

Third Meeting of the 2011/2012 Bureau
Luxembourg, 7-8 February 2012

**For discussion and
recommendations**

Item 8 of the Provisional
Agenda

**POSSIBLE SYNERGIES WITH THE WORK OF THE UNECE POPULATION
UNIT ON MEASURING AGEING**

Prepared by the UNECE secretariat

I. BACKGROUND

1. The UNECE Population Programme focuses on population ageing and intergenerational relationships since changes in these areas have significant economic and social impacts upon countries in the region. **Activities under this programme are carried out by the Population Unit, which since January 2011 is a part of the Statistical Division.** It is a small Unit (three staff members) servicing the UNECE Working Group on Ageing which reports directly to the UNECE Executive Committee (EXCOM).
2. Integration of the Population Unit into the Statistical Division presents opportunities for synergies in the area of methodological work on the statistical measurement of population ageing and its consequences. The importance for the statistical community to be more involved in this field was clearly demonstrated by the International Association for Official Statistics during its conference on “The Demography of Ageing and Official Statistics” organised in Belfast in 2011.
3. The mandate of the Population Programme, as set by the EXCOM following the General Assembly resolutions, is to ensure the realization of the Regional Implementation Strategy for the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing (MIPAA/RIS, adopted in 2002). The strategy addresses the challenges arising from demographic change, including releasing the unused potential of some population groups, in particular older persons. The work is governed by the Working Group on Ageing which provides a platform for intergovernmental policy debate on matters related to ageing and facilitates communication between government structures, a wider network of experts and non-governmental organizations. The activities under its work programme aim to improve evidence-based policymaking and monitoring of MIPAA implementation by coordinating data collection and policy oriented research on population ageing and intergenerational and gender relations.
4. Aiming at the systematic monitoring of the implementation of the regional strategy for MIPAA, the Working Group on Ageing promotes methodological work towards developing and selecting indicators that capture essential aspects of MIPAA/RIS commitments and permit measurement of the progress in their implementation. With financial support from the member states, a project on Mainstreaming Ageing: Indicators

to Monitor Implementation (MA:IMI) was initiated in 2005. Under this project, led by the European Centre for Social Welfare Policy and Research in Vienna, sets of indicators were developed in four domains: (i) demography; (ii) income and wealth; (iii) labour market and labour market participation; and (iv) social protection and financial sustainability. Some progress has also been made in developing indicators and collecting data on long-term care.

5. Although this work includes exploring availability of statistical data, collecting data from national and international sources and disseminating the information on the indicators, **it has been led to date by academic researchers, with no or very little involvement of official statisticians.**

6. The fourth meeting of the Working Group on Ageing on 21-22 November 2011 emphasized a need for closer cooperation with the official statistics in the monitoring process and in particular in developing a statistical basis for the UNECE regional report on the second cycle of review and appraisal of MIPAA/RIS. The members of the Working Group also acknowledged the opportunity that the integration of the Population Unit into the Statistical Division provides for strengthening the involvement of the statistical community in the statistical measurement of population ageing and its consequences.

II. 2012 JOINT UNECE AND EU PROJECT ON ACTIVE AGEING INDEX - A DASHBOARD OF INDICATORS (AAI)

7. In September 2012, the Austrian Government will host the UNECE Ministerial Conference on Ageing in Vienna. Coinciding with the 10th anniversary of MIPAA, the European Union has also designated the year 2012 as the European Year on Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations. In this context, UNECE and EU (DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion) agreed to cooperate on **developing an AAI to measure countries' progress in ensuring quality of life of the ageing population.** It is expected that systematically compiled and updated comprehensive AAI would facilitate the monitoring process of the MIPAA implementation in the UNECE region.

8. UNECE Population Unit as a coordinator of this work expects experts from related ministries, national statistical offices and academia to work together on developing and compiling the AAI. The main steps in this process are planned as follows:

(a) The preparatory conceptual work on the AAI as well as a first compilation of related data for the EU countries will be carried out by the European Centre for Social Welfare Policy and Research in Vienna, Austria (ECV).

(b) **An informal expert group will be convened by UNECE and will include statisticians, demographers and experts on population ageing** to discuss and review the concept and methodological approach suggested by ECV and to assess the feasibility of regular compilation of the AAI.

(c) The pilot testing of the AAI in two or three non-EU countries of the UNECE region will be carried out by the UNECE secretariat with the support of the informal expert group members.

(d) A tentative design of the AAI and results for selected UNECE countries will be presented during the side event of the Ministerial Conference on Ageing in September and an operational version of the AAI with comparative data will be presented in December 2012.

9. The informal expert group will work mainly through electronic consultations and teleconferences. In addition, two expert workshops will be organized jointly by UNECE and EU in the course of 2012.

III. PROPOSAL TO THE BUREAU

10. The Bureau is invited to consider the possible involvement of the NSOs in providing/reviewing statistics related to population ageing as the basis for monitoring national and regional strategies in response to the global initiative Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing.

11. The Bureau is also invited to consider the involvement of experts from NSOs in the informal expert group to be convened by UNECE, which will review the methodological approach and will test the feasibility of an Active Ageing Index (a dashboard of indicators). This would be a good opportunity for a cross-sectoral activity as often encouraged by the EXCOM.

* * * * *