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COUNTRY ROAD MAP FOR MAINSTREAMING AGEING

Summary

This paper by the secretariat provides information on the proposed preparation of a country road map for mainstreaming ageing. Mainstreaming ageing refers to the inclusion of the issue into all policy areas on all levels, based on a stakeholder-inclusive approach. A country road map is a plan of concrete steps to be taken by a country's government towards mainstreaming ageing, including recommendations on policy directions and a timetable for action. The present paper outlines the steps to be taken in preparing such road map and describes the review of the existing situation included in the exercise. It relates to paragraphs 28-33 of the draft programme of work (ECE/WG.1/2008/3).

Country Road Map for Mainstreaming Ageing

1   Approach

Country-reports on implementation of the UNECE Regional Strategy for the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing (MIPAA/RIS) have shown that many countries have progressed considerably in this. However, significant challenges remain, particularly for countries in transition. To improve ageing-related policies and programmes in a country, the internationally agreed policy objectives such as the commitments of MIPAA/RIS and existing successful policy examples from different countries would need to be translated into actions that consider the circumstances of the country. Planning of such actions would therefore need to be based on the analysis of these circumstances.

The commitment "to mainstream ageing in all policy fields with the aim of bringing societies and economies into harmony with demographic change to achieve a society for all ages" is a distinctive feature of MIPAA. Its broad scope poses a challenge to designing concrete actions for its implementation. Country road maps for mainstreaming ageing are meant to assist in overcoming this challenge; they are means of international support to national operationalization of mainstreaming. Such approach could also be applied to other commitments of MIPAA/RIS.

A road map is a document that provides a plan of concrete steps to be taken by a country's government towards mainstreaming ageing, including recommendations on policy directions and a timetable for action.

For the selection of a participating country, a set of baseline criteria will be applied to ensure that the participating government is committed to implementing MIPAA/RIS. International and national experts will provide inputs in different stages of developing the road map. The stages include a field mission with in-depth interviews with key stakeholders on different levels and in different sectors. The implementation of the road map is evaluated after one year.

2   Mainstreaming ageing

Mainstreaming is a strategy and a process leading to greater social integration of older persons and to the inclusion of ageing in all aspects of social, political, economic and cultural life. It is a crucial policy tool. It integrates policy approaches to ageing across all sectors, shifting away from targeting older persons as a separate marginalized group.

A participatory bottom-up approach to mainstreaming involves older persons in policy development and implementation ensures that their concerns are identified and mainstreamed more effectively. As a result, the needs of an ageing population should be reflected in all policy areas set out in the MIPAA/RIS commitments, including for example the labour market, health, social protection or education.

3   Preparation and implementation

The country road map project consists of four parts: (a) a desk study; (b) a field study; (c) development of the road map; and (d) evaluation of progress.

Desk study. The desk study analyzes the country's ageing situation based on available publications, documents and data. Among other documents, the country-report on the first five

years of implementation of MIPAA/RIS will be used. The data include, among others, those collected in the project Mainstreaming Ageing: Indicators to Monitor Implementation (MA:IMI) of the European Centre for Social Welfare Policy and Research as well as those of the UNECE Generations and Gender Programme. The desk study will provide a set of assumptions about the current situation and a first set of recommendations as a basis for the development of the road map to mainstreaming ageing.

Field study. The field study verifies the findings of the desk study and identifies additional factors. It includes interviews with government officials at both the political and operational levels as well as representatives of other sectors (e.g. the private sector, trade unions, civil society, NGOs or international organizations with field expertise or a country presence, the media, the research community). These interviews would follow a previously agreed outline. One or more moderated focus group discussions with representatives of different actor groups could be carried out to discuss the recommendations and contents of the road map as well as responsibilities and timelines for its implementation.

Road map. Based on the studies, a summary of the ageing situation and a road map document providing guidance for future steps are drafted. The road map provides recommendations on directions for policy and timelines for action. Completion of the road map will involve a peer review of local experts and a discussion in the UNECE Working Group on Ageing. After completion, the road map will be launched and a press release will be issued. This will serve to increase visibility and general awareness of ageing and of MIPAA/RIS, which should also support the latter's implementation.

