

United Nations Programme on Ageing

**Department of Economic and Social Affairs
Division for Social Policy and Development
Social Integration Branch
Generational Issues and Integration Section**

**Interregional Consultation on the Review and Appraisal of the Madrid
International Plan of Action on Ageing**

26-28 September 2005, Geneva

Report

New York 2005

Introduction

The Interregional Consultation on the Review and Appraisal of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing (MIPAA) was held at the Palais de Nations of the United Nations Office in Geneva (UNOG) from 26 to 28 September 2005. The meeting was organized by the UN Programme on Ageing of the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) and hosted by the Economic Analysis Division of the UN Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE).

Objectives

The overall objective of the consultation was to contribute to the elaboration of regional modalities of the review and appraisal of MIPAA. Specific objectives of the consultation:

1. Define the content and format of the regional process of the review and appraisal of MIPAA.
2. Review regional experience and identify good practices of technical cooperation activities aimed at assisting member states in undertaking the bottom-up review and appraisal of MIPAA.
3. Elaborate recommendations on how to undertake analysis of national data collected within bottom-up approach and their consolidation (“distillation”) at the regional level.
4. Identify arrangements for cooperation between major regional actors: governments, inter-governmental organizations, NGOs, and academia.

Participants and Agenda

The consultation was attended by seven representatives of the five Regional Commissions of the United Nations, five individual experts and six observers. (See Annex I for List of Participants.) The agenda of the meeting included the following items:

1. Relationships between MIPAA, Regional Implementation Strategies (RIS) and national action plans.
2. Role of Regional Commissions in assisting national implementation and review and appraisal.
3. Modalities of regional review and appraisal. Gathering of information using participatory methods.
4. Modalities of regional review and appraisal. Distillation of information gathered with participatory methods.
5. Role of major regional stakeholders in conducting review and appraisal.
6. Format and logistics of the regional review and appraisal.
7. Regional support for conducting national review and appraisal of MIPAA.

8. Linking regional and global reviews and appraisals – the regional process.

Opening of Consultation

Mr. Abdur Chowdhury, Director, Economic Analysis Division, speaking on behalf of the UNECE, welcomed the participants. He noted that ECE's guiding document concerning ageing and older persons is the Berlin Regional Implementation Strategy (RIS) for MIPAA. In the process of implementation, review and appraisal of the RIS, ECE cooperates with the European Centre for Social Welfare Policy and Research (Vienna, Austria) with the financial support of the Government of Austria.

Mr. Bob Huber, Chief of the Generational Issues and Integration Section of the Social Integration Branch of the Division for Social Policy and Development addressed the participants on behalf of the UNDESA Secretariat. He outlined the agenda and expectations of the consultation. His intervention was followed by the introduction of participants.

Summary of Discussion

Agenda item 1. Relationships between MIPAA, Regional Implementation Strategies and national action plans. The representatives of the UN Regional Commissions as well as regional experts highlighted the most important actions toward implementation of their respective RIS and MIPAA. Almost universally, the main focus of the implementation process was the development and or strengthening national infrastructure on ageing, such as establishment of national and local level committees and drafting national implementation strategies/plans. In Africa, however, attempts were made to incorporate the needs and expectations of older persons into national poverty eradication strategies.

Participants agreed that MIPAA needs more publicity and advocacy efforts (JMG), and that there is often a disjunction between focal government ministries and other ministries including those responsible for sectoral activities not directly related to ageing and older persons. Thus, effective MIPAA implementation needs greater mainstreaming and advocacy efforts. In addition, the initiatives of civil society should be reflected in government reports and shared between all national players.

Agenda item 2. Role of Regional Commissions in assisting national implementation and review and appraisal. Under this agenda item the participants reviewed technical cooperation activities in their respective regions related to the implementation of MIPAA. The staff of Regional Commissions informed about the requests of interested member states to provide them with technical cooperation activities on national capacity building on ageing. Capacity building services were requested in such areas as awareness raising, data gathering, indicators development, health and social security and designing and implementation of national action. It was noted that lack of

resources significantly limits the scope of technical cooperation activities on ageing in all regions.

