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Working Group on Ageing

Ninth meeting

Geneva, 21 and 22 November 2016

Report of the Working Group on Ageing on its Ninth Meeting

I. Introduction

A. Attendance

1. The ninth meeting of the Working Group on Ageing (WGA) was held on 21 and 22 November 2016 at the Palais des Nations in Geneva.
2. Representatives of 35 member States of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) participated: Albania, Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Canada, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Monaco, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, the Republic of Moldova, the Russian Federation, Serbia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, and Ukraine. The Holy See participated as an observer State.
3. Representatives of the International Labour Office (ILO), the International Social Security Association (ISSA), the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the World Health Organization (WHO) were present. Representatives of the European Commission and the European Centre for Social Welfare Policy and Research (ECV) also took part in the meeting. The following non-governmental organizations (NGOs) attended the meeting: Ardager, Central-Asia Gerontology Center, European Federation of Older Persons (EURAG), Forum for Health – Mental Health and Psychosocial Working Group, HelpAge International Moldova, International Association for Hospice and Palliative Care (IAHPC), International Association of Gerontology and Geriatrics (IAGG), International Longevity Centre – Global Alliance, International Network for the Prevention of Elder Abuse, Make Mothers Matter, Red Cross of Serbia, Soroptimist International, Turkey Retired Persons Organisation, and Women's World Summit Foundation.

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4. The total number of participants was 90. A full list of participants is available on the meeting website.¹

B. Adoption of the agenda and election of officers

5. The Working Group adopted the meeting's agenda as contained in document ECE/WG.1/2016/1 with an amendment to include under item 2(b) 'discussion of the draft proposal to transform the WGA into a Committee on Population Ageing'.

6. Mr. Bernd Marin has left his academic position at Webster University and can therefore no longer serve as research community representative to the Bureau. The Working Group endorsed the candidacy of Mr. Kai Leichsenring, Executive Director of the European Centre for Welfare Policy and Research, to be the new representative of the research community as standing observer to the Bureau.

7. The Working Group thanked Professor Bernd Marin (in absence) for his dedicated work for the WGA.

II. Report of the Bureau of the Working Group on Ageing and briefing on the outcomes of ageing-related events during 2016

8. The representative of Norway reported on the eighth Bureau meeting which took place in Oslo (Norway) on 19 and 20 May 2016, referring to the meeting report (ECE/WG.1/2016/3). The main points of discussion at the meeting were the outline of the Ministerial Conference format and agenda and the drafting of the Ministerial Declaration.

9. The Chair briefly outlined the Bureau's proposal for changing the intergovernmental status of the Working Group to that of a Sectoral Committee as described in room document ECE/WG.1/2016/RD1 (shared with the WGA in October 2016) and invited representatives of member States to express their views on the proposal. Several countries expressed their support in writing before the meeting, the representatives of the Republic of Moldova, Georgia, Norway, Slovenia and Spain voiced their strong support for the proposal during the discussion, while Switzerland abstained. The Russian Federation objected the proposed change on the grounds that the ECE has no specific mandate for social and human rights issues. The WGA asked the Bureau to undertake informal consultations with interested countries and taking into account the concerns expressed to prepare a better-elaborated proposal for transforming the WGA into a Sectoral Committee, focusing on the concrete mandate of the WGA.

10. The Principal Adviser to the ECE Executive Secretary reported on the plans for the follow-up to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. At the global level, the first High-level Political Forum was held in July 2016 with thematic sessions and 22 National Voluntary Reviews. The global forums will take place under a different theme with a focus on selected goals each year. The Regional Forum on Sustainable Development aims to ensure the follow-up review in the ECE region and contribute to the High-Level Political Forum.

