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Economic Commission for Europe**Standing Working Group on Ageing**

Seventeenth meeting

Geneva, 20–22 November 2024

**Report of the Standing Working Group on Ageing on its
seventeenth meeting****I. Introduction****A. Attendance**

1. The seventeenth meeting of the Standing Working Group on Ageing (SWGA) was held at the Palais des Nations in Geneva on 20–22 November 2024. The meeting was chaired by Mr. Alfredo Ferrante, SWGA Chair (Italy).¹
2. Representatives of the following 32 member States of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) participated: Austria, Azerbaijan, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Cyprus, Czechia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Kazakhstan, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands (Kingdom of the), Norway, Portugal, the Republic of Moldova, Romania, the Russian Federation, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Türkiye, the United States of America.
3. Representatives of the following intergovernmental organizations participated in the meeting: International Labour Organization (ILO), International Social Security Association (ISSA), Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA), United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), and World Health Organization (WHO). Representatives of the European Commission (EC) also took part in the meeting.
4. The following non-governmental organizations attended the meeting: AGE Platform Europe, Association of Former International Civil Servants, Bundesarbeitsgemeinschaft der Senioren-Organisationen (BAGSO), Fondation pour un Centre pour le Développement Socio-Eco-Nomique, Help Age International, International Federation on Ageing, NGO Committee on Ageing, Geneva, Red Cross of Serbia, and World Federation for Mental Health.
5. The academic and research community was represented by European Centre for Social Welfare Policy and Research and Netherlands Interdisciplinary Demographic Institute (NIDI).

¹ The list of participants is available on the meeting page:
<https://unece.org/population/events/seventeenth-meeting-standing-working-group-ageing>.

B. Opening of the meeting and adoption of the agenda

6. The seventeenth meeting of SWGA was opened by the Chair. Following opening remarks by the Chair and Secretariat, the Chair invited SWGA to adopt the agenda.

7. SWGA adopted the agenda of the meeting as contained in document ECE/WG.1/2024/1 without amendments.

II. Election of officers

8. In advance of the meeting, member States were invited to submit nominations of candidates to join the SWGA Bureau. The list of nominees was circulated by email in advance of the meeting.

9. The Chair announced the nomination to the SWGA Bureau of Ms. Eva Geier by the Government of Austria, Mr. Dragmoir Knezevic by the Government of Serbia, and Ms. Burcu Ayhan by the Government of Türkiye. Ms. Geier was nominated to replace the previous representative of Austria on the Bureau, Ms. Verena Schriebl, and Ms. Ayhan was nominated to replace the previous representative of Türkiye on the Bureau, Ms. Elmas Esra Ceceli. The Chair thanked Ms. Schriebl and Ms. Ceceli for their active contributions as Bureau members.

10. The Chair announced the departure from the Bureau of Mr. Martin Amberger (Germany). The Chair acknowledged Mr. Amberger's contributions to the Bureau and SWGA, including his leadership as Vice-Chair between 2022 and 2024, as Chair of the Task Force for Updating the Regional Implementation Strategy, and as co-lead of the declaration drafting group for the 2022 Rome Ministerial Declaration in 2021–2022.

11. The Chair informed that the Bureau members from Georgia, Ireland, Italy, Spain, Portugal as well as the observers representing civil society and research and academia agreed to serve on the Bureau for an additional term.

12. The Chair announced that he stood ready to serve an additional term as Chair and presented two candidates for the role of Vice-Chair of SWGA Bureau: Ms. Abigail Chantler (Ireland) and Mr. Nuno Marques (Portugal).

13. SWGA elected the SWGA Bureau by acclamation and confirmed the selection of Chair and Vice-Chairs as proposed by the Bureau.

III. Work of the Bureau

14. The Chair reported on the work of the Bureau and on the sixteenth meeting of the Bureau that was hosted by the Government of Italy in Rome on 23 and 24 April 2024, referring to the meeting report (ECE/WG.1/2024/3). The Chair thanked the Istituto Nazionale per l'Analisi delle Politiche Pubbliche (INAPP) for co-hosting the meeting with the Presidenza del Consiglio dei Ministri and for presenting updates on ageing policies in Italy to the Bureau.

15. The Chair highlighted five elements of the Bureau's work during 2024:

(a) Following the request by SWGA at its sixteenth meeting to consider the creation of a task force on quantitative monitoring of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing (MIPAA) and its Regional Implementation Strategy (RIS), the Bureau agreed to establish the task force, invited Mr. Nuno Marques (Portugal) to serve as Chair, and reviewed draft terms of reference for the task force (ECE/WG.1/2024/INF.2);

(b) In response to the recommendations suggested in the 2023 evaluation of the Ageing (Phase III) project, the Secretariat developed terms of reference for National Focal Points on Ageing (NFPAs) that specify their roles and responsibilities. The terms of reference were reviewed by the Bureau at its sixteenth meeting and shared with SWGA for electronic consultation in June 2024. The Chair tabled the draft terms of reference as contained in ECE/WG.1/2024/INF.1 for adoption by SWGA;

(c) Linked to the effort to strengthen the role of NFPAs, the Bureau and the Secretariat developed a new onboarding procedure for new focal points consisting of a welcome letter by the Chair, an information note on SWGA, and an online briefing to welcome new members, to present the activities and objectives of SWGA, and to provide an opportunity for focal points to ask questions;

(d) The Bureau worked with the Secretariat to develop a logo for SWGA to enhance its visibility and strengthen its communication efforts;

(e) The Bureau discussed ways to ensure sustainable funding for the implementation of the programme of work of SWGA. The Chair underlined the importance of financial support from member States. This topic was discussed further under item 10 of the meeting agenda.

16. SWGA adopted the draft terms of reference for NFPAs as contained in ECE/WG.1/2024/INF.1 and requested the Secretariat to include them as an annex to the report of the meeting.

IV. International events and initiatives on ageing and follow-up to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

17. The Chair invited speakers to provide updates regarding relevant international events and initiatives on ageing and sustainable development in 2024. The first presentations by UN DESA and OHCHR focused on activities in the United Nations system related to the human rights of older persons.

18. UN DESA informed SWGA of the conclusion of the Open-ended Working Group on Ageing (OEWG-A), which held its fourteenth and final session between 20 and 24 May 2024. During its final session, OEWG-A adopted decision 14/1 entitled “Recommendations regarding the identification of possible gaps in the protection of the human rights of older persons and how best to address them” which put forward eleven recommendations for Member States to address possible gaps in the protection of the human rights of older persons. The decision was followed by a General Assembly resolution (A/RES/78/324) which urged relevant United Nations bodies to further consider the recommendations, requested a high-level meeting during the seventy-ninth session of the General Assembly to exchange views on the recommendations, and decided that the OEWG-A had completed its work. In November 2024, the General Assembly formally concluded the mandate of OEWG-A.

