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**Social development: follow-up to the International Year  
of Older Persons: Second World Assembly on Ageing**

## **Follow-up to the International Year of Older Persons: Second World Assembly on Ageing**

### **Report of the Secretary-General**

#### *Summary*

The present report is submitted in response to General Assembly resolution 69/146, entitled “Follow-up to the Second World Assembly on Ageing”. The report provides an analysis of how the existing agenda for ageing and older persons fits within the framework of the post-2015 development agenda, including the sustainable development goals. It focuses on six issues that have direct relevance to the post-2015 development agenda from an older person’s perspective: poverty, health, gender equality, employment and decent work, inclusive cities and environmental emergencies. The report also provides updated information on recent developments on ageing from the regional commissions. The report concludes with recommendations for ensuring that no older person is left behind in the implementation of the post-2015 development agenda.

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\* A/70/150.



## I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution 69/146, entitled “Follow-up to the Second World Assembly on Ageing”. As Member States have turned their attention to the elaboration of a new development agenda beyond 2015 with the drafting of the sustainable development goals, the Assembly recognized in resolution 69/146 that there was a “continuing need to give due consideration to the situation of older persons in the ongoing discussion on the post-2015 development agenda”. In the wake of the adoption of the sustainable development goals and targets, it is timely for an analysis of how the agenda for ageing and older persons fits within this new framework in the light of the ongoing implementation of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing. It also provides an opportunity to highlight areas where progress could be made on the continued need for mainstreaming issues of ageing into the wider development agenda, as called for in the Plan of Action.

2. The report provides an ageing and older persons perspective on the following six issues that have direct relevance to the post-2015 development agenda: poverty, health, gender equality, employment and decent work, inclusive cities and environmental emergencies. The report also offers a succinct assessment of age-specific data limitations that impact the effective monitoring of targets under goal 1 (End poverty in all its forms everywhere), Goal 3 (Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages), Goal 5 (Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls), Goal 8 (Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all), Goal 11 (Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable) and Goal 13 (Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impact). Additionally, the report provides updated information on recent developments on ageing from the regional commissions, as well as conclusions and recommendations for consideration by the General Assembly.

## II. The situation of older persons in the post-2015 development agenda

### Goal 1: End poverty in all its forms everywhere

3. Poverty and lack of income security among older persons remain serious and persistent challenges. Many older adults, in both developed and developing countries, are unable to meet their basic expenses and struggle with rising housing costs, health-care bills and inadequate nutrition. Some groups of older persons are highly exposed to the risk of poverty, such as the oldest old and those needing long-term personal care, especially when on a limited income. The risk of falling into poverty in old age is generally more pronounced in developing countries, where two thirds of the world’s older people live, the majority of whom are employed in the informal sector (see [A/65/167](#)).

4. Poverty in old age has a strong gender dimension. The Secretary-General, in his report to the fifty-ninth session of the Commission on the Status of Women (see [E/CN.6/2015/3](#)) noted that the cumulative effect of a lifetime of disadvantages on employment, earnings, access to land and other assets, along with the limited availability of old-age pensions, leaves many older women highly vulnerable to

poverty. In many societies, female-headed households, including divorced, separated, widowed and unmarried older women, are particularly vulnerable.

5. According to the *World Social Protection Report 2014/15*, published by the International Labour Organization, about half of the population above the statutory pensionable age were in receipt of an old-age pension, worldwide, between 2010 and 2012.<sup>1</sup> In addition, pension levels for recipients often fall short of providing income security. The report also notes that, under existing provisions, only 42 per cent of the working population may expect to receive an old-age pension in the future.

6. The findings of the report suggest that, without significant expansion of old-age income security and related social and health services for older persons, the goal of eliminating extreme poverty for all people everywhere will remain elusive and there could in fact be a rise in poverty rates among the growing numbers of older persons in all parts of the world.

7. While the indicators related to targets 1 and 2 of goal 1 (End poverty in all its forms everywhere) are proposed to be “disaggregated by sex and age group,” they are based on existing measures that utilize household survey data where aggregate household-based information is used to calculate per capita income. The “household” is therefore the unit used to construct a set of poverty counts about individuals. In such transformation from household to individuals, many assumptions are made about living arrangements and the allocation of resources within the household. Intra-household differences in income and consumption between sexes and across age-groups are therefore not captured, meaning that a large number of poor older men and women may be living in households that are not categorized as poor.

8. Additionally, there is a certain degree of hidden old-age poverty,<sup>2</sup> which continues to be associated with stigma, discrimination, insecurity, isolation and lack of information on entitlements when they exist. In view of the sheer magnitude of the growth in the old-age population globally, particularly in low and middle income countries, accomplishing the goal of “ending poverty in all its forms everywhere” hinges on the ability of the international community and national Governments to acknowledge and comprehend the specifics of poverty in old age.

