



Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
26 November 2012

Original: English

Economic Commission for Europe

Working Group on Ageing

Fifth meeting

Geneva, 22 and 23 November 2012

Work of the Bureau

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

I. Introduction

Attendance

1. The Bureau meeting took place on 22-23 March 2012 in Brussels and was hosted by Belgium (Federal Public Service Social Security). The Bureau members from the following member States attended the meeting: Austria, Belgium, Canada, Georgia, Germany, Malta, and Serbia. Representatives of Armenia, Spain and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland were unable to attend. The scientific community was represented by two experts from the European Centre for Social Welfare Policy and Research (European Centre Vienna, ECV) and a coordinator of the Research Forum at the 2012 Ministerial Conference on Ageing. A representative of the European Federation of Older Persons participated on behalf of non-governmental organizations (NGOs). The meeting was also attended by two additional representatives of Austria and two additional representatives of Belgium. A representative of the European Commission attended the meeting in sessions on the preparations of the 2012 Ministerial Conference.

2. The meeting participants were welcomed by the Bureau member from Belgium, the host country. The Chairperson, Ms. Erika Winkler, representative of Austria, thanked the host country and opened the meeting.

3. The Bureau adopted the agenda without amending.

4. The Bureau took note of the secretariat's statement that there were no new developments regarding the Population programme under the Executive Committee Review process of the ECE 2005 Reform.

II. Progress on the implementation of the work programme of the Working Group on Ageing

5. The secretariat gave an overview of the recent work of the UNECE Population Unit in support of the WGA's programme. The most important tasks were concerned with the preparations for the 2012 Ministerial Conference and drafting of the synthesis report based on national reporting for the second review and appraisal cycle of MIPAA/RIS implementation.

6. Other main tasks since the last WGA meeting in November 2011 had included preparations for a capacity building workshop in Israel; finalisation for publication of a Roadmap on Mainstreaming Ageing in the Republic of Moldova and of an in-depth discussion paper "Active ageing and quality of life in old age"; as well as development of a draft policy brief on Active Ageing. The secretariat also informed on the Population unit's involvement in a joint UNECE and Economic Commission project 'Active Ageing Index' as well as potential participation in the ICPD Beyond 2014 Operational Review.

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

(a) Capacity-building training workshop on 'Community services for the elderly' in Haifa, Israel (5 to 14 March 2012).

The workshop was attended by 15 participants from the Russian Federation, Republic of Moldova, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Serbia, as well as from China, Vietnam, Myanmar, Nepal. Participants were professionals from governments, NGOs and academia. The programme, which included site visits, discussions and lectures by international and Israeli experts, was well received by participants. Israel considers continuing the programme with a third workshop on "Community care for elderly" in 2013. Bureau members were invited to make suggestions how to reach the best suited audience for the workshop.

(b) Publications

Publications of the Road Map on Mainstreaming Ageing for the Republic of Moldova and the discussion paper on the topic "Active Ageing and quality of life in old age" are in an advanced stage of the publication process.

(c) A draft policy brief on the topic "Active Ageing"

The secretariat presented a draft policy brief on "Active Ageing" and received a number of constructive comments and suggestions from the Members of the Bureau. It was agreed that the revised draft will be provided to the Bureau for further comments in late April and the final version will be ready by the end of May.

8. The secretariat also reported on two new projects related to population issues:

(a) Joint UNECE and European Commission project 'Active Ageing Index'

(i) The joint one-year project 'Active Ageing Index' was signed with the European Commission in December 2011. Under this project, UNECE provides to ECV a grant of Euro 180,000 to develop a methodology and a data set for an Active Ageing Index (AAI). ECV briefly introduced to the Bureau a frame for developing the conceptual approach and data compilation for such an index. Following this introduction, the Bureau requested, that once ready, a concept note should be distributed among the Bureau members.

(ii) The secretariat also informed that in the context of this project two expert workshops will be held in 2012 to review the methodology for an AAI as suggested by ECV and to evaluate the feasibility and applicability of the index. The first meeting is planned for 10-11 May 2012 in Brussels and the second will take place in late September/early October. The secretariat requested that two or three interested focal points on ageing express their willingness to participate in an expert group on AAI as representatives of policy makers. It was also pointed out that a pilot testing of the AAI is planned for at least one non-EU country. Georgia expressed an interest to participate in it.

(b) 'ICPD Beyond 2014' Operational Review

The secretariat reported that, as stipulated in the GA resolution 65/234, UNECE will coordinate the regional process of the operational review of the implementation of the programme of action of the International Conference on Population and Development (Cairo, 1994). The review under the title "ICPD Beyond 2014" will be carried out in 2012 and 2013. The secretariat requested focal points on ageing to indicate which institutions in their countries are engaged with the Population development issues.

