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Working Group on Ageing

Twelfth meeting

Geneva, 18 and 19 November 2019

Report of the Working Group on Ageing on its twelfth meeting

I. Introduction

A. Attendance

1. The twelfth meeting of the Working Group on Ageing (WGA) was held on 18 and 19 November 2019 at the Palais des Nations in Geneva. It was co-chaired by Edmundo Martinho, WGA Chair (Portugal), and Aina Strand, WGA Vice-Chair (Norway). The meeting was attended by a total of 85 participants.¹

2. Representatives of the following 36 member States of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) participated: Albania, Austria, Belarus, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Kazakhstan, Lithuania, Malta, Monaco, Montenegro, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Moldova, Russian Federation, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, Ukraine, and United States of America.

3. Representatives of the European Commission (EC), the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and the World Health Organization (WHO) participated. The academic and research community was represented by Bar-Ilan University (Israel), Georgian Technical University (Georgia), and European Centre for Social Welfare Policy and Research, Vienna (Austria). The following non-governmental organizations (NGOs) attended the meeting: AGE Platform Europe, Centre for Socio-Economic Development (CSEND), Greycells – Association of Former International Civil Servants for Development, HelpAge International, International Longevity Centre Global Alliance (ILC Global Alliance), International Longevity Centre of Canada (ILC Canada), International Network for the Prevention of Elder Abuse (INPEA)/NGO Committee on Ageing New York, International Federation on Ageing (IFA), NGO “Ardager”, NGO Central-Asia Gerontology Center, Red Cross of Serbia, Ukrainian Charity “Turbota pro

¹ The list of participants is available on the meeting page: <https://www.unece.org/index.php?id=50641>



Litnih v Ukraini” (Age-Concern-Ukraine), and World Federation for Mental Health (WFMH).

B. Opening of the meeting and adoption of the agenda

4. The twelfth meeting of the Working Group on Ageing was opened by the Director of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) Statistical Division.

5. The Working Group adopted the meeting’s agenda as contained in the document ECE/WG.1/2019/1 without changes.

II. Election of officers

6. The current Chair, Edmundo Martinho (Portugal), was re-elected for the next two-year term as was Aina Strand from Norway for her position as Vice-Chair. A suggestion to have a second Vice-Chair was supported by the WGA. Alexis Rinckenbach (France) will serve in this position.

7. Representatives of Belarus, Czech Republic and Israel stepped down from the Bureau. Candidates from five countries currently on the Bureau were re-elected to continue for another term: France and Italy for the second two-year term and Norway, Portugal and Slovenia for the third two-year term. In preparation of the fourth review and appraisal cycle of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing (MIPAA), it was decided to extend the Bureau from eight to ten country representatives. Subsequently, five new members were elected to the Bureau: Austria, Germany, Ireland, Republic of Moldova and Spain.

8. Following the decision of the WGA at its tenth meeting, Gertraud Dayé, who has been representing the civil society in the Bureau for two years, is succeeded by Heidrun Mollenkopf. The director of European Centre for Social Welfare Policy and Research will continue to represent the research community on the Bureau.

III. Report of the Bureau of the Working Group on Ageing and briefing on the outcomes of ageing-related events during 2019

A. The Bureau of the WGA

9. The Chair briefed participants on the outcomes of the eleventh meeting of the Bureau that took place on 6 and 7 May 2019 in Lisbon, Portugal. Among main items discussed were provisional Terms of Reference for a Task Force on Mainstreaming Ageing, the preliminary agenda for the twelfth meeting of the WGA and a concept of the policy seminar under the theme “Informal care for persons with dementia”. The Bureau supported a proposal by France to prepare an additional policy brief on the topic of women and old age as a contribution to the Beijing+25 review. Activities for 2019 International Day of Older Persons were also discussed.

B. Transformation of the Working Group on Ageing to a Standing Working Group on Ageing and revised Terms of Reference

10. The Director of the ECE Statistical Division informed the Working Group that following the ECE Executive Committee (EXCOM) endorsement at its 103rd meeting on 1 February 2019 of the revised terms of reference (TOR) of the Working Group on Ageing

including the change of its name to “Standing Working Group on Ageing”, the Commission at its sixty-eighth session in April 2019 decided to approve these changes. However, the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) at its meeting in July 2019 deferred approval of several ECE decisions including the change of the name and revised TOR of the Working Group to its 2020 session. Therefore, the Working Group can change its name and start acting under the revised TOR only once the ECOSOC endorses the ECE decision.

