

## **International Federation on Ageing**

<b>Date:</b>	April 13, 2009
<b>To:</b>	Community Development and Recreation Committee
<b>From:</b>	General Manager, Long-Term Care Homes and Services General Manager, Economic Development, Culture and Tourism
<b>Wards:</b>	All
<b>Reference Number:</b>	

### **SUMMARY**

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The International Federation on Ageing (IFA) is an international, non-government organization whose mission is “to generate positive social change for older people by stimulating, collecting, analyzing and disseminating information on rights, policies and practices that improve the quality of life for all persons as they age”. The mission is achieved through strategic plans and partnerships that respond directly to the United Nations Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing (2002) and the Active Ageing Framework of the World Health Organization.

IFA was formed in 1973 to represent the needs of a global ageing population and remains the only membership-based organization that operates across all sectors, comprising government, non-government organizations (NGO), private sector, academia, researchers and individuals. It is unique globally in the field of ageing and seniors. Through NGO membership, IFA represents 45 million older adults in 62 countries. Its grassroots partnerships aim to strengthen bridges between public and private sectors concerned with ageing issues. Governed by an International Board of Directors of thirty (30) people, IFA has working agreements with the World Health Organization and the United Nations Economic and Social Council and the Council of Europe in the European Union. It is represented at the United Nations in New York, Bangkok and Geneva.

Most recently headquartered in Montreal, Quebec and planning to relocate, IFA undertook a year-long global exploration of possible cities. Recognizing the merits of having IFA located in Toronto, the Long-Term Care Homes and Services Division and the Economic Development, Culture and Tourism Division determined a high degree of interest and support from healthcare, ageing and academic organizations and collaborated to inform IFA about the benefits of a Toronto location. IFA has now relocated here. This report summarizes facts and opportunities related to IFA’s presence in Toronto.

## **Financial Impact**

There are no financial impacts arising out of this report.

## **ISSUE BACKGROUND**

The International Federation on Ageing (IFA) is a key point of contact between governments, non-government organizations, academia, policy makers and the private sector in issues related to ageing and seniors. Members come from a diverse cross-section including healthcare, research, academia, architects, designers and urban planners, policy makers, social planners, aid organizations, advocacy organizations, philanthropic organizations, climate and environment organizations and consumers. IFA facilitates information exchange, research, advocacy, policy knowledge and application about ageing, age discrimination and age-friendly communities. They bridge gaps in the knowledge and understanding of the ageing experience and develop tools to empower older persons and the groups working with them. A key activity is in fostering an age-friendly environment at the global, regional and local levels, through affirmation and support of initiatives related to WHO's Age-Friendly Cities policy framework.

IFA hosts bi-annual global conferences related to ageing and symposia on ageing themes, conducts presentations at events organized by international, national, provincial and local organizations and advocates on ageing issues at all major UN events. Their website and e-newsletter provide a wealth of information on policies, practices and rights of older persons.

The strategic directions and priorities of IFA (2009-2012) are anchored in three (3) themes:

- (i) Older Persons and Development;
- (ii) Advancing Health and Well-Being into Old Age; and
- (iii) Ensuring Enabling and Supportive Environments.

IFA's approach reconciles with the current work of City divisions and the Toronto Seniors' Forum to act as leaders and a catalyst in encouraging an age-friendly lens amongst all organizations when they revise and /or initiate new programs or services.

## **COMMENTS**

In collaborating with various groups and organizations within Toronto's borders about the merits of IFA's presence in Toronto, over thirty (30) organizations provided letters of support that were forwarded to IFA to assist in their decision-making. These organizations affirmed their support for IFA's presence in Toronto, noting that the City of Toronto provides the ideal setting for IFA's effective operations for a variety of reasons, including:

- (i) Toronto is the most diverse municipality in Canada, offering IFA the opportunity to work with a wide range of organizations dedicated to promoting seniors' issues and serving seniors' communities;
- (ii) Toronto offers maximum opportunities for research and connection between IFA, teaching hospitals and major academic centres; and

- (iii) Many Toronto organizations have their own international networks that would aid both IFA and Toronto communities in enhancing global learning, policy development, advocacy and quality management related to issues of ageing.

Subsequent to IFA’s selection of Toronto, City staff have continued to discuss opportunities for collaboration with IFA in order to heighten attention to and the effectiveness of addressing the needs of older persons. IFA met with City divisional staff working on the WHO Age-Friendly Cities policy framework and it is anticipated that IFA’s presence in Toronto will be a strong catalyst in being able to move the age-friendly policy framework forward amongst all key stakeholders. IFA (The Secretary General and the Director of International and Corporate Relations) were guest speakers at a Family Member – Community Member education session at Cummer Lodge in April 2009, on the topics of “Ageing in a Diverse Society” and “Managing Caregiver Stress”.

IFA has indicated their intention to embed themselves in the Toronto community and work collaboratively with healthcare providers, other organizations, academics and researchers interested in ageing issues. Last, although the 10<sup>th</sup> Global Conference on Ageing is already scheduled to be held in Melbourne, Australia in 2010, IFA has indicated their intention to host periodic small Global Ageing Leaders Summit in Toronto, with the first one being considered for later in 2009.

IFA advocates for “a world where the political, social and physical environment are in line to support and enable older people to live in security, enjoy good health, be valued members and participate fully in the their communities”. This reconciles with the priorities of the City of Toronto, including the Agenda for Prosperity, Community Safety Plan, Clean City Beautiful City and the City’s beliefs about service, stewardship, commitment, civic engagement, community outreach and access and equity.

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## **SIGNATURE**

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