October 1, 2010

Dear Members of the Committee on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women

**Adoption of the draft General recommendation No. 27 on older women and protection of their human rights**

As organisations concerned with the elimination of discrimination against women throughout their lives, including in old age, we applaud and support the work of the Committee on age and gender-based discrimination.

The introduction of systematically asking States parties to report on how they are implementing the Convention in relation to older women is a major step towards improved understanding of multiple discrimination, stronger protection of older women’s rights and improved disaggregated data collection and analysis.

The General recommendation on older women and protection of their human rights will be the most comprehensive interpretation of human rights and State parties’ obligations as they apply in the context of ageing and we urge the Committee to adopt it during the 47th Session in Geneva in October 2010.

The timing is critical.

There is a growing recognition of, and attention to, the rights of older women and men. Momentum towards a regional human rights instrument has been gathering in Latin America and the Caribbean since the 2007 Brasilia Declaration committed States to promoting older people’s rights. At an international level, the 2010 report of the Secretary General to the 65th General Assembly (A/65/157, 21 July 2010) recognises the limited enjoyment rights, significant levels of abuse and neglect, persistent ageist stereotypes and exclusion that older women and men continue to experience.

2010 has also seen the creation of UN Women, the ECOSOC Annual Ministerial Review address commitments and goals on gender equality, the 15 year review of implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, the 10 year review of the Millennium Development Goals and the 10 year anniversary of Security Council Resolution 1325.

The absence of attention within these review processes to the discrimination experienced by older women has been alarming. The impact of both gender inequality across the life course, as well as the feminization of ageing, perpetuates the invisibility of older women.

The adoption of the General recommendation would be a timely and powerful signal to States parties to the Convention, UN Member States, UN Women and to the international community that discrimination based on age and sex is both morally and legally unacceptable and needs to be addressed across a range of policy mechanisms.

We, therefore, urge Committee Members to adopt the General recommendation at the 47th Session.

Signed, (In alphabetical order).