



Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
23 December 2022

Original: English

Economic Commission for Europe

Standing Working Group on Ageing

Fifteenth meeting

Geneva, 21 and 22 November 2022

Report of the Standing Working Group on Ageing on its fifteenth meeting

I. Introduction

A. Attendance

1. The fifteenth meeting of the Standing Working Group on Ageing (SWGA) was held on 21 and 22 November 2022, in person, at the Palais des Nations in Geneva.
2. Representatives of the following 31 member States of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) participated: Albania, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Kazakhstan, Lithuania, Malta, Norway, Portugal, Republic of Moldova, Russian Federation, Serbia, Slovakia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Türkiye, Ukraine and United States of America. The Holy See attended as an observer State.
3. Representatives of the European Commission (EC) and EUROSTAT, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the World Health Organization (WHO) participated.
4. The academic and research community was represented by the European Centre for Social Welfare Policy and Research and the Netherlands Interdisciplinary Demographic Institute (NIDI).
5. The following non-governmental organizations (NGOs) attended the meeting: AGE Platform Europe, Ardager, Central Asia Gerontology Center, Centre for Socio-Eco-Nomic Development (CSEND), International Federation on Ageing (IFA), NGO Committee on Ageing in Geneva, Red Cross of Serbia, Soroptimist International, Turbota pro Litnih v Ukraini (Age Concern Ukraine) and World Federation for Mental Health.



6. The meeting was attended by a total of 73 participants. A full list of participants is available on the meeting website.¹

B. Opening of the meeting and adoption of the agenda

7. The fifteenth meeting of SWGA was opened by the Executive Secretary of ECE followed by a welcome and housekeeping remarks by the secretariat.

8. The meeting's agenda, as contained in document ECE/WG.1/2022/1, was adopted without amendments.

II. Election of Officers

9. Following a call for nominations issued in September 2022, the Standing Working Group elected a new Bureau comprising delegates from the following member States: Austria, Georgia, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Portugal, Spain, and Türkiye. The Director of the European Centre for Social Welfare Policy and Research was re-appointed as the research community representative on the Bureau. The NGO representative was equally re-appointed for an additional term.

10. The representative of Italy was elected new Chair of the Standing Working Group on Ageing. The representative of Germany was elected new Vice-Chair of the Standing Working Group.

11. The outgoing Chair (Portugal) and secretariat thanked the outgoing Bureau members from France, Italy, Norway, the Republic of Moldova, and Slovenia for their personal investment and dedication to advancing the international work on ageing over the past years and welcomed the new members to the Bureau.

III. Report and discussion of the outcome of the UNECE Ministerial Conference on Ageing held in Rome in June 2022

12. Supporting documentation for this agenda item were the Report of the Ministerial Conference on Ageing "A Sustainable World for All Ages: Joining Forces for Solidarity and Equal Opportunities Throughout Life" (ECE/AC.30/2022/2), the Proceedings of the 2022 UNECE Ministerial Conference on Ageing (ECE/WG.1/41), the Report of the Joint Forum of Civil Society and Scientific Research, the Report on the fourteenth meeting of the Bureau of the Standing Working Group on Ageing (ECE/WG.1/2022/3), and the report on MIPAA/RIS+20 – 20 years of action towards creating societies for all ages in the UNECE region (ECE/WG.1/40)

13. The Chair reminded the SWGA of the successful UNECE Ministerial Conference on Ageing hosted by Italy in Rome on 16-17 June 2022 and invited the representative of Italy, on behalf of the host country, to briefly review the highlights of the Ministerial Conference

14. The Chair then invited the representative of Norway, on behalf of the Declaration Drafting Group, to share the experience of preparing and negotiating the 2022 Rome Ministerial Declaration, which was the outcome document of the Conference. She acknowledged the great diversity in the region, reflected by the Declaration, and reported on the considerations of the Declaration Drafting Group on the future challenges, which include

¹ <https://unece.org/population/events/fifteenth-meeting-standing-working-group-ageing>

long-term care, the urgency of combatting ageism and of adopting an intergenerational approach, and linking ageing to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. She highlighted the importance of the work of the SWGA and the role of international cooperation to meet the challenges related to ageing, for which the Declaration serves as a guiding tool, setting future-oriented goals for policymaking.

