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**QUESTION OF AGING**

Report of the Secretary-General

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## I. INTRODUCTION

1. The General Assembly, at its forty-second session, adopted resolution 42/51, in which it called upon the Secretary-General, Governments and non-governmental organizations to take a number of measures to implement the International Plan of Action on Aging. These encompass the second review and appraisal of the implementation of the Plan of Action, improved co-ordination and strengthening of the United Nations programme on aging, infrastructure building at national and international levels, advocacy, and technical co-operation. The resolution made a strong appeal to Governments, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations to contribute generously to the United Nations Trust Fund for Aging. It welcomed non-governmental initiatives that encourage the private sector to support the work of the United Nations system in the field of aging. The Assembly requested the Secretary-General to submit a progress report to its forty-third session.
2. The present report has been prepared in response to that request.

## II. RECOMMENDATIONS

3. The majority of the world's population aged 60 and over today are living in developing countries, and this proportion will increase from 58 per cent in 1990 to 62 per cent in 2000 and 71 per cent in 2025. The total global population of the elderly will increase from 487 million in 1990 to 612 million in 2000 and 1.2 billion in 2025. Simultaneously with the aging of populations, most countries are experiencing far-reaching technological changes and severe economic constraints. In such a climate, not every facet of aging can be dealt with; priorities need to be identified and resources pooled. Specific measures based on existing structures and activities, and more collaborative efforts encompassing Governments, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations will not only achieve "more with less" but can tap the expanding awareness of the need and opportunities that exist for timely intervention.
4. A set of priority measures are thus identified below and are submitted to Member States for their consideration. The General Assembly may wish to call upon all entities concerned to pool and channel resources accordingly. The recommendations are based on trends discernible in the second global review and appraisal on aging (see sect. III.A below) as well as expertise both within the United Nations system (see sect. III.A, and sect. III.C) and in the wider academic and non-governmental fields (see sect. III.A). Of particular relevance in the United Nations context is the accumulated experience of the United Nations Office at Vienna/Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs (UNOV/CSDHA) in the management of the Trust Fund for Aging, including efforts at resource mobilization (see sect. III.B). The recommendations relate to mechanisms for implementing the Plan of Action, training, information dissemination, research and evaluation, technical co-operation and advocacy. The proposed timeframe is 1989 to 1992 for immediate action, and 1992 and beyond for medium-term planning. The year 1992, the tenth anniversary of the World Assembly on Aging and the adoption of the Plan of Action, presents a significant occasion for organizing subsequent action.

5. Preliminary findings from the second review and appraisal indicate that co-ordinating mechanisms are essential for implementing the Plan of Action. The General Assembly may wish to call for priority attention being given to strengthening such mechanisms at the national, regional and international levels.

(a) At the national level, co-ordinating machinery or similar bodies with membership drawn from the Government, the non-governmental sector and the elderly themselves might be urged to draw up a national agenda on aging to 1992 and beyond; this process should also include the media, representatives of specialized educational institutions and the private sector, where appropriate.

(b) At the regional level, intergovernmental bodies should support national programmes on aging, devoting particular attention to expanding regional databases and instituting regional training courses on aging.

(c) At the international level, (i) the resources of the United Nations system-wide programme on aging should be increased, in the light of global demographic trends, for further implementation of the Plan of Action; (ii) an information exchange centre on aging should be established at UNOV/CSDHA, in its capacity as global focal point, to promote greater exchanges of knowledge and experience, particularly among developing countries.

6. Research and studies are the bedrock for the design and evaluation of effective policies and programmes. They are also essential for the appropriate exchange of technology. The General Assembly may wish to urge the bodies and organizations of the United Nations system, in co-operation with centres and institutes concerned, to conduct further research and studies in order to:

(a) Identify aspects of the Plan of Action that might be modified in the light of changing circumstances;

(b) Identify ways and means of ensuring the full and effective participation of the elderly in development;

(c) Identify and assess changing social support structures for the elderly;

(d) Determine the nature and magnitude of social expenditures related to aging in developing countries;

(e) Assist Member States in developing demographic and socio-economic profiles of their elderly populations.

7. Development co-operation represents an indispensable means for assisting Governments to strengthen and improve national capacities for aging-related policies and programmes. Resource constraints have, however, limited the number of requests for expert advice and assistance that the United Nations could fulfil; during the reporting period only three such advisory missions could be accomplished. In order to address this important need, the Secretariat is exploring the possibility of having an adviser on Aging Policies and Programmes attached to UNOV/CSDHA.

8. The United Nations Trust Fund for Aging is uniquely positioned to assist developing countries (in both a technical and financial sense) to deal with the aging of their populations. To date, the Fund has disbursed nearly \$850,000 for 30 projects. In view of the growing awareness among developing countries of the incipient aging of their populations, the demands for assistance from the Fund have outpaced its resources. It is therefore vital to strengthen the resource base of the Fund. The General Assembly may thus wish to call for a major fund-raising effort, setting a goal of resource mobilization of \$2 million by the year 1992, the tenth anniversary of the adoption of the Plan of Action. Based on past trends, this sum in the Fund could, in turn, lead to the mobilization of an estimated additional \$8 million in matching resources, which might not have otherwise been available (see sect. III.B).

9. National, regional and international activities on aging are clearly multiplying and, without vigilance, these efforts could easily be duplicated. International co-operation is therefore essential. After the completion of the second review and appraisal of the implementation of the Plan of Action, it would be opportune to work towards the formulation of a concerted programme of measures to the year 2000, when more than three fifths of the world's elderly will be living in developing countries. The national agendas recommended in paragraph 1 above could then be moulded into a revitalized international effort for implementing the Plan of Action. This would necessarily involve both regional technical meetings and an interregional consultation whose recommendations for a concerted programme of measures could be considered by the General Assembly at its forty-fifth session. The Assembly may wish to endorse this strategy, and call upon Member States to meet its costs through extrabudgetary resources.

