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Item 5 of the provisional agenda

Implementation of the WGA work programme in 2016

Implementation of the Work Programme of the Working Group on Ageing in 2016

Note by the Secretariat

I. Introduction

1. The United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) Working Group on Ageing (WGA) was established in 2008 as an intergovernmental mechanism to facilitate implementation of the ECE Regional Strategy for the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing (MIPAS/RIS).

2. The Vienna Ministerial Declaration (ECE/AC.30/2012/3), adopted by 50 member States at the UNECE Ministerial Conference on Ageing in September 2012 (Vienna, Austria), reaffirmed the mandate of the WGA and provided guidance to its work programme for the third MIPAA/RIS implementation cycle. Consequently, at its sixty-second meeting on 11 July 2013, the ECE Executive Committee renewed the Working Group's mandate through the end of 2017 (ECE/EX/2013/L.7) and at its seventy-fourth session on 17 December 2014 approved the revised terms of reference of the WGA (ECE/EX/18).

3. Taking into account the goals and measures outlined by the Vienna Ministerial Declaration, the Working Group, at its sixth meeting on 25-26 November 2013, agreed upon main elements of its programme of work for 2014–2017 (ECE/WG.1/2013/2).

4. This document is prepared for the ninth WGA meeting. It addresses the implementation of the programme of work in 2016, including the carrying out of the third cycle of review and appraisal of MIPAA/RIS, preparations for the Ministerial Conference in 2017, and main outputs for the key areas of activity: policy briefs with good practice

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examples; capacity development; monitoring implementation of MIPAA/RIS and strengthening the evidence base for policymaking.

II. Implementation of the main elements of the work programme for 2016

A. Third cycle of the review and appraisal of MIPAA/RIS implementation and preparations for the Ministerial Conference in 2017

1. Review and appraisal of MIPAA/RIS implementation

5. National reports on MIPAA/RIS implementation progress should be submitted to the ECE Secretariat by the end of October 2016. By the time of preparing this note, the majority of ECE member States were actively engaged in drafting these reports and conducting consultations with the civil society and other stakeholders. A number of national conferences on ageing are planned to take place later in 2016 (Armenia, the Czech Republic, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine). Based on the accounts received from member States the Secretariat will prepare a synthesis report, outlining major trends in the region, including progress made and remaining challenges.

6. As indicated in the guidelines, the 22 active ageing indicators need to be included in the statistical annex to the national reports. The Secretariat sent pre-filled statistical annexes to the countries for which data on these indicators are available.¹ Countries for which no data on active ageing indicators are available from the international data sources have to submit their own statistical annexes.

2. ECE Ministerial Conference on Ageing

7. In July 2016, the Minister for Labour, Solidarity and Social Security of Portugal proposed to host the Ministerial Conference on Ageing in Lisbon, Portugal, in September 2017 under the theme “A Sustainable Society for All Ages: Realizing the Potential of Living Longer”. The Secretariat and the partners from the Portuguese Government are currently engaged in the preparation of the Host Country Agreement.

8. A concept note on the structure of the Ministerial Conference including the schedule, agenda and possible panellists was prepared by a subgroup of the Bureau. Bureau members agreed at their meeting in May to have mixed panels of 5 panellists including experts, policymakers and NGO representatives. The concept note was shared with the Working Group and will be discussed at the WGA meeting in November.

9. An initial draft of the declaration for the Ministerial Conference was prepared by a subgroup of the Bureau. The draft was sent to the Working Group members prior to the ninth WGA meeting to facilitate the debates on the declaration text by the discussion groups in the course of the meeting. Official consultations with member States on the draft will start in 2017.

10. At the Bureau meeting in May it was agreed that organizing committees should be formed for the NGO and research forums with several institutes or organizations involved.

¹ Data for these indicators are available for countries that were included in the Active Ageing Index project (all EU countries and Canada, Iceland, Norway, Switzerland).

The representative of the NGOs and the Executive Director of the European Centre for Social Welfare Policy and Research in Vienna (ECV) declared their readiness to chair the respective organizing committees and to make a proposal for participating institutes and organizations.

