



**SPEECH BY CARMEN DIAZ GOMEZ  
OF THE IMSERSO AT THE PREPARATORY  
COMMITTEE OF THE UNECE MINISTERIAL  
CONFERENCE ON AGEING.**

### **Context in which the Conference is being held**

Since the United Nations Second World Assembly on Ageing, which was held in Madrid in the year 2002, and in accordance with the commitment that Spain undertook before the Commission for Social Development in 2003, the Spanish Ministry of Labour and Social Services, via the Institute for Older Persons and Social Services (IMSERSO) has been working on the implementation and follow-up of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing (MIPAA).

In this regard, Segovia hosted in November 2006, the "*First International Meeting of Focal Points on Ageing*" with the aim of preparing the review and appraisal of the Madrid Plan of Action and the Berlin Regional Implementation Strategy (RIS), exchanging knowledge and experience acquired by the various countries and contributing towards the process of preparing the UNECE Conference on Ageing 2007.

The next international event for reviewing the five years of implementation of the MIPAA and the RIS and identifying



the priorities for carrying out future initiatives will be held between 6<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> November in the city of Leon, at the *Ministerial Conference on Ageing for the European Region of the United Nations*.

As the host country and co-organiser of the Ministerial Conference in Leon, along with the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, Spain is again leading this important event.

The intention of Spain has been to support at all times the regional process of review that was started with the meeting of the Focal Points in Segovia. In this regard, we have managed, in collaboration with the United Nations, to consolidate the scenarios for debate on ageing, which allows us to reinforce and evaluate the progress made in the European region as regards the recommendations of the Madrid International Plan and the Berlin Regional Strategy.

The Regional Conference in Leon will help to clarify the progress that has been attained and to involve all of the States in the implementation of the Madrid Plan of Action by means of the exchange of experiences and the dissemination of information among the Member States of the UNECE region.

It will also facilitate to identify the priorities for subsequent coordinated initiatives in response to the ageing of the population.



The Conference will be the main event for revising the implementation of the MIPAA by analysing the degree to which the 10 Commitments laid down in the RIS have been met.

The Conference Agenda will be approved at this meeting of the Preparatory Committee to be held in Geneva on 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> July. However, we can provide a first *draft of the activities to be carried out, distributed among the days on which the Leon Conference is expected to be held:*

5 <sup>th</sup> November	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A Civil Society Forum will take place: NGOs and Researchers will gather separately for reviewing the advances of the five last years.</li><li>• Meeting of the Preparatory Committee</li></ul>
6 <sup>th</sup> and 7 <sup>th</sup> November	<p>The format proposed for the Conference is as follow:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A Plenary Session with:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Presentation of the regional report on the degree of compliance with the RIS Commitments</li><li>○ Reports from specialised Bodies</li></ul></li><li>• Parallel discussion panels on issues related to ageing. A total of 8 panels will be offered during the Conference to the participants.</li></ul>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Public events: Concert at the Cathedral of Leon and intergenerational debate.</li></ul>
8 <sup>th</sup> November	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Devoted to the Ministerial Segment:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Ministerial statements</li><li>○ Conclusions of previous sessions</li><li>○ Statement from NGOs</li><li>○ Adoption of a Political Declaration</li><li>○ Report on the Conference</li></ul></li></ul>

Approximately 400 participants are expected to attend as follows:

- 56 delegations from the Member States of the UNECE with up to 4 representatives per delegation.
- Representatives from bodies that are specialised and linked to the United Nations.
- Representatives from other intergovernmental organisations and international experts.
- Also, in the role of observers, representatives from NGOs, researchers and experts in ageing.



At the NGO Forum and the Research Forum one hundred participants are expected.

The working languages at the Conference will be English, French, Spanish and Russian.

