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A Society for all Ages

The United Nations Madrid International Plan of Action
on Ageing and its Significance for Policy on Ageing

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BAGSO and the Secretariat for International Policy on Ageing

BAGSO – the German National Association of Senior Citizens' Organisations – is an umbrella organisation that includes about 120 associations and represents the interests of millions of older people in Germany. BAGSO is particularly committed to promoting:

▸ a realistic image of age in society

▸ a self-determined life in old age

▸ social integration and participation by older people

▸ solidarity between generations

▸ healthy ageing and high-level healthcare and long-term care

▸ the interests of older consumers.

BAGSO is committed to strengthening the rights of older people both at the national and international level. In 1998, BAGSO was granted consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council (UN-ECOSOC) and became a member of the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC). It is also engaged in international networks representing older people worldwide, including AGE Platform Europe and the Global Alliance for the Rights of Older Persons (GAROP). In addition, BAGSO is active in EU projects and bilateral cooperation.

From the very beginning, BAGSO has been an active partner in the implementation of the goals of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing (MIPAA), including through participation in the Second World Assembly, the UNECE Ministerial Conferences and in upstream civil society forums.

It supports and accompanies European and international cooperation at the governmental level as well as with civil society stakeholders who are committed to the cause of ageing. Between 2003 and 2005, BAGSO coordinated the civil society contribution to the preparation of the "National Action Plan for the Implementation of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing and the UNECE Regional Implementation Strategy" (NAP) of the German Government.

Since 2017, Dr Heidrun Mollenkopf, board member of BAGSO and of the European umbrella organisation AGE Platform Europe, represents the voice of older people at the UNECE Standing Working Group on Ageing in Geneva. As of November 2019, she is a member of the working group's bureau as a representative of civil society.

BAGSO Board of Directors

Since 2016, BAGSO is actively participating in the sessions of the Open-ended Working Group on Ageing (OEWG-A) in New York as a representative of civil society. Written inputs are submitted to the United Nations in preparation for the sessions and statements on the session topics are developed.

With funding from the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth (BMFSFJ), the Secretariat for International Policy on Ageing was set up within BAGSO in 2017.

The Secretariat provides information on current developments in international policy on ageing, promotes bilateral exchange and acts as an interface repre-senting the interests of civil society and older people at the international level.
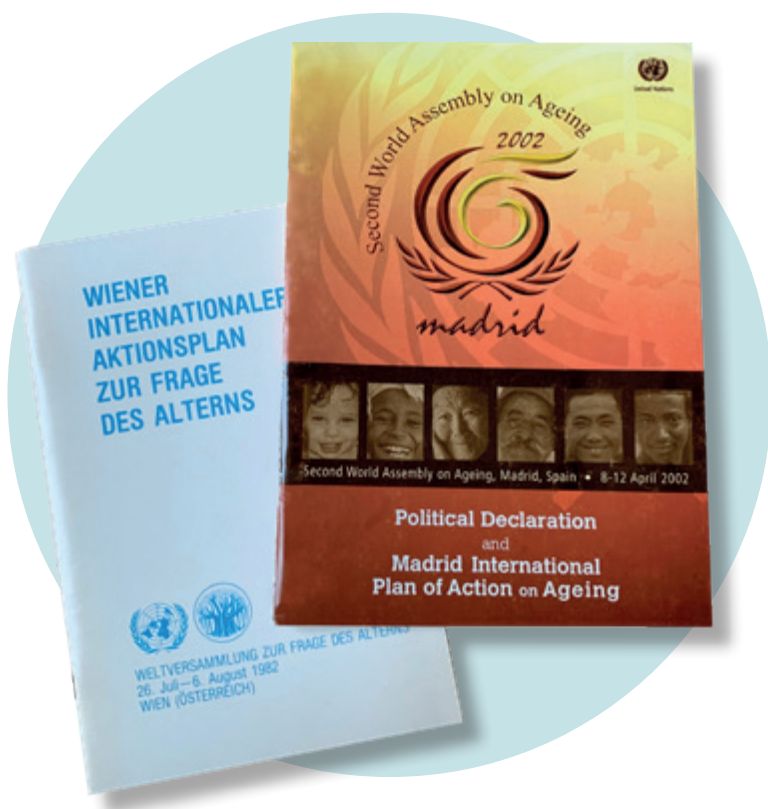
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The Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing at a Glance

- ▶ MIPAA is a comprehensive policy action plan that addresses the world's ageing population and strives for a society for all ages.

- ▶ The United Nations Regional Commissions have developed "Regional Implementation Strategies" (RIS) for the implementation of MIPAA. The implementation strategy of the United Nations Economic Council for Europe (UNECE), to which 56 states belong, is pertinent for Germany.

- ▶ In addition, some countries have drawn up their own national action plans. Germany submitted its National Action Plan in 2007.

- ▶ As the only regional commission of the United Nations to date, the UNECE established a Working Group on Ageing in 2008. It focuses on the further planning of the implementation of MIPAA and activities at the regional level. Furthermore, it is the platform for Europe-wide exchange in the field of ageing policy.

- ▶ The Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing and its accompanying Political Declaration were adopted by the United Nations (UN) at the Second World Assembly on Ageing in Madrid in 2002.

- ▶ The term "MIPAA" is used internationally as an abbreviation of the full title in English that includes the place of adoption: "Political Declaration and Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing."