### **Goal 3: Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages**

9. The goal’s aim embraces the now well-established fact that prevention and health promotion from birth throughout the life course leads to better health outcomes, particularly at older ages.<sup>3</sup> It also heralds equality in health at all ages as critical to leaving no one behind and social inclusion. The Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing (2002) notes that “policies that promote lifelong health, including health promotion and disease prevention, assistive technology, rehabilitative care, when indicated, mental health services, promotion of healthy

<sup>1</sup> International Labour Organization, *World Social Protection Report 2014/15: Building Economic Recovery, Inclusive Development and Social Justice* (Geneva, 2014), chap. 4.

<sup>2</sup> Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, *Pensions at a Glance 2013: OECD and G20 Indicators*.

<sup>3</sup> National Institute on Aging, National Institutes of Health, United States Department of Health and Human Services and the World Health Organization. *Global Health and Aging* (Washington, D.C.: National Institutes of Health; 2011).

lifestyle and supportive environments, can reduce disability levels associated with old age and effect budgetary savings” (para. 61). Furthermore, under priority direction II: advancing health and well-being into old age, issue 1 is health promotion and well-being throughout life.

10. While the targets related to goal 3 are clearly important in ensuring a healthy old age, they mainly relate to the prevention of premature mortality from communicable diseases such as HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria. The Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, in paragraph 66, also addressed these issues, though more generally, as it called for the reduction of the cumulative effects of factors that increase the risk of disease and consequently potential dependence in older age and made specific reference to older persons and HIV/AIDS.

11. Within the post-2015 framework, the relevance of indicators for measuring targets on communicable diseases (target 3.3) with regard to older persons depends very much on the upper age limit recommended by guidelines for data collection. Prevalence rates for HIV/AIDS are currently only calculated for ages between 15 and 49, even though it is known that people above the age of 49 are still at great risk for contracting the disease. The data situation is similar for malaria and tuberculosis.

12. The suggested indicator for target 3.4, “By 2030, reduce by one third premature mortality from non-communicable diseases through prevention and treatment and promote mental health and well-being — which is the probability of dying of cardiovascular disease, cancer, diabetes or chronic respiratory disease between ages 30 and 70”, while more easily measurable and comparable owing to data limitations than the composite indicator for healthy life expectancy, not only excludes those above 70 years of age, but tells little about the current health status and well-being of older persons.<sup>4</sup> These targets are based on the World Health Organization NCD Global Monitoring Framework, developed in the wake of the adoption of the Political Declaration on Non-communicable Diseases by the General Assembly in 2011. Concerns have been raised by both medical practitioners and non-governmental organization (NGO) representatives that lack of explicit target reference to people aged 70 and over may result in discriminated access to health care.<sup>5</sup>

13. Susceptibility to non-communicable diseases increases with age and is exacerbated by behavioural risks. As a result of strong behaviour modification campaigns in the more developed regions of the world, high incidences of non-communicable diseases are now more often associated with low- and middle-income countries and people living in poverty in high-income countries. However, in many countries, the high cost associated with the treatment of chronic diseases leave the most disadvantaged, including older persons, without access to health care.<sup>6</sup> This makes target 3.8, to “achieve universal health coverage, including financial risk

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<sup>4</sup> “Compendium of statistical notes for the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals”, United Nations Statistics Division, in collaboration with the Friends of the Chair group on broader measures of progress (March 2014).

<sup>5</sup> Peter Lloyd-Sherlock and others, “A premature mortality target for the SDG for health is agiest”, *The Lancet*, vol. 385, No. 9983 (30 May 2015).

<sup>6</sup> David E. Bloom and others, *Macro economic implications for population ageing and selected policy responses*, *The Lancet*, published online, 5 November 2014; World Health Organization (2015), Non-communicable diseases Fact sheet, available at [www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs355/en/](http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs355/en/).

protection, access to quality essential health-care services and access to safe, effective, quality and affordable essential medicines and vaccines for all”, a challenge, particularly for older persons. The Madrid Plan of Action addresses this issue under the headings of “universal and equal access to health-care services”, which calls for, inter alia, investing in health care and rehabilitation for older persons to extend healthy and active years.

14. Furthermore, the lack of knowledge of medical practitioners about the specific health issues and needs of older persons, coupled with the limited availability of age-appropriate health care in many developing countries, means that even for those with financial resources and/or medical insurance, medical treatments often do not have a positive effect.<sup>6</sup> To address this problem, the Madrid Plan of Action, in paragraphs 76 and 82, called for the development of a continuum of health care to meet the needs of older persons and the training of care providers and health professionals.

