Pacific Stakeholder Consultation

Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

Asia-Pacific Intergovernmental Meeting on the Fourth Review and Appraisal of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing (Bangkok and online, 29 June–1 July 2022)


Consultations Addressing all Madrid Plan of Action priority directions, in relation to the Pacific

1. I thank the Chair.

2. Excellencies, and distinguished delegates, I am pleased to report on Consultations Addressing all Madrid Plan of Action priority directions, in relation to the Pacific. I note the Summary of Outcomes¹ and the Summary Report prepared by the ESCAP.

3. The fourth consultation was held on 8 June 2022 and organized by ESCAP with input from stakeholders in the Pacific.

4. About 55 stakeholders from around 15 countries in Asia and the Pacific attended the consultation. Participants came from a broad range of sectors, including academia, civil society, intergovernmental organizations, local authorities and communities, and the private sector. There was balanced gender representation among participants.

5. Participants identified, among others, the following challenges:

   a. Governments paid limited attention to ageing, while focal points on ageing changed frequently and were not sufficiently sensitized;

   b. Coordination on services for older persons remained a challenge, with limited overall care strategies, age-friendly health services and adequate social pensions;

   c. Due to negative images of ageing, older persons were often not recognized, while traditional village systems and family-based care were diminishing, as youth moved to cities or abroad for better jobs. The COVID-19 pandemic had exacerbated vulnerabilities, including homelessness among older persons;

   d. Elder abuse was common, including financial and psychological abuse from family members, and was often underreported, due to factors such as shame and limited communication in remote areas;

   e. In several Pacific countries, older persons comprised around half of persons with disabilities, while there were very few support programmes for these individuals, including provision of assistive devices.

¹ ESCAP/MIPAA/IGM.3/2022/INF/2
6. Stakeholders pointed to good practices that supported implementation:
   
a. Most countries in the Pacific had ratified relevant conventions to enhance implementation of the Madrid Plan of Action. Moreover, older persons were often educated and well aware of their rights and needs;

   b. The traditional knowledge of older persons had been used in the context of natural disasters, including those related to climate change, such as through helping communities prepare for and mitigate the impacts of disasters.

7. Participants recommended the following actions:
   
a. Governments needed to take the lead in designing policies to promote the rights of older persons, with civil society actively participating in the development and monitoring of policies, along with building capacity to support older persons;

   b. There was a need to identify and increase awareness of abuse, with adequate policy and legal responses and supported by health professionals and social workers cognizant of complicated family dynamics;

   c. There needed to be safeguards of the human rights of older persons, with a move away from welfare models to rights-based approaches, including a convention on the rights of older persons.

8. In closing, and on behalf of all participants in the Pacific consultations, I congratulate the Commission and its officers for engaging proactively with the Pacific.

9. I thank the Chair