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Implementation of the WGA work programme in 2014

Implementation of the Work Programme of the Working Group on Ageing in 2014

Note by the secretariat

I. Introduction

1. The United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) Working Group on Ageing (WGA) was established in 2008 as an intergovernmental mechanism to facilitate implementation of the UNECE Regional Strategy for the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing (MIPAS/RIS) and the follow-up activities to the 2007 UNECE Ministerial Conference on Ageing in León, Spain.
2. The Vienna Ministerial Declaration (ECE/AC.30/2012/3), adopted by 50 member States at the UNECE Ministerial Conference on Ageing in September 2012 (Vienna, Austria), reaffirmed the mandate of WGA and provided guidance to its work programme for the third MIPAS/RIS implementation cycle. Consequently, at its sixty-second meeting on 11 July 2013, the UNECE Executive Committee renewed the Working Group's mandate through the end of 2017 (ECE/EX/2013/L.7).
3. Taking into account the goals and measures outlined by the Vienna Ministerial Declaration, the Working Group, at its sixth meeting on 25-26 November 2013, agreed upon main elements of its programme of work for 2014–2017 (ECE/WG.1/2013/2).
4. This document is prepared for the seventh WGA meeting and it addresses the implementation of the programme of work in 2014, covering the Working Group's five main areas of activity: (a) WGA discussion groups; (b) Policy Briefs with good practice examples; (c) Capacity development; (d) Monitoring implementation of MIPAA/RIS and strengthening the evidence base for policymaking; and (e) Preparations for the third cycle of the review and appraisal of MIPAA/RIS implementation and follow-up on related international agendas in the field of population and development.

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II. Implementation of the main elements of the work programme for 2014

A. WGA discussion groups

5. In the framework of WGA, four discussion groups were set up to support the process of the implementation of the commitments made by UNECE member States in the Vienna Ministerial Declaration (2012). The discussion groups focus on each of the four main goals of the Ministerial Declaration, namely: (a) Encourage longer working life and maintain ability to work; (b) Promote participation, non-discrimination and social inclusion of older persons; (c) Promote and safeguard dignity, health and independence in older age and (d) Maintain and enhance intergenerational solidarity.

6. Membership of the discussion groups, their terms of reference and their leadership were renewed at the sixth meeting of WGA. Experience shows that the groups work most effectively during the WGA sessions when people are present and time is allocated for their work. In between annual sessions the groups' activities are geared towards identifying good practice examples for the Policy briefs or future face-to-face discussions. In 2014, for instance, members of group (c) on Promoting and safeguarding dignity, health and independence in older age helped to prepare an outline and contributed material and good practice examples to the Policy Brief on "Innovative and empowering strategies of care". Some members of other groups also contributed good practice examples.

B. Policy Briefs with good practice examples

7. The series of Policy Briefs on Ageing provide information on policies and promote exchange of good practice examples among member States regarding different areas of the MIPAA/RIS. The Policy Briefs integrate a wealth of contributions and experiences from member States.

8. Since the Sixth meeting of the Working Group on Ageing in November 2013, one additional Policy Brief on the topic 'Innovative and empowering strategies for care' has been prepared. The outline of the Brief was presented and discussed at the WGA Bureau meeting in May 2014. It explores trends such as moving from passive to active care and from institutional care to home-based services. It also looks at new ways of cooperation between public care services and non - profit or private service providers as well as the roles of communities. All Policy Briefs are available on the UNECE website.¹

9. The next Policy Brief, as decided at the sixth WGA meeting in 2013, will be on "Ensuring dignity and non-discrimination of persons with dementia". This will be the focus of work in 2015. To assist in the related research and analysis, as for the previous brief, a consultant can be recruited, thanks to the German donation to the Ageing trust fund.

¹ Available from http://www.unece.org/pau/age/policy_briefs/welcome.html.

C. Capacity development

1. Road Maps for Mainstreaming Ageing

10. Road Maps for Mainstreaming Ageing, developed in collaboration with member States at their request, provide a guide through which the country in question can enhance implementation of the commitments of MIPAA/RIS taking into account specificities of the country.

11. In 2013, the Government of Georgia requested the UNECE to prepare a Road Map for its country. After initial work on a desk study, followed by two fact finding missions in 2013, the Road Map report was drafted in 2014. The analysis was based on information received in printed or electronic format, in addition to that provided during interviews and focus group discussions. Consultants delivered the ground work for the chapters on housing, the media and labour market.

12. The Road Map includes chapters on all areas of MIPAA/RIS commitments as well as migration, research and data collection, monitoring and evaluation. The chapters provide a general appraisal of the situation, followed by recommendations.