15. Owing to the fact that the focus of the targets is on prevention of non-communicable diseases at younger ages, the issue of the growing mental health needs of an ageing population and the resulting substantial growth in the incidence of Alzheimer’s disease and dementia is not addressed within the framework of the sustainable development goals. This will have significant economic and social consequences for all societies if not adequately addressed, as called for in the Madrid Plan of Action.

#### **Goal 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls**

16. Men and women experience old age differently. While both older men and older women face age-based discrimination, older women also face the additional cumulative effects of gender discrimination throughout their lives. Forms of discrimination against older women include negative stereotypes that render women in old age as unimportant; limited access to services and entitlements owing to lack of education, decision-making and participation in public life; lack of access to age-appropriate health care; lower earning capacity and the additional hurdle of discriminatory gender-based laws and customs that apply to property and inheritance.<sup>7</sup>

17. While the Millennium Development Goals galvanized progress to promote gender equality and mobilized international action in support of empowering women (goal 3), the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) has argued that the shortcomings of the Millennium Development Goals framework was its failure to tackle the structural underpinnings of gender inequality, including addressing issues of violence, unpaid work, limited control over assets and property and unequal participation in private and public decision-making, therefore not fully addressing gender-based discrimination.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> United Nations Population Fund and HelpAge International: *Ageing in the Twenty-First Century: A Celebration and A Challenge* (2012).

<sup>8</sup> United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, *A Transformative Stand-Alone Goal on Achieving Gender Equality, Women’s Rights and Women’s Empowerment: Imperatives and Key Components* (2013).

18. Despite growing evidence on how discrimination affects women in older age and the challenges they face, this issue received little attention during the post-2015 discussions. Target 5.1 aims to end all forms of discrimination against all women and girls everywhere, through measuring, inter alia, whether or not legal frameworks discriminate against women and girls as identified in the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. However, despite the adoption of General Recommendation No. 27 by the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women in 2010, which recognized age as one of the grounds on which women suffer such discrimination, older women remain low on the priority list of Member States (see [CEDAW/C/GC/27](#)). A recent report of the Secretary-General on the follow-up to the Second World Assembly on Ageing ([A/69/180](#)) noted that the number of references to old age in observations made by the Committee on the reports of State Parties during the period 2009-2013 remain scarce.

19. Discriminatory laws and practices against older women in all spheres of their political, economic, social and family lives fuel violence and abuse.<sup>9</sup> Despite policies and programmes adopted by many countries at the national level, reports of incidents of violence against older women have grown at an alarming rate. Recent findings draw specific attention to the abuse and violence directed at older women accused of witchcraft, as well as the financial abuse faced by older women owing to discriminatory property and inheritance laws (see [A/68/167](#)).

20. Target 5.2 of the sustainable development goals aims to eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation. Tracking progress in achieving target 5.2 would require extending data collection on women subjected to physical and/or sexual violence to the age 50 and beyond. Setting an upper age limit at 49 years stems from a traditional focus on women in reproductive age and overlooks sexuality and violence in older women's lives. Furthermore, studies have found "age" to be an important correlate of experience of violence, both inside and outside the home. Partner violence, measured in the 12 months prior to a survey, is generally more prevalent among younger women. However, and owing to their longer exposure to the risk of violence, lifetime partner violence is generally more prevalent for older women.<sup>10</sup>

21. With the number of older persons expected to reach 1.4 billion in 2030 and 2 billion in 2050, and women representing the majority of them, progress in achieving the goal on gender equality and empowering all women and girls will rest on recognizing that gender inequality and discrimination could last throughout women's lives, including in older age, and that a life-cycle analysis of gender equality is needed to address it.

**Goal 8: Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all**

22. The report of the Secretary-General to the General Assembly on a life of dignity ([A/68/202](#) and Corr. 1) for all calls for a post-2015 development agenda that

<sup>9</sup> Emna Aouij, Head of the United Nations Working Group on discrimination against women in law and in practice, Statement By United Nations Experts on the Occasion of World Elder Abuse Awareness Day, 2015.

<sup>10</sup> *Guidelines for Producing Statistics on Violence Against Women: Statistical Surveys* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.13.XVII.7).

ensures a shift from poor prospects for decent jobs that leave working women and men and their families in poverty to increased opportunities for decent work with decent wages. The report also calls for removing barriers for the full participation of older persons in employment, while protecting their rights and dignity.

23. In providing an assessment of progress to date, the Secretary-General reports to the Commission for Social Development and the General Assembly to identify various policy provisions, legislations and programmes towards enhancing the participation of older persons in the workforce (see [E/CN.5/2014/4](#), [A/68/167](#) and [A/67/188](#)). Despite some progress, older persons continue to face obstacles in obtaining and retaining employment and face the highest level of unemployment risk (see [E/CN.5/2014/4](#), [A/68/167](#) and [A/67/188](#)).

