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2007 UNECE MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE ON AGEING

Preparatory Committee

First meeting
Geneva, 12–13 July 2007

REPORT OF THE PREPARATORY COMMITTEE ON ITS FIRST MEETING

Introduction

1. The first meeting of the Preparatory Committee for the UNECE Ministerial Conference on Ageing (León, Spain, 6–8 November 2007) took place in Geneva on 12 and 13 July 2007. The meeting was mandated by the Work Plan on Population (ECE/EX/2007/L.4) approved by the UNECE Executive Committee, which provides for convening regional conferences and the related preparatory meetings. This report has been prepared by the UNECE secretariat in consultation with the Chair of the Preparatory Committee.

2. The meeting was attended by delegates from Albania, Andorra, Austria, Belarus, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Monaco, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, the Russian Federation, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the United States of America and Uzbekistan. Representatives of the European Commission and Holy See also attended.

3. Representatives from the following organizations and specialized agencies of the United Nations system participated: the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA).

4. Representatives of the European Centre for Social Welfare Policy Research, Vienna; the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC); and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) also participated.

5. The following non-governmental organizations (NGOs) were represented: European Federation of Older Persons-EURAG-Europe, HelpAge International, International Council of Women and International Federation on Ageing.

6. Two invited experts also attended, Ms. Rocío Fernández-Ballesteros (Universidad Autónoma de Madrid) and Mr. Dirk Jarré (Coordinator of the International Civil Society Forum).

I. OPENING AND ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA (Agenda item 1)

7. Mr. Paolo Garonna, UNECE Deputy Executive Secretary, opened the meeting.

8. The Preparatory Committee adopted the agenda as set out in document ECE/AC.30/PC.1/2007/1 with the following changes in the order of items: Agenda items 12 to 14 were brought forward before items 10 and 11, and items 7 and 9 were addressed together before item 8.

II. ELECTION OF OFFICERS (Agenda item 2)

9. Mr. Garonna invited the Preparatory Committee to elect a Chair and a Vice-Chair and to establish a Bureau, pointing out that it is customary to designate as Chair the representative of the country hosting the Ministerial Conference.

10. The Preparatory Committee elected Ms. Susana Viñuela (Spain) as Chair, and Ms. Erika Winkler (Austria) as Vice-Chair. The following persons were elected to the Bureau: Mr. Petr Wija (Czech Republic), Ms. Dorika Seib (Germany), Ms. Odete Severino Soares (Portugal), Ms. Irina Bondarenko (Russian Federation), Ms. Lidiya Kozarcanin (Serbia), Mr. David Hohman (United States) and Mr. Makhmudjon Ziyadullaev (Uzbekistan). Mr. Bernd Marin (European Centre for Social Welfare Policy Research, Vienna) and Mr. Dirk Jarré (Coordinator of the International Civil Society Forum) were elected as observers. The meeting also decided that the Bureau would be extended to all member States when negotiating the Ministerial Declaration.

III. OVERVIEW OF THE ROADMAP LEADING TO THE 2007 UNECE MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE ON AGEING (Agenda item 3)

11. The secretariat presented the roadmap leading to the León Ministerial Conference.

12. The representative of UNDESA presented the global review and appraisal of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing (MIPAA) and the role of regional conferences in it. Three regional conferences would be held, organized by UNECE (to be held in León, Spain, in November 2007); the [Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean](#) (Brasilia, December 2007); and the [Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific](#) (Macao Special Administrative Region of China, October 2007).

13. The Committee agreed on the roadmap in general, stating that the details would be adapted according to the decisions taken during the preparatory process.

IV. ACTIVITIES OF THE EUROPEAN CENTRE FOR SOCIAL WELFARE POLICY AND RESEARCH, VIENNA (Agenda item 4)

14. The representative of the European Centre for Social Welfare Policy and Research, Vienna, presented their activities.
15. The Committee took note of the useful contribution of the European Centre, with the support from the Austrian Government, to the follow-up of the Regional Implementation Strategy (RIS) of MIPAA, and considered that such work would also be necessary in the follow-up to the León Ministerial Conference.

V. ACTIVITIES OF ORGANIZED CIVIL SOCIETY IN THE FIELD OF AGEING (Agenda item 5)

16. The Coordinator of the International Civil Society Forum presented the activities of civil society in the field of ageing and in preparation for the high-level meeting.
17. The Coordinator of the Scientific Committee for the Research Forum presented the activities of the research community in preparation to the Ministerial Conference. A Research Forum would be organized the day before the Conference, in parallel to the NGO Forum.
18. The Preparatory Committee reaffirmed the need for close cooperation with civil society and the research community in preparation to the Ministerial Conference.

