



**Economic and Social  
Council**

Distr.  
GENERAL

ECE/AC.30/PC.1/2007/3\*  
2 May 2007

Original: ENGLISH

---

**ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE**

**2007 UNECE CONFERENCE ON AGEING**

Preparatory Committee

First meeting  
Geneva, 12-13 July 2007  
Item 9 of the provisional agenda

**DISCUSSION OF THE DRAFT AGENDA OF THE CONFERENCE**

**PREPARATIONS FOR THE 2007 UNECE CONFERENCE ON AGEING**

**RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE EXPERT GROUP FOR  
THE CONFERENCE ON AGEING<sup>1</sup>**

Note by the secretariat

**CONTENTS**

		<i>Paragraphs</i>	<i>Pages</i>
Introduction .....		1	2-3
I. General principles for the 2007 UNECE Conference on Ageing	2	3	
A. Title .....	3-5	3-4	
B. Main issues and topics.....	6-12	4-5	
II. Format of the conference .....	13-16	5	
A. Topics of the thematic panels .....	17-21	5-7	

---

\* Re-issued for technical reasons.

<sup>1</sup> This document is also discussed under agenda items 5, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12, 13, and 14 of the provisional agenda.

## CONTENTS (continued)

	Paragraphs	Pages
B. Format of the thematic panels .....	22	8
III. Background documents/presentations and reports.....	23-24	8
IV. Ministerial Roundtable.....	25	8
V. Public events at the 2007 UNECE Conference on Ageing.....	26-27	8
VI. Documents to be distributed at the UNECE Conference on Ageing.....	28	8
VII. Civil society contributions to and involvement in the 2007 UNECE Conference on Ageing.....	29-31	8-9
VIII. Research.....	32	9
IX. Ageing related activities at the UNECE .....	33	9
X. Contributions by Austria and Spain.....	34	9

## Annexes

I. Manifesto by researchers .....	10-11
II. Civil society participation .....	12-14

Introduction

1. In the first cycle of the global review and appraisal of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing (MIPAA) (E/CN.5/2006/2), Regional Commissions were mandated to convene regional conferences (pending the availability of sufficient resources) to consider the findings of national reviews, share experiences and good practices, and identify priorities for future action, and to submit the findings to the Commission for Social Development in 2008. The UNECE Executive Committee approved the Work Plan on Population (ECE/EX/2007/L.4), which includes convening such conferences and the related preparatory meetings. In preparation for the 2007 UNECE Conference on Ageing, the UNECE secretariat established an Expert Group to provide policy advice and expert assistance to the intergovernmental Preparatory Committee of the Conference. The Joint Meeting of the Task Force Monitoring RIS and the Expert Group for the UNECE Conference on Ageing was held in Vienna, Austria, on 26-27 February 2007 at the invitation of the Government of Austria. In the present document, the conclusions of the Expert Group's work on the format and content of the Conference are submitted to the Preparatory Committee of the Conference for its consideration. In addition to

the present document, “Draft elements for the political declaration” (ECE/AC.30/PC.1/2007/6) and “draft elements for the agenda of the 2007 UNECE Conference on Ageing”

## **I. General principles for the 2007 UNECE Conference on Ageing**

2. Members of the Expert Group agreed that the Conference should take stock of the past to accomplish the review of the process since the implementation of MIPAA/RIS, as well as look forward in order to develop prospective strategies and ideas.

### **A. Title**

3. The experts emphasized the importance of choosing the right title for the Conference. The experts did not agree on a single proposal. Instead, a number of proposals were put forward. The proposals below were mentioned by one or more experts and did not receive vehement opposition. No title received a majority. The experts suggested that the Preparatory Committee consider the following criteria when choosing a title:

- (a) Focus on the process of ageing rather than older persons;
- (b) Strengthen intergenerational/ intragenerational solidarity;
- (c) Cooperation among different actors/ shared responsibilities;
- (d) Respond to new challenges, be forward looking;
- (e) Emphasize basic value of dignity of people of all ages;
- (f) Emphasize social cohesion, and the need to combat fragmentation and discrimination;
- (g) Emphasize the positive aspects of extended life-spans for individuals as well as for society at large;
- (h) Be stimulating and encouraging;
- (i) Focus on active longevity and self-attainment without being normative.

