucial role played by civil society—including the NGO Committee on Ageing—in the adoption of HRC Resolution 58/13, which established the intergovernmental working group tasked with drafting a new international convention on the rights of older persons. She spoke of how coordinated NGO advocacy, particularly through GAROP, NHRIs, and OHCHR, contributed to this milestone. Silvia also recalled the impact of sustained efforts by the Group of Friends of Older Persons in Geneva, of which NGOCOA-GVA is an active contributor.

Silvia’s address was deeply rooted in a rights-based narrative, calling for a shift away from viewing older persons merely as beneficiaries of charity and care. Instead, she advocated for legal recognition of their agency and equal participation in society. She cited specific human rights—such as the rights to care and support, palliative care, freedom from abuse and neglect, access to health, assistive technology, and meaningful political and cultural engagement—as integral to a future convention.

Her presence at the High-Level Meeting served not only as recognition of her personal commitment, but also as a tribute to the collective impact of the NGO Committee on Ageing (Geneva) and its partners. Silvia’s remarks concluded with a rallying call: “We are not starting from scratch. We build on 14 years of evidence and experience. And we will be there every step of the way—towards a Convention and beyond.”

This moment marked a significant milestone in the visibility of NGOCOA-GVA on the global stage and underscored the Committee’s leadership in the movement for a UN convention on the rights of older persons.

4. Meetings of the Executive Committee

Meetings Held: July 2024 – April 2025

Between the General Assembly held in May 2024 and the upcoming one in June 2025, the Executive Committee of the NGO Committee on Ageing Geneva (NGOCOA-GVA) held a total of **seven formal meetings**:

- 17 July 2024
- 14 August 2024
- 16 September 2024
- 16 December 2024
- 16 January 2025
- 5 March 2025

- 22 April 2025

These meetings provided the framework for steering the Committee’s strategic advocacy, managing key partnerships, and overseeing institutional matters throughout the year.

Strengthening Leadership and Representation

- The Executive Committee **formally appointed Silvia Perel-Levin as second Vice-Chair**, complementing the role of Ann Lindsey and reinforcing leadership continuity.
- Members discussed the importance of dual visibility: encouraging affiliated organizations to display their link with NGOCOA-GVA while retaining their own identities, much like dual flags.

Advocacy Strategy and Event Preparation

- The Committee played a central role in the design and execution of major events, including:
 - The **International Day of Older Persons (IDOP) 2024**;
 - The coordinated **civil society engagement for HRC58**;
 - Pre-briefings and follow-ups in collaboration with GAROP.
- The Committee approved strategic documents, discussed hybrid event access, and confirmed speaker and partner lineups for the IDOP.

Financial and Operational Oversight

- **Banking access and signatory authority at UBS** were reviewed. Valerie remained the official signatory while Donatella and Alejandro’s access was progressively established.
- Website and communication improvements were discussed, including the creation of a **round-format logo for social media**, and streamlined email practices.
- The Committee agreed to improve internal information-sharing processes, notably for event visibility and reporting.

Coordination with Partners

- The Executive Committee formally decided to appoint Silvia Perel-Levin as the NGO Committee on Ageing Geneva's Ex-Officio representative to the Steering Group of the Global Alliance for the Rights of Older People (GAROP), effective immediately. This transition marked the conclusion of Ann Lindsey’s dedicated service in the role from 2020 to 2024, which was deeply appreciated by both the NGO Committee and GAROP for her clarity, insights, and consistent engagement.

- Silvia’s appointment was driven by the Committee’s strategic interest in deepening engagement with the GAROP Steering Group, particularly in the context of the new momentum toward an international legally binding instrument for the rights of older persons. With her extensive experience liaising with UN agencies and Member States, and her work with OHCHR and the Human Rights Council, Silvia’s role is expected to enhance both visibility and impact for Geneva-based NGO advocacy.
- Regular updates were shared regarding the **GAROP Steering Group**, the **Group of Friends of Older Persons**, and OHCHR.
- The Committee coordinated with GAROP on the **joint advocacy plan** and alignment for statement delivery at HRC58.
- It also discussed civil society’s role in upcoming multilateral forums such as:
 - The **CoNGO Virtual Summit** (June 2025).
 - The **UN General Assembly High-Level Meeting** (May 2025).
 - The **IFA Global Conference** (Cape Town, September 2025).
 - The **Social Summit in Qatar** (November 2025).

Forward Planning

- The Committee agreed to hold at least **four Executive Committee meetings per year**, with dates to be set in advance.
- Planning began for **IDOP 2025**, including early brainstorming on the theme, format, and room reservation.
- Proposals were made for enhanced media presence, joint press releases with GAROP, and better outreach to permanent missions.

Through these meetings, the Executive Committee demonstrated clear governance, commitment to accountability, and a sustained capacity to lead the NGOCOA-GVA through a dynamic and high-stakes year of advocacy.

5. Annual Meeting of the NGO Committee on Ageing (Geneva)

In a year marked by intense multilateral activity and the historic adoption of **HRC Resolution 58/13**, the NGO Committee on Ageing Geneva (NGOCOA-GVA) made a strategic choice to convene **only one full meeting of its general membership**, held virtually on **21 January 2025**. While this may seem exceptional, it was a deliberate and considered decision that

reflects the Committee’s sensitivity to the demands placed on its members during a year of highly visible and time-intensive engagement.

With members already actively participating in numerous global and regional processes — including the Human Rights Council, GAROP-coordinated advocacy, OHCHR consultations, and preparations for major summits in **Cape Town and Qatar** — the Committee recognized that scheduling additional standalone meetings could result in **diminished participation or overload**. Instead, coordination and planning were conducted through Executive Committee meetings and through the many sessions where the Committee was formally represented. This approach ensured **maximum visibility and impact**, without sacrificing member engagement.

