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Dear Mark

United Nations Convention on the Rights of Older Persons

Thank you for your letter of 14 May seeking further clarification as to why the Older People's Commission supports the development of a UN Convention.

The correspondence received from the Secretary of State indicates the UK Government's preference to focus on the outcomes and follow-up to the **Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing 2002** rather than pressing to evolve the **United Nations Principles for Older Persons, December 1991** into a fully-fledged Convention. These two ways forward are not, however, mutually exclusive.

The Madrid Plan of Action on Ageing commits nations to make progress in a range of areas including the following:

- The elimination of age discrimination
- The incorporation of ageing within social and economic strategies
- The need to provide older people with equal access to health care and services.

We welcome the UK Government's commitment to MIPPA.

However, making the UN Principles a Convention would achieve something important and further to MIPPA. Enforceable international treaties are in place for women, the elimination of race discrimination, Children, and Disabled Persons.



A UN Convention on the rights of older people is necessary to ensure that older men and women can realise their rights. With a UN Convention, and the assistance of a special Rapporteur, governments would have an explicit legal framework, guidance and support that would enable them to ensure that older people's rights would be upheld in countries across the world.

Demographic change is resulting in unprecedented numbers of older people worldwide. Greater numbers of people will be affected by age discrimination and ageism (this is why it is also important that in the UK context the Government implements as soon as possible the Equality Act provisions which ban age discrimination in the provision of goods, facilities and services). Strengthening older people's human rights is the correct response.

The Madrid Plan and UN Principles are not enforceable in law; a UN Convention would be.

Please let us know if we can be of any further assistance.

Yours sincerely

Sarah Stone
Deputy Commissioner/Dirprwy Comisiynydd