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Fourth meeting

Geneva, 21 and 22 November 2011

Item 3 of the provisional agenda

Work of the Bureau

Report on the third meeting of the Bureau of the Working Group on Ageing

I. Introduction

Attendance

1. The hosts of the meeting, representing Spain, welcomed participants and gave an introduction to the meeting.
2. The Chairperson, Ms. Erika Winkler representing Austria, thanked the hosts and opened the meeting.
3. The following member States were represented at the meeting: Armenia, Austria, Belgium, Georgia, Germany, Malta, and Spain. Representatives of Serbia and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland were unable to attend. Two representatives from the European Centre for Social Welfare Policy and Research (European Centre Vienna, ECV) participated in the meeting. A representative of the European Federation of Older Persons participated on behalf of non-governmental organizations (NGOs). The meeting was also attended by an additional representative of Austria and a representative of the Spanish Institute for Older Persons and Social Services (Instituto de Mayores y Servicios Sociales, IMSERSO).
4. The Bureau adopted the agenda.

II. Report on the extension of the mandate of the Working Group on Ageing by the UNECE Executive Committee

5. The Chairperson and the secretariat reported on the request made at the 39th meeting of the United Nations Commission for Europe (UNECE) Executive Committee on 16 December 2010, to extend the mandate of the Working Group on Ageing (WGA) for three

years. It was reported that this request had been formally approved by the Executive Committee at a subsequent meeting on 4 March 2011 (see ECE/EX/2011/L.6).

6. The secretariat reported that the 64th session of the Economic Commission for Europe was due to take place in the forthcoming week and that the draft decisions included a statement of recognition of the central role of the WGA in coordinating the regional element of the second cycle of review and appraisal of the implementation of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing and its Regional Implementation Strategy (MIPAA/RIS) in 2011-2013.

7. The representative of NGOs noted that the document requesting extension of the mandate, in its summary of achievements of the WGA to date, neglected to mention its effective collaboration with civil society and suggested that this be highlighted in future documents of this nature.

III. Progress on implementation of the WGA work programme

8. The secretariat gave an overview of the recent work of the UNECE Population Unit in support of the WGA's programme. The most important task had been seeking the extension of the WGA mandate. The secretariat thanked the Chairperson and the WGA member States for support.

9. Other main tasks since the last meeting had included preparations for a capacity building workshop in Israel; work relating to the Generations and Gender Programme; ensuring a complete list of current national focal points on Ageing for the WGA; and preparation of draft guidelines for national reporting on MIPAA/RIS in 2011. The secretariat reported that it had also been involved in other population-related activities such as those relating to the United Nations' International Year of Youth.

10. The secretariat presented information on progress relating to the elements of the WGA's work programme:

(a) Capacity-building training workshop on 'Community services for the elderly' in Haifa, Israel (20 February to 3 March 2011):

It was reported that the workshop had been attended by 11 participants, consisting of representatives of governments, NGOs and academia, from nine countries. The programme, which included field visits, discussions and lectures from international and Israeli experts, had been well received by both participants and hosts and the organizers had proposed the possibility of holding a similar workshop in 2012.

(b) Publication of the Road Map on Mainstreaming Ageing for Armenia and progress with the Road Map for the Republic of Moldova:

It was reported that the Road Map for Armenia had been completed and sent for printing.

The Bureau was told that a full draft of the Road Map in the Republic of Moldova was due to be shared with the Moldovan partners in May 2011, prior to negotiations and redrafting in order to ensure adoption of the recommendations. It was noted that approximately 15,000 United States dollars would need to be raised to pay for a consultant and travel expenses for this stage of the Road Map process.

The representative of Malta, in his capacity as director of the International Institute on Ageing, reported on a recent UNFPA visit to the Republic of Moldova and noted the eagerness of representatives there to complete the Road Map.

The Bureau discussed funding possibilities and suggestions for consultants.

