Mainstreaming the concerns of older persons into the social development agenda

1. Introduction

The proportion of older persons (those aged 60 years and over) rose to 10% of the world population in 2000. It is projected that in the next 50 years the proportion of older persons will double, reaching 21%. The overall number of older persons will increase from 606 million in 2000 to 1.9 billion in 2050. 394 million older persons will live in the developed countries by 2050, up from 232 million in 2000. In the developing regions of the world the number will reach 1.5 billion in 2050, a fourfold increase from 375 million in 2000.[1]

Age is one of the characteristics of social differentiation. While being a biological fact, the perception of age is nevertheless socially constructed. The connotation of age is inescapable, regardless of cultural environment. Whereas in some regions of the world, older persons are treated with respect and are well-regarded, in other parts of the globe, societal value is given to youth and signs of age have a rather negative image. Isolation, exclusion and marginalization of older persons are the usual consequences of age discrimination, which not only undermines the status of older persons in society but also threatens overall societal development. This paper will focus on the concerns of older persons and how their quality of life could be enhanced by mainstreaming their concerns systematically into the overall social development agenda.

Social development may be considered as positive, desirable social change which should be based on equal rights and equal opportunities for all, with the overall objective of achieving an equitable society. To this end, social groups - such as older persons - who have suffered from exclusion should be given special attention. To achieve an equitable society, the input of people is important. Hence, public actions should be people-centered, reflecting, inter alia, the views and needs of older persons. Mainstreaming their concerns and issues into the objectives of social development initiatives means paying attention to their particular needs when conceiving, implementing and evaluating development policies.

Mainstreaming - a process of bringing issues that have not received the consideration they deserve to the center of attention - is a tool for focus and inclusion. It has been a proxy for advocacy of various issues, such as gender and human rights and could also address issues concerning older persons. By definition, mainstreaming is a strategy and a process as well as a multi-dimensional effort. Successful mainstreaming should lead to (a) greater social integration of a particular group and (b) to the inclusion of a particular issue into all aspects of social, political, economic and cultural life. The

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[1] *World Population Prospects: The 2002 Revision,* vol. II

overall objective of mainstreaming should be the achievement of more equitable development within a society for the benefit of *all* social groups. To view for instance health, education, employment, or housing through the prism of a particular social group (i.e. older persons, persons with disabilities, etc.) promotes greater attention to the specific concerns of that group, as well as more inclusive policy making.

The Programme of Action of the World Summit for Social Development states that "the aim of social integration is to create 'a society for all', in which every individual, each with rights and responsibilities, has an active role to play"[2]. Mainstreaming, along with other active efforts to promote social integration, is necessary because most decision making has not been sufficiently inclusive. This has led to the exclusion of certain groups from participating fully in societal activities. The integration of these groups is based on the recognition and protection of their human rights, on tolerance, social justice and equalization of opportunities and is geared towards their effective participation in the public realm. Social integration requires advocacy and capacity-building, investment in institutions as well as distributive policies. Target areas for integration in diversity could be, inter alia, education, employment and health care. The overall objective of gender mainstreaming is gender equality; the purpose of mainstreaming human rights is the equal treatment of all human beings as well as the equal enjoyment of all rights by all human beings. By extension, mainstreaming the concerns of older persons into a wider policy agenda serves as a strategic tool with the overall objective of full integration and the enjoyment of all rights and opportunities by older persons. Mainstreaming the concerns of older persons should not be undertaken as a top-down activity. It is of utmost importance that the older persons most affected by exclusion are heard and are able to bring their own perspectives to the discussions and approaches for furthering their rights and integration.

It is crucial to note that the following does not address the issue of mainstreaming ageing from a sociological vantage point but will focus on the individual concerns of older persons. Ageing is a process that happens throughout life and begins at birth. Accelerated ageing during the last few decades started to make a significant impact in the political, economic and social functions of society. The inter-generational implications of demographic ageing are multifaceted and to discuss them in their complexity would go beyond the limits of this paper. The concept of mainstreaming lends itself to address the concerns of particular groups such as women, persons with disabilities or older persons, but would not suffice to address such a complex issue as ageing.