19. OHCHR reported on the establishment of a new section dedicated to the rights of older persons. The section will focus on increasing visibility of the rights of older persons at the international and national levels, strengthening the evidence base on human rights of older persons, and integrating the human rights perspective into existing initiatives, for example those related to age-friendly cities and communities and the care and support economy. OHCHR highlighted the importance of partnerships within the United Nations system and with civil society organizations (CSOs), human rights organizations, and academia. OHCHR acknowledged the need for a comprehensive legally binding instrument to address the rights and needs of older persons and committed support to member States if the decision is taken to pursue such an instrument.

20. OHCHR reported on the activities of the United Nations Independent Expert on the enjoyment of all human rights by older persons. The Independent Expert presented two thematic reports in 2024, one on the legal capacity of older persons and one on future generations of older persons. The Independent Expert carried out a country visit to Peru in March 2024 and will visit Malaysia in December 2024. Request for invitations for country visits to Egypt, Japan, Rwanda, Saudi Arabia, Spain and Turkmenistan have been submitted for 2025. The topics of the Independent Expert’s thematic reports in 2025 will be the rights of older persons in conflict settings and the right of older persons to work, in connection with the right to social protection. OHCHR requested member States to submit contributions to inform the reports. The Independent Expert will promote the rights of older persons at the Second World Summit for Social Development in 2025. The Independent Expert

recommends that member States initiate a drafting process for a legally binding instrument and offers her expertise as support.

21. In the discussion that followed the presentations, representatives of member States and civil society acknowledged that follow-up to the OEWG-A recommendations and the decision to pursue a legally binding instrument should be member State-driven but would require technical and secretarial support from the United Nations system. OHCHR and UN DESA committed their support to these follow-up processes. OHCHR reported that it is reviewing recent legal processes to identify good practices and lessons learned and that it would like to share these findings with member States. OHCHR encouraged further discussion on how to take the agenda forward.

22. As part of the discussion, Portugal reported that a national law on the rights of older persons was in development. Serbia advocated for special focus on the issues of economic violence and mental well-being across the life course. Slovenia reported on efforts to establish a stakeholders' group on the human rights of older persons. BAGSO and NGO Committee on Ageing, Geneva expressed support for the Geneva-based activities that would follow the conclusion of OEWG-A.

23. The European Centre for Social Welfare Policy and Research presented on the recently published book *A Research Agenda for Ageing and Social Policy*, which identifies priorities for social policy research in the context of population and individual ageing and advocates for renewed thinking about how to design social policies that support a life-course perspective towards ageing and a society where ageing does not result in negative outcomes such as disability, dependency, or social exclusion. The role of social institutions and public policies in achieving active ageing was highlighted, as was the importance of partnerships, the inclusion of diverse stakeholders, and interdisciplinary cooperation in policy and research.

24. The presentation provoked discussion around the areas most urgently in need of attention, including formal and unpaid care, violence, abuse, and neglect, and discrimination. The issue of the relationship between social rights at the national level and internationally binding agreements was raised by Italy, and the governance of human and social rights at local, national, regional, and global levels was discussed. The lack of data on violence against older persons and age-disaggregated data more generally was acknowledged. In response to a question by Portugal related to international cooperation in the area of research and the availability of funding, the European Centre for Social Welfare Policy and Research asked member States to inform researchers about the book and indicated interest in receiving research proposals from researchers across member States.

25. UN DESA briefed SWGA on preparations for and opportunities related to the Second World Summit for Social Development, planned to take place in Qatar in November 2025. A concise, action-oriented political declaration, negotiated in advance, will be the outcome document (A/RES/78/318). The opportunity to promote the inclusion of ageing and older persons' issues in the political declaration was discussed – the negotiations for which will begin in early spring 2025 – co-facilitated by Belgium and Morocco. The importance of raising awareness of ageing in this context was emphasized, given that population ageing and older persons were not sufficiently addressed in the Summit of the Future and its outcome documents. SWGA was informed of opportunities to work with national delegations to ensure ageing is discussed during the high-level round table discussions and that diverse stakeholders including older persons themselves are included in delegations.

26. SWGA discussed communicating the importance of ageing to the relevant diplomatic stakeholders involved in drafting the political declaration. SWGA was encouraged to contact delegations to the United Nations in New York and to take advantage of the sixty-third session of the Commission for Social Development as an opportunity to raise awareness on ageing and its relevance for the Second World Summit for Social Development.

27. ILO reported on its latest commitments with regards to ageing and the world of work, including in the areas of social protection, labour force participation of older persons, occupational safety and health and age-friendly work, age-friendly employment policies, and the fight against ageism. Ongoing and recent activities include promoting active labour market policies for activation of older persons, working with countries to implement

standards around occupational safety and health and to determine the needs and wants of older persons in the workplace, identifying policies that are age-sensitive, and collecting best practices towards eradicating ageism. ILO acknowledged the challenge of prioritizing ageing at the global level as it is not viewed as urgent in all regions and suggested the issue of declining labour productivity in agriculture could garner interest across regions.

28. ISSA reported on its activities to support social security systems and policies, focusing on new guidelines on administrative solutions for long-term care. The guidelines, which will be launched at the World Social Security Forum in 2025, are designed to improve the ability of social security administrations to provide long-term care services. The guidelines cover issues related to governance and strategy as well the nature of long-term care and delivery mechanisms. The presentation highlighted key concerns for long-term care governance and delivery, including adequacy of funding, identification of target beneficiaries, quality and control mechanisms, long-term care workforce and working conditions, and preventing abuse and neglect. The importance of international collaboration and exchange of experience to address the emerging challenges associated with long-term care provision was emphasized. ISSA invited participants to share good practices and to attend a webinar on long-term care and mental health on 26 November 2024, featuring a presentation on UNECE Policy Brief on Ageing No. 29 on the mental health of older persons.

29. In response to the updates by ILO and ISSA, participants discussed the need for better information on the oldest older workers, including those in unpaid work, the paradox of a growing silver economy yet persisting poverty among older persons, and the need to avoid duplication of efforts on long-term care at global and European Union (EU) levels.

30. WHO reported on recent developments in the implementation of the United Nations Decade of Healthy Ageing, including new tools to promote intergenerational practice and solidarity, a new digital home for the Global Campaign to Combat Ageism,² and new guidelines and training opportunities related to integrated and long-term care. WHO reported that an additional 300 cities and communities and five national and subnational programmes had joined the WHO Global Network for Age-friendly Cities and Communities (AFCC) since the last briefing to the group in 2023. The guide for national programmes for age-friendly cities and communities has been translated into additional languages, and new training opportunities related to AFCC have been developed. WHO reported on efforts to strengthen the evidence base, including the development of a new survey module to measure experiences of ageism, the forthcoming publication of an indicator framework for measuring progress and impact of the United Nations Decade of Healthy Ageing, a forthcoming report on social connection, social isolation and loneliness, and new evidence and knowledge resources related to age-friendly environments.

