



Open-ended working group on Ageing for the purpose of strengthening the protection of the human rights of older persons

General Assembly

Item 4: Existing international framework on the human rights of older persons and identification of existing gaps at the international level

New York, 21st August 2012

Statement delivered by Matthias Dettling, Second Secretary

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- Switzerland attaches great importance to the situation and the well-being of older persons. Discussions and studies made in recent years have shown that there might well be a gap of awareness, of information, of implementation and of monitoring with regard to the respect and promotion of the rights of older persons.
 - All international human rights instruments of the UN, with the exception of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, protect the human rights of older persons: this applies first and foremost to the two Covenants on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and on Civil and Political Rights; but also to the Convention for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, the Convention for the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, the Convention on the Rights of Disabled Persons, the Convention on the Rights of Migrant Workers as well as the Convention against Torture.
 - Switzerland therefore does not see normative gaps in the protection of the human rights of older persons. But we do acknowledge that there may well be an implementation, monitoring and information gap regarding the respect and promotion of their human rights. We therefore remain convinced that it is an important task for the international community to focus on the specific needs of older persons in order to better protect their civil, cultural, economic, political and social rights, the most glaring violation of their rights being discrimination based on age.
 - We would also like to underline that while the primary responsibility for the protection of human rights of older people remains with the States, also civil society and the economy have a role to play when it comes to the improvement of the human rights situation of older persons. The States are therefore asked to adopt policy measures that mobilize all actors to contribute to a better situation of older persons in society.

In our view it would be important:

1. to ask concerned special procedures of the Human Rights Council to address - within their respective mandates - the issue of better implementing the human rights of older persons in their reports and make recommendations to that effect;