This paper is divided into five parts. In the first part, mandates which guide the work of the UN Programme on Ageing and that often include suggestions regarding mainstreaming are briefly reviewed. In addition, major foci of work such as important meetings that pertain to mainstreaming efforts are described. The mandates adopted and the meetings held by the international community could generate momentum for national governments to utilize mainstreaming techniques to benefit older persons. Following that, crucial topics pertinent to the lives of older persons are highlighted and contextualized regarding the process of mainstreaming. Thereafter, general, quintessential tools and

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[2] *The Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action, World Summit for Social Development,* p.95

techniques for mainstreaming are suggested and discussed. Finally, the 'Positive ageing strategy' of the government of New Zealand is described as a good national practice of systematic mainstreaming. A conclusion will summarize overall findings, suggest synergies that could result from the mainstreaming process and delineate possible problems.

2. Mainstreaming as reflected in UN mandates, reports and meetings

The international community convened twice within twenty years to consider the issue of ageing at the global level: the First World Assembly on Ageing was held in Vienna in 1982 and the Second World Assembly in Madrid in 2002. The first Assembly and its plan of action recommended a variety of initiatives in employment and income security, health, housing, education and social welfare while focusing on the specific needs of older persons and the socio-economic implications of ageing in developed countries. The focus of the Madrid Assembly shifted considerably: it promoted the view of ageing from the perspective of both developing and developed countries. An intergenerational policy approach that pays attention to all age groups with the objective of creating a society for all ages and a shift from developing policies *for* older persons towards the *inclusion* of older persons in the policy-making process were major outcomes of the Madrid conference. This shift lays the foundation for participatory approaches which consist of taking the views and opinions of older persons into account when developing and implementing policies that affect them. The international community in Madrid emphasized the importance of mainstreaming the concerns and needs of older persons into development policies and programmes at the international as well as the national level.

In between the First and the Second World Assemblies on Ageing, the United Nations Principles for Older Persons were adopted in 1991. Consisting of five clusters (independence, participation, care, self-fulfillment, and dignity) that relate to the status of older persons, the Principles were an important policy tool, which, among other things, influenced the conceptualization of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing (MIPAA) adopted at the Madrid Assembly. MIPAA serves as the major mandate outlining topics which have been identified by the international community as most important concerning ageing and the lives of older persons. Under the three priority directions of development; health and well-being; and supportive environments for older persons, eighteen issues were agreed upon: (1) active participation in society and development, (2) work and the ageing labour force, (3) rural development, migration and urbanization, (4) access to knowledge, education and training, (5) intergenerational solidarity, (6) eradication of poverty, (7) income security, social protection/social security and poverty prevention, (8) emergency situations, (9) health promotion and well-being throughout life, (10) universal and equal access to health-care services, (11) older persons and HIV/AIDS, (12) training of care providers and health professionals, (13) mental health needs of older persons, (14) older persons and disabilities, (15) housing and the living environment, (16) care and support for caregivers, (17) neglect, abuse and violence, and (18) images of ageing. Within these eighteen priority issues, there are 35

objectives and 239 recommendations for action in MIPAA.[3] Mainstreaming as a policy tool is specifically mentioned in paragraph 15 of MIPAA: *"Mainstreaming ageing into global agendas is essential. A concerted effort is required to move towards a wide and equitable approach to policy integration. The task is to link ageing to other frameworks for social and economic development and human rights. Whereas specific policies will vary according to country and region, population ageing is a universal force that has the power to shape the future as much as globalization. It is essential to recognize the ability of older persons to contribute to society by taking the lead not only in their own betterment but also in that of society as a whole. Forward thinking calls us to embrace the potential of the ageing population as a basis for future development."[4]*

