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Economic Commission for Europe

Working Group on Ageing

Tenth meeting

Geneva, 23 and 24 November 2017

Report of the Working Group on Ageing on its Tenth Meeting

I. Introduction

A. Attendance

1. The tenth meeting of the Working Group on Ageing (WGA) was held on 23 and 24 November 2017 at the Palais des Nations in Geneva.
2. Representatives of 28 member States of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) participated: Austria, Belarus, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Canada, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Kazakhstan, Lithuania, Monaco, Montenegro, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, the Russian Federation, Slovenia, Spain, Switzerland, and Turkey. The Holy See attended as an observer State.
3. Representatives of the European Commission, the European Centre for Social Welfare Policy and Research (ECV), the International Labour Organization (ILO), and the Organisation of Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) participated. The following non-governmental organizations (NGOs) attended the meeting: AGE Platform Europe, Alliance Defending Freedom, Association of Former International Civil Servants, Central Asian Gerontology Center, European Federation of Older Persons, HelpAge International, HelpAge International Moldova, International Federation of Social Workers, International Longevity Centre, Global Alliance (ILC GA), International Network for the Prevention of Elder Abuse (INPEA), NGO Committee on Ageing – Vienna, Red Cross of Serbia, Soroptimist International, Turkey Retired Persons Organisation, and Women's World Summit Foundation.
4. The total number of participants was 70. A full list of participants is available on the meeting website.¹

¹ <http://www.unece.org/index.php?id=44772>

B. Adoption of the agenda and election of officers

5. The tenth meeting of the Working Group on Ageing was opened by the Executive Secretary of ECE, and followed by opening remarks by the Director of the Statistical Division.
6. The meeting's agenda (ECE/WG.1/2017/1) was adopted without amendments.
7. Following a call for nominations issued in September 2017, the Working Group elected a new Bureau comprising delegates from the following member States: Belarus, the Czech Republic, France, Israel, Italy, Norway, Portugal and Slovenia.
8. The representative of Portugal was elected new Chair of the Working Group on Ageing, succeeding Austria. Norway was elected Vice-Chair of the Working Group, succeeding Germany. The Director of the European Centre for Social Welfare Policy and Research was re-appointed as the research community representative to the Bureau.
9. Two candidates were nominated by the NGO Community for the NGO seat on the Bureau, to succeed Dirk Jarré who completed the maximum number of terms. The nomination of Gertraud Dayé by Dirk Jarré was endorsed by the NGO Committee on Ageing in Vienna. The nomination of Heidrun Mollenkopf by the AGE Executive Committee was endorsed by Age International, the NGO Committees on Ageing in Geneva and New York, HelpAge International and INPEA.
10. Upon recommendation by the Bureau members, Gertraud Dayé was elected to the Bureau for the next two years and the Bureau recommended that Heidrun Mollenkopf will succeed her on the Bureau for the following two-year term. Both candidates indicated their intention to closely collaborate throughout this time.
11. The representative of the ILC GA informed that while she esteemed both candidates and appreciated their capabilities, the NGO Committees on Ageing in Geneva and New York as well as HelpAge International, Age International and INPEA had endorsed only the nomination of Heidrun Mollenkopf by AGE Platform Europe as the representative of NGOs.
12. The Chair thanked the outgoing Bureau members for their contributions over the past years and welcomed the new members. She informed the WGA that the first day of the meeting will be chaired by the outgoing Chair and Vice-Chair while a new Chair will assume his duties on the second day of the meeting.

II. Report and discussion on the outcome of the UNECE Ministerial Conference on Ageing held in Lisbon in September 2017

13. Supporting documentation for this agenda item were the Report of the UNECE Ministerial Conference on Ageing held in Lisbon on 21-22 September 2017 (ECE/AC.30/2017/2) and the Report on the ninth meeting of the Bureau of the Working Group on Ageing (ECE/WG.1/2017/3).
14. The representative of Portugal briefly reviewed the main highlights of the Ministerial Conference and reported on the adoption of the Ministerial Declaration.
15. The representative of Germany who acted as Chair of the Declaration Drafting Group shared the experience of preparing and negotiating the 2017 Lisbon Ministerial Declaration. Canada welcomed the inclusiveness and effectiveness of the negotiation process.
16. Belarus expressed appreciation of the experience sharing among countries during the Ministerial Conference.

