

Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing Implementation and Follow-up

General Assembly

The General Assembly is the most inclusive organ of the UN, comprising all countries of the world, and meets annually in New York from late September to the end of December. Its crowded agenda includes an item on the follow-up to the World Assembly on Ageing.

The item is taken up first in the committee on social and humanitarian questions (the Third Committee), where most of the debate takes place and draft resolutions are submitted and negotiated. The resolutions adopted in committee then go to the plenary for final endorsement. They provide the necessary mandates to the international system for future action. Non-governmental organizations are not allowed to participate in the Assembly, but they are often active informally by submitting documentation to the Secretariat for its reports, and lobbying governmental delegations for inclusion of desired wording in the resolutions.

Sixty-second session (2007)

[Follow-up to the Second World Assembly on Ageing - Report of the Secretary-General \(A/62/131\) \(July 23, 2007\) \(A/62/131/Corr.1\)](#)

In his report to the 62nd session of the General Assembly, the UN Secretary General gives examples of implementation efforts as well as lessons learned during the first cycle of the Madrid Plan of Action on Ageing. Examples encompass legal frameworks, such as legislation focused on older persons in Brazil, social protection systems, such as the establishment of non-contributory social pensions in many poor countries and the development of human resources that particularly deal with aging issues. Calling progress made since 2002 , “remarkable,” the Secretary General concludes with recommendations, such as improving capacity building. The report does not, however, identify ways to build financial capacity for poor countries to implement aging programs.

Sixty-first session (2006)

[Follow-up to the World Assembly on Ageing – Resolution Adopted by the General Assembly \(A/RES/61/142\) \(January 30, 2007\)](#)

The General Assembly, on December 19, 2006, accepted the draft resolution submitted by the Third Committee with only one change in the original text. Article 9 of the resolution invites Member States to submit policy recommendations to enhance Madrid Plan implementation in addition to their reports on the implementation progress.

[Follow-up to the Second World Assembly on Ageing - Draft Resolution Presented by South Africa \(A/C.3/61/L.6\) \(October 4, 2006\)](#)

[Follow-up to the Second World Assembly on Ageing - Report of the Secretary-General \(A/61/167\) \(July 19, 2006\)](#)

In this report, the UN Secretary General presents “merely a snapshot of national capacity” to implement the Madrid Plan of Action on Ageing (MIPAA). The Secretariat could not rely on comprehensive information from Member States, because MIPAA is not a legally binding document. The UN cannot require Member States to report on the implementation progress on a regular basis. The report, responding to General Assembly resolution 60/135, highlights several national capacity building and implementation efforts, such as the introduction of social pension programs to support older persons, in poor countries, such as in South Africa. The report criticizes the “low profile” of aging issues exemplified by the” insufficient political attention and inadequate financial support geared towards building national capacity for implementing the Madrid Plan of Action.”

Sixtieth session (2005)

[Follow-up to the Second World Assembly on Ageing - Resolution Adopted by the General Assembly \(A/RES/60/135\) \(February 2, 2006\)](#)

This resolution, passed by the General Assembly on December 16, 2005, recognizes that in many countries around the world “awareness of the Madrid Plan of Action remains limited or non-existent.” The resolution stresses the “need for additional capacity-building at the national level” for MIPAA implementation and encourages Governments to support the United Nations Trust Fund for Ageing to enable the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat to provide expanded assistance to countries, upon their request.” The resolution further stresses “the importance of the collection of data and population statistics disaggregated by age and sex on all aspects of policy formulation by all countries, and encourages the relevant entities of the United Nations system to support national efforts in capacity-building, especially those of developing countries and countries with economies in transition.”

[Follow-up to the Second World Assembly on Ageing- Report of the Secretary-General \(A/60/151\) \(July 22, 2005\)](#)

In this report, the Secretary General assesses UN internal and national follow-up activities to the Second World Assembly on Aging in 2004/2005. The report underlines the "general lack of awareness" of the Assembly's Plan of Action and urges raising its visibility. The report also describes governmental, regional as well as UN and NGO efforts to mainstream ageing issues into international programs and activities and provides recommendations for the General Assembly to consider.