4. The experts therefore recommended that the Preparatory Committee consider the following ideas and engage in the necessary discussions to decide on an appropriate title.

- (a) Meeting the challenges of longer-life societies
- (b) Maximizing longevity: Empowering Older Persons in a Society for All Ages
- (c) Maximizing longevity's benefits: Social and economic elements for cooperation to advance quality of life
- (d) Extending well-being in ageing societies
- (e) Building wellness across ageing
- (f) A society for all ages: making a vision a reality
- (g) A society for all ages: Making the vision a reality
- (h) Challenges and chances of ageing societies.

5. The title “Rejuvenating long-life societies” was strongly supported by one expert, who argued that the seemingly paradoxical fact that a person of the same age – however “young” or “old” – becomes ever younger the longer he or she lives points to a very pleasant feature of ageing societies, namely that the remaining lifetime continues to expand while we are living our lives. This title also received support, for its puzzling and thought-provoking character.

B. Main issues and topics

6. The experts concluded that the phenomenon of ageing needs all policies to contribute for positive development. Thus the documents and programmes of the meetings as well as the keynote speeches should be thematically horizontal, not arranged by sector. The interdependence of policies addressing the phenomenon of ageing societies calls for a horizontal approach. Mainstreaming of ageing, as already demanded by the Berlin Strategy, likewise calls for a comprehensive approach. Therefore, efforts should be made to cover aspects of the different sectors of ageing under overarching themes during the Conference.

7. The issue of monitoring was raised, in particular if it should be handled as a thematic item in itself or automatically be included in every session. Certain experts argued that monitoring should be a self-evident component in all areas of action. However, others asserted that the bottom-up participatory approach goes beyond the concept of monitoring; therefore, in the interests of increasing participation, it should be included in the agenda.

8. Another main focus was the need to identify cross-cutting issues between different areas related to ageing. The gender perspective, for example, is highly cross-dimensional and should be included in each panel. The importance for the Conference of integrating different areas of action on ageing and elaborating overarching themes was highlighted. .

9. A proposal was made to include an item on environment into the agenda, which would contain issues such as transport, housing, and the accessibility of public institutions. The question was also raised of whether the impact of emerging issues such as globalization and new technologies on ageing should be addressed at the Conference. However, in the experts’ view these issues were not specific enough for the Conference, and there were concerns about including topics that are global in nature, and as such, less specific to ageing.

10. Regarding the additional challenges countries in the Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia (EECCA) region are facing due to economic hardships and the lack of capacity, a development perspective should be included in the ageing approach as well. The experts noted that it is important to bear in mind the Millennium Development Goals<sup>2</sup> (MDGs), and stressed that development, the MDGs and ageing, in the context of the countries of the EECCA region, merit particular attention at the Conference.

11. The experts particularly emphasized the need to promote the well-being and health of aged people, and that the focus of ageing policies should be on the mental, physical and social activities of older persons.

---

<sup>2</sup> The capacity development workshop on ageing held in Chisinau, Moldova, from 13 to 16 March 2007 provided an opportunity for some of the experts who were also present in Vienna to reiterate the high importance of this topic.

12. In general, the experts highlighted the need for further research in various fields connected to ageing in order to develop suitable strategies to address the changing structures of society. A proposal by researchers in the field of ageing represented at the Vienna meeting is attached in Annex I.

## **II. Format of the Conference**

13. The Expert Group decided to propose to the Preparatory Committee a three-day Conference, plus a one-day forum for non-governmental organizations (NGOs) before the Conference. The third day would consist of a ministerial segment.

