SPEECH SESSION 2 – ADEQUACY OF EXISTING HUMAN RIGHTS MECHANISMS IN RESPONDING TO CHALLENGES

We have heard from experts today that there are serious inadequacies in the existing human rights protections for older persons.

We activists in the field of aging can go on citing instance after instance to show the variety of ways older people are sacrificed at the alter of ageism and how insurmountable are the obstacles that block the path to social justice and equality.

We may ask why the UN has not protected the rights of older persons, as it has done for so many groups who have faced obstacles in equity, yet we know that the UN is really a reflection of the Member States.

So why aren’t Member States taking steps to protect older citizens…are older people not worthy of the same protections as other groups covered by Conventions?

Are we not contributing to our communities as others are? Are we too old and frail to be worthy of basic human rights? Are we not worth the expense of true equity?

Does anyone here really believe that older people are without protections because we don’t deserve it? Of course not.

Given the evidence we heard today and the OHCHR Normative Report does anyone really believe that the existing human rights mechanism are adequate for older persons? Of course not.

Yet here we remain unprotected, despite evidence of clear gaps and serious inadequacies of exiting human rights mechanisms and real and violent human rights abuses of older people.

The only explanation for this indifference to the suffering of older persons is ageism.

We call on Member States to look at yourselves, face your ageism and do the right thing.

When human rights are violated, we need countries to stand up and say no and to put into place the instruments to fully fight the prejudice of ageism: a binding international instrument.

Do it and do it now.