24. As the global community adopts a development agenda for the coming decades, two main issues on work and employment in old age take centre stage. The first is the continuing debate on the right of older persons to work on an equal basis with the right to work of others. In developed countries, some older people nearing retirement age may wish to remain active by working longer and retiring later in life. Others may try to continue working into old age because their pensions, usually their only, or main, source of income, would be insufficient to cover their living expenses after retirement, or might be higher if taken later. In the less developed regions, older persons tend to remain in the workforce for as long as they can, out of necessity to secure their livelihoods. Differences in the levels of labour force participation between developed and developing regions reveal a strong inverse relationship between labour force participation at older ages and the proportion of older persons receiving a pension.

25. Regardless of the different context, the implementation of nationally appropriate social protection systems, including floors, as called for as a mean to end poverty in all its forms everywhere (goal 1), should go hand in hand with the recognition that older persons have the right to work on an equal basis with the right to work of other age groups.

26. The second issue is the claim, often made by countries experiencing a youth bulge, that fewer jobs for older persons means more jobs for youth, a claim based on the assumption that there is a fixed number of jobs and workers. There is no empirical evidence in support of this claim. On the contrary, evidence suggests that early retirement policies have not generated jobs for younger people<sup>11</sup> and that increasing policies to foster employment of older workers is likely to support the employment of both older and younger workers.<sup>12</sup> Preliminary research carried out in the Asian region suggests that countries with a healthy labour market for older persons also have a healthy labour market for the youth.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> International Labour Organization, *An Analysis: Young and older workers: two sides of the same coin*, 2012.

<sup>12</sup> René Böheim, “The effect of early retirement schemes on youth employment”, IZA World of Labour 2014: available at <http://wol.iza.org/articles/effect-of-early-retirement-schemes-on-youth-employment.pdf>.

<sup>13</sup> *Report of the Workshop on Social Integration and Rights of Older Persons in the Asia-Pacific Region* (Bangkok, 2014), co-organized by Department of Social and Economic Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat and the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific; available at [www.un.org/esa/socdev/documents/ageing/workshop/Workshop2014Report.pdf](http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/documents/ageing/workshop/Workshop2014Report.pdf).

27. Realizing full and productive employment and decent work for all is widely viewed by Member States, developed and developing, as central to the post-2015 development agenda. The challenge, however, is translating this goal into targets that capture the multifaceted nature of the employment challenge and could be supported by indicators that enable assessments of progress. This is especially so in developing countries, where the majority of older people live, and where available statistics do not fully account for the distinctive features of labour markets characterized by widespread informality.

28. Within the proposed targets, older persons are accounted for under target 8.5, “By 2030, achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men, including for young people and persons with disabilities, and equal pay for work of equal value”. While there is a core set of indicators in the areas of working poor, informality and social protection, which is available and provides a menu of options to be adapted according to national circumstances, there is a need for those indicators to be disaggregated by age in accordance with Recommendation 204, “Transition from the Informal to the Formal Economy Recommendation, 2015 (No. 204)”, adopted by the International Labour Conference on 12 June 2015.

**Goal 11: Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable**

29. With over half of the world’s population already living in urban areas and continuing population growth and urbanization projected to add 2.5 billion people to the world urban population by 2050, planning for population ageing is bound to become a significant tenet of urban policy.<sup>14</sup>

30. The sustainable development goal to make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable needs to take into account various challenges and opportunities ageing societies impose on the economic and social fabric of cities. Making cities inclusive of older persons rests on the provision of opportunities for their economic and social participation, while affording them an accessible and safe built environment, affordable housing and health and other services in support of ageing in place.

31. Some cities have already developed visions that reflect their transition into ageing societies, sometimes specifically focusing on the issue, and sometimes as part of a general plan for urban and economic development.<sup>15</sup> A recent report of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), “Ageing in cities”, examines the impact that population ageing has on urban development and on cities’ policy response. The report references nine case studies covering Calgary, Canada; Brno, Czech Republic; Helsinki, Finland; Cologne, Germany; Toyama, Japan; Yokohama, Japan; Lisbon, Portugal; Manchester, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland; and Philadelphia, United States of America.<sup>15</sup> The report, which was prepared as the final outcome of the OECD “Sustainable Urban Development Policies in Ageing Societies” project, aims at providing policymakers with tools to mitigate the challenges of ageing societies as a central element to the construction of economically and socially resilient cities.

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<sup>14</sup> United Nations, *World Urbanization Prospects: The 2014 Revision, Highlights* (New York, 2014).