The objectives and recommendations of MIPAA provide the framework for addressing, within future policies and programmes, the needs and expectations of older persons. Additionally, the UN Programme on Ageing, in cooperation with the International Association of Gerontology, produced a joint project entitled 'Research Agenda on Ageing for the 21st Century'. The Agenda supports the implementation of MIPAA through policy-related research and data gathering based on the priorities identified in MIPAA. One can claim that the Agenda is a vehicle for reciprocal mainstreaming of policy and research on ageing. The Agenda consists of major priorities, critical research arenas, key methodological issues and implementation. Major priorities are (1) relationships of population ageing and socio-economic development, (2) current practices and options for maintaining material security into old age, (3) changing family structures, intergenerational transfer systems and emergent patterns of family and institutional dynamics, (4) determinants of healthy ageing, (5) basic biological mechanisms and age associated diseases, and (6) quality of life and ageing in diverse cultural, socio-economic and environmental situations. The critical research arenas center around (1) social participation and integration, (2) economic security, (3) macro-societal change and development, (4) healthy ageing, (5) biomedical issues, (6) physical and mental functioning, (7) quality of life, (8) care systems, (9) changing structures and functions of families, kin and community, and (10) policy process and evaluation. All ten critical research arenas consist of numerous, specific topics. Key methodological issues focus on changing methods and instruments, improved definitions as well as tools for measuring the multidimensional concepts. Other areas are cultural harmonization, including adaptation and development, of research methods and instruments; multidimensional longitudinal study methods with an emphasis on multigenerational dimensions; participatory appraisal research; methods for integrating bio-psycho-social research; multidimensional and multifaceted research including interactions between variables; measurement of all elements that older persons contribute to family and society; interdisciplinary studies of lifelong development and ageing; and improvement of validity of methods of measuring disability.

During the follow-up process of the Second World Assembly on Ageing, the United Nations legislative bodies (i.e., the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council) addressed the implementation and monitoring of the Madrid Plan,

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[3] *Political Declaration and Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing,* 2003, DPI/2271
[4] *Political Declaration and Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing,* 2003, DPI/2271, p.12-13

emphasizing, among other issues, the need to mainstream ageing into the development agenda at both national and international levels. At its fifty-seventh session in 2002, the General Assembly endorsed both the Political Declaration and MIPAA and welcomed the preparation of a road map to implement the Plan of Action (resolution 57/167). During the same session, the General Assembly also welcomed the adoption of the Research Agenda on Ageing for the 21st Century to support the implementation of MIPAA (resolution 57/177). Economic and Social Council resolution 2003/14 invited governments, the United Nations system and civil society to participate in a bottom-up approach to review and appraise MIPAA. General Assembly resolution 58/134 highlighted issues such as the lack of age disaggregated data in considering the situation of older persons, integration of ageing into all development policies, including the achievement of the MDGs, and setting of national and international priorities in selecting appropriate approaches to ensure that countries achieve a society for all ages. At its forty-second session, the Commission for Social Development decided to undertake the review and appraisal of MIPAA every five years, with each cycle to focus on one of the priority directions identified in the Plan of Action (resolution 42/1). Efforts to mainstream ageing were encouraged, and the Secretary-General was asked to facilitate and promote MIPAA by advocating means to mainstream ageing issues into development agendas and by proposing guidelines for the review and appraisal process, including technical assistance for capacity-building. Importantly, the resolution encouraged member states to include both age-specific policies and ageing-mainstreaming efforts in their review and appraisal of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing and in their national strategies, bearing in mind the importance of mainstreaming ageing into the global agenda.

Reports of the Secretary-General to the 58th and 59th session of the General Assembly followed up on progress regarding the implementation of the Madrid Plan including the mainstreaming activities. A road map for the practical implementation of MIPAA presented to the General Assembly in 2003 points out that the "two universal and essential facets of the implementation process"[5] are national capacity building and mainstreaming of ageing into the national development agenda. The UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA), which is responsible for the implementation of MIPAA, initiated a series of national workshops that would provide member states an opportunity to identify national priorities as well as to assess needs, infrastructure and resources related to the implementation of MIPAA. Other proposed issues that may be explored during the workshops are benefits and obstacles regarding mainstreaming as well as national data collection as a foundation for successful mainstreaming. A workshop organized by the Social Integration Branch of DESA in Dakar, Senegal in 2004 focused on gaining "in-depth knowledge of global and national commitments to social inclusion in general and mainstreaming ageing in particular".[6] A progress report will inform about the implementation of the mainstreaming plan. Later that year, a needs assessment and capacity building mission entitled 'Mainstreaming ageing in Kyrgyzstan' was undertaken. More activities to assist member states are being planned.

