

Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, 2002

A. Older persons and development

Issue 1: Active participation in society and development

Objective 1: Recognition of the social, cultural, economic and political contribution of older persons.

Actions

- Ensure the full enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms by promoting the implementation of human rights conventions and other human rights instruments, particularly in combating all forms of discrimination;
- Acknowledge, encourage and support the contribution of older persons to families, communities and the economy;
- Provide opportunities, programmes and support to encourage older persons to participate or continue to participate in cultural, economic, political, social life and lifelong learning;
- Older persons should be treated fairly and with dignity, regardless of disability or other status, and should be valued independently of their economic contribution;

Objective 2: Participation of older persons in decision-making processes at all levels.

Actions

- Take measures to enable the full and equal participation of older persons, in particular older women, in decision-making at all levels.

Issue 2: Work and the ageing labour force

Objective 1: Employment opportunities for all older persons who want to work.

Actions

- Enable older persons to continue working as long as they want to work and are able to do so;
- Eliminate age barriers in the formal labour market by promoting the recruitment of older persons and preventing the onset of disadvantages experienced by ageing workers in employment;

Issue 3: Rural development, migration and urbanization

Objective 1: Improvement of living conditions and infrastructure in rural areas.

Actions

- Strengthen the capacity of ageing farmers through continued access to financial and infrastructure services and training for improved farming techniques and technologies;
- Foster the development of local financial services, including microcredit schemes and microfinance institutions, in underserved rural areas in order to encourage investment;

Objective 2: Alleviation of the marginalization of older persons in rural areas.

Actions

- Design and implement programmes and provide services to sustain the independence of older persons in rural areas, including older persons with disabilities;
- Focus support on older persons in rural areas without kin, in particular older women who face a longer old age, often with fewer resources;

Objective 3: Integration of older migrants within their new communities.

- Design measures to assist older migrants to sustain economic and health security;
- Develop policies and programmes that facilitate, as appropriate, and as consistent with national laws, the integration of older migrants into the social, cultural, political and economic life of countries of destination and encourage respect for those migrants;

¹. Selected by members of the NGO Committee on Ageing for IDOP 2007, 1 June 2007

Issue 4: Access to knowledge, education and training

Objective 1: Equality of opportunity throughout life with respect to continuing education, training and retraining as well as vocational guidance and placement services.

Actions

- Encourage and promote literacy, numeracy and technological skills training for older persons and the ageing workforce, including specialized literacy and computer training for older persons with disabilities;
- Raise the awareness of employers and workers organizations of the value of retraining of older workers, particularly women.

Objective 2: Full utilization of the potential and expertise of persons of all ages, recognizing the benefits of increased experience with age.

Actions

- Enable older persons to act as mentors, mediators and advisers;
- Encourage the utilization of the social, cultural and educational knowledge and potential of older persons.

Issue 5: Intergenerational solidarity

Objective 1: Strengthening of solidarity through equity and reciprocity between generations.

Actions

- Promote understanding of ageing through public education as an issue of concern to the entire society;
- Develop initiatives aimed at promoting mutual, productive exchange between the generations, focusing on older persons as a societal resource;

Issue 6: Eradication of poverty

Objective 1: Reduction of poverty among older persons.

Actions

- Promote equal access for older persons to employment and income-generation opportunities, credit, markets and assets;
- Ensure that the particular needs of older women, the oldest old, older persons with disabilities and those living alone are specifically addressed in poverty eradication strategies and implementation programmes;
- Strengthen the capacity of developing countries to address the obstacles that hinder their participation in an increasingly globalized economy in order to assist them in their efforts to eradicate poverty, in particular among older persons.

Issue 7: Income security, social protection/social security and poverty prevention

Objective 1: Promotion of programmes to enable all workers to acquire basic social protection/social security, including where applicable, pensions, disability insurance and health benefits.

Actions

- Develop and implement policies aimed at ensuring that all persons have adequate economic and social protection during old age;
- Strive to ensure gender equality in social protection/social security systems;
- Strive to ensure the integrity, sustainability, solvency and transparency of pension schemes, and, where appropriate, disability insurance;

Objective 2: Sufficient minimum income for all older persons, paying particular attention to socially and economically disadvantaged groups.

Actions

- Organize, as a matter of urgency where they do not exist, social protection/social security systems to ensure minimum income for older persons with no other means of support, most of whom are women, in particular those living alone and who tend to be more vulnerable to poverty;
- Invite international organizations, in particular the international financial institutions, according to their mandates, to assist developing countries and all countries in need in their efforts to achieve basic social protection, in particular for older persons.

