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Implementation of the main elements of the Working Group on Ageing work programme in 2018 and planned outputs in 2019

Implementation of the work programme of the Working Group on Ageing in 2018

Note by the Secretariat

I. Introduction

1. The United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) Working Group on Ageing (WGA) was established in 2008 as an intergovernmental mechanism to facilitate the realization of the ECE Regional Implementation Strategy for the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing (MIPAA/RIS).
2. The Lisbon Ministerial Declaration (ECE/AC.30/2017/2), adopted by 46 member States at the UNECE Ministerial Conference on Ageing in September 2017 (Lisbon, Portugal), reaffirmed the mandate of the Working Group and provided guidance to its work programme for the fourth MIPAA/RIS implementation cycle. Consequently, at its ninety-sixth meeting on 26 January 2018, the ECE Executive Committee renewed the Working Group's mandate through the end of 2022 and approved the revised terms of reference of the WGA (ECE/EX/2018/L.1). The ECE Executive Committee also approved the biennial programme of work for 2018-2019 as contained in the document ECE/WG.1/2017/5.
3. This document is prepared by the secretariat for the eleventh WGA meeting. It addresses the implementation of the programme of work in 2018, including main outputs for the key areas of activity: policy briefs with good practice examples; capacity development; monitoring implementation of MIPAA/RIS and strengthening the evidence base for policymaking.

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II. Implementation of the main elements of the work programme for 2018

A. Policy Briefs with good practice examples

4. The ECE series of Policy Briefs on Ageing provides information on policies and promotes exchange of good practice examples among member States regarding different areas of MIPAA/RIS. The Policy Briefs integrate a wealth of contributions and experiences from member States. All published Policy Briefs are available on the ECE website.¹

5. Since the tenth meeting of the Working Group on Ageing in November 2017, a Policy Brief #20 on the topic “Innovative social services and supportive measures for independent living in advanced age” was published. Following the WGA Bureau decision taken at its tenth meeting in May 2018, the preparation of a Policy Brief #21 on the topic “Ageism as a barrier to a longer working life” started in autumn 2018 and its draft will be presented to the Working Group at its eleventh meeting. The German donation to the Ageing fund in 2017 ensures that both latest issues of Policy Briefs will be available in printed and electronic format.

6. Two new issues of Policy Briefs on Ageing are planned for 2019 as agreed by the Bureau based on discussion at the tenth WGA meeting: Policy Brief #22 will focus on informal carers and Policy Brief #23 will be devoted to ageing in urban environments.

B. Capacity development

7. In June 2018, the secretariat together with the Ministry of Family, Labour and Social policy of Poland, organized a national seminar “Active Ageing Index in Poland”. Seminar participants reviewed the Active Ageing Index (AAI) results for Poland at national and regional levels. They also discussed the potential of the AAI as a tool for monitoring ageing-related policies as well as for furthering the concept of active ageing. The seminar was attended by 50 participants representing Polish ministries and governmental bodies that work on issues of ageing, labour, health, social protection, and education; regional and local administration; statistical office; civil society organizations and research institutes.

8. As agreed at the tenth WGA meeting, the secretariat worked on preparing a Policy Seminar to be held on 21 November 2018, day after the eleventh meeting. The topic for this Policy Seminar – “Ageing and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)” – was agreed upon by the Bureau based on the electronic consultation with the WGA members in spring 2018.

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

1. Active Ageing Index

9. In 2018, the work continued under the third phase of the AAI project (AAI-III) aiming to promote and facilitate the use of the AAI for designing and monitoring policies on ageing at national and subnational levels. For this, (a) the guidelines for the AAI

¹ Available from <http://www.unece.org/population/ageing/policybriefs.html> .

calculation in non-EU countries and/or at subnational level were developed and issued in September 2018; (b) a research study on AAI results for different population groups was carried out in Italy; (c) update of AAI results for the European Union countries and countries for which data are available from the harmonized European surveys was issued; (d) Government agreement to work on the revision and second round of AAI calculations for the Republic of Moldova was reached. The Guidelines and the results of the Italian research studies will be made available on the AAI wiki-space.

