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Regional Intergovernmental Conference on Ageing:
Towards a Regional Strategy for the Implementation in Latin America
and the Caribbean of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing

Santiago, Chile, 19-21 November 2003

ANNOTATED PROVISIONAL AGENDA

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A. BACKGROUND

In the second half of the nineteenth century, the countries of the region began to undergo a demographic transition which was reflected in significant declines in fertility and mortality rates. One of the consequences of this process is an upward shift in the age structure of the population. Two aspects of this situation are a cause of urgent concern. First, the population is currently ageing at a more rapid rate than it did during the equivalent periods in the developed countries' histories and will continue to do so in the future. Second, this process is unfolding within a context of high poverty rates, persistent and striking social inequity, a low level of institutional development and limited social security coverage.

The status of older persons has figured prominently in resolutions adopted by the United Nations General Assembly since 1973. Participants in the First World Assembly on Ageing, held in Vienna in 1982, approved the International Plan of Action, which guided the course of thinking and action on ageing for more than a decade. The main emphasis of this plan was on the situation in the developed countries and recommended the adoption of a series of measures on employment and economic security, health, housing, education and social well-being.

In 1991, the General Assembly adopted resolution 46/91, entitled "United Nations Principles for Older Persons". The principles set forth in this resolution, which focus on independence, participation, care, self-fulfilment and dignity, have served as a framework for United Nations activities relating to ageing since 1991, and especially during the International Year of Older Persons, observed in 1999.

Subsequently, in June 2000, the General Assembly adopted resolution 54/262, in which it decided to convene the Second World Assembly on Ageing in 2002. At this forum, particular importance was attached to the ageing of the population in developing countries. In this regard, attention focused on the main objective of providing support for Governments and societies in the design of policies to facilitate the mainstreaming of older persons in the development process and in all the areas of social affairs. Guided by this objective, the participating countries signed a political declaration and adopted the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, which frames the definition of policies and actions aimed at benefiting older persons over the next several decades.

The Plan constitutes a planning instrument to help policy makers respond to demographic changes. In the political declaration, the Governments made a commitment to adopt the International Plan of Action and emphasized the importance of the United Nations system, especially the regional commissions, in providing support to Governments in the application, follow-up and monitoring of the Plan.

B. PROVISIONAL AGENDA

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2. Adoption of the agenda
3. Status of older persons in Latin America and the Caribbean and a proposed follow-up methodology

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7. Enabling environments for older persons
8. The status of older persons as viewed from the perspective of government networks and civil society organizations
9. International cooperation for the implementation of the Regional Strategy
10. Presentation of the Regional Strategy
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C. ANNOTATIONS TO THE PROVISIONAL AGENDA

1. Election of officers

At the first plenary session of the Conference, officers will be selected to preside over the proceedings.

2. Adoption of the agenda

The delegates will have before them the provisional agenda of the Conference (LC/L.1993) for their consideration and approval, along with any changes that they may consider necessary.

3. Status of older persons in Latin America and the Caribbean and a proposed follow-up methodology

Under this agenda item, a detailed analysis will be presented of the status of older persons in Latin America and the Caribbean. This analysis will be designed to serve as a basis for subsequent debate. The elements of this analysis are contained in a document "Older persons in Latin America and the Caribbean: situation and policies. Summary" (LC/L.1973) prepared for the Conference by the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), with support from the organizations belonging to the Inter-Agency Group on Ageing: the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the International Labour Organization (ILO), the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), the World Bank, and the United Nations Programme on Ageing.

- **Reference Document**

Las personas mayores en América Latina y el Caribe: diagnóstico sobre la situación y las políticas (DDR/I).

4. Country statements

The countries' delegations shall be invited to give presentations on the most significant activities undertaken in this field and the progress achieved in providing services to older persons, especially within the framework of the International Plan of Action adopted at the Second World Assembly on Ageing. The discussion on this topic will provide an opportunity to share experiences, especially with regard to problems and solutions.

5. Older persons and development

In the Madrid International Plan of Action, three high-priority areas are identified which serve as a framework for all the policy recommendations made with a view to improving the quality of life of older persons: (i) older persons and development; (ii) advancing health and well-being into old age; and (iii) ensuring enabling and supportive environments.

Following a general presentation on the topic, to be given by one of the institutions belonging to the Inter-Agency Group, the delegates will engage in an analysis of economic security and social safety nets as key factors for older persons; in our region, both these areas should be explored in depth in order to find economically viable options that are in keeping with actual conditions in each country. The participants will also analyse the active involvement of older persons in society and in development, together with their rights in this respect, with the latter being understood in the broadest sense, which includes economic, social and cultural rights.

6. Health and well-being of older persons

Although extraordinary progress has indeed been made in Latin America and the Caribbean in reducing mortality rates for all age groups, thereby increasing life expectancy and improving the health of the population, striking social and age-based inequities persist in terms of health conditions and access to satisfactory health care services for older persons.

The delegation of the Pan American Health Organization will give a general presentation on the topic in order to provide a picture of the situation in the region; the participants will then analyse the health conditions of older persons, which are understood to be the outcome of the care they have received throughout their lives, and access to health services, including the long-term care required by older disabled persons.

7. Enabling environments for older persons

The promotion of an enabling environment for the social development of older persons is one of the topics considered in the International Plan of Action. The achievement of certain essential objectives, including the development of participatory political systems, the elimination of violence and discrimination, and the promotion of material conditions that facilitate community life, are essential in order to strengthen the participatory role of older persons. It is essential to consider social environments in the region (abuse of older persons, the image of ageing and participation) and physical environments (housing and urban land use) as areas of intervention in which significant changes are called for.

A general presentation will be made on this topic by a representative of one of the member organizations of the Inter-Agency Group.

8. The status of older persons as viewed from the perspective of government networks and civil society organizations

Presentations will be made on the status of older persons as viewed from the perspective of government networks and civil society organizations that have service programmes for older adults.

9. International cooperation for the implementation of the Regional Strategy

Representatives of international (both bilateral and multilateral) cooperation organizations will analyse the role that international cooperation does and should play in implementing the Regional Strategy.

10. Presentation of the Regional Strategy

The President shall submit for the consideration of the delegations a preliminary proposal for a regional strategy for implementation of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing for review and approval.

11. Adoption of the Regional Strategy

At the end of the Conference the Regional Strategy will be adopted by common agreement among the national delegations.