That said, the **21 January 2025 meeting** served as a critical touchpoint for reflection, alignment, and planning. It brought together representatives from more than **20 affiliated organizations**, including IFA, INPEA, FIAPA, BAGSO, Soroptimist International, Age International, MMM, GWI, ILC Canada, and others. Apologies were received from several members, including Hans Peter Graf, Stacy Dry Lara, and Raymond Saner.

Key highlights from the meeting included:

- **Briefings on 2024 activities** such as the UNECE SWGA meeting, the OEWGA’s final resolutions, and the meeting of the Group of Friends of Older Persons in Geneva;
- **Updates on Geneva-based processes in early 2025**, including the OHCHR briefing of 17 January and NGO engagement with the new OHCHR unit for older persons;
- **Advocacy coordination around HRC58**, including GAROP’s joint documents, briefing sessions, and template tools to support national-level advocacy;
- A preview of major upcoming events including:
 - **UNECE RFSD (April 2025)**,
 - **The IFA Global Conference (September 2025)**⁷, and
 - **The Second World Summit for Social Development (WSSD2) in Qatar (November 2025)**⁸.

The meeting also served as a venue to discuss how best to ensure the **meaningful participation of civil society in Geneva** during the drafting phase of the new convention. The Committee reaffirmed its commitment to transparency, coordination with GAROP and OHCHR, and proactive outreach to governments.

While the single general meeting format may have differed from previous years, the decision proved effective. It allowed NGOCOA-GVA to remain **efficient and responsive** in a

⁷ <https://ifa.ngo/>

⁸ <https://social.desa.un.org/world-summit-2025>

particularly dynamic international context, while ensuring its members remained informed, engaged, and aligned around a common agenda: advancing the rights of older persons through every opportunity available.

6. Participation in the Joint Programme on Ageing (JPA)

The NGO Committee on Ageing Geneva participated actively in the **Joint Programme on Ageing (JPA)** coordinated by **UNECE, UNFPA, WHO**, and other UN agencies. Alejandro Bonilla Garcia represented NGOCOA-GVA in JPA meetings throughout the reporting period, contributing consistently to regional policy dialogues, multi-agency strategy sessions, and global ageing initiatives.

Ongoing Engagement and Leadership

Alejandro served as Chair of the JPA meeting on 11 September 2024, helping guide the discussion on policy developments related to ageing and promoting coordinated advocacy across sectors. He also contributed to the agenda planning for the October JPA meeting and participated actively in every session from May 2024 to April 2025.

His interventions regularly emphasized the importance of intergenerational dialogue, inclusion of civil society in high-level processes, and data-driven policymaking. Alejandro's engagement helped bridge the perspectives of Geneva-based NGOs with those of regional UN bodies and national governments.

Key Issues and Thematic Contributions

JPA meetings covered a wide range of topics, including:

- Regional frameworks on ageing and good health, being developed in consultation with WHO and UNECE.
- Monitoring frameworks and data systems such as the UNECE Ageing Policies Database, now available online.
- Emerging collaboration between UNECE and media stakeholders to combat ageism, supported by HelpAge and UNFPA.
- Planning for COP29 and its sessions on ageing, climate, and intergenerational solidarity.
- Enhanced focus on Ukraine and Moldova, where Alejandro emphasized the importance of civil society technical support in social protection and reform.

Highlight Events

- Alejandro was a panelist in the UNECE-WHO Roundtable on SDG 3 on 3 April 2025 at the Palais des Nations. His intervention focused on building health systems that are resilient, inclusive, and age responsive. He shared the panel with representatives from UNICEF, Portugal, and Turkmenistan
- He actively contributed to the strategy behind the media toolkit on ageism, advocating for its pilot use across UN country offices and supporting UNECE's call for interagency backing.
- He supported planning for upcoming activities including a joint policy dialogue on ageism, the 2025 Standing Working Group on Ageing, and the inclusion of older persons' issues in the High-Level Political Forum.

JPA participants included key representatives from UNECE (Lisa Warth, Philipp Hessel), WHO (Yongje Yon), UNFPA (Gul Icel, Ainur Kanafina, Eduard Jongstra), OHCHR (Chitra Massey, Kejian Chen), HelpAge International (Chris McIvor), and other engaged partners. Alejandro's voice helped shape key messages and ensure NGO visibility in these interagency spaces.

7. Participation in the 17th Meeting of the UNECE Standing Working Group on Ageing (SWGA)

From 20 to 22 November 2024, the NGO Committee on Ageing Geneva (NGOCOA-GVA) participated in the 17th annual meeting of the UNECE Standing Working Group on Ageing (SWGA), held at the Palais des Nations in Geneva. As an intergovernmental body reporting to the UNECE Executive Committee, the SWGA plays a central role in advancing the policy principles of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing (MIPAA), its Regional Implementation Strategy (RIS), and related global frameworks, including the 2030 Agenda, the WHO Decade of Healthy Ageing, and the ICPD Programme of Action.

The meeting gathered over 75 representatives from UNECE Member States, UN agencies, international organizations, and NGOs, including Alejandro Bonilla Garcia, Chair of NGOCOA-GVA, who participated as an observer and contributor to discussions on rights-based ageing policies, civil society engagement, and evidence-informed approaches to ageing governance.

Alejandro made a formal intervention during the session on international events and initiatives, emphasizing the historic adoption of HRC Resolution 58/13 and the subsequent launch of an intergovernmental process to draft a UN convention on the rights of older persons. He invited Member States to ensure coherence between regional commitments under MIPAA/RIS and this new global normative process. He further stressed the importance of integrating older persons' rights into national legislation and encouraged governments to engage with NGOs in preparing for the 2027 Ministerial Conference and the Fifth MIPAA Review.

Throughout the three-day meeting, NGOCOA-GVA actively followed discussions on ageing statistics, stakeholder engagement, and policy tools, including the updating of the Regional Implementation Strategy and the launch of the WHO European Strategy on Ageing in Good Health. The Committee welcomed the participatory nature of the meeting and reiterated its readiness to support Member States and the UNECE Secretariat in capacity-building, data use, and bridging national and international frameworks.