10. The tenth anniversary of the World Assembly on Aging in 1992 presents an ideal occasion for launching a world-wide round of activities. The General Assembly may wish to call upon Governments as well as concerned bodies and entities to participate. In addition to concerned bodies and organizations of the United Nations system, the Assembly may wish to include in such an endeavour the media, trade unions, employers' and pensioners' associations, youth and women's organizations. Finally, the Assembly may also wish to identify aging as a priority theme in both the proposed medium-term plan for the period starting in 1992, and in the elaboration of an international development strategy for the fourth development decade (1991-2000).

### III. PROGRESS REPORT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF RESOLUTION 42/51

#### A. Activities of the United Nations Office at Vienna/Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs

11. The implementation by UNOV/CSDHA of the aging programme as mandated, inter alia, by General Assembly resolution 42/51 has been constrained during the reporting period by a considerable reduction in staff in the Aging Unit. In order to carry out the work, it has been necessary to make special arrangements to strengthen interaction of units within UNOV/CSDHA and to maximize co-operation within the United Nations system, Member States and non-governmental organizations.

1. Second review and appraisal of the implementation of the International Plan of Action on Aging

12. In accordance with General Assembly resolution 37/51, a review and appraisal of the implementation of the International Plan of Action on Aging is held quadrennially. The first such review was in 1985; the second will be conducted in 1989 by the thirty-first session of the Commission for Social Development. As a basis for the second review, the Secretary-General circulated a questionnaire to Governments in February 1988, requesting their views and experiences in implementing the Plan of Action. To complement this, UNOV/CSDHA has elicited comments from organizations of the United Nations system and selected non-governmental organizations. The results of this inquiry will be analysed by UNOV/CSDHA and will form the basis of the report that the Secretary-General will submit to the Commission for Social Development. In response to General Assembly resolution 42/51, an ad hoc working group will be convened at the Commission to ensure that appropriate policy-level attention is accorded to the issue.

13. From the 48 responses of Governments received at the time of writing, 1/ some trends can be abstracted. The major concerns of Member States appear to lie in three areas:

(a) The escalating cost of social expenditures, particularly in health care and pensions;

(b) The weakening of traditional social support systems for the elderly, particularly the family;

(c) The condition of vulnerable groups of the elderly, particularly elderly women and the very old.

14. Measures contemplated or being taken by Member States in response to the aging of their populations appear to fall into four major categories:

(a) Contemplation or adoption of legislation and national plans of action;

(b) Establishment of appropriate infrastructures, particularly co-ordinating machineries;

(c) Strengthening of co-operation between Governments, the United Nations and non-governmental organizations as well as between professionals and volunteers in the planning and delivery of services;

(d) Marked increase of interest in training of national personnel.

15. Support for the second review and appraisal is being provided in part by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the United Nations Trust Fund for Aging, which are financing comparative regional studies on the implementation of the Plan of Action.

## 2. National machineries on aging

16. UNOV/CSDHA is conducting a global survey of national machineries (co-ordinating committees, councils or focal points) to determine the status of national infrastructures on aging. While some 70 such machineries were established in connection with the 1982 World Assembly on Aging, they have undergone considerable change in the intervening years. In the current survey, 47 countries have thus far responded to a questionnaire sent to Governments. All 47 report having national machineries for action on aging; 28 of these are developing countries. Thirty-two of the machineries are governmental bodies, 3 are non-governmental and 13 have both governmental and non-governmental representatives. Forty-five of the machineries are engaged in policy formulation, 40 in the implementation of programmes, 23 in training activities, and 28 in research on aging. Findings of the inquiry on the status of national machineries will be detailed in the report on the second review and appraisal.

## 3. United Nations system-wide co-ordination of policies and programmes in the field of aging

17. An Inter-agency Meeting on system-wide co-ordination of policies and programmes in the field of aging was held at Vienna on 10 and 11 March 1988. Nine bodies and organizations of the United Nations system as well as the International Institute on Aging participated in the meeting; this was the first inter-agency meeting on aging since 1983. 2/ The meeting adopted a draft outline of a system-wide approach to the implementation of the International Plan of Action on Aging, which has been submitted for approval by the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination.

18. The draft system-wide approach deals with four aspects of Plan implementation: constraints, priority objectives, strategy for implementation and framework for co-ordination. Both general and specific constraints are identified, including the novelty of the issue, its frequent low priority in national budgets, the lack of national infrastructures, limited personnel and other resources, and an apparent reluctance of decision-makers to take into account the medium and long-term effects of development decisions. A low resource allocation for aging at the international level is seen to constrain national activities still further.

19. Five priority objectives for international action are identified, and relate primarily to strengthening national capacities and infrastructures. They encompass research and analysis, policy formulation and evaluation, information exchange and infrastructural support.

20. The strategy for achieving the priority objectives of the Plan focus on resource mobilization, integration of age-specific concerns in overall development programmes, support for applied research and training, and greater involvement of non-governmental organizations in programme planning and implementation. Resource mobilization is particularly important and should include innovative approaches for involving both philanthropic organizations and the private sector.

21. The framework for co-ordination envisages a strengthened role for UNOV/CSDHA as the global focal point on aging, as well as streamlined approaches to inter-agency consultation and co-operation on operational activities.

22. Participants recommended the convening of the next inter-agency meeting in connection with the second review and appraisal in March 1989, to coincide with the thirty-first session of the Commission for Social Development.

#### 4. African society of gerontology

23. The impetus to establish an African society of gerontology came from the African Regional Conference on Aging, held at Dakar in December 1984. The Conference, organized through the tripartite co-operation of the Government of Senegal, an international non-governmental organization and UNOV/CSDHA, brought together delegates from 27 African countries and some 40 experts. The Conference invited the United Nations to participate in the establishment of an African gerontological society in collaboration with interested African Governments, the Organization of African Unity and non-governmental organizations concerned.

24. General Assembly resolutions 41/96 and 42/51 requested the Secretary-General to assist in establishing the society. In December 1987, in response to a request of the Government of Senegal, UNOV/CSDHA in co-operation with the Department of Technical Co-operation for Development of the Secretariat and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) organized a two-week advisory mission. The mission identified a tentative set of rules and procedures and outlined an organizational structure.

