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**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

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**Meeting with the Chairperson of the Working Group on Ageing**  
**Report by the Chair**

## Report by the Chairperson of the Working Group on Ageing

1. The Chair of the Working Group on Ageing of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), Mr. Edmundo Martinho (Portugal), is pleased to submit his report to the ninety-sixth meeting of EXCOM on 30 January 2018.

### I. Improving policymaking in compliance with the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing

2. The Population Unit of UNECE works with member States to strengthen policymaking in response to population ageing and other demographic changes.

3. The work is governed by the Working Group on Ageing (WGA), composed of National Focal Points on Ageing nominated by the respective governments. The Population Unit acts as the secretariat and enables the preparation and implementation of the WGA Programme of Work. The Unit also responds to the global population-related initiatives of the United Nations General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council.

4. Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) representing older persons and/or working in ageing-related areas and scientific community participate as observers to the Working Group and are represented in the WGA Bureau. The international organizations with programmes related to population ageing such as European Commission, International Labour Organization (ILO), United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), World Bank, World Health Organization (WHO) also take part in the Working Group as observers.

5. The Working Group supports the fulfilment of the policy principles set out in the 2002 Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing (MIPAA) and its Regional Implementation Strategy (RIS) among the UNECE member States and conducts reviews and appraisals of MIPAA/RIS implementation every five years. In 2017, the third review and appraisal exercise was completed and MIPAA/RIS framework was reaffirmed by the Lisbon Ministerial Declaration 'A Sustainable Society for All Ages: Realizing the potential of living longer'. For the fourth implementation cycle (2018-2022), the Lisbon Ministerial Declaration calls for policy measures and activities in three priority areas, namely:<sup>1</sup>

- (a) Recognizing the potential of older persons;
- (b) Encouraging longer working life and ability to work;
- (c) Ensuring ageing with dignity.

6. The Lisbon Ministerial Declaration and the WGA work programme seek to strengthen the interlinkages with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), including ending poverty in all its forms everywhere (SDG1), ensuring healthy lives and promoting well-being for all at all ages (SDG3), achieving gender equality (SDG5), promoting full and productive employment and decent work for all (SDG8) as well as access to lifelong learning opportunities (SDG4), and making cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable (SDG11).

7. This report highlights the work undertaken by the WGA over the last 12 months and major activities planned for 2018 and beyond. Further details can be found in the report of the tenth meeting of the Working Group on Ageing, ECE/WG.1/2017/2.

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<sup>1</sup> [http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/pau/age/Ministerial\\_Conference\\_Lisbon/Documents/ECE.AC.30-2017-2-E-Rev.1.pdf](http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/pau/age/Ministerial_Conference_Lisbon/Documents/ECE.AC.30-2017-2-E-Rev.1.pdf)

## II. Achievements over the past twelve months

### A. Completion of the third cycle of the review and appraisal of MIPAA/RIS implementation and organization of the 2017 Ministerial Conference

8. The organization of the fourth Ministerial Conference on Ageing and the preparation of the Synthesis report for the third review and appraisal cycle of MIPAA/RIS were at the centre of the activities of the Population Unit and the Working Group in 2017. Under the WGA guidance, 46 member States submitted national reports on MIPAA/RIS implementation, up from 40 countries in the previous cycle. The Synthesis report, summarizing the trends and achievements in implementing MIPAA/RIS in the UNECE region, was launched at the conference. The report includes an extensive statistical annex containing demographic data, and data on 22 active ageing indicators for the majority of UNECE member States. The Synthesis report was published as part of the Ministerial Conference proceedings.

9. The fourth UNECE Ministerial Conference on Ageing took place on 21-22 September 2017 in Lisbon, hosted by the Government of Portugal. It was preceded by an NGO forum and a research forum on 20 September 2017. Delegations from 46 UNECE member States, including 31 ministers and deputy ministers/state secretaries and a number of high-level officials from international organizations and the European Commission attended the Conference. NGOs, scientists and other stakeholders also participated in the discussions on progress made in implementing MIPAA/RIS between 2012 and 2017.<sup>2</sup>

10. The Ministerial Conference adopted the Lisbon Ministerial Declaration ‘A Sustainable Society for All Ages: Realizing the potential of living longer’. The first draft of the declaration was extensively discussed by the WGA in November 2016 and amended at the WGA Bureau meeting in April 2017. Two rounds of full-scale electronic consultations with the member States were organized by the secretariat between May and August 2017 to reach a general preliminary agreement on the text, which was tabled at the Conference. The Conference adopted the declaration after amending its paragraph 38 as proposed by the Portuguese and the Russian Federation delegations.