A. Main messages from expert and ministerial panels

17. The outgoing Chair of the Working Group summarized the key messages of the expert and ministerial panels held at the Ministerial Conference on Ageing under the themes of 'Recognizing the potential of older persons', 'Encouraging longer working lives and the ability to work', and 'Ensuring ageing with dignity'.

18. The European Commission highlighted the pertinence of the Lisbon Ministerial Declaration for the region and asked if a political declaration updating the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing (MIPAA) could be envisaged at the global level.

19. NGOs stressed the importance of taking into account parallel processes such as the 2030 Agenda and the discussions at the Open-ended Working Group on Ageing and pointed to the need of intensifying interregional exchange.

B. Results of the civil society and research forums

20. The NGO representative informed the Working Group about the NGO Forum that took place on 20 September 2017 preceding the Ministerial Conference and the NGO Political Declaration that was its outcome document. NGOs strongly supported the recommendation of the United Nations Independent Expert on the enjoyment of all human rights by older persons to establish a binding legal instrument on the human rights of older persons. Key messages that were conveyed to ECE member States at the Ministerial Conference were to ensure that older persons and their organizations are included in the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs); to develop policies to effectively ban any form of age discrimination, ageism, pejorative behaviour, violence and abuse towards older women and men; to remove barriers and strengthen the voice of older persons and their organizations in research and in the monitoring and implementation of all relevant policies; to promote all older women and men's right to dignity, well-being, adequate income, freedom, security and social inclusion; and to actively engage with older persons and civil society to ensure that the commitments made at the Ministerial Conference are fully realized.

21. The Research community representative informed the WGA about results of the Research Forum that took place in parallel with the NGO Forum on 20 September 2017. Around 70 researchers on ageing from across the ECE region exchanged research findings underpinning the Ministerial Declaration with evidence and identified priorities for future research on ageing. The Statement of the Research Forum that was presented at the Ministerial Conference reflects wide consensus among participants. It highlights the need for research exploring the potentials of involving older people in social, political and cultural discourse and planning; investigating the necessary preconditions for implementing a culture of positive ageing; analysing social investment initiatives and possibilities to equally distribute the potentials of the silver economy; analysing the efficacy of policy measures to overcome poverty and inequalities; exploring innovative ways to extend working lives and developing concepts of sustainable and valuable work lives in a life-course perspective; exploring the challenges of reconciling paid work and non-paid activities, including care provided outside kin relationships; promoting further multi-disciplinary research on human rights in old age and measures for combating ageism; identifying predictors of mistreatment of older persons in different settings and its consequences; and synthesizing existing results of ageing research to learn from existing knowledge.

C. Proceedings of the Conference

22. The secretariat informed the Working Group that the Conference Proceedings will be published in electronic format by the end of 2017.

23. The Working Group was informed about the Bureau proposal to set up a consultation group to explore the next steps in addressing Paragraph 38 of the Lisbon Ministerial Declaration, which relates to exploring 'the possibility of a resource-neutral transformation of the Working Group on Ageing to a standing sectoral committee without prejudice to the work of the UNECE in other areas of its mandate'.

24. Members of the Working Group were invited to express interest. Austria, Germany, Portugal and Slovenia volunteered to join the consultation group. The Russian Federation asked the secretariat for clarifications on the process and requested to be informed in advance about consultations. The Russian Federation will join the consultation group as an observer.

25. The Lisbon Ministerial Declaration is available in all official ECE languages and was published as an annex to the conference report (ECE/AC.30/2017/2/Rev1). The secretariat welcomed translations of the 2017 Lisbon Ministerial Declaration by member States and requested to receive copies for the ECE website.

