

Item 4. Follow up to the outcomes of the Asia-Pacific Intergovernmental Meeting on the Fourth Review and Appraisal of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing – Statement of Mala Kapur Shankardass

Thank you Chair, While Forward-looking policies and government action to address the challenges and maximize the opportunities of ageing have been put in place by various governments yet to my mind what seems as an overlook is strong and urgent emphasis on improving the images of older people in society. Stories of their resilience, their determination, their survival and their coping mechanisms hardly find space in popular media and public domain sources. There is no doubt that varied measures have been taken by governments and other stakeholders to promote the active participation and inclusion of older persons in all aspects of life but the criticality of this is that recognition of older persons as partners in development is in nascent stage. For instance I find as a Researcher working in the field of ageing since last 3 decades, hardly any instances where the contribution of older persons to the economy is applauded. Many older men and women are workers in agriculture, small scale industries and even some run businesses as well as continue to go to office in their later years even though it is seen more in the private sector than in the public but where are the calculations of their labour, the work hour inputs and its relation to shaping the economy. Many older persons, men and women are care givers and significant contributors

to reducing the cost of care on the society yet not only are their roles undermined but not enough initiatives are taken to enhance their contributions to the household & wider economy. Focus on and developing silver economy has caught the attention of the government and the private sector however to speed the implementation and upscale programs to give more visibility to the ageing sector is nonetheless slow. There is growing data on increases in populations ageing, but at the same time determining how the longer life expectancies are an asset to society is limited. Economic data linked to social, health and environmental determinants needs wider visibility. As an advocate for rights of older people I make a plea for giving due recognition to older people as partners of development and to support their role by having special and many more initiatives to improve their social including emphasis in providing adult and digital literacy, economic, health status. THANK YOU.