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**Follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development and the
twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly: review
of relevant United Nations plans and programmes of action
pertaining to the situation of social groups**

Further implementation of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, 2002

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report has been prepared in response to Economic and Social Council resolution 2014/7, in which the Council called for the Secretary-General to seek the views of Member States and other relevant stakeholders on: (a) a possible theme or themes for the third review and appraisal of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, to be held in 2017; (b) how the review and appraisal process could better contribute to advancing the social integration and broad-based participation of older persons in development; (c) how the mainstreaming of issues related to ageing and older persons into the work of the functional commissions of the Economic and Social Council could be achieved, as well as options for future modalities for the third review and appraisal process.

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I. Introduction

1. The Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, 2002, adopted by the Second World Assembly on Ageing, states that systematic review of its implementation by Member States is essential for achieving improved quality of life of older persons and that the Commission for Social Development should be responsible for the follow-up and appraisal of its implementation.¹ In its resolution 42/1 on the modalities for the review and appraisal of the Madrid Plan of Action, the Commission for Social Development decided to undertake a review and appraisal of the Madrid Plan of Action every five years. Additionally, the regional commissions were requested to promote and facilitate the implementation, review, appraisal and dissemination of the Madrid Plan of Action at the regional level.

2. In its resolution 2014/7, the Economic and Social Council requested the Secretary-General to seek the views of Member States and other relevant stakeholders on: (a) a possible theme or themes for the third review and appraisal of the Madrid Plan of Action, to be held in 2017; (b) how the review and appraisal process could better contribute to advancing the social integration and broad-based participation of older persons in development; (c) how the mainstreaming of issues of ageing and older persons into the work of the functional commissions of the Council could be achieved; and (d) options for future modalities for the third review and appraisal process.

3. Section II of the present report includes an overview of the modalities for the first and second reviews and appraisals of the Madrid Plan of Action, conducted by the Commission for Social Development in 2007-2008 and 2012-2013.

4. Section III gives a summary of the views of Member States² and observers on a possible theme or themes and modalities of the third review and appraisal as expressed in replies to a note verbale as well as inputs from other relevant stakeholders, including civil society and focal points on ageing in regional commissions.

5. Section IV presents options for future modalities for the third review and appraisal process, taking into consideration ongoing discussions and developments at the intergovernmental level.

II. Overview of the modalities of the first and second reviews and appraisals

A. First review and appraisal

6. At its forty-first session, in February 2003, the Commission for Social Development agreed to adopt a bottom-up narrative approach for the review and appraisal of the Madrid Plan of Action. In its resolution 44/1, the Commission invited all major stakeholders, including civil society, to participate in the review

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, annex II, paras. 131 and 132.

² Member States and observers were consulted through a note verbale dated 25 August 2014. Regional commissions and civil society organizations comprising the Stakeholder Group on Ageing were also consulted.

and appraisal and to contribute to its various activities and events. Member States were invited to undertake an initial identification of actions taken since the Second World Assembly on Ageing in 2002 and to identify specific areas for in-depth participatory inquiries. At its forty-fourth session, in February 2006, the Commission adopted procedures and a calendar for the first review and appraisal cycle. Following a participatory review and appraisal at the national level, the approach called for a sharing of experiences among Governments at regional gatherings organized by the regional commissions. Member States were invited to include both ageing-specific policies and ageing-mainstreaming efforts in their reporting.

7. The regional findings contributed to the overall first review and appraisal exercises conducted by the Commission for Social Development at its forty-fifth and forty-sixth sessions, in 2007 and 2008, respectively. The format included a plenary debate and a series of panel discussions and events related to the theme “Addressing the challenges and opportunities of ageing”. The executive secretaries of the regional commissions presented the findings of their respective meetings. Member States also forwarded 65 reports on national implementation. They provided information on both the successes achieved and the obstacles encountered by Governments in implementing the Madrid Plan of Action and gave a panoramic overview of national policy priorities. The outcome of the review was set forth in Commission resolution 46/1.