11. The Secretariat presented a brief overview of the discussions and outcomes of the two functional commissions of the United Nations. First, the 54th Session of the Commission for Social Development took place from 3 to 12 February 2016 at the United Nations Headquarters in New York under the priority theme 'Rethinking and strengthening

¹ <http://www.unece.org/index.php?id=42030#/>

social development in the contemporary world'. The Commission for Social Development tabled the resolution on the follow-up of MIPAA, which is likely to be adopted by the General Assembly by the end of 2016. The next session of the Commission for Social Development will take place in February 2017 under the title 'Strategies for the eradication of poverty to achieve sustainable development for all'. Second, the 49th Session of the Commission for Population and Development took place from 11 to 15 April 2016 under the theme 'Strengthening the demographic evidence base for post-2015 development agenda'. Next year, the theme will be 'Changing population age structures and sustainable development' with population ageing as an important part.

12. Representatives of international organizations presented new international initiatives in the area of ageing. The representative of the International Social Security Association (ISSA) presented main findings of the ISSA report on demographic megatrends and social security, highlighting key demographic changes which are likely to impact social security and measures that can be taken to address and mitigate the trends as well as unusual, nascent and significant future trends. Ways for social security systems to adapt to demographic changes can be a stronger focus on preventative measures and a shift to service-related retirement age to mitigate inequality in later life health and life expectancy.

13. A representative of the World Health Organization presented the global campaign to combat ageism. It was highlighted that ageism exists at different levels and that older persons subjected to age-based discrimination often internalize negative stereotypes which can result in poorer physical and mental health. Different approaches to combat ageism were presented including legislation against age-based discrimination, intergenerational activities or media campaigns. Following the presentation, mandatory retirement age was discussed in the context of institutional discrimination.

III. Economic dimension of population ageing

14. The Executive Director of the ECV presented a paper on the economic dimension of population ageing. After introducing the traditional approaches to the economics of population ageing and the changing economic and technological context, he focused on the economic effects of ageing at individual, corporate and societal levels. He argued that the assignment of tasks and activities to defined age brackets has become outdated and called for taking a life-course approach and moving from age differentiation to age integration where activities such as education, work and leisure take place simultaneously rather than subsequently. This could be achieved with a new work-life model in which future life-course developments are anticipated.

15. The Working Group discussed the presented findings and raised questions about the costs of an age-integrated approach and the burden on the younger generations as well as the implications of increasing precarious work and automated, labour-free production for the social security systems.

IV. Third cycle of review and appraisal of MIPAA/RIS

A. National reports and format of the synthesis report

16. The Secretariat presented a brief preliminary summary on the submission of national reports and informed the Working Group about the possible format of the synthesis report, which will be prepared in early 2017. So far, 24 countries submitted their reports and 11

countries informed the Secretariat that their reports are forthcoming. Representatives of four countries gave an update on the status of their reports.

B. Preparations for the UNECE Ministerial Conference on Ageing in 2017

1. Organizational and financial matters of the Conference

17. At the invitation of the Government of Portugal, the fourth UNECE Ministerial Conference under the title ‘A Sustainable Society for All Ages: Realizing the potential of living longer’ will take place in Lisbon in September 2017. The representatives of Portugal informed on the organizational matters of the Conference. The Portuguese Prime Minister is planning to attend either the opening or closing session of the Conference. The host country suggested that the Conference takes place on 21-22 September 2017, one week earlier than initially proposed by UNECE due to conflicting host country’s agenda. The suggested date was acceptable for the Working Group members except for Israel, where it falls on a national public holiday.

18. The Secretariat informed member States on ways to support the Ministerial Conference. Both in-kind and financial contributions are welcome. Countries can contribute by including representatives of the research community and civil society in their delegation and financing their participation. A poster exhibition is planned to which countries can contribute by printing posters and by supporting the authors of posters. Contributions to the UNECE Ageing fund could also be used for the Ministerial Conference, for example to co-finance participants of countries with a lower budget. The nomination of speakers and invitation of high-level participants are also needed.

2. Organizational and financial matters of the Conference

19. The representative of non-governmental organizations briefed the Working Group on the plans for the NGO forum, which will be held along with the research forum on 20 September 2017, preceding the Ministerial Conference. A number of ageing-related organizations which were approached expressed their interest to participate. The local partner in Portugal may be Santa Casa da Misericórdia de Lisboa (SCML). The main objective of the forum is to finalize the declaration of NGOs to the Ministerial Conference and to agree with the civil society panellists on their positions. It is planned that the preparatory committee will hold at least two face-to-face meetings, including one in Lisbon.