Agenda item 3. Modalities of regional review and appraisal. Gathering of information using participatory methods. Participants presented several examples of participatory practices in the implementation, review and appraisal of MIPAA, noting that most of these practices drew from experiences in other areas of social policy, particularly urban and rural poverty, gender and the health sector. They also emphasized that no systematic participatory approaches to data gathering and policy evaluation on ageing are universally available in their regions.

A participatory approach is a process in which stakeholders, including older persons, are empowered in order to ensure their full participation in the design, implementation and evaluation efforts of national and local policies and programmes. It was also pointed out that participatory data gathering needs significant allocation of time and efforts aimed at its facilitation. Meanwhile, in many developing countries NGOs and academia are already engaged in various forms of participatory research. The participatory data gathering exercise should assist in measuring achievements against self-set goals and the objectives of a respective RIS. Participants noted that any participatory assessment could include three principal inquiries: (a) What has the Government done since the Second World Assembly on Ageing in Madrid? (b) What impact did the policy (policies) have? (c) How do we know? In other words, does sufficient and reliable information exist to confirm the impact? The process of the participatory bottom-up review and appraisal of MIPAA is as important as its outcome and comparability at the regional level would make more sense than on the global level.

Agenda item 4. Modalities of regional review and appraisal. Distillation of information gathered with participatory methods. Innovative institutional mechanisms might be required to support the process of distillation of data gathered through the participatory approach. Such mechanisms are already available in regard to HIV/AIDS and gender issues. Their careful application for the review and appraisal of MIPAA could be useful.

The UNDESA draft “Framework for monitoring, review and appraisal of MIPAA” while elaborating on the methods of the distillation process, should take into account the different cultural environments of member states. Moreover, the development of country-specific guidelines that could outline the distillation process would be helpful.

Agenda item 5. Role of major regional stakeholders in conducting review and appraisal. Major stakeholders in the implementation and evaluation of MIPAA include older persons and their families, older persons’ organizations, local NGOs, local government, national government focal points and line ministries, research institutes, the private sector, international NGOs, the media and the United Nations system. National statistics offices would be immediate partners that could provide valuable base data for various stakeholders. In addition, major stakeholders could include regional inter-governmental and non-governmental bodies and organizations, including UN Regional

Commissions, Regional Development Banks, regional offices of the UN system organizations (UNFPA, UNICEF, UNDP, FAO, ILO, WHO) and training institutions.

It would be essential for governments to facilitate the participatory bottom-up approach in a comprehensive and inclusive manner. At the preparatory stage of the review and appraisal exercise it would be useful to identify (“to map”) various potential stakeholders and assess their capacities in order to get a multidimensional sketch of actors and their ability to contribute to the review and appraisal process.

Local people together with professional staff should be involved in designing the evaluation, collecting the data and analyzing it in such a way as to provide relevant policy guidance. Older persons are the primary subject of concern and hence, their participation in face-to-face interviews and other forms of participatory inquiries is essential for gathering information. The important role that the media and academic institutions could play in providing a neutral or un-biased perspective to the appraisal process was pointed out.

One regional commission suggested that a regional consultative body on ageing could be formed, subject to availability of resources. Such a body would decide on the priority issues in the region for the review and appraisal, and discuss and endorse the results of the review and appraisal. In addition, it will be responsible for mobilizing resources and convening the necessary meetings; drafting and sending out necessary guidelines to focal institutions at country level; and using the results of the survey to write a consolidated regional report for presentation to a governing body of a regional commission or a conference of ministers, as appropriate.

Agenda item 6. Format and logistics of the regional review and appraisal. Participants envisioned the convening of a meeting in each UN region that would receive and consider findings of national review and appraisal activities and submit its outcome to the Commission for Social Development in New York. The timing and format of regional meetings will be determined by Member States of each regional commission. The content of this first cycle of the review and appraisal would center on what specifically governments have done since the Madrid Assembly, what changes could be identified in the quality of life of older persons and how these changes could be evaluated through participatory methods. The overall format of the outcome will be determined by Regional Commissions and could be a brief concluding document (e.g., statement, declarations, proclamation, etc.), outlining regional priorities, achievements and obstacles in the implementation of MIPAA. The outcome document will then be forwarded to the Commission for Social Development in 2008. To realize these measures, additional (extra-budgetary) financial resources are needed.