<sup>15</sup> Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, *Ageing in Cities* (Paris, April 2015).

32. The report emphasizes that, in the context of ageing cities, indicators, beyond making it possible to benchmark policy outcomes, are particularly important for cities to identify which stage of the ageing process and related changes they are experiencing; for example, young and fast growing city/ageing slowly, young city/ageing rapidly, ageing city with slow population growth. Indicators also provide citizens with information about their societies and help to build consensus among citizens of different generations.

33. Of direct relevance to older persons under the targets of the sustainable development goal on making cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable are outcomes such as access to adequate, safe and affordable housing, safe, affordable, accessible and sustainable transport, inclusive and sustainable urbanization, universal access to safe, inclusive and accessible, green and public spaces. While the indicators measure the proportion of the population that benefits from the achievement of targets, they do not enable specific assessment of whether older persons, or persons with disabilities, benefit from the achievement of targets. As has been highlighted in the report of the High-Level Panel of Eminent Persons on the post-2015 development agenda, targets can only be considered achieved if they are met by all relevant social groups.<sup>16</sup>

### **Goal 13: Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts**

34. The goal to take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts reflects the fact that climate change is an inevitable and critical global challenge with long-term implications for the sustainable development of all countries and populations. Climate change impacts are already disrupting livelihoods in many parts of the world. It has the potential to place increased stress on everyone, but disproportionately on the most vulnerable groups.

35. Climate change is coupled with an increasing frequency of natural disasters. As such, the targets of the sustainable development goal on strengthening resilience and adaptive capacity to climate change and its impact focus on hazards and natural disasters in all countries, integrating climate change measures into national policies, strategies and planning and improving education, awareness raising and human and institutional capacity on climate change mitigation, adaptation, impact reduction and early warning. The targets also aim at promoting mechanisms for raising capacities for effective climate change-related planning and management, in the least developed countries.

36. While the targets under goal 13 make reference to women, youth, local and marginalized communities, they do not refer to older persons. Older persons are among the most at risk from the impacts of climate change because of decreased mobility resulting from age, changes in physiology and more restricted access to resources, all of which may limit adaptive capacity. Also, a large body of evidence points to adverse effects of heat waves, a phenomenon experienced with increased frequency as a result of climate change, on the health of older persons.<sup>17</sup> Disaster risk reduction has been recognized as being instrumental to counteracting the added

<sup>16</sup> Report of the High-Level Panel of Eminent Persons on the Post-2015 Development Agenda, "A New Global Partnership: Eradicate Poverty and Transform Economies through Sustainable Development", p. 29 (United Nations, 2013).

<sup>17</sup> See Janet L. Gamble and others, "Climate change and older Americans: state of the science", *Environmental Health Perspectives*, vol. 121, No. 1 (2013).

risks arising from climate; risk-sensitive development should be a key component of the post-2015 development agenda.

37. The role of older persons and the interplay of vulnerability, resilience and adaptive responses to climate stressors and disasters have been recognized in the new framework for disaster risk reduction 2015-2030, which was adopted in Sendai on March 2015.<sup>18</sup> The framework calls for a broader and more people-centred preventive approach to disaster risk reduction and encourages Governments to engage with relevant stakeholders, including older persons in the design and implementation of policies, plans and standards. It states that older persons have years of knowledge and skills, which are invaluable assets to reduce disaster risk, and they should be included in the design of policies, plans and mechanisms, including early warning activities. Applying this approach will be essential in understanding the unique vulnerabilities of older persons to disasters and the longer term processes of climate change.

38. As an example, the “Disaster Risk and Age Index of 2015” report contributed by the non-governmental organization HelpAge International to the Sendai Conference provides a country-by-country analysis of the disaster risks faced by older people in 190 countries.<sup>19</sup> The index is based on three dimensions: hazard and exposure, vulnerability and lack of coping capacity. The report demonstrates how older persons’ day-to-day living conditions may leave them vulnerable and at risk from disasters and illustrates policies and practices that can significantly reduce the risks to older persons.

### **III. Updated information on regional policy developments (2014-2015)**

#### **Economic Commission for Africa**

39. The draft African Union Protocol on the rights of older persons in Africa to supplement provisions of the African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights will be submitted to the Specialized Technical Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs and then for adoption by the African Union Assembly in January 2016. The protocol arises from a recommendation of the African Union Policy Framework and Plan of Action on Ageing (2002). The African Union Executive Council also endorsed an African Common Position on the Rights of Older Persons adopted in November 2012 in preparation for the observance of the twentieth anniversary of the International Year of the Family. The Economic Commission for Africa has initiated a research project on ageing and development in small island developing States in Africa involving Guinea-Bissau, Cabo Verde, Mauritius and Sao Tome and Principe. Small island States have a unique ageing process, compared to mainland countries, with generally small and rapidly ageing populations and some experiencing population decline. The project aims at documenting the specifics of the ageing challenge faced by African small island States and making it an integral part of the wider African development agenda.