8. Participation in the Stakeholder Group on Ageing (SGA)

Throughout the reporting period, the NGO Committee on Ageing Geneva (NGOCOA-GVA) was actively and consistently represented in the **Stakeholder Group on Ageing (SGA)**, a key civil society mechanism within the Major Groups and Other Stakeholders (MGoS) framework of the United Nations. Alejandro Bonilla Garcia, Chair of NGOCOA-GVA, attended nearly all monthly SGA virtual meetings, playing an important bridging role between the Geneva-based processes and the New York-based global advocacy strategies of the SGA.

In this capacity, Alejandro shared **regular updates on the Committee's advocacy work in Geneva**, including the coordination of civil society during the 58th session of the Human Rights Council (HRC58), the organization of the October 2024 commemoration of the International Day of Older Persons, and the successful adoption of HRC Resolution 58/13 to establish an intergovernmental working group on a convention for the rights of older persons. His interventions ensured that global colleagues were kept informed of key developments, especially those related to the Human Rights Council, GAROP activities, and opportunities for engagement within Geneva-based processes.

Alejandro also contributed substantively to **SGA discussions on major policy processes**, including:

- Preparations for the Second World Summit for Social Development (WSSD2) to be held in Qatar in November 2025. His inputs helped shape the SGA's advocacy on decent work, social protection, and intergenerational solidarity — core areas where older persons' rights and visibility are often overlooked.
- The development and review of civil society declarations and statements for key UN processes such as CSocD63, the High-Level Political Forum (HLPF), and the RFSD (UNECE), where ageing, SDG 8, and decent work were recurring themes.
- The Beijing+30 process and discussions on older women's rights, where Alejandro echoed the Committee's emphasis on gendered ageism, life-course approaches to care and income security, and the human rights of older women.

He also supported the SGA's efforts in drafting inputs for the VNRs (Voluntary National Reviews) and positioning older persons within the context of digital inclusion, social resilience, and structural inequalities. These contributions often drew upon Alejandro's

expertise in international labour standards, the right to social protection, and the implementation of the ILO Social Protection Floor Recommendation (R202).

At several meetings, Alejandro used the opportunity to express appreciation for the efforts of GAROP and INPEA, including their participation in side events at the Human Rights Council and the Global Group of Friends on Ageing. He also endorsed the SGA's engagement with younger generations through joint statements with the Major Group on Children and Youth and emphasized the importance of building shared narratives between youth and older persons, particularly in the context of climate change, care, and social sustainability.

Finally, Alejandro served as a communication conduit, ensuring that Geneva's ageing-related processes — including the Joint Programme on Ageing (JPA), regional MIPAA follow-ups, and WHO or OHCHR developments — were reflected in the SGA's strategy. His efforts reinforced the importance of maintaining strong linkages between Geneva and New York advocacy tracks and gave NGOCOA-GVA a visible, respected place within the SGA's multilateral engagement.

This sustained participation allowed NGOCOA-GVA to contribute meaningfully to the broader global movement for the rights of older persons. It also reaffirmed the Committee's commitment to collaborative civil society advocacy, the pursuit of rights-based social development, and the principle of intergenerational solidarity as a cornerstone of sustainable development.

9. Coordination with the NGO Committees on Ageing (New York and Vienna)

Throughout the reporting period, the NGO Committee on Ageing Geneva (NGOCOA-GVA) maintained regular communication and coordination with its sister committees based at the United Nations in New York and Vienna. These relationships were reinforced through monthly meetings, joint advocacy planning, and the mutual sharing of information and invitations across all three regions. Cooperation was especially visible around key global observances and multilateral events.

In particular, the three committees coordinated around the International Day of Older Persons (IDOP) 2024, the adoption of Resolution 58/13 at the Human Rights Council, and other Geneva- and New York-based events. Each committee ensured the visibility of the others' events, shared registration and access details with their networks, and encouraged cross-participation of members.

While the Geneva-based IDOP event has been described in Section 1 of this report, the commemorations in New York and Vienna also made important thematic contributions.

IDOP 2024 – NGO Committee on Ageing (New York)⁹

On 7 October 2024, the NGO Committee on Ageing in New York, in partnership with UN DESA, organized a commemorative session at UN Headquarters under the theme:

“Ageing with Dignity: The Importance of Strengthening Care and Support Systems for Older Persons Worldwide.”

The session focused on the urgent global need to strengthen long-term care infrastructure, address the global shortage of formal and informal care workers, and ensure equitable access to care. It drew attention to the feminized nature of unpaid care work, especially in low- and middle-income countries, and highlighted the risks posed to older persons without appropriate care systems.

The program explored both policy recommendations and human rights concerns, featuring input from international experts on geriatrics, public health, caregiving, and social protection. A commemorative UN postal stamp issue titled “*Ageing for All Ages*” was also launched during the event.

IDOP 2024 – NGO Committee on Ageing (Vienna)¹⁰

On 30 September 2024, the NGO Committee on Ageing in Vienna hosted its IDOP event at the UN Offices in Vienna under the theme:

“Marginalization of Older Persons in Society – A Significant Health Risk.”

This event was grounded in SDG 3 (“Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages”) and examined how social exclusion affects older persons’ physical and mental health. The panel brought together international experts from Austria, Italy, Israel, Germany, the Philippines, and Serbia. Topics included:

- Demographic transitions.
- Social marginalization and intergenerational divides.
- Geriatric health care and mental health.
- Political challenges to inclusion and support systems.

Presentations also highlighted country-specific initiatives from Serbia and the Philippines, showcasing practical responses to the needs of marginalized older populations.

⁹ <https://webtv.un.org/en/asset/k1r/k1rpbi8rwt>

¹⁰ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cxWNUt38MBk>

10. Collaboration with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)¹¹

Throughout the reporting period, the NGO Committee on Ageing Geneva (NGOCOA-GVA) maintained a strong and dynamic relationship with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR). This collaboration was visible across multiple layers of activity, from advocacy coordination and mutual participation in events, to joint communication and co-contributions to public resources.