A. Main messages from expert and ministerial panels

15. The representative of Italy presented an overview of the main messages highlighted during the expert panels and ministerial roundtables under the themes of ‘Promoting active and healthy ageing throughout life’, ‘Ensuring access to long-term care and support for carers and families’, and ‘Mainstreaming ageing to advance a society for all ages’, as well as the High-level panel discussion between ministers and civil society representatives on ‘Joining forces for solidarity and equal opportunities throughout life: building forward on lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic’, also reflected in the Report of the Ministerial Conference on Ageing “A Sustainable World for All Ages: Joining Forces for Solidarity and Equal Opportunities Throughout Life” (ECE/AC.30/2022/2) and the Proceedings of the 2022 UNECE Ministerial Conference on Ageing (ECE/WG.1/41).

B. Results of the Joint Forum of Civil Society and Scientific Research

16. The Joint Forum of Civil Society and Scientific Research, which was for the first time organised as a joint meeting, was held on 15 June 2022, preceding the Ministerial Conference. On behalf of the coordinators of the Joint Forum of Civil Society and Scientific Research, the NGO representative on the Bureau reported on the forum and presented the main outcomes of the discussions held. She informed the SWGA about the process of developing the Joint Declaration adopted during the forum and presented at the Ministerial Conference, highlighted the future priorities of civil society and scientific research and concluded by stating that the forum considered the topics addressed in the 2022 Ministerial Declaration as crucial for both civil society and scientific research communities, who are ready to support the commitments made. The forum suggested adaptations to new global contexts to develop the MIPAA work programme and RIS further, and underpinned the need for an international, legally binding instrument such as a UN Convention to substantiate the policy efforts made by member States.

17. Following the presentation, research and civil society representatives expressed their satisfaction with the joint forum between research and civil society and the wish of having similar meetings more often than every five years.

18. During the discussion, the Chair invited the members of the SWGA to reflect on the priorities for regional cooperation to support the implementation of the Rome Ministerial Declaration over the next five years. The secretariat shared the results of a survey on priority themes sent out in preparation of the meeting. Issues raised during the discussion included the potential challenges posed by financial restrictions, economic and energy crises in many member States and the need to adapt to these changing realities, digital inclusion of older persons, long-term care and support to caregivers, international migration and the situation of migrants, climate change and the need to focus more on emergency preparedness and response, improved coordination between central and local authorities, the need for more age-friendly and inclusive environments, and the mental health and well-being of older persons, among others.

19. The Chair thanked the SWGA for the suggestions made.

IV. Concluding the fourth cycle of review and appraisal of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing and its Regional Implementation Strategy (MIPAA/RIS)

A. Country experiences

20. The Chair invited SWGA members to share their countries' experiences and lessons learned in preparing national reports on MIPAA/RIS implementation during the fourth cycle of review and appraisal.

21. The representative of Georgia provided a brief update on ageing-related priorities and policy directions in the country and shared that the government is working on fundamental reforms of the social protection system with technical assistance from EU and UNFPA to ensure older persons' human rights.

22. The representative of Canada shared that other levels of government, Indigenous partners and key civil society organisations representing older persons were consulted in preparing the national report. The process of gathering information to include in the report highlighted the importance of ensuring the engagement process is as inclusive as possible and being mindful that some stakeholders may require a unique method to meaningfully seek their input. Canada is considering different mechanisms that could be used in the next cycle of review and appraisal of MIPAA to inform the preparation of the report. Preparing for and supporting an ageing population is also vital to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, with ageing cutting across the goals on poverty eradication, good health, gender equality, economic growth and decent work, reduced inequalities, and sustainable cities. Canada is committed in advancing the SDGs working to ensure vulnerable populations are not left behind.