Fifty-ninth session (2004)

[Follow-up to the Second World Assembly on Ageing - Report of the Secretary-General \(A/59/164\) \(July 21, 2004\)](#)

As requested by the General Assembly in 2003, the Secretary-General submitted this report on UN activities to implement the Madrid Plan of Action, based on contributions received from 14 UN system organizations and major NGOs working in the field of ageing. The report concludes that some progress has been achieved since 2002 on linking ageing and development within the organizations and bodies of the UN system, but much

more remains to be done, particularly at the national level. It notes that maintaining priority on the international agenda for older persons' issues is a challenge given the many competing issues and limited resources. The report makes a number of recommendations that were then taken up in the resolution adopted by the General Assembly.

[Follow-up to the Second World Assembly on Ageing - Resolution by the GA \(A/RES/59/150 \) \(February 1, 2005\)](#)

Resolution 59/150 of December 20, 2004 invited States and the UN system to take into account the needs and concerns of older persons in decision-making at all levels; invited the functional commissions of the Economic and Social Council to integrate ageing issues into their work; recommended that the Commission on the Status of Women continue to consider the situation of older women; encouraged the regional commissions to elaborate a regional strategy for the implementation of the Madrid Plan of Action; requested the Secretary-General to submit his proposals for conducting the review and appraisal of the Plan at the regional and global levels to the Commission for Social Development in 2006; and requested the UN system organizations to strengthen the capacity of the focal points on ageing and to provide them with adequate resources.

Fifty-eighth session (2003)

[Follow-up to the Second World Assembly on Ageing - Report of the Secretary-General \(A/58/160 \) \(July 17, 2003\)](#)

During the first year of follow-up to the World Assembly on Ageing, the UN system developed a "road map", or a comprehensive strategy in order to assist governments in the implementation of their commitments towards older persons. The strategy identifies national capacity-building and mainstreaming of ageing into national development policies as the main aspects of the process, particularly in developing countries and countries with economies in transition. It sets out steps to be taken at the national and international level, taking into account the gender dimension, and recommends a "bottom-up approach" for assessing progress. The approach stresses the need for participation, dialogue and sharing of ideas and best practices among all stakeholders, therefore including older persons and their organizations. This report by the Secretary General gives a detailed description of the strategy.

[Follow-up to the Second World Assembly on Ageing - Resolution by the GA \(A/RES/58/134\) \(January 26, 2003\)](#)

This General Assembly resolution adopted on December 22, 2003 recognized that population ageing worldwide makes it "imperative that ageing be integrated into development policies for the attainment of internationally agreed development goals" and called on governments and UN system organizations to act accordingly. Specifically, it requested the Economic and Social Council to consider ageing in its review of issues arising from the global conferences; requested the Social Development Commission to integrate ageing in the follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development, and to cooperate with the Commission on the Status of Women with regard to older women; requested the Statistical Commission to develop modalities for disaggregating data by

age and sex; requested the UN system organizations to report to the Social Development Commission on their progress in mainstreaming ageing in their work ; and invited the international financial institutions and regional development banks to take older persons into account in their policies and projects.

Source: <http://www.globalaging.org/agingwatch/GA/sessions/main/index.htm>

UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs

In the UN Secretariat, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) has responsibility to foster and assist MIPAA implementation and follow-up. Within DESA, the UN Programme on Ageing assumes the main responsibility for MIPAA and works with other parts of the UN to get the task done. In a very positive movement, the UN Programme of Youth began taking a closer look at MIPAA in 2003, strengthening its approach to inter-generational issues and mainstreaming MIPAA's recommendations.