III. Second Review and appraisal cycle of MIPAA/RIS: draft synthesis report with statistical annex

9. The secretariat presented a first draft of a synthesis report outlining major trends of MIPAA/RIS implementation in the UNECE region. The draft was based on the 28 reports received. The report includes information about the national reports submitted, the methodologies used, the main achievements and challenges identified by the countries; progress made under each commitment and conclusions regarding the status quo and proposed future activities. The Bureau members briefly discussed the draft synthesis report and agreed to send specific comments before 6 April 2012. Several countries are expected to still submit their reports and this information will be taken into account during the revisions. Based on the suggestions received from the Bureau and on reports that may still be forthcoming, the secretariat will prepare and circulate among Bureau members a revised draft of the synthesis report by the end of May.

10. The secretariat presented a set of annex tables which was approved with a few additional tables to be included (on fertility, mortality and unemployment of prime-age groups). The tables dealing with the health and social care aspects will be sent to ECV for completion based on available data. ECV will provide missing data as feasible. For any data that may still be incomplete, UNECE member states will be contacted to provide additional information from their national statistical offices. Based on the completed annex tables, UNECE will prepare a short chapter for the synthesis report that provides an overview of demographic trends and statistical developments within the region. The revised annex tables and the draft chapter for the synthesis report will be circulated by the end of May, together with the revised synthesis report.

IV. Negotiation of the declaration for the Ministerial Conference

11. A member of the Declaration Drafting Group presented a first draft of the ministerial declaration. The Bureau discussed this draft extensively, firstly on the general concept and then paragraph by paragraph. The deliberations on the Ministerial Declaration concluded with an agreed draft text.

12. As a next step, it was agreed that the Secretariat will send out the draft text to members of the Working Group on Ageing for consultation. The first round of consultation will start in the week of 2 April 2012 and will conclude on 3 June 2012. Based on the comments and suggestions received, the Declaration Drafting Group will discuss a second draft – prepared by the Secretariat – which will be sent for further consultations and eventual pre-approval to the working group member States in June.

13. Based on comments received during this round of revision, the draft declaration to be presented at the Ministerial Conference on Ageing shall be finalized by mid-July.

V. Ministerial Conference on Ageing 2012: organizational matters

14. The Chairperson presented an updated draft programme for the conference including suggestions for the content and nature of the experts and ministerial panels. The proposals were discussed at length. The Bureau took note of the work done by the conference organizers and the secretariat (invitations, seating plans, and side events). It was agreed to send a reminder to the WGA members to confirm their interest to take part in the panel discussions.

15. The Bureau discussed at length and agreed with the suggestion of several WGA members to restrict the Ministerial panels to ministers and heads of delegations only. The NGOs representative agreed with this decision. A proposal to have an official closed private session by ministers was not supported the majority of the Bureau, but it was agreed that the Conference host will examine the possibility to organize a working lunch exclusively for ministers. The lunch would take place after the photo session on 20 September 2012. Additionally, an informal minister dinner will take place on 19 September 2012.

16. The secretariat presented a proposal for a poster exhibition on good practices in MIPAA/RIS implementation in the region during the conference, which was approved by the Bureau. The secretariat will send a call for submission of good practices that may be presented on the poster walls. The call will include detailed instructions and deadlines for preparing submissions. It will include a template for preparing the posters to streamline the layout. Participants will be in charge of printing the posters themselves, bringing them to the Conference and fixing them to the poster walls that will be made available.

17. It was also mentioned that ECV is planning a side event of the conference on the Active Ageing Index during lunch-time on 19 September, which was welcomed by the Bureau.

18. The representatives of the research and the civil society forums presented updated programmes of their respective events. They also reported on the status of invitations. The Bureau took note of this information.

19. The representative of the Commission of the European Union confirmed that EU will provide support for travel and accommodation costs for participants of the civil society and research community elements of the 2012 Ministerial Conference.

VI. Agenda of the 5th meeting of the Working Group on Ageing

20. The secretariat presented a draft provisional agenda for the fifth meeting of the Working Group, which is scheduled for 22 and 23 November 2012. Three important elements were discussed: (a) an amendment to the terms of reference of the WGA

regarding the role of the WGA Bureau and the election modalities of its members, the Chair and the Vice-chair; (b) a new Programme of Work for 2013-2017 and (c) the review and evaluation of the Monitoring RIS programme element. It was also suggested to include an update about work done within the Open-ended Working Group on Ageing in New York.

21. It was agreed that the members of the Bureau will send to the secretariat their suggestions for a new programme of work of the WGA, taking into account the WGA funding situation.

22. The secretariat outlined that the modalities for reviewing the work programme element 'Monitoring RIS' need to be agreed on via electronic consultations. The secretariat will put forward a suggestion in this regard.

23. It was also agreed that the secretariat would coordinate the communication to collect proposals for elements of a new Programme of Work for 2013-2017 of the Working Group as well as draft Terms of References for the Bureau of the Working Group on Ageing.

VII. Any other business

24. The Chairperson referred to the need to be better informed about progress made in the work of the UN Open ended Working Group on Ageing to be able to take these in some respect parallel activities into account for the work of the of the UNECE Working Group on Ageing.

VIII. Summary and closing of the meeting

25. It was preliminary agreed that the next Bureau meeting should take place on 6-7 May 2013. Serbia was asked to consider hosting the Bureau meeting in Belgrade. If this will not be possible, the meeting will take place in Geneva.