25. It is envisaged that the society, to be based in Senegal, will comprise gerontological experts designated by its member States, and will be financed by membership fees and voluntary contributions. Its aim will be to promote in Africa the implementation of the International Plan of Action on Aging, giving special attention to awareness-building, training of trainers, public information and education, promoting inter-generational solidarity and integration of the elderly in development, and applied research.

26. The Government of Senegal, in consultation with UNOV/CSDHA, the Department of Technical Co-operation for Development and UNDP, is scheduled to organize a preparatory meeting this year. The meeting will comprise representatives of several African countries, and will discuss the organization of the society and finalize arrangements for its establishment.

#### 5. International Institute on Aging and other training initiatives

27. The International Institute on Aging in Malta, established pursuant to Economic and Social Council resolution 1987/41, was inaugurated by the Secretary-General on 15 April 1988.



28. The Institute has its headquarters in Valletta, Malta, and is funded from voluntary contributions by Governments, non-governmental organizations, philanthropic institutions and individuals. Seed money and support were provided by the Department of Technical Co-operation for Development to assess and determine the feasibility of establishing the Institute in Malta, and to address its proposed functions. It has also received an initial contribution of \$US 300,000 over two years from UNDP. UNFPA is also considering providing a grant. The Institute operates under the direction of an international Board, which formulates principles and guidelines for its activities, approves its work programme and budget, identifies financial resources and assists in fund-raising activities, which are a high priority. The Secretary-General of the United Nations has appointed the Director-General of the United Nations Office at Vienna as Chairperson of the Board.

29. The Institute will provide training in gerontology to policy-makers, planners, programme executives and educators, scientists, professionals and para-professionals. It will also promote co-operation on relevant aspects of aging. In close co-operation with the United Nations, it will analyse and disseminate information on aging appropriate to developing countries.

30. In the light of recommendations 57, 59, 60 and 62 of the Plan of Action regarding training of personnel for research, data collection and information exchange, and the relevant provisions of Economic and Social Council resolution 87/41, the Government of Yugoslavia has requested a feasibility study on the establishment of a United Nations-affiliated institute on aging in Belgrade.

#### 6. Exchange of information

31. The International Seminar-Expert Group Meeting on Policies and Strategies for the Participation of the Elderly in Development held in Rabat, Malta, from 2 to 5 February 1988) provided a forum for the exchange of experiences and a review of policies and programmes on aging in developing countries. The Seminar was organized by the Department of Technical Co-operation for Development and UNOV/CSDHA in collaboration with the Government of Malta. It was supported by regular programme financing provided by the department and a grant from the United Nations Trust Fund for Aging. Eleven experts participated together with observers from the United Nations system and the host country. The recommendations adopted by the Seminar form the basis for the technical guidelines on programme and project planning for the participation of the elderly in development that are to be issued by the UNOV/CSDHA.

32. The Bulletin on Aging, which is a major vehicle for the exchange of information in the field, was issued twice in 1987. Commencing in 1988, the Bulletin is being issued three times a year, with one issue being devoted to technical or specialized information previously contained in the Periodical on Aging, which has been discontinued due to resource constraints.

33. In 1988 the UNOV/CSDHA issued a Handbook on Organizations Active in the Field of Aging. The Handbook describes in brief 270 organizations and educational institutions, identifies their aging-related activities and functions, and lists

countries and/or regions in which these organizations would like to co-operate with others on aging-related projects.

#### 7. Co operation with non-governmental organizations

34. UNOV/CSDHA continued to co-operate extensively with non-governmental organizations during the reporting period. In addition to a global survey of over 1,000 non-governmental organizations active in the field of aging, which resulted in the Handbook on Organizations Active in the Field of Aging, UNOV/CSDHA is currently surveying the extent and status of national machineries on aging, as mentioned in paragraph 16 above. The survey will help to identify the extent to which their membership includes non-governmental organizations, particularly organizations of the elderly, since membership in national machineries usually reflects a participation in policy formulation and programme implementation.

35. Liaison continued with the NG/ Committees on Aging in New York and Vienna comprising, respectively, 60 and 30 member organizations. In May 1988, the New York Committee convened a Consultation at United Nations Headquarters. It explored community care and the broad question of partnerships between Governments, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations in the field of aging. The conclusions and recommendations were brought to the attention of the first regular session of 1988 of the Economic and Social Council by the International Council on Social Welfare, on behalf of 30 international organizations in consultative status with the Council. The statement expressed support for the United Nations programme on aging, called for improved co-operation of the non-governmental and intergovernmental communities, and urged world-wide consultations in 1992, the tenth anniversary of the adoption of the Plan of Action.

36. The Vienna NGO Committee on Aging focused its discussions in the reporting period on the question of elderly women. It presented a broad-based appeal to the thirty-second session of the Commission on the Status of Women (Vienna, 14 to 23 March 1988) on the conditions and needs of older women. 3/

37. UNOV/CSDHA collaborated with the Committee for the Promotion of Aid to Co-operatives (COPAC) on the preparation of a Manual on Co-operatives for Aging. The Manual, produced with financial assistance from the United Nations Trust Fund for Aging, is based on a survey of more than 3,000 co-operatives or related institutions and organizations.

38. UNOV/CSDHA participated in a number of non-governmental conferences during the reporting period, which included the Seminar on Elderly Women organized by the American Association of Retired Persons (Washington D.C., 30 June 1988), where the Director-General of the United Nations Office at Vienna delivered the keynote address; and the Fifth International Conference on Legislation concerning Veterans and War Victims (Bad Ischl, Austria, 21 to 24 April 1988).

**B. Development co-operation**

**1. Technical co-operation activities**

39. During the period from January 1987 to June 1988, and in accordance with their mandates, UNOV/CSDHA and the Department of Technical Co-operation for Development co-operated in the provision of aging-related advisory services to three countries, supported the development of infrastructures in the field of aging, and are publishing technical guidelines on programme and project planning. Advisory missions were undertaken to the Dominican Republic, Morocco and Senegal and focused on aging-related policy formulation and programme design. The mission to the Dominican Republic served to link expertise available in the region and thus reflects efforts to promote greater technical co-operation among developing countries. The mission to Senegal was combined with expert consultations on the establishment of an African society of gerontology.

