



*U.S. Delegation to the
Second World Assembly on Ageing
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Plenary Remarks

by

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Mr. President:

On behalf of the President of the United States, George W. Bush, and Health and Human Services Secretary, Tommy G. Thompson, I am very pleased to be here today. My Delegation and I are honored to have this opportunity to participate in the Second World Assembly on Ageing.

Like all of you, the United States values the contributions that older persons have made and continue to make to society. Today, we reaffirm our commitment to them and to identify steps we can take to further improve their lives and the lives of their families and caregivers.

We also affirm our commitment to the themes addressed in the International Plan of Action on Ageing 2002. The Plan's recognition of the needs of older women, the need for older people to stay active and engaged, and the need to create intergenerational solidarity demonstrate how the international community shares a common vision of a better future for older persons.

Like the First International Plan of Action on Ageing, the new Plan is a very forward-looking document. While we cannot predict with full certainty what will transpire over the next 20 years, we can anticipate some of the challenges that lie ahead. We must start now to prepare for these challenges.

Looking back, we see visible progress in improving the lives of older persons and in preparing for tomorrow's aging populations. Nations have begun to address the many challenges while at the same time recognizing the contributions that an aging population can make to society. We must work together to make aging an experience to be anticipated.

Allow me to review briefly how the United States has implemented the International Plan of Action on Ageing adopted in Vienna in 1982. Older Americans comprise a large segment of the U.S. population -- one out of every eight of our citizens. And our *older*