8. The first review and appraisal of the Madrid Plan of Action produced more than 70 country reports, from countries in all regions; the reports emanated from regional review and appraisal activities. The first review and appraisal also produced a number of global reports that addressed major developments since the convening of the Second World Assembly on Ageing.³ However, in the wake of the first review and appraisal of the Madrid Plan of Action, certain shortcomings in the process became apparent.

9. Resource constraints and lack of capacity at two regional commissions and within a number of Member States made a comprehensive assessment of progress achieved since 2002 a challenging endeavour. In regions where demographic ageing was more advanced, there was greater interest in the review and appraisal process, as well as more resources available, among both member States and regional commissions, which led to broader and more multilayered information about the lives of older persons in those regions. Additionally, the review and appraisal process was facilitated by the availability of standard age-disaggregated quantitative and qualitative census and household survey data on the lives of older persons in those countries, supplemented in some cases, particularly in the region of the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE), by specific surveys on older persons. In contrast, the participation of the majority of Member States with a younger demographic profile in the review and appraisal process, which usually correlated with a greater array of development challenges, remained limited.

10. The bottom-up approach to the review and appraisal process calls for the participation of older persons and their organizations. However, the participatory, bottom-up approach was utilized as a major assessment tool in only a few countries in the ECE region and approximately half of the member States of the Economic

³ For a detailed analysis and the results of the first review and appraisal, see [E/CN.5/2008/2](#), [E/CN.5/2008/7](#) and Corr.1 and [A/63/95](#).

Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC). In addition, it was reported by the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) that nearly half of the countries surveyed reported carrying out analysis using participatory tools such as client satisfaction surveys and focus groups.

B. Second review and appraisal

11. In resolution 47/3, the Commission for Social Development requested the Secretary-General to seek the views of Member States regarding, inter alia, options for future modalities for the review and appraisal of the Madrid Plan of Action, in preparation for the second review and appraisal. Responses to a note verbale sent by the Secretariat indicated that Member States preferred to continue to use the same modalities for the second review and appraisal as for the first, but with more emphasis on an open method of coordination.⁴

12. In its resolution 2010/14, the Economic and Social Council decided that the second review and appraisal process would include preparatory activities at the national and regional levels, including those conducted by the regional commissions, ending in 2012. In addition, it was decided that the theme for the second review would be “Full implementation of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing: social situation, well-being and dignity, development and the full realization of all human rights for older persons”. National and regional findings contributed to the work of the fiftieth and fifty-first sessions of the Commission, in 2012 and 2013. At its fifty-first session, in February 2013, the Commission organized a high-level panel discussion on the report of the Secretary-General on the second review and appraisal of the Madrid Plan of Action, with Government representatives from each regional group reporting on the outcomes of their respective regional meetings and workshops.⁵

13. The second review and appraisal produced a larger number of national reports than the first review and appraisal; a particularly large number of national reports came from member States of ECE and ECLAC. ESCAP carried out a questionnaire-based review, in addition to receiving national reports. While resource and capacity constraints of regional commissions and their member States continued to be a challenge in two regions where demographic ageing was not so apparent, regional conferences, meetings or workshops were held in all regions.⁵

14. The wide variations in the type of appraisal methodology possible, owing to the availability of data and indicators and other types of surveys, made it challenging for a number of Member States to fully evaluate the status of older persons and the relevant policy outcomes. In terms of the involvement of civil society, similar to the first review and appraisal process, there were varying levels and types of participation in the ECLAC, ESCAP and ECE regions. In some national reports, there were general references to “consultations”; and in some national reports there were references to focus group and other consultation processes; and general public consultations on the implementation of policies and

⁴ *Guidelines for review and appraisal of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing* (available from www.un.org/ageing/research_papers.html) serves as a blueprint for this method of evaluation.

⁵ For a full discussion of the outcome of the second review and appraisal, see [E/CN.5/2012/5](#) and [E/CN.5/2013/6](#).

programmes outcomes provided input for other national reports. Several countries in the ECE region also mentioned consultations with experts from academia, the private sector or international organizations.

