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Asia-Pacific Intergovernmental Meeting on the Second Review and
Appraisal of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing

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Item 5 of the provisional agenda

**Consideration of key regional issues within the framework of
the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing**

Report on the regional preparatory process for the review of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing in Asia and the Pacific

Note by the secretariat

Summary

The present document provides an overview of the regional preparatory process for the second review and appraisal of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing in Asia and the Pacific (the Madrid Plan of Action), including a summary of recommendations on regional priority actions agreed upon at the Preparatory Meeting for the Asia-Pacific Intergovernmental Meeting on the Second Regional Review and Appraisal of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing. The Madrid Plan of Action is particularly relevant to policymakers in Asia and the Pacific considering that the number of older persons in the region is increasing at an unprecedented pace. Given declining fertility rates and increasing longevity, and the resulting economic and social implications for all countries in the region, there is a compelling need to build a regional consensus around a set of actions that would address commonly shared challenges in the implementation of the Madrid Plan of Action to prepare for an ageing society. The present document is intended to facilitate the deliberations of the Meeting on the key issues and priority actions for the next implementation cycle of the Madrid Plan of Action. The Meeting may also wish to consider and identify key areas for regional cooperation.

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I. Introduction

1. The year 2012 marks the tenth anniversary of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, which was adopted by 159 Governments at the Second World Assembly on Ageing in Madrid in 2002,¹ and subsequently endorsed by the General Assembly during its fifty-seventh session.² The General Assembly, in its resolution 65/182 of 21 December 2010 on the follow-up to the Second World Assembly on Ageing, reaffirmed the Madrid Plan of Action and set out a series of actions for Governments to advance its implementation. The Economic and Social Council, in its resolution 2010/14 of 22 July 2010 on the future implementation of the Madrid Plan of Action on Ageing, 2002, acknowledged, inter alia, the essential contributions of the United Nations regional commissions to the implementation, review, and appraisal of the Madrid Plan of Action, including the organization of the regional review and appraisal meetings as part of the preparatory process for the second global review and appraisal of the Madrid Plan of Action to be held in 2013. The Council, in its resolution 2011/28 of 28 July 2011 on the modalities for the second review and appraisal of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, 2002, encouraged the regional commissions to continue to facilitate the review and appraisal exercise at the regional level.

2. The Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, at its sixty-seventh session adopted resolution 67/5 of 25 May 2011 on the full and effective implementation of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing in the Asia-Pacific region. In the resolution, the Commission encouraged all members and associate members to accelerate the implementation of the Madrid Plan of Action. The Commission also decided to convene the Asia-Pacific High-level Intergovernmental Meeting on the Second Regional Review and Appraisal of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing in 2012. The present document provides an overview of the key components that have contributed to the regional preparatory process for the second review and appraisal of the Madrid Plan of Action in Asia and the Pacific, and presents key actions that should be taken to accelerate the implementation of the Madrid Plan of Action, which have emerged from the regional preparatory process.

3. The Madrid Plan of Action is particularly relevant to policymakers in Asia and the Pacific given that the number of older persons in the region is increasing at an unprecedented pace. While persons aged 60 years and older in the ESCAP region totalled almost half a billion (437 million) people in 2010, this number is expected to triple to nearly 1.3 billion people in 2050. As a result, one in four people in Asia and the Pacific will be 60 years or older in 2050.

4. While the timing and pace of ageing will differ across Asia and the Pacific, all countries are expected to experience an increasingly older population in the years to come. This dramatic shift in the age structure of the population will affect economic and social development in all countries of the region.

¹ *Report of the Second World Assembly on Ageing, Madrid, 8-12 April 2002* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.02.IV.4), chap. I, resolution 1, annexes I and II.

² See General Assembly resolution 57/167 of 18 December 2002 on the follow-up to the Second World Assembly on Ageing.