▶ The implementation of MIPAA is reviewed every five years. To this end, the states submit reports on a voluntary basis, which are bundled at the level of the UN regional commissions and globally at the United Nations. In the UNECE region, at the end of each five-year phase, a Ministerial Conference is held where the main areas of action for the next five years are defined. The last Ministerial Conference was held in Lisbon, Portugal, in 2017.

▶ International policy on ageing around MIPAA has meanwhile been supplemented by discussions within the Open-ended Working Group on Ageing of the United Nations (OEWG-A). It was set up in 2010 following a resolution by the UN General Assembly to address the rights of older people. In addition, the 2030 Agenda, adopted in 2015, provides a further framework for international policy on ageing with its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).[1]

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1 The 2030 Agenda was adopted by the United Nations in 2015 as a successor to the Millennium Development Goals, which were the most important and comprehensive policy instrument from 2000 to 2015. Social development was at the centre of this document. The 2030 Agenda addresses sustainable development in the sense of ecological, social and economic development.

1. MIPAA – A Milestone in International Policy on Ageing

The year 2022 will mark the 20th anniversary of the United Nations Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing (short MIPAA[2]). To this day, it provides a policy framework and a comprehensive action plan for governments and civil society. MIPAA is an international response to the opportunities and challenges of the ageing world population and aims to develop a society for all ages.

BAGSO Honorary Chairwoman Prof Dr Ursula Lehr (second from right) with international representatives of gerontology in Vienna, 1982

The early days

MIPAA was based on the first United Nations' International Plan of Action on Ageing (Vienna International Plan of Action on Ageing), which was adopted in Vienna in 1982. In the run-up to the conference, the then International Association for Gerontology drew special attention to ageing in developing countries in a message to the World Conference. For a long time since, the Vienna International Plan of Action on Ageing and the United Nations Principles for Older Persons[3], adopted in 1991, were the most important cornerstones of international policy on ageing.

In the late 1990s, governments, the United Nations and civil society increasingly began to realise that the Vienna International Plan of Action on Ageing was in need of a fundamental revision.

Current topics such as the migration of younger population groups and the situation of older people in rural areas were to be covered in a revised plan – especially at the urgent behest of developing countries.

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2 The abbreviation MIPAA will be used in the following.

3 The five principles are: independence, participation, care, self-fulfilment and dignity.
See United Nations Resolution 46/91 of 16 December 1991.

UN Secretary General Kofi Annan during his opening speech in Madrid in 2002

Human Rights and Development Cooperation

Building on the Vienna International Plan of Action on Ageing, MIPAA placed even greater emphasis on including current topics and ensuring global relevance. MIPAA was also designed to help address ageing issues in discussions on social and economic development. This is why MIPAA includes goals and measures that can be implemented universally. These are relevant, on the one hand, for states where demographic change is taking place more slowly and in the context of a functioning welfare state. Yet they are also important on the other hand for states that are subject to rapid population ageing but are less developed socially and economically.

As a result, the United Nations decided in 2000 that a Second World Assembly should be held two years later. The Assembly and the draft plan were prepared over the next two years by the United Nations, member states, civil society and the scientific community.

To this day, MIPAA is recognised as the first important international document to address ageing issues in the context of human rights. The political declaration of the member states reaffirms the commitment to the protection and promotion of all human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the right to development. This new trend coincided with a general paradigm shift away from a needs-based approach and towards a human rights-based approach in development cooperation.

Older people planting trees together with children in Peru

2. MIPAA in Detail

At the Second World Assembly on Ageing in 2002, the member states agreed on global goals for dealing with the challenges of demographic change and set these goals in three priority directions:

1. Older persons and development

2. Advancing health and well-being into old age

3. Ensuring enabling and supportive environments

For each of these priority directions, objectives and a total of 239 actions were defined based on the problem areas described.

Throughout, MIPAA aims to improve the living conditions, particularly of older people, worldwide and to strengthen the values of society as a whole, including intergenerational solidarity. The central goal: Older people should play an active role and contribute to locally implementable policies that promote the well-being of older people and all generations worldwide. The aim is to ensure that around the globe, people have the opportunity to age in safety and dignity and to continue to participate in society as citizens with full rights.

Priority direction 1:
Older persons and development

OBJECTIVES:

▶ Recognition of the social, cultural, economic and political contribution of older persons

▶ Participation of older persons in decision-making at all levels

▶ Employment opportunities for all older persons who want to work

▶ Improvement of living conditions and infrastructure in rural areas

▶ Alleviation of the marginalisation of older persons in rural areas

▶ Integration of older migrants within their new communities

▶ Equality of opportunity throughout life with respect to continuing education, training and retraining as well as vocational guidance and placement services

▶ Full utilisation of the potential and expertise of persons of all ages, recognising the benefits of increased experience with age

▶ Strengthening of solidarity through equity and reciprocity between generations

▶ Reduction of poverty among older persons

▶ Promotion of programmes to enable all workers to acquire basic social protection/social security, including pensions, disability insurance and health benefits, where applicable

▶ Sufficient minimum income for all older persons, paying particular attention to socially and economically disadvantaged groups

▶ Equal access by older persons to food, shelter and medical care and other services during and after natural disasters and other humanitarian emergencies

▶ Enhanced contributions of older persons to the re-establishment and reconstruction of communities and the rebuilding of the social fabric following emergencies

Priority direction 2:
Advancing health and well-being into old age

OBJECTIVES:

▶ Reduction of the cumulative effects of factors that increase the risk of disease and consequently potential dependence in older age

▶ Development of policies to prevent ill-health among older persons

▶ Access to food and adequate nutrition for all older persons

▶ Elimination of social and economic inequalities based on age, gender or any other ground, including linguistic barriers, to ensure that older persons have universal and equal access to healthcare

▶ Development and strengthening of primary healthcare services to meet the needs of older persons and promote their inclusion in the process

▶ Development of a continuum of healthcare to meet the needs of older persons

▶ Involvement of older persons in the development and strengthening of primary and long-term care services

▶ Improvement in the assessment of the impact of HIV/AIDS on the health of older persons, both for those who are infected and those who are caregivers for infected or surviving family members

▶ Provision of adequate information, training in caregiving skills, treatment, medical care and social support to older persons living with HIV/AIDS and their caregivers

▶ Enhancement and recognition of the contribution of older persons to development in their role as caregivers for children with chronic diseases, including HIV/AIDS, and as surrogate parents

▶ Provision of improved information and training for health professionals and para-professionals with respect to the needs of older persons

▶ Development of comprehensive mental healthcare services ranging from prevention to early intervention, the provision of treatment services and the management of mental health problems in older persons

▶ Maintenance of maximum functional capacity throughout the life course and promotion of the full participation of older persons with disabilities

Priority direction 3:
Ensuring enabling and supportive environments

OBJECTIVES:

▶ Promotion of "ageing in place" in the community with due regard to individual preferences and affordable housing options for older persons

▶ Improvement in housing and environmental design to promote independent living by taking into account the needs of older persons, in particular those with disabilities

▶ Improved availability of accessible and affordable transportation for older persons

▶ Provision of a continuum of care and services for older persons from various sources and support for caregivers

▶ Supporting the caregiving role of older persons, particularly older women

▶ Elimination of all forms of neglect, abuse and violence against older persons

▶ Creation of support services to address elder abuse

▶ Enhancement of public recognition of the authority, wisdom, productivity and other important contributions of older persons

Source: United Nations (2002). Second World Assembly on Ageing.
Madrid, 8 – 12 April 2002

In this sense, MIPAA includes specific measures to promote the engagement and active participation of older people at all levels. Although older people are still at the centre, MIPAA is increasingly promoting a life-course approach.

MIPAA acknowledges that the foundations for older age are laid throughout the course of people's lives and that an inclusive society for all ages is the over-arching goal.

3. Managing and Implementing Processes

To implement MIPAA, the inter-action between governments and civil society, with the support of various United Nations organisations and other international mechanisms, including financial institutions, is considered essential. The role of civil society is strengthened in particular through the Guidelines for the Review and Appraisal of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, published in 2006, which prescribe a bottom-up, participatory approach.

For the implementation of MIPAA, three of the five United Nations regional commissions have agreed on Regional Implementation Strategies (RIS).[4] For Germany and 55 other member states[5], the Regional Implementation Strategy of the UNECE applies. It was adopted in Berlin in 2002 at the invitation of the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth (BMFSFJ) at the first Ministerial Conference of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe.

A key component of the UNECE Regional Implementation Strategy is "Mainstreaming Ageing", a policy strategy and process aimed at integrating aspects of ageing into all relevant policy areas.

In concrete terms, this means, for instance, that existing laws should adequately reflect the concerns of all age groups and not merely create separate laws for older persons. This approach aims to take into account the living conditions of all age groups at all stages of planning, implementation and evaluation of measures and their impact on all age groups.

In 2008, UNECE set up the Working Group on Ageing to better coordinate and implement MIPAA and the RIS at the regional level. The Working Group has its own secretariat in Geneva and reports directly to the UNECE Executive Committee (EXCOM). Once a year (usually in November), the Working Group, consisting of the National Focal Points on Ageing[6], meets to plan the further regional implementation steps for MIPAA. In addition, the group acts as a platform for exchange between states, academia and civil society.

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4 Asia and the Pacific, Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean. Regional action plans for Africa and West Asia have been in place since 2002.

5 All European countries, all former Soviet republics in Asia as well as Israel, Cyprus, the USA and Canada

6 For Germany: one representative from the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth (BMFSFJ)

The Working Group's governing body is made up of representatives of states as well as one person from academia and one from civil society. The Working Group deals with key issues and publishes examples of their implementation in policy briefs that are made available to states and the public. In addition, international conferences and regular technical exchange take place.

In 2019, the Working Group acquired a permanent mandate as the "Standing Working Group on Ageing" and has thus become firmly established within the UNECE structure, thereby increasing attention on the issues of demographic change and older people.

The RIS of the UNECE provided the basis for the National Action Plan to implement the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing in Germany, published in 2007, and has been the guiding principle of German ageing policy ever since.

UN Guidelines for the National Implementation

In addition to MIPAA itself, the Regional Implementation Strategies and the guidelines for implementation monitoring, the United Nations published guidelines for the national implementation of MIPAA. These guidelines were developed for the National Focal Points on Ageing and pursue two broad approaches for a successful implementation of the plan:

1) The development of effective age-specific policies that facilitate the mainstreaming of older persons' concerns into all aspects of development and policy-making; and

2) The application of a holistic intergenerational life-course approach that emphasies equity and inclusiveness for all age groups.

Source: United Nations (2008). Guide to the National Implementation of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, New York.