B. Policy Briefs with good practice examples

11. The series of Policy Briefs on Ageing provide information on policies and promote exchange of good practice examples among member States regarding different areas of MIPAA/RIS. The Policy Briefs integrate a wealth of contributions and experiences from member States. All published Policy Briefs are available on the UNECE website.²

12. Since the eighth meeting of the Working Group on Ageing in November 2015, one additional Policy Brief on the topic ‘Migration and older age’ was published. The extended outline of the brief was presented and discussed at the WGA meeting in November 2015 and the draft brief was sent out to all national focal points. This issue of Policy Brief was published and launched in July 2016 and is available in printed and electronic versions.

13. In April 2016, the Secretariat started work on the next Policy Brief, which, as decided at the eighth WGA meeting in 2015, is focusing on older persons in rural and remote areas. The extended outline of the brief was shared with the WGA together with a call to provide good practice examples in August 2016. The first draft of this Policy Brief will be presented at the ninth meeting of the WGA.

C. Capacity development

1. Road Maps for Mainstreaming Ageing

14. Road Maps for Mainstreaming Ageing, developed in collaboration with member States at their request, provide a guide through which the country in question can enhance implementation of the commitments of MIPAA/RIS taking into account specificities of the country. Road Maps have been developed for Armenia (2011), the Republic of Moldova (2012) and Georgia (2015).

15. The Road Map for Mainstreaming Ageing in Georgia was taken up by the national authorities for implementation. In May 2016, the Parliament of Georgia issued a resolution on the adoption of the “State Policy Concept on Population Ageing in Georgia” based on the Road Map’s recommendations. The Ministry of Labour, Health and Social Affairs of Georgia was charged to adopt the Action Plan on Ageing for 2016-2018 by August 2016. A multi-sectoral working group consisting of representatives of the Parliament of Georgia, the Government, non-governmental organizations and experts on population issues was instrumental in preparing the policy concept document and action plan.

16. An evaluation exercise was carried out to assess the progress in the implementation of the Road Map for Mainstreaming Ageing in Armenia, funded by Sweden as part of its contribution to the Ageing fund. An evaluation specialist was contracted to prepare the framework and carry out the evaluation. The evaluation comprised a desk review of available material and data sources, a questionnaire which was disseminated as an online survey to relevant stakeholders in Armenia and an evaluation mission to Armenia in April 2016. Working Group members from the Republic of Moldova and Sweden participated in

² Available from http://www.unece.org/pau/age/policy_briefs/welcome.html.

the evaluation mission alongside the evaluation expert and Secretariat staff. During the field mission, interviews and focus group discussions with key informants were conducted, among them representatives of ministries, non-governmental organizations, service providers, social partners and municipal authorities. The findings of the evaluation were summarized in an evaluation report which was published in September 2016.

2. Workshops

17. A second regional capacity-development workshop on addressing data gaps for active ageing indicators was held on 23 and 24 June in Minsk and hosted by the National Statistical Committee of the Republic of Belarus. It was organized thanks to the financial support of UNFPA's Regional Office for Eastern Europe and Central Asia and Sweden's contribution to the Ageing fund. The workshop was aimed at national focal points on ageing and representatives of the national statistical offices of Eastern European, Caucasus, Central Asian and Western Balkans countries. It reviewed the progress in preparing the statistical annexes to national reports of MIPAA/RIS implementation and provided consultations on the specific indicators as per requests from the participant countries.

D. Monitoring implementation of MIPAA/RIS and strengthening the evidence base for policymaking

1. Active Ageing Index (AAI)

18. The second phase of the AAI project by the ECE Population Unit and the European Commission's Directorate General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion started in October 2013 and was concluded in April 2016. Activities implemented in 2016 under the second phase (AAI-II) included the finalizing of pilot studies in Turkey and Serbia as well as the implementation of a pilot study at the local level in Germany. The preliminary results of this study were presented at the Peer Review in Berlin on 14-15 April 2016. The final report is available from the wiki-space devoted to AAI.³

19. The third phase (AAI-III) was launched in May 2016 and will continue through April 2019. Under this phase the following activities are being implemented in 2016:

- (a) Extending AAI coverage in time, i.e. computing 2016 AAI (based primarily on the data for 2014) for the countries which are carrying out the internationally harmonized social surveys.
- (b) Specific analysis of AAI results: the Population Unit launched a call for consultancy to carry out a comparative analysis of AAI results in at least two countries for different population groups, e.g. for urban and rural population, or for population with different education level or socio-economic status. The study will be completed in early 2017, and the results will be made available on the AAI wiki-space.
- (c) Communication, outreaching to stakeholders and coordinating the work of the Expert Group on the Active Ageing Index including the organization of its sixth meeting in October 2016.