### Preparatory activities carried out by the IMSERSO

- **Negotiation of the Agreement** on the Seat of the Conference entered into by the IMSERSO, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation and the UNECE: the agreement between the Executive Secretary of the UNECE and the Spanish Ambassador at the Permanent Mission in Geneva will be closed in brief. Practical arrangements for the Conference Hall and the hotels reservation have already been made.
- **Meeting in Madrid to prepare the NGO Forum on 13 June:** We have invited and financed to attend a preparatory meeting, the International Organisations that belonged to the Preparatory Committee of the World NGO Forum before the Second World Assembly on Ageing in 2002. Up to 40 representatives of NGO were present at this meeting. *The State Secretary of Social Services, Families and Disability has sent a letter to the Executive Secretary of The UNECE to support the participation of the NGO in the preparatory process of the Conference.*
- **Meeting to prepare the Research Forum:** with the members of International Association of Gerontology (IAG), which prepared the Scientific Forum in



Valencia in 2002, and with Spanish experts IMSERSO have financed the participation of 30 researchers in this meeting held in Madrid on 29 June.

- **An interministerial consultation process** on the Conference has started among the Ministry of Labour and Social Services, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the Ministries of Education, Health, and Internal Affairs.
- The Preparatory Committee for the Conference, which will include the participation of all of the representatives of the Member States in the UNECE Region, is taking place on 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> July in Geneva. **Spain has been invited to chair the Preparatory Committee** and the Cabinet of the State Secretary of Social Services, Families and the Disability is the chair of this Committee during the preparatory process.

*For the first cycle of review and appraisal of the MIPAA and the RIS, Spain has promoted the participation of the Civil Society and the UN Bottom-Up approach in order to build a " Society for All Ages":*

Despite the fact that the support to the participation of the Civil Society has been provided by Spain at an international level by reinforcing the presence of NGOs at the process of the Conference of Leon, I will now go on to comment briefly on the participation of Spanish civil society in issues related to ageing:



## State Council on the Older Persons

As regards the mechanisms that have been established in order to take into account the opinions of the older persons in Spain, the main body is the **State Council on the Older Persons**. The members of the State Council are representatives from the Spanish non-governmental organisations working with and for the older persons. It is an interministerial collegiate body, entrusted with the role of providing advisory and consultative services to the Ministry of Labour and Social Services. One example of their participation was on the occasion of the writing and implementation of new Spanish Law on *“Promotion of the Personal Autonomy and Attention to Dependent Persons”*, a consultative group was formed within the State Council on the Older Persons giving council to the Government.

## Promoting the associative movement:

The associative movement is promoted, among other measures, by subsidising the entities or programmes that carry out initiatives on behalf of the older persons. It is regulated through the Official Spanish State Gazette (B.O.E.), specifying the objectives to be met.

## Intergenerational Dialogue

The intergenerational programmes carried out by the IMSERSO are a means for specific and ongoing exchange of resources and learning between the older and younger generations with the ultimate aim of achieving individual



and social benefits. Since the month of September, the network of intergenerational programmes that is coordinated by the IMSERSO has been in operation. One of the intergenerational programmes involves a group of schoolchildren that regularly visit an older person's home to offer company, dialogue and support to the residents.

The intergenerational concept is not new and is historically immersed in the family and relationships of various cultures. It is also in line with the UN slogan "towards a society for all ages".

By means of Collaboration Conventions between the IMSERSO and other entities such as Universities, programmes like the one held in the Autumnus Community of Extremadura, with the Primary Schools, have been funded.

### **Exchange of best practices**

Moreover, the participation of civil society is encouraged by the International Technical Seminars that are being held every year in Spain organised by the IMSERSO. During the International Seminars, representatives from the Administration, the NGOs, the academia and civil society meet to analyse, to debate and to exchange information and best practices in the issues related to ageing.

In the hope of having contributed to inform you on our activities and our involvement in the preparation of the Ministerial Conference on Ageing, I would like to wish you all an excellent work at this Preparatory Committee and in



behalf of the Ministry of Labour and Social Services, I look forward to seeing you all in November in Leon.

Geneva, 12 July 2007