4. Reviewing progress

Every five years, the implementation of MIPAA and the respective Regional Implementation Strategies is reviewed. The member states agreed on a participatory and bottom-up approach for the review. The involvement of civil society and, quite specifically, the participation of older people are thus predetermined. In addition to the requirement of a participatory review, the guidelines adopted in 2006 proposed both instrumental and outcome-oriented indicators for reviewing implementation[7]. This means that the member states are required to include older people in this process in addition to the traditional evaluation based on national statistics.

For each evaluation cycle, the UN Commission adopts modalities, which serve as a basis for specific guidelines developed by the Regional Commissions. These in turn form the groundwork for national reporting. The national reports are discussed, inter alia, at regional conferences against the backdrop of regional implementation strategies, for example at UNECE level. The outcomes of these conferences and the governments' voluntary national reports form the basis for the UN's comprehensive overview report on the status of MIPAA implementation.

Dr Mollenkopf, Member of the BAGSO Board of Directors at the UNECE Ministerial Conference in Lisbon, 2017

UNECE Ministerial Conference in Lisbon, 2017

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7 United Nations (2006). Guidelines for review and appraisal of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, New York

The Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth (BMFSFJ) published national reports on MIPAA and the UNECE-RIS for the second and third cycles in 2012 and 2017, respectively. BAGSO commented on these reports from the perspective of civil society. As part of the first cycle (2007), the German National Action Plan was submitted for implementation.

To date, four UNECE regional ministerial conferences have taken place (2002 in Berlin, 2007 in León, 2012 in Vienna and 2017 in Lisbon). At each of these conferences, ministerial declarations were formulated setting out the main areas of action for the region.

Based on the national reports, the Regional Commissions prepare reports every five years as a basis for a summarising global report to be presented by the Commission for Social Development (CSocD), coordinated by the UN Programme on Ageing, most recently in 2018. In addition, member states and civil society have the opportunity to submit oral and written reports as part of this Commission.

5. Initiating National and International Policy on Ageing

MIPAA as a Strategy and Stimulus in Senior Citizen Work and Policy

The United Nations' reports show that MIPAA has made a significant contribution to the development of national plans of action and policies on ageing. Particularly in countries where older people have already been the focus of national policy for a while, though, progress would probably have been made independently of MIPAA. Still, MIPAA is helping to ensure that important aspects are now being taken into account in national senior citizen policies around the globe.

It is also evident that due to on-going demographic change worldwide, the adoption of MIPAA and RIS as well as the adoption of resolutions within the framework of UN, older people have moved more and more into focus. In 2010, for example, a UN resolution[8] led to the establishment of the Open-ended Working Group on Ageing (OEWG-A) which meets annually and focuses on human rights aspects of ageing. In May 2014, Prof Dr Rosa Kornfeld-Matte was appointed Independent Expert on the Enjoyment of all Human Rights by Older Persons.

Touring exhibition "What's 'old' anyway?"

The increase in activities at the international level has led to an enhanced awareness of the living conditions of older people worldwide. Data availability is improving from year to year (despite further shortcomings) and the exchange of experience among governments and civil society stakeholders is steadily increasing.

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8 Resolution 65/182 of 21 December 2010

Symposium of the Secretariat for International Policy on Ageing, June 2017

In the UNECE region, the number of reporting countries has increased from cycle to cycle. In the third review cycle (2017), 84 per cent of member states (compared to 67 per cent in the second cycle, 2012) submitted a report. In addition, growing interest arose among member states in creating ageing policies that are based on MIPAA and the RIS, e.g. when it comes to developing strategies with the support of the UNECE Population Unit. In this respect, for example, Armenia, Belarus, Georgia and Moldova have been supported in the preparation of road maps.

For Germany, a number of initiatives that have been significantly influenced by MIPAA can be highlighted. A concrete example is the updating of the public perception of older people, recommended by MIPAA. For instance, the 6th German Government Report on Older People dealt with images of old age in society, which was followed by the touring exhibition "What's 'old' anyway?" [9].

In less developed countries, in contrast, MIPAA or the Regional Implementation Strategies are often specifically referred to as a basis for the adoption of new policy frameworks or for the integration of older people into existing policy frameworks, e.g. to alleviate poverty. Examples are the National Ageing Policy in Tanzania (2003), the Law for Older Persons in Kenya (2006), the National Social Security Policy in Ethiopia (2012) and the National Action Plan for Older Persons in Uganda (2012/13).

Some countries of the Global South developed their national policies on ageing with the support of the UN Programme on Ageing, the Focal Point on Ageing within the UN system, and the Regional Commissions. The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) also provides technical and financial support. For instance, there is close cooperation with the statistical office in South Korea, which continuously assesses progress in the implementation of MIPAA.

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9 The exhibition is available in English and French as well.

MIPAA is also an important baseline for argumentation and a driving force for senior citizens' organisations and other civil society players. This applies to countries of the Global South and the Global North alike. Concrete examples are the global campaign "Age Demands Action" launched by HelpAge International and the work of the European umbrella organisation of senior citizens' organisations, AGE Platform Europe, which encourages its members to participate directly in the respective national reporting. These civil society stakeholders also call for motivating governments to play an active role, especially in two associated bodies: the UNECE Standing Working Group on Ageing at UNECE level, and the United Nations Open-ended Working Group on Ageing (OEWG-A).