31. The European Commission briefed SWGA via video message on recent changes to the College of Commissioners following the June 2024 European parliamentary elections. In the next mandate, the topic of demography will be spread across three members of the College of Commissioners: Commissioner for the Mediterranean, Commissioner for Intergenerational Fairness, and Commissioner for Health. The new composition of the College of Commissioners is expected to be confirmed soon. Ms. Dubravka Šuica, currently the Vice-President for Demography and Democracy, will become Commissioner for the Mediterranean but will continue to cover demographic issues in her mission, including the implementation of the demographic toolbox, international aspects of demography, the labour market participation of underrepresented groups, and the impacts of demographic change on social protection in EU Member States.

32. Responding to the update from the European Commission, AGE Platform Europe expressed concern that ageing would not be sufficiently covered under the new composition of the College of Commissioners. AGE Platform Europe commented that older persons are not mentioned in the new commissioners' portfolios, and that the mission of the new Commissioner for Intergenerational Fairness mentions younger and future generations but not older persons. AGE Platform Europe called for solidarity across generations, emphasized

² See www.aworld4allages.org.

that all age groups deserve fairness and equal rights, and encouraged efforts towards a society for all ages.

33. HelpAge International briefed SWGA on recent research on the extent to which international aid spending for gender equality includes older women. The analysis found that despite the fact the older women represent 27 per cent of the global female population, only 0.1 per cent of total aid spending on gender equality targets older women. The research was presented at an online side event supported by SWGA and the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency during the UNECE Beijing+30 Regional Review Meeting in October 2024. Acknowledging the fact that many donor countries are in the UNECE region, HelpAge International called on UNECE member States to strengthen efforts to mainstream ageing in gender equality aid financing and to consider this objective as part of the ongoing review and update to RIS.

V. Progress towards the goals of the 2022 Rome Ministerial Declaration

34. Under this item, SWGA members shared new policy developments responding to the goals of the 2022 Rome Ministerial Declaration.³

35. Relating to Goal I of the Rome Ministerial Declaration, “Promoting active and healthy ageing throughout life”, the Republic of Moldova reported on the Programme on Active and Healthy Ageing for 2023–2027, highlighting actions related to improving the digital inclusion of older persons and expanding opportunities for lifelong education. Slovenia reported on recent activities aimed at fighting ageism and promoting a positive image of ageing and older persons, concluding that changing deeply rooted perceptions is a long-term process that requires efforts across many areas.

36. Relating to Goal II of the Rome Ministerial Declaration, “Ensuring access to long-term care and support for carers and families”, Spain reported on the National Strategy on Deinstitutionalization, which aims to implement person-centred and community-based approaches to care. Czechia presented recent measures to address abuse and neglect of older persons, including surveys of older persons and residential care staff on the topic, the establishment of a working group on the safety and rights of older people, the development of an action plan on abuse and neglect of older persons, and efforts to raise awareness of abuse and neglect of older persons including in the media. Cyprus reported on the new subsidy scheme for residential care which aims to improve access to quality long-term care services, reduce poverty and social exclusion, and improve work-life balance for informal caregivers. Romania reported on social assistance reform to promote social inclusion, to reduce poverty, and to increase access to social services for various groups including older persons. France reported on recent measures to preserve autonomy, prevent isolation, combat mistreatment and strengthen the rights of persons in residential care, support a shift towards home-based care, and better regulate residential care facilities.

37. In the discussion that followed, Germany congratulated presenters for the impressive progress towards the goals of the Rome Ministerial Declaration. Serbia expressed support for the focus on deinstitutionalization and emphasized the need to complement deinstitutionalization efforts with appropriate social welfare policies and policies across other sectors. Questions to presenters highlighted the importance of support for informal caregivers, technical challenges around collecting data on abuse and neglect of older persons, the challenge of recruiting and maintaining long-term care workers, and enforcement mechanisms for quality standards in social services. Participants also discussed the intangible nature of ageism as a challenge for addressing it.

38. Relating to Goal III of the Rome Ministerial Declaration, “Mainstreaming ageing to advance a society for all ages”, Georgia reported on the development of the National Action Plan on Ageing 2025–2026 which has strategic goals that align with the commitments of

³ Presentations on national policy updates are available on the meeting website: <https://unece.org/population/events/seventeenth-meeting-standing-working-group-ageing>.

MIPAA/RIS and existing national legislation related to population ageing and human rights. Italy reported on recent advancements in national legislation to support active ageing, long-term care planning, and labour market resilience through active labour market policies and opportunities for lifelong learning. Portugal briefed on the first execution report of the Portuguese Active and Healthy Ageing Action Plan which reported on 94 activities implemented in the nine months following the adoption of the plan in January 2024. Slovakia reported on the National Plan for Active Ageing 2021–2030, the establishment of an expert working group to raise awareness of active ageing, and on plans including the establishment of regional and local “councils of senior citizens”.

39. Following the presentations, participants discussed the topic of digitalization in national plans and strategies and the need to balance measures aimed at improving digital literacy of older persons with measures that target those perpetrating digital crimes against older persons. Ensuring the right to societal participation and access to public services for older persons who lack digital skills was also discussed. Participants raised the issue of budgetary constraints and the sustainability of funding for activities under national plans and strategies.

40. During the discussion, Azerbaijan affirmed its commitment to the goals of MIPAA/RIS and to the prioritization of the needs of older persons in its national development agenda. Azerbaijan reported on its contributions to the UNECE Ageing Policies Database and expressed commitment to the fifth review and appraisal cycle of MIPAA and to future collaboration with UNECE on ageing issues.

VI. Programme of work of the Standing Working Group on Ageing: implementation in 2024 and plans for 2025

41. Under item 6 of the agenda, the Secretariat presented the elements of the programme of work implemented in 2024 as reported in ECE/WG.1/2024/4 and outlined planned activities for 2025.

A. Raising awareness on ageing and its implications for sustainable development and creating synergies with related policy agendas

42. The Secretariat reported on the occasions during 2024 in which ageing and its synergies with related policy agendas were highlighted including the Commission for Social Development, the Commission on Population and Development, the Summit of the Future, the UNECE Regional Forum on Sustainable Development and the UNECE Beijing+30 Review Meeting. The Secretariat reported that UNECE joined the Global Coalition for Social Justice, an ILO initiative bringing together multiple partners in preparation for the Second World Summit for Social Development. In the context of the coalition, UNECE will work to raise awareness on ageism as a key social justice topic.