III. New and ongoing international initiatives in the area of ageing and the follow-up to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

26. The OECD representative introduced the recently completed report 'Preventing Ageing Unequally', which reviews ageing and inequality trends and assesses how they have been interacting within and across generations. The report shows how disadvantages become entrenched as inequalities start early in life and compound along the life course. According to the report, old-age poverty and inequality are major challenges in many countries that population ageing will magnify. Currently older people fare relatively well in a number of OECD countries, but the situation is likely to become less favourable. Younger generations who have entered the labour market might not enjoy the improved situation for current older people. This will have long-lasting effects impacting on their living conditions in older age, in particular for individuals with low education levels born after the mid-1960s. The report puts forward a policy agenda to prevent, mitigate and cope with unequal ageing. The presentation was followed by questions from the floor.

27. The ILO representative updated the group on recent work by the ILO towards universal health and long-term care protection for older persons under the SDGs and informed members of the group about the publication of the World Social Protection Report 2017-2019 at the end of November 2017. The presentation highlighted that only few countries in Europe provide a universal right to long-term care (LTC) while income support for older people is too low to push them out of poverty. Rights deficits and inadequate LTC benefits result in high frequency out-of-pocket payments for older persons. On average, in high-income countries there are only 5.3 formal LTC workers to care for 100 persons aged 65 and above. These are supported by more than 37 informal carers who are often unpaid older family members. The presentation emphasized that policies towards achieving the SDGs and universal health coverage should prioritize equity-based strategies to extend coverage and access for all and remove social determinants of inequities by implementing national social protection floors.

28. Estonia reported on the Conference 'Dignity and Independent Living = DI' organized on 12-13 October 2017 in Tallinn under the Presidency of the Council of the European Union

by Estonia. The aim of the conference was to advance discussions on how to accelerate the transition from institution-based services to community-based services in the European Union. Risks associated with the transition are lack of clarity about alternatives to institutional care, costly and wrong replication of institutional culture on a smaller scale and de-institutionalization as a mere EU-funded exception to the rule of institutional care. The importance of providing personalized support services that allow users to be empowered and to exercise self-determination and their role as social beings was stressed. This requires profound reforms that need to be thought through with the people who are affected. The recording of the full conference is available from <https://www.eu2017.ee/political-meetings/dignity-independent-living-di>.

29. The Secretary of the Conference of European Statisticians updated the WGA on the global and ECE-level activities related to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Specifically the group was informed about progress of the Interagency and Expert Group on SDG indicators established in 2015 whose task was to develop a list of indicators for SDG monitoring at the global level and provide support for the implementation of the indicator framework until 2030, review capacity-building and report on progress towards the SDGs. The proposed global list of 232+ indicators was approved by the United Nations Statistical Commission, ECOSOC and the United Nations General Assembly in 2017. Members of the Working Group were further informed about the Road Map on statistics for the SDGs developed by a Steering Group and endorsed by the Conference of European Statisticians in June 2017. The Road Map provides guidance to countries on how to set up a system for providing statistics and indicators for SDGs. Challenges that remain are to ensure coordination, coherence and consistency between the different reporting levels and streams, to mainstream SDG monitoring in existing reporting mechanisms, limited human and financial resources and the need for greater awareness of the SDGs and the respective roles of different actors.

30. The representative of ILC GA, Chair of the NGO Committee on Ageing in Geneva and an elected member of the Steering Committee of the Stakeholder Group on Ageing informed the Working Group that the Regional Forum on Sustainable Development will take place on 1-2 March 2018 and will be preceded by a Civil Society Forum on 28 February. The civil society in the ECE region organizes itself following the structure of the major groups and other stakeholders that interact with the High-level Political Forum in relation to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. The ECE Stakeholder Group on Ageing is actively involved in the process to ensure that older persons and issues related to ageing are not left behind.

