



Economic Commission for Europe

Working Group on Ageing

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The Working Group on Ageing work programme for the fourth implementation cycle of the Regional Implementation Strategy for the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing

Main elements of the programme of work for 2018–2022

1. Introduction

1. The UNECE Ministerial Conference on Ageing in Lisbon in 2017 reaffirmed the mandate of the Working Group on Ageing (WGA) and pledged support for its activities. The draft programme of work for 2018-2022 foresees new and continuing elements of the WGA activities in response to the main goals of the 2017 Lisbon Ministerial Declaration and in alignment with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The realization of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing and its Regional Implementation Strategy (MIPAA/RIS) contributes to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, in particular of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 3, 8, 1, 5, 10, and 4 where the connections between the priority policy goals agreed in the Lisbon Ministerial Declaration and the SDGs are the strongest.

2. The new programme of work builds on the core activities which proved helpful in implementing MIPAA/RIS in the previous cycles: policy briefs, road maps for mainstreaming ageing, capacity-building workshops and monitoring of MIPAA/RIS implementation. These activities will be continued and adjusted to societal developments. They will be supplemented by new programme elements such as policy seminars and in-depth discussions focusing on specific elements under the three main goals of the 2017 Lisbon Ministerial Declaration.

3. To provide opportunities for exchange of experience with regard to the implementation of national strategies on ageing, networking and cross-sectoral collaboration to advance policies on ageing, including in relation to connecting ageing with the SDGs, the annual WGA meetings will continue dedicating time for country presentations and discussion group break-out sessions. In addition, the inter-agency coordination facilitated by the secretariat through the regular meetings of Geneva-based United Nations agencies and civil society organizations working on ageing will ensure regular communication and exchange on activities at the international level.

2. Main elements of the programme of work

4. The draft programme of work for 2018–2022 foresees activities in four main areas: (a) policy seminars and in-depths discussions; (b) preparation of policy briefs with good practice examples; (c) capacity development; and (d) monitoring implementation of MIPAA/RIS and strengthening the evidence base for policymaking. The suggested activities are in line with the EXCOM-approved programme of work of the Population component of the Housing, Land Management and Population subprogramme for 2018–2019 (ECE/WG.1/2017/5), and the ‘Draft Strategic Framework 2020–2021 for the Population component of the Housing, Land Management and Population subprogramme (ECE/WG.1/2017/Room Document 1).

A. Policy seminars and in-depth discussions

5. The policy-specific seminars or ‘master-classes’ that focus on policy challenges and responses developed by member States will be organized back-to-back with annual Working Group meetings to facilitate participation. Topics for policy seminars will be decided in consultation with the member States during the annual WGA meetings or based on an on-line questionnaire.

6. In-depths discussions based on papers/presentations prepared by invited experts to strengthen understanding of evidence-based and gender-sensitive policymaking would be organized during the annual WGA meeting (possibly every second year). The expert papers will preferably draw on survey-based research in the area of ageing and intergenerational relations such as the Generations and Gender Programme (GGP), the Survey of Health, Ageing and Retirement in Europe (SHARE), and others.

B. Policy Briefs with good practice examples

7. Policy briefs remain an important element of the new programme of work, as they provide access to evidence-based policy advice on specific aspects of MIPAA/RIS and showcase good practices from across the region. At least one policy brief per year will be prepared by the UNECE secretariat on a theme to be decided by the Working Group at its annual session. Topics reflecting the goals of the 2017 Lisbon Ministerial Declaration might be suggested by the discussion groups for consideration at the plenary session of the WGA meeting. Discussions during the policy seminars could also lead to development of a policy brief on a similar topic.

8. In accordance with the established pattern, the future Policy Briefs will include a gender-sensitive analysis of policy challenges and information about available policy options along with good practice examples, which will be prepared with inputs from the WGA discussion groups and the countries implementing the corresponding policies. Relevant sex and age-disaggregated statistical data should be included when available. UNECE member States are invited to translate the Policy Briefs into national languages to share ideas and make them accessible to a wider circle of professionals, policymakers and volunteers.

C. Capacity development

a) National and subregional workshops

9. In the UNECE region there are considerable differences among countries in relation to the stage of population ageing and the implementation of MIPAA/RIS. Therefore, in the work programme for the fourth cycle of MIPAA/RIS, priority could be given to national and subregional workshops that focus on specific challenges in the implementation of the goals of the Lisbon Ministerial Declaration. The WGA members are expected to contribute to such workshops alongside international organizations and the secretariat.

b) Road Maps for Mainstreaming Ageing and reviews of national policies on ageing

10. The Working Group is making efforts to develop capacity through the project on Road Maps for Mainstreaming Ageing. The aim of the project is to provide guidance to individual member States on how to formulate ageing-related policies in response to MIPAA/RIS. Ensuring synergy with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, future road maps for mainstreaming ageing will be designed in alignment with the national implementation of the SDGs. Road Maps are developed at the request of a member State and in accordance with the general terms of reference for the project approved by the WGA at its sixth meeting in November 2013.

11. In 2018–2022 the secretariat, with the support of WGA members, will be able to engage in the development of two Road Map projects. To initiate development of the Road Map project, any interested member States are invited to submit their written requests to the secretariat.

12. Field missions and other activities related to the evaluation and monitoring of road map implementation in the Republic of Moldova and/or Georgia, where the projects were completed in 2012 and 2015, respectively, may be undertaken if programme funding permits. Similarly, a peer assessment of recently developed national policies/strategies on ageing that were based on the Active Ageing Index framework could be considered.

c) Guidelines for Mainstreaming Ageing in the relevant policy areas

13. The Working Group in cooperation with the experts from academia and civil society organizations will develop more comprehensive guidance for mainstreaming ageing in all relevant policy areas. The recommendations will build on the acquired expertise through the Road Map projects and will be designed to integrate the objectives of 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development and its SDGs.