43. Ahead of the meeting, SWGA members were invited to share written updates on awareness-raising on ageing at the national level. Croatia, Czechia, BAGSO, and Red Cross of Serbia submitted updates on events and activities. A document providing details on these activities is available on the meeting website.⁴

44. Regarding awareness-raising on ageing in 2025, the Secretariat mentioned the 2025 sessions of the Commission for Social Development (February), the Commission on the Status of Women (March), and the Commission on Population and Development (April) as well as the 2025 International Labour Conference (June) and WHO Regional Committee for Europe (October) as opportunities for engagement with relevant delegations and ministries to promote national efforts on ageing and highlight the relevance of ageing in the related agendas. The Secretariat highlighted concrete opportunities for participation related to the Regional Forum on Sustainable Development convened by UNECE on 2 and 3 April 2025

⁴ <https://unece.org/population/events/seventeenth-meeting-standing-working-group-ageing>.

as well as possible substantive inputs to the preparatory process for the Second World Summit for Social Development in November 2025.

45. UN DESA informed participants that the theme of the fifty-eighth session of the Commission on Population and Development will be “Ensuring healthy lives and promoting well-being for all at all ages” and reported that the sixty-third session of Commission for Social Development will be linked to the Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development and the Second World Summit for Social Development. UN DESA informed that side events during the session of the Commission for Social Development may provide an opportunity for preparations for the Second World Summit for Social Development.

46. The United States emphasized the importance of mainstreaming ageing across related policy agendas in light of the conclusion of OEWG-A. The United States highlighted the need to work with delegations in New York to develop appropriate, cross-cutting language for political declarations and offered support to countries to strengthen collaboration between ministries and delegations to the United Nations. The United States also suggested that the Fourth High-level Meeting of the United Nations General Assembly on the Prevention and Control of Non-Communicable Diseases may be an additional opportunity to raise awareness on ageing. Canada suggested the World Social Security Forum as an additional opportunity to raise awareness of ageing.

B. International cooperation and exchange of experience and knowledge

47. The Secretariat presented UNECE Policy Brief on Ageing No. 29 on mental health of older persons that was published in June 2024 and thanked all countries that submitted policy examples. Germany thanked Austria for the forthcoming translation of the brief into German and encouraged other countries to translate the brief and/or key messages into national languages.

48. The Secretariat reported on the three online policy dialogues on ageing organized in 2024, the first in March focusing on violence against older persons, the second in June on the mental health of older persons launching the policy brief, and the third on mainstreaming ageing in September, focusing on coordinating ageing policy across government. The Secretariat reported that feedback on the online policy dialogues has been positive and provided information on the breakdown of participation by sector.

49. The Secretariat reminded participants about the in-depth policy discussion on evidence-based ageing policy scheduled for the third day of the meeting and directed participants to the concept note and programme on the meeting website.

50. The Secretariat presented the results of an online survey of SWGA on priority topics for 2025. The four highest ranked topics (in descending order) were changing the narrative on ageing, care workforce, older workers, and engaging older persons.

51. Based on the results of the survey and given the opportunity to draft an input to the Second World Summit for Social Development, the Secretariat proposed to dedicate Policy Brief on Ageing No. 30 and the first online policy dialogue of the year in April to the topic of opportunities and challenges of an ageing workforce. The Secretariat proposed to publish the brief by the end of March 2025 so it could be considered as an input during the drafting process for the political declaration of the Second World Summit for Social Development.

52. For the two other policy dialogues during 2025, the Secretariat proposed the topics of changing media narratives of ageing (June) and mainstreaming ageing: older people councils (September). The Secretariat proposed that the in-depth policy discussion at the eighteenth meeting of SWGA in November 2025 would serve as a mid-term meeting on the work to update RIS.

53. SWGA discussed the proposals. Canada, Germany, Italy, and Portugal supported the proposal to position Policy Brief on Ageing No. 30 as an input to the Second World Summit for Social Development. The United States supported the proposal to publish the brief by the end of March because the zero draft of the political declaration of the Second World Summit for Social Development will be published at the end of April or beginning of May, allowing

time for consideration of the brief in the zero draft. AGE Platform Europe reported that the 2023 Age Barometer analysed the situation of older people in the labour market which may be useful for Policy Brief on Ageing No. 30. Italy suggested the brief may also be an input to the International Labour Conference in June 2025. Czechia suggested menopause at work as an important topic to cover in the brief. NGO Committee on Ageing, Geneva offered knowledge on ILO conventions on retirement and their impact on older workers as an input to the brief. Canada encouraged SWGA to mainstream engagement of older persons across all outputs in addition to the dedicated policy dialogue on the topic. Germany supported proposal to dedicate the 2025 in-depth policy discussion to a mid-term meeting on the RIS update.

54. SWGA agreed that Policy Brief on Ageing No. 30 will be on the topic of opportunities and challenges of an ageing workforce. SWGA decided that the topics of the policy dialogues on ageing in 2025 will be: (1) opportunities and challenges of an ageing workforce; (2) changing media narratives on ageing; and (3) mainstreaming ageing: older people councils. SWGA decided that the in-depth policy discussion at the eighteenth meeting of SWGA will serve as a mid-term meeting on the update to the UNECE Regional Implementation Strategy (RIS) of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing (MIPAA).

55. The Secretariat launched the UNECE Ageing Policies Database⁵ with more than 200 policies submitted by member States as part of the fourth review and appraisal of MIPAA (MIPAA+20) and in response to calls for updates during 2024. The Secretariat provided a live demonstration of how to use the online database, highlighting various key features. The Secretariat reported that future work on the database will involve adding more policies from the MIPAA+20 review, expanding the geographic scope, and requesting from member States policy updates since 2022. The Secretariat shared communication and dissemination plans, including through social media, direct engagement with users from civil society, academia, and international organizations, and outreach to SWGA and other stakeholders. The Secretariat asked SWGA to share policy updates and help spread the word about the new database.

56. The Chair and Germany congratulated the Secretariat on the launch of the database. Germany suggested that the SWGA logo be added to the database webpage and that a link to the database is added to the UNECE website. Germany encouraged SWGA to provide regular policy updates to keep the database relevant and useful. SWGA committed to sharing policy updates since 2022 with the Secretariat for the Ageing Policies Database.