Collaboration with Key OHCHR Figures

The Committee maintained close and consistent contact with Chitrlekha Massey, Chief of the Rights of Older Persons Unit at OHCHR, and with Dr. Claudia Mahler, the UN Independent Expert on the enjoyment of all human rights by older persons. Both were regularly invited to NGOCOA-GVA events and often contributed with substantive insights. Their presence and engagement were essential in reinforcing the alignment between Geneva-based civil society and the normative work led by OHCHR at the Human Rights Council and through the broader UN system.

Their contributions were especially noted during:

- The October 2024 Geneva commemoration of the International Day of Older Persons.
- The 58th session of the Human Rights Council, where OHCHR played a key supporting role in the adoption of HRC Resolution 58/13 (see Sections 1 and 2).

A. Expert Meeting on Violence Against, Abuse, and Neglect (13–14 June 2024)

NGOCOA-GVA was prominently involved in the OHCHR Expert Meeting on the Human Rights Obligations of States regarding Violence Against, Abuse, and Neglect of Older Persons, held virtually on 13–14 June 2024 in line with HRC Resolution 54/13.

- Silvia Perel-Levin participated in the opening panel of the first session, addressing challenges in preventing and responding to abuse and neglect.
- Alejandro Bonilla Garcia delivered the wrap-up of Day 1, bringing forward the civil society perspective and emphasizing the need for binding protections, transparency, and long-term commitment to combating ageism and structural violence.

The event served to review legal and policy gaps and helped shape recommendations for the Human Rights Council's upcoming 57th session. It also reaffirmed NGOCOA-GVA's growing role as a respected voice in formal UN human rights mechanisms.

¹¹ <https://www.ohchr.org/en/topic/older-persons>

B. Contributions to the #Agency&Dignity Newsletter¹²

Both Alejandro Bonilla Garcia and Silvia Perel-Levin contributed to OHCHR's official newsletter, #Agency&Dignity, a platform designed to amplify the voices of civil society, experts, and older persons' advocates.

- In Issue 2 (September–November 2024), Alejandro shared a civil society perspective on the urgent need for an international legally binding instrument, highlighting the gaps in the current system and the opportunity presented by HRC Resolution 58/13.
- Silvia's contributions underscored the importance of a rights-based framework for ageing, intergenerational solidarity, and stronger UN mechanisms to monitor implementation of older persons' rights

11. Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions (GANHRI)

Alejandro Bonilla Garcia, as Chair of the NGO Committee on Ageing (Geneva), participated in the 2025 Annual Meeting of the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions (GANHRI), held from 10 to 12 March 2025 at the United Nations Office at Geneva (UNOG). His participation included the dedicated side event "*NHRIs at the Forefront: Strengthening Cooperation with States and Civil Society in Advancing a Convention on the Rights of Older Persons*", which took place on 10 March from 13:00 to 14:00 in Room XXVII. This event provided an important platform to highlight the pivotal role of National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs) in shaping, promoting, and supporting the development of a new international legal instrument to protect and promote the rights of older persons.

More information is available at <https://ganhri.org/history-of-ganhri-and-nhris/> and <https://ganhri.org/event/ganhri-2025-annual-meeting/>.

Alejandro's participation in GANHRI 2025 strengthened the collaboration between civil society actors and NHRIs in advocating for a strong, inclusive, and rights-based United Nations Convention on the Rights of Older Persons. The 10 March session built on the outcomes of the Human Rights Council's 58th session and offered a civil society perspective on legal obligations, institutional frameworks, and practical pathways to advance the protection of older persons globally.

12. International Federation on Ageing (IFA)

<https://ifa.ngo>

Alejandro Bonilla Garcia, Chair of the NGO Committee on Ageing (Geneva) and Representative to the United Nations of IFA, has actively shared information on the developments related to

¹² <https://ageingcommitteegeneva.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/08/AgencyDignity-issue-1.pdf>

the 58th Session of the Human Rights Council (HRC58), including the adoption of the Resolution on the Rights of Older Persons, with the IFA Secretariat. In particular, he maintained close contact with IFA Secretary General Gregor Sneddon, who participated in and contributed to the NGO activities co-organized by the NGO Committee on Ageing (Geneva) and the Global Alliance for the Rights of Older People (GAROP) during the session.

Conversely, Mr. Bonilla Garcia, together with Mr. Sneddon, used the opportunity of their exchanges in Geneva to highlight and publicize the forthcoming IFA 17th Global Conference on Ageing, which will take place in Cape Town, South Africa, from 9 to 12 September 2025. <https://www.ifaconf.ngo>

Building on the momentum of HRC58, the NGO Committee on Ageing (Geneva), in collaboration with GAROP and the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions (GANHRI), is currently exploring the organization of a symposium during the IFA Cape Town conference. The proposed symposium would provide insight and practical guidance on how civil society organizations can effectively contribute—both globally and nationally—to the implementation of the activities arising from the HRC58 Resolution on the Rights of Older Persons.

13. Engagement with Authorities and NGOs in the City of Geneva

A. Authorities of the City of Geneva

Throughout the year, the NGO Committee on Ageing (Geneva) has maintained consistent and constructive engagement with the local authorities of the City of Geneva. Notably, regular contact has been upheld with Mrs. Christina Kitsos, who has served as the Mayor of Geneva from June 1, 2024, to May 31, 2025, and concurrently heads the Department of Social Cohesion and Solidarity.

This collaboration has encompassed sharing updates on developments and events at the 58th session of the Human Rights Council (HRC58) and other international forums. Additionally, local authorities have been invited to participate in key events organized by the NGO Committee on Ageing.

The Department of Social Cohesion and Solidarity is instrumental in implementing the city's "Politique de la longue vie" (Long Life Policy), which outlines a comprehensive action plan with 30 measures aimed at enhancing the quality of life for seniors. A central component of this policy is the Cité Seniors, a dedicated space offering a variety of activities and services tailored to the needs of older adults¹³.