20. The representative of the research community will set up an organizing committee for the research forum. The aim is to gather 30 to 50 researchers at the forum. Sources for funding are yet to be identified.

21. WGA members discussed what role NGOs should play in the drafting of the Ministerial Declaration and it was agreed that each country can decide on its own if and to what extent NGOs are included in the consultations on the Declaration draft.

3. Work in discussion groups on the draft text of the Ministerial Declaration

22. The draft text of the Ministerial Declaration, as prepared by the WGA Bureau and shared with meeting participants ahead of the meeting, was discussed in three groups, one per thematic area of the Conference and Declaration. After the discussion, the rapporteurs of each group gave a summary of the deliberations to the plenary. The discussion groups

made a number of suggestions for re-wording, adding reference to specific issues and combining existing paragraphs.

23. Rapporteurs of each group will send a written summary of their deliberations to the Secretariat. The Bureau will incorporate the suggestions from the breakout session of the three discussion groups to the current draft of the Ministerial Declaration as appropriate and will finalize the draft during its spring meeting in order to send it out for the formal consultations with the member States.

4. Work in discussion groups on the Conference format and agenda

24. The draft outline of the Ministerial Conference format and agenda as prepared by the Bureau and shared with meeting participants ahead of the meeting was discussed in three groups during a breakout session. Discussion groups brought forward comments on the keynote speech, thematic areas and suggestions for keynote speaker, panelists and moderators.

25. The WGA agreed on the three thematic areas of the Ministerial Conference as follows: (1) Recognizing the potential of older persons, (2) Encouraging longer working life and ability to work, and (3) Ageing with dignity. During the breakout session, the three groups also made suggestions on discussion items to be included under the respective thematic area. In addition to reporting at the resumed plenary session, rapporteurs of each group presented their written summaries of deliberations to the Chair.

26. The Working Group agreed to have further consultations (via e-mail) on the proposed subtopics under each panel and possible panelists for the Ministerial Conference. The host country of the conference will be consulted before any final decision will be made.

V. Implementation of the WGA work programme in 2016

27. The Working Group reviewed the implementation of its work programme during the year 2016 as contained in document ECE/WG.1/2016/4.

A. Policy Brief on ‘Older persons in rural and remote areas’

28. The Secretariat presented the first draft of the Policy Brief on ‘Older persons in rural and remote areas’. Many rural and remote areas are characterized by an imbalance between young and old, low population density and geographical isolation, creating specific challenges for older people in these areas. The policy brief outlines strategies to address, recognize and meet the needs of older persons in rural areas in four domains: bottom-up collaboration, health and social care, ageing in place and transportation and mobility. The aim is to provide cost-effective and accessible services, to reduce socio-economic and health inequalities between rural and urban areas as well as to ensure the mobility and social integration of older persons in rural and remote areas. In the subsequent discussion, the representative of the UNFPA Moldova argued for bringing out the role of civil society more explicitly in the suggested strategies as civil society organizations are often the main service providers, in particular in many Eastern European and Central Asian countries.

B. Road Maps on Mainstreaming Ageing: evaluation report on implementation progress in Armenia

29. The representative of Sweden informed the Working Group about the evaluation mission to Armenia in April 2016 which was carried out to assess the progress made in implementing the Road Map’s recommendations. An evaluation team including Working

Group members from Sweden and the Republic of Moldova went on a fact-finding mission to Armenia and conducted interviews and focus group discussions with key informants and visited a residential older people home and a home care centre in Yerevan.

