

UNECE Ministerial Conference on Ageing 15.-17.6.2022, Rome
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General statement (4 min)

Dear Chair, Your Excellencies, Dear Colleagues,

Twenty years ago in Madrid, we came together to discuss what ageing means in the twenty-first century. Since then, there have been many changes in our societies. Most recently, the pandemic and the unjustified war in Ukraine have shown us how crucial it is to build resilience.

Finland is rapidly ageing. Ageing is a major challenge, but also a political priority for us. The preparedness for ageing of the population has been built for a long time. The development work described in Finland's MIPAA follow-up report is based on this continuation.

The aim of the Finnish ageing policy is to enhance older people's health and wellbeing, functional capacity, participation and independent living. In 2020, Finland published a horizontal programme on ageing in multi-stakeholder collaboration. The programme promotes equal opportunities, social participation and staying longer in employment. It aims at strengthening the inclusion, self-determination and resources of older people. The policies have a strong basis on legislation, register data, scientific research and evaluation.

During the Covid-19 pandemic, older people have been disproportionately affected. The lessons learned from the pandemic are an integral part of our development work.

Currently, Finland is going through a health and social services reform that is the largest administrative reform ever undertaken in Finland. The aim of the reform is to create equal, well-coordinated and integrated services. We want to ensure healthy and active ageing through rehabilitation and supporting living at home.

For a long time, Finland has promoted smart technologies for ageing. The aim of the innovations is to support the needs of the ageing population. At the same time, we need to make sure that digitalization is inclusive.

Dear Friends,

Ageing affects all sectors of society. An Economy of Wellbeing emphasizes a whole-of-society approach. Finland underlines the importance of close cooperation with civil society organizations. Civil society has a key role in supporting the everyday life of older persons and in promoting their rights.

We want to recognize and cherish the role of older people as contributors and active participants in the society. It is crucial to support the older people in strengthening their own voice.

Finland underlines the diversity of the elderly population and the need to influence attitudes related to ageing. An age-friendly society can better harness the potential of an ageing population. Older people are not a special group, but rather mainstream, whose needs we are committed to take into account.

Finally, I would like to congratulate Italy and the UNECE Secretariat for organizing this Conference.

Thank you.