[UN Programme on Ageing](#)

DESA's Program on Aging organizes expert group meetings and promotes awareness of the bottom-up approach through guidelines in order to assist countries in MIPAA follow-up. DESA also receives assessments on the aging situation from regional commissions and makes recommendations to the UN Secretary General for inclusion in a yearly report. With less than four staff professionals the UN Programme on Ageing is quite understaffed compared with other UN departments and considering the magnitude of population aging. This page also includes work of other DESA departments.

[United Nations Programme on Youth](#)

Within DESA, the UN Programme on Youth acts as the focal point for youth issues. In 1995, the UN adopted an international strategy, the World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond. The World Programme shares similarities to MIPAA as it builds on the same international instruments, such as the Programme of Action of the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development. Most importantly, a proposed supplement to the World Programme stresses intergenerational solidarity that resonates throughout MIPAA. This page follows the Youth Programme's work on mainstreaming the recommendations contained in MIPAA.

Regional Commissions

Five commissions, comprising the countries of each main region of the world, contribute to policy formulation and implementation of MIPAA from a regional perspective. Concerned about the impact of ageing populations for social and economic development, the commissions are paying increasing attention to this issue, and some of them have adopted specific policies. At its 2004 session, the UN General Assembly encouraged those commissions that have not yet done so, to elaborate a regional strategy for the

implementation of the Madrid Plan of Action. So far, ageing programs have been adopted by the following regional commissions:

[UN Economic Commission for Europe \(UNECE\)](#)

UNECE is the main oversight body for the European regional implementation strategy for MIPAA and conducts follow-up reviews at its annual sessions. On this page you can find key UNECE documents on MIPAA implementation as well as links for further research.

[UN Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean \(UNECLAC\)](#)

UNECLAC helps put the ideas from the MIPAA into effect by setting up conferences, meetings and training sessions for regional governmental and intergovernmental groups. UNECLAC's population and development unit assumes responsibility for MIPAA's implementation and follow-up and meets biennially to review the progress of each member country and set goals for the next two years.

This page compiles ECLAC's reports on MIPAA implementation and provides links to further research.

[UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific \(UNESCAP\)](#)

UNESCAP facilitates two action plans on aging, the Macao and the Madrid Plan. UNESCAP's Population and Social Integration Section organizes regional meetings, seminars and training sessions for its Member States and NGOS. UNESCAP also conduct regular regional surveys on aging to foster and monitor implementation of the Macao and Madrid plans of action on aging.

Functional Commissions

ECOSOC establishes functional commissions to study different issues within its mandate and make specific policy recommendations. The commissions, which are composed of UN Member States, vary in composition and focus. As part of the follow-up to the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, ECOSOC and the General Assembly designated the Commission on Social Development as the main forum for MIPAA evaluation. Additionally, the Commission on the Status of Women, the Commission on Population and Development, and the Statistical Commission were asked to address MIPAA within their respective topic areas. At the 2004 session of the General Assembly, all other functional commissions were also invited "to integrate the issues of population and individual ageing into their work in order to promote implementation of the Madrid Plan of Action."

[Commission on Social Development](#)

As part of the follow-up to the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, ECOSOC and the General Assembly designated the Commission on Social Development to integrate the different dimensions of population aging into its work and to give priority to MIPAA implementation and follow-up. This page follows the Commission's decisions and resolutions as the main UN body in charge of MIPAA evaluation. The page also cites

NGO efforts at the Commission to mainstream older persons in the UN system.

[Commission on Population and Development](#)

Following the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) held at Cairo in 1994, the Commission on Population and Development expanded its role as the main follow-up mechanism to the decisions of the Conference, and the new international approaches that aim to integrate population concerns into development strategies. The Commission is responsible for preparing studies and advising ECOSOC on a range of population issues, such as population aging; monitoring, reviewing and assessing the implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action and making appropriate recommendations to the Council on its findings.