30. The Secretariat presented key findings of the evaluation report. The evaluation found mixed efforts to integrate issues of older persons into the areas work of each ministry, a weak link between strategic direction at national level to activities at regional and provincial levels and promising efforts of non-state actors towards a stronger alliance and more strategic coordination. Results point to limited sharing of experiences and lessons learned across stakeholder groups. A number of barriers still exist for older persons to continue working. Support for multigenerational households and informal caregivers could be strengthened and the affordability of quality health care services remain issues of concern. It has been recommended to continue to mainstream ageing across all thematic areas and ministries, to identify priority areas for action for the next phase of implementation, to increase the engagement and coordination with provincial and local authorities, to optimize the comparative advantage of non-state actors and to create a more robust monitoring and evaluation system.

31. The representative of Armenia informed the WGA that Armenia is developing the second cycle of the action plan and will take into account the recommendations of the evaluation report. In response to questions raised on the funding of NGO projects and activities, the representative of Armenia explained that projects are funded from different sources with the donor community playing an important role. Armenia's goal is to institutionalize services and ensure sustainability of the funding. She further reported that a needs assessment survey was recently carried out in order to find out which kind of services are needed for older people in which regions, and special programmes were developed for each region.

C. Workshop on the use of active ageing indicators for national reports

32. The Secretariat reported on the second workshop on the use of active ageing indicators for national reports which was held in Minsk on 23 and 24 June 2016. The workshop aimed at strengthening the capacity of countries in Eastern Europe, Caucasus, Central Asia and Western Balkans to produce active ageing indicators and reviewing the progress made by the countries in preparation of the statistical annex to the national reports on MIPAA implementation.

D. Active Ageing Index project

33. The Secretariat provided a summary on the activities of the Active Ageing Index (AAI) project since the 8th WGA meeting. The second phase of AAI project was concluded in April 2016 by completing pilot studies for Serbia and Turkey, finalizing calculations of AAI for Canada, Iceland, Norway and Switzerland, and carrying out a pilot study on AAI at local level in Germany. The third phase of the AAI project began in May 2016. The Secretariat presented the results of the pilot study 'Extending the Active Ageing Index to the local level in Germany' and gave an overview of the activities to be implemented in the course of the third phase of the AAI project. At the request of the Swiss delegate, the Secretariat will prepare a briefing note on the policy relevance of the AAI.

E. Generations and Gender Programme

34. The Secretariat briefed the WGA on the recent developments in the Generations and Gender Programme (GGP). Belarus joined the programme in December 2015 and will be fielding the GGP survey shortly. Kazakhstan and Turkey also consider carrying out the GGP survey in the near future. GGP was awarded the status of Emerging Project by the European Strategy Forum on Research Infrastructure (ESFRI), and received funding to

further develop its research infrastructure over the next two years. To date, GGP has around 3,000 users of the microdata and more than 1,300 entries in its bibliographical database.

35. The report on successful implementation of the main elements of the WGA work programme in 2016 as contained in document ECE/WG.1/2016/4 was approved.

VI. Country experiences

36. The representative of Belarus presented the national policy measures on population ageing. She provided a brief overview of the demographic characteristics of the population and, based on the 2012 Vienna Ministerial Declaration goals, highlighted some important achievements and challenges at the country level.

37. The representative of Norway presented the Government's strategy for an age-friendly society which was launched in March 2016 under the title 'More Years – More Opportunities'. It is the first national cross-sectorial strategy on ageing, and draws upon the framework of evoking opportunities and potential, as opposed to viewing ageing as a problem.

38. The representative of the Republic of Moldova reported on the country's progress in the implementation of MIPAA/RIS between 2012 and 2017, summarizing the results of the national review and appraisal. She outlined main remaining challenges and priority areas for future action. The representative of HelpAge International Moldova commended the Government of the Republic of Moldova on its efforts and expressed their readiness to continue the good collaboration with the Government on ageing-related issues.

VII. Main elements of the WGA work programme for 2017

A. Policy Briefs

39. The Secretariat informed the Working Group that the work on the next issue of the Policy Brief will start in early 2017. The topic was agreed to be 'Realizing the potential of living longer', corresponding to the title of the Ministerial Conference. The Secretariat proposed that Bureau members contribute to this issue by preparing an extended outline before the Bureau meeting in April. The representative of Norway in cooperation with the representatives of NGOs and researchers will explore the possibility to lead this work. Working titles for the following three issues of policy briefs were chosen as follows: 'Innovative social services and supportive measures for independent living in advanced age'; 'Ageing in urban environments'; 'Ageing in place' (including aspects of housing and assistive technologies).