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

14. Monitoring MIPAA/RIS implementation and strengthening the evidence base for age- and gender-sensitive policymaking are core elements of the WGA programme of work for 2018–2022. They aim to (1) provide evidence for the ongoing review of policies towards raising the quality of life of older women and men and (2) engage key stakeholders in formulating and implementing policies and programmes that can improve the experiences of ageing for all and maintain the interconnected financial and social sustainability of public welfare systems in the UNECE region.

15. The approaches initiated during the third MIPAA/RIS implementation cycle will be pursued to strengthen monitoring capacities.

a) The WGA, supported by the UNECE secretariat and in collaboration with the European Commission, will strengthen the basis for using the Active Ageing Index (AAI) to monitor the implementation of MIPAA/RIS. In 2018–2019, in the framework of the ongoing ‘AAI – third phase’ project, the secretariat will coordinate implementation of several activities including carrying out AAI updates (total and by sex), examining its dynamics over the last decade and broadening country coverage as well as its application at subnational and local level.

b) The follow-up on recommendations of the UNECE Task Force on Ageing-related Statistics (with the voluntary participation of some WGA members) as well as the ongoing work of the UNECE Task Force on measuring old-age population in institutions should help to devise the core set of indicators to support the monitoring of MIPAA/RIS implementation and complement the national reports during the fourth review and appraisal cycle.

16. The Generations and Gender Programme (GGP) remains an essential component of data collection and research for the UNECE work on population issues. The secretariat will continue coordinating the GGP as an important gender-sensitive source of evidence for policymaking and monitoring implementation of MIPAA/RIS and the 2017 Lisbon Ministerial Declaration. Further participating countries will be sought through measures of advocacy, and the scientific community will be encouraged to use the data for their research. The Secretariat will continue to update the bibliography of publications using GGP data.

E. Preparations for the fourth cycle of the review and appraisal of MIPAA/RIS implementation and follow-up on related international agendas in the field of population and development

17. The decision of the Commission for Social Development about the procedure for the fourth review and appraisal exercise is to be expected at its 58th session in 2020 and is expected to follow in a similar manner to the previous review and appraisal exercises. In the process, synergies with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the follow-up to the 25-year review of the implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD +25) will be sought, especially in the context of responding to population dynamics within a human rights framework, including women's empowerment and gender equality.

18. In preparation of the fourth periodic review of the implementation of MIPAA/RIS in the UNECE region, a 20-year review of developments in addition to the more specific follow-up on the implementation of the Lisbon Declaration objectives will be conducted. The secretariat will coordinate the preparation of MIPAA+20 report and funding permitted will engage a research consultant to develop it. The twentieth anniversary of RIS will also provide an opportunity to revisit the strategy to aiming to enhance alignment with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

19. For timely and successful completion of the fourth review and appraisal cycle of MIPAA/RIS in 2022, the preparatory work may start at the twelfth meeting of the WGA in 2019 including an agreement on the timeline for preparation and submission of the country reports and their synthesis and on an outline of the guidelines for the country reports. Based on the outcomes of the discussion at the twelfth WGA meeting in 2019, the guidelines will be finalized and disseminated by the Bureau after its meeting in spring 2020. This will give member States about 15 months to document progress made and prepare country reports on the implementation of MIPAA/RIS and the goals of the 2017 Lisbon Ministerial Declaration. The Secretariat will prepare a synthesis report.

20. The preparatory work for the fifth UNECE Ministerial Conference on Ageing will start with the decision of the Commission for Social Development about the fourth review and appraisal exercise at its 58th session in 2020. UNECE member States will be invited to consider hosting the 2022 Ministerial Conference on Ageing. The potential host country will be invited to prepare a concept note for the fifth Ministerial Conference for discussion at the thirteenth meeting of the Working Group in 2020.

21. At its thirteenth meeting, the Working Group will start to function as the preparatory committee for the conference and will decide about the title of the conference and the possible political outcome document to conclude the fourth cycle of the review and appraisal of MIPAA/RIS. The Bureau will guide the preparations for the conference between the annual sessions of the Working Group. The host country will set up a conference support team led by a high-level representative and will work in close cooperation with the WGA Bureau and the secretariat.

3. Financing the programme of work

22. The Working Group's initial terms of reference (ECE/EX/2008/L.11) and their later amendments stipulated that its annual meetings are to be serviced by the UNECE secretariat without the need for additional resources (for the latest terms of reference see ECE/EX/2018/L.1. Annex 1). At the same time, member States agreed to establish a fund for voluntary contributions to support activities related to capacity development for ageing-related policymaking, better informed ageing-related policies in the region and more effective implementation of MIPAA/RIS.

23. The Population Unit in the Statistical Division of the UNECE secretariat is responsible for the work related to ageing, including servicing the meetings of the Working Group and its Bureau. The regular budget provides for two professional posts in the unit that limits the range of activities in the proposed programme of work. Delivering the activities and outputs envisaged for the fourth implementation cycle of MIPAA/RIS will require extrabudgetary resources to hire consultants and finance travel for experts and meeting participants from low- and lower-medium income countries. In response to the 2017 Lisbon Ministerial Declaration, members of the Working Group are invited to pledge financial resources and offer in-kind contributions in support of the implementation of the programme of work for 2018–2022.
