

# UNECE Policy Seminar on Ageing

## Ageing and the Sustainable Development Goals

### Summary Report

UNECE's first Policy Seminar on Ageing that took place on 21 November 2018 at the Palais des Nations in Geneva, Switzerland, focused on the linkages between ageing-related policies and the Sustainable Development Goals. The Policy Seminar was attended by over 50 participants, including representatives from 30 UNECE member States, civil society and international organizations.

The purpose of the seminar was to increase awareness of the linkages between the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing and its Regional Implementation Strategy and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and to provide a space for experience sharing and peer learning among UNECE member States and civil society organizations.

### **I. Setting the scene: Older Persons and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development**

The day was introduced by Vitalija Gaucaite Wittich, Chief of the Population Unit at UNECE and Lidia Bratanova, Director of the Statistical Division of UNECE, who reminded participants about the policy challenge of integrating ageing in the national implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and of its significance to ageing-related policies given its holistic and ambitious pledge of leaving no one behind.

*The 2030 Agenda: interconnected, integrated, inclusive, universal and transformative*

Setting the scene, Michael Kunz, SDG expert from the UNECE Sustainable Development and Gender Unit, provided an overview on the 2030 Agenda and its relevance for the region. He traced the history from the Millennium Development Goals which focused on development to the 2030 Agenda which joins the development and sustainability dimensions in a universal agenda that applies to all member States. The 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the 2030 Agenda are interconnected and their implementation requires an integrated approach. This provides an opportunity to overcome silos and many countries have put in place inter-ministerial coordination processes that foster more holistic thinking and integrated policy making across government departments.

*Ageing, Older Persons and the 2030 Agenda*

Verity McGivern<sup>1</sup>, Help Age International's 2030 Agenda Advocacy Manager and Co-Chair of the Stakeholder Group on Ageing, focused on the place of older persons in the 2030 Agenda and shared her insights on the role and achievements of the Stakeholder Group on Ageing<sup>2</sup> in ensuring that the needs and contributions of older persons are taken in account of at the global level.

---

<sup>1</sup> [http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/pau/age/PS2018/Presentations/01\\_03\\_Older\\_people\\_and\\_the\\_SDGs.pdf](http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/pau/age/PS2018/Presentations/01_03_Older_people_and_the_SDGs.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.stakeholdergrouponageing.org/>

Age or older persons are explicitly mentioned in a number of SDG targets, notably 2.2, 11.2, 11.7 (older persons) and 10.2. 17.18 (age). However, it was stressed that a focus on these few areas would be quite limiting and it is instead important to focus on the broader commitments made in the resolution<sup>3</sup>. Key policy issues that are covered by the 2030 Agenda and pertinent to older persons are income (SDGs 1, 5, 8, 9, 10), health and care (SDGs 3, 2, 5), discrimination, violence and abuse (SDGs 5, 10, 16) and voice and accountability (SDGs 5, 10 and 16).

In highlighting the broader significance of the 2030 Agenda to the ageing community, Verity McGivern outlined three ways of approaching the SDGs, according to the level of ambition: first, focusing on the targets in which older persons are specifically mentioned; second, identifying where the SDGs can support one's existing policy agenda in the field of ageing to strengthen the arguments already made in the policy spaces within which one is already working; and third, recognizing and leveraging the potential for transformative impact through the SDGs that provides the opportunity for mainstreaming ageing and older people into the broader policy discourse on sustainable development. She noted that the 2030 Agenda has had a disruptive impact challenging traditional policy making; creating new spaces and structures and opportunities for enhanced visibility of ageing issues and for political commitment.

Ongoing challenges include the lack of commitment at national level. Most of the discussion at the global level is shaped by civil society and the United Nations system; governments do not yet champion the issue of population ageing within the context of the 2030 Agenda. She noted that more engagement at national level would positively influence discussions at the global level.

## II. Connecting MIPAA/RIS and the 2030 Agenda: Areas for policy integration

The 2030 Agenda highlights that “it is important to recognize the link between sustainable development and other relevant ongoing processes in the economic, social and environmental fields”<sup>4</sup>. While the targets are ambitious and global, it is up to each government to decide how they should be incorporated into national planning processes, policies and strategies.

The second session of the policy seminar focused on highlighting the linkages between the 2030 Agenda and the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing and its Regional Implementation Strategy, including specifically the policy priorities identified in the 2017 Lisbon Ministerial Declaration.

In her presentation<sup>5</sup>, Lisa Warth, UNECE Population Unit, mapped out the policy linkages between selected SDGs (1, 3, 4, 5, 8, 10, 11, 16, and 17) and ageing-related policy priorities. These are detailed in the background paper<sup>6</sup> “Connecting MIPAA/RIS and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development: Areas for Policy Integration” and summarised in the table below.