Since civil society assessment is an integral part of the review, many governments involve senior citizens' organisations and other stakeholders in the review of the MIPAA implementation at national level, as is the case in Germany. In some countries, such as Brazil and Chile, senior citizens' advisory councils, national forums and conferences as well as public consultations have been established to improve the participation of older people.

An older woman weaving baskets in Myanmar

"The Madrid Plan of Action seems to have fostered the participation of older persons at various levels. Its contribution to raising awareness about the situation of older persons, in particular by giving visibility to age discrimination and elder abuse, has also to be recognized. That is an important step forward as the need for visibility has long been considered one of the main challenges faced by older persons."

Rosa Kornfeld-Matte,
Independent Expert on the
Enjoyment of all Human Rights
by Older Persons

Petition for a UN convention on the rights of older people

Despite this patchy progress in the implementation and monitoring thereof, MIPAA has made a significant contribution to the growing inclusion of ageing and older people in the political agenda. Although reporting is extremely heterogeneous due to, among other things, the flexibility envisaged by the UN, it plays an important role in mobilising governments and other key stakeholders. The report "Ageing in the Twenty-First Century: A Celebration and A Challenge", published by UNFPA and HelpAge International in 2012, is one example. The report was produced on the occasion of the 10th anniversary of MIPAA with the participation of many UN organisations and numerous actors from civil society and academia. Within the scope of this report, the participating organisations were asked to address ageing issues within their mandates. For many, it was the first time they had dealt with this issue.

Older People's Rights

For the first time, MIPAA is pursuing a human rights approach in support of older people and is placing their rights in the spotlight. It has thus contributed to the establishment of the Open-ended Working Group on Ageing (OEWG-A) at UN level in 2010 and to the commencement of work by the Independent Expert on Human Rights for Older Persons in 2014.

Today, it is generally agreed that MIPAA has put ageing and continuing demographic change on the international agenda. Yet although great progress has been made, the UN has noted in recent years that significant implementation gaps still need to be closed. In its reports, the UN has identified key barriers that have to be overcome in order to push the implementation of MIPAA.

These include the lack of political will, inadequate resources and insufficient capacity at the national level of some states.

The recognition and assertion of the rights of older people, reaffirmed above all with the Principles for Older

Persons[10] adopted by the UN General Assembly in the early 1990s and increasingly taken into account in MIPAA, is progressively gaining importance in international debates. Yet, it is argued – particularly by civil society and human rights institutions, and supported by some UN member states – that the rights of older people are still not fully guaranteed. They claim that as a political action plan, MIPAA is not legally binding and its implementation, as well as the voluntary reporting, is not sufficient. Older people still remain largely invisible and are rarely or never mentioned in human rights reports. In 2016, the Independent Expert therefore called on the UN member states to step up their efforts in view of the growing number of older people worldwide, and recommended considering the development of an international UN Convention on the Rights of Older Persons.

According to the Independent Expert, a binding regulation at UN level could help raise awareness of the issue of ageing and older people and commit UN member states to regular reporting and increased action. Experience with other international human rights conventions has shown that legally binding instruments are more likely to succeed[11]. While such a convention would be of minor importance for many developed countries because of already existing laws, it would nevertheless be crucial for less developed countries – not only

BAGSO symposium "Shaping a future for our grandchildren: Older generations and the 2030 Global Agenda"

in order to put the issues of ageing and older people on the political agenda, but above all with a view to safeguarding older people's human rights.

At the regional level, the rights of older people were strengthened in recent years through the establishment of a number of regional, legally binding instruments. For one, the Organisation of American States adopted an Inter-American Convention on the Protection of the Human Rights of Older Persons in 2015. For another, in 2016, the African Union ratified a Protocol to the Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Older Persons in Africa.

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10 See Resolution A/RES/46/91

11 For instance, the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Convention on the Rights of Women

Progress in recent years at the international and regional level can be attributed to a growing understanding of the issues raised in MIPAA. However, it also takes account of the fact that MIPAA is not a binding instrument to fully guarantee the rights of older people in practical terms as well.

Agenda 2030

MIPAA offers valuable orientation within the context of the agreement on the sustainable development goals of the 2030 Agenda. MIPAA is an important benchmark for achieving specific target actions of this globally valid political agenda. The promise of the 2030 Agenda of "Leaving no one Behind" is consistent with MIPAA's goal of a "Society for all Ages". Indeed, MIPAA serves as an instrument to involve older people in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

Due to the continuing need to integrate ageing issues into global instruments of sustainable policy, the universal document MIPAA has proven to be a sound basis with concrete recommendations for action.

6. WAYS FORWARD

The outcome after almost 20 years since the Second World Assembly on Ageing shows that MIPAA has achieved considerable success at the national, regional and international level. Policy on ageing has consistently gained in importance and older people and their advocacy groups have increasingly become key stakeholders in ageing policy. Many concrete initiatives have been launched, above all to recognise the considerable social contribution of older persons.

The reporting of recent years shows that the following ageing-related policy issues have consistently been given priority: social security, healthcare and social services as well as equality, participation and human rights of older people. However, the full spectrum of civil, political, social, economic and cultural rights of older people is not covered by MIPAA.

Emerging Topics

Over the past few years, some topics such as disasters and emergencies as well as the fight against violence, neglect and abuse of older persons have become increasingly important in the implementation of MIPAA.

The use of robotics and artificial intelligence is a topic that is not yet comprehensively covered by MIPAA, despite the fact that it is of current relevance and gaining in importance.