10. The Second international seminar on the AAI took place in Bilbao on 27-28 September.² It was co-organized by the UNECE, European Commission's Directorate General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion, Oxford Institute of Population Ageing, and the University of the Basque Country with the support of the Biscay Provincial Government (Spain). The seminar was dedicated to the studies focusing on the use of the AAI to identify ways to improve active ageing outcomes through appropriate policy measures at different levels and in different contexts, and to address some methodological aspects. The eighth meeting of the Expert group on AAI was held on 26 September 2018 in Bilbao (Spain), back to back with the international seminar.

11. As the AAI-III project is entering into its final stage in 2019, the activities under it will focus on visualisation and enhanced communication about the AAI by providing a more visually appealing, interactive and user-friendly interface as well as holding a stakeholder meeting and possibly some national seminars. The preparations for regular AAI results updates and trends analysis as well as the AAI calculation for non-EU countries will be considered in the run-up to the fourth review and appraisal of MIPAA/RIS.

2. The Generations and Gender Programme

12. The secretariat has continued to act as a clearinghouse for data administration of the Generations and Gender Programme (GGP) and as a coordinator of the network of National Focal Points – the GGP Council of Partners. In this capacity, the ECE secretariat co-organized a meeting of the Council of Partners: on 6 June 2018 in Brussels, Belgium, back-to-back with the European Population Conference (6-9 June 2018). As the co-ordinator of the GGP Council of Partners, the ECE secretariat performs an important bridging function between those responsible for programme management and development and those in charge of its implementation at the national level.

13. A new round of GGP surveys is planned for 2019-2020. In the meantime, two additional ECE countries – Kazakhstan and Latvia – started fielding the Generation and Gender Survey (GGS) 2020. Further fundraising for the GGS is underway in Georgia, the Republic of Moldova and Romania.

14. The ECE handles data submissions by national teams and processes applications by scientists and experts who wish to use GGP data for their research.³ The secretariat has also maintained and updated the bibliography of GGP-based research.⁴ The GGP is among the leading data sources for policy-relevant research on demographic trends and processes in the ECE region. The data and research findings from the GGP have been used for computing AAI indicators in some contexts and supported/instigated some policy measures addressing low fertility and intergenerational equity concerns.

² For more information on the Second international seminar visit <https://statswiki.unece.org/display/AAI/Second+international+seminar++on+the+Active+Ageing+Index>

³ Data can be accessed by registered users at www.ggp-i.org.

⁴ Available from <http://www.ggp-i.org/form/publications/>.

3. Other programme elements and related activities

15. The side event “MIPAA meets SDG1: Responses to old-age poverty in the UNECE region” was organized by the Working Group on Ageing at the 56th Session of the Commission for Social Development on 31 January 2018 in New York. Austria, France and Norway shared their policy strategies addressing the risk of old-age poverty through inclusive policies and the promotion of active ageing.

16. The secretariat together with the UNFPA Eastern Europe and Central Asia Regional Office finalized a regional monitoring framework to support the follow-up on the implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD), and more specifically the recommendations of the Chair’s summary that concluded the 20-year review of the ICPD in the region in 2013. The monitoring framework is aligned to the extent possible with the SDG indicators. It was used as a basis for preparing the UNECE regional report on ICPD+25.

17. The UNECE Regional Conference on ICPD+25 “Enabling Choices: Population Dynamics and Sustainable Development” focused on key actions for implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action and addressed the wider policy concerns related to three major themes: population dynamics and sustainable development; families, sexual and reproductive health over the life course; and inequalities, social inclusion, and rights. The concerns and potentials of ageing societies outlined in the 2017 Lisbon Ministerial Declaration found their reflection and support throughout the deliberations of the Conference.

III. Conclusions

18. The 2017 Lisbon Ministerial Declaration provided an important framework of reference to streamline activities in implementing and monitoring MIPAA/RIS in the ECE region. The key role of the Working Group on Ageing as the facilitator of MIPAA/RIS implementation in the region has been once more confirmed by the extension of its mandate to the end of 2022. The WGA has produced substantive outputs and has provided a framework for networking among national focal points to exchange information and share experiences.

19. The recent financial and in-kind contributions in support of the WGA – Germany’s donation to the Ageing fund in 2017, hosting of the tenth Bureau meeting in Ljubljana by Slovenia, policy brief translations by Austria and Spain, and others – facilitated the implementation of activities foreseen in the WGA programme of work for 2018. The extra-budgetary funding received under the joint project with the European Commission’s Directorate General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion provided necessary resources to continue work on the AAI and promote its use for policymaking and monitoring the impact of active ageing policy actions.