57. Germany, Lithuania, Norway, Portugal, and Spain shared updates on peer learning activities carried out during 2024.

58. In April 2024, Norway hosted Lithuania for a three-day study visit. The visit was supported by the Nordic Council of Ministers and Nordic-Baltic mobility programme for public administration and covered topics including health statistics, pension reform, promoting longer working lives, care reform, living safely at home, and active ageing. Various entities representing national and local government from Norway and Lithuania were involved. Norway indicated that the visit provided a good opportunity to reflect on policies in their country. Lithuania thanked Norway for organizing the visit and reported that the visit provided inspiration that is already being translated into action in the country. Lithuania emphasized the value of including representatives from national and local levels of government as well as civil society in the study visits.

59. In July 2024, Portugal hosted Germany and Spain for a mutual learning visit in which good practices from each country were shared. The exchange also covered approaches to long-term care in Portugal and included visits to an Active Ageing Competence Center and to traditional and intergenerational residential care institutions. Germany stressed the importance of involving representatives of local government and institutions in such visits and encouraged SWGA members to organize similar peer learning visits. Spain thanked Portugal for organizing the visit and endorsed peer learning as a valuable tool for SWGA.

⁵ Available at <https://ageing-policies.unece.org/>.

60. Norway reported on an upcoming EU peer review of social protection and inclusion of older persons in which 11 EU Member States will visit Oslo and explore topics such as deinstitutionalization, active care and active ageing policies, and age-friendly societies.

61. Switzerland reported that it is exploring the organization of a peer learning visit with the city of Geneva to coincide with the eighteenth meeting of SWGA.

62. Portugal informed that it will host another mutual learning visit in April 2025 for municipal mayors and that mayors from other countries are invited to attend.

63. The Secretariat asked member States to inform the Secretariat of peer learning plans and activities.

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

64. The Secretariat reminded SWGA about the resources available as part of the UNECE Mainstreaming Ageing Toolkit and reported that Policy Brief on Ageing No. 28 had been translated into German, that translations into Slovak and Turkish are being finalized, and that the online course on mainstreaming ageing has been translated into German and that translations into Russian and Turkish are in preparation. The Secretariat invited member States to indicate interest in translating resources to national languages.

65. The Secretariat reported that a road map for mainstreaming ageing is being developed for Uzbekistan in collaboration with UNFPA and WHO. Recommendations were shared with national stakeholders for discussion in late November, after which the road map will be finalized.

66. The Secretariat informed SWGA of a new capacity-development activity to support countries in the assessment of available statistical data on ageing, the identification of data gaps, and the formulation of recommendations to improve existing data and to develop new statistics on population ageing and older persons. A pilot project is currently under way in Georgia. The Secretariat proposed to develop a methodological guide for such assessments as part of the mainstreaming ageing toolkit to facilitate replicating similar data availability and needs assessments in other countries. Interested countries are invited to contact the Secretariat.

67. SWGA requested the Secretariat to develop a tool for data gap analysis based on the pilot project currently developed in Georgia as a contribution to the Mainstreaming Ageing Toolkit.

68. Portugal and the Republic of Moldova briefed SWGA on capacity-building activities at the national level. Portugal reported on training for both formal and informal caregivers provided by the Active Ageing Competence Center reaching 5,000 caregivers in 2024. The Republic of Moldova reported on a training course on governance based on demographic data and the integration of the principle of active aging in sectoral and local public policies. The course covers four essential modules, including data sources and analysis of demographic phenomenon and active ageing.

D. Monitoring the implementation of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing and its Regional Implementation Strategy and strengthening the evidence base for policymaking

69. The Secretariat reported on two main activities related to ageing-related statistics and age-disaggregated data during 2024: the establishment of the Task Force on Quantitative Monitoring of MIPAA/RIS and the Conference of European Statisticians (CES) In-depth Review on Ageing-related Statistics.

70. CES has selected ageing-related statistics for in-depth review in 2024. These analyses take stock of current practices, identify gaps between user needs and existing statistics, and prioritize issues that need to be addressed. The reviews often lead to further work on the topic

and the development of new guidelines for statistical production. The in-depth review is led by Statistics Portugal and will look at the extent to which national statistical offices have implemented the *UNECE Recommendations on Ageing-related Statistics*,⁶ published in 2016. The review also considers the data user perspective, providing insight on the availability and accessibility of data relevant to policymaking on ageing. The Task Force on Quantitative Monitoring of MIPAA/RIS will support the in-depth review.

71. The Secretariat acknowledged positive developments at the international level in the area of ageing-related statistics and age-disaggregated data, including the work of the Titchfield City Group on Ageing to improve the visibility of older persons in Sustainable Development Goals monitoring and the development of a monitoring framework for the Decade of Healthy Ageing.

72. Portugal, the Chair of the Task Force on Quantitative Monitoring of MIPAA/RIS, briefed SWGA on the establishment of the task force following the April 2024 meeting of the SWGA Bureau. The objective of the task force is to guide the development of a framework of quantitative indicators to monitor the implementation of MIPAA/RIS at the national and regional levels. The framework will be developed in parallel to the revised RIS and presented to SWGA at its nineteenth meeting in November 2026. The framework will be piloted during the fifth periodic review and appraisal of MIPAA/RIS in 2026–2027 and used in future review and appraisal cycles. The task force will also contribute to the CES In-depth Review on Ageing-related Statistics in 2024. SWGA was invited to adopt the terms of reference of the task force as contained in ECE/WG.1/2024/INF.2.

73. Netherlands Interdisciplinary Demographic Institute (NIDI) provided an update on the Generations and Gender Programme, highlighting features of the Generations and Gender Survey (GGS) that can support ageing policy development. These include coverage of a broad age range – typically ages 18 to 79 – and sample sizes that facilitate disaggregation and the study of small groups, multidisciplinary questionnaires covering a wide range of topics, a longitudinal design, and wide geographical coverage. The potential of GGS to study intergenerational exchange and loneliness among older persons was highlighted.

74. In the discussion, AGE Platform Europe inquired about the reason for limiting the age of survey respondents at 79 years. NIDI acknowledged the lack of data on the oldest old but explained that in many countries the complementary Survey of Health, Ageing and Retirement in Europe (SHARE) research infrastructure covers this group. The United States stressed the importance of multidimensional disaggregation that allows for the study of intersecting characteristics such as age and gender or age and disability status.

75. SWGA approved the terms of reference for the Task Force on Quantitative Monitoring of MIPAA/RIS as contained in document ECE/WG.1/2024/INF.2.

76. SWGA approved the report on implementation of the programme of work of the Standing Working Group on Ageing in 2024 as contained in document ECE/WG.1/2024/4.

VII. Updating the Regional Implementation Strategy for the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing

77. Germany, the Chair of the Task Force on Updating RIS, reported on progress during 2024, including 10 online meetings, the publication of the Guidance Note for National Stakeholder Engagement on Future Ageing Policy Priorities (ECE/WG.1/2024/INF.3), and discussions on news topics and the format for the new RIS. The Chair of the task force thanked the members of the group and the Secretariat for their contributions during the past year.