C. The fifty-second session of the Commission on Population and Development and the tenth session of the Open-ended Working Group on Ageing in New York; and the Beijing+25 Regional Review Meeting

11. The secretariat reported on the fifty-second session of the Commission on Population and Development, which took place on 1-5 April 2019 at the United Nations Headquarters in New York, under the theme “Review and appraisal of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) and its contribution to the follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”. A political declaration underscoring the critical role of population-related measures and policies in achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development was adopted at the beginning of the session. The High-level Interactive Panel on key findings and recommendations of the regional conferences on population and development concluded the ICPD+25 review. At the High-level Interactive Panel the challenges of the ECE region were presented by Belarus, a co-chair of the ECE High-level Regional ICPD+25 Review Conference. The theme of the forthcoming fifty-third CPD session in 2020 is “Population, food security, nutrition and sustainable development”. The Commission also decided on the theme of fifty-fourth session in 2021 – “Population and sustainable development, in particular sustained and inclusive economic growth”.

12. The Vice-Chair briefed participants on the tenth session of the Open-ended Working Group on Ageing (OEWG) held on 15-18 April 2019 at United Nations Headquarters in New York. Two focus areas were “Education, training, life-long learning and capacity-building” and “Social protection and social security (including social protection floors)”. The work of the WGA was presented at the OEWG session. During the discussion on possible WGA collaboration with OEWG, WGA members noted that following the work done in New York is important and WGA can contribute by providing inputs for substantive discussions. The eleventh session of the OEWG will be held on 6-9 April 2020 and two focus areas will be “Right to Work and Access to the Labour Market” and “Access to Justice”. The representatives of Austria and Germany supported a proposal of the AGE Platform Europe representative to organise a side event of the WGA during the OEWG session.

13. The representative of France reported on the Beijing+25 Regional Review Meeting held on 29-30 October 2019 in Geneva. The meeting provided a forum for ECE member States to review progress and identify challenges in the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action. A side event on the theme “Changing demographics: Ageing and its implications for gender equality” was organised by France, Germany and Italy in collaboration with the European Commission and the ECE secretariat and was very well attended.

IV. New and ongoing international initiatives in the area of ageing and the follow-up to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

A. In Focus: Understanding ageism

14. At the invitation of the secretariat, Professor Liat Ayalon, Bar Ilan University, Israel, delivered a lecture on the topic of ageism based on ongoing international research in this field. Distinguishing three dimensions of ageism: stereotypes, prejudice, and discrimination, she stressed that it could be both positive and negative; directed towards others and oneself; young and old; and be explicit and implicit. Research suggests that ageism is more pervasive than sexism and racism. However, age is not explicitly included as a ground of discrimination in most United Nations treaties and it is not the subject of a specific human rights convention. Professor Ayalon stressed that to succeed in combatting ageism laws and regulations should explicitly prohibit age discrimination; and that people need to change the way they think and talk about (older) age. Ageing is an opportunity for individuals and societies.

15. A representative of the World Health Organization presented the advancements of the WHO Global Campaign to Combat Ageism, that has the vision of “A world for all ages” and the goal to “Change the way we think, feel and act towards age and ageing”. The campaign has four areas of work: data and evidence, global coalition, awareness, and platform for action. The WHO has done four systematic reviews on ageism. The policy review, which included also 32 ECE countries, showed that all countries have taken some level of action. The WHO will publish a global report on ageism in 2020.

16. The secretariat suggested ageism to be a potential topic of the WGA side event of the OEWG session. Several participants pointed out that society should first address the issue of ageism to be able to make progress on the issues related the population ageing.

17. The representative of Canada shared their good practices. In Canada, the National Seniors Council is working on identifying measures to counteract ageism and the Federal, Provincial and Territorial Ministers Responsible for Seniors Forum is conducting a study to examine the social and economic impact of ageism. The final report with proposed approaches, initiatives and strategies to address ageism will be published in 2021.

B. International initiatives in the area of ageing

18. The WHO representative updated the group on the preparations for a Decade of Healthy Ageing (2020-2030). The Outline of the Decade proposal has four action areas: change how we think, feel and act towards age and ageing; develop communities to foster abilities of older people; deliver integrated care and health services for older people; and develop access to long-term care. An online course “Healthy Ageing for Impact in the 21st Century” has been developed to build capacity for the implementation of the Decade. The Decade will be launched on 1 October 2020.