13. A draft of the Road Map was presented to the Bureau of WGA during the Bureau meeting, providing an opportunity to comment. An in-depth discussion of an advanced draft took place in Tbilisi (Georgia) in July 2014 during a two-day workshop with participation of the Government of Georgia and other stakeholders. The Government of Georgia committed to develop an Action Plan that should structure implementation of the recommendations.

14. As part of awareness raising campaign an essay contest was organized among older persons in Georgia, asking them about their experiences in ageing, their lessons for the younger generation and advice for policymakers. The authors of ten best essays received an award and together with other contest participants were celebrated at a ceremony organised jointly with the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) office in Georgia in the UN House, Tbilisi, on 16 July 2014. A professional photographer was engaged to visit participants of the essay contest and take their pictures. Both, portraits and essays (or quotes) in Georgian and English will be compiled into a book. An exhibition at the Palais des Nations in November 2014 will show the portraits, together with some quotes of the essay authors.

2. Workshops

15. No regional capacity-development workshop was held in 2014. However, the Secretariat contributed to a number of national seminars and workshops organised by the UNECE country governments or Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs). For instance, the Secretariat, based on its policy brief presentation, provided the framework for general debate and group work and helped to summarise the discussion at the seminar "Elder abuse in Ukraine" held by the Ukrainian NGO "Age Concern Ukraine" and UNFPA office in Ukraine in February 2014; also at the work session "Towards National strategy on Ageing in Russia" and the congress "Social adaptation, assistance and elderly health in present-day society" held under auspices of the "Senior generation" forum in St. Petersburg, Russian Federation in April 2014, the Secretariat shared good practices from UNECE countries and provided arguments for national strategies on ensuring environment conducive to active and healthy ageing to be firmly based on the internationally agreed policy framework of MIPAA/RIS. Similarly, the Secretariat contributed to the seminar "Culture of ageing and

old age between traditional and contemporary model”, organized under the patronage of the Ministry of Labour, Employment, Veteran and Social Affairs of Serbia in May 2014.

D. Monitoring implementation of MIPAA/RIS and strengthening the evidence base for policymaking

1. Indicators

Active Ageing Index (AAI)

16. The second phase of the AAI project by the UNECE Population Unit and the European Commission's Directorate General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion was launched in October 2013 and will continue through December 2015. The work is being implemented jointly with the Southampton University, United Kingdom.

17. Under the second phase (AAI-II) the following activities are being implemented in 2014:

(a) Extending AAI coverage:

(i) *geographically*, i.e. beyond 27 countries of the European Union (EU), the AAI results for which were released in February 2013. New countries to be included: Croatia (EU member from July 2013), Canada, Iceland, Norway, and Switzerland, as well as Serbia and Turkey under a pilot study of AAI,

(ii) *in time*, i.e. computing AAI for the most recent years and for years 2007/2008 to perform a trend analysis.

(b) Outreaching to stakeholders — the activities aim at promoting AAI as a tool for tracking progress in the implementation of MIPAA/RIS and for an evidence-based policymaking in active ageing:

(i) supporting a Peer Review “The Active Ageing Index — regional perspective and development of the research methodology for regional analysis of European countries” to be held in Poland on 15-16 October 2014,

(ii) preparing for an International Seminar “Building an evidence base for active ageing policies: Active Ageing Index and its potential” (Brussels, 16–17 April 2015),

(iii) exploring stakeholder interest in holding national seminars on in-depth analysis of AAI results,

(iv) coordinating the work of Expert Group on the Active Ageing Index including organisation of the two face-to-face meetings: 29-30 January 2014 and 13-14 November 2014.

(c) Communication: A public wiki page dedicated to AAI has been maintained and regularly updated including project presentations for external dissemination; an AAI questionnaire; a page devoted to the International Seminar “Building an evidence base for active ageing policies: Active Ageing Index and its potential”.

2. The Generations and Gender Programme (GGP)

18. The secretariat has continued to act as a clearinghouse for administration of GGP. The programme includes national surveys which are repeated in three-year intervals (panel surveys). First waves are currently available for 18 countries (Australia, Austria, Belgium,

Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Estonia, France, Georgia, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Japan, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Romania, and the Russian Federation). Second wave data are available for 9 countries (Australia, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, France, Georgia, Germany, Hungary, Lithuania, and the Netherlands). Survey micro-data are complemented by information on policies and legal frameworks in different countries which are stored in the Contextual Data Base.

19. GGP is among the leading data sources for policy-relevant research on demographic trends and processes in the UNECE region. The Programme provides a rich source of evidence for the evaluation of implementation of MIPAA/RIS. In collaboration with its scientific partner, the Netherlands Interdisciplinary Demographic Institute (NIDI), UNECE promotes the use of evidence from GGP data as a basis for policymaking.