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<sup>18</sup> See [A/CONF.224/L.2](#), April 2015.

<sup>19</sup> HelpAge International, *Disaster Risk and Age Index* (London, 2015).

### **Economic Commission for Europe**

40. The Economic Commission for Europe continues to produce policy briefs on specific topics related to ageing, examining the pros and cons of various possible policy approaches and presenting examples of good practices chosen by the members of its Working Group on Ageing. In February 2015, issue 15 in the series was published, exploring the topic “Innovative and empowering strategies for care”. Issue 16 focuses on the topic “Dignity and non-discrimination of persons with dementia”, which was published in September 2015.

41. The Commission, in collaboration with the Ministry of Labour, Health and Social Affairs of Georgia, published a road map for mainstreaming ageing in Georgia in May 2015. The road map, the third in the Commission series of national road maps for mainstreaming ageing, is intended to help guide the country as it works to fulfil the commitments of the Regional Implementation Strategy for the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing. It is the culmination of a systematic review of the diversity of social, economic, cultural and political factors affecting the situation of older persons in Georgia. It identifies recommendations for concrete actions in each of these areas, as well as advocating for a generalized mainstreaming approach in which the reality of population ageing is recognized and its consequences taken into account in all areas of policymaking.

42. Within the framework of a joint Economic Commission for Europe-European Commission project, the Economic Commission for Europe continues the work on the Active Ageing Index, an evidence tool for assessing the untapped potential of older people and for monitoring active ageing outcomes at different levels (national and subnational).<sup>20</sup> The Active Ageing Index has now been calculated for 28 European Union countries for three data points (2008, 2010 and 2012). This allowed for analysis of the dynamics over a four-year period. The latest Active Ageing Index results and the outcomes of the analysis are presented in an analytical report launched in April 2015.<sup>21</sup> The research continues for other Economic Commission for Europe countries — Canada, Iceland, Norway and Switzerland — and pilot studies are being run for Serbia and Turkey. There is also a strong interest regarding the use of the Active Ageing Index at the subnational, regional or local level. A number of countries, such as Italy, Poland and Spain, have already taken the initiative to calculate regional indexes for their regions.

43. In preparation for the third review and appraisal cycle of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing and its Regional Implementation Strategy, the secretariat of the Economic Commission for Europe, together with the Working Group on Ageing and its Bureau, issued guidelines for the national focal points on ageing and other stakeholders on preparation of the national reports in May 2015.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>20</sup> See [www1.unece.org/stat/platform/display/AAI/Active+Ageing+Index+Home](http://www1.unece.org/stat/platform/display/AAI/Active+Ageing+Index+Home).

<sup>21</sup> Economic Commission for Europe and the European Commission (2015), “Active Ageing Index 2014: Analytical Report”; report prepared by Asghar Zaidi, Centre for Research on Ageing, University of Southampton and David Stanton, under contract with the Economic Commission for Europe (Geneva), co-funded by European Commission’s Directorate General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion (Brussels); available at: [www1.unece.org/stat/platform/download/attachments/76287849/AAI%20Report%20LOW%20RES.PDF?version=1&modificationDate=1429629201948&api=v2](http://www1.unece.org/stat/platform/download/attachments/76287849/AAI%20Report%20LOW%20RES.PDF?version=1&modificationDate=1429629201948&api=v2).

<sup>22</sup> See [www.unece.org/population/mipaa/reviewandappraisal.html](http://www.unece.org/population/mipaa/reviewandappraisal.html).

### **Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean**

44. Within the framework of the Organization of American States (OAS), the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) supported the drafting of the Inter-American Convention on the Protection of Human Rights of Older Persons, prepared by the Working Group on the Protection of Human Rights of Older Persons, which was adopted by OAS in June 2015.