78. A key element for drafting a new RIS is the organization of national stakeholder engagement exercises, using a participatory approach. NFPAs are asked to organize – together with the relevant government agencies and CSOs – the processes in their countries during the first half of 2025. The objective of the engagement processes is to engage the

⁶ See <https://unece.org/statistics/publications/recommendations-ageing-related-statistics>.

broad set of stakeholders affected by individual and population ageing to identify policy areas and topics that have up until now been overlooked. Additional information about the process is available in the guidance note on the meeting website.

79. The Secretariat announced that Italy will take over the role as Chair of the task force in 2025 and thanked Germany for the leadership of the task force during the last two years.

80. Ireland requested the Secretariat to provide a prerecorded video address that could be used to inform stakeholders of the background and context of the national stakeholder engagement process. Ireland suggested this would be useful for other countries as well.

81. Austria, Italy, Serbia, Spain, and BAGSO shared their plans for the national stakeholder engagement exercises. Austria reported that it will field a questionnaire among a variety of stakeholders and combine the results of the engagement exercises with those from an evaluation of the national Senior Citizens' Plan. Italy reported that it will carry out a survey of national and regional stakeholders, conduct focus groups or workshops on specific topics, organize consultations with central and local administrations, and organize a national conference to present results. Serbia reported on a newly established Council of Ageing and Intergenerational Cooperation which will be engaged for the review of MIPAA/RIS. Spain reported on the establishment of a national stakeholder group made up of representatives of national, regional, and local government as well as academics. Spain has also identified key areas of focus for the national exercise including deinstitutionalization, digital inclusion, active ageing, loneliness and isolation, and ageism. BAGSO reported that, with support from the German Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth, it will field a survey targeting older persons and CSOs, organize in-depth discussions with older persons and CSOs using the world café method during the German Senior Citizens' Day in April 2025, prepare a whiteboard exhibition during the event, and hold an online expert workshop to discuss the results in April 2025.

82. SWGA requested the Secretariat to prepare and publish a report on the findings of national stakeholder engagement exercises.

VIII. Preparing the fifth review and appraisal of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing and its Regional Implementation Strategy

83. UN DESA briefed SWGA on the fifth review and appraisal of MIPAA/RIS from the global perspective. The fifth review and appraisal will be launched by the adoption by the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ESOSOC) of a resolution on modalities containing decisions of Member States on how to carry out the process. The resolution is informed by a report of the Secretary-General, drafted by a facilitator, and negotiated by Member States. Before adoption by ECOSOC, it is adopted by the Commission for Social Development in February 2025. Member States will carry out national reviews and appraisals during 2026, regional reviews and conferences will take place in 2027, and in 2028 the global review will take place at the Commission for Social Development. The 25th anniversary of the Second World Assembly on Ageing will be celebrated in 2027.

84. The Secretariat presented the proposed timeline for the fifth review and appraisal of MIPAA/RIS in the UNECE region, as contained in ECE/WG.1/2024/INF.4. Informed by feedback from member States, guidelines for the national reviews will be prepared in 2025. A call for interest in hosting the 2027 Ministerial Conference on Ageing will be issued in 2025.

85. The Secretariat reminded SWGA of the structure of the national reports for the fourth review and appraisal and asked participants to reflect during small group discussions on the extent to which the previous approach to MIPAA/RIS reporting was useful at the national level and how it could be modified to improve its utility for national purposes in light of new and forthcoming resources such as the UNECE Ageing Policies Database and the development of a quantitative monitoring framework for MIPAA/RIS.

86. In small groups, meeting participants identified positive aspects of the MIPAA/RIS review and appraisal process, including that it serves as a mechanism to connect with entities across sectors and levels of government and with CSOs and to raise awareness on national efforts towards MIPAA/RIS across the government. Participants reported that the national review process is useful for collating information across government entities and levels, particularly in federal systems, for assessing progress at the national level, and for educating new staff in ministries on ageing work undertaken across the country. To improve the process, meeting participants suggested to keep the questionnaire simple, to prepare clear guidelines including a word limit and to make them available as early as possible, to make use of the new UNECE Ageing Policies Database, to develop an executive summary or key messages format to facilitate engagement and feedback from stakeholders, and to avoid duplication with other international reporting exercises. Participants expressed concern that a simplified process that relies more heavily on the UNECE Ageing Policies Database may compromise involvement of civil society organizations, emphasizing the importance of a bottom-up approach. Participants also indicated a simple, quantitative indicator framework would be useful for benchmarking progress. Participants also suggested providing peer support or support from the Secretariat, especially for those NFPAs who are undertaking the review and appraisal for the first time.

87. In the discussion that followed in plenary, Canada highlighted the value of sharing good practices and suggested that this storytelling element remain alongside elements that benchmark or measure progress across countries. HelpAge International called on member States to consider foreign aid commitments targeting older persons as part of the upcoming review and appraisal cycle. Members of SWGA were invited to volunteer to work with the Secretariat and the Bureau in developing the reporting guidelines in 2025. Belgium and Canada volunteered to contribute to the work to develop the reporting guidelines.

IX. Programme of work for 2025 and Outline of key components of the programme of work for 2026

88. The Chair invited SWGA to adopt the Draft programme of work of the population component of the housing, land management and population subprogramme for 2025 (ECE/WG.1/2024/5) and recommend it for approval by the Executive Committee of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe.

89. SWGA was invited to consider the Outline of the key components of the programme of work of the population component of the housing, land management and population subprogramme for 2026 (ECE/WG.1/2024/INF.5) and to provide feedback on those components, as necessary.

90. SWGA adopted and recommended to the Executive Committee of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe for approval the Draft programme of work of the population component of the housing, land management and population subprogramme for 2025, as contained in document ECE/WG.1/2024/5.

X. Financing of the programme of work

91. The Secretariat reported on the financing of the programme of work, including regular budget resources, and contributions to and expenditure from two extrabudgetary project funds, the Ageing – Phase IV project (Ageing Fund) and the Ageing Policies Database project.

92. The Secretariat thanked Austria, Estonia, Germany, Switzerland, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and AARP for their financial contributions to the Ageing Fund since the sixteenth meeting of SWGA, amounting to a total of USD 140,253, and for additional pledges by Estonia, Germany and AARP of a total of USD 88,640 towards the programme of work in 2025.

93. The Secretariat also thanked members of the group for the in-kind support provided: Austria, Slovakia, and Türkiye for policy brief translations, Italy for hosting the sixteenth

meeting of the Bureau in Rome in April 2024, and Austria for hosting the evening reception on the first day of the seventeenth meeting of SWGA.