20. UNECE processes applications submitted by scientists and experts who wish to use GGP data for their research.² Since the sixth meeting of WGA, 90 applications were granted access for wave 1 data and 54 for wave 2 data. For data from Norway and Australia, where special application procedure applies, 32 new data applications for wave 1 data and 13 for wave 2 data were granted access.

21. The Secretariat has also maintained and updated the bibliography of GGP-based research.³ The bibliography has now been integrated into the main GGP website (www.ggp-i.org). Under the new format, users can enter new bibliographic sources directly online. Entries will be checked and approved by UNECE or NIDI. The bibliography currently has references to about 1,000 GGP-based publications.

22. The UNECE Secretariat has continued to manage the GGP Network of National Focal Points and organized a meeting of this group on 25 June in Budapest, Hungary. As the co-ordinators of this group, the UNECE Secretariat has had an important bridging function between those responsible for programme management and development and those responsible for implementation in countries.

E. Preparations for the third cycle of the review and appraisal of MIPAA/RIS implementation and follow-up on related international agendas in the field of population and development

1. Review and appraisal of MIPAA/RIS implementation

23. The WGA Bureau discussed preparations for the review and appraisal of the third cycle of MIPAA/RIS implementation (2013-2017) during its meeting in May 2014. The Bureau developed a draft of the guidelines for national reports to be prepared in 2016/2017. It was decided to structure the reporting around the four main goals expressed in the Vienna Ministerial Declaration (2012). In addition, countries may include information on emerging issues into the concluding part of the report.

24. The guidelines and reporting mechanisms will be discussed at the seventh meeting of the WGA. The Discussion Groups should provide input to the guidelines for their respective themes. All UNECE member States are encouraged to consider early on how to include a participatory element into the reporting (e.g. with the help of a conference, multi-stakeholder task force or by other means).

² Data can be accessed by registered users at www.ggp-i.org.

³ Available from <http://www.ggp-i.org/bibliography.html>.

25. The Bureau started discussions about the deadline for the submission of national reports as well as a date and a title for the next Ministerial Conference. The Bureau agreed to further discuss about the dates and theme during the Seventh WGA meeting.

2. Follow-up on ‘ICPD Beyond 2014’ activities

26. In 2012-2013, following the General Assembly Resolution 65/234, the UNECE Population unit was engaged in the joint project with UNFPA on assessing the progress of and identifying policy priorities and actions for implementation of the Programme of Action (PoA) adopted at the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) for the period beyond 2014.

27. A comprehensive survey was conducted among the UNECE member States to record achievements and challenges in implementing the ICPD PoA and a regional report was published highlighting trends and identifying areas for development. The regional report was launched at the UNECE High-level Regional Conference “Enabling Choices: Population Priorities for the 21st Century” in 2013 in Geneva, Switzerland, and the Chair’s summary provided the main outcome document (ECE/AC.27/2013/2 Annex I).

28. In 2014, the Secretariat continued to be engaged with the UN Stakeholder group on ICPD Beyond 2014 and took active role in its meetings via video- and tele-conferences. The Secretariat provided inputs to the two Secretary-General reports for the forty-seventh session of the Commission on Population and Development (CPD) in April 2013 under a special theme “Assessment of the status of implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development” and for a special session of the UN General Assembly on 22 September 2014.

29. The Secretariat will remain involved in the follow-up activities related to the ICPD Beyond 2014 as mandated by the CPD 2014/1 resolution “Assessment of the status of implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development” (in particular paragraphs 11, and 17 through 25) and sixty-ninth session of the General Assembly.

III. Conclusions

30. The Vienna Ministerial Declaration (2012) has continued to provide an important framework of reference and to streamline activities in implementing and monitoring of MIPAA/RIS in the UNECE region. The key position of the Working Group on Ageing as the facilitator of MIPAA/RIS implementation in the region has been once more confirmed by the extension of its mandate to the end of 2017. WGA has produced substantive outputs and has provided a framework for networking among national focal points to exchange information and share experiences. Additional member States have adjusted their national policy frameworks in response to MIPAA/RIS.

31. The support was also emphasized by contributions to the Ageing trust fund received in 2013-2014 from Estonia, Germany, and Norway, which was greatly appreciated and allowed implementing activities foreseen in the WGA programme of work, in particular the preparation of Policy Briefs and the Road Map on Mainstreaming Ageing. The extra-budgetary funding received under the joint management project with the European Commission’s Directorate General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion provided with necessary resources to extend country coverage by AAI and promote its use for policymaking and monitoring impact of active ageing policy actions.