14. The Expert Group decided to recommend that the Preparatory Committee have several thematic panels, during three sessions (afternoon of day 1, and morning and afternoon of day 2). Two panels would always be running in parallel.

15. The experts agreed that monitoring, reviewing and updating the MIPAA/RIS should be the objective of the Conference. However, the proposal of dedicating one full day to general country reports (addressing questions such as “What have countries done so far to implement MIPAA?” and “What do they plan to meet commitments of RIS?”) did not find support.

16. Additional information is to be found in the “Draft elements for the agenda” (ECE/AC.30/PC.1/2007/L1).

### **A. Topics of the thematic panels**

17. The issue of topics for the thematic panels was discussed. Two main proposals (para.18 (a) and (b)) were discussed systematically and in detail. The second proposal was generally supported by the experts and members of the Task Force.

18. Regarding the titles of the thematic panels, the experts emphasized that the titles that provoke lively debate, such as “no forced retirement as a human right”, should be favoured.

#### **(a) Cluster of commitments**

- (i) Policy actions aimed at achieving a society for all ages (RIS Commitments 1 and 8)
- (ii) Intergenerational solidarity and relationships in family and society (2,7,9)
- (iii) Population ageing: challenges and opportunities for economic growth and societal development (3)
- (iv) Adjustment of social protection systems and labour markets (4,5,6)
- (v) Lessons from review and appraisal: new insights gained with the bottom-up participatory approach and from cooperation with civil society

#### **(b) Horizontal and comprehensive topics emphasizing the need for the coordination of different policies**

- (i) Creating integrated and coordinated approaches to ageing

- (ii) Human rights, participation and social inclusion
- (iii) Intergenerational dynamics in ageing societies
- (iv) Lifelong learning/growth/extending working lives
- (v) Ageing and poverty<sup>3</sup>
- (vi) Quality of life/independent living and promotion of self-sufficiency/living arrangements/social isolation and loneliness
- (vii) Health (including mental health), well-being and active ageing
- (viii) Balancing care strategies in ageing societies
- (ix) Review and appraisal of the Research Agenda on ageing

Further options mentioned included the following:

**(c) Cross-cutting issues as topics**

- (i) Human rights
- (ii) Quality of life/social quality
- (iii) Gender
- (iv) Monitoring
- (v) National action plans
- (vi) Research

**(d) Cross-sectoral, comprehensive themes as topics**

- (i) Enabling environments (transportation, housing, technology, etc.)
- (ii) Participation
- (iii) Guidelines for national implementation of MIPAA
- (iv) Ensuring the political inclusion of older persons
- (v) Raising visibility of older persons
- (vi) Integrated and coordinated policies for ageing
- (vii) Bottom-up approach
- (viii) Migration
- (ix) Emerging issues
- (x) Volunteerism

**(e) Specific priority issues as topics**

- (i) Health and well-being
- (ii) Environment

---

<sup>3</sup> It is suggested to use a broad definition of poverty, including different aspects such as social, economic and cultural.

- (iii) Development (e.g. transformation of labour markets)
- (iv) Goals for a society of longevity
- (v) Millennium Development Goals

**(f) Cross-dimensional topics**

- (i) A sense of purpose: Strategies for active ageing
  - Lifelong learning
  - Civic participation and volunteerism
  - Role of the media in promoting positive ageing
- (ii) Alleviating poverty among older persons
  - Employment strategies
  - Pension schemes
  - Rural older persons
- (iii) Health and well-being
  - Health promotion and health literacy
  - Health systems
  - Creating liveable communities for all ages
  - Transportation
  - Universal design
  - Independent living/living arrangements
- (iv) Balancing care strategies in ageing societies
- (v) Review and appraisal of the Research Agenda on ageing

19. The opportunities and positive aspects of the ageing process in society should be emphasized in each panel.

20. The experts emphasized that the 2007 UNECE Conference on Ageing should further the agenda of the 2002 Berlin Ministerial Conference and focus on new findings and priority areas since the Berlin Conference. Thus, it was agreed to base the recommendation to the Preparatory Committee on the option in para 18(b). This proposal emphasizes the needs for a horizontal and comprehensive approach and for the coordination of different policies, rather than focusing on a sectoral approach.