19. A representative of the OHCHR, supporting the Independent Expert on the enjoyment of all human rights of older persons, reminded about the Independent Expert’s mandate and key findings of her work over the last year. The Independent Expert worked on the topic of “Older Persons in humanitarian emergencies – the human rights imperative” for her last report, presented to the Human Rights Council in September 2019. The report highlights specific protection gaps that exist for older persons, including a lack of awareness of older persons’ needs in emergency situations, and puts forward recommendations on these issues.

C. 2030 Agenda follow-up

20. The secretariat updated the group on the global, regional and some national activities linked to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The Regional Forum on Sustainable Development was held on 21-22 March 2019 in Geneva and the High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) was held on 9-18 July 2019 in New York. The theme was “Empowering people and ensuring inclusiveness and equality”. A regional report and voluntary national reviews of several ECE countries were presented. During the HLPF, the Stakeholder Group on Ageing held a side event “Confronting ageism and empowering older people to ensure social, economic and political inclusion of all”.

21. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) Summit was held on 24-25 September within the overall context of the United Nations General Assembly 2019 high-level week in New York. The Political Declaration “Gearing up for a decade of action and delivery for sustainable development” was adopted. Furthermore, a report “The Future is Now: Science for Achieving Sustainable Development” was launched. It is the first quadrennial Global Sustainable Development Report prepared by an independent group of 15 scientists.

22. The next HLPF on Sustainable Development will be held on 7-16 July 2020 in New York and the Regional Forum will take place on 19-20 March 2020 in Geneva. The theme will be “Accelerated action and transformative pathways: realizing the decade of action and delivery for sustainable development”.

V. Country experiences: aligning policy measures and strategies on ageing with the Lisbon Ministerial Declaration

23. A representative of Bulgaria presented a National Strategy for Active Ageing in Bulgaria (2019-2030). The aim of the Strategy is to create conditions for active and decent living of older people by providing equal opportunities for their full participation in economic and social life. The strategy is addressing: independent living, participation in society, access to care, and dignity. Its priorities are based on the four domains of the Active Ageing Index (AAI). Therefore, twenty-two indicators of the AAI will be used for monitoring, and the average European Union (EU) values will be the targets. Biannual plans and biannual reports for strategy implementation will be prepared. An evaluation of the Strategy will be conducted every four years by an independent external expert.

24. Italy presented a national coordination initiative hosted by the Presidency of the Council of Ministers with support from researchers. Italy intends to actively involve NGOs, academia and the private sector in the process and to work on a shared policy intervention model on active ageing with regions and municipalities. This can be seen as preparatory work to a national strategy on active ageing.²

25. Norway updated the Working Group on the previously reported cross-sectorial strategy “More years – more opportunities” (2016) that was built on the understanding that population ageing concerns all sectors. The new programme “A full life – all your life”, based on stakeholder inputs and co-creation, broadens the notion of care and provides examples of tools and policies. A national programme for Age-friendly Norway has been introduced that includes among other elements a campaign for planning for better old age, making local communities and public spaces more adapted to the needs of older persons and promotes

² For more information, refer to Italy’s presentation: <http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/pau/age/WG.12/Presentations/3-active-ageing-policies-Italy.pdf> .

national partnership and new ways of participation and volunteering. Next step will be establishment of an ombudsperson to promote the interests of older persons.

26. The representative of the NGO Central-Asia Gerontology Center reported on the National development strategy for 2030 in Tajikistan, which prioritizes older persons as a vulnerable group.

27. Albania reported on some good practices including a project financed by the EC and implemented by a group of NGOs. The project supports the implementation of grassroots initiatives implemented by civil society to fill certain strategic gaps of central and local governments. Albania also drew attention to its new national action plan on the integration of older persons, which was drafted based on the MIPAA with the goals of social protection and inclusion of older persons. The document is in the process of being approved by the Government.

28. The Austrian representative congratulated Norway and Albania on their successful projects on the community level and considered these of particular importance to reach older people directly.

29. The NGO CSEND made a statement on Digital Literacy for older persons in which the proposal to set up an expert group on ensuring digital inclusion and literacy of older persons was voiced. NGO Greycells supported CSEND in its proposal.