23. The representative of Belgium stated that the SWGA should motivate national services to participate in the elaboration of report by giving more visibility to the policies carried out at national level in the regional reports and mentioned that the proposed ageing policies database may be helpful in this regard.

24. The representative of Italy shared that desk analysis, qualitative and quantitative data collection and a bottom-up approach were used in the national review and appraisal exercise. The drafting of the report was integrated in the "national multi-level coordination of active ageing policies project" promoted by the office of the Prime Minister from 2019 to 2022. The project set up a network of public administration both at national and local level and another network of civil society stakeholders involving social partners, associations, and NGOs to collect opinions from civil society. A public consultation on the draft report was held in 2021 to collect feedback from civil society organisations. The public consultation process was recently relaunched to gather feedback on the Joint Forum declaration and on the Rome Declaration.

25. The representative of IFA noted that in the monitoring of progress, insufficient information is available on the percentage of the budget used to improve the conditions for older people. She stated that it would be important to know how much is spent not only for pensions, but also for housing, digitalization, and all the other topics discussed to enhance older people's conditions.

26. The secretariat commented on the interventions pointing out that for the next review and appraisal cycle the SWGA could think about addressing some of the lessons learned during the fourth cycle review.

B. The global segment of the fourth review and appraisal cycle of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing at the 61st session of the Commission for Social Development (2023) and other global events

27. The secretariat informed the SWGA about the Secretary-General report on the fourth review and appraisal of MIPAA expected to be issued in December 2022 and briefed the SWGA on the global segment of the fourth review and appraisal of MIPAA at the 61st session of the Commission on Social Development in February 2023. A high-level panel on MIPAA will provide the opportunity for sharing the regional outcome of the fourth review and appraisal of implementation.

28. The possibility of organising a side-event was discussed. The representative of IFA informed about a side event being planned by civil society and suggested to coordinate events.

29. The SWGA asked the Bureau to develop a proposal for a side event at the 61st session of Commission of Social Development.

V. New and ongoing national and international initiatives in the area of ageing, inter-agency collaboration and follow-up to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

30. The representative of Bulgaria briefed the SWGA about the Ministerial Conference on Demographic Resilience entitled “Pathways for societies that thrive in world of rapid demographic change”. The event, organised by the UNFPA Regional Office for Eastern Europe and Central Asia in collaboration with the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Bulgaria, took place in Sofia in December 2021 and launched the Decade of Demographic Resilience (2022-2031). The representative of UNFPA expressed commitment of the outcomes of the conference. She also highlighted that UNFPA is willing to assist countries in designing policies and programmes that address challenges presented by demographic change.

31. A representative of WHO briefed members of the SWGA about recent and planned activities under the four action areas of the United Nations Decade of Healthy Ageing, which are combating ageism, integrated care, long-term care and age-friendly environments and informed participants about several tools available and ways of getting involved, including through joining the Healthy Ageing Collaborative that was established in September 2022. She also announced a new guide on national age-friendly city and community programmes to be launched in 2023 which could be a useful tool for national efforts to create more age-friendly environments.

32. A representative of OHCHR briefed the SWGA on the multi-stakeholder meeting, convened by OHCHR in August 2022 to discuss the report of the High Commissioner on the normative standards and obligations under international law in relation to the promotion and protection of human rights of older persons. The results and recommendations of this meeting will be submitted to the 52nd session of the Human Rights Council that will be held in March 2023. She further informed that the 12th session of the Open-ended Working Group on Ageing, in April 2022, thematically focused on "contribution of older persons to sustainable development", "economic security" and the rights of older people relating to "work and access to the labour market" and their "access to justice". The next session will be held from 3 to 6 April 2023. The call for inputs for the 2023 session of the working group on the focus areas of “right to health and access to health services”, “social inclusion”, “economic security” and “contribution of older persons to sustainable development” will be issued soon.

She also reminded participants that 2023 will mark the 75th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and that OHCHR will run a one-year information campaign.