Issue 8: Emergency situations

Objective 1: Equal access by older persons to food, shelter and medical care and other services during and after natural disasters and other humanitarian emergencies.

Actions

- Take concrete measures to protect and assist older persons in situations of armed conflict and foreign occupation, including through the provision of physical and mental rehabilitation services for those who are disabled in these situations;
- Call upon Governments to protect, assist and provide humanitarian assistance and humanitarian emergency assistance to older persons in situations of internal displacement in accordance with General Assembly resolutions;
- Raise awareness among relief agency personnel of the physical and health issues specific to older persons and of ways to adapt basic needs support to their requirements;

Objective 2: Enhanced contributions of older persons to the reestablishment and reconstruction of communities and the rebuilding of the social fabric following emergencies.

Actions

- Include older persons in the provision of community relief and rehabilitation programmes, including by identifying and helping vulnerable older persons;
- Assist older persons to re-establish economic self-sufficiency through rehabilitation projects, including income generation, educational programmes and occupational activities, taking into account the special needs of older women;

B. Advancing health and well-being into old age

Issue 1: Health promotion and well-being throughout life

Objective 1: Reduction of the cumulative effects of factors that increase the risk of disease and consequently potential dependence in older age.

Actions

- Set targets, in particular gender-specific targets, to improve the health status of older persons and reduce disability and mortality;
- Identify and address the main environmental and socio-economic factors that contribute to the onset of disease and disability in later life;

Objective 2: Development of policies to prevent ill-health among older persons.

Actions

- Ensure that gender-specific primary prevention and screening programmes are available and affordable to older persons;
- Pay attention to the dangers arising from social isolation and mental illness and reduce the risk they pose to the health of older persons by supporting community empowerment and mutual aid groups, including peer outreach and neighbourhood visiting programmes and by facilitating the active participation of older persons in voluntary activities;
- Develop statistical indicators at all levels on common diseases in older persons to guide policies aimed at preventing further illness in this age group;

Objective 3: Access to food and adequate nutrition for all older persons.

Actions

- Promote equal access to clean water and safe food for older persons;
- Promote lifelong healthy and adequate nutrition from infancy, with particular attention to ensuring that specific nutritional needs of men and women throughout the life course are met;
- Pay particular attention to nutritional deficiencies and associated diseases in the design and implementation of health promotion and prevention programmes for older persons;

Issue 2: Universal and equal access to health-care services

Objective 1: Elimination of social and economic inequalities based on age, gender or any other ground, including linguistic barriers, to ensure that older persons have universal and equal access to health care.

Actions

- Take measures to ensure equal distribution of health and rehabilitation resources to older persons and, in particular, increase access for these resources for older persons who are poor and promote their distribution to poorly served areas, such as rural and remote areas, including affordable access to essential medications and other therapeutic measures;
- Enhance the access of older persons to primary health care and take steps to eliminate discrimination in health care based on age and other forms of discrimination;

Objective 2: Development and strengthening of primary health-care services to meet the needs of older persons and promote their inclusion in the process.

Actions

- Take measures to provide universal and equal access to primary health care and establish community health programmes for older persons;
- Encourage, at all levels, arrangements and incentives to mobilize commercial enterprises, especially pharmaceutical enterprises, to invest in research aimed at finding remedies that can be provided at affordable prices for diseases that particularly afflict older persons in developing countries and invite the World Health Organization to consider improving partnerships between the public and private sectors in the area of health research.

Objective 3: Development of a continuum of health care to meet the needs of older persons.

Actions

- Improve the coordination of primary health care, long-term care and social services and other community services;
- Promote the establishment and coordination of a full range of services in the continuum of care, including prevention and promotion, primary care, acute care, rehabilitation, long-term and palliative care, ⁸ so that resources can be deployed flexibly to meet the variable and changing health needs of older persons;

Objective 4: Involvement of older persons in the development and strengthening of primary and long-term care services.

Actions

- Include older persons in the planning, implementation and evaluation of social and health care and rehabilitation programmes;

Issue 3: Older persons and HIV/AIDS

Objective 1: Improvement in the assessment of the impact of HIV/AIDS on the health of older persons, both for those who are infected and those who are caregivers for infected or surviving family members.

