



February 24, 2021
By electronic mail

The Honourable Marc Garneau, Minister of Foreign Affairs
The Honourable Deb Schulte, Minister of Seniors

Re: It is time for a Convention on the Rights of Older Persons

In ways both similar to, and different from, the HIV pandemic, the COVID-19 pandemic has shown yet again how the denial and infringement of human rights drives and worsens a public health crisis. One particularly pernicious and tragic dimension of this relationship has been the death toll and other suffering that COVID-19 has taken on older persons, not least because of the failure to act promptly and adequately to protect their health and well-being. COVID-19 has exposed the impact of ageism and discrimination against older persons all around the world and highlighted the need for a legal instrument to protect the human rights of older persons.

The HIV Legal Network is a long-time advocate for human right as one essential touchstone in an effective response to public health challenges and is a long-time supporter and partner of the Grandmothers Advocacy Network (GRAN). I write today in support of the efforts of the International Longevity Centre (ILC) Canada to enlist Canada's support and leadership for a UN Convention on the Rights of Older Persons. The ILC's appeal was made in a letter available at: <https://www.ilccanada.org/images/Letter.pdf>.

It is time to lay the foundations for a UN Convention to enshrine the rights of older people in a Convention on the Rights of Older Persons. I hope and trust that Canada will be a strong proponent of such a measure to strengthen the international human rights system.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

Richard Elliott
Executive Director

Cc: The Right Honourable Justin Trudeau, Prime Minister of Canada

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