94. The Secretariat informed that leftover funds transferred from the Ageing Phase III project and new funds raised will cover activities implementing the SWGA programme of work in 2025. However, there is the need to raise additional funds for the implementation of activities under the programme of work during 2026–2027. The Secretariat also highlighted the challenges around staff turnover associated with entry-level junior professional positions (P2-positions) that are filled exclusively through the Young Professionals Programme (YPP).

95. The Chair informed SWGA of a decision at the April 2024 Bureau meeting to pursue a crowdfunding approach to finance the programme of work, requesting more countries to consider pledging financial support to the Ageing Fund rather than relying on a small group of countries and organizations to contribute large amounts.

96. Portugal expressed support for the approach proposed by the Chair and suggested that countries indicate whether this may be possible by the 2025 meeting of the SWGA Bureau. Norway indicated that generally the country does not finance specific United Nations programmes and suggested that a membership fee for SWGA may be an alternative approach for financing the programme of work. Germany agreed that it can be difficult to raise funds but encouraged colleagues to make the effort suggesting that often there are unspent funds available at the end of the budgetary year which could be secured for SWGA. The United States suggested that expanding the scope of work of SWGA given conclusion of OEWG-A may be a way to secure more funding and posts.

97. SWGA agreed to collectively pledge financial support towards the implementation of activities listed in its Programme of Work 2023–2027 as contained in ECE/WG.1/2023/2 to the extent budgetary situations and opportunities allow financial contributions.

98. SWGA requested the Secretariat to develop a cost estimate to implement the Programme of Work through to the end of 2027.

99. SWGA also requested the Secretariat to outline the steps needed to request an upgrade of the regular budget P2 position to a P3 position in the Secretariat to reduce the frequency of staff turnover, as well as the steps necessary to request an additional regular budget position to strengthen the work of UNECE on population ageing in the longer term.

XI. Other business and summary of decisions

100. The Chair, with the assistance of the Secretariat, summarized the decisions taken at the seventeenth meeting of SWGA which are included as annex I to this report.

101. The eighteenth meeting of the Standing Working Group on Ageing will take place on 12–14 November 2024.

XII. In-depth policy discussion

102. The Chair opened the third day of the meeting and introduced the in-depth policy discussion on evidence-based ageing policy, noting that the aims of the discussion were to highlight the importance of evidence-based ageing policies, identify gaps and challenges in this area, share best practices in the use of evidence in national ageing policies, and provide NFPAs with an opportunity to voice evidence needs.

103. The Secretariat provided an overview of the topic of evidence-based policymaking in the domain of ageing, covering definitions and objectives, evidence needs and availability of evidence for ageing policy, challenges around evidence generation and use, and actions to address these challenges. This was followed by a panel discussion on the unique value of three primary sources of evidence for ageing policies – official statistics, scientific research, and participatory evidence – and strategies for ensuring evidence use by policymakers. In the panel discussion, a representative of Statistics Portugal spoke about the use of official statistics for policymaking, the European Centre for Social Welfare Policy and Research spoke about the role of scientific research, and HelpAge International spoke about

participatory evidence. The European Commission presented on its efforts to strengthen evidence-informed policymaking in the EU including training for policymakers on working with evidence and a capacity-development tool on science for policy.

104. Member States shared best practices in the generation and use of evidence in national ageing policies. Ireland reported on a recent public consultation on health and care services and support for older persons which targeted older persons, their friends and family, caregivers, healthcare professionals and other stakeholders. Canada reported on an analysis of economic vulnerability among older persons which informed a permanent increase to the Old Age Security pension. Czechia presented on collaboration between the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs and a national research institute to develop an indicator catalogue for the national action plan on ageing and the sharing of administrative data across the health and social sectors enabling new detailed analyses of use of health services, receipt of social benefits and other outcomes. The Republic of Moldova reported on the development of the demographic forecast which will be produced every three years and disseminated to national and local government entities. Slovenia presented on a survey on sheltered housing, a form of institutional care in the country, which identified key areas for improvement. Georgia reported on an ageing data needs and availability assessment carried out with support by the Secretariat which identified challenges and provided recommendations for improving ageing-related data and statistics in the country. Türkiye shared an update on a survey of persons aged 50 and older carried out in 2023 in cooperation with the Turkish Statistical Institute to collect data on the well-being of older persons for use in policy development.

105. In the discussion that followed, participants highlighted the importance of capturing information on both individual and population ageing and of continued monitoring of policy impacts after implementation. Participants discussed the need for political commitment to generate evidence and the role of peer learning in the generation and exchange of evidence.

106. As an input to the CES in-depth review on ageing-related statistics, participants discussed in small groups the availability and accessibility of official statistics for ageing policies. Participants identified lengthy request processes, long response times, and in some countries financial costs as barriers to accessing official statistics. Participants indicated that knowledge of data availability is a challenge, especially as ageing-related data and statistics are often collected and managed by several different entities. Participants identified substantive gaps around the oldest old, older persons in institutions, violence, abuse and neglect, informal care, inclusion, and at-risk populations. Participants also discussed the evolving nature of data needs, the need for timely and frequent information, and the importance of data and statistics that are disaggregated by age, gender, and geographic location. Participants advocated for free and simple access to official statistics.

XIII. Conclusions and closing of the meeting

107. The Chair thanked speakers and participants and closed the meeting.

Annex I

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

<i>Agenda item</i>	<i>Document (LINK)</i>	<i>Decision</i>
1	ECE/WG.1/2024/1	SWGA adopted the agenda without amendment.
2		<p>SWGA elected the Bureau as follows:</p> <p>Chairperson:</p> <p>Mr. Alfredo FERRANTE (Italy)</p> <p>Vice-Chairpersons:</p> <p>Ms. Abigail CHANTLER (Ireland)</p> <p>Mr. Nuno MARQUES (Portugal)</p> <p>Bureau members:</p> <p>Ms. Eva GEIER (Austria)</p> <p>Ms. Ketevan GOGINASHVILI (Georgia)</p> <p>Mr. Dragomir KNEZEVIC (Serbia)</p> <p>Mr. Manuel MONTERO REY (Spain)</p> <p>Ms. Burcu AYHAN EKENCI (Türkiye)</p> <p>Observers:</p> <p>Ms. Heidrun MOLLENKOPF (Civil society)</p> <p>Mr. Kai LEICHSENDRING (Research/Academia)</p>
3	ECE/WG.1/2024/INF.1	SWGA adopted the terms of reference for National Focal Points on Ageing as contained in ECE/WG.1/2024/INF.1 and requested the Secretariat to include them as an annex to the report of the meeting.
6(b)		SWGA decided that Policy Brief No. 30 will be on the topic of opportunities and challenges of an ageing workforce.
6(b)		SWGA decided that the topics of the policy dialogues on ageing in 2025 will be: (1) opportunities and challenges of an ageing workforce; (2) changing media narratives on ageing; and (3) mainstreaming ageing: older people councils.
6(b)		SWGA decided that the in-depth policy discussion at the eighteenth meeting of SWGA will serve as a mid-term meeting on the update to the UNECE Regional Implementation Strategy (RIS) of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing (MIPAA).
6(b)		SWGA committed to sharing policy updates since 2022 with the Secretariat for the Ageing Policies Database.
6(c)		SWGA requested the Secretariat to develop a tool for data gap analysis based on the pilot project currently developed in Georgia as a contribution to the Mainstreaming Ageing Toolkit.
6(d)	ECE/WG.1/2024/INF.2	SWGA approved the terms of reference for the Task Force on Quantitative Monitoring of MIPAA/RIS as contained in document ECE/WG.1/2024/INF.2.