This topic was taken up by the Independent Expert in one of her reports, because new technologies will become more and more important in the future in order to maintain social contacts, to support nursing staff in their daily activities or to provide healthcare services. The topic was also discussed at the International Expert Conference on Human Rights of Older People (inter-sessional meeting) in Vienna in November 2018.

Another topic that is currently increasingly being discussed and for which specific recommendations for action were made in the report of the Caribbean states on the third cycle of the MIPAA Review are issues related to sexual identity. What progress has been achieved with MIPAA for lesbians, gays, bisexual, intersexual and transgender persons, for instance?

Likewise, topics that have already been addressed, such as migration and digitalisation, are given higher priority in the face of current social developments. Issues relating to older migrants and older people living in areas from which younger generations are migrating are particularly important in connection with healthcare and long-term care systems. In particular, the issues of inclusion and participation of older people in the labour market require concrete measures to improve the opportunities of older people in the fields of education and lifelong learning.

Internet training for older people in their homes

Improving Data Availability

In the future, availability of more age-related and age-disaggregated data will be crucial. At present, the lack of a comprehensive and consistent approach to the MIPAA review makes it difficult to compare progress across member states or over different time periods. In fact, the information provided in the national reports on MIPAA implementation varies widely in terms of the type of information (from anecdotes to detailed statistics) and measured outputs and impacts. This is compounded by the fact that statistics are often only available for the population as a whole, but not for different age groups.

This poses a major problem, especially in developing and emerging countries, where data on the older population is often scarce or non-existent. Thus, the basis for argumentation in favour of a national policy on ageing is lacking.

Several years ago, the UNECE had already launched the "Active Ageing Index", an attempt to provide a universal approach for monitoring the situation across the 56 states of the UNECE region. Yet, this index is criticised in part, because certain indicators, such as the participation of older persons in the labour market, have different meanings and causes for different countries.

Non-governmental organisations are also collecting data in order to make the situation of older people visible on a global scale. One example is the Global AgeWatch Index presented in 2013, or a study published in 2019 by the Global Alliance for the Rights of Older People (GAROP), where older people in ten countries had been interviewed. However, due in part to the already insufficient data availability, there is a lack of a comprehensive and consistent approach that would allow for international comparisons.

With the establishment of the Titchfield City Group on Ageing – which was also supported by Germany – the United Nations Statistical Commission acknowledged this gap in March 2018.

The goal of this group is to generate age-related and age-disaggregated data on a global scale. In view of the indicators applicable to the Sustainable Development Goals, there is also increasing hope for improved data availability and thus a better measurement of the implementation of MIPAA and the Sustainable Development Goals.

By way of conclusion, it can be stated that MIPAA has made a major contribution to the further development of international, regional and national policy on ageing.

Thanks to MIPAA, important milestones have been reached, ranging from national action plans and policy programmes to multilateral cooperation and the increasing discussion about the rights of older people. In addition, there has been a paradigm shift from a needs-based approach, where older people were seen as beneficiaries, to a human rights-based approach that has given older people a central and active role in decision-making at all levels. However, the implementation of MIPAA remains fragmentary.

7. Links and Further Information

International Policy on Ageing

All of the important documents, including BAGSO's statements, are available at:
▶ www.bagso.de

More information is available on the website of the German Federal Ministry for
Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth:
▶ https://www.bmfsfj.de/bmfsfj/meta/en/senior-citizens/112072

MIPAA

▶ https://www.un.org/development/desa/ageing/madrid-plan-of-action-and-its-
  implementation.html
  Political Declaration and the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing
  2002.

▶ www.inia.org.mt/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/2.2-4-Parry-FINAL.pdf
  Article published in the International Journal on Ageing in Developing
  Countries (2018), which analyses active ageing in the Asia-Pacific region
  and suggests courses of action for the implementation of MIPAA.

▶ www.unece.org/pau/ageing/ministerial_conference_2017.html#/
  Individual contributions, summaries and the Ministerial Declaration of the
  UNECE Ministerial Conference on the Review of the United Nations Madrid
  International Plan of Action on Ageing (September 2017).

▶ www.unece.org/pau/mipaareports2017.html
  National reports of the UNECE states on ageing policy, 2017.

▶ www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/pau/RIS.pdf
  Regional Implementation Strategy for the Madrid International Plan of Action
  on Ageing, adopted at the UNECE Ministerial Conference in Berlin.

▶ www.un.org/esa/socdev/ageing/documents/papers/guide.pdf
  Handbook on the National Implementation Strategy for the Madrid Inter-
  national Plan of Action on Ageing, published by the United Nations (2008).

▶ www.un.org/esa/socdev/ageing/documents/MIPAA/
GuidelinesAgeingfinal13%20Dec2006.pdf
Guidelines for the Review and Appraisal of the Madrid International Plan of
Action on Ageing, published by the United Nations (2006).

Rights of Older People

▶ www.institut-fuer-menschenrechte.de/themen/rechte-aelterer/
The German Institute for Human Rights makes available the most important
publications and facts concerning all aspects of the protection of the human
rights of older people. The Institute provides information on discussions
conducted at national and international level within the framework of the
United Nations Open-ended Working Group on Ageing.

▶ www.ohchr.org/en/issues/olderpersons/ie/pages/ieolderpersons.aspx
Information on the work of the United Nations Independent Expert on the
Enjoyment of all Human Rights by Older Persons.

▶ https://social.un.org/ageing-working-group/
Information on the United Nations Open-ended Working Group on Ageing
(OEWG-A).

