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Implementation of work programme in 2012

Implementation of the Work Programme of the Working Group on Ageing in 2012

Note by the secretariat

I. Introduction

1. The UNECE Working Group on Ageing 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 (RIS/MIPAA) and the follow-up activities to the UNECE Ministerial Conference on Ageing in León, Spain (6-8 November 2007).
2. At its fortieth meeting in March 2011, the UNECE Executive Committee agreed to renew the Working Group's mandate for the three-year period 2011-2013, bringing the programme of the Working Group into line with the UN planning and reporting cycles (EXCOM/CONCLU/40).
3. The Working Group, at its fourth meeting (21-22 November 2011), reviewed the implementation of the programme of work in 2011 (ECE/WG.1/2011/4) and decided on its main activities and outputs for 2012-2013 (ECE/WG.1/2011/5).
4. This document is prepared for the fifth meeting of the Working Group on Ageing. It describes the implementation of the programme of work in 2012, covering the Working Group's four main areas of activity: (a) preparation of policy briefs with good practice examples; (b) monitoring implementation of RIS/MIPAA, including the completion of the second cycle of review and appraisal of RIS/MIPAA; (c) capacity development; and (d) strengthening knowledge-base for policy action on ageing and intergenerational relationships.

5. The description of implemented activities is followed by an update about the on-going UNECE Executive Committee's Review of the 2005 ECE Reform in relation to the Population programme and the conclusions.

II. Implementation of the work programme for 2012

A. Policy briefs with good practice examples

6. The Working Group on Ageing has issued a series of policy briefs that provide information on progressive and innovative policy discourse in order to foster the exchange of good policy practice amongst member States. The policy briefs provide examples of successful policies and programmes aimed at implementing the UNECE RIS/MIPAA. The secretariat has compiled the policy briefs based on contributions from Member States.

7. Since the fourth meeting of the Work Group on Ageing in November 2011, two additional policy briefs on the topics 'Images of older persons' and 'Active Ageing' have been published. Both Policy Briefs were translated into French and German by Member States. All policy briefs are available on the UNECE website.¹

8. Several topics have been suggested for further policy briefs. Given the reduction in staff at the UNECE Secretariat, the preparation of future proposed policy briefs will depend on the availability of additional funds or on in kind contribution from experts.

B. Monitoring of the UNECE Regional Implementation Strategy for the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing

1. Second cycle of review and appraisal of RIS/MIPAA

9. The second cycle of review and appraisal of MIPAA/RIS was concluded with the Ministerial Conference under the motto *Ensuring a society for all ages: promoting quality of life and active ageing*. At the Ministerial Conference, the *Synthesis report on the implementation of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing in the UNECE region* was launched, summarizing major trends from the 36 national reports on MIPAA/RIS implementation received in the process. A summary of the report is available as an official document (ECE/AC.30/2012/4). The UNECE Secretariat prepared an annex to the report containing empirical data.

10. Following the decisions of the forty-eighth session of the Commission for Social Development (E/2010/26, E/CN.5/2010/9), the modalities for the second review and appraisal exercise were outlined in the document 'Preparations for the second review and appraisal of implementation of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe Regional Implementation Strategy for the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing' (ECE/WG.1/2010/5). The UNECE will submit the conclusions of the review and appraisal conference and individual national reports to the Commission for Social Development in 2013.

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

2. Ministerial Conference on Ageing, Vienna, 2012

11. Hosted by the Government of Austria, the UNECE Ministerial Conference on Ageing took place on 19-20 September 2012.² It was preceded by a non-governmental organizations (NGO) forum and a research forum on 18 September 2012. Delegates from nearly 50 Member States participated in the Conference.

12. During the preparatory process to this Conference, a Declaration Drafting Group was convened by the Bureau of the Working Group to prepare a draft text of the ministerial declaration for adoption by Member States as the outcome document of the Conference. The Declaration Drafting Group consisted of representatives from Austria (the chairperson), Belgium, Georgia, Germany and Malta, with the assistance of the NGO representative. The Group facilitated a participatory process and to extent possible incorporated contributions from UNECE Member States and NGOs.

