

MADRID INTERNATIONAL PLAN OF ACTION ON AGEING

is a 16,000- word document calling for changes in attitudes, policies and practices at all levels in all sectors, so that the 'enormous potential' of ageing in the twenty-first century may be fulfilled

The Madrid Plan lists 33 objectives and 117 concrete recommendations, grouped into three priorities:

1. Older persons and development
2. Advancing health and wellbeing into old age
3. Enabling and supportive environments.

Together, the priorities cover 18 areas of concern to older people.

The Plan concludes with a section on implementation and follow-up. An accompanying Political Declaration summarises the key issues and commitments by governments, which are detailed in the Plan.

The Plan is intended to be used as a practical tool to assist policy makers to focus on the key priorities associated with individual and population ageing.

A society for all ages

The Plan sets out a vision and values for a society for all ages. It calls for changes in attitudes, policies and practices, so that the enormous potential of ageing may be fulfilled.

It stresses older people's right to development, calls for an end to age discrimination, and emphasises the need to mainstream ageing into global development agendas.

The stated aim of the Plan is to ensure that people everywhere can age with security and dignity, and continue to participate in their societies as citizens with full rights.

The Plan calls for governments to place the specific contri-

Priority 1: Older persons and development

- Active participation in society and development
- Work and the ageing labour force
- Rural development, migration and urbanisation
- Access to knowledge, education and training
- Intergenerational solidarity
- Eradication of poverty
- Income security, social protection / social security and poverty prevention
- Emergency situations

Priority 2: Advancing health and well being into old age

- Health promotion and wellbeing throughout life
- Universal access to healthcare services
- Older persons and HIV/AIDS
- Training of care providers and health professionals
- Mental health needs of older people
- Older people and disabilities

Priority 3: Enabling and supportive environments

- Housing and the living environment
- Care, and support for caregivers
- Neglect, abuse and violence
- Images of ageing

Implementation and follow up

- National action
- International action
- Research
- Global monitoring, review and updating

butions and concerns of older people in the context of the major United Nations conferences and summits, special sessions of the General Assembly and review follow-up processes. Implementing the agreements reached at these events would enable older people to contribute fully and benefit equally from development. The Plan describes as essential the promotion and protection of all human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the right to development; combating discrimination based on age, and promoting the dignity of older people; mainstreaming ageing into global agendas; and recognising the ability of older people to contribute to society. The Plan urges governments to embrace the potential of the ageing population as a basis for future development.

PRIORITY 1

OLDER PEOPLE AND DEVELOPMENT

The Plan states that older people must be full participants in the development process, and also share in its benefits.

It calls for recognition of the social and economic contribution of older people, including those made through unpaid work, particularly women.

It says that older people should be enabled to continue with income generating work for as long as they want to and can do so. It refers to commitments made at the 1995 World Summit for Social Development on promoting the goal of full employment.

It recommends promoting self-employment initiatives for older people, ensuring access to credit for older people, and eliminating age barriers in the formal labour market.

The Plan calls for policies for food security and agricultural production to take into account the implications of rural ageing, recommends equitable access to basic and continuing education for all adults, and promotes solidarity between generations.

The Plan highlights the eradication of older people's poverty as a fundamental aim. It commits governments to in-

cluding older people in policies and programmes to reach the Millennium Development Goal of halving numbers of people living in extreme poverty by 2015.

The Plan calls for the promotion of programmes to enable all workers to acquire basic social protection, including, where applicable, pensions, disability insurance and health benefits.

The Plan recognises both the vulnerability and potential of older people in emergency situations.

It calls for governments and humanitarian relief agencies to recognise that older people can make a positive contribution. It also calls for equal access by older people to food, shelter and medical care and other services during and after emergencies.

PRIORITY 2

ADVANCING HEALTH AND WELLBEING INTO OLD AGE

The Plan mentions the responsibility of individuals to maintain a healthy lifestyle, and of governments to create a 'supportive environment' that enables people to maintain their health and wellbeing into old age.

For both humanitarian and economic reasons, older people should have the same access to preventive and curative care and rehabilitation as other groups.

The Plan promotes a 'life course' approach to wellbeing in old age. It describes health promotion activities and access to health services throughout life as the cornerstone of healthy ageing.

Linking health to broader issues affecting people's lives, the Plan calls for improvements in the economic and social situation of older people to improve their health as well.

The Plan calls for a reduction of the cumulative effects of factors that increase the risk of disease and, consequently, dependence in older age.

Policies should be developed to prevent ill-health among

older people, and all older people should have access to food and adequate nutrition.

The Plan points out that investing in health care and rehabilitation for older people extends their healthy and active years.