15. For the second review and appraisal, the overall theme of “Full implementation of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing: social situation, well-being and dignity, development and the full realization of all human rights for older persons” was chosen; however, neither regional nor national reporting was aligned to the theme.

III. Summary of viewpoints of Member States and other stakeholders

16. As requested by the Economic and Social Council in its resolution 2014/7, a note verbale dated 25 August 2014 was sent to Member States to seek their views on: (a) a possible theme or themes for the third review and appraisal of the Madrid Plan of Action, to be held in 2017; (b) how the review and appraisal process could better contribute to advancing the social integration and broad-based participation of older persons in development; (c) how the mainstreaming of issues of ageing and older persons into the work of the functional commissions of the Economic and Social Council could be achieved; and (d) options for future modalities for the third review and appraisal process.

17. In accordance with Council resolution 2014/7, regional commissions and civil society partners working in the field of ageing were also asked to contribute their views.

18. Responses were received from seven Member States: Azerbaijan, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Malta, Mexico, Romania and Qatar. Responses were also received from ECLAC and ESCAP. Several civil society organizations working in the field of ageing submitted a joint response.⁶

A. Possible themes

19. Azerbaijan suggested several themes for the third review and appraisal, including evidence-based policy and programmes to address the needs of older persons; social inclusion of older persons; availability and accessibility of age-disaggregated data; and development of infrastructure and introduction of modern technologies to empower the participation of older persons.

20. Costa Rica proposed the theme “Analysis of the benefits and shortcomings using the Madrid Plan of Action as a tool to the elaboration of a convention on the human rights of older persons”.

21. El Salvador suggested the theme “Protection of the human rights of older persons: moving from vulnerability to rights holders with guaranteed rights”.

⁶ The Stakeholder Group on Ageing — comprised of non-governmental organizations that are in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council and that are members of the New York NGO Committee on Ageing.

22. Malta suggested the theme “Active citizenship”, which would go beyond the traditional focus on labour market and welfare services and look towards civic engagement and the ability of older persons to contribute to development and new roles for older persons, such as volunteering. The Government noted that “ultimately it is not advanced chronological age in itself that leads to ageism, age discrimination and the abuse and poverty of the elderly, but the absence of citizenship rights”.

23. Mexico provided ideas for areas of focus: the oversight of gerontological institutions where medical and social assistance is provided; development and professionalization of the work of care providers; the importance of campaigns to publicize the human rights of older persons; the institution of programmes to prepare for retirement; public policies with programmes and activities for the comprehensive development of older persons; models of care based on the needs and preferences of older persons.

24. Romania suggested three possible themes: “Promoting and encouraging volunteerism”; “Promoting and strengthening intergenerational solidarity and the mentoring role older persons play for youth”; and “Regional, transnational and international cooperation to ensure the promotion and protection of the rights of older persons in order to reduce the poverty and social exclusion of older persons and improve their quality of life”.

25. Qatar suggested the theme “Protection of the human rights of older persons”.

26. ECLAC noted that the following three topics were among the issues related to the human rights of older persons that were of concern to member States in the region: incorporation of care into national social protection systems to promote the autonomy and protection of the dignity of older persons; universalization of the rights to social security and non-discrimination in access to pensions; and participation of older persons in decisions affecting them and their empowerment as human rights holders.

27. ESCAP suggested the theme “Promotion and protection of the rights of older persons, putting older persons at the centre of all development processes”.

28. The non-governmental organization Stakeholder Group on Ageing offered the following suggestions for possible themes: “Leaving no one behind in the post-2015 sustainable development agenda”; “Ending intergenerational poverty”; “Discrimination against older persons”; and “The role of older persons in contributing to their communities and society: social integration and participation”.

B. How the review and appraisal process could better contribute to advancing social integration and broad-based participation of older persons in development

29. The Government of Costa Rica noted that the review and appraisal process could be used as a tool to advance the participation of older persons as a process in their social inclusion and recognition of their human rights.

30. The Government of El Salvador noted that the review and appraisal process provided an open space for the participation of associations and foundations of older persons at the national, regional and international levels to allow them to give their

opinion on the three priority directions: older persons and development; advancing health and well-being into old age; and ensuring enabling and supportive environments.