13. The first draft of the declaration was extensively discussed and amended at the Bureau meeting in March 2012. Then two rounds of full-scale electronic consultations with the Member States and an additional round to reach the general preliminary agreement on the text were organized by the secretariat and the Chair of the Declaration Drafting Group between early April and late August 2012. The preliminary agreed text of the Ministerial Declaration was tabled at the Conference.

3. Indicators

(a) *Active Ageing Index*

14. The UNECE, in cooperation with the European Commission's Directorate General on Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion (EC) and the European Centre for Social Welfare Policy and Research (European Centre) are collaborating on the development of an *Active Ageing Index (AAI)*. The Index aims to provide the policymakers with a tool that will indicate various domains for policy interventions in promoting active and healthy ageing. The AAI will be a tool to measure and monitor active and healthy ageing, not just in outcomes but also pointing to untapped potential of older people, at the country level. The AAI will make use of a dashboard of indicators on the extent to which older people have and can realise their potential with respect to employment and various unpaid family, social and cultural contributions as well as be healthy, independent and autonomous in their living. All three project partners seek to obtain transparent results for 27 EU countries and a few other UNECE member States by the end of 2012. The work on AAI should potentially also connect to the process of monitoring progress (especially in the implementation of MIPAA). The work performed has benefitted from the advice of an international group of experts convened by the Secretariat.

(b) *International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) – Review of implementation of its Programme of Action in the UNECE Region*

15. The General Assembly resolution 65/234 of 22 December 2010 on the follow-up to the International Conference on Population and Development beyond 2014 requested the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) to undertake an operational review of the implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD), coordinated in the regions through the Regional Commissions. The UNECE is in charge of preparing a regional report on the implementation of the ICPD

² For more information see http://www.unece.org/pau/ageing/ministerial_conference_2012.html

Programme of Action in its region. The regional reports will form the basis for the Secretary-General's global report to the Commission on Population and Development at its forty-seventh session, as mandated by General Assembly resolution 65/234.

16. In pursuance of the above-mentioned mandate, UNECE Member States were invited to contribute to a Global Survey on ICPD beyond 2014 by completing a comprehensive questionnaire, which has been prepared by UNFPA in a participatory process with civil society, international organizations and the United Nations system as well as Governments. The UNFPA provided funding for a consultant at UNECE to analyse responses and prepare the regional report.

17. Several sections of the questionnaire are related to the issues dealt with by the Working Group on Ageing and the collected information may provide more comprehensive data on institutional context for monitoring implementation of RIS/MIPAA in the UNECE countries.

C. Capacity development

1. Road maps for mainstreaming ageing

18. The development of Road Maps for Mainstreaming Ageing was an integral part of the initial programme of work adopted by the Working Group on Ageing at its establishment during its first meeting in November 2008 (ECE/WG.1/2008/3, paragraphs 28-33). These Road Maps, 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 RIS/MIPAA taking into account specificities of the country.

19. The report of the Road Map project for Armenia was completed during 2010 and approved by the Working Group at its third meeting. The finished document was published in 2011. In August 2012, the Ageing Strategy and related Action Plan – an integral part of the Road Map – were adopted by a Government Decree in Armenia.

20. The Road Map on Mainstreaming Ageing for the Republic of Moldova was presented to the Working Group on Ageing during its fourth meeting. It was published in spring 2012. The recommendations of the Road Map, on the basis of which the Action Plan was developed, were presented to the National Commission on Population and Development of the Republic of Moldova. It was agreed with the Moldovan government that the Road Map should be treated as a complementary element to Moldova's National Strategic Programme on Demographic Security for 2011-2025, which does not focus explicitly on mainstreaming ageing.

21. During the fourth meeting of the Working Group on Ageing, Georgia expressed interest in the preparation of a Road Map. The request is pending the receipt of sufficient extra-budgetary contributions from UNECE member States into the Trust Fund of the Working Group on Ageing to support its implementation.

2. Workshops

22. UNECE collaborated with Israel's Agency for International Development Cooperation, MASHAV, on holding a capacity-development training workshop on *Community Services for the Elderly* in Israel from 5 to 14 March 2012. The workshop took place in a training centre in Haifa and entailed several site visits in different parts of the country. The programme involved presentations from experts, both scientists and policy-makers, and had several interactive group work components. Participants included

representatives from governments, civil society and academia from the Republic of Moldova, the Russian Federation, Serbia, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, as well as from China, Myanmar, Nepal and Vietnam. Following positive experiences, it is foreseen that another workshop of this kind will take place in 2013. UNECE member States are encouraged to disseminate this information to potential participants.