B. Finalizing 3rd MIPAA/RIS review

40. The Secretariat informed the WGA that they will review in detail all submitted country reports and will work on a synthesis report in the first quarter of 2017, depending on the timeliness of national report submissions. The draft synthesis report including the statistical annex will be sent to the WGA members for comments/clarifications.

41. The Secretariat will coordinate and support the organization of the 2017 UNECE Ministerial Conference on Ageing, oversee the official electronic consultations with the member States on the Declaration draft, cooperate with the Portuguese colleagues to finalize the Conference format, send out invitations to ministers, panellists and moderators, and carry out communication and outreach activities. The Secretariat will issue a call for posters on good practice examples related to the themes of the Conference and encourage

member States to involve NGOs and practitioners. After the Conference, the Secretariat will prepare and publish the Conference proceedings.

C. Capacity-building activities

42. The Secretariat reported that Belarus and Bulgaria expressed their interest in a Road Map for their countries but no formal request had been made yet. The Secretariat further informed the WGA that they would only be able to start Road Map preparations in autumn 2017 after the Ministerial Conference.

43. The Secretariat does not foresee any workshops for the next year. At the same time, countries are invited to send a request for support if they organize workshops for which they would like to receive assistance or inputs from the Secretariat. Under the Active Ageing Index project the Secretariat plans to organize a national seminar in Italy in spring 2017.

D. Other programme elements

44. The Secretariat reported on planned activities related to MIPAA/RIS monitoring and evidence-building for policymaking, i.e. the third phase of the Active Ageing Index project, the Generations and Gender Programme as well as a possible mandate extension of the ECE Task Force on Ageing-related Statistics.

45. The Secretariat also informed the Working Group about the forthcoming ICPD +25 review in 2017-2018. The ECE will cooperate with the UNFPA Regional Office for Eastern Europe and Central Asia for the review on advancing the implementation of the ICPD Beyond 2014 recommendations in the ECE region, but there is no concrete activity plan yet.

VIII. Financing of the work programme

46. The Secretariat informed the WGA that subsequent to the ECE Executive Committee approval of the extra-budgetary project on the Active Ageing Index on 23 November 2015, in May 2016 the ECE and the European Commission's Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion signed a funding agreement for three years. This is the third phase of the AAI project implementation which extends from 1 May 2016 to 30 April 2019.

47. The Secretariat informed the Working Group about the regular budget resources for 2016-2017 and the current financing of the programme.

48. The Secretariat reported that no financial contributions have been made in 2016 and acknowledged in-kind contributions received from Norway in the form of hosting the Bureau meeting, from Belarus in the form of hosting the workshop on active ageing indicators, and from Belarus, Spain and Germany in the form of translating Policy Briefs. For 2017, Portugal pledged to host the Ministerial Conference, Austria – to host the Bureau Meeting in April, Switzerland – to translate Policy Briefs into French, and Germany – to translate Policy Briefs into German.

49. The Chair will issue a call for contributions to the UNECE Ageing fund in support of the Ministerial Conference, in particular the NGO and research forums. Germany pledged to explore a possibility to provide some funding in support of planned Policy Briefs.

IX. Other business, summary and conclusion of the annual session

50. The Secretariat summarized the main items discussed and decisions taken at the ninth annual meeting of the WGA. The summary points as listed in Annex I of this report were projected on the screen for input/approval by the WGA members.

51. The next Bureau meeting will be held on 3-4 April 2017 in Vienna, Austria.

52. The tenth meeting of the WGA will take place on 23-24 November 2017 in Geneva, Switzerland.

53. The Chair thanked the participants and the Secretariat and closed the meeting.

Annex I

Conclusions and decisions taken at the ninth meeting of the Working Group on Ageing — Chair's summary

Item 1: Adoption of the agenda and election of officers

- The WGA adopted the agenda (with amendments).
- The WGA elected a new representative of the research community as standing observer to the Bureau: Mr. Kai Leichsenring, Executive Director of the European Centre for Social Welfare Policy and Research (ECV).