11. The global review of MIPAA implementation during the third cycle will conclude on 31 January 2018 with a high-level panel at the 56th session of the Commission for Social Development. The UNECE region will be represented by Mr. Vieira da Silva, Minister of Labour, Solidarity, and Social Security of Portugal, Chair of the Lisbon Ministerial Conference. During the Commission session, the UNECE secretariat together with the WGA members will hold a side event ‘MIPAA meets SDG1 – responses to old-age poverty in the UNECE region’.

### B. Policy Briefs on Ageing with good practice examples

12. The UNECE produces a series of Policy Briefs on Ageing on the topics selected by the members of WGA aiming to address the MIPAA/RIS commitments, suggest policy measures and promote exchange of good practice examples among member States. The Policy Briefs integrate a wealth of contributions and experiences from UNECE countries. Many of the briefs are translated into several languages (French, German, Russian, Serbian, and Spanish) by member States.

13. In 2017, two new Policy Briefs were published: ‘**Older persons in rural and remote areas**’ and ‘**Realizing the potential of living longer**’. The latter was dedicated to the theme of the Ministerial Conference and 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. Preparations also started for a next Policy Brief ‘Innovative social services and supportive measures for independent living in advanced age’. Its focus and content were discussed by WGA at its tenth meeting in November 2017.

<sup>2</sup> Further details on the Conference debates can be found in the report of the Ministerial Conference on Ageing, AC.30/2017/2/Rev.1.

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

13. An important area under the WGA Programme of Work is monitoring the implementation of MIPAA/RIS and strengthening the evidence base for policymaking. Two main activities fall under this item:

(a) The Working Group supported the use and further development of the **Active Ageing Index (AAI)**. The index provides a composite measure for active ageing outcomes and the capacity/enabling environment for it, and is developed as a tool to monitor impact of active ageing policies. As recommended by the WGA, 22 indicators of the AAI were used in the statistical annex to the national and Synthesis reports on the third MIPAA/RIS review and appraisal cycle. In 2017, the AAI coverage in time and geographically was extended and two research studies on criteria-specific analysis of AAI results in Germany and in Poland were carried out. They focused on comparison and analysis of AAI results for older population groups distinguished by criteria of educational attainment, socio-economic status, and area of residence (urban or rural). The findings of these studies are expected to provide basis for better-targeted policy measures.<sup>3</sup>

(b) The **Generations and Gender Programme (GGP)** is an important data source for the analysis of the intergenerational and gender relationships within family and society. The Programme includes national longitudinal surveys that are repeated in about three-year intervals. Currently, the harmonized data for the first and second survey waves are available for 19 and 12 countries, respectively. Belarus and Kazakhstan have recently joined GGP. The preliminary version of Belarus Generations and Gender Survey data will be soon available for analysis. The Programme is governed by the Consortium Board, of which UNECE is a member. The UNECE Population Unit coordinates the GGP network of national teams (Council of Partners) and has an important role in bridging the programme governance with national teams responsible for GGP implementation. In July 2017, UNECE co-organized a meeting of the Council of Partners in Berlin, Germany, back-to-back with the fourth GGP User Conference. As survey data custodian, UNECE processes applications submitted by scientists and experts who wish to use GGP data for their research.

## III. Major planned activities for 2018 and beyond

14. The Working Group on Ageing and its secretariat will continue working towards its main objective to enhance the implementation of MIPAA/RIS in UNECE member States and meet the goals of the Lisbon Ministerial Declaration. EXCOM is invited to adopt the renewal of the Working Group's mandate for the period 2018-2022 and its terms of reference (as contained in E/EX/2018/L.1) as well as its Programme of Work 2018-2019 (as contained in ECE/WG.1/2017/5). The WGA activities and outputs for 2018 and beyond will fall under the main elements of the Programme of Work for the fourth cycle of MIPAA/RIS (2018-2022). The following key constituting elements were agreed at the tenth WGA meeting in November 2017:

### A. Policy Briefs on Ageing

15. Policy Briefs will remain an important element of the new Programme of Work, as they provide evidence-based policy advice on specific aspects of MIPAA/RIS and showcase good practices from across the region. The Policy Brief '**Innovative social services and supportive measures for independent living in advanced age**' will be issued in May-June 2018. The next Policy Brief to be prepared in the second half of 2018 will be on '**Ageing in urban environments**'. The UNECE member States are invited to translate Policy Briefs into national languages to make them accessible to a wider circle of professionals, policymakers and NGOs/volunteers.