40. As reported above (see sect. III.A), UNOV/CSDHA and the Department of Technical Co-operation for Development also co-operated in the organization and convening of the International Seminar-Expert Group Meeting on Strategies and Policies for the Participation of the Elderly in Development, and in the establishment of the International Institute on Aging.

**2. United Nations Trust Fund for Aging**

**(a) Project cycle activities**

41. Since becoming operational in 1983, pursuant to General Assembly resolution 37/51 of 3 December 1982, the United Nations Trust Fund for Aging has received more than 100 requests for assistance and has provided nearly \$ 850,000 in grants to 30 projects in the field of aging. The regional distribution of grants by the Fund is presented in table 1; a list of projects supported appears in annex 1.

42. During the period under review (January 1987 to June 1988), some 35 inquiries for assistance were received by the Fund. As indicated in table 1, nine were approved for funding, involving a resource commitment of \$209,700. The data available indicate that each \$1 committed by the Fund resulted in the mobilization, on average, of an additional \$4. Thus, during the 18-month period under review an estimated additional \$1 million was mobilized to further the objectives of the International Plan of Action on Aging and to reinforce aging-related concerns in mainstream development.

Table 1. Distribution of grants by region

Region	Number of projects supported		Value of grant (United States dollars)	
	January 1983 to December 1986	January 1987 to June 1988	January 1983 to December 1986	January 1987 to June 1988
Africa (RAF)	6	2	131 636	75 900
Asia and Pacific (RAS)	-	2		35 300
Latin America and the Caribbean (RLA)	7	2	361 800	40 700
Western Asia (RWA)	2	-	23 000	-
Interregional and global (INT/GLO)	6	3	117 380	57 811
<b>Total</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>633 816</b>	<b>209 711</b>

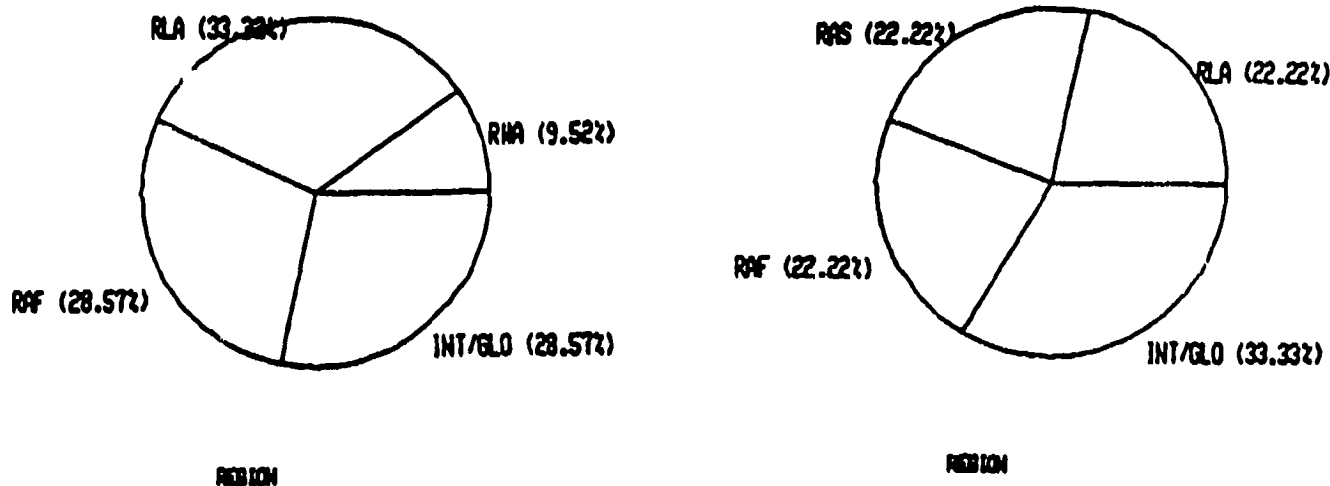


Figure 1. Number of projects supported by region:  
 1983-1986; 1987-1988

43. As figure 1 indicates, the majority of the projects supported during both 1983-1986 (72 per cent) and 1987-1988 (67 per cent) were for country and regional-level action.

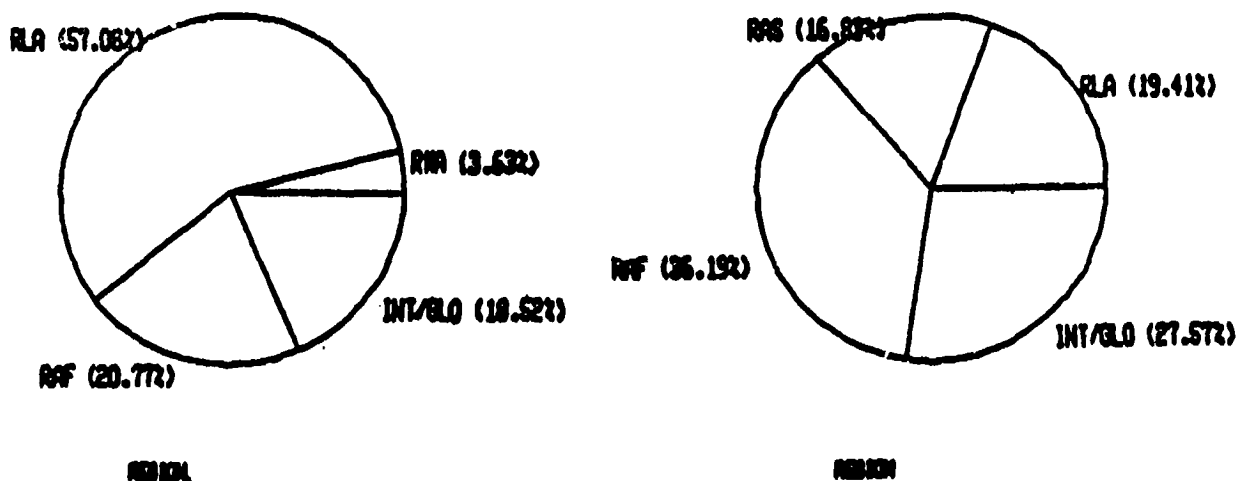


Figure 2. Regional distribution of grants:  
 1983-1986; 1987-1988

44. Figure 2 shows that country and regional-level action also account for the decided majority of grants made by the Fund: \$516,436 (81 per cent of all grants) for the period 1983-1986 and \$151,900 (72 per cent of all grants) for 1987-1988.