Evaluation. Efforts made and outcomes achieved in implementing the road map will be evaluated one year after its launch. This evaluation will be based on information provided by the country and information collected during a follow-up mission.

Actors. UNECE secretariat will lead the work on a country road map, involving international and local experts. Local experts will be strongly involved in the field study. The desk study and the development of the road map document itself will primarily be carried out by international experts. It is expected that the UNFPA local office would be an important partner, as their expertise and experience with Population and Development Strategies is directly relevant for this exercise.

4   Framework of evaluation

4.1   Ageing situation

A general introduction to the country and its circumstances is given. Demographic situation and trends are summarized and examined in view of their potential consequences in the long, medium and short term. This analysis will rely, among others, on the indicators of achievement developed in the MA:IMI project and on the data of the Generations and Gender Programme where available. This analysis will provide an understanding of the urgency of certain types of action.

4.2   Strategy documents

An existing strategic framework for mainstreaming ageing could be found in a national action plan on ageing, in another comprehensive policy document or in a comprehensive set of specific policy documents. Such material frequently includes national priorities in ageing-related policies,

suggests action, and provides targets for mainstreaming efforts at different levels and indicators to measure progress.

4.3   Institutional setting

During the road mapping exercise, institutional setting is assessed with respect to ensuring the consideration of ageing-related concerns across all policy areas. Achieving mainstreaming ageing requires a general level of awareness among policy-makers about population dynamics, its implications and potential strategies. In ministries, regional and municipal organs, interdepartmental or interagency working groups, councils or commissions, focal points on ageing could help achieve exchange and streamlining of policies and reduce duplication or ambiguous distribution of roles. Distribution of responsibilities in and between public agencies with respect to ageing is reviewed as part of the road map development. Provisions for integrating older persons into the policymaking process that concerns them will be identified and evaluated.

Concerns of older persons would need to be embedded in a general framework of non-discrimination. Such legal framework is examined from the perspective of whether older persons are empowered to defend their concerns. The existence of an office on age discrimination or an ombudsperson could be an indicator.

4.4   State budget

State budget can be considered as another reflection of a government's priorities. Its evaluation would reveal the commitment to policy areas specifically related to ageing. For example, it would be possible to detect the relative amount of resources devoted to provide free health care or other services to older persons or on training health care staff in gerontology or geriatrics. At the same time, the existence of mechanisms to consider ageing-related concerns during the preparation of the budget is to be examined.

4.5   Awareness

Issues concerning ageing and older persons may not be sufficiently known to decision-makers, opinion leaders and the public. Advocacy campaigns may help to sensitize the public to concerns and conditions of older persons and help overcome negative stereotypes and ageism. Newly collected data should be disseminated to contribute to the overall knowledge of society regarding ageing and older persons thus contributing to overall awareness-raising. The general perception of older persons and the availability of public awareness campaigns may serve as indicators here.

4.6   Data collection

The policy framework should be evidence-based, which requires the availability of data collected through censuses, civil registration, household surveys, and focus group discussions. Qualitative data collected with participatory methods should complement quantitative data. Existing data sources will be reviewed and data-collection needs identified. Available infrastructure in academia should be actively included.

4.7   Performance assessment

Based on existing data, progress towards mainstreaming ageing should be reviewed systematically. Mechanisms should be in place to review the trends indicated by existing

monitoring tools and to take actions based on observations made. Monitoring results should be fed into the policy process.

4.8   Policy priorities

Existing policy priorities will be identified and examined as to whether they reflect the needs of an ageing population. They will be evaluated against MIPAA/RIS commitments, identifying areas of priority and areas in need of more attention. Recommendations will be given regarding ways in which ageing issues could be granted more prominence in certain policy areas. The participating country would select one or more areas on which to focus. Examples of such areas are summarized below.