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<sup>3</sup> <https://statswiki.unece.org/display/AAI/Active+Ageing+Index+Home>

## B. Capacity-building on ageing-related issues

16. The Working Group on Ageing is discussing potential candidates for the Road Maps on Mainstreaming Ageing. Belarus and Bulgaria have indicated their interest. If requested, the secretariat, with support from WGA members, would initiate the development of one Road Map project in 2018. The proposals for conducting peer assessments of mainstreaming ageing into relevant policies in UNECE countries are also discussed.

17. The secretariat with WGA support will organize a capacity-building workshop for government experts and practitioners back to back with the 2018 meeting of WGA, focusing on a specific policy area related to the implementation of the objectives of the Lisbon Ministerial Declaration. The topic of the workshop will be agreed by the WGA Bureau in May 2018.

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

18. The work on advancing the use of the **Active Ageing Index** to monitor the implementation of MIPAA/RIS will continue with financial support from the European Commission. The activities planned for 2018 include: new rounds of AAI calculations using the most recent available data; pilot studies and analysis of educational/socio-economic status impact on AAI outcomes; preparation of guidelines on use of alternative variables for AAI calculation at subnational level or / and non-EU countries; organization of the Second international seminar on AAI in September 2018, improved communication and visualization of the AAI results.

19. The **Generations and Gender Programme** will continue to be an essential component of data collection and research for the UNECE work on population issues. More harmonized data will be forthcoming from Belarus, Australia, France, Hungary, and the Netherlands. The first GGP survey is to be carried out in Kazakhstan. The secretariat will continue coordinating GGP as an important source of evidence for policymaking and monitoring implementation of the Lisbon Ministerial Declaration goals.

## IV. Cooperation with other organizations

20. The Working Group on Ageing and its secretariat maintain very good cooperation with the international organizations active in the area of population ageing in the UNECE region: joint projects were undertaken with the European Commission (i.e. the AAI project), organization of joint events with WHO and involvement in the WHO Expert Group on Economics of Ageing.

21. At the global level, close relationships have been maintained with UNFPA, both headquarters in New York and the Regional Office for Eastern Europe and Central Asia (EECARO) in Istanbul. Cooperation takes place with regard to support to the implementation process of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) and other population-related matters. On an annual basis, the UNECE Population Unit and EECARO exchange information on their work programmes and discuss possible joint activities. A new joint project on 'Enhanced integration of population dynamics into development planning: follow-up to ICPD beyond 2014 in the UNECE region' commenced in 2017.

22. The Population Unit initiated an informal Geneva-based inter-agency group on ageing, with representatives from ILO, the International Social Security Association (ISSA), the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), the UNFPA Geneva office, WHO, and the NGO Committee on Ageing. The meetings of the inter-agency group take place once or twice a year to mutually update on planned ageing-related activities and discuss how the group members could be involved in/benefit from each other activities. The inter-agency group's work has already contributed to enriching the work of WGA by providing substantive contributions to several annual meetings and organizing an ECE/WHO side event at the Ministerial Conference in Lisbon.

## **V. Exploring a possibility to transform WGA to a standing sectoral committee – responding to the Lisbon Ministerial Declaration**

23. On 22 September 2017, the UNECE member States adopted the Lisbon Ministerial Declaration, which states in the paragraph 38 that

*“...To further support the intergovernmental collaboration in the field of population ageing, we also acknowledge the need to explore 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. As a follow-up, the WGA at its tenth meeting in November 2017 decided to set up a consultation group composed of several countries 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. The consultation group will inform the WGA Bureau about the planned steps in May 2018. The outcome of the consultation will be presented to the annual meeting of the Working Group on Ageing and to EXCOM.

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