5. Declining fertility rates and increased longevity offer countries the opportunity to redefine national development agendas in new and creative ways by encouraging active and productive ageing as set out in the three pillars of the Madrid Plan of Action.³ Countries have encountered difficulties in implementing some critical measures related to population ageing. An enabling environment that supports active ageing must remove barriers to employment and include the development of universal social protection schemes that provide a secure income and universal health services into old age. The latter would be an important step towards providing accessible and appropriate health services to older persons with multiple and complex health needs. Additionally, productive and healthy older persons need barrier-free and age-friendly social and physical environments. In the absence of these measures, countries will face difficulties with economically unsustainable dependency ratios and health-care expenditures, and the social exclusion of greater numbers of the population.

6. The ageing of the Asia-Pacific population underscores the compelling need to build a regional consensus around a set of actions that would address commonly shared gaps in the implementation of the Madrid Plan of Action. The Regional Seminar on Health Promotion and Active Ageing in Asia and the Pacific (held in Bangkok on 15 and 16 November 2010),⁴ the Regional Forum on Elderly Care Services in Asia and the Pacific (held in Nanjing, China on 21 and 22 January 2011), the 2011 Regional Survey on Ageing in Asia and the Pacific, and the Preparatory Meeting for the Asia-Pacific Intergovernmental Meeting on the Second Regional Review and Appraisal of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing (held in Beijing from 22 to 24 November 2011)⁵ served as important milestones in the process of developing a set of regionally agreed upon key actions to accelerate the implementation of the Madrid Plan of Action.

7. The actions presented under Section VI of this document are derived from recommendations on regional priorities agreed upon at the Preparatory Meeting for the Asia-Pacific Intergovernmental Meeting on the Second Regional Review and Appraisal of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing. Collectively, the actions are intended to facilitate the deliberation of the Meeting on the key issues and priority actions for the next implementation cycle of the Madrid Plan of Action. The Meeting may also wish to consider and identify key areas for regional cooperation.

II. General Assembly resolution 65/182, Economic and Social Council resolution 2010/14 and Economic and Social Council resolution 2011/28

8. General Assembly resolution 65/182 of 21 December 2010, on the follow-up to the Second World Assembly on Ageing, encouraged all member States to further implement the Madrid Plan of Action as an integral part of their national development plans and poverty eradication strategies.

³ The three pillars are: (i) older persons and development; (ii) advancing health and well-being into old age; and (iii) ensuring enabling and supportive environments.

⁴ See www.unescap.org/sdd/meetings/HAI-Ageing/outdoc.pdf.

⁵ See [http://test.actionbias.com/sites/test/files/Final Report of Preparatory Meeting on MIPAA Review_0.pdf](http://test.actionbias.com/sites/test/files/Final%20Report%20of%20Preparatory%20Meeting%20on%20MIPAA%20Review_0.pdf).

9. In its resolution 2010/14 of 22 July 2010 on the future implementation of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, 2002, the Economic and Social Council called upon member States to continue to participate effectively in the implementation of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, 2002, inter alia, through national strategies and policies, and by improving data collection and sharing ideas, information and good practices. It also recommended that member States work with the regional commissions to exchange information on good practices.

10. Also, in resolution 2010/14, the Council decided to conduct the second global review and appraisal of the Madrid Plan of Action in 2013 at the fifty-first session of the Commission for Social Development, and acknowledged the essential contributions of the regional commissions to the implementation, review and appraisal of the Madrid Plan of Action, including the organization of regional review and appraisal meetings and the preparation of their outcome documents. The Council decided that the procedure for the second review and appraisal of the Madrid Plan of Action should include preparatory activities at the national and regional levels, including those conducted by the regional commissions, to be concluded in 2012.

11. In its resolution 2011/28 of 28 July 2011 on the modalities for the second review and appraisal of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, 2002, the Economic and Social Council encouraged the regional commissions to continue to facilitate the global review and appraisal exercise at the regional level, and encouraged member States and United Nations organizations, where appropriate, to provide support to regional commissions in facilitating the review and appraisal process and organizing regional conferences to review national review and appraisal results in 2012.

III. Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific resolution 67/5

12. In its resolution 67/5 of 25 May 2011, ESCAP decided to convene the Asia-Pacific High-level Intergovernmental Meeting on the Second Regional Review and Appraisal of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing in 2012 to provide a regional input to the global review and appraisal of the Madrid Plan of Action. In the above-mentioned resolution, the Commission encouraged members and associate members:

(a) To accelerate the implementation of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing;

(b) To conduct a national review and appraisal of the Madrid Plan of Action using, among other things, a bottom-up participatory approach;

(c) To ensure high-level representation in the Asia-Pacific High-level Intergovernmental Meeting;

(d) To provide financial or other forms of support for regional cooperation aimed at promoting the implementation of the Madrid Plan of Action in the Asia-Pacific region;

(e) To incorporate a gender perspective into all policy actions on ageing, and to strengthen the empowerment and legal protection of older persons, in particular older women.

IV. 2011 Regional Survey on Ageing

13. The 2011 Regional Survey on Ageing⁶ was conducted by ESCAP. The objective of the survey was to compile data on national policies and programmes on population ageing and special measures to address the needs of older persons implemented by countries in the Asia-Pacific region. A total of 30 ESCAP members and associate members responded to the survey.⁷

14. The survey showed that most members and associate members had made progress in developing national plans with specific institutional arrangements that address ageing from an interministerial or intergovernmental approach supported through an enhanced budgetary allocation. The wide range of institutional mechanisms identified in the survey highlighted the broad number of approaches and policy mechanisms used to address the needs of older persons in the region, reflecting the increasing importance countries were placing on preparing for and responding to ageing populations. Survey responses indicated that committing the necessary financial and human resources to implement the Madrid Plan of Action had been a common challenge faced by countries in the Asia-Pacific region, and that countries had made progress in investing in professional staff dedicated to improving the lives of older persons. Survey responses further indicated that more attention needed to be directed to the particular situation of older women.

15. Under the area of older persons and development, several members and associate members had been taking positive measures to promote the active participation of the elderly. These initiatives, however, need to increase support for older persons' employment and comprehensive social protection systems. The main obstacles to older persons gaining and retaining employment were discrimination, mobility and accessibility limitations, and rapid change in required skill sets. Programmes supporting the training and employment opportunities for older persons are therefore of paramount importance. The promotion of decent employment of the elderly is not only key to their inclusion in an active and productive society, but also contributes to alleviating the growing pressures a larger elderly population places on the provision of social protection and health insurance. Indeed, social protection and social security systems in many countries and areas in the Asia-Pacific region continue to be weak. Social protection and social security systems still lack comprehensive coverage and fall short of providing adequate levels of support.

16. The advancement of health and well-being into old age was reported as a priority for members and associate members in the region as reflected in survey responses. Many steps had been taken to address the accessibility, affordability and availability of health-care systems. These efforts varied

⁶ The preliminary results of this survey were presented at the Preparatory Meeting for the Asia-Pacific Intergovernmental Meeting on the Second Regional Review and Appraisal of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing held in Beijing from 22 to 24 November 2011.

⁷ Responses were received from: Armenia; Australia; Azerbaijan; Bangladesh; China; Democratic People's Republic of Korea; Georgia; Fiji; India; Indonesia; Japan; Lao People's Democratic Republic; Malaysia; Maldives; Mongolia; Myanmar; Nepal; New Zealand; Papua New Guinea; Philippines; Republic of Korea; Russian Federation; Samoa; Sri Lanka; Thailand; Turkey; Uzbekistan; Viet Nam; Hong Kong, China; and Macao, China.

greatly in terms of the extent of provision, with some schemes being contributory and others non-contributory.

