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Working Group on Ageing

Sixth meeting
Geneva, 25 and 26 November 2013
Item 4 of the provisional agenda
Work of the Bureau

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

I.   Opening of the meeting and adoption of agenda

1.   The Bureau meeting took place on 21-22 May 2013 in Belgrade and was hosted by Serbia (Republic Institute for Social Protection). The Bureau members from the following member States attended the meeting: Austria, Belgium, Georgia, Germany, Malta, Serbia and Spain. Representatives of Armenia and Canada were unable to attend. The scientific community was represented by one expert from the European Centre for Social Welfare Policy and Research (European Centre Vienna, ECV). A representative of the European Federation of Older Persons participated on behalf of non-governmental organizations (NGOs). The meeting was also attended by two representatives of the Red Cross Serbia, and one representative of the Gerontological Society of Serbia.

2.   The meeting participants were welcomed by the Bureau member from Serbia, the host country. Ms. Brankica Jankovic, State Secretary of the Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Policy greeted participants of the meeting in a key note address. In absence of the WGA Chair Ms. Erika Winkler, Mr. Hannes Spreitzer, representative of Austria, was asked to chair the meeting. He thanked the host country and opened the meeting.

3.   The Bureau adopted the agenda, including one additional element about enhancing work with NGOs.

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II. Brief on the main outcomes of the 65ᵗʰ session of the ECE (April 2013) in respect of the UNECE Population programme and Working Group on Ageing

4.   The Secretariat informed the Bureau about the decisions taken regarding the Population programme under the Executive Committee Review process of the ECE 2005 Reform. Under the guidance of the Executive Committee the population unit shall continue to work on implementing the Vienna Ministerial Declaration. The focus of work should be on ageing. The Unit should ensure that programme activities are complementary to (and not duplicating) work of UNFPA and other international organizations. The Bureau expressed strong support to the Population Unit as the Secretariat to the Working Group on Ageing and suggested preparing documentation to communicate how its programme of work is distinct and not duplicative but complementary to other organizations.

5.   In 2013 the mandate of the Working Group expires. The Bureau suggested proposing renewal of the mandate until 2017, when the third cycle of implementation of MIPAA/RIS ends. This would be in line with the WGA Programme of Work which will also be prepared for the same timeframe.

III. Closing of the second cycle of review and appraisal of MIPAA/RIS: 51st Session of the Commission for Social Development

6.   The Chairperson and Secretariat reported about the 51st Session of the UN Commission for Social Development and the closing of the second cycle of review and appraisal of the Regional Implementation Strategy of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing. The secretariat drew attention to the report of the Secretary General about the Second review and appraisal of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing (E/CN.5/2013/6) and to resolution E/CN.5/2013/L.6 where in paragraph 15 the contributions of the United Nations regional commissions to the implementation, review and appraisal of the Madrid Plan of Action are especially emphasized

IV. Progress on implementation of the WGA work programme in 2013

7.   The secretariat gave an overview of the recent work of the UNECE Population Unit in support of the WGA's programme. In addition to coordination of a new format, namely the discussion groups formed at the Fifth meeting of the WGA in November 2012, the most important tasks were concerned with preparing the Policy Brief on Abuse of Older Persons, work on the Active Ageing Index in collaboration with the European Commission and the ECV and capacity-building activities. The secretariat presented information on progress relating to these elements of the WGA's work programme:

1. Work in the four discussion groups of the WGA

8.   The Bureau discussed how to further guide the work of the discussion groups, covering each one of the main topics of the Vienna Ministerial Declaration. Different groups have taken different approaches to structuring their work and identifying their outputs. The Bureau agreed that groups needed to decide more clearly about their modus operandi to be able to function more independently in between the meetings of the WGA.

Bureau members will explore possibilities to host a meeting of the 4 group leaders and rapporteurs as well as the Secretariat in one of their countries to have an appraisal of how the work proceeds. Group members will be explained once more and in more detail what is expected of them and they will be informed of the group leaders meeting in due course.

2. Policy Brief on Abuse of Older Persons

9.   The draft Policy Brief on Abuse of Older Persons was presented to Bureau members who had an opportunity to comment on its content and the selection of good practices. The feedback was generally very positive. The secretariat took note of a few concrete suggestions. Bureau members were given 2 weeks following the meeting to provide additional comments. The Policy Brief will then be shared with the discussion group 3 on the topic of promoting and safeguarding dignity, health and independence in older age. Taking into account the additional feedback provided by Bureau members, the Brief will be finalized and launched on 1 October 2013, the International Day of Older Persons.