¹³ [LinkedIn+3Familles Genève+3Ville de Genève+3](#)

For more information on the city's initiatives and services for seniors, please refer to the following resources:

- Department of Social Cohesion and Solidarity¹⁴
- Long Life Policy¹⁵
- Cité Seniors¹⁶

B. Geneva Seniors Network Platform (Plateforme du Réseau Seniors Genève)

The NGO Committee on Ageing (Geneva) has actively engaged with the Plateforme du Réseau Seniors Genève¹⁷, a dynamic network that brings together organizations and public institutions committed to enhancing the quality of life for seniors in the canton of Geneva. As of 2024, the Plateforme comprises 87 member associations and institutions, representing approximately half of the population aged 65 and over in the canton. [Apege](#)

Our participation in the Plateforme's events has provided valuable opportunities to share insights from the 58th session of the Human Rights Council (HRC58) and other international forums. Additionally, we have extended invitations to Plateforme representatives to attend key events organized by our committee, fostering a collaborative environment for addressing issues pertinent to the senior population.

The Plateforme focuses on several priority areas through its thematic commissions:

- Age and Migration: Addressing the unique challenges faced by seniors from migrant backgrounds.
- Senior Housing: Promoting suitable and accessible housing solutions for the elderly.
- Social Isolation: Combating loneliness and fostering social connections among seniors.
- Senior Policy: Advocating for comprehensive policies that support the aging population.
- Information for Seniors: Ensuring that seniors have access to relevant and timely information.
- Volunteering in the Associative Sector: Encouraging and facilitating volunteer opportunities for seniors within community organizations.

Through these commissions, the Plateforme serves as a hub for interdisciplinary collaboration, promoting and supporting projects and actions of general interest related to older adults. It acts as an interface between the associative world, public institutions, private

¹⁴ <https://www.geneve.ch/autorites-administration/administration-municipale/departement-cohesion-sociale-solidarite>

¹⁵ <https://www.geneve.ch/actualites/lancement-nouvelle-politique-longue-vie#:~:text=La%20Politique%20de%20la%20longue%20vie%20pr%C3%A9voit%20un%20plan%20d%27encourager%20la%20participation%20citoyenne.>

¹⁶ <https://www.geneve.ch/cite-seniors>

¹⁷ <https://www.plateformeseniors.ch/>

entities, the academic community, and the political sphere, ensuring a complementary approach to senior-related initiatives

14. Engagement with CoNGO (Conference of NGOs in Consultative Relationship with the United Nations)¹⁸

The NGO Committee on Ageing Geneva (NGOCOA-GVA) has actively participated in the work of **CoNGO**, the global platform for NGOs in consultative relationship with the United Nations. Over the reporting period, NGOCOA-GVA took part in **monthly CoNGO meetings**, engaged in collective advocacy, and contributed to internal governance and strategic reflection processes within CoNGO.

Regular Participation in CoNGO Meetings

NGOCOA-GVA remained a consistent participant in **CoNGO-wide meetings and strategic consultations**, both in Geneva and online. These included sessions on civil society access to the UN, the role of NGO Committees, and the broader multilateral challenges facing the UN system. Information was regularly exchanged with other NGO Committees, reinforcing collaboration across substantive areas and UN regions. These exchanges were particularly active around key events such as the International Day of Older Persons 2024 and the 58th session of the Human Rights Council, enabling mutual visibility and joint outreach.

Representation on the Nominations Committee for the 2025 CoNGO General Assembly

Alejandro Bonilla Garcia, Chair of NGOCOA-GVA, was invited to serve as a member of the CoNGO Nominations Committee for the 28th General Assembly of CoNGO, scheduled for October 2025. This important body is responsible for overseeing the nominations and elections for CoNGO's President and Board members.

Alongside distinguished colleagues from across regions and disciplines, Alejandro contributed to reviewing candidacies, verifying eligibility, and supporting the integrity of the nomination process. The Nominations Committee worked to ensure regional and thematic balance in representation, with a special emphasis on transparency and inclusiveness. This role reflects the continued trust placed in NGOCOA-GVA by the broader CoNGO community and underscores its leadership in global civil society governance.

Participation in the Planning and Execution of the 2025 CoNGO Summit of NGO Committees

In early 2025, Alejandro Bonilla Garcia was also invited to join the Planning Team for the CoNGO Summit of NGO Committees, held under the theme:

¹⁸ <https://ngocongo.org/>

“Defining the Present, Securing a Shared Future: Asserting Civil Society Participation at the United Nations.”

Held on 24 June 2025 at the Church Center for the United Nations in New York, this hybrid event brought together CoNGO’s substantive committees from across the globe to reflect on:

- The multilateral landscape and civil society’s space within it;
- The role of NGO Committees in promoting transparency, advocacy, and inclusive participation.
- Civil society’s response to shrinking civic space and evolving UN processes, including the Pact for the Future and Agenda 2030.

Alejandro contributed both to the conceptual framing of the summit and to logistical preparations. He represented the NGO Committee on Ageing Geneva among other executive leaders from thematic and regional committees, including the Committees on Sustainable Development, Financing for Development, and Women’s Rights.

The Summit helped define common goals across CoNGO’s structure, focusing on enhancing collaboration, safeguarding consultative status, reinforcing intergenerational representation, and shaping a “Call to Action” to be presented at the CoNGO General Assembly in October 2025. A key takeaway was the reaffirmation of the independent and substantive roles that NGO Committees play in connecting global civil society with the multilateral system

15. International Gender Champions (IGC)¹⁹

Alejandro Bonilla Garcia is a proud member of the International Gender Champions (IGC) network, in which he participates as Chair of the NGO Committee on Ageing (Geneva) and as Representative to the United Nations of the International Federation on Ageing (IFA). The IGC is a leadership network that unites decision-makers—across governments, international organizations, civil society, and the private sector—who are committed to breaking down gender barriers and making gender equality a working reality in their institutions. More information about the network is available at <https://genderchampions.com/about>, and Alejandro’s profile can be found at <https://genderchampions.com/champions/alejandro-bonilla-garcia>.

