

INTERVENTION NOTES

AGENDA 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

**MONDAY, 7 SEPTEMBER 2022
10.00 AM – 12.00 NOON**

Excellencies,

Ladies and gentlemen,

Rapid aging will be a crucial megatrend affecting our region, including Malaysia in the coming decades. For Malaysia, the ageing megatrend brings new challenges in areas such as welfare, employment, income security, social safety net and aged care.

2. In promoting and protecting the rights of older persons, the National Policy and Plan of Action for Older Persons have been adopted since 1995 as the guiding documents to push forward the ageing agenda. As mandated in the policy, a National Advisory and Consultative Council for Older Persons was formed in 1996 to ensure a systematic approach to address the issues of older persons.

3. The drafting of a new Plan of Action has recently commenced. This Plan of Action will cover new challenges that the country is facing and among others will include development of a model to implement long term care, as well as the implementation of age-friendly cities. The Government hopes to finalise and launch the new Plan of Action soon.

4. Realising the importance of a rights-based approach to protect older persons, the Government has conducted a study on the content, approach and scope in drafting a Bill specifically for older persons which completed in October 2021. The rights of older persons will be further recognised once a new law on older persons is tabled in the first quarter of 2024.

5. To encourage productive and active ageing, the Government has forged strategic collaboration with NGOs to establish Activity Centres for Older Persons, based on community-based elderly care concept. The centre provides older persons with the opportunity to socialize with peers and carry out activities including recreation, health screenings and capacity building. As of June 2022, there are a total of 50,929 older persons participating actively at 153 activity centres nationwide. These Activity Centres are planned to be upgraded to become Lifelong Learning Hubs. Lifelong learning is also encouraged through programmes offered by various government TVET centres including the University of the Third Age (U3A). Among the courses offered are religious studies, photography, arts, culinary, languages and information technology.

6. Malaysia recognizes the pressing need to discuss on new emerging issues such as the COVID-19 pandemic and digital transformation. Older persons are more likely to be digitally excluded and to experience barriers in accessing goods and services that are increasingly offered online. The Government is actively promoting the harnessing of digital technologies to promote socioeconomic changes that empower older persons and better integrate them into the mainstream of development. Currently, every Activity Centre for Older Persons are equipped with computers and internet access. These facilities enable the patrons to join online trainings and workshops.

7. Due to a growing number of older persons, it is necessary to create cities that are aware of the unique needs of all their citizens including the needs of the ageing population. In this aspect, a smart city recognises the role of technology and ICT in supporting older persons and accelerating the implementation of MIPAA.

8. The Government is also concerned with the vulnerabilities faced by older women, and is cognisant of the need to review policies that are not gender sensitive. Malaysia recognises the importance to mainstream gender perspective in policies and programmes related to older persons with a focus on gender dimension of ageing and this will be one area that the Government shall be focused on moving forward.

Thank you.