



UNITED NATIONS
ECONOMIC COMMISSION
FOR EUROPE

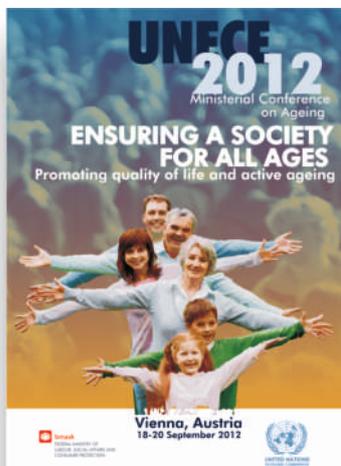
WEEKLY

UNECE

10 - 14 September 2012

493

Population



UNECE Ministerial Conference will discuss strategies to foster Active Ageing

The UNECE Ministerial Conference “**Ensuring a society for all ages: promoting quality of life and active ageing**” will take place on from 18 to 20 September 2012 in Vienna, Austria. The Conference will mark the 30th anniversary of the first World Assembly on Ageing, which also took place in Vienna in 1982. It will review progress made in implementing the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing (MIPAA) and its Regional Implementation Strategy (RIS), both adopted in 2002, and define the post-2012 agenda on ageing.

Some 450 participants, including 34 Ministers, Deputy Ministers or State Secretaries, and high-level officials from UNECE member States as well as representatives of European and international organizations, scientists, older persons and non-governmental organizations representing them will take part in the debates.

Sven Alkalaj, UNECE Executive Secretary, and Rudolf Hundstorfer, Austrian Federal Minister for Labour, Social Affairs and Consumer Protection will open the Conference, and Heinz Fischer, President of the Federal Republic of Austria, will greet the participants of the High-level segment. Renowned scientists will also be involved, including, among others, Prof. Susanne Iwarsson (Lund University, Sweden), Olga Mikhailova (Saint Petersburg Institute of Bioregulation and Gerontology, Russian Federation) and Prof. Ursula Lehr (Chairperson of BAGSO, the German Federal Head Organization of Senior Citizens' Organizations, Germany).

The Conference will open on 18 September 2012 with an NGO and a Scientific Forum. On 19 September the programme will feature a plenary session followed by expert panels on the following topics:

- Promoting longer working life and maintaining work ability
- Participation, non-discrimination and social inclusion of older persons
- Creating an enabling environment for health independence and ageing in dignity

On 20 September 2012, a Panel discussion between Ministers and civil society representatives will be dedicated to **Stimulating intergenerational dialogue and solidarity between the generations: a shared responsibility**. Ministerial panels on Ensuring a Society for All Ages: **Promoting Quality of Life and Active Ageing** will take up different aspects from the expert panels and culminate in a plenary session expected to lead to the adoption of the Ministerial Declaration. This outcome document shall highlight the future priorities for the third implementation cycle of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing and its Regional Implementation Strategy (2013 – 2017). Declarations from the NGO and the Scientific Forums will be taken into consideration for the Ministerial Declaration. A good practice exhibition will be on display throughout the conference, illustrating ageing-related policy and practice throughout the region.

Active ageing

The Conference coincides with the 2012 European Year for Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations. The Conference underlines the importance of investing in policy-frameworks that enable individuals to be active throughout their life-course and until old age. Active ageing and solidarity between generations represent important opportunities. Therefore active ageing has been prominent on the agenda of the UNECE work on ageing in the region, encouraging member States to exchange experiences on good practices and to agree on new and promising strategies and approaches.

The Ministerial Conference is jointly organized by UNECE and Austria's Federal Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Consumer Protection. □

For more information, please visit:

http://www.unece.org/pau/ageing/ministerial_conference_2012.html.

Aarhus Convention

Parties to Aarhus Convention agree new target areas to promote the Convention's principles internationally

At the fifteenth meeting of the Working Group of the Parties to the Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters (Aarhus Convention), held at the United Nations in Geneva from 3 to 5 September 2012, Parties reaffirmed their binding commitment to promote the



principles of the Convention in international forums and identified key areas, including new processes, for targeted action.

A thematic session on promoting the Convention's principles created a new momentum for furthering this strategic area of work led by France. The session, attended by more than 100 delegates from Governments, non-governmental and international organizations, international financial institutions (IFIs), academia, business and industry, focused on three key issues: efforts by the Parties to promote public participation before, during and after the Rio Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20 Conference) in June 2012; measures taken by Parties at the national level to systematically promote public participation in all international forums dealing with environmental matters; and public participation in projects funded by IFIs.

At the session, civil society urged Parties to contact their representatives of the boards of IFIs to make them aware of their obligation to promote the Aarhus Convention's principles in IFI processes. They stressed that major improvements were needed in the release of information on environmental conditions included in IFI projects and contracts, and more regular disclosure of environmental information, for example monitoring reports. They also stressed that compliance mechanisms should provide responses in a more timely manner. The importance of supporting and strengthening such mechanisms was highlighted by several delegates.

Parties to the Aarhus Convention committed to take concrete actions to actively promote the principles of the Convention in the initiatives to be put in place as a result of the Rio+20 Conference, in particular in the new high-level forum on sustainable development and in the upgrading of the United Nations Environment Programme. They also committed to identify concrete actions that they might take, individually or collectively with other Governments, to promote the principles of the Aarhus Convention in the processes, policies and projects of IFIs taking part in the session, namely the World Bank, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development and the European Investment Bank. Parties were invited to each develop and implement a national action plan to systematically promote the principles of the Convention in all international forums dealing with matters relating to the environment, including those under the competencies of other ministries.

The Working Group meeting this week also featured a web link-up with the Government of Chile and the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, which presented 10 Latin American countries' initiative to establish a legal instrument on Principle 10 of the Rio Declaration for the Latin American region. The meeting also heard a presentation by the Green Access Project of Japan, which seeks to identify appropriate models of public participation for protecting the environment and creating a sustainable society in Japan. □

For further information, please visit: <http://www.unece.org/env/pp/welcome.html>
or contact: ella.behlyarova@unece.org.

Ageing Index



UNECE works on developing an Active Ageing Index

UNECE, the European Commission and the European Centre for social Welfare Policy and Research, are working on a joint project to develop an Active Ageing Index. The aim is to measure the economic and social capacity of older people for active and healthy ageing across the European Union and other UNECE countries.

This project was launched within the framework of this year's two major events related to ageing – the European Year for Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations and the 10th anniversary of the implementation of Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing.

The preliminary results of the index were presented at the 8th World Demographic and Ageing forum, held from 27 to 30 August in St. Gallen. They will be further discussed at a side event at the UNECE Ministerial Conference **“Ensuring a society for all ages: promoting quality of life and active ageing”** on 20 September in Vienna. Amongst EU countries, Sweden, Finland and Denmark are leaders in terms of utilizing the potential for active ageing. For Latvia, Bulgaria and Greece the index indicates additional potential for investment in domains such as social participation in voluntary work and adult learning. □

Detailed information on the Forum 2012 can be found at: <http://www.wdaforum.org/index.php/en/congress-wagc-2012/documentation>.