33. A representative of Age Platform Europe commented that the occasion of the 2023 session of the Open-ended Working Group on Ageing would be an excellent opportunity for organizing a side event to highlight how MIPAA can contribute to the rights of older persons and how the discussions of the Open-ended Working Group could contribute to the future agenda related to MIPAA.

34. The representative of *Turbota pro Litnih v Ukraini* mentioned the difficult situation of older persons in Ukraine and human rights challenges faced in the current emergency and response.

35. With respect to the mandate of the Independent Expert on the Enjoyment of all human rights by older persons, OHCHR briefed the working group on recent and planned activities by the Independent Expert in 2022 and 2023. Among other activities, the Independent Expert submitted a report to the Human Rights Council on the topic of older people deprived of liberties, including in care settings, as well as report to the General Assembly on the rights of older persons to adequate housing. Furthermore, OHCHR mentioned that the Independent Expert had resumed country visits and, among others, plans a visit to the Republic of Moldova in 2023. Finally, in 2023 the Independent Expert plans to present two thematic reports, one to the Human Rights Council on violence, abuse and neglect of older persons, and another one to the General Assembly on building back better after climate related disasters.

36. A representative of UNECE briefed on preparations for the Regional Forum on Sustainable Development that will take place on 29-30 March 2023 and invited the SWGA to consider possible inputs. The focus in 2023 will be on SDGs 6,7,9,11 and 17. He mentioned that one topic of discussion during the event was planned to be on digital transformation and learning and that one idea could be to specifically focus on older individuals if the interest exists among members of the SWGA. The representative of CSEND proposed for consideration to organise annual side events on ageing at the Regional Forum to highlight linkages between ageing and the sustainable development goals.

37. The representative of the European Commission briefed the SWGA on European Care Strategy. The Strategy involves a communication of the European Commission as well as two Council recommendations, one on the revision of the Barcelona targets and one on affordable and quality long-term care, additionally supported by two staff documents. The Strategy calls for care services to be expanded to meet current and future needs for care while also improving their quality, affordability, and accessibility. The representative from the European Commission stressed the importance of social dialogue, education, and training for achieving these goals as well as making care work more attractive and financially rewarding and improving the compatibility between care work and employment. The European Commission will provide technical support to its member States in implementing the Strategy and will monitor progress through the European Semester and Social Protection Committee, national action plans and progress reports as well as indicators related to long-term care.

38. Age Platform Europe shared key messages from their recent annual conference that was organized in November 2022 to discuss the future alternatives for long-term care provision among key stakeholders. Age Platform Europe, when referring to the European Care Strategy, stressed the importance for aligning it to global processes such as MIPAA. Age Platform Europe highlighted gaps in defining clear quality standards in long-term care and expressed concern that attention by policymakers to the needs of older individuals during the Covid-19 pandemic may have declined. Age Platform Europe thanked the Czech Republic for the patronage of the event under its Presidency of the European Council.

39. The representative of the Czech Republic referred to highlights of the conference organised by Age Platform Europe under the Presidency of the European Council and briefed on recent ageing-related policy developments in the country, including the establishment of a working group for the protection of the rights of older persons at the government council for human rights.

40. The representative of Kazakhstan explained the situation of long-term care in the country and reported on recent government initiatives.

41. The Chair thanked presenters for the informative briefings and closed the item.

VI. Implementation of the SWGA work programme in 2022 and plans for 2023

42. Under this item, the secretariat reported on activities implemented in 2022 and presented planned activities for 2023.

A. International cooperation, exchange of experience and policy discussion

1. Policy seminars on ageing

43. SWGA members were briefed on the content and format of the 2022 Policy Seminar on Ageing on the topic of “quality in long-term care”, organised back-to-back with the annual meeting of the SWGA on 23 November 2022. The secretariat informed the SWGA that the background paper prepared for the seminar would be finalised following the seminar and published online. The secretariat thanked all members of the SWGA who contributed to it.