30. Austria reminded participants that an expert seminar on digitalization and care, challenges and opportunities had been organised in 2018 in the context of the OEWGA. Austria's representative suggested that a policy brief could be produced on this topic. AGE Platform Europe considered it equally important to focus on the issue of digitalization and noted that there are already some good examples in member countries.

VI. The WGA work programme for the fourth implementation cycle of the Regional Implementation Strategy for the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing (MIPAA/RIS) in 2018-2022

A. International cooperation, exchange of experience and policy discussion

1. Policy seminars on ageing

31. The 2018 Policy seminar created a space for peer learning on the topic of ageing and the Sustainable Development Goals. As a direct follow-up, Austria, France, and Germany participated in the ECE Regional Forum on Sustainable Development in March 2019 providing examples of lifelong learning in older age. In addition, three follow-up events took place: a seminar in January 2019 organised by NGO BAGSO (Germany), a workshop in September 2019 within the German Government to sensitise different departments of the international ageing agendas and in November 2019, a dialogue forum on ageing and the SDGs in Austria.

32. AGE Platform Europe noted that for many actors such as NGOs and the lay public, international frameworks and intergovernmental processes such as MIPAA, the 2030 Agenda and the WGA are far away from their own experiences. The main motivation of BAGSO for organizing the seminar in Germany was to communicate the potential of international agendas on ageing to civil society representatives and other stakeholders.

33. The 2019 Policy seminar was organized on the topic of informal care for persons with dementia. The participants of the meeting were asked to propose/discuss potential topics for

the policy seminar in 2020 during the first break-out session. The discussion groups put forward several suggestions including topics on older persons in emergency situations, on age-friendly technologies, and on intergenerational conflicts and solidarity. A survey will be carried out in early 2020 among WGA members to rank the proposed topics.

2. Policy Briefs

34. The secretariat informed the Working Group about the publication of Policy Briefs on combating ageism in the world of work (No. 21) and on informal carers (No. 22). The Working Group was also reminded that Policy Brief No. 23 on ageing and gender equality will be published at the end of 2019/early 2020 and is being prepared under initiative of France. Policy Brief No. 24 focuses on “Ageing in smart and sustainable cities”, a first draft of which was prepared by the secretariat together with a consultant. It should be completed in early 2020. WGA members were invited to send in good practice examples for Policy Brief No. 24 by the end of November 2019.

35. For the Policy Brief No. 25 to be issued in 2020 the priority during the eleventh Working Group meeting was given to “Older persons in emergency situations”. The broad outline prepared by the secretariat was discussed during the first break-out session of the meeting. Several good practice examples were indicated by member States and NGOs, and suggestions were made to streamline the focus of a draft outline and take into account outcomes of a number of recent reports (Report by Independent Expert, OEWG Expert Group meeting, etc.). It was noted that focus should not be not only on emergency situations resulting from natural disasters, but also on those arising from man-made disaster, including terrorism, war and conflict. WGA members were asked to provide good practice examples in core areas to be addressed in the policy brief and send their comments on the proposed outline by the end of December 2019.

36. The second preferred theme was age-friendly digitalization and eGovernment or ageing in the digital era. Also, later, once the guidelines on mainstreaming ageing are issued a policy brief on the same topic may be produced to introduce them to a wider group of policymakers and practitioners. The suggested topics gathered approval from all three discussion groups.

37. The discussion groups also considered other topics such as the integration of health and social care, inequalities in ageing and how to prevent those, the participation in public life and the financial security of older persons (including poverty prevention in terms of material deprivation).

B. Guidelines and policy recommendations, advisory services and capacity-building

1. Road maps for mainstreaming ageing

38. The secretariat reminded participants that at the last WGA meeting in 2018 Belarus made a request for developing a Road Map for mainstreaming ageing to support the preparation of a national ageing strategy in the country. Two field missions were conducted by the secretariat in December 2018 and April 2019, supported by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) Regional office for Eastern Europe and Central Asia. The Road Map put forward some 65 recommendations in the areas of MIPAA/RIS commitments. In April 2019, the draft recommendations were discussed with authorities in Belarus. A number of them were taken into account in devising a national strategy. The Road Map for Belarus will be published before the end of 2019, in both printed and electronic versions (in English). A Russian version of the document (unofficial translation provided by the UNFPA) will be also made available.

