



Shared Prosperity Dignified Life



Parliamentarians Dialogue

on the 4th review of Madrid Action Plan on Ageing

19 May 2022

Concept note

I- Background

In the absence of a binding legal instrument governing the rights of older persons, the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing (MIPAA) remains the most comprehensive and most specialized international framework on older persons' issues. The plan of action and its declaration were adopted by the Second World Assembly on Ageing in April 2002 in the presence of 162 countries, of which 19 Arab countries¹. The adoption of the action of plan represented a recognition by the international community of the challenges facing older persons in a rapidly ageing world and an attempt to seize opportunities associated with the ageing phenomenon. It constituted a turning point in addressing older persons' issues, through adopting a rights-based approach that regarded older persons as active contributors to development with worth utilizing expertise and abilities rather than mere recipients and beneficiaries of social and welfare services.

The plan of action which aims to build a society for all ages where "people everywhere are able to age with security and dignity" consists of 18 issues, 35 objectives, and 239 recommended actions that revolve around 3 main priority directions, namely: (a) older persons and development, including issues of: active participation in society, employment, income security, social protection, access to education and training, migration, intergenerational solidarity, and emergencies; (b) Advancing health and well-being into old age, including issues of health promotion, universal and equal access to health care services, training of health care professionals, mental health, and disabilities; (c) Ensuring enabling and supportive environments, including issues of housing and the living environment, ageing in place, support for caregivers, protection from abuse and violence, and positive images of ageing.

Achieving the objectives of MIPAA requires coordinated efforts from all relevant stakeholders including parliamentarians. Members of Parliament have a crucial role to play in advancing the rights of older persons and voicing their needs and priorities. They are entrusted with enacting laws that serve to protect and empower older persons, as well as discussing and approving national budgets that must allocate appropriate resources to address older persons' needs. They are also tasked with ensuring that governments develop strategies and programmes targeting the most vulnerable including older persons

¹ Arab countries present at the Second World Assembly on ageing were: Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, , Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Tunisia, the Sudan, United Arab Emirates, and Yemen

and implement them efficiently. Hence, the participation of parliamentarians in the MIPAA review process is of utmost importance at the national, regional, and global levels.

MIPAA's implementation is appraised every five years through an inclusive and comprehensive process, aimed at monitoring progress, surveying the status of older persons, and identifying emerging priorities. The regional commissions of the United Nations System are mandated to facilitate the regional reviews. In line with the modalities of the fourth review and appraisal of MIPAA (Res 2020/8²) issued by the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), ESCWA launched the regional review process in the Arab region.

The fourth MIPAA review and appraisal comes at a critical time for the Arab region. While still being described as youthful populations, most Arab countries have embarked in a rapid demographic change characterized by a steady increase in the number and percentages of older persons. In fact, the number of older persons (65+) in the Arab region has reached 21 million in 2020, and the percentage of older persons in the Arab region is expected to more than double in the next 30 years increasing from around 5% in 2020 to 11% in 2050. In addition, many Arab countries have already started their ageing transition (period during which the percentage of older persons increases from 7 to 14%) and it is projected that by 2035 most Arab countries will have either started or completed their ageing transition. This phenomenon poses an additional challenge for Arab countries to respond to the needs and priorities of their older persons and to protect them from marginalization and exclusion, while also struggling to address the needs of their younger populations.

These demographic shifts are coinciding with significant socio-economic and political challenges that countries across the region are facing today. These challenges were further exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, which put substantial pressure on both the societies as well as the families to fully and effectively cater for the needs of their older persons. The pandemic also accentuated the inequalities among older persons. The challenges facing ageing and older persons in the region have been highlighted in different regional reviews of global frameworks, including the ICPD regional review, as well as the review of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Despite some promising policy developments witnessed across Arab countries, including the adoption of the regional Arab Strategy for Older Persons 2019-2029, as well as the development of older persons' policies in a number of Arab countries, older persons continue to be a growing vulnerable group that is facing an increasing risk of being left behind. Large groups of older persons are excluded from social protection platforms, heightening their risk of disease and poverty. Changing social norms as a result of migration, urbanization, and modernization are impacting inter-generational support. Policy making relating to older persons remains fragmented in most Arab countries and does not respond to the needs of older persons today nor prepare for the quickly increasing numbers and proportions of older persons in the near future. The COVID-19 pandemic has further threatened the wellbeing of older persons,

² Resolution 2020/8 adopted by the Economic and Social Council on 18 June 2020 (E/2020/26): Modalities for the fourth review and appraisal of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, 2002
<https://undocs.org/en/E/RES/2020/8>

especially those in vulnerable situations, and highlighted the urgency of the need for coherent policies that address older person's needs, priorities, and specificities.