31. The Government of Malta noted that above and beyond the bottom-up approach prescribed in the review and appraisal of the Madrid Plan of Action, the next step in the practice of dialogue-based policymaking is the active participation of citizens in the design of public policies, exchanging viewpoints and arguments before a policy is adopted in a truly participatory approach to policymaking.

32. The Government of Mexico elaborated upon how the process of review and appraisal allowed for the timely identification for those countries that had shown less progress in advancing the integration and participation of older persons in development. Proposals could then be developed to address the socioeconomic effects of the ageing process, which would be evaluated periodically with feedback on the creation, design and development of legislation, policies and programmes aimed at improving living conditions, supporting job growth and employment of the older population and ensuring their active participation and full social integration.

33. The Government of Romania noted that raising awareness of the role of older persons in society, their “value” as a resource and encouraging their social, economic and political participation through activities such as volunteering and mentoring could be highlighted through the review process.

34. The Government of Qatar emphasized the relevance of the review process in enhancing awareness about the importance of social integration of older persons and the identification of policy gaps to achieve that.

35. ECLAC noted that the third review and appraisal in the region would focus on the implementation of the San José Charter on the Rights of Older Persons in Latin America and the Caribbean, adopted at the Third Regional Intergovernmental Conference on Ageing in Latin America and the Caribbean, held in San José in May 2012. In this context, it would seem relevant to establish linkages between the regional and global review processes. Member States could be invited to establish indicators and timelines for the adoption of national measures to promote the implementation of regional agreements and the Madrid Plan of Action, taking into account institutional infrastructure, national capacity and financial resource mobilization.

36. ESCAP noted that the outcomes of the review and appraisal at the regional level were very specific, with actions recommended for both the United Nations system and Member States. Therefore, ESCAP recommended more specific global outcomes with stronger recommendations for action for the focal points on ageing, the regional commissions and United Nations funds and programmes in an effort to provide better support to Member States in the implementation of the Madrid Plan of Action. The report of the Secretary-General should contain clear recommendations for action that, if acceptable to Member States, could form the basis of a resolution or resolutions outlining priority actions to be undertaken by States, as well as mandates for the Secretariat as part of the review and appraisal process.

37. As acknowledged in previous reports of the Secretary-General, the majority of older persons continue to have little or no knowledge of the existence of the Madrid Plan of Action or its review and appraisal process. This was a main highlight from

the consultations with older persons conducted in 2011-2012 during the second review and appraisal exercise.⁷ Against this background, there clearly is an acknowledgement by Member States and all relevant stakeholders that the participation of older persons in decisions that affect them remains an important objective that needs to be operationalized, including within the framework of the third review and appraisal of the Madrid Plan of Action.

C. Mainstreaming of ageing into the work of the functional commissions of the Economic and Social Council

38. The Government of El Salvador suggested that the President of the Economic and Social Council could write to the Chairperson of each functional commission requesting the incorporation of issues related to older persons into the work of their respective commission. This is in the light of the recent reform of Council in which functional commissions have been requested to align their themes with that of the high-level segment of the Council. Similarly, the bureau of the Council could consider the theme of older persons in the integration segment.

39. The Government of Malta suggested that the Council consider mainstreaming an ageing focus or perspective into all major areas of development policy, such as planning, finance, employment, education and health, so as to promote the necessary incorporation of ageing and older persons' concerns into national development frameworks and poverty eradication policies.

40. The Government of Qatar emphasized the importance of the integration of ageing and older persons into the post-2015 development agenda and the need to request Member States to provide the necessary data to enable progress in achieving the relevant goals and targets to be monitored. The Government suggested that the Economic and Social Council consider holding a high-level meeting to discuss issues of older persons.

41. The Government of Mexico considered it necessary to incorporate a cross-cutting age perspective in all the work of the Economic and Social Council relating to the situation of older persons and the challenges faced by them. Consideration should be provided to the economic and social aspects of ageing to make sure that policies and programmes effectively set parameters for adequate social protection and to ensure the economic security of older persons.