45. Table 2 provides data on the distribution of projects among five principal subject areas, identified in accordance with priorities for the Fund established by the General Assembly. It may be recalled that the Secretary-General's report to the forty-second session of the General Assembly (A/42/567) had identified five categories of activities for the Fund. After further review and analysis of the Fund's operations, these have been redefined as follows: "Seminars and Conferences" are now included under "Training" or under "Information Exchange", depending on the basic objective of the project - strengthening capacities or exchanging experiences; "Projects Directly Benefiting the Elderly" has been redefined as "Support to Organizations of or concerned with the Elderly"; and "Advisory Services" is now classified as "Technical Co-operation on Aging Policies and Programmes".

Table 2. Distribution of grants by subject area

Area	Number of projects		Value of projects (United States dollars)	
	January 1983 to December 1986	January 1987 to June 1988	January 1983 to December 1986	January 1987 to June 1988
Training	6	1	200 500	20 300
Data collection; applied research	7	1	258 900	25 000
Information exchange	5	5	147 316	87 811
Support to organisations of or concerned with the elderly	1	2	18 000	76 600
Technical co-operation on aging policies and programmes	2	-	9 100	-
Total	21	9	633 816	209 711

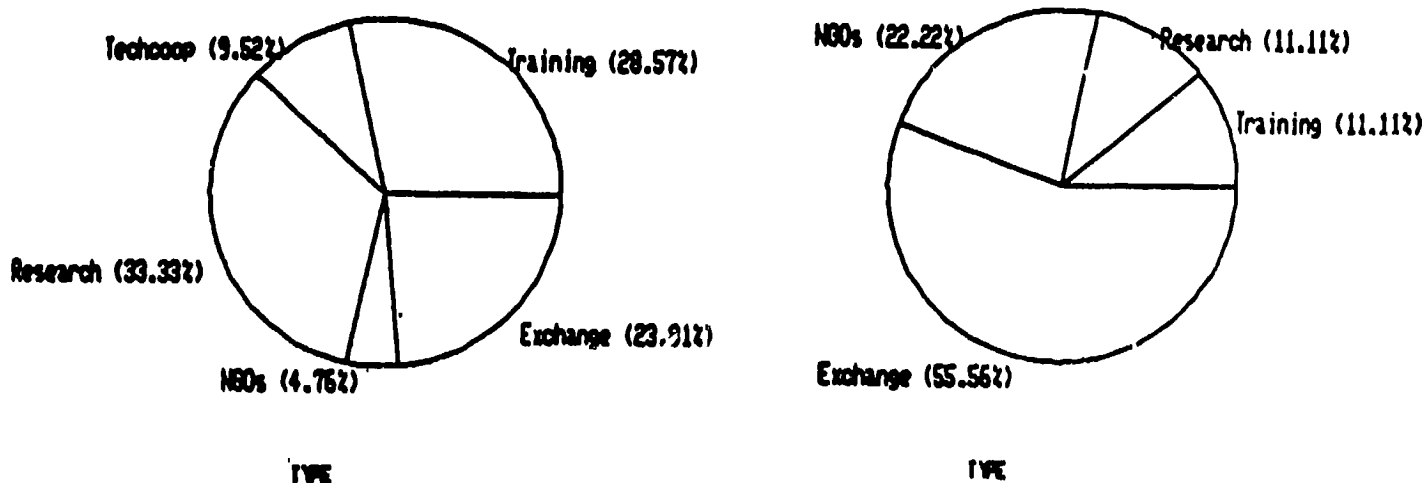


Figure 3. Projects supported, by subject area:  
 1983-1986; 1987-1988

46. Figure 3 indicates that research, training and exchanges accounted for nearly 90 per cent of all projects supported during 1983-1986. This pattern has changed significantly during 1987-1988, with the growing awareness of the need for vastly increased exchanges of knowledge and experience among developing countries. Training and research remain important subject areas, but there is also a considerable increase in requests for support for projects concerned with organisations of the elderly.