Item 2: Report of the Bureau of the Working Group on Ageing and briefing on the outcomes of ageing-related events during 2016

- Georgia, Norway, Republic of Moldova, Slovenia and Spain expressed strong support for the Bureau's proposal for transforming the WGA into a Sectoral Committee, Switzerland abstained, the Russian Federation objected.
- The WGA asked the Bureau to undertake informal consultations with interested countries and taking into account the concerns expressed to prepare a better-elaborated proposal for transforming the WGA into a Sectoral Committee focusing on the concrete mandate of the WGA.
- The WGA took note of new international initiatives in the area of ageing: International Social Security Association's report on demographic megatrends and social security; World Health Organization – on global campaign to combat ageism.

Item 3: Economic dimension of population ageing

- The WGA discussed main findings of a paper by Mr. Kai Leichsenring, Executive Director of the ECV, on the economic dimension of population ageing.

Item 4: Third cycle of review and appraisal of MIPAA/RIS

- The WGA was informed about the submissions of national reports and the format of the synthesis report.
- Working group members were informed on ways to support the organization of the Ministerial Conference and contribute to it.
- The WGA took note of the plans for the research and NGO forums.
- Discussion groups brought forward comments on the keynote speech, thematic areas and suggestions for keynote speaker, panellists and moderators.
- The WGA agreed on the three proposed thematic areas of the Ministerial Conference.
- The WGA agreed to have further consultations (via e-mail) on the proposed subtopics under each panel and possible panellists for the Ministerial Conference.
- The Bureau will incorporate the suggestions from the discussion groups to the current draft of the Ministerial Declaration as appropriate and will finalize the draft during its spring meeting in order to send it out for the formal consultations with member States.

Item 5: Implementation of the WGA work programme in 2016

- The WGA commended the first draft of the Policy Brief on 'Older persons in rural and remote areas'.

- The WGA approved the undertaken evaluation mission to Armenia and key findings of the evaluation report.
- The WGA took note of the report on the workshop on the indicators of active ageing in national reports.
- The WGA took note of the work implemented under the Active Ageing Index (AAI) project and of member States' initiatives related to the use of the AAI at national and subnational levels.
- The Secretariat will prepare a briefing note on the AAI project.
- The WGA took note of GGP developments.
- On the basis above, the WGA approved the report on implementation of the main elements of the WGA work programme in 2016.

Item 6: Country experiences (Belarus, Norway, Republic of Moldova)

- Belarus presented national policy measures on ageing; Norway gave a brief overview of the Government's strategy for an age-friendly society; the Republic of Moldova presented ageing policies and first achievements in their implementation. The WGA noted that the presented country experiences reflect the impact of MIPAA/RIS.

Item 7: Main elements of the WGA work programme for 2017

- The topic of the next Policy Brief will be 'Realizing the potential of living longer'.
- The WGA agreed on working titles for the following three Policy Briefs: 'Innovative social services and supportive measures for independent living in advanced age'; 'Ageing in urban environments'; 'Ageing in place' (including aspects of housing and assistive technologies).
- The WGA noted that Belarus and Bulgaria indicated initial interest in a Road Map for their countries but no formal request had been made yet.
- The WGA took note of the planned activities under the third phase of the AAI project.

Item 8: Financing of the work programme

- The WGA took note of the financing status of the work programme. The Chair will issue a call for contributions to the UNECE Ageing fund in support of the Ministerial Conference, in particular the NGO and research forums.

Item 9: Other business, summary and conclusions of the meeting

- The WGA approved the list of main decisions of its 9th meeting.
- The date and place of the next Bureau meeting are 3-4 April 2017, Vienna.
- The WGA took note of date and place of the 10th meeting of the Working Group on Ageing (23-24 November 2017, Geneva).