

16th INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR OLDER PERSONS 1 October 2006

Theme: Improving the Quality of Life for Older Persons: Advancing UN Global Strategies

In support of the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and in line with the recommendations of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing the theme draws attention to policies and programmes to enhance the quality of life, participation and engagement of older persons in the social, economic and political spheres of their societies.

As we recognize a global population of 600 million people age 60 and over, we also need to emphasize that they represent a potential source of development if the right policies and programmes are designed to support their contributions. This would also support a positive image of older persons, which unfortunately, in many societies has slowly deteriorated into an image of them being a drain on national resources.

An event will take place at UN Headquarters in New York on 5 October to celebrate the International Day, organized by the NGO Committee on Ageing, in collaboration with the United Nations Department of Public Information and the Department for Economic and Social Affairs. The objectives of this event are:

- to raise awareness of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, with special focus on the third Priority Direction – Ensuring Enabling and Supportive Environments in support of promoting positive images of ageing
- to emphasize the need for the development and implementation of appropriate ageing policies and programmes
- Identify innovative initiatives for enhancing living conditions (eg. housing, transport) that are being planned and implemented in various countries
- Advocate for older persons to be recognized as valuable resources and to showcase their contributions to societies

What can you do in your community/country?

Organize a forum to discuss these issues in your community. What is the image of older persons today in your country? What can be done to improve this image or portray positive information about their contribution?

Showcase projects, initiatives, businesses run by older persons. See if you can get media coverage of this in support of the International Day.

Write an article in a local newspaper to raise key issues.