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[5] *Follow-up to the Second World Assembly on Ageing – Report of the Secretary-General,* (A/58/160), p.4
[6] *Follow-up to the Second World Assembly on Ageing – Report of the Secretary-General,* (A/59/164), p.5

At the international level, mainstreaming "should integrate ageing into existing processes and work programmes of the United Nations system organizations and development budgets and include older persons in policy implementation and evaluation as a matter of course."[7] The road map also reaffirmed the need to mainstream gender perspectives into policies and programmes to take account of the needs of older women and men. Concerning the monitoring of MIPAA, the road map suggests "to track the extent to which mainstreaming occurs and how ageing is integrated in development policies."[8]

To generate public attention concerning mainstreaming, the theme chosen for the International Day of Older Persons in 2003 was 'Mainstreaming ageing: forging links between the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing and the Millennium Development Goals'. Various UN programmes, specialized agencies as well as NGOs have made efforts to mainstream the concerns of older persons into their respective agendas. On the level of operative action, UNFPA strives to mainstream ageing into its areas of work, namely reproductive health, gender issues and humanitarian responses to conflict situations. WHO's major mainstreaming objective is to focus on principles and methods of developing health care systems that are responsive to ageing. HelpAge International has focused on HIV/AIDS and older persons as caregivers for orphans and children. The 2004 report of the Secretary-General to the General Assembly recommends "to assign full-time focal points on ageing and provide them with adequate resources to further implementation, particularly through appropriate mainstreaming action."[9]

Expert group meetings organized by DESA were held on links between agreements made in Madrid and poverty related issues in Africa (Tanzania, October 2003), on modalities for the review and appraisal of MIPAA (Malta, November 2003) and on national implementation of MIPAA (Austria, December 2003). These meetings helped to facilitate follow-up regarding the practical approaches to implementation, including its mainstreaming dimension, at the national level.

In Tanzania, governments reiterated their pleas to fully integrate older persons into international and national development strategies, and achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Participation in policy design allows older persons to benefit from related action programmes so they become full partners in development. Governments also acknowledged incorporating the concerns of older persons into poverty monitoring and reduction strategies, such as PRSPs and MDG reports. In addition, mainstreaming the concerns of older persons is necessary for 'linking ageing to existing policy and operational programming instruments'[10]. To achieve this, national capacity has to be strengthened and 'awareness of the rights and priority needs of the older poor is needed'[11].

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[7] *Follow-up to the Second World Assembly on Ageing – Report of the Secretary-General,* (A/58/160), p.6

[8] *Follow-up to the Second World Assembly on Ageing – Report of the Secretary-General,* (A/58/160), p.10

[9] *Follow-up to the Second World Assembly on Ageing – Report of the Secretary-General,* (A/59/164), p.18

[10] *Regional Workshop on Ageing and Poverty, Report of the Workshop*, p.8

[11] *Regional Workshop on Ageing and Poverty, Report of the Workshop,* p.8

The objectives of the meeting in Malta were: (a) elaboration of content and methodology of a bottom-up approach to review and appraise the implementation of MIPAA, (b) suggestion of actions at various levels to undertake the bottom-up approach, (c) recommendations for information collection regarding older persons, and (d) development of indicators for national monitoring of MIPAA. Besides focusing on ageing specific policies, the meeting recommended mainstreaming ageing into development policies as part of the review and appraisal exercise and referred to 'all-inclusive efforts to reconcile population ageing and societal development'[12]. The Malta meeting further elaborated the bottom-up, open-ended and participatory approach as endorsed by the Commission for Social Development, which allows policy makers to benefit from the results of participatory social assessment and provides the opportunity for older persons to articulate their conditions and needs in focus group discussions. This ensures the inclusion of opinions of older persons that have been previously excluded or marginalized from traditional information gathering. Opinions and viewpoints of older persons may, therefore, find their way into the mainstream and receive more attention by policy makers. Data collection can be facilitated by using instrumental and outcome indicators organized according to the objectives of MIPAA (see below). The suggested indicators were agreed upon as a framework to review and appraise the national implementation of MIPAA.

