

Report on the International Federation on Ageing (IFA): 11th Global Conference on Ageing

1. PURPOSE

To report on the International Federation on Ageing (IFA): 11th Global Conference on Ageing that was held in Prague, Czech Republic from 28 May to 1 June 2012.

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 The International Federation on Ageing (IFA) invited South Africa to participate in the IFA's 11th Global Conference on Ageing. South Africa is a member of the IFA. The South African delegation comprised of Ms Rykie Meiring (DIRCO); Mr Jackie Mbonani, Chief Director: Older Persons (DSD) and Ms Thuli Mahlangu, Director: Older Persons (DSD).
- 2.2 The Conference recognised the 10th Anniversary of the UN International Conference and Plan of Action on Ageing (Madrid, 2002). The Madrid Plan of Action on Ageing focuses on three key priority areas namely: -"Older Persons and Development"-; -"Advancing Health and Well-being into Old Age"-; and -"Ensuring an Enabling and Supportive Environment"-. These priority areas formed the programme framework for the 11th Global Conference on Ageing. A fourth theme was incorporated, namely -"Connected Technologies"-. Each theme was also informed by other international and regional frameworks, including the United Nations (UN) Principles for Older People, the Active Ageing Framework of the World Health Organization and the African Union Policy Framework and Plan of Action on Ageing.
- 2.3 During the Conference, discussions on a proposed UN Convention on the Rights of Older People took place. South Africa strongly supported and lobbied for this idea and South Africa's policy priorities on older persons were reflected in the discussions.
- 2.4 The SA Delegation initiated engagement with other Africa's countries at the Conference to discuss the improvement of Africa's representivity on the IFA Board and to ensure that issues that affect the Continent are well represented on the agenda of the IFA.
- 2.6 Follow-up discussions will be undertaken on (a) the proposed UN Convention on the Rights of Older People; and (b) Africa's representivity and participation in regional and international fora related to Older People.

3. DISCUSSION AND BACKGROUND

The International Federation on Ageing: 11th Global Conference

- 3.1 The 11th Global Conference on Ageing, organised by the International Federation on Ageing took place in Prague, from 28 May to 1 June 2012. This event took place more than a decade after the IFA's successful 4th Global Conference on Ageing during which the Montreal Declaration for Older People was adopted.

Conference Programme

- 3.2 The first day Government Officials participated in the Officials Forum. The theme for this meeting was 'Long Term Care and Technology'. More than 70 Government Officials from 25 different countries attended the Forum to share their national policies, as well as to learn about the strategic plans implemented by other countries facing similar challenges.
- 3.3 The Madrid Plan of Action on Ageing focuses on three key priority areas namely: -"Older Persons and Development"-; -"Advancing Health and Well-being into Old Age"-; and -"Ensuring an Enabling and Supportive Environment"-. These priority areas formed the programme framework for the 11th Global Conference on Ageing. A fourth theme was incorporated, namely -"Connected Technologies"-. Each theme was also informed by other international and regional frameworks, including the United Nations (UN) Principles for Older

People, the Active Ageing Framework of the World Health Organization and the African Union Policy Framework and Plan of Action on Ageing.

- 3.4 There were 14 sessions running concurrently, every two hours of each day. Since presenters and attendees included UN representatives, government officials, researchers, community leaders, business executives and representatives from non-governmental organisations, multiple perspectives were provided and enriched during the discussions.

Composition and Participation of the South African Delegation

- 3.5 The South African delegation comprised the following officials from DIRCO and the Department of Social Development (DSD): Ms Rykie Meiring (DIRCO); Mr Jackie Mbonani, Chief Director: Older Persons (DSD) and Ms Thuli Mahlangu, Director: Older Persons (DSD).
- 3.6 The Officials participated, among others, in the seminars that focused on the UN International Conference and Plan of Action on Ageing (Madrid, 2002); the proposed UN Convention on the Rights of Older People; Training programmes on Ageing, hosted by the UN; and Population Ageing and Development.

Outcome of the Conference

- 3.7 The South African delegation initiated informal meetings with African Countries during the Conference and discussed the fact that the Continent is not well represented at the Conference and on the agenda of the IFA. The IFA decided to organise a Regional Workshop on Ageing in Cameroon in 2013.
- 3.8 SA actively took part in the discussions on a proposed UN Convention on the Rights for Older People. South Africa strongly supported this idea and South Africa's policy priorities on older persons were reflected in the discussions..
- 3.9 The Officials established contact with Ms V Levy, Ms H Hamlin and Ms M Myer, UN Representatives and presenters of the papers on the proposed UN Convention on Older People. These UN officials could prove useful sources of information and perspectives in terms of the proposed UN Convention on Older People. These UN officials requested South Africa to actively engage the discussions on the proposed UN Convention on Older People during the Third Session of the Open-ended Working Group on Ageing that will take place in New York in August 2012.
- 3.10 The SA Delegates met with Professor Alexander Kalache from the New York Academy of Medicine and Senior Advisor on Global Ageing. Professor Kalache will participate in the First Africa Regional Conference on Older People (Gerontology and Geriatrics) that will take place in Cape Town, from 17 – 20 October 2012. He expressed a willingness to have further discussions with the Department of International Relations and Cooperation and the Department of Social Development during this time. This will provide an opportunity for South Africa to get advice from one of the world leaders on global ageing regarding challenges that South Africa faces. He has raised older people's issues worldwide as head of the United Nations Programme on Ageing from 1993 to 2009. He was responsible for the 1999 UN International Year of Older Persons, the UN Second World Assembly on Ageing in 2002 and the 2002 UN Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing.

4. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that:

- 4.1 DIRCO and DSD actively participate in the IFA Regional Workshop on Ageing that will take place in Cameroon from 27 to 28 May 2013.
- 4.2 Adequate preparations for the resolutions on older people for the UNGA67: Third Committee: Social Development Issues and the 51st Session of the UN Commission for Social

Development should commence timeously. The feasibility of the proposed UN Convention for Older People will be negotiated during this time;

- 4.3 The Mission in New York participates in the Third Session of the Open-ended Working Group on Ageing that will take place in New York in August 2012;
- 4.5 South Africa actively participates in the First Africa Regional Conference on Older People (Gerontology and Geriatrics) that will take place in Cape Town, from 17 to 20 October 2012. Attending the Conference will provide an opportunity for South Africa to align national priorities with Africa regional priorities and commitments.