3. Active Ageing Index

10.   A member of the ECV presented the Active Ageing Index, including some rankings under different components of the index. The index seeks to identify additional potential for active ageing from a policy perspective. The index currently covers the 27 EU member States and the preliminary results on the AAI in the United States have been provided by the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP). A member of the UNECE secretariat presented about an AAI Wiki that was developed for the Index, allowing users to easily explore concepts and results. The secretariat informed the Bureau about potential future activities under the second phase of this project, including outreach to additional countries.

4. Capacity-building activities

11.   The Bureau was informed that the capacity building workshop on Community Services for the Elderly, planned for 8-18 April 2013 in collaboration with Mashav, Israel, was postponed until 2014 as only a relatively small number of participants subscribed from the UNECE region. A workshop on implementation of the Road Map for Mainstreaming Ageing in the Republic of Moldova will be organized together with the Austrian Social Ataché in Chisinau on 19-20 September. The secretariat will participate.

V. Self-evaluation exercise on Road Maps for Mainstreaming Ageing

12.   The secretariat presented a Self-evaluation report on Road Maps for Mainstreaming Ageing for the Bureau's comments and suggestions. The Bureau members very much appreciated the report and the insight and suggestions it provided to further improve the preparation of Road Maps. Bureau members agreed with the suggested recommendations.

VI. WGA work programme for the third cycle of MIPAA/RIS: proposals for new and continuing elements of the programme in response to the 2012 Vienna Ministerial Declaration

13.   The Bureau discussed programme elements, including their funding, and agreed on the draft process of the Programme of Work for 2014-2017, to be presented to the WGA. It was decided to prepare the Programme of Work for the period until 2017 to have it coincide with the third implementation cycle of MIPAA/RIS, reflecting the priorities decided at the Vienna Ministerial Conference in September 2012. The discussion groups of the WGA will be engaged more strongly in implementing the priorities of the Vienna Ministerial Declaration. This will provide members of the WGA with an opportunity to contribute more actively to the work of realizing the Vienna Declaration. They may choose one of four priority areas that they consider pertinent for their country and drive the preparation of concrete outputs that are most relevant for their work. Existing elements that have proven most useful for implementing MIPAA/RIS will be continued and strengthened, namely activities in the area of capacity building, in particular the organization of workshops and the preparation of Road Maps. Policy Briefs have been much appreciated in the past and will be an important element of the new Programme of Work as they provide access on evidence-based policy advise on specific aspects of MIPAA/RIS and showcase good practices from across the region. New approaches will have to be found to strengthen capacities to monitor MIPAA/RIS implementation.

14.   Based on the discussion during the Bureau meeting, the secretariat will prepare a general structure for the Programme of Work until 2017 and Bureau members will provide drafts for different chapters. The NGO representative Dirk Jarré will prepare an outline on the role of the discussion groups. Spain will contribute the text on capacity building; Georgia will provide a draft text on Road Maps for Mainstreaming Ageing, Serbia will outline activities on Policy Briefs. Malta, with support from the ECV, will prepare the draft on monitoring MIPAA/RIS. Based on submissions received by end of August the Chair will streamline the contributions into a first overall draft of the Programme of Work, Teleconferences and Email exchange will be used to finalize the document by end of September 2013.

VII. Agenda of the fifth meeting of the Working Group

15.   The secretariat presented a draft provisional agenda for the sixth meeting of the Working Group, which is scheduled for 25 and 26 November 2013. Bureau members discussed and decided on the main items for the agenda. With regards to the election of officers and Bureau members during the sixth WGA meeting, in line with the amendment to the Terms of Reference of the Working Group adopted at the fifth WGA meeting, it was decided that all member States will be invited through their permanent missions to nominate candidates. It was also agreed to dedicate one half day to work in the discussion groups.

VIII. ICPD beyond 2014 - UNECE Regional Conference "Enabling choices: population priorities for the 21st century": organizational matters

16.   The secretariat informed the Bureau on the results of a global survey and the related regional report for the "ICPD beyond 2014 Operational Review" being prepared by UNECE in response to the General Assembly Resolution 65/234. It also updated the

Bureau on preparations for the UNECE Regional Conference "Enabling choices: population priorities for the 21st century", scheduled to take place on 1-2 July 2013 in Geneva.

IX. Other business

17.   The NGO representative voiced a need for WGA to work closer with NGOs and informed about available translation of the Vienna Ministerial declaration along with statements made by NGOs and Scientific community.

X. Summary and closing of the meeting

18.   Germany and Georgia will explore possibilities of hosting the next Bureau meeting, tentatively scheduled for May 2014. The Chairperson summarized and closed the meeting.

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