In 2025, Alejandro reaffirmed his support to the IGC Panel Parity Pledge and the Gender-Based Violence Pledge, and made two personal commitments:

(1) to champion gender equality and the rights of older women at the Second World Summit on Social Development to be held in Qatar, and

¹⁹ <https://genderchampions.com/>

(2) to ensure that gender equality is fully integrated into the drafting and consideration of older persons' rights at the 58th session of the Human Rights Council in Geneva.

In this context, Alejandro has served as a “bridge” between the IGC and these two major international processes and the 17th IFA Global Conference on Ageing, to be held in Cape Town, ensuring that the gender dimensions of ageing are kept high on the international agenda.

His personal vision for the network is encapsulated in the quote: *“Do not only practice gender equality consciously until you get it right, practice it until unconsciously you cannot get it wrong.”*

In 2024 and 2025, Alejandro participated in multiple IGC events and dialogues, contributing actively to advancing gender equality across diverse policy domains. These included:

- **6 June 2024** – Biannual Champions Meeting hosted by the Permanent Mission of Australia, focusing on the climate-gender nexus
 - **19 August 2024** – High-Level Event: *“Open Situation Room: Championing Gender Equality in Climate Action”*, contributing to the Geneva Pledge draft
 - **28 August 2024** – *Lunch & Learn: “Seeds of Change – Promoting Gender Equality in Food Systems”*, exploring systemic inclusion in food policies
 - **5–6 December 2024** – Capacity-Building Sessions on *“The Relevance of Human Rights to AI”*, part of the IGC Digital Governance series
 - **9 December 2024** – Bonus Module: *“A Human Rights-Based Approach to AI Development”*
 - **16 January 2025** – Biannual Champions Meeting hosted by the Permanent Mission of Canada
 - **28 January 2025** – Champions Group Discussion on gender dimensions in human rights work and HR Council mechanisms
 - **6 March 2025** – Geneva Gender Debate: *“Digital and New Emerging Technologies as Catalysts for Accelerating Gender Equality”*
 - **20 March 2025** – High-Level Breakfast: *“Water and Women: A Geneva Perspective”*, linking gender and climate resilience
 - **27 March 2025** – Presentation: *“Visualising Deep Data to Advance Gender Equality”*, showcasing how data analytics can support advocacy and policy-making
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16. UN Today²⁰: Advocating for a Convention on the Rights of Older Persons²¹.

In May 2025, the NGO Committee on Ageing Geneva (NGOCOA-GVA) gained increased global visibility through the publication of an article titled “A UN Convention on the Rights of Older Persons: The Time for Action Is Now” in *UN Today* magazine. Authored by Alejandro Bonilla Garcia, Chair of NGOCOA-GVA and IFA Representative to the United Nations in Geneva, the article appeared in the widely circulated May–June edition of the official staff magazine of UN Geneva.

Spanning pages 26–28 of the magazine, the article offered a compelling, rights-based argument for the adoption of a legally binding international convention to protect the rights of older persons. It outlined the systemic and structural challenges faced by older people globally and emphasized that ageing must be viewed not only as a demographic trend but as a call to action grounded in human dignity, equity, and intergenerational solidarity.

The article covered a wide range of issues at the heart of ageing and human rights, including:

- Persistent ageism and discrimination.
- Violence, abuse, and neglect of older persons.
- Gaps in health and care systems.
- The intersection of ageing and disability.
- The digital divide, which marginalizes older persons in an increasingly digital world.
- The climate crisis and its disproportionate impact on older populations.
- The unique vulnerabilities of older migrants and refugees.
- And the gendered dimensions of ageing, particularly the compounding discrimination faced by older women.

The article also celebrated recent progress at the UN, particularly the adoption of HRC Resolution 58/13, and recognized the critical role played by OHCHR, the UN Independent Expert on the enjoyment of all human rights by older persons, and civil society coalitions such as GAROP in moving the agenda forward.

The piece served both as a call to governments to show leadership in supporting a convention and as an invitation to civil society to remain mobilized and engaged.

The publication in *UN Today* helped raise awareness among diplomats, UN officials, civil society leaders, and the general public — reinforcing the Geneva-based NGO Committee’s advocacy for a strong, inclusive, and legally anchored international framework on ageing.

²⁰ untoday.org

²¹ <https://untoday.org/a-un-convention-on-the-rights-of-older-persons-the-time-to-act/>

17. Collaboration with UNITAR: Mainstreaming Knowledge on Ageing²²

During the reporting period, the NGO Committee on Ageing Geneva (NGOCOA-GVA) actively participated in and supported the **UNITAR Virtual Roundtable Series “Mainstreaming Knowledge on Ageing”**, an inclusive global initiative co-organized by UNITAR’s Division for People and Social Inclusion and the CIFAL Global Network. The series, launched in 2022, continued through 2024–2025 and brought together over 1,300 participants and 80 speakers from all sectors and world regions.

The 2024–2025 series focused on the **quality of life of older persons** and addressed key themes such as:

- The right to work for older migrants, refugees, and stateless persons.
- The use of new technologies to promote mental health and inclusion.
- Labour market and leisure trends in the context of demographic shifts.
- Intersectional discrimination.
- Protection of older persons during conflict and crisis.

NGOCOA-GVA contributed directly to the series through the participation of its leadership:

- On **27 June 2024**, **Silvia Perel-Levin**, Vice-Chair of NGOCOA-GVA, spoke at the roundtable titled **“The Use of New Technologies for Promoting Mental Health, Accompaniment, and Support to Improve the Lives of Older Persons.”** Silvia emphasized the role of digital inclusion in addressing isolation and enabling older persons to actively manage their mental health and social engagement.
- On **19 September 2024**, Alejandro also participated as a speaker in the roundtable titled **“The Implications of Demographic Shifts on Social and Economic Security through Labor Markets and Leisure Activities.”** His remarks focused on how ageing trends affect pension systems, employment access, and public infrastructure — and how national and international frameworks must adapt to address the evolving needs of older persons.
- On **14 May 2025**, **Alejandro Bonilla Garcia**, Chair of NGOCOA-GVA, was a speaker at the roundtable titled **“The Right to Work for Older Migrants, Refugees, and Stateless Persons.”**²³ He addressed the challenges posed by legal, ageist, and administrative barriers and emphasized the need for inclusive employment and social protection policies for displaced older persons.