42. ECLAC underscored the need for addressing the situation of older women within the framework of the Commission on the Status of Women, in particular in relation to three important issues: the generation of data on violence against older women; unpaid care services, including both services provided and received by older women, and; gender-specific challenges in accessing to and benefiting from social security. ECLAC noted that the promotion and protection of the rights of older persons should be included in the appraisal process of the Cairo Programme of Action⁸ through the Commission for Population and Development; ECLAC also noted that the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) should be invited by

⁷ *Ageing in the Twenty-First Century: A Celebration and a Challenge* (UNFPA and HelpAge International, 2012), chap. IV.

⁸ *Report of the International Conference on Population and Development, Cairo, 5-13 September, 1994* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.95.XIII.8), chap. I, resolution 1, annex.

Member States to strengthen the incorporation of ageing and the situation of older persons into its mandate.

43. ESCAP suggested that the issue of older women should feature more prominently in the deliberations and outcomes of the Commission on the Status of Women. It noted that ageing was a central pillar that should be addressed more prominently by the Commission on Population and Development and a key element of the social pillar of the high-level political forum on sustainable development. In practical terms, the Commission on the Status of Women could, under a sub-item of its agenda, consider a background paper on older women at least once every two years, while the Commission on Population and Development could consider a recurrent sub-item on trends in ageing. Similarly, issues related to ageing could be considered by the Economic and Social Council once every four years.

44. As highlighted in various reports of the Secretary-General, the mainstreaming of ageing and issues related to older persons, as called for in the Madrid Plan of Action, has, for the most part, not materialized in national policymaking, within the framework of intergovernmental debates and within the work of the United Nations system. The reform of the Economic and Social Council and the evolving post-2015 development agenda process offer key opportunities for mainstreaming and advancing the issue of older persons and population ageing, going beyond the commitments made by Member States in the Madrid Plan of Action.

45. In addition, Member States could recall the successful mainstreaming mechanisms used in the cases of persons with disabilities, youth and indigenous peoples and decide to take similar kinds of intergovernmental action to advance the case of older persons.

IV. Procedures and options for the third review

46. The feedback received by the Secretariat for the present report, as well as the experience of the first two five-year review and appraisal processes, clearly indicates that each region has its own priorities in relation to the modalities and the focus of its review and appraisal processes, which are often based on post-Madrid regional plans of action. In order to advance the social inclusion and participation of older persons and the original intent of the bottom-up approach for the review and appraisal process, focusing on the process of the review and appraisal, rather than agreeing on a particular theme, could be considered as an option for the third cycle. This inclusive approach would also be more effective in giving broader dissemination to the Madrid Plan of Action and subsequent regional plans of action among the general population and older persons.

47. In keeping with the mandated timeline for the third five-year review and appraisal, the proposed calendar could be as follows:

2015: The Commission, at its fifty-third session, decides on the theme and modalities

2016: National reviews and appraisals take place

2017: Regional review processes take place

2018: Global review by the Commission for Social Development at its fifty-sixth session

V. Recommendations

48. The Commission for Social Development may wish:

(a) To consider whether to adopt an overall theme for the third review and appraisal and, if so, what the theme should be;

(b) To endorse the aforementioned calendar for the third review and appraisal and request Member States and their respective regional commissions to begin a dialogue on the organization and implementation of the participatory review process;

(c) To emphasize to Member States and the regional commissions the importance of adopting an organized and uniform approach in relation to the participation of civil society in the planning and evaluation processes of the review and appraisal;

(d) To consider inviting organizations of older persons, at the national level, to further participate in the review process by submitting the views of their members in relation to the implementation of the Madrid Plan of Action and/or regional plans of action. Submissions could be made through their Governments to the Commission for Social Development and/or to the corresponding regional commission;

(e) To request the regional commissions to facilitate the review and appraisal process in their regions, provide assistance to Member States, upon request, in the organization of their national review and appraisal and organize regional review meetings;

(f) To invite Member States and the United Nations system, including the agencies, funds and programmes in the system, to take concrete measures to mainstream ageing issues, including the views of older persons, into their own programming and existing United Nations mandates.