44. The secretariat reminded the SWGA that from 2023, policy seminars will become an integral part of SWGA annual meetings in the form of in-depth policy discussions. For 2023, the proposed thematic focus for this discussion is on inequalities. The secretariat shared the results of a survey that was sent out in preparation of the meeting in which members of the group were asked to indicate important dimensions of inequality that could be covered in the 2023 Policy Seminar on Ageing. The secretariat thanked members of the SWGA for their inputs and informed that the survey will remain open for additional suggestions.

45. The SWGA decided that the in-depth policy discussion in 2023 will be on the topic of “combating inequalities in older age”.

2. Policy briefs

46. The secretariat reminded members of the SWGA that Policy Brief No. 27 on “Mainstreaming Ageing – revisited” was published in February 2022. The secretariat thanked Austria for the in-kind translation of the brief into German and informed that a Russian translation is in preparation.

47. The secretariat presented a first outline of Policy Brief No. 28 that will address, as agreed by the group in 2021, the broad theme of the 2022 Ministerial Conference. The secretariat proposed to focus it on older persons in vulnerable situations. In their responses to the survey shared by the secretariat in advance of the meeting, SWGA members had highlighted several priorities, including natural disasters caused by climate change, precariousness linked to the energy crisis, lack of access digital technologies, lack of social participation, income poverty and maltreatment of older individuals in long-term care homes.

48. Participants were invited to provide feedback on the presented documents. The NGO Committee on Ageing welcomed the topic and suggested to be mindful not to represent older

persons as such as vulnerable and to highlight the many important contributions of older individuals to society. Age Platform Europe also acknowledged the importance of this topic, highlighting the importance of a life-course perspective as vulnerabilities are often caused in the early stages of life. The secretariat thanked participants for their useful feedback.

49. The SWGA agreed on the topic for Policy Brief No. 28 to be “Older persons in vulnerable situations” and to issue the brief in the first quarter of 2023.

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

1. Road maps for mainstreaming ageing

50. The representative of the Republic of Moldova shared results of the 10-year evaluation of the implementation of the UNECE Roadmap for Mainstreaming Ageing in the Republic of Moldova that was conducted in 2022 with the support of the secretariat and the UNFPA country office. She thanked UNECE and UNFPA for their support. The secretariat highlighted the very positive collaboration and invited other members of the SWGA to get in contact if they would like to develop a roadmap for mainstreaming ageing or evaluate existing efforts.

2. Capacity development on mainstreaming ageing

51. The representative from the Republic of Moldova briefly reported on training workshops organised in October 2022 in collaboration with UNECE and the UNFPA country office to build capacity on mainstreaming ageing among civil servants from the central public administration. Further training workshops for local-level civil servants are in preparation. The representative from the Republic of Moldova thanked UNFPA as well the secretariat for their support in organizing and conducting the workshop.

52. The chair thanked the presenters and invited other members of the SWGA to share capacity-development activities on ageing.

53. The representative from Georgia informed the SWGA that population ageing remained high on the policy agenda of the Government, which is currently elaborating a national action plan on ageing. The Ministry of Health will collaborate with the secretariat and the UNFPA country office in Georgia to organize a capacity development workshop on mainstreaming ageing for civil servants, using the methodology piloted in the Republic of Moldova. The training event is planned for February 2023. The representative from Georgia thanked the secretariat for their continuing support towards the goal of mainstreaming ageing in the country.

54. The representative of Türkiye stressed the importance of ageing mainstreaming and mentioned that in 2022 a parliamentary research commission on ageing had been established and is working on a report based on a participatory approach. A workshop on the welfare of older persons organised by the Grand National Assembly in cooperation with the Ministry of Family and Social Services was to be held in December 2022. The representative of Türkiye also mentioned that the UNECE Guidelines for Mainstreaming Ageing had been translated into Turkish and that mainstreaming ageing workshops were planned.

55. The representative of AGE Platform Europe informed the SWGA about a forthcoming expert workshop in December 2022 on mainstreaming ageing for government experts in Germany, organized by the German National Association of Senior Citizens' Organisations (BAGSO) in collaboration with the German Government, and the UNECE secretariat.