The meeting in Vienna focused on national implementation of the Plan of Action. Among the objectives were (a) identifying national implementation issues, (b) producing strategy guidelines to mainstream ageing issues into national development agendas, (c) contributing to the development of a technical assistance programme to build national capacity for the implementation and follow-up to the Madrid Plan of Action, and (d) identifying possible pilot countries and capacity building needs. A paper entitled 'Mainstreaming ageing into national policy frameworks - an introduction' was distributed and discussed. It contained the following findings: one of the aims of mainstreaming ageing is to change the perception that older persons are just another group requesting new programmes, to a view of older persons as active agents of development. More disaggregated data could contribute to a more accurate view of the living conditions of older persons. Currently, there is often a conviction that older persons are generally held in high esteem and will be taken care of by their families. Any analysis has to recognize the often inherent bias against older persons and how it will affect the outcomes of policies if not addressed consciously. Therefore, empowerment and participation are important vehicles in efforts to mainstream the concerns of older persons. Among numerous comments and thoughts about mainstreaming ageing, it was stated that 'mainstreaming assumes a good understanding of both the substance and methodology of ageing by all actors'[13]. The meeting also investigated the links between mainstreaming ageing and corresponding policy (programmes), interventions (actions), and financial resources, and discussed approaches for the development of guidelines for successful national mainstreaming.

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[12] *Expert Group Meeting on Modalities for Review and Appraisal of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, Report,* p.4

[13] *Interregional Consultative Meeting on National Implementation of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, Report of the Meeting,* p.3

3. Crucial issues to be highlighted in the mainstreaming process

Empowering older persons to actively participate in their societies includes an opportunity for older persons to work as long as they wish, in productive and satisfying jobs without being forced into retirement. There is evidence that active ageing is closely linked to rewarding work which in turn contributes to the development of any society. Access to credit and micro-credit is often denied to older persons and should be facilitated. Continuous training and skills updating are important components to ensure that older persons can remain active in the work force. That will in turn contribute to ensuring the sustainability of social protection systems that will benefit all members of society. The goal of promoting full employment as outlined in commitment three of the Copenhagen Declaration includes also older persons as long as they are able and willing to work. Future employment policies should take the interests of older persons into account, which has often not been the case in the past. Such policies should focus on employability of older persons by providing training opportunities, adaptive work environments and flexible retirement arrangements. Assisting older persons to reconcile work with care-giving responsibilities would underline a sensitive approach to promoting employment and self-employment of older persons. This would consequently contribute to the goal of eradicating poverty.

Education has for too long been viewed as an area that only concerns younger people. A knowledge-based society, however, requires policies that ensure lifelong access to education and training. Increased access to education in younger age will ease problems dealing with technological change throughout life. Full enrollment in primary education would lay the foundation for eradicating illiteracy and could promote lifelong learning which is an important ingredient for people of all ages to perform at and adapt to the workplace. Expertise and experience of older persons are essential for exchanging knowledge between generations, be it at the workplace or as mentors. Intergenerational solidarity expresses itself in how much a society invests in educational programmes for older persons, so they will be able to give back to other age groups. Mainstreaming the concerns of older persons into all existing education and training policies would strengthen intergenerational solidarity and increase participation of older persons in numerous societal activities.

Health care is obviously the most important issue for older persons. A prudent health care system is based on the promotion of healthy life styles with the goal of preventing or minimizing the occurrence of diseases throughout life. Preventive measures should be flanked by equal and universal access to services which is especially important for older persons. Older persons belonging to minorities, the poor, and people living in rural areas often experience poorer health compared to their peers. In addition, they are frequently discriminated against because of their age when in need of health services. This is unacceptable and efforts should be taken to rule out any such incidences. To assess the success of a health care system, targets could be set measuring the improvements in the health status of older persons, i.e. disability and morbidity rates as well as extension in life expectancy. Non-communicable and communicable diseases such as HIV/AIDS, malaria or tuberculosis have to be addressed. Mental health, access to

drugs and rehabilitative care, sufficient nutrition and clean water, physical activity and prevention of drug, alcohol and tobacco abuse should be promoted in order to reach the objective of healthy ageing. Specific measures that concern older persons should be mainstreamed into health policies to ensure equitable provision of services to older persons. Older persons should by no means only be viewed as consumers of health care services. They often contribute substantially to care-giving to their spouses, children and grandchildren. Society should recognize this while mainstreaming the concerns of older persons into the health care system.

The above-mentioned issues of focus should be cross-sectorally linked to allow for discovering correlations that have not been established so far. Enhanced provision of funds to finance research as well as capacity building should be addressed on an international and national level. Particular attention should be paid to bottom-up, participatory data collection methods, to inform the process of mainstreaming and its monitoring, as called for by the international community.