Actions

- Ensure and expand the compilation of HIV/AIDS data to allow for the assessment of the extent of HIV/AIDS infection in older persons;
- Pay special attention to older carers of HIV/AIDS patients, including the collection of both quantitative and qualitative data on the health status and needs of older carers.

Objective 2: Provision of adequate information, training in caregiving skills, treatment, medical care and social support to older persons living with HIV/AIDS and their caregivers.

Actions

- Ensure that AIDS treatment and support strategies recognize the needs of older persons who are infected by HIV/AIDS.

Objective 3: Enhancement and recognition of the contribution of older persons to development in their role as caregivers for children with chronic diseases, including HIV/AIDS, and as surrogate parents.

Actions

- Introduce policies to provide in-kind support, health care and loans to older caregivers to assist them in meeting the needs of children and grandchildren in accordance with the Millennium Declaration;¹⁰

Issue 4: Training of care providers and health professionals

Objective 1: Provision of improved information and training for health professionals and para-professionals on the needs of older persons.

Actions

- Initiate and promote education and training programmes for health professionals, social care professionals and informal care providers in the services for and care of older persons, including in gerontology and geriatrics, and support all countries, in particular developing countries, in these efforts;

Issue 5: Mental health needs of older persons

Objective 1: Development of comprehensive mental health-care services ranging from prevention to early intervention, the provision of treatment services and the management of mental health problems in older persons.

Actions

- Develop and implement national and local strategies designed to improve prevention, timely detection and treatment of mental illness in old age, including diagnostic procedures, appropriate medication, psychotherapy and education for professionals and informal caregivers;
- Provide ongoing training to health-care professionals in the detection and assessment of all mental disorders and of depression.

Issue 6: Older persons and disabilities

Objective 1: Maintenance of maximum functional capacity throughout the life course and promotion of the full participation of older persons with disabilities.

Actions

- Develop, as appropriate, gender and age-sensitive national and local policies, legislation, plans and programmes for the treatment and prevention of disabilities, taking health, environmental and social factors into account;
- Encourage the provision of rehabilitation and appropriate care and assistive technologies for older persons with disabilities to fulfil their need for services, support and full integration into society;

C. Ensuring enabling and supportive environments

Issue 1: Housing and the living environment

Objective 1: Promotion of “ageing in place” in the community with due regard to individual preferences and affordable housing options for older persons.

Actions

- Coordinate multi-sectoral efforts to support the continued integration of older persons with their families and communities;
- Link affordable housing with social support services to ensure the integration of living arrangements, long-term care and opportunities for social interaction;

Objective 2: Improvement in housing and environmental design to promote independent living by taking into account the needs of older persons in particular those with disabilities.

Actions

- Promote employment of technology and rehabilitation services designed to support independent living;

Objective 3: Improved availability of accessible and affordable transportation for older persons.

Actions

- Improve the availability of efficient public transportation services in rural and urban areas;

Issue 2: Care and support for caregivers

Objective 1: Provision of a continuum of care and services for older persons from various sources and support for caregivers.

Actions

- Increase quality of care and access to community-based long-term care for older persons living alone in order to extend their capacity for independent living as a possible alternative to hospitalization and nursing home placement;
- Develop social support systems, both formal and informal, with a view to enhancing the ability of families to take care of older persons within the family, including in particular the provision of long-term support and services for the growing number of frail older persons;

Objective 2: Support the caregiving role of older persons, particularly older women.

Actions

- Encourage the provision of social support, including respite services, advice and information for both older caregivers and the families under their care;
- Reinforce the positive role of grandparents in raising grandchildren;

Issue 3: Neglect, abuse and violence

Objective 1: Elimination of all forms of neglect, abuse and violence of older persons.

Actions

- Sensitize professionals and educate the general public, using media and other awareness-raising campaigns, on the subject of elder abuse and its various characteristics and causes;
- Enact legislation and strengthen legal efforts to eliminate elder abuse;

Objective 2: Creation of support services to address elder abuse.

Actions

- Establish services for victims of abuse and rehabilitation arrangements for abusers;
- Include handling of elder abuse in the training of the caring professions;

Issue 4: Images of ageing

Objective 1: Enhancement of public recognition of the authority, wisdom, productivity and other important contributions of older persons.

Actions

- Develop and widely promote a policy framework in which there is an individual and collective responsibility to recognize the past and present contributions of older persons, seeking to counteract preconceived biases and myths and, consequently, to treat older persons with respect and gratitude, dignity and sensitivity;