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PROGRAMME OF WORK FOR 2009–2010

DRAFT PROGRAMME OF WORK FOR 2009–2010[1]

Note by the secretariat

Summary

This note provides information to assist the Working Group on Ageing to establish its programme of work. It proposes activities in four areas: (a) preparation of policy briefs with good practice examples; (b) monitoring implementation of the Regional Strategy for the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, including work on indicators of achievement; (c) capacity development; and (d) analysis of intergenerational relationships. The Working Group is expected to decide on activities for 2009–2010, including their related funding through pledges.

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[1] This document was submitted on the above date because of the need for consultations.

I. BACKGROUND

1.   At the UNECE Ministerial Conference on Ageing (León, Spain, 6–8 November 2007), several countries expressed the need for a mechanism to ensure follow-up activities. In response, the UNECE Executive Committee decided at its twenty-fourth meeting to establish the Working Group on Ageing (ECE/EX/2008/L.11). The purpose of the Working Group on Ageing is to reinforce and continue implementation of the Regional Strategy for the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing (MIPAA/RIS) and the León Ministerial Declaration. This document proposes the programme of work for the Working Group for 2009–2010.

II.   POLICY BRIEFS WITH GOOD PRACTICE EXAMPLES

Description

2.   The commitments of MIPAA/RIS need to be translated into concrete actions adapted to country-specific situations. This would also help to raise awareness of the MIPAA/RIS framework. A number of countries in the UNECE region can demonstrate successful experiences with concrete projects. These experiences need to be communicated so that other countries in similar situations can learn from them through a series of policy briefs to provide rapid access to information on the state of the art of policy discourse, translating the detailed scientific and policy issues for a broader audience and demonstrating successful examples of policies and programmes.

Work accomplished

3.   In connection with the first five-year review and appraisal of MIPAA/RIS, member States prepared reports on its implementation in the period 2002–2007. Many of them highlighted their achievements at the 2007 Ministerial Conference on Ageing. The country reports and presentations provide an important source of information on which the preparation of policy briefs can build. The UNECE secretariat has studied the experience of other institutions and international organizations to develop a concept for the MIPAA/RIS policy briefs.

Work to be undertaken

4.   The UNECE secretariat is ready to prepare a series of policy briefs based on member States' contributions, to highlight specific topics under MIPAA/RIS and demonstrate commonalities across the UNECE region while being sensitive to the specific needs of its subregions. These 4- to 8-page policy briefs aim to reach policymakers, the media and scholars as well as the general public.

5.   The information about generally available policy options is complemented by concrete good practice examples, which will be prepared in cooperation with the countries implementing these projects. The good practice examples aim to cover the geographical diversity of the UNECE region and to address the countries' various concerns.

6.   A number of policy briefs will make use of the findings from the UNECE Generations and Gender Surveys and contextual databases. The topics of such briefs include: intra- and intergenerational relationships and social cohesion; gender relations; and the reconciliation of work and family life.

7.   Countries are expected to provide examples of good practice and to make proposals on the format and content of policy briefs.

III. MONITORING

Description

8.   To be able to understand progress in implementation, it needs to be measured with indicators that capture essential aspects of MIPAA/RIS commitments. This requires methodological work towards developing and selecting a list of indicators, exploring international sources for data availability, collecting the data from national and international sources and disseminating the information on the indicators in an easily understandable manner.

Work accomplished

9.   The project on Mainstreaming Ageing: Indicators to Monitor Implementation (MA:IMI) led by the European Centre for Social Welfare Policy and Research in Vienna (ECV) has defined and designed indicators to monitor implementation of ageing-related policies. These indicators have been developed in four domains: (a) demography; (b) income and wealth; (c) labour market and labour market participation; and (d) social protection and financial sustainability. The process of the choice of indicators has been rigorous as it involved consultation and agreement with international experts. These indicators also have been graphically illustrated and included in the country profiles available online (www.monitoringRIS.org). The graphical representation of the indicators has been found to be a very useful way of providing an intuitive understanding of sometimes complex indicators. Such representation would promote use of those indicators necessary for policymaking and would help to avoid pitfalls of over-simplified interpretations based on crude data.

10.   In the first phase of the MA:IMI project, ECV set up a special website (www.monitoringRIS.org) to disseminate information on activities related to MIPAA/RIS at the global, regional, national and subnational levels.

Work to be undertaken

11.   ECV has expressed readiness to continue to develop indicators and collect corresponding data on two additional domains: (a) gender-specific mainstreaming ageing indicators and (b) long-term care indicators. The potential of developing indicators on the quality of life of older people will be explored.

12.   In consultation with interested countries, ECV is ready to develop a core proposal for the indicators based on the literature and an initial mapping of data available in international databases. Based on this proposal, the indicators will be elaborated in two workshops of two days each, which the ECV would organize.