21. The proposal is also contained in the document, "Draft elements for the agenda".

**B. Format of the thematic panels**

22. The experts agreed that a keynote speaker should introduce each thematic session. The panellists should represent a balance between experts, government representatives and civil society representatives.

**III. Background documents/ presentations and reports**

23. It was pointed out that it should be borne in mind that the main objective of the Conference was the monitoring, reviewing and updating of the MIPAA/RIS. In all sessions, a guiding structure might be followed by participants, with the goal of fulfilling this objective whatever the strategy followed for monitoring, reviewing and updating the MIPAA (i.e. bottom-up or top-down approach). Also, this guiding structure might be in the reports made by representatives of member States and by other organizations. Finally, the role of the European Centre for Social Welfare Policy and Research, Vienna in this process should be reflected.

24. It was also suggested that demographic issues with relation to ageing be addressed in one of the keynote speeches in the plenary.

**IV. Ministerial Roundtable**

25. The Ministerial Roundtable should focus on intergenerational solidarity. The experts emphasized, however, that due attention should be paid to ensure that the discussion remains clearly focused and pragmatic.

**V. Public events at the 2007 UNECE Conference on Ageing**

26. To make the Conference more visible, an appealing title should be found. If one agenda item of the Conference could include the public outside the conference hall, this would be a positive step. This event should focus on intergenerational solidarity.

27. In addition, the media should be encouraged to do a live transmission of the Ministerial Roundtable discussion.

**VI. Documents to be distributed at the UNECE Conference on Ageing**

28. The experts emphasized the need at the Conference to make publicly available the main documents related to ageing, including the MIPAA/RIS, the MDGs, and the United Nations Principles for Older Persons, as well as the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs Guidelines for implementing the bottom-up participatory approach.

**VII. Civil Society Contributions to and Involvement in the 2007 UNECE Conference on Ageing**

29. The need for full participation and involvement of civil society in the process of the 2007 UNECE Conference on Ageing was strongly emphasized. The paper on the contributions and

involvement of civil society to the Conference, which was unanimously adopted by the experts, is attached in Annex II.

30. It was also emphasized that the UNECE member States should support the involvement of their national NGOs and other national groups in the field of ageing (e.g. researchers and experts) in the preparation of the Conference. The involvement of every stakeholder in every country was seen as a key to the success of the Conference.

31. In addition, it was suggested that the activities of organized civil society in the field of ageing should not only be described, but should address strategic deficits and impediments arising from the public sector, in particular those of not involving NGOs in development and reform processes, and the lack of readiness on the part of federal and local governments as well as municipalities to provide NGOs with the necessary resources.

### **VIII. Research**

32. All experts and members of the Task Force emphasized the need for further strengthen research in the field of ageing in the UNECE member States. Annex I reflects the common position of the researchers present at the meeting in Vienna.

### **IX. Ageing related activities at the UNECE**

33. The members of the Expert Group and the Task Force called for the strengthening of the capacities of UNECE Population Activities Unit (PAU), particularly so that it could adequately support the follow-up to the international forums on ageing and find appropriate arrangements for the intergovernmental supervision of its work. Some members also suggested requesting the Preparatory Committee to consider including the issue in the draft Political Declaration. The Task Force for Monitoring MIPAA/RIS agreed to draft a letter to the relevant ministers of the UNECE member States, asking for additional support for the work of the UNECE secretariat on population ageing.

### **X. Contributions by Austria and Spain**

34. The experts unanimously expressed their appreciation to the Governments of Austria and Spain for their support the work of the UNECE PAU and the European Centre for Social Welfare Policy and Research, Vienna. They also emphasized the need to continue with the Task Force Monitoring RIS and the work of the European Centre for Social Welfare Policy and Research, Vienna.