<i>Agenda item</i>	<i>Document (LINK)</i>	<i>Decision</i>
6(d)	ECE/WG.1/2024/4	SWGA approved the report on implementation of the programme of work of the Standing Working Group on Ageing in 2024 as contained in document ECE/WG.1/2024/4
7		SWGA requested the Secretariat to prepare a report on the findings of the national stakeholder engagement exercises and publish it.
9	ECE/WG.1/2024/5	SWGA adopted and recommended to the Executive Committee of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe for approval the Draft programme of work of the population component of the housing, land management and population subprogramme for 2025 as contained in document ECE/WG.1/2024/5.
10	ECE/WG.1/2023/2	SWGA agreed to collectively pledge financial support towards the implementation of activities listed in its Programme of Work 2023–2027 as contained in ECE/WG.1/2023/2 to the extent budgetary situations and opportunities allow financial contributions.
10		SWGA requested the Secretariat to develop a cost estimate to implement the Programme of Work through to the end of 2027.
10		SWGA requested the Secretariat to outline the steps needed to request an upgrade of the regular budget P2 position to a P3 position in the Secretariat to reduce the frequency of staff turnover, as well as the steps necessary to request an additional regular budget position to strengthen the work of UNECE on population ageing in the longer term.
11		Eighteenth meeting of the Standing Working Group on Ageing will take place on 12–14 November 2025.

Annex II

Terms of reference for National Focal Points on Ageing under the Standing Working Group on Ageing

I. Mandate and membership of the Standing Working Group on Ageing

1. The Standing Working Group on Ageing (SWGA) is an intergovernmental body which is subsidiary to the Executive Committee (EXCOM) of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) and reports regularly to EXCOM on its work programme and achievements.
2. The mandate of SWGA emanates from several resolutions and global agendas, including the Rome Ministerial Declaration on Ageing (2022), the General Assembly resolution 75/131 (2020) on the United Nations Decade of Healthy Ageing (2021–2030), the General Assembly resolutions on the Follow-up to the Second World Assembly on Ageing, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1, 2015), the World Health Organization's Global Strategy and Action Plan on Ageing and Health (2016) and the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) Beyond 2014.
3. The membership of SWGA consists of national focal points on ageing (NFPAs) representing the member States of the UNECE region.

II. Objectives of the Standing Working Group on Ageing

4. SWGA aims to support all countries in the UNECE region to mainstream population ageing across their policy and regulatory frameworks to adjust to demographic changes and create an environment conducive to the full realization of the individual and societal potential of living longer. The Standing Working Group supports the realization of the policy principles set out in the 2002 Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing (MIPAA) and its Regional Implementation Strategy (RIS), and the subsequent Ministerial Declarations on Ageing among the UNECE member States. It seeks synergies with the activities related to the implementation and monitoring of MIPAA/RIS and those related to the regional/national follow-up on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and other population-related international or regional frameworks such as ICPD and the United Nations Decade of Healthy Ageing.

III. Role of National Focal Points on Ageing

5. The role of the NFPA is to represent their Government on the Standing Working Group on Ageing and to contribute to advancing the programme of work of SWGA, including through spreading knowledge developed by SWGA and coordinating activities supporting the advancement of the SWGA programme of work in their respective country.

IV. Appointment of National Focal Points on Ageing

6. NFPAs are appointed by their respective Government, for example by a Ministry with responsibilities in the field of ageing policies. Ideally, the NFPA is a government official who actively works on the ageing portfolio within the country they represent. Appointments can be communicated to the UNECE Secretariat either directly or through Permanent Missions to the United Nations in Geneva. If communicated directly, the Permanent Mission should be copied.

V. Period of service of National Focal Points on Ageing

7. There is no defined term length for NFPA. In general, it is desirable for the NFPA to serve for a period of at least several years to promote continuity in the work of SWGA.

VI. Responsibilities of National Focal Points on Ageing

8. NFPAs contribute to the implementation of the programme of work of SGWA through undertaking various responsibilities which may include:

(a) Participating in annual meeting of SWGA and UNECE ministerial conferences on ageing, sharing knowledge and experience related to the national implementation of MIPAA/RIS and other policies related to demographic change and population ageing;

(b) Coordinating inputs to the work of SWGA across government agencies and informing all relevant ministries and agencies about SWGA initiatives and activities;

(c) Acting as point of contact for ageing-related inquiries from SWGA and the UNECE Secretariat;

(d) Providing regular updates on ageing-related policies to support monitoring and experience-sharing on the implementation of MIPAA/RIS;

(e) Supporting the development of joint products and activities under the SWGA programme of work such as policy briefs, guidelines, and ageing policy dialogues;

(f) Increasing awareness regarding the importance of mainstreaming ageing across government;

(g) Supporting the implementation and periodic review and appraisal of MIPAA/RIS at the country and regional levels;

(h) Supporting the preparation of the ministerial conferences on ageing and liaising with relevant ministers to seek ministerial representation at the conference;

(i) Considering contributing through in-kind and/or financial support to the implementation of the SWGA programme of work, as relevant.

VII. Opportunities for National Focal Points on Ageing

9. Opportunities for NFPA include to:

(a) Propose and join SWGA task forces, leading on the development of new products and guidelines related to their area(s) of expertise;

(b) Shape the SWGA programme of work and propose new activities and capacity-building tools;

(c) Enhance their knowledge of international ageing policy through exchange of experience and good practice;

(d) Develop their professional network and benefit from bilateral and multilateral cooperation with NFPAs from other countries;

(e) Participate in peer learning activities;

(f) Benefit from technical advisory services such as for the development of Road Maps for Mainstreaming Ageing and other ageing policies;

(g) Present national practices at SWGA policy dialogues and other international events;

(h) Stand for election to the SWGA Bureau.