

United Nations Economic Commission for Europe

A SOCIETY FOR ALL AGES: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Proceedings of the UNECE Ministerial Conference on Ageing

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NOTE

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FOREWORD

In the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) region, people today live healthier and longer than ever before, which is a great achievement. Accompanied with the trend towards having fewer children, this is leading to the ageing of the population, a stage in the universal process known as the demographic transition. Populations in the UNECE region are entering or have recently entered this stage, which holds significant opportunities but also comes with a number of challenges. The universal nature and broad implications of ageing require that policy responses are discussed internationally, cover a wide spectrum of economic and social issues and involve a broad range of stakeholders.

In the context of the United Nations, ageing was first put on the international policy agenda at the World Assembly on Ageing in Vienna in 1982. Subsequently, the United Nations Principles for Older Persons were developed and 1999 was proclaimed International Year of Older Persons. The Second World Assembly on Ageing in Madrid in 2002 set the agenda for discussing the far-reaching implications of population ageing across all spheres of society. The Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing (MIPAA) was concretized for the UNECE region in the Regional Implementation Strategy (RIS) adopted at the UNECE Ministerial Conference on Ageing in Berlin in the same year. Five years later, ministers and Government representatives came together again in León, Spain, at the UNECE Ministerial Conference entitled “A Society for All Ages: Challenges and Opportunities”, to review the progress made in implementing this Strategy.

UNECE co-organized this Conference with the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs of Spain. The Ministerial Declaration adopted by the Conference renewed the commitment of UNECE member States to the MIPAA and the RIS, and focused on areas that need the most urgent action. Reflecting their vital role in many ageing-related actions, UNECE involved non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in preparations to the Conference early on and acknowledges their contribution to the drafting of the Ministerial Declaration. A forum for civil society and the scientific community was held a day before the Conference, and its final documents are included in this volume.

The aim of this volume is to disseminate the Conference proceedings to a wider public and thereby inspire a broader debate. Apart from the Ministerial Declaration, the volume contains the Chairperson’s Summary, a review of the implementation of the MIPAA in the UNECE region, the keynote papers, summary of contributions, the NGO Declaration and the conclusions of the Research Forum.

UNECE is grateful to the authors of the keynote papers, to the Conference participants and to the members of the Preparatory Committee for their engagement in discussion and contributions, which have led to the material contained herein. It is expected that this volume will be of interest to a wider audience interested in population matters and will increase awareness about the need for policy responses to demographic change.



Marek Belka
Executive Secretary

United Nations Economic Commission for Europe

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ABBREVIATIONS

BAGSO	German National Association of Senior Citizens' Organizations
CEE	Central and Eastern Europe
CIOMS	Council for International Organizations of Medical Sciences
DB	Defined-benefit
ECB	European Central Bank
ECLAC	United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean
EFI	Experience for Initiatives
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
GGS	Generation and Gender Survey
ILO	International Labour Organization
IMERSO	Ministry of Labour and Social Services of Spain and its Institute for Older Persons and Social Services
ISSA	International Social Security Association
LTC	Long-term care
MIPAA	Madrid International Plan Action on Ageing
NGO	Non-governmental organization
NDC	Notional defined-contribution
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OAD	Old-age dependency ratio
PAYG	Pay-as-you-go system
RIS	Regional Implementation Strategy
PHC	Primary health-care
PPAS	Population Policy Acceptance Study
UNDESA	United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs
UNECE	United Nations Economic Commission for Europe
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
WHO	World Health Organization

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