4. Tools and techniques for successful mainstreaming

Mainstreaming can be an effective approach to further a particular issue through advocacy. It can also serve to consistently highlight and emphasize it in policies, programmes, budgets, laws and international treaties. What are the components of successful mainstreaming? What can be learned from the examples of gender and human rights mainstreaming?

Analyzing the practices that have been employed to mainstream gender and human rights is a useful point of departure. There is a variety of factors that made the efforts to mainstream gender and human rights successful. Essential elements for mainstreaming gender were: (a) data collection regarding the differences in living conditions between women and men, (b) analysis of power distribution between men and women, (c) refocusing of strategies, goals, actions and processes according to gender, (d) reflection of gender in budget allocation, policy decisions and in overall development planning, (e) evaluation of laws and entitlements to ascertain the discrimination against women, and (f) changing culture (values, norms, and attitudes), structures, procedures and institutions with the ultimate objective of achieving gender equality. Effective human rights mainstreaming was based on: (a) awareness raising and increased focus on stronger enforcement of the various human rights conventions, (b) appointment of special representatives to detect and publicize human rights abuses, (c) analysis of widespread human rights abuses as root causes for potential conflicts, and (d) redefinition of development as a human right.

Given the components that made mainstreaming gender and human rights successful, the following tools and techniques are suggested for comprehensively mainstreaming the concerns of older persons into social development policy and programmes.

a) Data collection and analysis

Mainstreaming should be done on the basis of well-founded knowledge. Therefore, the comprehensive collection of data is of great importance. Only after sufficient socio-economic data about ageing and older persons has been gathered will it be possible for policy makers to develop effective policy approaches. Data can be collected through censuses, civil registration, household surveys, and focus group discussions. Governments, research institutions, and civil society groups should be actively engaged in carrying out such data gathering exercises. Age-disaggregated data that sheds light on the particular living conditions of older persons is obviously of particular interest for policy makers. Participatory methods for collecting qualitative information should complement other more quantitative data collection methods. Using participatory methods, the researchers listen to the concerns of stakeholders, providing them with a chance to be heard and have their views taken into consideration. Such an approach offers several advantages: it is often cheaper to conduct and can be facilitated on short notice, it allows people to have a voice on pertinent issues, and it broadens the variety of information sources available to assess the living conditions of older persons. The approach may also generate a greater feeling of involvement and empower people to approach their problems by themselves instead of waiting for outside assistance. After the data gathering, information has to be 'distilled' on the local, provincial and national levels to interpret the findings, making them more accessible for policy makers. In this process, qualitative data should complement quantitative information rather than compete with it. Central knowledge management units within government could be helpful repositories of information collected at the various levels and from various sources pertaining to older persons.

b) Awareness raising, advocacy and education

Issues concerning ageing and older persons suffer from a chronic lack of attention and resources which is very much linked to the lack of political visibility as well as a lack of attention in the development agenda. Newly collected data should be disseminated to contribute to the overall knowledge of society regarding ageing and older persons. It should also serve as a vehicle for awareness raising. A concerted advocacy campaign has to be designed after data has been collected and analyzed. Sensitizing the public to concerns and conditions of older persons should be a logical, second step. To be effective, the campaign should be organized at the local, provincial and national levels. Representatives of groups of older persons, civil society, faith-based organizations, educational and research institutions, media, political parties as well as government officials should participate in the campaign. Ignorance and prejudice - either rooted in cultural beliefs or in stereotyping - are fundamental factors to be overcome. Ultimately, advocacy campaigns should lead to a greater appreciation of the concerns of older persons, to overcoming negative stereotypes, and to developing or adjusting strategies, policies, programmes and legislation that impact the quality of life in order to achieve a society for all.

c) Tools for performance assessment

After the data collection has been undertaken and the advocacy campaign has been started, it is essential to develop tools of assessment for the mainstreaming process. Developing benchmarks on which potential progress could be measured and introducing appropriate indicators addressing the results and progress of mainstreaming are important tools to ensure continuous accountability. Such key performance indicators could be shared - as a point of reference - by all actors, practitioners and donors and should be quantitative and qualitative in nature. Performance indicators would attempt to (a) measure progress of individual well-being of older persons (quality of life indicators) and (b) the success of overall policy. An example of a quality of life indicator is satisfaction expressed by older persons about overall conditions (economic, social, cultural). A success indicator regarding policy directed toward older persons is i.e. a measurable increase in various services provided to older persons. A periodicity should be built into the review process. Action should be suggested in case the outcome is lagging considerably behind the expectations that were set. In addition, if there is only little progress in a certain area, one cannot rely on indicators alone but must analyze the root causes of the lack of results.