VI. CONTRIBUTIONS OF SPAIN TO THE REGIONAL REVIEW AND APPRAISAL OF MADRID INTERNATIONAL PLAN OF ACTION ON AGEING: 2007 UNECE MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE ON AGEING, LEÓN, SPAIN (Agenda item 6)

19. The representative of Spain presented their contributions to the regional review and appraisal of MIPAA.
20. The Committee took note of the valuable organizational and substantive input from Spain to the follow-up, review and appraisal of MIPAA/RIS.

VII. DRAFT AGENDA OF THE CONFERENCE (Agenda items 7 and 9)

21. The secretariat presented the Draft Agenda of the Conference (ECE/AC.30/PC.1/2007/L.1) for discussion and approval.
22. During the discussion, the necessity of the link between the Conference, the NGO Forum and the Research Forum was highlighted. It was proposed that the NGO Declaration should be renamed the “Civil Society Declaration”, since this formulation would be more comprehensive, including both NGOs and researchers.
23. There were a number of proposals for the themes of the panel discussions covering, inter alia, areas such as health, social security and intergenerational solidarity. The secretariat requested that participants submit written proposals and make further suggestions for speakers and topics regarding the panels on the first two days of the Conference.

24. It was also noted that the ministerial discussion should be focused on the Ministerial Declaration; however, all controversial issues should be addressed beforehand.

25. The Committee agreed on the general outline of the agenda of the Conference.

**VIII. RULES OF PROCEDURE: DURATION, PARTICIPANTS,
INVOLVEMENT OF NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS
(Agenda item 8)**

26. The Committee adopted the rules of procedure of the Conference as set out in document ECE/AC.30/PC.1/2007/L.2.

**IX. DRAFT ELEMENTS FOR THE MINISTERIAL DECLARATION
(Agenda items 12 and 13)**

27. The secretariat presented the draft elements for the political declaration (ECE/AC.30/PC.1/2007/L.3) to initiate and guide the drafting process of the Ministerial Declaration. During the discussion that followed, proposals on issues to be included and emphasized were put forward. Participants recommended making the Ministerial Declaration short and punchy.

28. The Committee agreed that the concept of “intergenerational solidarity” should be replaced by “intergenerational collaboration”.

29. The Committee saw MIPAA/RIS as a good starting point for further work. At the same time, there was a need to be more forward-looking and to refresh the agenda, sharpening it with the fact that some issues have become current and timely.

30. The Committee underlined that the Ministerial Declaration should contain both achievements and forward-looking elements, calling for a holistic view that would include mainstreaming ageing and participation as well as the need to redefine ageing and all ages, and to differentiate among age groups.

31. Summarizing the discussion, the Committee agreed on three main subject domains for the Ministerial Declaration: health, work and intergenerational issues. These should be linked to healthy ageing and the extension of the working age. Issues of social security, social protection and pensions should also be adequately addressed.

32. The Committee requested the secretariat to prepare the first draft of the Ministerial Declaration based on the discussion that had taken place.

X. TITLE OF THE CONFERENCE (Agenda item 14)

33. The secretariat made a presentation on the subject of the title for the Conference, which should refer to the process of ageing and should be translatable into all relevant languages.

34. The Committee agreed on the Conference title, “A Society for All Ages: Challenges and Opportunities”.

XI. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS (Agenda items 10 and 11)

35. The secretariat gave a presentation on the background documents for the Conference. Country reports would be used by the secretariat to prepare a summary report for the Conference, to be finalized by the end of August.

36. The secretariat was requested to take steps towards making the country reports publicly available, by providing links to the webpages of the respective ministries of member States.

XII. NEXT STEPS (Agenda item 15)

37. The Committee agreed to hold a two-day meeting of the Bureau, where the second day would be open to all participants of the Committee for the negotiation of the draft Ministerial Declaration and the fine-tuning of the agenda. The dates of the Bureau meeting would be 8 and 9 October 2007.

38. According to the work plan, the secretariat will distribute a first draft of the Ministerial Declaration to the Committee by 27 August 2007, requesting comments by 10 September. Based on the comments, the secretariat will prepare a second draft, which will be made available on 24 September, so as to be discussed at the meeting of 8 and 9 October.

XIII. CLOSURE OF THE MEETING

39. The secretariat informed the Committee that the report would be prepared soon after the meeting, in cooperation with the Chair.