²² <https://unitar.org/sustainable-development-goals/people/our-portfolio/ageing-older-persons/2024-ageing-older-persons>

²³ <https://event.unitar.org/full-catalog/4th-year-virtual-roundtable-series-mainstreaming-knowledge-ageing-1st-event-out-5-1>

NGOCOA-GVA was also prominently listed as one of the official supporters of the series, alongside UN agencies, human rights bodies, and academic institutions, thereby reinforcing its strategic partnership with UNITAR in advancing the global ageing agenda.

Through this collaboration, the Committee helped amplify:

- The intersection between ageing, human rights, and emerging global trends.
- The voices and perspectives of older persons in virtual, multilingual, and accessible spaces.
- And the multilateral learning platforms needed to mainstream ageing in policy, practice, and education.

This partnership reflects NGOCOA-GVA's commitment to promoting inclusive dialogue, sharing expertise, and supporting the UN Decade of Healthy Ageing. The Committee looks forward to continuing its engagement with UNITAR and its global learning initiatives in the years ahead.

18. Participation in the UNECE Regional Forum on Sustainable Development²⁴

On **2–3 April 2025**, the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) held its **Regional Forum on Sustainable Development** at the **Palais des Nations in Geneva**. The forum brought together governments, civil society, and UN system entities to examine regional progress in implementing the 2030 Agenda and to discuss pathways to accelerate sustainable development amid complex global and demographic challenges.

As part of this high-level forum, **Alejandro Bonilla Garcia**, Chair of the NGO Committee on Ageing Geneva, participated as a speaker in the session titled:

“Strengthening Health Systems in the Context of Demographic Change to Promote a Healthier, Longer Life”, held on **3 April 2025 from 10:25 to 11:25 a.m.** The session focused on building resilient and inclusive health systems in the context of rapid population ageing.

In his intervention, Alejandro emphasized that **healthy ageing must be seen as a life-course process**, with investments beginning in childhood and sustained throughout adulthood. He argued that there is no “miracle fix” at age 70 for inequalities or health deficits that begin early in life. Using the metaphor of a house, he explained that we cannot start building the roof in old age if the foundation was never laid. Alejandro advocated for universal access to early healthcare, nutrition, education, and safe environments as critical investments in the resilience of older generations. He also addressed inequities and structural barriers—such as poverty and underfunded health systems—that compound disadvantage across the life span,

²⁴ <https://regionalforum.unece.org/events/regional-forum-2025>

calling for integrated policies, intersectoral action, and a renewed commitment to solidarity and intergenerational equity.

His participation reaffirmed NGOCOA-GVA's commitment to bringing ageing issues into **regional sustainable development dialogues**, particularly where health, social protection, and inclusion intersect with demographic change and human rights.

UNECE's Regional Forum continues to be a vital space for aligning national and regional policies with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The NGO Committee on Ageing Geneva is proud to contribute to its success and visibility as part of its broader strategy to elevate the voices of older persons in multilateral development processes.

19. Participation in BAGSO-Coordinated Event on Intergenerational Solidarity²⁵

On 11 December 2024 and 22 May 2025, Alejandro Bonilla Garcia, Chair of the NGO Committee on Ageing Geneva (NGOCOA-GVA), participated as a speaker in the online event series coordinated by BAGSO in partnership with AGE Platform Europe, NGOCOA-GVA, and the UNECE Standing Working Group on Ageing. This series, entitled "An Engaged Civil Society as Engine for an Age-Friendly Society," included the sessions:

- "Ageing Well for All: Visions for Future Policies and Services" (11 December 2024)
- "Daring New Communities: Living Solidarity in an Individualised Society" (22 May 2025)

These events gathered civil society representatives from across the UNECE region to explore innovative approaches to ageing, community resilience, intergenerational cooperation, and social cohesion within the context of demographic change and rising individualism. The sessions fostered dialogue and knowledge exchange among NGOs and stakeholders active in ageing-related advocacy and policy.

In the session "Living Solidarity – Between Rights and Policy" held on 22 May, Alejandro delivered a presentation titled "Who Bears the Cost? Intergenerational Fairness in Financing Social Systems." He emphasized the importance of intergenerational solidarity as a structural priority for sustainable social protection systems, addressing the political and ethical dimensions of ageing societies, fiscal justice, and equitable financing models for current and future generations.

²⁵ <https://www.bagso.de/english/events/daring-new-communities-living-solidarity-in-an-individualised-society/>

Alejandro’s contributions helped underscore NGOCOA-GVA’s longstanding advocacy for dignity, inclusion, and economic justice as essential pillars of age-friendly societies. The session also included exchanges with youth groups and organizations promoting intergenerational engagement from Belgium, Italy, and the Czech Republic.

The Committee welcomes this collaboration with BAGSO, AGE Platform Europe, and UNECE, reaffirming the importance of civil society’s role in developing inclusive, rights-based approaches to ageing policy across Europe and Central Asia.

20. Engagement with the United Nations Inter-Agency Group on Ageing (UN IAGA)²⁶

Over the reporting period, the NGO Committee on Ageing Geneva (NGOCOA-GVA) actively followed and contributed to the work of the United Nations Inter-Agency Group on Ageing (UN IAGA), particularly in the context of preparations for the Second World Summit for Social Development (WSSD2), scheduled to take place in November 2025.

The UN IAGA is composed of over 30 UN system entities and coordinated by DESA and ESCWA, with WHO serving as co-chair in 2024. The group plays a key role in promoting coherence and visibility of ageing within intergovernmental processes and has emerged as an important force in ensuring that population ageing and the rights of older persons are reflected in multilateral frameworks such as the Pact for the Future, the Global Digital Compact, and the outcome document of WSSD2.