45. In June 2014, the Mexico Federal District Government of Mexico City, together with ECLAC, held the Second International Forum on the Rights of Older Persons within the framework of the implementation and follow-up of the San Jose Charter on the rights of older persons in Latin America and the Caribbean. Representatives from Argentina, Aruba, Austria, Bangladesh, Belize, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Ecuador, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Greece, Guatemala, Italy, Mauritius, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Spain, United States of America and Uruguay attended the meeting, as well as representatives of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the Ibero-American Social Security Organization, OAS, the Council of Europe and the African Commission on Human Rights and Peoples. The Forum results were published in the book “Autonomy and dignity in old age: Theory and practice in policy rights of older persons” in December 2014.<sup>23</sup>

46. In November 2014, a trainer of trainers course on “the rights of older persons: tools for transfer and collaborative learning, toward the humanization of care and practice”, organized by the National Institute of Social Services for Retirees and Pensioners of Argentina within the framework of a training agreement signed with ECLAC, was conducted. The course was attended by 40 professionals of the National Institute, who are now leading in-person awareness activities across the country and have trained 2,723 officers of the Institute. Additionally, an ongoing distance training course conducted by the National Institute and ECLAC has been implemented since 2013, in which 9,717 agents of the Institute throughout the country have been trained.

47. ECLAC has continued to provide technical support to the Secretariat of Social Development of the Mexico Federal District Government of Mexico City. During 2015, ECLAC prepared the document entitled “Older persons’ access to the Food Pension Programme and related rights in Mexico City”, which served as the basis to design the credit programme for older persons. This is a social credit initiative guaranteed by the Federal District Government of Mexico City, which aims to facilitate the access of older people to financial services. In late 2014, the *Secretaría de Desarrollo Social*, together with ECLAC, designed a survey on the needs related to the care of those entitled to food pension in Mexico City. The survey was applied to 23,699 older persons in the first quarter of 2015 and its results gave rise to the document entitled “Care needs of older persons in Mexico City: diagnosis and policy guidelines”, prepared by the *Secretaría de Desarrollo Social* and ECLAC, which will serve as the basis for designing a programme of care to be implemented during 2015.

48. The momentum to ensure the human rights of older persons in Latin American countries continues. While, in terms of public discourse, the issue has taken hold, there are limitations to its implementation owing to lack of funds, institutional

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<sup>23</sup> Available from [http://repositorio.cepal.org/bitstream/11362/37523/1/S1421014\\_es.pdf](http://repositorio.cepal.org/bitstream/11362/37523/1/S1421014_es.pdf).

weaknesses, poor implementation of laws and low coverage of existing programmes.

49. Some issues are gaining greater visibility, such as the situation of older persons in disaster situations, those living on the street and those who are part of the prison population. Older women often benefit from existing programmes owing to their vulnerability, but seldom with a view to reducing gender and generational gaps.

#### **Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia**

50. Since the adoption of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) has focused its work on the review of its implementation. The regional reviews undertaken by ESCWA mainly addressed institutional frameworks and policies dealing with older persons, programmes and projects formulated in response to the Madrid International Plan of Action, challenges facing member countries in the implementation of the Plan of Action and recommendations for future work by member countries and ESCWA. Focus was also placed on analysing the situation of older persons in the ESCWA countries following the three priority areas of the Plan of Action, namely, older persons and development, advancing health and well-being into old age and ensuring enabling and supportive environments.

51. Along the same line, ESCWA is planning to work on the third review and appraisal during the biennium 2016-2017 through (a) the provision of support to member countries, upon their request, to put together national reports reviewing the progress made to date in the implementation of Plan of Action; (b) undertaking research on issues of concern to older persons in the Arab countries; and (c) the preparation for a regional meeting aimed at reviewing the achievements of policies and programmes in the area of ageing and exploring future prospects to enhance the work on older persons in the Arab region.

52. Policy development in the Arab region points to the importance of strengthening the existing institutional set-up for dealing with issues of concern to older persons, with a view to enhancing coordination between relevant line ministries. This is to prevent the fragmentation of efforts in the design, development, implementation and assessment of policies, plans and programmes targeting older persons and to enhance their impact and further the integration of older persons into the development process. Along with this, a change to a more proactive approach is solicited whereby older persons are viewed as rights holders, partners in and contributors to the development process. This will ensure their participation in the identification of issues and problems that they consider important and in influencing the formulation of corresponding remedial measures.

#### **Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific**

53. The work of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCAP) has been focused on the economic and social impact of population ageing in the region, with a particular emphasis on income support, long-term care issues and the promotion of the rights of older persons. In support of this agenda, ESCAP is preparing an analytical publication.

54. In the area of long-term care, ESCAP organized, on 10 and 11 December 2014, a regional expert consultation on long-term care of older persons in Bangkok. The

meeting discussed national experiences in the provision of long-term care for countries at different stages of population ageing, and critical areas for the provision of care in the region were identified. Analytical studies are also being prepared that focus on the growing demand for long-term care owing to the process of rapid ageing in the region; different modalities of care used in countries of the region; and the gaps and challenges in the provision of long-term care in the region. The outcome of the regional expert consultation and the studies will feed into an analytical report on long-term care for older persons with policy recommendations to meet the increasing demand for long-term care of older persons in the region.