(c) Self-evaluation report on policy briefs:

The secretariat reported on the outcomes of a questionnaire distributed to focal points at the third meeting of the WGA in November 2010 to evaluate the series of Policy Briefs on Ageing.

The self evaluation report was approved.

The Bureau discussed the suggestions for future topics for policy briefs and the importance of translating policy briefs into languages other than English, and agreed on the proposal to include contact details of focal points in the good practice examples.

It was agreed that the series of existing policy briefs would be collated into one document in time for the 2012 Ministerial Conference. The representative of Austria will investigate the possibility of printing hard copies.

(d) Generations and Gender Programme:

The secretariat reported on the current progress and recent developments of the Generations and Gender Programme (GGP), including a recent meeting of the GGP Consortium and a forthcoming GGP data users' conference and meeting of the GGP International Working Group.

It was reported that the European Union Directorate General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion (EU DG Employment) had indicated its willingness to fund a further five countries to take part in the GGP. The countries have yet to be decided and will be chosen via a call for proposals.

11. The secretariat presented a draft of a new policy brief on 'regional cooperation on ageing policies'. Members of the Bureau provided comments and suggestions and were requested to send additional good practice examples where available. In particular it was noted that the term 'regional' might not be fully understood and should be clarified in the text or the title. It was agreed that revisions would be made to the draft and a new version would be circulated to the Bureau for further comments in June 2011.

12. The secretariat reported on the draft outline of a new policy brief on 'images of older persons'. Members of the Bureau made comments and suggestions.

13. The secretariat outlined suggestions for future capacity building activities. In October 2011, a workshop on ageing issues is to be held in the Czech Republic, as confirmed to the secretariat by the focal point. Serbia also had made some proposals but in the absence of the representative of Serbia no details could be given. It was noted that the International Institute on Ageing, Malta, was due to hold a workshop on "policy formulation, planning, implementation and monitoring of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing" on 17-18 October, but that these dates were considered to be too late to help UNECE member States in need of training prior to preparing their national reports.

14. The secretariat reported that organization of a regional or sub-regional training workshop on national reporting for the second cycle of review and appraisal of MIPAA/RIS would only be possible if a member State provided the funds. Members were therefore asked to explore possibilities for this at the earliest opportunity since such a workshop would need to take place in late June or July 2011. Any positive response would need to be received by May 2011 at the latest.

IV. Second cycle of review and appraisal of MIPAA/RIS: guidelines for the national reports

15. The secretariat presented the results of an electronic consultation regarding the preparation of guidelines for national reporting for the second cycle of review and appraisal of MIPAA/RIS.

16. Two issues on which no consensus had been reached were the length of the report and the nature of NGO involvement. These issues were discussed by the Bureau.

17. It was agreed that since national focal points on ageing are intended to provide a channel for the views of all stakeholders, they should be asked to consider the input of NGOs in compiling national reports, rather than UNECE seeking separate reports from NGOs.

18. The text of the guidelines was discussed in detail and a number of changes were agreed upon, including the need to include reference to the 2007 León declaration. It was agreed that any specific editorial comments should be sent to the secretariat by email as soon as possible. Key decisions were:

(a) Reports would require information on all ten commitments of the RIS

(b) Reporting on instrumental changes (changes in laws, policies and programmes with a view to implementation of MIPAA/RIS) would be essential.

(c) Sub-questions beneath each heading would be re-worded as prompts rather than questions and the guiding text would make clear that it was not necessary to refer to all of them, rather than they were given to stimulate ideas

(d) The headings would be altered to use the exact wording used in the RIS commitments

(e) The introductory text would remind member States that quality of life and active ageing would be the 2012 conference theme and ask them to focus on this where relevant and possible.

19. It was agreed that a final revised version of the guidelines would be circulated to Bureau members by 12 April for approval, and then to all member States by the end of April 2011.

20. A representative of ECV presented a draft list proposed as a core set of indicators for member States to use in their national reports. It was stated that ECV could help member States locate data on these indicators if they faced difficulties.