The NGO Committee on Ageing Geneva has been included in consultative meetings and exchanges with the IAGA. Throughout the year, the Committee reviewed IAGA materials and policy documents—such as the February 2025 Joint Advocacy Brief and the Statement to the Summit of the Future—and shared them with its membership for awareness, feedback, and technical input. These documents stress a life-course, rights-based approach to development, placing older persons not just as beneficiaries but as full participants and contributors to sustainable and inclusive societies.

Topics addressed included:

- Eradication of poverty in old age and promotion of social protection;
- Access to decent work and long-term care services;
- Legal empowerment and access to justice;
- Intergenerational solidarity and digital inclusion;

²⁶ <https://desapublications.un.org/ageing/united-nations-inter-agency-group-ageing-iaga-strengthening-inclusion-older-persons-work#:~:text=The%20United%20Nations%20Inter%2DAgency.issues%20within%20the%20United%20Nations>

- Mainstreaming ageing in environmental, housing, and urban development strategies;
- Ensuring ageing is represented in the political declaration of WSSD2.

The Committee emphasized the importance of echoing these themes in the discussions and outcome documents of WSSD2, the Pact for the Future, and the Global Digital Compact. The material was also used to inform NGOCOA-GVA members in their own interactions with governments and UN actors, supporting greater alignment and advocacy coherence.

This engagement highlights the Committee’s commitment to ensuring that civil society perspectives—particularly those rooted in the Geneva human rights space—remain connected with inter-agency UN coordination efforts. It also illustrates the Committee’s growing role as a trusted interlocutor and amplifier of key messages across both NGO networks and multilateral platforms.

21. Engagement in the WSIS+20 Forum High-Level Event²⁷

In May 2024, the NGO Committee on Ageing Geneva (NGOCOA-GVA) participated in the WSIS+20 Forum High-Level Event, organized by the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) in Geneva. This major gathering marked 20 years since the World Summit on the Information Society and explored the evolving role of digital technology in sustainable development, digital inclusion, and intergenerational cooperation.

The Forum offered a platform for governments, UN agencies, civil society, academia, and the private sector to engage on critical issues at the intersection of digital transformation, human rights, and social inclusion. NGOCOA-GVA contributed to these conversations through both its membership and its Chair, Alejandro Bonilla Garcia.

On 30 May 2024, Alejandro Bonilla Garcia participated as a speaker in Session 297, titled: “Fit for Each Other? Multi-Generational Cooperation with Generative AI”, organized by the Centre for Socio-Eco-Nomic Development (CSEND) as part of their WSIS Series on *ICTs and Intergenerational Partnerships for a Sustainable Future*.

The session examined the impact of digitalization and artificial intelligence on the workplace and society, focusing on the potential for technology to enhance collaboration between generations. Alejandro contributed a social security and social protection perspective, emphasizing the importance of adapting digital systems and workplace cultures to support ageing populations, ensure fairness across generations, and leverage the experience of older persons in shaping the digital future.

²⁷ <https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2024/en>

Alejandro also participated in the Open Consultation Process for the WSIS+20 High-Level Event 2025, held on 18 November 2024, contributing early reflections on the agenda, structure, and engagement strategies for the 2025 cycle.

This engagement reinforced NGOCOA-GVA's role in promoting ageing as a cross-cutting issue in digital policy and innovation. It also served to highlight the Committee's expertise on intergenerational solidarity, ageing and technology, and rights-based approaches to digital inclusion.

By participating in WSIS+20, the NGO Committee on Ageing Geneva contributed to bridging the digital divide, strengthening multigenerational dialogue, and embedding older persons' perspectives in the ongoing global conversation on the future of information and communication technologies.

22. Participation in the WHA78 Side Event on Healthy Ageing

On 19 May 2025, Alejandro Bonilla Garcia, Chair of the NGO Committee on Ageing Geneva and Representative of the International Federation on Ageing (IFA) to the United Nations in Geneva, participated as a speaker in the official side event on ageing organized during the Seventy-Eighth World Health Assembly (WHA78) in Geneva.

The event, titled “Accelerating Impact of the UN Decade of Healthy Ageing 2021–2030: Investing in a Continuum of Care and Age-Friendly Environments,” was convened at the UN Palais des Nations from 18:00 to 19:20 and hosted by the State of Qatar, with co-sponsorship from the Republic of Korea, Finland, Japan, Kenya, Spain, and coordinated by UNDESA. It brought together senior government officials, UN agencies, and civil society actors to showcase investments and policy strategies for healthy ageing across diverse global contexts.

Alejandro served as a speaker in Panel Two, titled: “Investments to Enable Accelerated Actions with Impact by 2030.” He participated in his capacity as IFA representative and Chair of NGOCOA-GVA, reflecting the federation's commitment to universal social protection and health equity as pillars of healthy ageing.

Alejandro's intervention focused on the need for multisectoral policy approaches to combat ageism, which remains a persistent barrier to the inclusion and protection of older persons across the life course. He underscored the importance of:

- Framing ageing as a driver of development rather than a burden;
- Integrating ageism awareness across health, education, employment, and social policy;
- Building age-friendly, inclusive health systems with equity at their core;

- Mobilizing long-term investments that are rights-based and grounded in intergenerational solidarity.

His remarks complemented those of fellow panelists from ASEAN, Spain, and Finland, who focused respectively on leadership for healthy ageing, building age-friendly communities, and creating structural supports for long-term impact. The event aligned closely with WHO's General Programme of Work and with the global ambition to make the UN Decade of Healthy Ageing 2021–2030 a period of measurable progress.

Alejandro's presence at this high-level event reinforced the visibility of the NGO Committee on Ageing Geneva and its members in multilateral discussions on ageing and health. It also demonstrated the Committee's continued advocacy for rights-based, inclusive, and evidence-informed public health frameworks that serve the dignity and well-being of older persons worldwide.