2030 Agenda

▶ http://www.bmz.de/de/ministerium/ziele/2030_agenda/index.html
The Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development provides
basic information on the 2030 Agenda.

▶ https://17ziele.de/
This website is sponsored by the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation
and Development and presents the 17 sustainability goals for citizens.

▶ www.stakeholdergrouponageing.org/
Information on the activities of the Stakeholder Group on Ageing, which
represents the interests of older people within the framework of the 2030
Agenda and of which BAGSO is a member.

Further Topics

▶ www.bagso.de/aktuelle-projekte/geschaeftsstelle-internationale-altenpolitik.
html
The Secretariat for International Policy on Ageing provides information on
current developments and makes important documents and explanations
available online, e.g. on the implementation of the United Nations Madrid
International Plan of Action on Ageing, on current events in international
policy on ageing and on bilateral activities.

▶ www.unece.org/population/ageing/policybriefs.html
The United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) regularly
publishes policy briefs including a number of interesting project examples on
ageing issues. All the policy briefs are available for download in several
languages.

▶ www.un.org/development/desa/ageing/
Current information and data on the activities of the United Nations with links
to the various issues, bodies and their meetings.

▶ www.un.org/en/sections/issues-depth/ageing/
Current information and data on global demographic trends: United Nations,
Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (2017).
World Population Ageing 2017 – Highlights (ST/ESA/SER.A/397).

ANNEX 1

MIPAA as a Driver for International Policy on Ageing[12]

1982	The United Nations Vienna International Plan of Action on Ageing is adopted.
1990	The United Nations designates 1 October the "International Day of Older Persons".
1991	The United Nations adopts the UN Principles for Older Persons.
1999	The International Year of Older Persons is celebrated. The United Nations General Assembly is designating the theme of the year as "Towards a Society for All Ages", thereby placing special emphasis on dialogue and intergenerational solidarity.
2002	**The Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing (MIPAA) is adopted.**
	At the first UNECE Ministerial Conference on Ageing in Berlin, the 56 members of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) adopt a Ministerial Declaration including the Regional Implementation Strategy (RIS) with ten voluntary commitments.
2004	**The Commission for Social Development (CSocD) prepares a resolution on the design of the follow-up process for MIPAA and decides to review MIPAA every five years. The German Government regularly attends the Commission's conferences and contributes reports and opinions.**
2007	**The German Government publishes the "National Action Plan for the Implementation of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing and the UNECE Regional Implementation Strategy". BAGSO draws up a statement on behalf of civil society.**
	The second UNECE Ministerial Conference on Ageing takes place in León, Spain. A Ministerial Declaration is also adopted there.
2008	**The UNECE establishes the Working Group on Ageing in Geneva, led by a small steering group.**
2010	With Resolution A/Res/65/182, the United Nations establishes the Open-ended Working Group on Ageing (OEWG-A) at UN level.

12 The major MIPAA milestones are printed in **bold** in the table. All other milestones relate to important parallel processes in international policy on ageing.

2011   **The UN Secretary General presents the follow-up report to the Second World Assembly on Ageing (A/66/173) to the UN General Assembly, the first report to analyse the human rights situation of older people worldwide.**

2012   **The Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth (BMFSFJ) publishes the first "National Report of the Federal Government: 10 years since the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing and UNECE Regional Implementation Strategy" (Country Report). BAGSO comments on this report.**

The third UNECE Ministerial Conference on Ageing takes place in Vienna. A Ministerial Declaration is adopted again.

The third Regional Intergovernmental Conference on Ageing in Latin America and the Caribbean takes place in San José, Costa Rica. A charter for the protection of the human rights of older people, the "San José Charter on the Rights of Older Persons in Latin America and the Caribbean", is adopted.

2013   The United Nations Stakeholder Group on Ageing, a network of NGOs, is founded to represent the interests of older people within the scope of the Sustainability Agenda (post-2015).

2014   The Human Rights Council of the United Nations appoints Chilean Rosa Kornfeld-Matte as an Independent Expert on the Enjoyment of all Human Rights by Older People.

2015   The United Nations member states agree on 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the 2030 Agenda to succeed the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Ageing and older people are specifically mentioned.

2016   The "Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights for Older Persons in Africa" identifies key areas for the protection of older people.

Rosa Kornfeld-Matte, the Independent Expert on the Enjoyment of all Human Rights by Older People, appointed by the United Nations Human Rights Council in 2014, publishes a report on the human rights of older people worldwide. Considerable gaps in protection are identified. BAGSO issues a statement on this report.

2017   The Inter-American Convention on Protecting the Human Rights of Older Persons enters into force.

The Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth (BMFSFJ) publishes the second "National Report of the Federal Government: 15 years since the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing and UNECE Regional Implementation Strategy" (Country Report). BAGSO comments on this report.

The eighth session of the OEWG-A gives this body two important innovations: Firstly, and supported by Germany, national human rights institutions are enabled to participate in discussions and submit written contributions. Second, from now on, the main topics are discussed in depth at each session. The eighth session deals with age discrimination and equality as well as violence, abuse and neglect of older people.

The fourth UNECE Ministerial Conference on Ageing takes place in Lisbon. A Ministerial Declaration is again adopted.

2018

The Titchfield City Group on Ageing of the United Nations Statistical Commission is established.

The United Nations global report on the Implementation of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing is presented at the 56th Session of the UN Commission for Social Development (CSocD).