17. Most respondents acknowledged the importance of ensuring enabling and supportive environments, with a majority of them having implemented measures, such as providing public housing units or accessible and affordable homes for older persons, to support this. The survey indicated that innovative forms of caregiving to the elderly that included standards and evaluative mechanisms had been undertaken. Also with regard to caregiving, most respondents had provided training for formal and informal caregivers to ensure the continuum of care and services for older persons. In this area, however, two key gaps remain: the lack of an accreditation system for caregiving training; and a limited number of clear policies and programmes addressing neglect, abuse and violence against the elderly.

V. Regional consultations on ageing

18. In its resolution 67/5, ESCAP welcomed the holding of the Regional Seminar on Health Promotion and Active Ageing in Asia and the Pacific in Bangkok on 15 and 16 November 2010, and the Regional Forum on Elderly Care Services in Asia and the Pacific in Nanjing, China, on 21 and 22 January 2011, which contributed to the review of the implementation of the Madrid Plan of Action, in particular, on health and care of the elderly.

19. The Regional Seminar on Health Promotion and Active Ageing in Asia and the Pacific was conceived as a part of an overall strategic framework towards developing policies and practices for improving the health of older persons, as well as reducing the cost of health care. Participants at the seminar identified 10 concrete recommendations for action by Governments to address the gaps and challenges faced in implementing the health pillar of the Madrid Plan of Action.⁸

20. More than 100 senior government officials, experts and practitioners from 15 countries in the Asia-Pacific region participated in the Regional Forum on Elderly Care Services in Asia and the Pacific.⁹ The Forum analysed the critical concerns of older persons, including the excessive burden borne by older women due to their provision of unremunerated care and their limited access to social protection schemes. It provided Asia-Pacific countries with an opportunity to share knowledge and good practices in addressing the rising demand for age-friendly care services, including quality health and long-term care services.

21. To support the organization of the Asia-Pacific Intergovernmental Meeting on the Second Review and Appraisal of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, a preparatory meeting was held in Beijing from 22 to 24 November 2011. The preparatory meeting was attended by 53 experts from government, research institutions and civil society organizations, as well as relevant international organizations, and sought to identify key priorities related to population ageing in the region and specify concrete recommendations for action. These recommendations are detailed in the following section.

⁸ See www.unescap.org/sdd/meetings/HAI-Ageing/outdoc.pdf.

⁹ See <http://test.actionbias.com/sites/test/files/Outcomedocelderlycare20110408.pdf>.

VI. Key recommended actions resulting from the regional preparatory process for the review of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing in Asia and the Pacific

22. The recommendations for action on key regional priorities developed at the Preparatory Meeting for the Asia-Pacific Intergovernmental Meeting on the Second Regional Review and Appraisal of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing are based on three priority directions of the Madrid Plan of Action, namely older persons and development, advancing health and well-being into old age, and ensuring enabling and supportive environments. The observations and recommendations for action made at the Meeting are detailed below:

(a) Older persons and development:

(i) *Active participation in society and development.* Older persons and their organizations should be empowered so that they can participate in policy development processes and decision-making at all levels. Older persons' equal access to advocacy and redress mechanisms should be ensured. Older people's associations or their equivalents should be established in both rural and urban areas in order to provide a strong voice and create opportunities for older persons in society and development;

(ii) *Work and the ageing labour force.* Policies and legislation should be developed and enacted to remove the barriers to participation of older persons in the labour market. Measures should include the promotion of flexible work arrangements and the introduction of life-long learning and training initiatives. The role of older persons employed in the informal sector should also be recognized, as well as their right to social protection. Governments should facilitate public and private partnerships to create greater employment and income generation opportunities for older persons;

(iii) *Rural development, migration and urbanization.* Governments should promote age-friendly environments in both urban and rural areas and take measures to support older migrant workers returning to their place of origin;

(iv) *Access to knowledge, education and training.* Opportunities for lifelong learning for older persons and the use of appropriate teaching modalities should be promoted. The transfer of knowledge, skills and experiences of older persons to younger generations should be encouraged. Access by older persons to information and communication technology, especially in rural and remote areas, should be improved;