It calls for universal and equal access to healthcare, strengthening primary health care services to meet older people's needs, developing a 'continuum' of health care services which includes palliative care, and involving older people in the development of health care services.

The Plan recognises the impact of HIV/AIDS on older people and recommends ways to alleviate it. These include researching HIV/AIDS infection in older people, researching health needs of older carers, providing information, training, medical care and social support to older people living with HIV/AIDS and their carers, reviewing the economic impact of HIV/AIDS on older carers, and developing policies to support older carers.

The Plan calls for an urgent expansion in age-care training for health and social workers working with older people.

Anticipating a significant increase in the number of older people with mental illness, due to population ageing, the Plan emphasises the need to develop a full range of mental health care services.

The Plan calls for the full participation of older people with disabilities. It commits governments to ensuring that issues concerning older people with disabilities are included in the agendas of national policy and programme coordination agencies dealing with disability, and encouraging the development of self-help organisations of older people with disabilities.

PRIORITY 3

ENABLING AND SUPPORTIVE ENVIRONMENTS

The Plan calls for the promotion of 'ageing in place' in the community, taking into account older people's preferences and what is affordable.

Governments should promote provision of community-based care and support of family care, and support carers through training, information, psychological, economic, social and legislative mechanisms.

It points out that provision of care to those who need it, whether by or for older people, is mostly done by the family or community, especially in developing countries.

It calls for assistance for older carers, and improved health and social services for older people needing care.

The Plan calls for provision of a 'continuum' of care and services for older people from various sources and support for carers, and support for the care-giving role of older people, particularly older women.

All forms of neglect, abuse and violence of older people should be eliminated.

The Plan recommends raising awareness among professionals and the general public, abolishing harmful traditional practices involving older people, enforcing laws against elder abuse, encouraging cooperation between government and civil society in addressing elder abuse, minimizing risks to older women, especially in emergency situations, and encouraging research into elder abuse.

The Plan calls for greater public recognition of the authority, wisdom, productiveness and other contributions of older people.

IMPLEMENTATION AND FOLLOW-UP

The Plan notes that a vital first step towards implementation would be to mainstream ageing and the concerns of older people into national development frameworks and poverty-eradication strategies.

It stresses that NGOs are vital in supporting governments' efforts to implement, assess and review the Plan.

Research and technology should be directed at the individual, social and health implications of ageing, particularly in developing countries.

It points out that, at the global level, better coherence,

governance and consistency is urgently needed in the international monetary, financial and trading systems.

The Plan notes that a substantial increase in overseas development aid is required if developing countries are to achieve the Millennium Development Goals.

'Developed' countries are urged to make concrete efforts towards the target of 0.7 per cent of gross national product as aid to developing countries, including 0.15 per cent to 'least Developed' countries.

It calls for urgent action to address the debt problems of developing countries. International financial institutions and regional development banks are invited to examine and adjust their lending and grants practices, to ensure that older people are recognised as a development resource, and taken into account in their efforts to assist developing countries and countries with economies in transition to implement the Plan.

Similarly, commitment by United Nations funds and programmes is important to ensure integration of ageing in their programmes and projects.

Support by the international community and international development agencies for organisations that specifically promote training and capacity-building on ageing in developing countries is extremely important, says the Plan.

Responsibility for facilitating and promoting the Plan is allocated to the United Nations Programme on Ageing (part of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs). Responsibility for translating the Plan into regional action plans rests with the United Nations regional commissions, and national governments are responsible for ensuring that the Plan takes effect.

KEY AGREEMENTS AND POLICIES

Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948): Commits governments to ensuring a series of rights and freedoms without distinction of any kind.

Vienna International Plan of Action on Ageing (1982): Committed governments, but omitted many areas of concern to older people in developing countries. Replaced by the Madrid Plan.

United Nations Principles for Older People (1991) : Sets out older people's rights to independence, participation, care, self-fulfillment and dignity, but does not commit governments.

Millennium Declaration (2000): Commits governments to achieving a set of eight Millennium Development Goals, which include halving the number of people living in extreme poverty by 2015.

Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing (2002): Commits governments to achieving a set of 33 objectives which cover areas of concern to older people in developing countries as well as richer countries, and are linked to existing international agreements including the Millennium Development Goals.

Africa Policy Framework and Plan of Action on Ageing: Adopted by member states of the African Union, covering issues of concern to older people in Africa.

National policies Some governments have or are developing national policies which recognise ageing as a development issue, in line with the Madrid Plan. Mauritius has a policy and a policy for Tanzania is well advanced. A policy update is included in State of the world's older people 2002