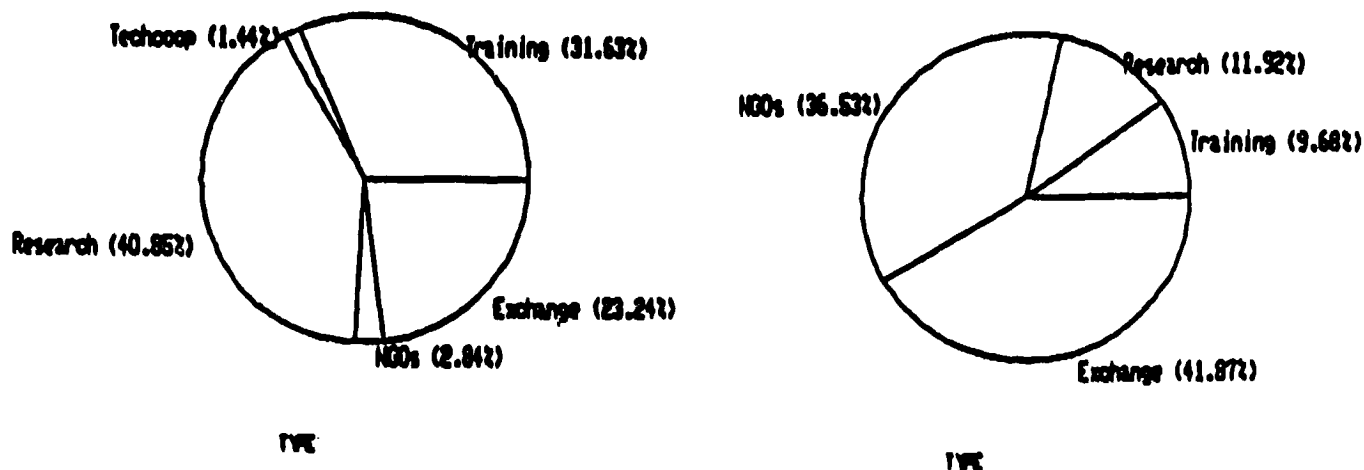


Figure 4. Distribution of grants, by subject area:  
 1983-1986; 1987-1988

47. As figure 4 demonstrates, more than two fifths of the resources disbursed during 1983 to 1986 were for data collection and applied research. Training was the second priority, accounting for 31 per cent of the resources disbursed, followed by information exchange, accounting for 23 per cent. For the 1987-1988 period, information exchange took the largest share (42 per cent) of resources disbursed, followed by support to the activities of organisations of the elderly (36 per cent); training and research each accounted for 12 per cent of the resources disbursed.

(b) Selected project experiences

48. Special attention has been directed to projects that are concerned with capacity building and with the formulation of aging-related policies and pilot programmes in developing countries. For instance, the Fund is supporting a national training course on caretaking for the elderly, scheduled to be held in China in September 1988. At the regional level, the Fund provided assistance for a meeting at the University of Florida, which served as a forum for reviewing implementation of the International Plan of Action on Aging in Latin America and

the Caribbean, and assessed future policy and research priorities. The Fund provided assistance for a seminar on aging in the Asian and Pacific region, organized by the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, which evaluated the regional implementation of the International Plan of Action and considered national and regional strategies to further its implementation. Preparatory activities for the establishment of an African society of gerontology are being supported by the Fund. In Uganda, through an earmarked grant provided by the Federal Republic of Germany, the Fund is supporting a project designed to respond to settlement needs of elderly refugees; the project is being implemented by the Anglican Church of Uganda.

49. These are but a few examples of projects being supported by the Fund. They reflect its complementary role, in both the substantive and financial sense, to other forms of assistance available. In each of these cases the Fund has contributed to strengthening the capacities of developing countries and regions through the carefully targeted use of its modest financial resources. The impact of the Fund's operations appears to have been positive and multi-directional. It continues to play a vital role in raising awareness of aging issues, in providing financial and technical support, and in mobilizing additional resources.

(c) Resource management and mobilization

50. The Director-General of the United Nations Office at Vienna continues to carry out the managerial responsibilities of the Fund and to seek new and improved ways to streamline and strengthen its operations. Proposals for funding are appraised by the Social Development Trust Fund Operations Committee, established in UNOV/CSDHA during 1987, whose funding recommendations are submitted to United Nations Headquarters for financial approval. Establishment of the Committee has served to reduce the time required to appraise and approve projects by approximately 50 per cent.

51. The Fund is uniquely positioned, not only to provide direct substantive and financial support to developing countries, but also to act as a catalyst for resource mobilization. The data available indicate that the modest, seed-money grants of the Fund have served to mobilize additional resources at an estimated ratio of 4:1. As reported above, the \$209,711 in grants made from January 1987 to June 1988 resulted in an estimated \$800,000 in additional resources being mobilized. Without the Fund's seed-money grants, those resources might not have become available for the benefit of the growing number of elderly persons, particularly in developing countries.

52. In spite of its achievements, the Fund continues to be in urgent need of additional resources. While the Pledging Conference for United Nations Operational Activities provides an opportunity for sustained support for the Fund, the 1987 Conference resulted in pledges of only \$27,858 from seven Governments. Contributions to the Fund are also mobilized through the periodic circulation of project proposals and through earmarked contributions.



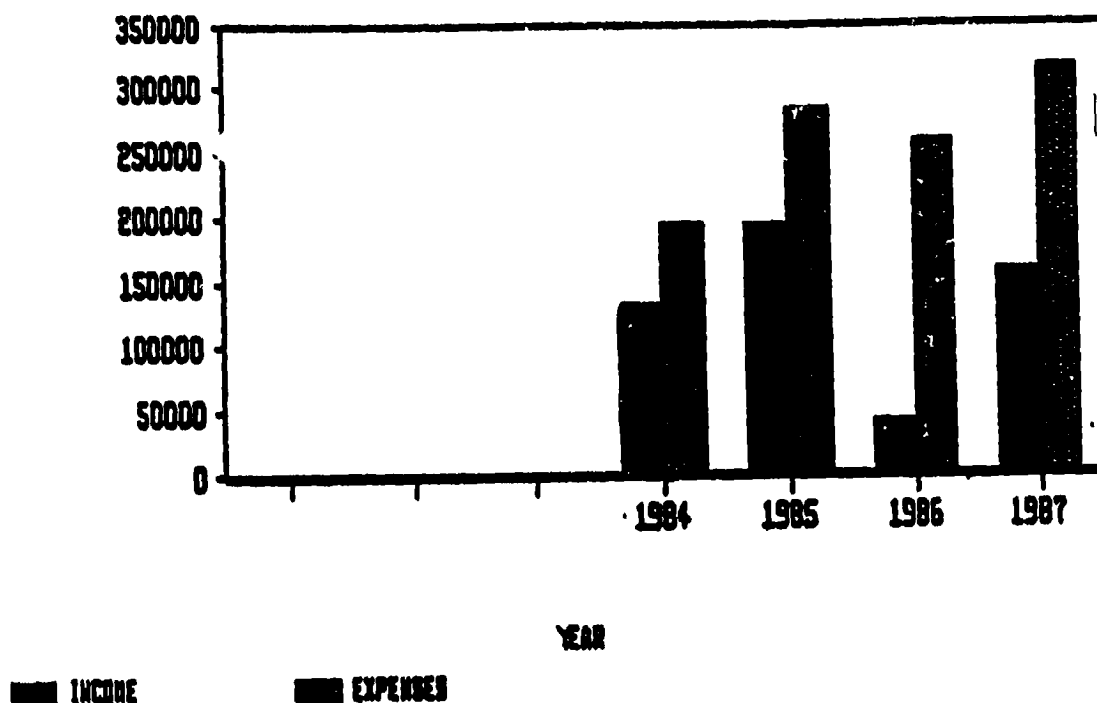


Figure 5. Income and Expenditures: 1984-1987  
(in United States dollars)