Specialized Agencies

UN specialized agencies have a special relationship with the UN under agreements reached with ECOSOC, which is authorized to coordinate their activities through consultation and recommendations, and to request reports on the implementation of recommendations made by it or by the General Assembly. The agencies are therefore deeply involved in the follow-up to UN global conferences including the World Assembly on Ageing, and are expected to take action to implement their respective responsibilities under these mandates. The following agencies have adopted programs to ensure the integration of the needs of older persons in their work:

[The International Labour Organisation](#)

The ILO conducts MIPAA implementation and follow-up by participating in inter-agency meetings and by contributing to reports on aging. Two ILO units are also part of a task force that guides “the follow-up of the Regional Implementation Strategy of the MIPAA in the UNECE region.”

[World Health Organization](#)

The World Health Organization contributed to the World Assembly on Aging in 2002 and remains actively involved in MIPAA implementation and follow-up, particularly by assisting poor countries in shaping and adopting aging policies.

UN Funds and Programs

As many new countries gained their independence and joined the UN in the 1950s and 1960s, a variety of funds and programs were established to mobilize international funding and expertise in order to help them achieve their development goals.

[Population Fund](#)

First established in 1969, the UN Population Fund is the major source of funding and expertise for population and reproductive health programs within the UN system. The Fund's work on population aging is guided by the Madrid International Plan of Action on

Ageing. On this page you will find information on the Fund's MIPAA implementation efforts.

NGOs

The UN Charter, Article 71, says that the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) “may make suitable arrangements for consultation with non-governmental organizations which are concerned with matters within its competence.” NGOs often act as independent experts to the UN or its Member States. As such, they have brought many important topics of discussion, including the need for a disability rights convention, to the attention of the UN system. While there are over 2,600 NGOs in consultative status with ECOSOC, only a handful work specifically on aging.

[NGOs](#)

Putting the non-binding Madrid Plan of Action on Ageing into practice largely depends on NGO efforts. Often, these organizations form the backbone of regional implementation efforts through their local programs, research and offers to share their expertise with government ministries. Yet, little information can be found on the NGO “bottom-up” work. This section attempts to document NGO input into MIPAA implementation and follow-up at the UN headquarters in New York and around the world.

FOCAL POINTS ON AGING

[UN System Focal Points](#)

In preparation for the World Assembly on Ageing, the UN created focal points on aging within the UN system. This listing of UN focal points has been updated by Global Action on Aging in 2006.

[National Aging Focal Points of the UN Economic Commission for Europe's Member States \(October 2006\)](#)

In order to facilitate regional MIPAA implementation, the UN Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) created a network of national focal points on ageing among its Member States. The focal points collect information about each country's political processes, programs and actions with respect to aging, and act as advisers for the collection and interpretation of data on aging within their regions. As of October 2006, some 34 out of 56 UNECE Member States have nominated a focal point. The first meeting of national focal points took place in November 2006, in Segovia, Spain.

[National Aging Focal Points of the UN Economic and Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean's Member States - Latin America \(March 2007\)](#)

Responding to ECLAC's regional implementation strategy for MIPAA, 19 Latin American ECLAC Member States thus far designated focal points on aging in national ministries. (Source: UN NGLS)

ORGANIZATIONS

[HelpAge International](#)

This page follows MIPAA implementation efforts and presents information on interesting projects, such as the “Older Citizens Monitor the Madrid Plan” initiative in which older persons around the world directly monitor their governments’ MIPAA implementation process.

[International Institute on Ageing](#)

The International Institute on Ageing was established in Malta in 1988, on the recommendation of ECOSOC, as an autonomous body within the UN system. Its main objective is to "empower the less developed countries to cope with the challenges of the consequences of mass longevity in the next decades by building capacity" through training and education. The Institute's website provides updated information on international aging conferences.

[UN Non-Governmental Liaison Service](#)

On this page UN NGLS provides basic UN documents on aging, updates on MIPAA implementation activities as well as useful links for further research.

Source: <http://www.globalaging.org/agingwatch/index.htm>