2019

The UN Open-ended Working Group on Ageing (OEWG-A) is upgraded through a UN resolution of December 2018. For the first time in ten sessions, it has a fixed date in the UN calendar and guaranteed interpreting service. Topics of the session are: education and lifelong learning, social protection and legal aspects of last year's issues. BAGSO has participated in the working group since the 7th session and prepares contributions and opinions.

The UNECE Working Group on Ageing, established in 2008, is upgraded to a Standing Working Group with a permanent mandate.

2020

The modalities of the fourth MIPAA review cycle will be presented at the 58th session of the UN Commission for Social Development (CSocD).

The UN Open-ended Working Group on Ageing (OEWG-A) will meet for the 11th time. The topics of the session will be the right of older people to employment and access to justice.

2021

Governments and regional commissions will evaluate the implementation of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing.

2022 + 2023

The fourth cycle will end in 2022/23 with the 20th anniversary of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing.

ANNEX 2

Glossary of Key Terms in International Policy on Ageing

Abbreviation	English term	Explanation
AU	African Union	The AU is one of the regional bodies under Chapter VIII of the UN Charter. Similar institutions are the Organisation of American States (OAS), the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO).
BMFSFJ	Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth	The Federal Republic of Germany advocates a self-determined life for senior citizens in a variety of ways and coordinates national policy on ageing. In this context, the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth is also responsible for the German Government's international commitment to strengthening the rights of older people and therefore regularly represents Germany, e.g. in the UNECE-SWGA and the OEWG-A.
CSocD	Commission for Social Development	The UN Commission on Social Development is one of ten functional commissions of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) of the United Nations.
ECA/ESCAP/ECE/ ECLAC/ ESCWA	Regional Commissions for Africa, Asia and the Pacific, Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean, and for Western Asia	The United Nations has five regional commissions: Africa, Asia and the Pacific, Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean, and Western Asia.

Abbreviation	English term	Explanation
ECOSOC	Economic and Social Council	The Economic and Social Council is one of the six principal organs of the United Nations. According to the Charter, it is the central organ of the United Nations for economic, social and development issues. BAGSO has consultative status, which allows it to participate as a non-governmental organisation in important meetings and to submit opinions and reports.
EESC/EWSA	European Economic and Social Committee	Consultative body representing employee and employer organisations and other interest groups.
MIPAA	Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing	The term "MIPAA" is used internationally. It is an abbreviation of the English title that includes the place of adoption: Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing
OAS	Organization of American States	The OAS is one of the regional agencies under Chapter VIII of the UN Charter. Similar institutions are the African Union (AU), the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) or the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO).
OEWG-A	Open-ended Working Group on Ageing	The Open-ended Working Group on Ageing (OEWG-A) consists of UN member states, civil society and other stakeholders who have been working together since its inception through a resolution at the UN General Assembly in New York in 2010. The OEWG-A mandate includes the review and discussion of the existing human rights framework, the identification and closing of gaps as well as further considerations regarding a future human rights instrument for the protection of older people.
RIS	Regional Implementation Strategy	The five United Nations regions have drawn up regional MIPAA implementation strategies and use them for orientation.

Abbreviation	English term	Explanation
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals	The United Nations 17 Goals for Sustainable Development were adopted in 2015 through the 2030 Agenda. The SDGs cover various topics, such as the eradication of poverty and hunger, the promotion of sustainable economic growth and climate protection. The goals are inextricably linked and mutually dependent.
Titchfield Group	Titchfield City Group on Ageing	This group was appointed by the United Nations Statistical Commission in 2018 to improve data on ageing worldwide. The group was initially established for five years and will be operational until 2023.
UN Programme on Ageing	United Nations Programme on Ageing	The programme is part of the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA). The programme is the central point of contact for ageing issues within the United Nations. One of its main tasks is to promote the implementation of MIPAA.
UN Statistical Commission	United Nations Statistical Commission	The Statistical Commission is a subsidiary body of the United Nations. It is one of the commissions of the Economic and Social Council set up in 1946 to improve statistics and statistical methods.
Independent Expert	Independent Expert on the Enjoyment of all Human Rights by Older Persons	In 2013, the UN Human Rights Council established the mandate for an Independent Expert on the Enjoyment of all Human Rights by Older Persons. The expert is appointed with a 3-year mandate to review, monitor, advise and publicly report on the human rights situation of older people worldwide. She works to consolidate an understanding of the rights of older people and to promote the implementation of measures to help strengthen and protect the rights of older people.

Abbreviation	English term	Explanation
UNECE	United Nations Economic Council for Europe	The United Nations Regional Economic Council for Europe, which is based in Geneva. The UNECE is composed of 56 states (all European states, the CIS states in Central Asia and the Caucasus, Turkey, Cyprus, Israel, the USA and Canada).
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund	UNFPA is the world's largest source of funding for projects in the field of population planning and policy. Since 1979, it has held the status of a special organ of the United Nations General Assembly and is part of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).
UNHRC	United Nations Human Rights Council	The Human Rights Council is the central political organ in the United Nations system to promote and implement human rights around the world.
UNECE-SWGA	UNECE Standing Working Group on Ageing	In 2008, UNECE set up the Working Group on Ageing with its own secretariat in Geneva. In 2019, the working group was granted permanent status.

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https://social.un.org/ageing-working-group/desa-ageing.shtml, https://www.eesc.europa.eu/de

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