



Shared Prosperity Dignified Life



## Key messages and recommendations of the Arab Parliamentarians Dialogue 19 May 2022

Achieving the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing (MIPAA) objectives in the Arab region requires coordinating efforts among all stakeholders, including members of parliaments who play a key role in advancing older persons' rights, and expressing their needs and priorities. Parliamentarians are responsible for enacting laws and legislation that enshrine the protection and empowerment of older persons, and for discussing and approving national budgets in which adequate resources should be allocated to meet older persons' needs. They are also tasked with ensuring that governments develop and effectively implement strategies and programmes targeting the most vulnerable groups, including older persons. In preparation for the fourth MIPAA review and based on the participatory approach adopted in the preparation process, ESCWA organized, in partnership with UNFPA, a meeting that gathered several parliamentarians from various Arab States.

This meeting was of great importance at the national, regional and global levels as it provided an overview of the MIPAA and its review process in the Arab region, and explored the progress made in the preparation of national review reports. Parliamentarians shared knowledge and experiences about their role and contributions to addressing older persons' issues. They also addressed challenges they face and ways to enhance their contribution to the advancement of older persons' issues for the implementation of the MIPAA objectives.

The meeting concluded with several key messages and recommendations, as follows:

1. Ensure that constitutions and laws enshrine older persons' rights and review existing laws to achieve this goal.
2. Mainstream ageing into the legislative, representative and oversight mechanisms of parliaments and into the work of parliamentary committees.
3. Strengthen the knowledge and capacity of parliamentarians and committees' staff to respond to older persons' issues in the legislative and oversight process.
4. Urge parliaments to enact laws on older persons in a manner that enshrines all their rights, including, among others, social protection, health, financial security, food, transportation and protection from violence, and to enact laws that support older persons' families and promote intergenerational support.
5. Strengthen the oversight role of parliaments in holding governments accountable for their programmes related to older persons and hold accountability sessions on older persons' issues.
6. Encourage the development of programme-based rather than item-based budgets to enhance the ability of parliamentarians to discuss, adjust and control budgets; and include older persons' issues in analysis and in budget reports to ensure law enforcement through concrete programmes and initiatives.
7. Highlight older persons' issues in final accounts that are as important as budgets to strengthen the oversight role of parliaments.
8. Promote the role of parliaments in protecting older persons, especially in times of crisis, war and recovery.

9. Strengthen networking between parliaments and various stakeholders, such as civil society, the private sector and experts, to support the work mechanisms of parliaments (hearing sessions and committees' work) and enhance the role of parliamentarians in responding to older persons' issues; and intensify communication with older persons, their families and advocacy groups to support older persons, prioritize their needs and engage them in policymaking.
10. Integrate older persons' issues into the periodic review of the Sustainable Development Agenda and voluntary national reports in this area.
11. Share experiences, promote parliamentary dialogue between Arab States, and consider the establishment of an Arab parliamentary working group to advocate for older persons' issues in the region.