56. The representative of Kazakhstan mentioned the collaboration with UNECE since 2020 towards the goal of mainstreaming ageing. Recently, a survey among older individuals was conducted in the country and several events were held to support older individuals.

57. Following the updates on recent and planned events by the SWGA, the secretariat updated members of the group on the development of a short online training course on mainstreaming ageing. The aim of the course is to build knowledge on mainstreaming ageing as a policy strategy to effectively respond to individual and population ageing and to help operationalize the recommendations of the UNECE Guidelines for Mainstreaming Ageing.

58. The Chair congratulated the secretariat on the course outline presented. The representative of Italy expressed strong support and satisfaction with the proposed interactive layout. He also highlighted the potential of the course to be adapted and distributed among university students. The presentation was followed by discussion focusing on disseminating the online training course, including through translation into national languages. Members of the SWGA were invited by the secretariat to volunteer to review the draft course and provide feedback.

C. Monitoring the implementation of the Regional Implementation Strategy for the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing and building the evidence base for policymaking

59. The representative of NIDI briefed the SWGA on recent developments in the Generations and Gender Programme (GGP) followed by a discussion about the use of GGP data as evidence base for policymaking in the region. Representatives of member States which recently conducted the Generations and Gender Survey were invited to share their views on this matter.

60. The representatives of the Republic of Moldova and UNFPA briefed the SWGA on the Gender and Generations Survey (GGS) that was conducted in 2020 in the country. The relevance of GGS for evidence-based policy making to address population ageing was highlighted. Thanks to additional questions that were added to the GGS fielded in the Republic of Moldova, the GGS could also be used to the Active Ageing Index (AAI).

61. The secretariat briefed the SWGA on the proposal to develop a database of ageing policies in the UNECE region as part of the work programme 2023-2027 which had been sent to the members of the group prior to the meeting. The aim of the policy database is to provide easy access to examples of ageing policy across the UNECE region through a searchable web-based database. The database would allow users to search for information by country, by policy domain and by policy instrument. It would support member States in addressing the goals and objectives of the 2022 Rome Ministerial Declaration through enhanced access to information on related policy developments in the region and facilitate policy monitoring over time. The secretariat presented a proposed timeline for the implementation of the project.

62. Following a discussion on the project proposal, the SWGA decided to include the development of the Ageing Policies Database in the programme of work for 2023-2027.

63. The SWGA adopted the implementation report of the work programme 2022 (ECE/WG.1/2022/4).

VII. Initial discussion on the work programme of the SWGA for the fifth implementation cycle of the Regional Implementation Strategy for the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, 2023-2027

64. The Chair welcomed participants back for the second day of the meeting and invited the secretariat to provide a summary of the decisions taken on the first day.

65. The Chair then invited the secretariat to present the proposed modalities for developing the multi-year programme of work of the SWGA for the fifth cycle of MIPAA/RIS implementation between 2023 and 2027. Starting with the discussion of thematic priorities and new and continuing elements of the programme of work during the 15th meeting, the new programme of work would be developed by the Bureau in collaboration with the secretariat and in consultation with the SWGA between January and April and the draft finalised by the Bureau at its Spring meeting in 2023 to be adopted by the SWGA at its 16th meeting in November 2023. Based on the new programme of work, a new phase of the Ageing Fund, Phase IV, would be prepared during the first half of 2023 to secure funds for the planned activities. Member States will be invited to pledge financial support.

66. The Chair proposed that volunteers could temporarily join the (extended) Bureau to support the development of the new programme of work and invited members of the SWGA to express their interest. Representatives of Italy and Norway expressed their readiness to support the Bureau as well as several civil society organisations present. The Chair and secretariat welcomed the support offered by civil society and proposed that their contributions could be coordinated and channelled through the NGO and research representatives on the Bureau.