(v) *Intergenerational solidarity.* Solidarity between generations should be forged by increasing the level of knowledge on ageing among people of all ages to ensure commitment and support of the social and economic needs of older persons. Intergenerational interactions around economic activities in communities, such as apprenticeships and mentoring programmes, should be encouraged and facilitated;

(vi) *Income security, social protection, social security and poverty prevention.* Policies aimed at ensuring that all older persons have adequate income security and social protection, including through contributory and non-contributory pensions, should be implemented. Specific income security and social protection policies for women who are more likely to engage in informal and/or unpaid work through their life course should be developed. Governments should address barriers to portability of social security schemes;

(vii) *Emergency situations.* The needs of older persons must be included in disaster risk reduction and management plans. Older persons should be included in the development of responses to disasters and in reducing the impact of climate change. The social isolation of internally displaced older persons during times of social conflict and emergency situations should also be addressed;

(b) Advancing health and well-being into old age:

(i) *Health promotion and well-being throughout life.* Targets should be set and monitored to improve the health status of older persons and reduce disability and morbidity. Governments should develop policies and models for health promotion and disease prevention in all socioeconomic settings for the Asia-Pacific region. Behavioral change for healthy lifestyles and management of lifestyle-related diseases and chronic conditions should be promoted through health education and training. Older persons' access to information and services on sexual health should be ensured. Policies should be developed from a gender perspective that respond to the different situation of older men and women and pay special attention to the needs of older women, in view of the higher proportion of women among the oldest old (aged 80 and above);

(ii) *Universal and equal access to quality, age appropriate and gender sensitive health-care services.* Strategies to provide a comprehensive continuum of care to promote ageing in place need to be developed. They should cover preventative health care, acute care, chronic disease management, long-term care and end-of-life care. Governments should promote affordable dental and eye care services. People-centred models for primary care in all socioeconomic settings should be developed for the Asia-Pacific region. Coordination and integration within health services as well as with social services should be promoted. Comprehensive and accessible rehabilitation services should be provided. Governments should ensure access to high quality, appropriate and affordable end-of-life care, as well as ensure that older persons have access to responsive physical and mental health services, particularly in remote and rural areas;

(iii) *Older persons and HIV.* Governments should strengthen the support for older persons affected by HIV by ensuring that health promotion messages include older persons living with and affected by HIV, and that the continuum of health and social care services address the needs of older persons living with and affected by HIV. Support should be given to older persons who act as the primary caregivers for children that have been infected by HIV or orphaned by HIV and AIDS;

(iv) *Training of care providers, health professionals and social service providers.* Governments should develop coordinated and comprehensive training frameworks on gerontology and geriatrics to increase health professionals' understanding of the needs of older persons;

(v) *Mental health needs of older persons.* In promoting the overall mental well-being of older persons, Governments should ensure the provision of a continuum of mental health services with a community orientation, including early detection of mental health disorders, such as dementia and mood disorders, in older persons and respite care for their caregivers. A strategy to overcome discrimination and stigma towards older persons with mental health disorders and their families should be developed;

(vi) *Older persons and disability.* Provision of and accessibility to a continuum of services for older persons with disabilities and their caregivers should be ensured within their communities. A strategy to overcome discrimination and stigma towards older persons with disabilities should be developed. Acute and ongoing rehabilitation services, including environmental modification and provision of assistive technology to optimize the ability of older persons to live independently and participate actively in the community should be provided. The provision of support to caregivers of older persons with disabilities should be given;

(c) Ensuring enabling and supportive environments:

(i) *Housing and the living environment.* The coordination of multi-sectoral efforts to support the continued integration of older persons with their families and communities should be addressed by encouraging investment in local infrastructure, such as transportation, health, sanitation, information and communication technologies, community facilities and security, to foster active participation of the elderly in local communities and support multigenerational communities. The provision of affordable housing should be linked to social support services to ensure the integration of living arrangements, long-term care and opportunities for social interaction. Age-friendly communities and universal design that ensures that public buildings and outdoor spaces are free of barriers to mobility and access should be encouraged, and assistance should be provided to older persons in making their homes free of barriers to mobility and access. Technology and rehabilitation services should be promoted to support independent living. Governments should improve the availability of efficient public transportation services in rural and urban areas, and facilitate the growth of both public and private alternative forms of transport in urban areas, such as neighborhood-based transportation, businesses and services. Older drivers should be encouraged to undergo driver training and assessment, safer roadways should be designed, and cars should be designed to cater to the needs of older persons and persons with disabilities;

(ii) *Care for older persons and support for caregivers.* Steps should be taken to provide community-based care and support for family care. Governments should establish and apply standards and mechanisms to ensure quality care in formal and informal settings.

The provision of community-based care and support of family care should be advocated based on an equal distribution of caring responsibilities between women and men, and using measures which reconcile working and family life. Support to caregivers should be given through training, information, psychological, economic, social and legislative mechanisms, including opportunities for formal accreditation. Governments should identify ways to assist older persons, in particular older women, in providing care, and to address their specific social, economic and psychological needs. The caregiving skills of older persons should be recognized through an accreditation scheme towards securing employment;

(iii) *Neglect, abuse and violence.* Research into the causes, nature, extent, seriousness and consequences of all forms of elder abuse and violence against older persons should be conducted, and the results should be widely disseminated. Governments should sensitize and educate society, using media and other awareness campaigns, on the subject of elder abuse and violence. Governments should enact and enforce legislation by strengthening implementation mechanisms to eliminate abuse and violence against older persons. Harmful and discriminatory traditional practices involving older persons, specifically widows, including those that cover land ownership and inheritance rights, should be eliminated. Early detection, intervention and reconciliation services for victims of elder abuse and violence should be established. Governments should take measures to ensure reporting of elder abuse and violence as well as enhance cooperation with civil society in addressing elder abuse and violence;

(iv) *Images of ageing.* Awards that recognize and honour older persons for their contributions to society should be introduced. Better images and perceptions of older persons should be promoted, including through the voices of older persons themselves. Mass media should be encouraged to highlight the contributions and resourcefulness of older persons.

23. Meeting participants recognized that a number of initiatives at the national level could be taken to enhance the implementation of the Madrid Plan of Action, which would strengthen policy in support of older persons. These included setting up a nodal ministry with overall responsibility on ageing issues, establishing an overarching inter-disciplinary and consultative mechanism on ageing that would include relevant ministries/departments (such as health, women), ensuring coordination between all levels of government, and ensuring the participation of older persons, civil society organizations and the private sector in actions taken to implement the Madrid Plan of Action.

24. Meeting participants noted several actions to consider for enhancing regional cooperation in the implementation of the Madrid Plan of Action. Such actions include: raising awareness on the Madrid Plan of Action; sharing statistical data on ageing in the region; establishing a platform for the regular exchange and documentation of good practices and regional initiatives on ageing; sharing effective and affordable tools and models to promote healthy ageing that are appropriate to the region, including in the areas of health care, self-care, community care, long-term care and health promotion; developing a regional approach to address the deficit of a skilled elder care workforce, including greater opportunities for accreditation and certification based on qualification standards; and enhancing regional

advocacy for greater resource allocation to address the needs and well-being of older populations.

VII. Conclusion

25. ESCAP members and associate members have been called upon to accelerate the implementation of the Madrid Plan of Action in the light of significant gaps in the preparation for and adjustment to an ageing future for the Asia-Pacific region. Developing a regional consensus on a set of recommended actions would be an effective strategy to address commonly shared shortfalls in the implementation of the Madrid Plan of Action as countries can support each other through knowledge-sharing on data collection and best practices. The Meeting may thus wish to consider and identify key areas for regional cooperation on the basis of the recommendations on regional priorities agreed upon at the Preparatory Meeting for the Asia-Pacific Intergovernmental Meeting on the Second Regional Review and Appraisal of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing.
