Written Statement Submitted by the International Federation on Ageing (IFA)

Madam Chair, your excellencies and distinguished colleagues. As an international non-governmental organization whose membership base comprises government, civil society, industry, academia and individuals, the International Federation on Ageing (IFA) appreciates the opportunity to provide a statement today at the Asia-Pacific Intergovernmental Meeting on the Fourth Review and Appraisal of the MIPAA.

To promote and strengthen multisectoral and multi-stakeholder partnering to foster healthy ageing and in particular the implementation of the UN Decade of Healthy Ageing 2021-2030. The UN Decade of healthy ageing, endorsed by the World Health Assembly, aligns with and supports implementation of the United Nations Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing (MIPAA), and the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals.

Population ageing is a transformative force that impacts the social, health and economic fabric of every country. By 2030, which marks the end of the UN Decade of Healthy Ageing, and almost MIPAA plus 30 the number of people aged 60 years and older will be 34% higher than today, reaching 1.4 billion. ²

In the context of the lives of current and future generations of older people the MIPAA review and extensive consultation highlights both developments and opportunities go into more depth on specific country issues. Older people and those with underlying health conditions have faced the most significant risks from COVID-19, yet neither are they invisible or powerless. In this space of both tragedy and opportunity older people and civil society are the glue of solidarity globally, nationally, locally and at the community level.

The review and extensive consultation has shown that the resilience of older people is critical in the process of healing and recovering – a reminder of multiple previous crisis and emergency situations.

But the health, wellbeing and functional ability of all citizens, and especially older people must be at the forefront of a review of the systems of national policy and programs. Lives, livelihoods and economies are in jeopardy when people and the systems in which they live and work are disconnected or do not have a common agenda.

As the population ages, the demand for long-term care (LTC) will increase. The Covid-19 pandemic has laid bare the recurring issues faced by the LTC sector, including concerns over financial stability, workloads, and inadequate working conditions for family caregivers and kin. To protect the rights of caregivers and build LTC systems that are financially and socially sustainable, there is a need to improve working conditions by including fair compensation, remuneration and benefits for all caregivers.

Economic security in later life is an essential prerequisite for the realization of all human rights, a notion that is anchored in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. ¹ Economic security, which includes social protection, is essential to prevent older persons from falling into poverty.

The right to health, economic and social security in later life require formal acknowledgement through a legally binding instrument. The IFA is honoured to work alongside Member States in the region to advocate for the rights of older people which must be respected and protected.

---