II- **Parliamentary dialogue on the fourth review and appraisal of Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing**

Objective of the dialogue

The dialogue aims at bringing together parliamentarians from the Arab region to:

- a. Provide participants with an overview of the MIPAA components and its review process and the progress achieved in the national reporting process.
- b. Facilitate the exchange of knowledge and expertise on the involvement and contributions of parliamentarians in different countries with older persons' issues
- c. Discuss challenges faced and ways to optimize engagement of parliamentarians in older persons' issues to accelerate the achievement of MIPAA objectives.

Participants

The dialogue will include parliamentarians from Arab countries who are involved with social and population issues or who are members of specialized parliamentary committees dealing with older persons' issues.

Date and venue

The dialogue will be held virtually on Monday 19 May 2022. The meeting can be accessed via the following link:

Expected outcomes

- Increased awareness among parliamentarians on MIPAA components and the review process
- Increased knowledge and expertise on involvement of parliamentarians in the MIPAA review process and in advancing the rights of older persons
- Challenges faced by parliamentarians working on older persons' issues and proposed solutions to optimize engagement of parliamentarians in the implementation of MIPAA are addressed.

Organization of work

The dialogue will take place from 10:00 am to 13:00 pm Beirut time as per the below proposed organization of work

9:45-10:00	Registration
10:00-10:10	Welcoming remarks ESCWA, UNFPA

10:10-10:30	<p>Scene Setting</p> <p>This session will set the scene for the discussion by introducing the MIPAA, its review process and the activities undertaken by ESCWA in this respect</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - MIPAA (7 min) - The review process at national level/the guiding template developed by ESCWA (global and regional level steps forward) (7 min) - Q&A (6 min) <p><i>Moderator: TBD</i></p>
10:30-11:30	<p>Open discussion: The role of parliamentarians in advancing the rights and issues of older persons in the Arab region: Achievements and work in progress</p> <p>This session will offer a platform for open discussion and peer learning and dialogue among Arab parliamentarians on their experiences in addressing older persons' issues</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How has your parliament addressed older persons concerns (eg. ageing related laws, discussions of budget, mainstreaming ageing in national development plans, etc.). - Special role of parliamentarians in times of crises (COVID, economic crisis, conflicts, etc..) <p><i>Moderator: TBD</i></p>
11:30-11:40	Break
11:40- 12:40	<p>Open discussion: The role of parliamentarians in advancing the rights and issues of older persons in the Arab region: Challenges and recommendations for the way forward</p> <p>This session will provide a platform to discuss various challenges faced by parliamentarians working on older persons' issues and propose solutions to ensure that Arab parliamentarians are undertaking their functions while being fully sensitive to older persons needs and issues, as a means to being engaged in MIPAA implementation. The session will also seek to come out with concrete recommendations for strengthening the role of parliaments in this field. The recommendations will serve as input to the MIPAA regional review conference.</p> <p><i>Moderator: TBD</i></p>
12:40-13:00	Closing remarks and the way forward

Outcome

The dialogue will result in a statement/ key messages that will serve as input to the MIPAA regional review conference organized in June 2022.

Background material

- a. Third Review of the Madrid International Plan of Action on ageing
<https://www.unescwa.org/events/third-review-ageing-arab-countries>

- b. Political Declaration and Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing 2002.
<http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/documents/ageing/MIPAA/political-declaration-en.pdf>
- c. ECOSOC resolution 8/2020 on Modalities for the Fourth Review and appraisal of MIPAA 2002. <https://undocs.org/ar/E/RES/2020/8>
- d. Progress in the implementation of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Aging in the Arab States E/ESCWA/SDD/2019/INF.8
<http://www.unescwa.org/sites/default/files/pubs/pdf/advancing-implementation-madrid-international-ageing-arab-countries-english.pdf>
- e. Aging in ESCWA Member States: Third Review of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing E/ESCWA/SDD/2017/TECHNICAL PAPER.12.
https://archive.unescwa.org/sites/www.unescwa.org/files/publications/files/ageing-escwa-member-states-english_3.pdf
- f. Documents and presentations presented at the first and second capacity-building workshop on the "Fourth Review and Appraisal of Madrid International Action Plan on Ageing", April and September 2021
- g. Ageing in the Arab region: statistical trends and policy perspectives:
<https://arabstates.unfpa.org/en/publications/ageing-arab-region-statistical-trends-and-policy-perspectives>
- h. The rights of older persons: a review of national strategies in the Arab region
<https://arabstates.unfpa.org/en/publications/rights-older-persons>
- i. Arab Regional Conference on Population and Development: Reviewing the Implementation of the 2013 Cairo Declaration, Regional Report 2018.
<https://archive.unescwa.org/sites/www.unescwa.org/files/events/files/arab-regional-conference-population-development-final-report-en.pdf>