13.   Collection of data on the already defined indicators has been successful for countries that are well represented in internationally accessible databases such as those of the European Union. For other countries, notably those of Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia (EECCA), success has varied, depending on the availability of data. The existing UNECE network of focal points on statistics could help cover more countries. The Working Group may consider requesting the Conference of European Statisticians (a UNECE committee consisting of heads of national statistical offices) to support the request for additional data collection.

14.   To better disseminate activities related to MIPAA/RIS at the global, regional, national and subnational levels, the design of the special monitoring website will be enhanced. The role of this website as the main source for exchanging information on the implementation of MIPAA/RIS in the UNECE region will be strengthened through the closer involvement of countries in providing the material for updating.

15.   Countries are expected to express their readiness (a) to be engaged in the conceptual work and data collection and (b) to share the information on their MIPAA/RIS-related activities through the website.

IV. CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT

Description

16.   In the UNECE region, there is considerable variation between countries in the stage and pace of population ageing as well as in the level of knowledge about this process and its societal consequences. Capacities in designing and implementing ageing-related policies and programmes also vary greatly. EECCA countries are in the process of setting up policies in response to population ageing or are just starting to consider their options. At such a stage, they would particularly benefit from learning from other countries who have acquired more experience in this area.

17.   Within the general aim of enhancing national capacities in implementing MIPAA/RIS, the objective of the proposed activities is to promote mainstreaming ageing and participatory and evidence-based approaches to the design of ageing-related policies and programmes. The proposed activities include a capacity development workshop and preparing a country roadmap on mainstreaming ageing.

Work accomplished

18.   In March 2007, UNECE, in cooperation with the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), organized a workshop for EECCA countries to increase awareness of MIPAA/RIS and to identify the particular challenges in those countries. The participating countries

appreciated this undertaking. Underlining the importance of training experts in the field of ageing to promote a holistic approach for population policies, participants expected guidance on how to translate this holistic approach into sustainable strategies that considered the specifics of a country's demographic and socio-economic situation, emphasizing the need to develop such capacities in government agencies.

<div align="center">Work to be undertaken</div>

Workshop

19.   A five-day subregional workshop for EECCA countries is proposed. The workshop will aim:

  (a)   To improve understanding of how to identify and analyse challenges and opportunities related to ageing and demographic change;

  (b)   To enhance national capacities to design and implement policies and programmes on ageing;

  (c)   To promote the mainstreaming of ageing as well as participatory and evidence-based approaches to the design of ageing-related policies and programmes.

20.   This workshop will mainly target government officials acting as national focal points on ageing, but engage also other stakeholders, such as non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and the research community. Participants will be introduced to and trained on applying the existing overall guidelines such as the Guide to the National Implementation of MIPAA and the Guidelines for review and appraisal of MIPAA (both documents are available at: http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/ageing/research_papers.html). The workshop will be based on participatory learning. Participants will work in small groups to explore the possibilities of applying the inputs to their specific needs.

21.   Participants will be instructed to come to the workshop prepared with case studies of actual programmes on ageing being carried out or developed in their respective countries. In countries where such programmes are not yet under consideration, participants are expected to bring in preliminary proposals and ideas. This material will be analysed during the workshop.

22.   It is suggested that one of the countries in the EECCA subregion will host the workshop. The proposed workshop is expected to be co-organized by UNECE, the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA), UNFPA and the host country. The workshop will also build on the experience of the International Institute on Ageing (INIA) with ageing-related training programmes.

23.   It would be advisable to focus the workshop on a certain area of MIPAA/RIS implementation, which would be dealt with in more detail. Below, some options are presented for the Working Group's consideration.

24.   **Mainstreaming ageing** is as an important factor in the implementation of the MIPAA/RIS. Mainstreaming can be defined as a strategy and a process leading to the greater

social integration of older persons and the inclusion of ageing in all aspects of social, political, economic and cultural life. Mainstreaming can thus be seen as a crucial policy tool. Workshop participants will be introduced to the general concept and will learn to use tools and techniques of successful mainstreaming. These include data collection, refocusing strategies, budget allocation, policy decisions and overall development planning, evaluation of laws and entitlements, changing culture (values, norms, and attitudes), awareness-raising and institutional change. The feasibility of different tools and strategies will be explored for the national context. Participants will become sensitized to a participatory approach in a policy process.

25.   **Intergenerational relationships in providing care.** Family networks continue to contribute the largest share of care activities in the UNECE region. Older persons generally prefer to be cared for in a family context and to stay at home and live independently rather than be in institutional care. Policies may be devised to assist family members in their caring functions, for example by offering day-care or respite-care centres to allow family members to take time off. Family care may be credited towards the pension and family caregivers may be offered training to perform their duties more professionally. At the same time, complementary measures must be in place so that those older persons who cannot be cared for in the family context anymore or do not have family members can be offered professional services elsewhere. Participants will receive training in how to adapt the most desirable policy guidelines to the situation of their country.