IV. Concluding the third cycle of review and appraisal of MIPAA: national and global dimensions

A. Country experiences

31. Slovenia presented their new national 'Strategy of Long Living Society' adopted in 2017. The strategy is based on four pillars: labour market and education; independent, healthy and safe life of all generations; the creation of an environment for active ageing; and inclusion in society. Central elements of the strategy include active ageing (emphasizing activity and creativity in all stages of life, concern for health and intergenerational solidarity); informal carers; rights of older persons; dignified ageing, and non-discrimination of older persons. Slovenia further informed the WGA about the experience of reporting on the implementation of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing and its Regional Implementation Strategy (MIPAA/RIS) in which multiple stakeholders were involved, including active participation of younger generations. A lesson learnt was that such engagement is beneficial

and should be continuous, not only on the occasion of the period reviews of MIPAA/RIS implementation.

32. Due to time constraints, Germany did not share their country experience during the meeting as planned but made the presentation slides available to participants. These provide information about the German Federal Government Demography Strategy, a Round table on Active Ageing, new regulations facilitating the reconciliation of work, family and care, reforms to strengthen long-term care and support to persons with dementia, the Nursing Professions Reform Act and recent reforms relating to provisions for older age.

33. The secretariat read out a statement by the United States of America expressing regrets about not being able to attend the meeting and informing the group about the appointment of Lance Robertson as Assistant Secretary for Aging and Administrator for Community Living, of the Administration for Community Living (ACL), part of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The statement reaffirmed the commitment of the United States to the implementation of MIPAA/RIS and engagement in the work of the Working Group on Ageing.

B. The global segment of the third review and appraisal cycle of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing at the 56th session of the Commission for Social Development (2018) and other global events

34. The secretariat informed the group about the ECE input to the Secretary-General Report on MIPAA implementation for the 56th session of the United Nations Commission for Social Development (CSocD) to be held in January-February 2018. The regional input was based on the findings of the Syntheses Report (ECE/AC.30/2017/3).

35. The secretariat informed Working Group members that the global segment of the MIPAA+15 review will take place at the 56th session of the CSocD on 31 January in the form of a 3-hour high-level panel. The ECE region will be represented by the Minister of Labour, Solidarity, and Social Security of Portugal.

36. The opportunity to hold a side event to promote the work of the WGA was discussed and the secretariat invited members who will be present at CSocD to collaborate in organizing the event.

V. Initial discussion on the WGA work programme for the fourth cycle of MIPAA/RIS implementation, 2018-2022

A. Areas of focus – responding to the goals of the Lisbon Ministerial Declaration and integrating SDGs

37. The Chair highlighted the necessity for the new work programme to respond to the mandate provided by the 2017 Lisbon Ministerial Declaration taking into account the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. She pointed out that the implementation of MIPAA/RIS contributes to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and underlined the connections between the priority policy goals agreed in the Lisbon Ministerial Declaration and the SDGs, in particular SDGs 3, 8, 1, 5, 10, and 4. A comprehensive mapping of the connections between the policy goals of the Lisbon Ministerial Declaration and the SDGs was prepared by the secretariat to inform group discussions on the priorities for the fourth cycle of MIPAA/RIS implementation.

B. New and continuing elements in the work programme

38. Members of the Working Group on Ageing were invited to discuss in three groups the areas of focus and individual elements for the future work programme while incorporating the goals of the 2017 Lisbon Ministerial Declaration and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Each discussion group considered a separate policy goal for the fourth cycle of MIPAA/RIS implementation agreed in the 2017 Lisbon Ministerial Declaration. The goals discussed were recognizing the potential of older persons, encouraging longer working life and ability to work, and ensuring ageing with dignity. After the group discussions, designated rapporteurs of each group provided a summary of the deliberations to the plenary.

39. The groups reaffirmed the usefulness of existing elements in the programme of work and suggested that it would be useful to provide capacity-building and opportunities for exchange of experience with regard to the implementation of national strategies on ageing, networking and cross-sectoral collaboration to advance policies on ageing, including in relation to connecting ageing with the SDGs. The idea of policy-specific seminars or 'master-classes' that would focus in depth on policy challenges and responses developed by member States were also welcomed. These could be organized back-to-back with annual Working Group meetings to facilitate participation.