## ANNEX I

### Manifesto by researchers

### Research Forum

in preparation for the

UNECE CONFERENCE ON AGEING

León, Spain: 6-8 November 2007

1. Experts participating in the joint meeting (Vienna, 26-27 February, 2007) for the preparation of the UNECE Conference on Ageing (León, November 2007) strongly emphasized the importance of research for responding to population ageing and providing evidence for improving the implementation and evaluation of the MIPAA/RIS.

2. Before the Second World Assembly on Ageing and the Berlin Ministerial Conference on Ageing, several meetings were organized thanks to the joint efforts of the United Nations Programme on Ageing and the International Association of Gerontology (IAG).

3. Finally, before the Second World Assembly on Ageing – where, at the same time, NGOs met – a Research Forum on Ageing took place in Valencia, Spain, in April, 2002. As a result of all these meetings, a *Research Agenda on Ageing for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* was developed and published (IAG, 2003), and afterwards adapted to the European region (Andrews et al., 2006).

4. The RIS has taken into consideration research as a “motto” in the development and advancement of political actions on ageing as well as in its role as contributing role to a bottom-up and top-down review and appraisal.

5. Therefore, the UNECE Conference on Ageing has to be open to the following issues:

- (a) *Focal Points* should include research as one of the components of their RIS reviews and appraisal.
- (b) A *Research Forum* is required in which experts can discuss the contributions from research to the implementation of the MIPAA in the region as well as in what extent the Research Agenda has also been implemented. This Forum could take place before the Conference (at the same time when the NGOs are meeting). In addition, one of the thematic panels could be devoted to research.
- (c) The *Political Declaration* should emphasize that “Scientific research is vital to enable Europe to respond to population ageing, to provide evidence for policy, practice and citizens. To be effective research must be multi-disciplinary, well funded, based on international collaboration and, ultimately, directed towards improving the quality of people’s lives as they age”.

**QUESTIONS TO BE INCLUDED IN THE QUESTIONNAIRE ON THE FOLLOW-UP  
TO THE UNECE MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE ON AGEING**

The experts also recommend, in future evaluations on the follow-up to MIPAA/RIS, to include a specific element on research. The questions could be as follows:

Research

In the past five years have there been any national programmes of ageing research?

Yes      No

If yes,

How many such programmes?\_\_\_\_\_

What is the total level of funding?\_\_\_\_\_

What fields have been covered by these programmes?\_\_\_\_\_

Is there a national body responsible for coordinating ageing research?

Yes      No

If yes, what is its name?\_\_\_\_\_

**ANNEX II**  
**Civil Society Participation**

**VIENNA DECLARATION ON NGO PARTICIPATION**

**PARTICIPATION OF ORGANIZED CIVIL SOCIETY IN PREPARATIONS FOR THE  
UNECE CONFERENCE ON AGEING, LEÓN, NOVEMBER 2007**

1. In its session in February 2006, the Commission for Social Development concluded a panel discussion on the subject of participation with the statement that “It is clear that bottom-up, participatory review and appraisal can be a tool of better decision making and improved policies and programmes. ... The social perspective they introduce provides new and essential information to policymakers and increases their understanding of actual conditions for older persons in their country. ... Encouraging active involvement ... in the review and appraisal exercises can help to overcome stereotypes and lead to greater social capital, as people connect, share experience and resources, organize networks to promote their interests and well being, and contribute to better policies.”

2. Experts participating in the preparatory meeting held in Vienna on 26-27 February 2007 strongly emphasized that participation of people through organized civil society, and in particular NGOs, is one of the decisive factors for social cohesion and social quality of a society – and this in particular in the area of policies promoting a society for all ages. In this context, participation means more than consultation. It means the active involvement of relevant stakeholders in the design, preparation, implementation, delivery and evaluation of policies and programmes aiming at the improvement of living conditions and the well-being of people – in particular of older persons.

