

Position Paper

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Older Persons and Transportation

Persons over the age of 60 represent a large and increasing proportion of the world's population. Numbering 737 million in 2009, this cohort is expected to grow to more than 2 billion by 2050 (ST/ESA/SER.A290). Although older persons are not identified as a Major Group under Agenda 21 and remain essentially invisible in the Commission on Sustainable Development process, transportation is a critical component of their lives. Transportation, including accessible and affordable public transportation, is a key factor influencing the health and well-being of older persons. It is a determinant of social and civic participation as well as access to community and health services.

Transport and mobility for persons of all ages, including the elderly, are essential preconditions for sustainable development. In a time when financial crises and global climate change have served to refocus attention away from the individual, it is important to note that in many cases improvements and modernization in transport services in urban areas not only have been made at moderate cost but have been designed to reduce greenhouse gas emissions while providing increased accessibility and reliability. With respect to rural areas and developing nations, problems with transport continue to be seen as a major barrier for older persons, both in regard to reaching markets and receiving needed services. This lack of transport infrastructure and affordable transport services also presents a significant obstacle to the achievement of many of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

In accomplishing transportation solutions, seek the participation of older persons in the necessary planning for an energy efficient, multi-transportation mode outcome in a multigenerational society and be guided by: the recognition of the importance of transportation for the rural elderly: the *International Plan of Action on Ageing 2002*, Section C, Priority Direction III -- Ensuring enabling and supportive environments; and WHO's *Global Age-Friendly Cities: A Guide (2007)*, Part 6, Transportation.