4.8.1   Economy and labour market

The situation in the economy and in the labour market has significant implications on the well-being of persons of all ages, regarding the accumulation of experience, wealth and pension entitlements over the life course in particular. Its effects on citizens' lives need to be understood from the life-course perspective. Economic and social reform in countries in transition should consider all age-groups.

More specifically, integration into the labour market is relevant for many older persons. To what extent do older persons depend on additional income to sustain themselves? To what extent are they given the opportunity to remain actively integrated into the labour market and thus contribute to development of the society, should they wish so? Can the workplace be adapted to the needs of older persons? Are flexible retirement arrangements available for older persons who want to reconcile work with care activities in their families?

Indicators to be evaluated are the availability of policies to increase labour market participation of older persons, the employment ratio of older persons relative to the general population, the percentage of older women in wage employment or the percentage of businesses owned by older persons.

4.8.2   Health and social protection

Need for health care usually increases with age. Promotion of healthy lifestyles that minimize disease throughout life is a very important element in the development of health care in ageing societies. People of all ages should be given the necessary information to make healthy choices. Important indicators are the availability of age-friendly primary health care facilities and of health care with specialized care for older persons and persons with disabilities. It may be helpful to have guidelines in place that provide standards and norms on health care and rehabilitation for older persons. The general health policy framework should ensure that people are not discriminated against based on age in accessing treatment. Accessibility of care for older persons should be ensured, including the poor and those living in rural areas.

An adequate level of training of medical personnel in geriatrics has to be maintained which should be integrated in university curricula and on-going training. Furthermore, the availability of programmes promoting health and prevention, managing diseases and in generally maintaining a high level of quality of life shall be looked at. Health-related programmes should have been developed with inputs from older persons themselves.

In terms of social protection, the availability of basic social protection for all ages is crucial. The percentage of older persons able to meet their minimum needs, the percentage of people benefiting from social protection and the availability and adequacy of pensions could be used as indicators in this context.

4.8.3   Education

Contemporary knowledge-based societies require policies that ensure lifelong access to education and training. It will be examined whether programmes focusing on continuing education for older persons are available and how many older persons are enrolled in them. It should be examined whether such programmes help to achieve higher employability, for example in terms of computer literacy, or whether they help improve quality of life. At the same time, the expertise and experience of older persons should be used for exchanging knowledge between generations, be it at the workplace or as mentors, training the younger generations.

4.8.4   Intergenerational and intragenerational solidarity

The impact of existing policies and programmes on intergenerational links should be examined. More specifically, the availability, scope and coverage of initiatives for strengthening intergenerational solidarity should be looked at. The family is a major pillar in providing care across generations. This role should be facilitated through the general policy framework. An indicator may be the percentage of older persons providing support and care to younger members of the family or community.

Mechanisms can be put in place to facilitate reconciling caring activities with work life. At the same time, older persons have to be recognized in their contribution in supporting their children, caring for their grandchildren or people of their own age. Where the family is unavailable to take on care responsibilities, institutional provisions should be made. Intergenerational and intragenerational solidarity should also take place in terms of transfer of knowledge.

In order to evaluate the status of the intergenerational and intragenerational relationships, older persons have to be integrated as an important source of information. Here again, the potential of participatory review can be used for preparing the road map.

4.9   International cooperation

The MIPAA/RIS process has greatly enhanced international exchange on good strategies to tackle the issues related to population ageing. The level of exchange with international organizations and neighbouring countries bears important potentials to improve performance in implementation of ageing related policies. The representation at international conferences and the participation in international review processes of MIPAA/RIS are further indicators for exposure to the recent discussion of population strategies.