40. In a second round of discussions, the three groups discussed definitions of concepts and areas of focus for the next policy brief innovative social services and supportive measures for independent living in advanced age. The first group focused on definitions of advanced age for the purpose of the policy brief and related challenges to be addressed, the second group focused on innovative social services and support measures and the third group on the pitfalls and safeguards of independent living. The inputs of the discussion groups will guide the development of the policy brief.

VI. Implementation of the WGA work programme in 2017 and planned outputs for 2018

41. The Working Group reviewed the implementation of its work programme during the year 2017 as contained in document ECE/WG.1/2017/4.

A. Policy briefs

42. In 2017, two policy briefs were published as print publications thanks to the financial contributions by Germany: No. 18 'Older persons in rural and remote areas' (March 2017) and No. 19 'Realizing the potential of living longer' (September 2017). A drafting committee composed of representatives of Norway, the research and NGO representatives on the Bureau and the ECE secretariat jointly prepared the latest policy brief No. 19, which focused on the theme of the Ministerial Conference. Specifically, it explored four potentials that living longer holds for individuals, economies and society at large. These are healthy life years, extended working lives, the silver economy and informal contributions through volunteering and care. The policy brief recommends an age-integrated life-course approach to tackling the barriers that currently hinder their full realization. The secretariat presented the main elements of the policy brief to the Working Group.

43. As agreed during the ninth meeting of the Working Group in 2016, the topics for the next three policy briefs are 'Innovative social services and supportive measures for independent living in advanced age', 'Ageing in urban environments', and 'Ageing in place'. Suggestions for future topics for policy briefs that were raised during group discussions include the situation of informal carers, linking ageing with the SDGs, and tackling ageism. The question of merging the three related themes of upcoming policy briefs into two rather than three policy brief issues to allow covering a broader thematic range was discussed with

the group. The group decided to postpone the decision on future topics to the next working group meeting.

B. Capacity-building

44. The secretariat informed the group about the national seminar in Italy entitled ‘Active Ageing Index in Italy: Use and Policy Implications’, which was organized with partners from Italian National Research Center on Ageing (INRCA) in May 2017. The seminar focused on the Active Ageing Index (AAI) results for Italy at national and regional levels and the AAI potential as a tool for monitoring ageing-related policies as well as for furthering the concept of active ageing.

45. The representative of Italy highlighted the value of the seminar for promoting an integrated approach to active ageing policies and a standard methodology for different regional contexts. He stressed that the AAI is a useful tool for monitoring and evaluation of ageing policies which also demonstrates that combined measures in various policy areas are needed to advance active ageing.

C. Active Ageing Index project

46. The secretariat updated the group on activities implemented under the third phase of the Active Ageing Index (AAI) project since the ninth meeting of the WGA. Two parallel research studies on analysis of AAI results for different population groups were carried out by institutional consultants in Germany and Poland. The project continues cooperation with the University of Southampton in a number of research activities, including computation of the most recent AAI results. A side event on the AAI was held during the Ministerial Conference in Lisbon. The project team began the preparations for the Second International seminar on the AAI to be held in 2018. The results of the studies, information about meetings and publications are available from the AAI wiki-space.²

47. The representative of the European Commission highlighted the continued support from the European Commission of the AAI project, the importance of the studies for different population groups which allow for better understanding of ongoing changes in population including not only ageing by itself, but also education, increased participation by women etc. He stressed the value of the AAI as a synthetic and flexible instrument to capture parallel developments in society at national and subnational levels.

D. Generations and Gender Programme

48. The secretariat updated the group on the Generations and Gender Programme. A Council of Partners meeting was held on 5 July 2007 back to back with the fourth GGP User Conference on 6-7 July 2017. Belarus and Kazakhstan have joined the programme and Belarus has finished fielding the GGP survey with support of the UNFPA local office and experts of the Netherlands Interdisciplinary Demographic Institute. Belarus thanked the secretariat for the support and new research possibilities allowing to fill gaps in data on older people.

49. Austria asked the secretariat to clarify if there is a follow-up to ageing-related statistics referred to in the Lisbon Ministerial Declaration. The secretariat informed that the Conference of European Statisticians will make a decision about continuation of this work in 2018.