D. Knowledge base for policy action on ageing

(a) The Generations and Gender Programme (GGP)

23. The secretariat has continued to act as a clearinghouse for administration of the Generations and Gender Programme (GGP), which is emerging as one of the leading data sources for policy-relevant research on demographic trends and processes in the UNECE region. For those countries which participate in the GGP, the survey and contextual data constitute a rich source of evidence for the evaluation of implementation of RIS/MIPAA, both in terms of impact on the lives of older persons and with respect to instrumental change (i.e. the existence of relevant policies). The data also provide empirical evidence for use in the Working Group's other outputs such as the policy briefs on ageing.

24. Currently the first wave survey micro data of 15 countries can be accessed online upon application. Additional wave 1 data are expected to become available from Poland and Sweden. Several countries have collected second wave data, for example Australia, Czech Republic, France, Georgia, Hungary, Germany, Italy, Lithuania the Netherlands and the Russian Federation. Some countries have already collected third wave data, including France, Hungary, the Netherlands and the Russian Federation. They will be made available to researchers after submission and harmonization at the Netherlands Interdisciplinary Demographic Institute (NIDI). Several countries are ready to carry out data collection for next waves, for example Georgia, but obtaining funding remains a major challenge. As countries have to make their own funds available for implementation of the Generations and Gender Survey, UNECE has continued to provide support for the fundraising endeavours of countries seeking to implement the GGP.

25. The UNECE has continued to process applications for GGP data, granting data access for 70 new data applications since the last meeting of the Working Group on Ageing.³ It has implemented a new facilitated application procedure for data access. The secretariat has also maintained, updated and improved the functionality of a bibliography of GGP-based research.⁴ The bibliography which is searchable online currently has 850 data entries of publications making use of GGP data.

26. The UNECE secretariat has continued to manage the GGP International Working Group, made up of focal points from country teams, and organized a meeting of this group on 13 June 2012 in Stockholm, Sweden. 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.

(b) Publication Active Ageing and Quality of Life in Old Age

27. Emanating from the in-depth discussion held on the same topic during the fourth meeting of the Working Group on Ageing, a report *Active Ageing and Quality of Life in Old Age* was published in May 2012.

³ Data can be accessed by registered users at www.ggp-i.org.

⁴ Available from <http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/pau/ggp/biblio/Biblio/current.05.12.html>

III. UNECE Executive Committee's Review of the 2005 ECE Reform implementation

28. The UNECE Executive Committee (EXCOM) is carrying out the review of the implementation of the 2005 reform of UNECE. It aims to provide recommendations for future work for each UNECE subprogramme, including population.

29. EXCOM discussed the Population subprogramme at its meeting on 12 December 2011. The Chair of the Working Group gave a presentation that was well appreciated. In spring 2012, EXCOM set up Friends of the Chair Groups to make a more detailed assessment of each UNECE subprogramme. The group met to review population on 17 July 2012. EXCOM members from Austria, Belarus, Israel, the Russian Federation and Serbia participated in the meeting.

30. EXCOM will prepare concrete recommendations for the future UNECE work priorities to be submitted for adoption at the 2013 spring session of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe.

IV. Conclusions

31. Since its foundation, the WGA has established itself as a valuable asset for facilitating the implementation of RIS/MIPAA, both as a productive source of substantive outputs and as an effective networking resource for national focal points to exchange information and share experiences.

32. Its key position as the facilitator of RIS/MIPAA implementation in the region has been confirmed and strengthened during the second review and appraisal and during the preparatory process of the UNECE Ministerial Conference in Vienna.

33. The UNECE secretariat would like to thank the Government of Austria for their extraordinary contribution to the process by hosting the Ministerial Conference in Vienna.

34. The UNECE secretariat acknowledges Estonia's contribution of extra-budgetary funds to the Trust Fund of the Working Group on Ageing. Implementation of several elements of the programme of work adopted by the Working Group on Ageing depends on such contributions.