39. The representative of Belarus reported on the draft national strategy under the title “Dignified Longevity 2030” and its six key objectives: the principle of equality and inclusion in society, an increase in the sustainability of the pension system and the efficiency of the labour market, lifelong learning, adaptation and development of the healthcare system to all ages and promotion of healthy ageing, development of social services and adapting the infrastructure and environment to be age-friendly. The national strategy will also be considered when developing programmes for socioeconomic development for the next five years, which are the main strategy documents for Belarus. The implementation will take place both at the national and subnational (regional and local) levels. A package of documents for public consultation is being prepared and the strategy will be submitted to the Council of Ministers, with the aim of completing this work by the end of 2019.

40. Austria congratulated Belarus on this National Strategy aligned with the WGA work. Austria’s representative asked about the role of NGOs in the policymaking process and the provision of the social services for older persons. The representative of Belarus reported that there is an interdepartmental commission which is working under the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection, which includes some civil society organisations. NGOs that work in the interest of older persons have formed a coalition among them and Belarus seeks to increase the participation of NGOs in policymaking and involves them in the multi-stakeholder discussions.

41. Another request to develop a Road Map on mainstreaming ageing was received in 2019 from the Government of Kazakhstan and accepted by the ECE Executive Secretary. The work on a desk study is already ongoing and the first field mission is planned for early 2020.

2. Guidelines for mainstreaming ageing

42. The Chair and secretariat reported on progress made on guidelines on mainstreaming ageing. The decisions to develop guidelines and to establish a task force to lead on this work were taken at the eleventh meeting of the WGA in November 2018. The Task Force on Mainstreaming Ageing was established in June 2019. It developed and piloted a stocktaking questionnaire for the preparation of country notes and invited all members of the Working Group on Ageing to take part in the stocktaking on mainstreaming ageing across the ECE region. Based on the information collected using the stocktaking questionnaire, the Task Force and a consultant will work on preparing guidelines to be tabled for discussion at the thirteenth WGA meeting in 2020. The Chair informed participants about the plan to launch and promote the guidelines throughout the European Union and beyond during Portugal’s presidency of the Council of the EU (January-June 2021).

43. Participants were updated on progress on three thematic modules: raising awareness and support for ageing-related policies; developing an institutional framework for mainstreaming; and tools and methods. The Task Force representatives of these three work packages presented their first findings based on country notes received. In the second round of break-out sessions, the three discussion groups exchanged on their experiences in preparing country notes and discussed the conceptual structure of guidelines. After the group discussions, designated rapporteurs of each group provided a summary of the deliberations to the plenary.

44. The secretariat reflecting on the discussion groups’ contribution noted a general agreement on several points: (a) the preparation of country notes was challenging but also rewarding; (b) it was helpful to consult other country notes, and some participants considered revising already submitted notes to add more information; (c) looking at gender mainstreaming could be a useful starting point; (d) stocktaking is not about outcomes but about the process of mainstreaming ageing; (e) other purposes of preparing country notes, besides knowledge gathering for the guidelines are learning to what extent ECE countries

have developed mainstreaming strategies to integrate ageing issues into all relevant policy fields (Commitment 1 of MIPAA/RIS); and preparation for the upcoming fourth review and appraisal of MIPAA/ RIS.

45. It was agreed that all countries will prepare their notes by the end of February 2020. Once considered final, they will be published on the ECE website. The Working Group also agreed on the modular approach and proposed thematic modules.

46. A representative of the CSEND suggested setting up a wiki-group of national experts on ageing to facilitate discussions and exchange of information.

C. Monitoring the implementation of MIPAA/RIS and building an evidence base for policymaking

1. Active Ageing Index

47. The secretariat updated the group on activities implemented under the third phase of the AAI project since the eleventh meeting of the WGA. The “2018 Active Ageing Index: Analytical Report” was published in June 2019. It provides the latest AAI results for the EU (based on the 2016 data); trends over 2008-2016, subnational AAI, and inequalities in AAI; and links the AAI to two policy frameworks: European Semester and MIPAA.

48. Pilot studies at subnational (NUTS-2) level were conducted in Romania and Spain. The 2018 AAI was calculated for a number of non-EU countries: Norway, Republic of North Macedonia, and Serbia; and revisions are ongoing for the Republic of Moldova.

49. Evaluation of the third phase of the AAI was conducted by an independent consultant (July–September 2019) through interviews with over thirty stakeholders, analysing 72 quantitative and qualitative responses. The secretariat thanked the Working Group members who completed the evaluation questionnaire and/or took part in the interview.