53. As indicated in figure 5, the general trend has expenditures exceeding income received by the Fund. The shortfall was \$62,000 in 1984, \$87,000 in 1985, \$218,000 in 1986 and \$155,000 in 1987, reflecting the Fund's response to the growing number of priority requests for assistance. But if the current trend is to be reversed, there is an urgent need for deliberate action by Governments, as well as non-governmental organizations concerned and the private sector. Without an immediate and sustained effort to strengthen the Fund, many constructive projects will fail to materialize and the advantage of timely action that developing countries now have in response to the evolving problems of aging will be lost. Member States should therefore give serious consideration to the situation of the Fund. The matter has been raised on a number of occasions in recent sessions of the General Assembly but has thus far not resulted in measures which ensure the viability of the Fund.

### 3. Trust Fund for the Promotion of a United Nations Programme for the Aging

54. The Trust Fund for the Promotion of a United Nations Programme for the Aging was established in July 1986 on a provisional basis until 31 December 1987 and subsequently extended through 1988. The Secretary-General is reviewing the options for the use of the resources of the Fund, currently established at \$18,000. Options identified include the use of these seminal resources as seed money to co-finance formulation of the concerted programme of measures to the year 2000, discussed in section II. Another option being explored is the proposal to create a

world foundation on aging, which would encourage the private sector to support the work of the United Nations system in the field.

**C. Activities of the specialized agencies and organizations of the United Nations system**

55. The Population Division, Department of International Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat is currently engaged in research on population aspects of aging and their economic and social consequences. The research, which is funded by UNFPA, aims to provide planners in developing countries with a better understanding of the socio-economic consequences of aging and of the range of policy options and programmes available. A Consultative Meeting was held in New York from 23 to 26 May 1988 to review draft reports from Argentina, Morocco and the State of Kerala in India, where the aging of population has already progressed to a significant degree.
56. The Population Division and the Municipal Government of Sendai, Japan, in collaboration with the Japan Aging Research Center, the International Centre of Social Gerontology and UNOV/CSDHA, are currently organizing an International Conference on the Aging of Populations in the context of Urbanization (Sendai, 12 to 16 September 1988). The meeting will discuss, inter alia, the implications of aging and urbanization for social support systems.
57. The Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific convened an Expert Seminar on the Promotion of National Infrastructures for Aging Populations in Asia and the Pacific at Bangkok from 14 to 17 December 1987, with support from the United Nations Trust Fund for Aging. The Seminar was attended by 16 experts and representatives of United Nations agencies and bodies. It adopted a guide for future activities on aging in the region, which emphasized a human resources development perspective and the need for strengthening relationships between Government and non-governmental sectors in providing alternative support systems for the elderly.
58. The Economic Commission for Europe has carried out, with financial assistance from UNFPA, a project on the economic and social implications of changing age distributions. Sixteen institutions from 14 member countries participated in the project, which concluded with a meeting in Brussels from 25 to 27 April 1988. The project report, which includes some 45 background papers, is under preparation; an annotated bibliography will be published separately.
59. The Latin American Demographic Centre (CELADE) continues to carry out training, research and technical assistance activities in the field of aging, and provides assistance to Governments in the region on the integration of population factors into development planning.
60. Research on social support systems for the elderly, which commenced two years ago at the United Nations University, is now nearing completion. The objective is to identify the changing nature of welfare resources in relation to the growing needs of the elderly, based on seven surveys encompassing selected communities in Brazil, Egypt, India, the Republic of Korea, Singapore, Thailand and Zimbabwe.

Five of the surveys have been completed and an expert group consultation held to plan the synthesis and publication of findings.

61. Studies by the Food and Agriculture Organisation in the Côte d'Ivoire and Rwanda are paying particular attention to the elderly, identifying their participation in the labour force as well as their household tasks and discretionary activities in an attempt to understand the role of the elderly in the functioning of rural societies. Other activities of FAO encompass the elderly as well but do not treat them as a specific group.

62. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) is finalizing a number of projects in the field of aging: a training manual to help the elderly to work with young children, produced in co-operation with the International Federation on Aging; a survey of facilities for the elderly in French universities, conducted with the Union française des universités du troisième âge; and an evaluation on preparation for retirement as an element in education on aging, conducted in six countries (Algeria, France, India, Japan, Nigeria and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland). UNESCO is preparing a consultation and a survey on the use of the skills and experience of the elderly in the education of young people and adults, and studies on the impact of aging on socio-cultural infrastructures.

63. Activities of the World Health Organization (WHO) go beyond traditional medical concerns to encompass the broader context of improving the quality of life of the elderly. This implies support for elderly people from their families, their workplace, the community and the State. Developing a comparative international data base to reflect such a multidimensional approach has been one of WHO's priorities in the 1984-1989 period. In addition, WHO's Global Medium-Term Programme for the 1990-1995 period has a programme element on Health of the Elderly, which aims to reduce the functional dependency of the elderly as a result of the deterioration in their health, social and economic status. Measures to attain this objective include support to Member States in the formulation of appropriate policies, data collection and information dissemination, co-operation with national programmes in organizing comprehensive care systems, promotion of applied research, development of technologies appropriate for the elderly in developing countries, and the promotion of multilateral international collaboration in the field.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

64. It is clear that there is now a growing global debate on the topic of aging and a broad concern for establishing strong infrastructures at all levels. Accordingly, there is a growing awareness of the limited time left for setting in train the necessary legislation, research and training institutions, co-ordinating machineries, and a range of policies of both a sectoral and integrative nature. The challenge now is to define the major issues, to refine responses, and to mobilize the necessary resources which are everywhere inadequate to the task, both internationally and nationally. The second review and appraisal of the implementation of the Plan of Action will be particularly helpful in identifying

successful policies and programmes in certain countries that may be usefully adapted in others.

