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Intergovernmental Working Group on the Human Rights of Older Persons

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Oral Statement of the Finnish National Human Rights Institution for the First Session of the Intergovernmental Working Group on the Human Rights of Older Persons, item 4, *Discussion on the Chair's 'Food for Thoughts' paper*, July 15th, 2026.

This document contains observations by the Finnish Human Rights Centre (HRC¹, NHRI) to the first session of the Intergovernmental Working Group on the Human Rights of Older Persons (13 to 17 July 2026).

Should you have any further questions or need for additional information, do not hesitate to contact us at info@ihmisoikeuskeskus.fi.

The Finnish National Human Rights Institution considers the Chair's reflections on the structure and guiding principles of the future instrument to be, on the whole, well-founded and worthy of support. We would, however, like to raise a few additional observations regarding the Chair's paper.

The draft preamble notes that the views of all relevant stakeholders should be taken into account. The Finnish NHRI would encourage taking this approach a step further and considers that, in line with the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), the preamble should explicitly recognize the right of older persons to participate in decision-making processes and policies that affect them.

More generally, the Finnish NHRI is of the view that, when considering alternative formulations relating to the structure, guiding principles, obligations and substantive provisions of the future instrument, careful attention should be paid to the lessons learned from the CRPD. Good practices and successful formulations

¹ The Human Rights Centre represents the Finnish National Human Rights Institution (NHRI) in international NHRI cooperation and other international and European cooperation in human rights.

The NHRI comprises the Human Rights Centre, its pluralistic 39-member Human Rights Delegation, and the Office of the Parliamentary Ombudsman. The institution complies with the UN Paris Principles and the Global Alliance of NHRIs (GANHRI) accredited it with A-status in 2014, 2019 and 2025.

should be drawn upon, while approaches that have proven less effective should be avoided.

We understand the need to acknowledge differences between States and to recognize the distribution of responsibilities, including between families and the State. At the same time, we consider it important to ensure that this perspective does not detract from the State's obligation to guarantee that older persons can exercise and enjoy their rights independently, and, where necessary, with appropriate support, and participate actively and fully in society.

We also consider it essential, when addressing equality and non-discrimination, to recognize that substantive equality entails not only the prohibition of age-based discrimination but also the State's positive obligation, where necessary, to take proactive measures to promote equality. This is particularly important for older persons and groups of older persons who face heightened disadvantage or are in particularly vulnerable situations. In this regard, the Finnish NHRI wishes to highlight the equal rights of older persons belonging to minorities, as well as older Indigenous persons.