50. The AAI visualization tool is under development by the EC Joint Research Centre (EC JRC), and for now only the EU data are available (AAI results over time, country profiles, testing targets/policy measures).³ The results of the studies, information about meetings and publications are available on the AAI wiki-space.⁴

2. Generations and Gender Programme

51. The secretariat updated the group on the Generations and Gender Programme (GGP): under the umbrella of ECE the GGP infrastructure provides data about families and life trajectories of individuals to enable researchers to contribute insights to current societal and public policy challenges. It also provides users with an open-access of cross-nationally comparable surveys and contextual data. The latest survey was completed in Kazakhstan in June 2019 with a sample of 15,000 respondents. An agreement to run the Generations and Gender Survey (GGS) was signed in the Republic of Moldova in January 2019; the fielding is set to start in early 2020. The present questionnaire of the survey – GGS 2020 – has been revised and shortened. Statements of intent to do the survey were received from 31 countries. The GGP Council of Partners held its annual meeting in Paris on 23 October 2019 during which seven countries confirmed their intentions and the availability of financial resources.

52. Representative from Red Cross Serbia informed the Working Group about a study on intergenerational solidarity in Serbia that provides recommendations to the government on how to mainstream intergenerational solidarity within society.

³ <https://composite-indicators.jrc.ec.europa.eu/active-ageing-index/>

⁴ <https://statswiki.unece.org/display/AAI/Active+Ageing+Index+Home>

3. Preparations for the fourth review and appraisal of the implementation of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing

53. The secretariat informed participants that the decision of the United Nations Commission for Social Development about the modalities for the fourth review and appraisal of the MIPAA is to be taken at its fifty-eighth session in February 2020.

54. A 20-year review of MIPAA may be considered and the decision in this regard will be taken by the WGA once the modalities for a global MIPAA review are agreed upon. The Working Group could consider preparing a 20-year overview report with the help of a consultant.

55. The preliminary timeline for the fourth cycle of MIPAA/RIS review and appraisal was agreed upon (ECE/WG.1/2019/RD1). The structure of the guidelines for national focal points and stakeholders for the preparation of country reports will follow the pattern of the previous one. The Vice-Chair, the Bureau members from Austria and NGO will prepare a draft of the guidelines for the Bureau meeting in spring 2020. Guidelines will be finalized in September 2020, and countries will have 12 months to prepare their reports before the submission deadline of September 2021. The Working Group will start acting as a preparatory committee for the fifth ECE Ministerial Conference on Ageing, and the Bureau will divide tasks between a declaration drafting group and a conference preparation group at the thirteenth WGA meeting in November 2020.

56. The secretariat highlighted the importance of a participatory process in preparing the country report and noted that advances on gender mainstreaming and regional cooperation need to be addressed more explicitly than in previous country reports.

57. The representative of the European Centre for Social Welfare Policy and Research requested participants to nominate representatives of the research community in their country to facilitate the organisation of the researchers' forum that will be held – as in previous years – in conjunction with the Ministerial Conference.

58. The Working Group approved the report on implementation of the main elements of the WGA work programme in 2019 and commended the work done by the secretariat and the WGA members who were directly involved in the work programme activities in 2019, in particular those in the Task Force on Mainstreaming Ageing.

VII. Programme of work of the Population component of the Housing, Land Management and Population subprogramme for 2020

59. The secretariat introduced the draft programme of work of the Population component of the subprogramme on Housing, Land Management and Population for 2020 as outlined in the document ECE/WG.1/2019/5. The development of guidelines for mainstreaming ageing are seen as the flagship output for next year.

60. Deliverables include the number of official meeting documents to be prepared, organization of the annual WGA meeting and the spring Bureau meeting. Under the item of the generation and transfer of knowledge, a policy seminar is foreseen, and four publications are planned for 2020 including two policy briefs, the Kazakhstan Road Map and the Guidelines on mainstreaming ageing.

61. The Working Group adopted and recommends to the ECE Executive Committee for approval the draft of the programme of work of the Population component of the Housing, Land Management and Population subprogramme for 2020.

VIII. Financing of the work programme

62. The secretariat informed the Working Group about the availability and use of regular budget and extrabudgetary resources in 2018-2019 and the financing of the programme of work in 2020. Secretariat's regular budget staff consist of two professionals and one programme assistant.