26.   **A gender-based approach to the ageing society.** Men and women may have different needs and conditions when arriving at old age. Often women receive lower pensions because they have spent less time in paid employment; they may be more vulnerable to old-age poverty. This is reinforced by the fact that women live longer. Their needs in terms of care are different, as they are more likely to live in single-person households when they begin to be in need of assistance and care. To address these needs, policies need to consider these differences. The workshop will help policymakers identify the areas where men and women have different needs in their countries. Empirical evidence will be obtained from case studies, but also from the UNECE Generations and Gender Programme and Gender Statistics database. Case studies from different countries will be discussed, including gender aspects in labour market regulation and the pension system.

27.   Delegations are requested to comment on the presented proposals and to bring up issues where capacity development could be particularly beneficial to them. Delegations may also wish to inform the Working Group on their willingness to host and contribute to the workshop.

Country roadmap on mainstreaming ageing

28.   A country roadmap on mainstreaming ageing will be prepared at a country's request, assuming commitment to the implementation of MIPAA/RIS. It will provide a concrete appraisal of the situation in a given country providing guidance on mainstreaming ageing. It is suggested that the implementation phase of the project consist of four parts: (a) a desk study; (b) a field study; (c) development of the roadmap; and (d) evaluation of progress achieved after one year. The exercise will involve international experts who will contribute based on the information provided by stakeholders from different sectors in the country (e.g. government, the private sector, trade unions, civil society, international organizations with field expertise or a country presence, the media and academia).

29.   **Desk study.** The desk study will serve to analyse the ageing situation in the pilot country based on available data, documents and publications, including the 2007 report on the implementation of MIPAA/RIS. 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 roadmap to mainstreaming ageing.

30.   **Field study.** Based on the findings of the desk study, a field study will be carried out by international experts in collaboration with a local expert group, to verify the findings of the desk study and to identify additional factors not previously considered. During the field study, government officials (at both the political and operational levels) as well as from other sectors (e.g. the private sector, trade unions, civil society, government, NGOs or international organizations with field expertise or a country presence, the media, the research community) will be interviewed based on an outline previously agreed upon.

31.   **Roadmap.** Based on the desk study and the findings of the field study, a summary of the ageing situation and a roadmap providing guidance for future steps will be drafted. The roadmap will provide recommendations on directions for policy and time lines for action (e.g. national plans and frameworks, laws and regulation, the institutional setting, compliance with international regulation). Finalization of the roadmap will involve a discussion in the Working Group. After completion, the roadmap 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.

32.   **Evaluation.** Efforts made and outcomes achieved in implementing the roadmap will be evaluated one year after its launch.

33.   The Working Group is invited to discuss this proposal, its purpose and method of work. Countries are expected to express willingness to participate in the exercise and to support it financially and in kind.

V.   ANALYSIS OF INTERGENERATIONAL RELATIONSHIPS

<u>Description</u>

34.   Population ageing challenges intergenerational solidarity at both the family and societal levels. As outlined in MIPAA/RIS commitment 9, policy responses need to consider the ongoing transformation of the family structure and intergenerational relationships. Sustainable responses to policy challenges also require that the causes and consequences of the demographic developments are understood and explained. UNECE coordinates the Generations and Gender Programme (see http://ggp.unece.org), which involves data collection and research and can effectively support this area of policymaking within the framework of MIPAA/RIS. The secretariat will keep the Working Group informed about activities in the Generations and Gender Programme, in particular about their potential contribution to the implementation of MIPAA/RIS.

Work accomplished

35.   The UNECE Conference "How Generations and Gender Shape Demographic Change" (Geneva, 14–16 May 2008) included a panel session on intergenerational relationships, and a keynote paper was presented on this topic.

Work to be undertaken

36.   The UNECE secretariat is promoting the use of data collected in the Generations and Gender Surveys for policy-relevant analyses. To date, more than 10 out of the 40 research projects based on these data deal with intergenerational relationships. The UNECE secretariat is prepared to draft a report synthesizing the findings from these studies, focusing on their policy implications.

37.   Analyses based on data from other countries can provide useful policy-relevant knowledge. However, the specific features of a country can only be addressed using the empirical data collected there. To date, 16 countries have collected the survey data. Entering this programme would provide many countries in the EECCA subregion with initial benchmarking information on several processes, as they have not yet participated in previous data collection endeavours of this kind.

38.   Members of the Working Group on Ageing may wish to consider promoting their country's participation in the Generations and Gender Programme.