



Closing session: intervention

**UNECE Regional Review Meeting
30 October 2019**

Thank you Madam chair.

My name is Sylvia Beales. I work on issues of older women representing Gray Panthers and Widows for Peace through Democracy and live in the UK.

Today I'm speaking on behalf of the Women's Major Group.

The protection of all women's rights, gender equality, democracy and peace and in situation of conflict is not possible without meaningful participation into political and policy processes of all women as citizens with recognised rights and organized in civil society groups.

In our Forum we have stressed the need for meaningful participation of all women affected by conflict; and stressed the importance of hearing and acting on indigenous women's voices; Roma Women and Sami Women's rights advocates; rural women; widows; women in labour movements; women of all ages, especially older women and young feminists; women with disabilities; LGBTI and GNC women and people and migrant women; refugee and undocumented women.

Some of these groups are specially discriminated in accessing political rights in their country such as migrant and undocumented women.

Our public space to promote women's rights keeps shrinking and it becomes increasingly difficult for civil society to contribute to promoting gender equality. The low levels of funding for women's rights associations and groups at all levels in the region is alarming.

It is equally very alarming that women right now are being harassed, including sexually, and receiving death threats because of their activism, including younger and older female leaders in the climate change movement. There are attacks against feminist journalists and women in the media including via online spaces.

We must tackle racism. Migrant women face racism in their treatment by institutions, such as immigration offices or social workers, but also when they work or want to access work. Strict measures and penalties should be taken on racial profiling to put an end to institutional and structural racism.

We are asking you to take additional measures to restore safety. We need to increase our focus more on human security, which includes economic security, political security, community and personal security, environmental and food security, for all women in their diversity and across the life course.

Urgent action is needed to legally protect women and girls active in political and public life against all forms of violence, abuse, sexism and ageism. This requires the full ratification and implementation of the Istanbul Convention on the Violence against women, especially for migrant women and all groups mentioned.

Thank you