55. In the area of enhancing social protection for older persons, ESCAP implemented the project “Analysing Social Protection Policies: A Focus on Income Support Schemes”. The project conducted in-depth research on existing income support schemes for vulnerable groups, including for older persons, throughout the region. It resulted in the preparation of a comprehensive menu of policy options for the design and implementation of income support schemes in the region. Analytical products produced under the project provide policymakers with knowledge on ways to improve existing income support schemes or integrate existing income support schemes into a more comprehensive social protection system so that they contribute to protecting the individual over the different phases in the life-cycle.

56. ESCAP has initiated the implementation of the project “Strengthening Income Security for Older Persons in Asia and the Pacific”. The project analyses existing pension systems and other income support schemes for older persons with regard to their coverage, beneficiaries, sustainability and suitability to provide income security for older persons. The project provides a platform for South-South cooperation and sharing of experiences on income security for older persons between countries in the Asia-Pacific region. The project is ongoing, and will feature national, subregional and regional consultations aimed at strengthening income security for older persons in the region.

57. In response to resolution 69/14, as well as the General Assembly resolutions 65/182 and 67/139 on the Open-ended Working Group on Ageing, ESCAP organized a workshop on the social integration and the rights of older persons in the Asia-Pacific region, which was held from 30 September to 2 October 2014 in Bangkok. The workshop was organized in collaboration with the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, with the support of the Asia-Pacific Forum of National Human Rights Institutions, UNFPA and HelpAge International. The workshop brought together experts from 12 Governments, national human rights institutions, civil society and the United Nations system and provided an opportunity for sharing experiences on how national legislation can better contribute to the social integration of older persons and ways to address existing gaps in implementing existing legislation. Participants also discussed how the region could contribute better to the work of the Open-Ended Working Group on Ageing.

#### **IV. Conclusions and recommendations**

**58. The post-2015 development agenda, and its overarching objective of eradicating poverty, provides an important platform for addressing poverty and lack of income security among older persons. This remains a serious and persistent challenge and has a strong gender dimension. While living in poverty**

is difficult at any age, it is especially challenging at older ages, when options for escaping it are limited. With the population aged 60 and over in low and middle income countries expected to grow by over 400 million between 2015 and 2030, ending poverty will require an unprecedented expansion of social protection provisions and benefits.

59. The goal of health and well-being at all ages is an important cross-cutting issue with significant implications for the success of the post-2015 development agenda. However, none of the health priorities and health-care needs of older persons as articulated in the Madrid Plan of Action, are expressed within the existing targets.

60. The combination of age and sex discrimination puts women at more of a disadvantage in old age than men. Older women continue to suffer from discriminatory laws and practices, including limited access to services and entitlements, which renders them more vulnerable to abuse and violence. While the post-2015 development agenda is a major step forward in promoting the need to address gender-based discrimination, notably violence and abuse, a more inclusive life course approach is needed to combat violence and abuse against women in older age.

61. Work, employment and income security are as important to the social integration of older persons as they are for adults of other age groups. The right of older persons to work should, therefore, be promoted and protected on an equal basis with the right to work of others.

62. Against a background of steady upward population growth in urban areas, rapid urbanization and ageing populations, planning for and providing opportunities for making cities inclusive of older persons' economic and social participation is an important dimension of the construction of sustainable cities.

63. Climate change has the potential to place increased stress on everyone, but disproportionately on the most vulnerable groups. Older persons are among the most at risk from climate change and face particular adaptation challenges that have potentially far-reaching implications. Among the key components to counteract the added risks arising from climate change is a people-centred approach to disaster risk reduction, as well as building the resilience of older persons to the impact of natural disasters and climate change processes.

64. Pursuing inclusiveness within the framework of the sustainable development goals encompasses, to a welcome extent, consideration of individuals and groups of all ages. However, targets tend to focus on the challenges of the young and working age adults, while policy outcome indicators are unlikely to be widely available with the level of detail required to assess the impact on the situation of older adults.

65. Effective implementation of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing will be critical to achieving several sustainable development goals. A central tenet of the successful implementation of the Madrid International Plan rests on building national capacities for policy development and mainstreaming ageing into national and international development agendas. The General Assembly may, therefore, wish to consider the following recommendations:

(a) **Encourage Member States to take steps towards mainstreaming ageing as part of achieving the sustainable development goals so as to enhance the implementation of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing;**

(b) **Encourage Member States to continue addressing issues of significance to older persons, which are not explicitly recognized in the sustainable development goals and targets, within the framework of the implementation of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing;**

(c) **Encourage Member States to ensure that persons aged 60 and above are accounted for in the implementation of the sustainable development goals and targets, with a view that no older person is left behind.**

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