NGO participation in the UNECE Conference on Ageing, León, 2007

- (a) When conceiving a strategy for the involvement of NGOs in the preparatory process for the forthcoming León Conference, it is of particular value to remember an experience, which produced excellent results, recognized by both by Governments and NGOs, which must be considered as the guiding precedent.
- (b) In the preparation for the RIS of the UNECE region and the 2002 Berlin Ministerial Conference on Ageing, NGOs in the field of ageing both at the national or regional levels were closely involved in all major stages of the process.
- (c) In particular, representatives of such NGOs participated in the three technical expert meetings, which identified the major issues addressed by the RIS and in the Political Declaration.
- (d) Two NGO representatives, serving in their personal capacity, were members of the Drafting Committee preparing the RIS, and five NGO representatives introduced NGO views and demands into the negotiations of the Open-Ended Working Group on the RIS.

- (e) NGOs had previously pre-negotiated their common positions during a Preparatory NGO Meeting attended by some 70 NGO representatives from major international and national networks on ageing from the UNECE region and its member States. These were then presented in a consolidated NGO contribution to the process.
- (f) The draft of the Regional Implementation Strategy which was negotiated by UNECE member States in the Open-Ended Working Group contained in an integrated form the consolidated remarks and demands of the NGOs. Five NGO representatives took part in the negotiations but, obviously, without voting rights.
- (g) At the 2002 Berlin Ministerial Conference, a spokesperson representing the world of NGOs in the area of ageing had the opportunity to voice the concerns of this sector in a speech which was an integral element of the plenary and prominently placed in the programme.
- (h) This final contribution was highly appreciated by government representatives. In fact, it was one of the motivations of the creation of the Task Force monitoring RIS initiated by the Government of Austria in order to benefit in a systematic way from the expertise of civil society at large.
- (i) The preparatory process for the UNECE Conference on Ageing to be held in León 2007 has to at least match the qualitative criteria set and so successfully experienced by all partners during preparations for the 2002 Berlin Ministerial. It would be a most regrettable political and strategic error to fall behind these standards.
- (j) This means that the importance of close involvement of organizations of older persons or working for them needs to be fully recognized in all relevant documents of technical and political nature and such NGOs be full fledged partners of Governments at all stages of the preparatory process.
- (k) In particular, NGOs should be asked to contribute to the main background document for the León Conference, a representative of the NGO world should participate in the drafting group responsible for this background paper, and NGO experts serving in their personal capacity need to be members of the Expert Group and participate in the open-ended Preparatory Committee for the Conference.
- (l) The UNECE Conference on Ageing in León has to be open to NGO participation, and needs to provide, at a prominent time in the programme, the opportunity to NGOs to communicate their views, concerns and visions as a crucial societal community.
- (m) It has to be acknowledged as a *conditio sine qua non* that NGO involvement requires timely and adequate financial and technical support for NGOs to be able to organize themselves in a transversal manner for the process and produce consolidated positions reflecting the issues of common concern –not just individual stances of different organizations.
- (n) While the “NGO Forum” to take place the day before the UNECE conference in León will have a predominantly public interest character, NGOs need the possibility to meet already in late Spring or early summer to be able to prepare in

common their contributions to the conference – and in particular to the background papers, the contents of the conference programme and the envisaged outcome. The necessary funding needs to be insured.

3. Finally, the joint meeting of the Task Force and the Expert Group also strongly recommended that the UNECE member States be encouraged to include civil society representatives, particularly from NGOs active in the field of ageing, in their delegations to the UNECE Conference on Ageing in León to be held in November 2007.

4. This “Roadmap” on the participation of organized civil society in preparations for the UNECE Conference on ageing in León, November 2007, has been adopted unanimously by the joint meeting of the Task Force “Monitoring RIS” and the Expert Group for the preparation of the UNECE Conference on Ageing (around 35 persons) in their final working session in Vienna on 27 February 2007.

-----