67. The SWGA decided to delegate the task of developing the new programme of work 2023-2027 to the SWGA Bureau and to support the Bureau by temporarily extending Bureau membership to volunteers for this task. The secretariat acknowledged expressions of interest received and invited other members of the SWGA who wish to contribute to inform the secretariat after the meeting.

A. Updating the Regional Implementation Strategy and exploring the possibility of updating the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing

68. The Chair referred to the task entrusted by the Rome Ministerial Declaration (paragraph 47) to the SWGA “of updating RIS and exploring the possibility of also updating MIPAA to adapt ageing-related policy responses to economic, social, and digital transitions and emerging challenges, and developing further instruments to support them”. The Chair invited the SWGA to discuss this mandate and agree on the way forward.

69. The secretariat proposed for the consideration of the SWGA a possible timeline for updating RIS until 2027, involving the developing of proposed modalities in 2023 on which the SWGA could agree at its 16th meeting, agreement on structure and key elements to be included in 2024, the development of an updated strategy in 2025, consultations and revisions in 2026 and finalisation and adoption of an updated regional strategy at the next UNECE Ministerial Conference in 2027. A task force with representatives from member States, civil society as well as research/academia could work together towards this goal and inform the SWGA annually on progress.

70. During the discussion, the representative of Italy mentioned that the societal and political context can change substantially until 2027. Updating MIPAA/RIS would have to

be a continuous process that needs to carefully assess changes in the societal and political context. He suggested to have a mid-term conference during the process in 2025. This proposal was also supported by the European Centre for Social Welfare Policy and Research and civil society representatives who also favoured a shorter timeline for updating RIS. The question of a participatory process in developing the new RIS was also raised, and civil society representatives were invited to make a proposal for a participatory process which could be part of the new programme of work.

71. The Chair thanked the SWGA for the suggestions made and proposed that the SWGA could consider a special session in 2025 to discuss progress and the secretariat proposed that the in-depth policy discussion could be dedicated to this.

72. Age Platform Europe suggested to organize a series of webinars to explore specific topics. CSEND mentioned that it would be very useful to strengthen the focus on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and linkages with ageing.

73. The SWGA decided to establish a taskforce for the follow-up on paragraph 47 of the Rome Declaration in the first quarter of 2023, composed of SWGA members, civil society, and research representatives.

B. Areas of focus – responding to the goals of the 2022 Rome Ministerial Declaration

74. The secretariat invited members of the SWGA to discuss in smaller groups the areas of focus for the future programme of work responding to the goals and objectives expressed in Rome Ministerial Declaration adopted at the UNECE Ministerial Conference on Ageing in June 2022 (ECE/AC.30/2022/2).

75. The Chair reported the results of the discussions back to the full group.

C. New and continuing elements in the work programme

76. The SWGA was then invited to discuss in separate groups the importance and feasibility of individual work programme elements to be included in the future work programme. The SWGA was asked to suggest new programme elements and/or discontinue some current elements to better respond to the agreed focus areas for the new work programme. The secretariat also invited the SWGA to discuss ways to enhance regional cooperation alignment with related global agendas such as the UN Decade of Healthy Ageing or the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

77. The Chair reported a summary of the results of the group discussions back to the plenary and the SWGA further discussed some of the proposals.

78. The secretariat acknowledged all the proposals made which will be compiled and shared with the extended Bureau to inform deliberations on the new programme of work.

VIII. Programme of work for 2023 and recommendations on key components of the programme of work for 2024

79. The SWGA adopted and recommended to the EXCOM for approval the draft programme of work of the Population Component of the subprogramme on Housing, Land Management and Population for 2023 as contained in document ECE/WG.1/2022/5.

80. The Chair reminded the SWGA that at its 115th meeting in March 2021 the Executive Committee adopted a document entitled “Sequential review of the proposed programmes of work of ECE subprogrammes” (document 2021/8). In line with the sequential review procedure, the Standing Working Group Bureau at its September 2022 meeting reviewed the proposal on key components of the programme of work of the Population component for 2024. The Chair invited the SWGA to consider the “Outline of key components of the programme of work of the Population component of the Housing, Land Management and Population subprogramme for 2024”, as contained in document ECE/WG.1/2022/INF and provide recommendations on these components, as necessary. The secretariat informed the SWGA that the new database on ageing policies in the UNECE region will be reflected in the proposed programme plan of the Population component for 2024.