63. For the Active Ageing Index – Phase III project (May 2016-August 2019), some part of the funds that were provided by the European Commission were not spent and will be returned to the donor. In 2019, the financial contribution from the UNFPA Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia was mainly used for the completion of the Road Map for Belarus and the preparation of a desk study for the Road Map for Kazakhstan.

64. The secretariat thanked Germany for its contribution to the Ageing fund in 2019 and acknowledged in-kind contributions by Slovenia and Portugal in the form of hosting the Bureau meetings in 2018 and 2019 respectively, by Poland, Romania and Spain in the form of hosting seminars on the Active Ageing Index in 2018 and 2019, and by Switzerland in the form of co-hosting the 2019 Policy seminar. Germany, Portugal, and Spain also provided in-kind contributions by translating policy briefs into their national languages.

65. A pledge for financial contribution of EUR 75,000 for the 2020-2022 work programme was made by Portugal. Several other countries pledged to explore possibilities for their contributions. The secretariat informed that ECE Ageing fund will be relaunched under a new project called Ageing (Phase III), that will be used to support implementation of the planned WGA activities.

66. The secretariat informed the Working Group that under the Proposed Programme Budget for Economic Development in Europe in 2020 (A/74/6 (Sect. 20)), the ECE proposed to cut the Associate Population Affairs Officer position in the Population Unit, i.e. one of the two professional staff. The final decision on the Programme Budget will be taken by the fifth Committee of the United Nations General Assembly in December 2019. A number of member State representatives and NGOs expressed concerns about the proposal that counters the Commission's decision to transform the Working Group into a standing intergovernmental body and reduces secretariat's ability to support the WGA work programme in the future.

IX. Other business, summary and conclusion of the meeting

67. The chair summarized the main items discussed, and the Working Group confirmed the decisions taken at its twelfth annual meeting. An overview of decisions is included in Annex I.

68. The twelfth meeting of the Bureau will take place on 27-28 April 2020, the venue to be confirmed.

69. The thirteenth meeting of the WGA will take place on 19-20 November 2020 in Geneva, Switzerland.

Annex I

Decisions taken at the twelfth meeting of the Working Group on Ageing

- The WGA adopted the agenda (ECD/WG.1/2019) without amendments.
- The current Chair (Edmundo Martinho, Portugal) and Vice-Chair (Aina Strand, Norway) were re-elected to continue for another two-year term, a second Vice-Chair, Alexis Rinckenbach, France, was elected.
- Representatives from five countries were re-elected to continue for another term on the Bureau: France, Italy, Norway, Portugal and Slovenia.
- Three countries – Belarus, Czech Republic and Israel – stepped down from the Bureau.
- Five new members of the Bureau were elected: Austria, Germany, Ireland, Republic of Moldova and Spain.
- The new NGO representative, Heidrun Mollenkopf, will be on the Bureau for the next two two-year periods. Kai Leichsenring will continue as representative of researchers at the Bureau.
- The WGA will start acting under the revised Terms of Reference once the ECOSOC endorses the ECE decision.
- The WGA member States will consider organising a side event at the eleventh meeting of the OEWGA in April 2020.
- The WGA took note of the presented national policy developments and encouraged countries to regularly share their novel approaches in addressing population ageing.
- The WGA members are invited to submit comments for the outline of Policy Brief No. 25 “Older persons in emergency situations” and good practice examples for Policy Briefs No. 23 and No. 24 until the end of November 2019.
- The Policy Brief No. 26 will address ageing in the digital era and No. 27 will be dedicated to mainstreaming ageing.
- The WGA agreed that all members are to prepare country notes on mainstreaming ageing to form a repository. The deadline for submitting finalized country notes is the end of February 2020.
- The WGA agreed on the timeline of the fourth review and appraisal of MIPAA/RIS (pending the resolution on review modalities by the Commission for Social Development) and requested the Bureau to issue the country report guidelines for national focal points and other stakeholders.
- Austria, Norway and the NGO representative will lead the work on preparing guidelines for national reporting on MIPAA. The WGA will share their comments on the previous guidelines to help the process.
- The decision on MIPAA+20 report was postponed.
- The report on the implementation of the main elements of the WGA work programme 2019 was approved by the WGA.
- The WGA adopted and recommended to the ECE Executive Committee for approval the draft programme of work of the Population component of the subprogramme on Housing, Land Management and Population for 2020.