d) Evaluation of current laws and mainstreaming of concerns into new legislation and policies

The review process could be carried out by an office which lobbies for the concerns of older persons. The process of mainstreaming should involve the input of many different policy actors at various levels whose experience may be diverse. Every existing policy, programme or law should be evaluated on whether it reflects adequately the concerns of older persons. After the review process has been finalized, adjustments to existing laws and policies should be suggested and implemented. In case the letter of the law is clearly against the interest of older persons, changes should be introduced. Guidelines to mainstream the concerns of older persons into new laws, policies and programmes should be developed before any new legislation is introduced and voted on. They should include the identified national priorities concerning older persons, suggested procedures for developing mainstreaming efforts at all levels, and indicators to measure success. For all new policies, programmes and laws, an impact analysis regarding ageing and older persons could be conducted. Mainstreaming should not become a mere "add-on" to policy making. Mainstreaming the concerns of older persons should not result in additional policies but should mean the review of existing policies to ensure that they adequately reflect the concerns of older persons.

e) Reflection of ageing in the social budget

A mainstreaming office should also be established within the Finance Ministry to ensure that ageing is mainstreamed in the annual budget. It is of utmost importance to ensure every year that the budget process takes the concerns and problems of older persons into consideration while deciding which resources will be spent on what projects and programmes. Improved equity in national resource allocation would be seen as

change in favour of social groups in high need without disadvantaging any group. Such a budgeting process would be a holistic approach that would reflect the importance that older persons are given by politicians and society as a whole. In addition, consideration should be given to the tax code and how it affects older persons. A fair and progressive tax system would benefit older persons and would be a reflection of successful mainstreaming efforts.

f) National coordination and international cooperation

The attempt to mainstream concerns of older persons along the lines of both development and human rights requires efforts at all levels: from the local and national levels to the international dimension. Multi-level efforts need to be effectively coordinated, especially since they relate to themes ranging from improving older persons' access to opportunities to combating stereotyping. Coordination between policies needs to be achieved and a common enforcement mechanism designed and monitored in order to successfully mainstream older persons' issues holistically.

The actors involved – notably governments, NGOs, international organizations, and donors – should move towards effective mainstreaming together. Their approaches and decision-making processes should be adapted in view of encompassing needs and specificities of older persons and in order to create a better coordination mechanism on policies and practices. An investment-oriented allocation of resources to tackle the needs of older persons would be desirable.

In their effort towards building capacity, these actors and institutions should develop and share best practices on efficient specific actions and services to foster the creation of further knowledge and to support research. There is a need for a more systematic sharing of best practices at the global level, with particular reference to South-South cooperation. Capacity building should also be facilitated by technical cooperation efforts provided by the United Nations system.

Many actors and institutions have specific policies related to ageing but these are often not sufficiently publicized and therefore insufficiently implemented. There is a substantial need for training in regard to the issues pertaining to older persons. In order to effectively mainstream ageing it is necessary to train not just focal points on ageing, but also all staff working on issues of social inclusion. Developing guidelines outlining the conception, sequencing of actions, implementation and evaluation of policies to support the better integration of older persons into a society for all might be necessary.

5. *New Zealand's approach towards mainstreaming the concerns of older persons*

New Zealand has mainstreamed ageing into policy development. The 'Positive Ageing Strategy' was issued in April 2001 by the Minister for Senior Citizens. The International Year of Older Persons in 1999 provided the impetus 'to highlight the status of older people in New Zealand, raise awareness of older people's issues on the policy agenda, and to consider the challenges and opportunities New Zealand's ageing population will generate'.[14] The purpose of the strategy was: (a) to improve opportunities for participation of older persons, (b) to utilize research conducted and networks developed during the International Year, and (c) to combine actions into a comprehensive strategy framework. The desired long term goal 'is a society where older peoples' contributions are valued, where older people can participate in their communities in the ways that they choose, and where both young and old view older age as positive and empowering'.[15]

The strategy was developed through an inclusive and consultative process that involved government officials, NGOs, local government, academics, the health sector, and older and younger persons themselves, including older indigenous people. The consultation specifically identified priorities for future action and developed a strategy that contains ten goals and principles, including income security, accessible health services, affordable housing and the opportunity 'to age in place', accessible transport, non-discrimination of rural communities, cultural services, elimination of ageism in employment, attitude change, and opportunities for participation for older persons.

