Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific  
Intergovernmental Meeting on the Fourth Review and Appraisal of the  
Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing  

Statement of the United States of America  

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Introduction

• Good day. First, I wish to thank the organizers and my fellow colleagues for their ongoing support and progress toward implementing the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing.

• I am Edwin Walker, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Aging with the Administration for Community Living within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. We serve as the national Focal Point on Ageing, and I am very pleased to participate in this intergovernmental convening.

• We play a critical role in advancing U.S. policies that impact older adults and people with disabilities.

• Our mission is to maximize the independence, well-being, health and dignity of older adults, people with disabilities across the lifespan, and their families and caregivers.

• We are one of the few federal agencies that has a mandate to be “visible and effective advocates” on behalf of the people and communities our programs serve.

• In the U.S., “community living” is viewed as not only an important policy goal, but it is fundamentally tied to our nation’s civil rights.

• We have a history of strong principles designed to focus on the rights and protections of older persons, and to develop systems to achieve quality care.

• Our agency is the hub of the federal government’s work to support families and kinship caregivers, which is a priority of the Biden-Harris Administration.

Addressing the Workforce Shortage

• In the United States and throughout the globe, successful aging in the community requires the availability of a well-trained, high-quality workforce of direct care professionals. Yet, like many countries, we are faced with challenges related to the
supply of these workers, and the resulting impact on the health and safety of care recipients.

- Later this year, we will be establishing a new National Technical Assistance Center designed to address these issues and strengthen this critical workforce.

**Supporting Families and Family Caregivers**

- The home care providers, direct care professionals and those often considered “formal – or paid – caregivers” are only the tip of the iceberg of what we call the Long-Term Services and Supports System.

- Like many other countries represented here today, the U.S. recognizes the critical role families and friends play and acknowledges that our system could not function without the considerable contributions of family and other unpaid caregivers.

- Currently in the U.S., approximately 54 million individuals are serving in the role of a family caregiver for an older adult or a person of any age with a disability.

- These family caregivers provide an immense contribution, perform complex medical tasks with little guidance, and often do so at significant personal cost.

- For the past 22 years, we have established programs in each state to provide support to approximately 900,000 caregivers a year. These caregivers indicate that without this support they would have had to place their loved one in some form of facility or institution.

- To address the devastating impacts of Alzheimer’s disease and dementias, over the past decade, we have been using the best science has to offer to support family caregivers, professionals, and people with dementia themselves.

- Additionally, we have allocated funding to support states and communities to ensure the availability of high-quality and affordable respite services and we are helping to create a national volunteer Care Corps to provide non-medical supports to older adults and their family caregivers.

- Perhaps most exciting in this area, is that later this year, the U.S. will be unveiling the nation’s first National Family Caregiving Strategy.

- The Strategy is the result of two citizen advisory councils of professionals, researchers, administrators, and caregivers themselves who provided an in-depth assessment and review of the leading and most promising research, policy and practice known—both domestically and globally, including from many of you.
• When complete, the Strategy will provide a roadmap for the United States to: optimize caregiver support efforts; advance equity and diversity; and ensure that all efforts to uplift caregivers are person- and family-centered, trauma informed, and culturally sensitive.

• We are excited about this tremendous accomplishment and will be pleased to share our experience in advancing caregiving with other member States.

Wrap Up

• In conclusion, the United States remains committed to the goals of MIPAA. And we look forward to continued implementation through the periodic Reviews and Appraisals as well as other instruments or mechanisms developed to build “A Sustainable World for All Ages.”

• Thank you for your attention.