

MIPAA Meets SDG1 – Responses to Old-Age Poverty in the UNECE Region

Erika Winkler, Austria, Former Chair of the UNECE Working Group on Ageing

Colleagues from governmental and non-governmental organizations,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Welcome to the side event of the Working Group on Ageing in the region of the UNECE. This time we chose as theme our responses to SDG 1 and to old-age poverty in the UNECE region, which is with 56 member states a huge region from Vancouver to Vladivostok, including Europe, the US, Canada and the countries of Central Asia.

Please **let me briefly introduce the Working Group on Ageing**, which I chaired from 2010 – 2017.

In 2004, when the **CsocD in para 7 of its resolution 42/1 requested “the United Nations regional commissions**, within their mandates, to promote and facilitate the implementation, review and appraisal of and dissemination of information about the Madrid Plan of Action at the regional level”, **UNECE did not react**. It was Austria, learning from its experience of no follow-up after the 1st World Assembly on Ageing in Vienna in 1982, who took a leadership to ensure a follow-up after the 2nd World Assembly in Madrid 2002 by establishing a “Task Force on Ageing”.

This “**Task Force**”, consisting of governmental and non-governmental representatives and scientists in collaboration with the UNECE secretariat, became the Preparatory Committee of the 1st review and appraisal of MIPAA und RIS and of the 2nd UNECE Ministerial Conference on Ageing in León in 2007. In 2002, the 1st UNECE Ministerial Conference on Ageing in Berlin adopted the Regional Implementation Strategy (RIS) of MIPAA in the UNECE region.

In León it became clear to the ministers that a designated intergovernmental body such as **UNECE Working Group on Ageing would be essential to promote policies on ageing** and the interests of older persons in the UNECE, the region whose population has been ageing particularly rapidly.

Since 2008, the Working Group has contributed to the effective implementation of the commitments of the MIPAA/RIS as well as of the León and Vienna Ministerial Declarations of 2007 and 2012, in accordance with its terms of reference. Our exchange of experience and discussion on ageing policies have provided direction and guidance for all our work in the field of ageing, taking into account the different needs of the individual 56 member states.

What have been the main activities of the WGA?

1. Capacity building and Roadmaps on Mainstreaming Ageing

To support member states in establishing National Action Plans on Ageing, eg Armenia, Moldavia or Georgia

2. Policy Briefs on Ageing

19 Policy Briefs have been published to exchange best practices of MS in many fields of ageing policies like Age-friendly employment, the potential of volunteering, Active ageing policies, Abuse of Older Persons, Innovative and empowering strategies for care, strategies for people with dementia and at least on the potential of living longer.

3. Mainstreaming Ageing in the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development

With the result, that all indicators have to be monitored for all age groups and older persons are included to make sure, that no one is left behind

4. Strengthen the role of the UN regional commissions

In the Resolution on the Modalities for the third review and appraisal of MIPAA, which was adopted by the CsocD in February 2015, we managed to take a step forward in strengthening the role of the regional commissions. The resolution no longer “encourages”, but “requests” the regional commissions to implement the review and appraisal. The CSocD draft Resolution of this year calls upon the Secretary General to strengthen the work of the regional commissions and our Lisbon ministerial declaration of 2017 in para 38 stresses the importance to further support the intergovernmental collaboration in the field of population ageing, and acknowledges the need to explore the possibility of a resource-neutral transformation of the Working Group on Ageing to a standing sectoral committee of UNECE.

5. 2nd and 3rd Review and Appraisal of implementation of MIPAA

The WGA functions as preparatory committee of guidelines for national reports on the review and appraisal of the implementation of MIPAA/RIS and of Ministerial Conferences and Declarations every fifth year. The 3rd UNECE Ministerial Conference 2012 took place in Vienna on the theme: **“Ensuring a society for all ages: Promoting quality of life and active ageing”**.

In the context of the **Vienna Conference, active ageing was set up as the central concept and operational approach** of national and regional policies on ageing.

During the last five years the emphasis has shifted from the shortcomings of older people to their potentials and in 2017 the 4th Ministerial Conference on Ageing in Lisbon focused on the theme: **“A sustainable society for all ages: Realizing the potential of living longer”**.

For the next five years we will focus on further mainstreaming ageing into relevant policy areas and **combating ageism** in its many forms, on designing and implementing **integrated policies for active and healthy ageing**, where older persons are continuously recognized as **an asset for a sustainable and inclusive society** for all ages. With **three main goals**: empowering individuals to realize their potential for physical, mental and social well-being, encouraging longer working life and ability to work and ageing with dignity.

At the same time, we make clear that **the full implementation of MIPAA is our best contribution to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda** and its SDGs.

However, let us now look into some policies on implementing SDG 1 and to reducing the risk of old-age poverty and promoting active ageing of some member states.

First, **Vitalija Gaucaite Wittich**, chief of the population unit of UNECE and Secretary of the WGA will give us an overview of old-age poverty and exclusion in the UNECE region.

Then I welcome **Philipp Charwath**, the Deputy permanent representative of the permanent Mission of Austria to the UN, **Aina Strand**, Vice Chair of the WGA, representative of Norway, **Pascal Froudière**, member of the Bureau of the WGA, representative of France, and **Dirk Jarré**, longstanding civil society representative on the WGA. Thank you and Vitalija, the floor is yours.