5 Appraisal of the situation and recommendations

Issues to be evaluated	*Possible recommendations for scaling up implementation*

Holistic approach

Is ageing a policy priority?	Commit to tackle ageing-related issues

Strategic framework

Is there a national action plan on ageing or a comprehensive set of policy documents on ageing? Does this plan or documents contain priorities, targets, suggested procedures and indicators for measuring success?	Priorities and concrete targets to be suggested. Recommendations on how better implement the existing policy framework.
How are older persons' concerns reflected in existing policies, programmes and laws?	Adjustments in policies, programmes, laws to better address concerns of older persons
How are internationally agreed policy goals and principles reflected in the national policy framework?	Adjustments of national policy framework to better reflect internationally agreed goals and principles

Institutional setting

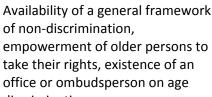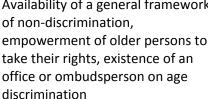| How is the existing setting of public institutions supportive to mainstreaming ageing? Gaps and overlaps.	Recommendations on filling institutional gaps and on streamlining the distribution of ageing-related responsibilities between institutions
Level of awareness among policy-makers, including focal points on ageing, about population dynamics, its implications and potential strategies	Identification of areas in particular need of capacity development. A staffing policy that maintains institutional memory and the provision of career opportunities in the area of ageing may need attention.
Involvement of national, regional and municipal levels in the implementation of ageing policies and availability of resources	Means are devised to increase involvement of levels insufficiently involved in policy-making or with insufficient resources and/or capacities

Issues to be evaluated	*Possible recommendations for scaling up implementation*
Involvement in ageing-related policy-making of other stakeholders than government, such as NGOs, private sector, trade unions	Ways are suggested how stakeholders (NGOs, private sector, trade unions) can be involved more systematically
Availability of a general framework of non-discrimination, empowerment of older persons to take their rights, existence of an office or ombudsperson on age discrimination	Suggestions are made how a non-discriminatory framework can be introduced, how older persons can be empowered and how an office or the institute of an ombudsperson on age discrimination could be established

State budget

Reflection of the needs of older persons in the state budget	Suggestions are made how the budget can better reflect the needs of older persons or how prioritising can be undertaken in a more cost-effective manner

Awareness

Measures taken to reduce prejudice and highlight the positive contribution of older persons in society	Mechanisms of awareness-raising and anti-ageism are suggested

Data collection

Availability of data as a basis for policy-making; availability of a research infrastructure; participation of the country in international data collection as a basis for policy development	Data collection needs are identified, suggestions on building up a research infrastructure with capacity of researching ageing related questions are made; avenues and feasibility of participation in collection of internationally comparable data are explored

Performance assessment

Availability of benchmarks against which progress in implementing ageing-related policies and programmes can be monitored and evaluated. Availability of mechanisms to improve practice based on the evaluation results.	Recommendations are given on how mechanisms of effective monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of the national policy framework can be put in place and how the evaluation results can be translated into policy-action

Issues to be evaluated	*Possible recommendations for scaling up implementation*

Policy priorities

Integration of ageing-related aspects in selected major policy areas	Areas are identified that have to be included into the mainstreaming ageing exercise

The role of international cooperation

Presence of the country at international conferences, interaction with international organizations and exchange with countries in the region	Means to increase integration of the country into the international processes of policy exchange are identified. Avenues to achieve increased interaction with international organizations and countries in the region are proposed
Participation of the country in reporting on progress in implementing MIPAA/RIS to UNECE	Recommendations are given on how mechanisms of effective monitoring and reporting on MIPAA/RIS can be put in place and how the results of M&E can be translated into policy-action
Availability of structures to take on the monitoring and evaluation of the country road map	Suggestions on how mechanisms of monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of the road map can be devised

6   Bibliography

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7 Example for a timetable

September 2010	Evaluation of implementation
December 2009	Launch
	Translation into national language, printing
October - November 2009	Peer review of the draft, including discussion in the Working Group
July - September 2009	Road map: Prepare overall report and develop recommendations into a road map
April - June 2009	Field study: expert interviews with all stakeholders, visit of institutions, focus group discussion(s) on preliminary set of recommendations
February - March 2009	Desk study – analysis of available data and other printed material, development of preliminary recommendations as a basis for the road map
Early 2009	Identify experts and local consultants; prepare contracts
	Define participating country or countries; agree on content areas on which to focus