Monitoring of the situation of older persons is facilitated through elaboration of an annual action plan that evaluates the plan of the year before and production of a major report on the status of older persons every three years. The Office for Senior Citizens of the Ministry of Social Development is responsible for reporting and monitoring. Liaising with 34 other governmental departments, it developed a measure of achievement, key milestones and timeframes. The Office for Senior Citizens also fulfills an advocacy function through wide dissemination of reports and periodic meetings. Concrete mainstreaming means for example that the Office would suggest changes to the state housing stock to reflect the needs of older persons, so that the current status would not impede the achievement of the identified goal of 'ageing in place'. The lessons learned so far are that (a) engagement with other government offices has to be early and ongoing, (b) budgeting regarding staff and efforts concerning mainstreaming should be appropriate to the tasks, (c) only policies, programmes and activities that specifically target older persons will be included in the annual action plans, (d) reporting achievements have to be tangible and measurable, and (e) bureaucratic jargon should be avoided to make the reports truly accessible to the general public.

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[14] *New Zealand Policy on Ageing – An Age Integration and Mainstreaming Perspective*
[15] *New Zealand Policy on Ageing – An Age Integration and Mainstreaming Perspective*

6. Conclusion

The three preceding chapters have made the following evident:

(1) Mandates emanating from and meetings convened by the United Nations have recognized the importance of mainstreaming the concerns of older persons into the overall process of development. That could provide governments with the impetus to conceive of policy approaches that systematically reflect the needs of this social group.

(2) Issues that have the greatest importance for older persons have been identified by the international community and possible approaches that governments might want to choose have been outlined. Individual governments will choose the issues which have the greatest significance in their national context. So far, only New Zealand has adopted and is in the process of implementing a mainstreaming strategy on ageing.

(3) Synergies that a more holistic and cross-sectoral approach could garner should be harnessed. The concerns of older persons should not be seen in isolation or in competition with other social groups. In this regard, mainstreaming could mean a coordinated, intergenerational approach aimed at ensuring a greater and more sustainable return than that which could be achieved by approaching a particular population group only. Mainstreaming the concerns of older persons into Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers as well as into national MDG reports will highlight the particular needs of older persons, and might lead to a more holistic approach to social integration.

The following concerns should be addressed and reflected upon before any mainstreaming strategies are developed:

(1) There are concerns whether mainstreaming might contribute to a partial "disappearance" of an issue such as ageing as a result of the process of mainstreaming it into various interventions. While promoting mainstreaming, it is important not to lose sight of the specific needs and expectations of older persons. Mainstreaming must not mean diluting even more the already scarce attention given to older persons or diminishing the funding of specific programmes. A twin track approach to policy and programmes on ageing is suggested: to address older persons' specific needs, and, simultaneously, to foster mainstreaming as a cross-cutting issue.

(2) Since human rights and gender approaches affect all people, mainstreaming seems to be an effective tool to integrate these issues into overall policy planning. It is, however, a more difficult task to mainstream issues relating to older persons since these issues are usually considered to affect only a certain group. To overcome this predicament and to generate comparable weight and attention to these issues seems to be a challenge. This situation calls for additional efforts such as advocacy, awareness raising, and public education in order to promote the conviction that a sensitive approach to mainstreaming the concerns of older persons will benefit *all* age groups within society.

In summary, mainstreaming as a technique to further the interests and well-being of older persons could be a useful tool to promote an equitable age-integrated society for all ages, as called for in MIPAA. Mainstreaming should not be seen as a new panacea to resolve long-standing problems. Having pointed out the potentials and opportunities that effective mainstreaming could offer, but also aware of problems and concerns regarding the application of mainstreaming approaches, this paper recommends mainstreaming as a strategy that can be effective if applied prudently. New policies that are based on careful planning, sensible implementation and rigorous evaluation using well-thought-out indicators could lead to more satisfying results for older persons.