IX. Financing of the work programme

81. The secretariat reported on the status of the financing of the SWGA work programme in 2022, regular budget and extra-budgetary allocations and recent donations to the Ageing Fund. Members of the SWGA were invited to pledge, to discuss funding opportunities and to identify areas that require further contribution.

82. The secretariat informed the SWGA that the Population Component of Subprogramme 8 received a budget allocation of USD 42,000 through the Regular Programme of Technical Cooperation (RPTC) in 2022. These funds contributed to carrying out the 10-year evaluation of the implementation of the Roadmap for Mainstreaming Ageing in the Republic of Moldova, training workshops for national and local policy makers in the Republic of Moldova, the preparation of training materials and travel of participants. The secretariat invited members of the SWGA to indicate their interest in carrying out capacity development workshops or roadmaps for mainstreaming ageing in 2023.

83. The secretariat thanked Austria, Estonia, Germany, Norway, Portugal, and Switzerland for their financial contributions amounting to USD 633,870 in total to the Ageing-Phase III fund since its establishment in 2019. Phase III project will be closed in 2023, following an evaluation, and a proposal for Phase IV for the Ageing Fund will be developed in consultation with the SWGA during the first half of 2023 to finance the activities of the multi-year programme of work in 2023-2027.

84. The secretariat thanked Italy for the significant financial and in-kind contribution of organising and hosting the 2022 UNECE Ministerial Conference on Ageing in Rome.

85. The secretariat informed the SWGA about the financial pledges received by Austria, Estonia, and Germany amounting to a total of USD 159,400 to support the development of the new Ageing Policies Database and thanked member States for the support received.

X. Other business, summary, and conclusions of the meeting

86. The Chair, with the assistance of the secretariat, summarized the decisions taken at the fifteenth meeting of the SWGA.

87. The Chair informed participants that the 15th meeting of the Bureau will take place on the 27-28 April 2023 (place tbc). The 16th SWGA meeting will take place on 20-22 November 2023 in Geneva.

88. The Chair thanked participants and closed the meeting.

Annex

Decisions taken at the fifteenth meeting of the Standing Working Group on Ageing

- The SWGA adopted the agenda without modifications (ECE/WG.1/2022/1).
 - The SWGA elected the new Bureau as follows: representatives from Austria, Germany, Ireland Portugal, Spain, Civil Society and Research were re-elected to continue for another term on the Bureau. New representatives from Georgia, Italy and Türkiye joined the Bureau. Italy was elected as the new Chair and Germany as the new Vice-Chair of the Bureau.
 - The SWGA asked the Bureau to develop a proposal for a Side Event at the 61st session of the Commission of Social Development (February 2023) for submission by 22 December deadline.
 - The SWGA approved the proposed topic for the 2023 in-depth policy discussion, which will be on “combating inequalities in older age”.
 - The SWGA agreed on the topic for Policy Brief No. 28 “Older persons in vulnerable situations” to be issued in the first quarter of 2023.
 - The SWGA agreed to include the development of an Ageing Policies Database in the programme of work 2023-2027.
 - The SWGA adopted the implementation report of the work programme 2022 as contained in document ECE/WG.1/2022/4.
 - The SWGA agreed to delegate the task of developing the new programme of work 2023-2027 to the SWGA Bureau and to support the Bureau by temporarily extending the Bureau membership to volunteers for this task.
 - The SWGA agreed to establish a taskforce for the follow-up on paragraph 47 of the Rome Declaration in the first quarter of 2023, composed of SWGA members, civil society, and research representatives.
 - The SWGA adopted and recommends to the EXCOM for approval the draft programme of work of the Population Component of the subprogramme on Housing, Land Management and Population for 2023 as contained in document ECE/WG.1/2022/5.
-