Agenda item 7. Regional support for conducting national review and appraisal of MIPAA. All participants noted the lack of resources which limits their capacity to offer technical assistance to member states in conducting their national review and appraisals. That is a reflection of general prevailing pattern: both regular and extra-budgetary resources for technical cooperation activities on ageing are extremely limited in

practically all world regions (see also agenda item 2, above). When available, extra-budgetary resources are most often coming from UNFPA or a few interested governments. The UN Programme on Ageing may provide possible funding for training courses on operational guidelines for the review and appraisal of MIPAA. INIA would share the names of former graduates of its training workshops contained in its database to facilitate the participatory review and appraisal by creating the basis for a network of dedicated partners in different countries. It can also offer training for stakeholders of the participatory review and appraisal process. A joint funding proposal to the Development Account or to other funding agencies will be developed.

Agenda item 8. Linking regional and global reviews and appraisals – the regional process. The participants discussed the following time table for the first cycle of the global review and appraisal of MIPAA:

2006: The Commission for Social Development decides on the timing, modalities and the theme for the first cycle of the review and appraisal. Possible themes for the first cycle may include: “Adjusting to an Ageing World”; “Opportunities and Challenges of Ageing”; “Ageing and Societal Development”, et al.

Countries receive Operational Guidelines for the review and appraisal of MIPAA prepared by the UN DESA in consultation with the regional commissions. DESA and the regional commissions work jointly to promote awareness of the bottom-up approach and familiarity with the guidelines, to assist countries to begin the process. As a first step, countries will be requested to indicate their priorities for review and appraisal and undertake an “instrumental” assessment, including identifying MIPAA-related institutions, policies and programmes introduced since 2002; recalling national priorities; and reviewing the national ageing situation. As a result, specific areas for in-depth participatory inquiries would be defined for the bottom-up review and appraisal. They would be requested to present this information at the Commission for Social Development in 2007.

2007: The Commission for Social Development marks the fifth anniversary of the Second World Assembly on Ageing. The Commission receives the report of the Secretary-General on major developments in the area of ageing since the Second World Assembly (the World Ageing Situation Report), which could include short regional contributions (regional ageing situations) by the regional commissions. Member States indicate the actions they have taken since the Second World Assembly to implement the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing (for example, new laws, policies and programmes; establishment of coordinating mechanisms; information campaigns), and each country determines for itself what area it wishes to evaluate using a bottom-up participatory approach.

National and regional processes of review and appraisal begin. Countries review and appraise the implementation of national policies and strategies which they identified. Regional commissions assist countries in conducting their national review and appraisals and encourage participatory approach to the process. Information on the initial experience

and good practices in organizing and conducting bottom-up participatory evaluation at local and national level are also collected and analyzed.

Regional commissions convene regional meetings (see agenda item 6, above) to review the implementation of MIPAA and RIS by considering the findings of national reviews, sharing experiences and good practices, and identifying priorities for future action. The commissions submit conclusions of the meetings, as well as individual national reports, to the Commission for Social Development in 2008.

2008: The Commission for Social Development at its forty-six session in February 2008 conducts the global segment of the first cycle of the review and appraisal of MIPAA. The modalities of this segment could include a series of plenary meetings or deliberations of a series of roundtables. An outcome document could include the conclusions of the first review and appraisal exercise along with the identification of prevalent and emerging issues and related policy options. A series of parallel events, including panels, workshops and seminars organized by all major stakeholders will be conducted, including the presentation of findings of independent monitoring projects.

Conclusions

Participants underscored the urgent need to develop and distribute the guidelines for the review and appraisal which are currently under preparation by DESA. Global guidelines should be practical and based on the three priority directions of MIPAA. The future guidelines should be translated into local languages, which could be facilitated by regional commissions.

Extra-budgetary funds to convene regional review and appraisal meetings in 2006-2007 will be necessary in all five UN regions.

It is essential to continue and maintain the discussion between the participants in follow-up to the Geneva consultation through e-mail exchanges. Suggestions were made for closer cooperation and communication among regional commissions, and with civil society organizations. The UN Secretariat in New York should act as a clearing-house in this interaction and could assist with expertise and resources, and provide a forum for follow-up meetings to the Geneva inter-regional consultation, in order to discuss what has been achieved in a particular time-frame. Such follow-up meetings should include representatives of NGOs working on ageing issues.