Department of Economic and Social Affairs

Regional Dimensions of the Ageing Situation

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Department of Economic and Social Affairs

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Foreword

The year 2002 marked a watershed in a policy discourse regarding older persons worldwide. The Second World Assembly on Ageing convened in Madrid, Spain, to discuss the challenges and opportunities of ageing in the twenty-first century adopted two innovative international policy documents: the Political Declaration and the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing. Five years later, the first review and appraisal has been conducted at the national, regional and international levels to assess the implementation of the Madrid Plan of Action around the world.

The review and appraisal exercise offered an opportunity to review various dimensions of ageing, analyze policy responses and try to assess the changes in overall quality of life of older persons in all five UN regions of the world. A bottom-up participatory assessment was proposed to review and appraise national policy action on ageing since the Madrid Assembly. This important participatory approach empowers older persons by allowing them to express their views on policies that relate to them and which could have possible ramifications for their well-being.

The present publication, Regional Dimensions of the Ageing Situation, contributes to the series of events, conferences and publications related to the first review and appraisal of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing. It highlights priorities, as well as recent trends and policy developments, in the five UN regions of the world. The publication, which is a joint effort of UN staff and international experts, aims to assist national governments, the international community and the public at large to better assess the situation of older persons five years after the Second World Assembly on Ageing. It should better inform the debate on how to align priorities, policy innovations and technical cooperation to implement the objectives of the Madrid Plan of Action.

It is my sincere hope that the important issue of ageing will gain more attention in the international arena. Only thorough and rigorous analysis, such as that undertaken in this publication, can provide the basis for evidence-based policies aimed at building a society for all ages.

Sha Zukang
Under-Secretary-General
for Economic and Social Affairs
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Explanatory Notes

The following abbreviations have been used:

AARP  formerly, American Association of Retired Persons
AGFUND Arab Gulf Programme for United Nations Development Organizations
CSCI Commission for Social Care Inspection, UK
CIS Commonwealth of Independent States
CFR Council on Foreign Relations
ESCAP Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
ESCWA Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia
ECA Economic Commission for Africa
ECE Economic Commission for Europe
ECLAC Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean
ERSAP Economic Reforms and Structural Adjustment Programme
EM elder mistreatment
EC European Commission
SAGE Global Ageing and Adult Health
GPIF Government Pension Insurance Fund
GDP gross domestic product
HAI HelpAge International
IAGG International Association of Gerontology and Geriatrics
IDS Institute of Development Studies
INIA United Nations International Institute on Ageing
INTRA Integrated Health-Care Systems Response to Rapid Populations Ageing in Developing Countries
IDB Inter-American Development Bank
ILO International Labour Organization
UNAIDS Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS
ALMA Latin American Academy of Medicine of Older Adults
SABE Latin American and Caribbean regional survey on ageing, health and well-being
LTC long-term care
MA:IMI Mainstreaming Ageing: Indicators to Monitor Implementation
MEAA Middle East Association on Alzheimer’s
NSGRP National Strategy for Growth and Reduction of Poverty
NEPAD New Economic Partnership for Africa’s Development
NGO non-governmental organization
UNHCR Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
OMC Open Method of Coordination
OECD Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
PAHO Pan American Health Organization
PAYG pay-as-you-go pension scheme
RSILAC Regional Strategy for the Implementation in Latin America and the Caribbean of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing
SARS severe acute respiratory syndrome
SCIE  Social Care Institute for Excellence, UK
SSA  Social Security Administration
SHARE  Survey of Health, Ageing and Retirement in Europe
TFR  total fertility rate
UN/DESA  United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs
UNDP  United Nations Development Programme
UNFPA  United Nations Population Fund
USCB  United States Census Bureau
WHO  World Health Organization

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