

DESA Remarks
UNECE Ministerial Conference on Ageing
by Daniela Bas, Director, DISD – UN DESA
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Excellencies, distinguished delegates, and colleagues,

It is a great pleasure to be here in person with you as we move towards closure of this very important Ministerial Conference on Ageing.

At the outset, I wish to express my appreciation to the Government of Italy for hosting the Conference, and to congratulate the Executive Secretary of the UN Economic Commission for Europe and her team, particularly the Population Unit, on the success of the Conference. I wish to also thank the panelists and participants for the enriching discussions and dialogues we had these past three days.

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Since its endorsement by the General Assembly in 2002, the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing remains the main guiding document for building societies for all ages.

The systematic review and appraisal of the Plan provide impetus for its successful implementation. Exercises like this one, deliver a holistic regional lens that is essential for improving the quality of life of older persons.

The United Nations regional commissions play a critical role in supporting this exercise, as they facilitate intra-regional cooperation, provide regional forums and undertake regional reviews to ensure that the outcomes of intergovernmental processes at the regional level inform the global review and appraisal of the implementation of the Madrid Plan of Action at the end of each cycle.

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As the Second World Assembly on Ageing approached its 20-year milestone, we have noticed steady effort by the international community to anchor the issue of ageing in the global development agenda – particularly as the pledge to leave no one behind is now more important than ever.

For example, from 2016 to 2021, over two-thirds of the Voluntary National Reviews, which help strengthen national ownership of the Sustainable Development Goals; promote inclusiveness and participation; as well as more effective implementation of the 2030 Agenda - include references to ageing.

Also, the proclamation of the United Nations Decade of Healthy Ageing, which builds on the Madrid International Plan of Action, presents an opportunity for collective action with diverse stakeholders to enable older persons to do what they value, retain the ability to make decisions, and preserve their purpose, identity and independence.

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The Economic and Social Council endorsed the timeline for carrying out the fourth review and appraisal and determined that the global review will take place in 2023.

As laid out by the Commission for Social Development, the five UN regional commissions adopt individualized approaches that are tailored to their respective operational realities. The outcomes of intergovernmental processes at the regional level inform the global review.

In keeping with the mandated timeline, this global review will take place at sixty-first session of the Commission for Social Development next year in New York.

In preparation for the session, the Secretary-General will issue a report, including the conclusions of the fourth review and appraisal exercise. We look forward to a comprehensive report that will identify prevalent and emerging issues together with policy options that are essential to the elimination of social and economic inequalities to ensure that older persons live with security and dignity, and that they continue to participate in their societies as citizens with full rights.

I look forward to seeing you all in New York next year.

Thank you for your attention.