³ Available from <http://www1.unece.org/stat/platform/display/AAI/Active+Ageing+Index+Home>.

2. The Generations and Gender Programme (GGP)

20. The Secretariat has continued to act as a clearinghouse for data administration of GGP and as a coordinator of the network of National Focal Points – the GGP Council of Partners. In this capacity the ECE Secretariat has co-organized two Council of Partners meetings since the last WGA session: on 2 December 2015 in Vienna, Austria and on 31 August 2016 in Mainz, Germany. As the co-ordinator of the GGP Council of Partners, the ECE Secretariat has had an important bridging function between those responsible for programme management and development and those in charge of its implementation at the national level.

21. The programme includes national surveys which are repeated in three-year intervals (panel surveys). Harmonized data from the first wave surveys are currently available for 19 countries (Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, France, Georgia, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Japan, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Romania, the Russian Federation, and Sweden). Second wave data are available for 9 countries (Australia, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, France, Georgia, Germany, Hungary, Lithuania, and the Netherlands). Survey micro-data are complemented by information on policies and legal frameworks in different countries which are stored in the Contextual Data Base.

22. A new round of GGP surveys is planned for 2019. In the meantime, three additional ECE countries – Belarus, Kazakhstan and Turkey – expressed their interest to join GGP. Belarus is most advanced in its preparations and is going to field the GGP survey in early 2017 with support of the UNFPA local office and experts of the Netherlands Interdisciplinary Demographic Institute (NIDI).

23. ECE handles data submissions by national teams and processes applications by scientists and experts who wish to use GGP data for their research.⁴ Since the eighth meeting of WGA, 70 applications were granted access for wave 1 data and 60 for wave 2 data. For data from Norway and Australia, where a special application procedure applies, 9 new data applications for wave 1 data and 9 for wave 2 data were granted access.

24. GGP is among the leading data sources for policy-relevant research on demographic trends and processes in the ECE region. In collaboration with its scientific partner NIDI, ECE promotes the use of evidence from GGP data as a basis for policymaking. The Secretariat has also maintained and updated the bibliography of GGP-based research.⁵ The bibliography currently has references to more than 1,100 GGP-based publications.

III. Conclusions

25. The third review and appraisal cycle of MIPAA/RIS and preparations for the 2017 Ministerial Conference on Ageing were at the centre of the activities of the ECE Secretariat and the WGA in 2016. As foreseen in the WGA programme of work for 2014–2017, the Vienna Ministerial Declaration (2012) has continued to provide an important framework of reference and helped to streamline activities in implementing and monitoring of MIPAA/RIS in the ECE region. The WGA has produced substantive outputs and has provided a framework for networking among national focal points to exchange information and share experiences. The involvement in the WGA activities provided additional impetus for some ECE member States (i.e. Georgia, the Republic of Moldova, Ukraine, etc.) to

⁴ Data can be accessed by registered users at www.ggp-i.org.

⁵ Available from <http://www.ggp-i.org/form/publications/>.

adjust their national policy frameworks in response to MIPAA/RIS and the Vienna Ministerial Declaration goals.

26. The substantive contributions to the ECE Ageing fund received since the Vienna Ministerial Conference (Estonia, Germany, Norway, and Sweden) facilitated implementation of activities foreseen in the programme of work for 2016, in particular the evaluation exercise on the Road Map on Mainstreaming Ageing in Armenia and the capacity-building workshop on active ageing indicators. The latter was also supported by the UNFPA Regional Office for Eastern Europe and Central Asia. The extra-budgetary funding received under the joint management project with the European Commission's Directorate General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion provided necessary resources to extend the country coverage of AAI and promote its use for policymaking and monitoring the impact of active ageing policy actions.