21. Representatives of Spain and Malta reported that they had attended the 49th session of the Commission for Social Development (CSD) in New York, 9-18 February 2011.

22. The secretariat reported that a draft resolution (E/CN.5/2011/L.3) had been submitted to the CSD session, which emphasized the regional aspect of reporting. This was taken as evidence of the importance of regional synthesis reports.

23. There was discussion of a report on the situation eight years after the adoption of MIPAA, being prepared by the NGO HelpAge International and UNFPA, for which ECV was contracted to prepare the input relating to UNECE member States. It was noted that it would be useful to obtain the draft of this report to share with those member States appearing in it, in order to inform their national reporting efforts.

V. Ministerial Conference on Ageing 2012: organizational matters

24. The representative of Armenia, the vice chairperson, chaired this item of the agenda.
25. An invited representative of the EU DG Employment introduced the EU's plans for the European Year of Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations 2012.
26. The EU representative reported that the EU would be willing to provide support for the NGO and research community elements of the 2012 Ministerial Conference. It was stated that the exact nature of such support is not yet certain but would probably involve financing travel and lodging for participants.
27. The Chairperson presented a draft programme for the conference including suggestions for the content and nature of the expert and ministerial panels. The proposals were discussed at length. Key decisions were:
 - (a) The order of the second and third panels was to be reversed
 - (b) The titles of the panels would be presented as challenges or 'dilemmas'
 - (c) It was agreed that any specific suggestions for rewording of text in the programme should be sent to the Chairperson and the secretariat
28. The timing, size and location of the NGO and research forums were discussed. It was agreed that they should not run concurrently with the Ministerial conference but should instead take place the preceding day. The representative of Austria agreed to investigate possibilities for holding the events in the European Commission premises in Vienna or at the University of Vienna.
29. No decision was reached on whether to have one theme or two different themes for the two ministerial panel sessions. It was agreed that this matter would be discussed via email.
30. It was agreed that recommendations for speakers on the expert panels should be sent via email to the Chairperson and the secretariat, with the aim of ensuring adequate geographic representation of member States and civil society.

VI. Drafting of the declaration for the 2012 Ministerial Conference on Ageing

31. It was agreed that Germany, Malta, Georgia, Belgium and Austria, with the assistance of the NGO representative, would form a working party to draft an outline structure of the elements of the declaration to be shared electronically with the whole Bureau by 15 October 2011. Such a draft is to be modelled upon the elements of the conference programme.
32. Furthermore it was agreed that following review by the full Bureau, the draft would then be sent to the whole Working Group in late October or early November in order to encourage all member States to consider their inputs prior to the November meeting. It was decided that the Bureau would meet immediately prior to the 4th WGA meeting (at 8.30am on Monday 21 November) to review the draft once more before presentation to the Working Group.
33. It was agreed that the secretariat would coordinate the electronic communications entailed in sharing the draft with the Working Group.

VII. Agenda for the fourth meeting of the WGA (first meeting of the Preparatory Committee for the 2012 Ministerial Conference)

34. The secretariat referred to the draft agenda circulated prior to the meeting and asked for comments or suggestions.

35. The secretariat reported that professor Dr. Clemens Tesch-Roemer from German Centre of Gerontology had agreed to deliver a keynote speech for the in-depth discussion on 'quality of life and active ageing' under item 7 of the draft agenda.

36. With the exception of suggested changes to timing - the representative of Germany proposed that more time be devoted to preparations for the Ministerial Conference, especially the drafting of the declaration -, the draft agenda was agreed upon.

VIII. Any other business

37. The Bureau approved (by email following the meeting) a list of publications for the biennium 2012-2013.

IX. Summary and closing of the meeting

38. It was provisionally agreed that the next meeting of the Bureau of the WGA would be held on 22 and 23 March 2012. Belgium, Germany and the United Kingdom (*in absentia*) were asked to explore possibilities for hosting the meeting.