65. The major constraints facing the United Nations programme are the novelty of the issue in developing countries, a tendency among decision-makers to postpone the treatment of issues that are not of an immediate or emergency nature, economic stringencies at the national level and a low allocation of resources for aging. A similarly low allocation of resources at the international level seriously constrains the United Nations capacity to function as a catalyst and co-ordinator of the energies and resources required for a timely adjustment to the aging of populations. It particularly affects the activities of the Trust Fund for Aging and those of UNOV/CSDHA, the global focal point on aging. The major resource now available to the United Nations in the field of aging is timely action. There is still time for interventions of a preventive nature. If these are not carried out, however, there will soon be a need for more costly emergency interventions in both the economic and social spheres.

66. The tenth anniversary of the adoption of the Plan of Action in 1992 presents an opportunity for marshalling attention and energies over a short and immediate period, and for setting in motion a momentum that could be maintained to the end of the century, by which time the aging profile of most countries will have become apparent. This opportunity will be lost, if action does not begin immediately.

#### Notes

1/ Africa region - 9, Asia and Pacific - 7, Europe and North America - 16, Latin America and Caribbean - 11, Western Asia - 5.

2/ The following agencies and bodies participated in the inter-agency meeting on aging at Vienna on 10 and 11 March 1988: International Labour Organisation, World Health Organization, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, United Nations Population Fund, United Nations Relief and works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, Economic Commission for Europe, Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, International Institute on Aging, and the United Nations Office at Vienna/Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs.

3/ The statement to the thirty-second session of the Commission on the Status of Women was made by the International Federation of Business and Professional Women, Soroptimist International, Zonta International, non-governmental organizations in consultative status, category I; Bahá'í International Community, Caritas Internationalis (International Confederation of Catholic Charities), International Council of Jewish Women, International Federation for Home Economics, International Federation of Settlements and Neighbourhood Centres, International Federation of University Women, Medical Women's International Association, Pax Romana (International Catholic Movement for Intellectual and Cultural Affairs) (International Movement of Catholic Students), World Federation of Methodist Women, World Union of Catholic Women's Organizations, non-governmental organizations in consultative status, category II.

## ANNEX

Projects supported by the United Nations Trust Fund for Aging  
from January 1983 to June 1988

A. Africa

1. United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO): Development of national policies on aging in the People's Republic of the Congo (1983).
2. International Centre of Social Gerontology: Expert Meeting on aging and development in Africa (Versailles, France, 4-6 May 1983).
3. Government of Senegal: African Conference on Gerontology (Dakar, 10-15 December 1984).
4. Government of Mali: Development and implementation of an experimental policy for the elderly (1984-1985).
5. Government of Morocco: Assessment of the needs of the aged in Morocco and the effect on development (1985).
6. Government of Zimbabwe: Consultative meeting on planning for the needs of the elderly in Zimbabwe (Harare, 15-18 December 1986).
7. Anglican Church of Uganda: Assistance to the Aging (Kampala, 1988).
8. Government of Senegal: Meeting of Preparatory Group for establishing an African Society of Gerontology (Dakar, September 1988).

B. Asia and the Pacific

9. Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP): Regional seminar on promoting national infrastructures for aging populations (Bangkok, 8-12 December 1987).
10. Government of China: National caretaking course for the elderly (September 1988).

C. Latin America and the Caribbean

11. Sociedad Colombiana de Gerontología y Geriatria: Promotion of national awareness of issues of aging and training in Colombia (1983-1984).
12. Pan American Health Organization (PAHO): Needs assessment survey of the urban elderly in Latin America and the Caribbean - phase I (1984-1985).

13. International Centre of Social Gerontology: Training courses on gerontology in Argentina, Brazil, Costa Rica, Ecuador and Peru - phase I (September 1985-August 1986).

14. Instituto Nacional de Servicios Sociales para Jubilados Pensionados (Argentina): Evaluation of the socio-economic situation of the aging population in Argentina (1986-1987).

15. International Centre of Social Gerontology: Training courses on gerontology in Argentina, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Jamaica, Mexico and Uruguay - phase II (September 1986-August 1987).

16. International Centre of Social Gerontology: Conference on Gerontology for Latin America and the Caribbean (Bogotá, 9-13 June 1986).

17. Pan American Health Organization (PAHO): Needs assessment survey of the urban elderly in Latin America and the Caribbean - phase II (1986-1987).

18. National Council for Solidarity and Social Development: Multiple Activities Centre for the Elderly (Bolivia, 1987).

19. Centre for Gerontological Studies, University of Florida: Conference on Aging Demography and Well-Being in Latin America (Gainesville, FL, 23-25 February 1988).

#### D. Western Asia

20. United Nations Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs: Advisory services to the Government of the United Arab Emirates on policies and programmes for the aging (1983).

21. Child and Mother Welfare Society (Lebanon): Development of innovative, responsive and comprehensive services for the elderly (1986-1987).

#### E. Global

22. International Association of Gerontology: Workshop on the uses of scientific information in planning and developing programmes for older adults (New York, 12-17 July 1985).

23. International Federation of Aging: Skills exchange and training for service delivery systems (1984-1985).

24. Government of Malta: Expert Group Meeting on the Feasibility of Establishing an Institute on Aging (Valleta, 15-19 December 1986).

25. Committee on the Promotion of Aid to Co-operatives (COPAC): Promotion of co-operatives for the aging (1986-1987).

26. International Federation on Aging: Development of care for the elderly (1986-1987).

27. United Towns Organization: sample survey on the conditions of the elderly in 700 towns.

28. UNOV/CSDHA: International Seminar on Policies and Strategies for Participation of the Elderly in Development (Malta, 2-5 February 1988).

29. UNOV/CSDHA: Second Review and Appraisal of the Implementation of the Vienna International Plan of Action on Aging (1988).

30. Population Division, DIESA: International Conference on Aging Populations in the Context of Urbanization (Sendai, Japan, 12-16 September 1988).

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