50. The Central Asia Gerontology Center informed the group about survey data on ageing in Tajikistan available on their website.

² <https://statswiki.unece.org/display/AAI/Active+Ageing+Index+Home>

E. Other programme elements

51. The secretariat informed the Working Group about the forthcoming ICPD+25 review in 2018 and progress on the joint project with UNFPA on 'Enhanced integration of population dynamics into development planning: follow-up to the International Conference on Population and Development in the ECE region'. A face-to-face Expert Group meeting will take place on 13-14 December 2017 in Geneva to consolidate information on existing statistical indicators and reporting mechanisms as a first step in developing a regional ICPD monitoring framework that will help assess progress on ICPD implementation in the region.

VII. Review of subprogramme performance and programme planning

52. The secretariat introduced the draft programme of work of the Population component of the Housing, Land Management and Population subprogramme for 2018-2019 (ECE/WG.1/2017/5), the Draft Strategic Framework 2020-2021 for the Population component of the Housing, Land Management and Population subprogramme (ECE/WG.1/2017/Room Document 1) and the Programme Performance report for the biennium 2016-2017 (ECE/WG.1/2017/Room Document 2).

53. The draft programme of work of the Population component of the Housing, Land Management and Population subprogramme for 2018-2019 (ECE/WG.1/2017/5) was adopted by the Working Group and recommended to the Executive Committee (EXCOM) for approval.

54. The Working Group acknowledged the Draft Strategic Framework 2020-2021 and commended the secretariat on the implementation of the work programme in 2016-2017 as detailed in document ECE/WG.1/2017/Room Document 2.

VIII. Financing of the work programme

55. The secretariat informed the Working Group about the availability and use of regular budget and extrabudgetary resources in 2016-2017 and the current financing of the programme.

56. The secretariat reported financial contribution to the Ageing fund by Germany in 2017 and acknowledged in-kind contributions received from Norway and Austria in the form of hosting the Bureau meetings in 2016 and 2017 respectively, from Belarus in the form of hosting the workshop on active ageing indicators in 2016, and from Portugal in the form of hosting the Ministerial Conference on Ageing in 2017. Belarus, Germany, Spain, and Switzerland provided in-kind contributions in the form of translating policy briefs in 2016 and 2017.

57. Pledges for 2018 were made by Slovenia to host the next Bureau meeting and by Austria in the form of contributions towards the WGA side event at the 56th session of the Commission of Social Development in New York.

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

58. The secretariat summarized the main items discussed and decisions taken at the tenth annual meeting of the WGA. The main elements and decisions of the meeting were

projected on screen for input/approval by the WGA members. An overview of decisions taken is included in Annex I.

59. The tenth meeting of the Bureau will be hosted by Slovenia on 14-15 May 2018.
60. The eleventh meeting of the WGA will take place on 19-20 November 2018 in Geneva, Switzerland.
61. The Chair thanked the participants and closed the meeting.

Annex

Decisions taken at the tenth meeting of the Working Group on Ageing

- The WGA adopted the agenda (ECE/WG.1/2017/1) without amendments.
 - Representatives from four countries were re-elected to continue for another term on the Bureau: Belarus, Norway, Portugal, and Slovenia.
 - Four new members of the Bureau were elected. The Czech Republic, France, Israel, and Italy.
 - Portugal was elected to be the next Chair of the Working Group. Norway was elected Vice-Chair.
 - It was decided to set up a consultation group to explore next steps in addressing Paragraph 38 of the Lisbon Ministerial Declaration. Austria, Germany, Portugal and Slovenia volunteered to join this group. The Russian Federation will join as an observer.
 - It was decided to organize a side event on ageing at the 56th session of the Commission on Social Development on 31 January 2017 to promote the work of the Working Group.
 - The group adopted the draft programme of work as detailed in document ECE/WG.1/2017/5 and recommended it to the ECE Executive Committee for approval.
 - Slovenia will host the next meeting of the Bureau on 14-15 May 2018.
 - The eleventh meeting of the WGA will take place on 19-20 November 2018 in Geneva, Switzerland.
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