---

<sup>3</sup> [A/RES/70/1 – Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#)

<sup>4</sup> Paragraph 55 of A/RES/70/1

<sup>5</sup> [http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/pau/age/PS2018/Presentations/02\\_01\\_Connecting\\_MIPAA\\_RIS\\_and\\_SDGs.pdf](http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/pau/age/PS2018/Presentations/02_01_Connecting_MIPAA_RIS_and_SDGs.pdf)

<sup>6</sup> [http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/pau/age/PS2018/MIPAA\\_RIS\\_2030\\_Agenda\\_Areas\\_for\\_Policy\\_Integration.pdf](http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/pau/age/PS2018/MIPAA_RIS_2030_Agenda_Areas_for_Policy_Integration.pdf)

## Selected examples of ageing-related policies contributing to achieving the SDGs

- SDG 1 Policy measures that **ensure social protection across the life course and prevent poverty in old age** contribute to the implementation of SDG1 which is to end poverty in all its forms everywhere.
- SDG 3 Policy measures that **promote healthy ageing and ensure access to health services, social and long-term care** contribute to achieving SDG 3 which is to ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages
- SDG 4 Policies that increase **access to and encourage participation in lifelong learning and training opportunities for older persons** contribute to SDG4 which is to ensure inclusive and equitable equality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all
- SDG 5 Policies that are designed **to reduce gender gaps in old age which are often the result of lifelong accumulated disadvantage experienced by women** contribute to achieving SDG 5 which is to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls
- SDG 8 Policies that **encourage longer working lives and the ability to work** contribute to achieving SDG 8 which is to promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all.
- SDG 10 Policies **promoting inclusion and participation of older persons** contributes to achieving SDG 10 which is to reduce inequality within and among countries
- SDG 11 Policies aimed at **creating age-friendly environments, including accessible and affordable housing, transport, and public space** contributes to achieving SDG11 which is to make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable
- SDG 16 Policies aimed at **involving older persons in decision-making, combating age-based discrimination and ageism, and fighting elder abuse** contribute to achieving SDG 16 which is to promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels
- SDG 17 **Developing ageing-related statistics to monitor and evaluate ageing-related policies** contributes to implementing SDG 17 which is to strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development

Olga Kharitonova from the UNECE Population Unit drew attention to the relevance of active ageing to the 2030 Agenda in her presentation<sup>7</sup>. Realizing the potential of older persons through active ageing also contributes to the implementation of the SDGs. This was illustrated by mapping indicators of the Active Ageing Index (AAI) against corresponding goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda. The AAI covers aspects of goals 1, 3, 4, 5, 8, 10, 11, 16 and 17 and more specifically targets 1.2, 3.2, 3.4, 3.5, 3.8, 4.3, 4.4, 5.4, 5.5, 8.5, 10.2, 10.4, 11.7 16.1, 16.7, and 17.8.

### III. Integrating ageing into national implementation and reviews of the 2030 Agenda

The third session of the policy seminar then moved from theory to practice. Andreas Schaller from Austria<sup>8</sup>, Anahit Martirosyan from Armenia<sup>9</sup> and Martin Amberger from Germany<sup>10</sup> looked at how the integration of the two agendas works in their respective national contexts. They shared national

---

<sup>7</sup> [http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/pau/age/PS2018/Presentations/02\\_02\\_AAI\\_Linkages\\_with\\_SDGs.pdf](http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/pau/age/PS2018/Presentations/02_02_AAI_Linkages_with_SDGs.pdf)

<sup>8</sup> [http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/pau/age/PS2018/Presentations/03\\_01\\_Austria.pdf](http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/pau/age/PS2018/Presentations/03_01_Austria.pdf)

<sup>9</sup> [http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/pau/age/PS2018/Presentations/03\\_02\\_Armenia.pdf](http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/pau/age/PS2018/Presentations/03_02_Armenia.pdf)

<sup>10</sup> [http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/pau/age/PS2018/Presentations/03\\_03\\_Germany.pdf](http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/pau/age/PS2018/Presentations/03_03_Germany.pdf)

experience of the integration of ageing into the national implementation of the 2030 Agenda, reflecting on opportunities for integration and barriers and what stakeholders on ageing – in government, civil society and academia – can do to ensure that the concerns and contributions of older persons are taken into account.

Heidrun Mollenkopf from BAGSO<sup>11</sup>, the German National Association of Senior Citizens' Organisations, shared examples of measures taken by civil society actors in Germany to contribute to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

Elena Proden from the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR)<sup>12</sup> gave an overview of available learning tools developed on the 2030 Agenda to raise awareness among policy makers at national level and build capacity on key processes related to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda at national level, such as stakeholder engagement.

Several participants shared national experience during the subsequent discussion from the floor.

#### **IV. Empowering people and ensuring inclusiveness and equality – the 2019 SDG review**

The afternoon session continued in the spirit of exchange and peer learning with the opportunity to share policy measures implemented at national level that contribute to achieving the SDGs. Given the in-depth review of Goals 4 (Quality Education), 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), 10 (Reduced inequality) and 16 (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions) amongst others at the High-level Political Forum in New York in 2019, the discussion focused on national ageing-related policies contributing to their achievement.

Michael Kunz introduced the session with a brief outline of the 2019 Regional Forum on Sustainable Development organized by UNECE on 21-22 March 2019 under the theme of “Empowering people and ensuring inclusiveness and equality”. Participants exchanged on possible case studies on ageing-related policies that could be presented at the Regional Forum.

#### **V. Closing**

In the closing session, Lisa Warth and Vitalija Gaucaite Wittich summarised the key themes which had emerged during the discussions and participants were invited to provide feedback.

The background paper, concept note, list of participants and all presentation slides are available for download on the meeting page: <http://www.unece.org/index.php?id=49374>

\*\*\*

---

<sup>11</sup> [http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/pau/age/PS2018/Presentations/03\\_05\\_Bagso\\_Germany.pdf](http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/pau/age/PS2018/Presentations/03_05_Bagso_Germany.pdf)

<sup>12</sup> [http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/pau/age/PS2018/Presentations/03\\_04\\_UNITAR.pdf](http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/pau/age/PS2018/Presentations/03_04_UNITAR.pdf)