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ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR AFRICA
DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS



AFRICAN UNION



Concept Note on the Expert Group Meeting on Aging, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 19-21 November 2007

Background

In February 2006, the Commission on Social Development (CSD) in its resolution 44/1 outlined specific modalities for the first review and appraisal of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Aging (MIPAA). The review and appraisal process was proposed to take place during 2006-2008. The CSD encouraged the regional commissions to convene regional review and appraisal activities.

Complementing the review and appraisal of MIPAA currently coordinated by the Department of Social Affairs (DESA) would be the need for regional activities in which DESA and all other commissions would be invited by the host commission to exchange knowledge and identify lessons learned. DESA recommends that the two areas for international cooperation should be: (1) training activities on how to organize and coordinate a nation-wide review and appraisal incorporating participatory methods of data collection and analysis; and (2) regional review and appraisal events (meetings/conferences) to evaluate the national experience in the region and identify future priorities for implementing the MIPAA.

Indeed, it is important that Africa participates actively in the review and appraisal of MIPAA. The Policy Framework and Plan of Action on Aging, which was developed by the AU in collaboration with HelpAge International and adopted by the 38th Session of the then OAU Assembly of Heads of State and Government in 2002 was Africa's contribution to the MIPAA. Its ultimate goal is to guide Member States in designing, implementing, monitoring and evaluating appropriate integrated national policies and programmes to meet the individual and collective needs of older people. The Framework mandates the AU Commission to establish an Advisory Council which would be responsible for overseeing the implementation process of the Plan of Action.

The Expert Group Meeting on Aging is one of the components of the review process planned for Africa by ECA. It will take place in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, from 19 to 21 November 2007. The focus of the meeting will be on receiving and deliberating on the contents of the 2007 Report on Aging in Africa produced by the Commission; conducting in-depth exploration of selected topics on aging in Africa; receiving and discussing country review and appraisal reports; and charting the way forward.



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For Africa, regarded as the youngest continent in the world in terms of the age structure, the EGM will provide a platform for information sharing on the challenges posed by increasing numbers of older persons, and country experiences in dealing with the needs of the elderly.

Preliminary agenda for the EGM

The proposed preliminary agenda of the meeting is, therefore as follows:

- 1) Opening ceremony;
- 2) Presentations of the MIPAA of the AU Policy framework on ageing
- 3) 2007 report on Aging in Africa;
- 4) Selected topics on aging in Africa:
 - a. Advocacy, awareness creation and evolution of policies and programmes on ageing in Africa.
 - b. Urbanization, poverty and the well-being of older people in Africa
- 5) Country reports on review and appraisal of the MIPAA;
- 6) Review and appraisal of Africa's strategies to implement MIPAA priorities for future action.
- 7) The need for international programmes on ageing: Obstacles and the way forward. Strengthening the bottom-up review and appraisal process of the MIPAA in Africa;
- 8) Research gaps and challenges on aging in Africa: Remedies for information provision;
- 9) Discussion on identified priorities issues and the way forward.
- 10) Closing ceremony

Expected Accomplishments

The expected accomplishments will include:

- 1) Shared knowledge and information on the elderly
- 2) Increased awareness of planners and policy makers in member States on the issues of aging;
- 3) Enhanced capacity of member States to cooperate and promote sub-regional, regional and international partnerships for providing social, economic and health support to the elderly.



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Participants

Due to limited resources, only a selected number of countries have been invited to draft reports and present them to the EGM. These are: Cameroon, Ethiopia, Ghana, Mauritius, South Africa, Tanzania and Uganda. Prior communication on the subject between ECA and the countries on the subject, regional distribution and linguistic factors were taken into account in the selection. In addition, six experts have been selected to present papers on special topics on aging and enrich the deliberations of the EGM.

Partners

This EGM is prepared by the ECA in close collaboration with UNDESA, and in partnership with the AU, HelpAge, selected countries and experts.