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## Economic Commission for Europe

### Standing Working Group on Ageing

#### Fourteenth meeting

Geneva, 22 and 23 November 2021

## Report of the Standing Working Group on Ageing on its fourteenth meeting

### I. Introduction

#### A. Attendance

1. The thirteenth meeting of the Standing Working Group on Ageing (SWGA) was held on 22 and 23 November 2021 at the Palais des Nations in Geneva and online. It was chaired by Aina Strand, SWGA Vice-Chair (Norway). The meeting was attended by a total of 102 participants.<sup>1</sup>

2. Representatives of the following 39 member States of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) participated: Austria, Azerbaijan, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Kazakhstan, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Monaco, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Serbia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, Ukraine, United States of America and Uzbekistan. The Holy See attended as an observer State.

3. Representatives of the European Union (EU) and the European Commission (EC), the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the World Health Organization (WHO) participated.

4. The academic and research community was represented by European Centre for Social Welfare Policy and Research (Vienna, Austria); Jagiellonian University (Cracow,

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<sup>1</sup> The list of participants is available on the meeting page:  
<https://unece.org/info/Population/events/349039>



Poland)/ EuroAgeism; INRCA - Centre for Social and Economic Research on Ageing (Italy); and University of International Business, Kazakhstan.

5. The following non-governmental organizations (NGOs) attended the meeting: AGE Platform Europe, Ardager, Atdal 40+, Centre for Socio-Eco-Nomic Development (CSEND), Gray Panthers, German National Association of Senior Citizen's Organisations (BAGSO), HelpAge International, International Federation of Associations of the Elderly (FIAPA), International Federation on Ageing (IFA), International Network for the Prevention of Elder Abuse (INPEA), NGO Committee on Ageing in Geneva, Red Cross of Serbia, Turbotra pro Litnih v Ukraini (Age Concern Ukraine), and Turkey Retired Persons Organization.

## **B. Opening of the meeting and adoption of the agenda**

6. The fourteenth meeting of SWGA was opened by the Chair of the meeting, Aina Strand, SWGA Vice-Chair (Norway), by the Executive Secretary of ECE, and by the Director of the Statistical Division of ECE.

7. The Standing Working Group adopted the meeting's agenda as contained in document ECE/WG.1/2021/1 without changes. The Secretary of SWGA provided a technical briefing to in-person and online participants.

## **II. Work of the Bureau of the Standing Working Group on Ageing and briefing on the outcomes of ageing-related events during 2021**

8. The Chair presented the work of the Bureau of the Standing Working Group on Ageing. The thirteenth meeting of the Bureau in March 2021 took place online as did the two subsequent ad-hoc meetings in June and October 2021. The latter two were mainly dedicated to preparations for the 2022 Ministerial Conference on Ageing, in particular to the drafting of the Ministerial Declaration, and to elaborating the Conference content and structure.

9. The Chair informed that the date of the Ministerial Conference had been set for 16 and 17 June 2022 and reminded that a revised draft of the Ministerial Declaration had been circulated for further input prior to the meeting of SWGA.

10. The Chair commented on the financial situation of the secretariat of SWGA and welcomed the new staff member.

11. The Chair of the meeting reported on behalf of the SWGA Chair (Portugal) on the interventions of Portugal at the eleventh session of the General Assembly Open-ended Working Group on Ageing (OEWG-A), including the launch of the UNECE Guidelines for Mainstreaming Ageing.

12. The representative of OHCHR informed that the eleventh session of OEWG-A took place in a hybrid format in New York from 29 March to 1 April 2021. In the general debate, many United Nations Member States underlined the disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on older persons. They shared best practices and lessons learned. The new focus areas for the twelfth session of OEWG-A were set to be the economic security of older persons; and the contribution of older persons to sustainable development. NGO representatives commented on the difficulties faced by NGOs to participate in the OEWG-A meeting and voiced disappointment over the lack of conclusions about closing the gaps in international treaties on the rights of older persons, as well as over the small number of member States who participated and spoke during the meeting. They called for ECE member States to engage more in OEWG-A.

13. The representative of Slovenia presented on the outcomes of the International Online Conference on Human Rights for All Ages: Promoting a Life Course Perspective and Intergenerational Cooperation to Combat Ageism, that took place on 18 November 2021 under the auspices of the Slovenian EU Presidency. The conference demonstrated the growing interest in the human rights of older persons and ageism.

14. The secretariat informed about the inputs provided to the forthcoming Secretary-General report on the Preliminary assessment of the fourth review and appraisal of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, 2002 (MIPAA).

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

15. Ms. Astrid Dentler, Member of the cabinet of the EC Vice-President on Democracy and Demography, informed about the adoption of the EC Green Paper on Ageing, the outcomes of the public consultation following the adoption of the Green Paper, and related initiatives planned for 2022. She highlighted the following main elements of the Green Paper: (i) Ageing starts the day we are born (life-cycle approach to ageing; healthy and active ageing; life-long learning); (ii) Labour markets need to adapt; (iii) Ageing comes with both challenges and opportunities; (iv) Solidarity and responsibility between generations has to be fostered. Ms. Dentler also reported on the outcomes of a 12-week-long public consultation on the Green Paper, which had contributions from a broad range of stakeholders with 70 per cent of input coming from the academic sector, and civil society organizations. Respondents called for modernising pension systems, addressing gender pay and pension gaps, and enhancing integrated, person-centred and community-based care, among others. The results of the consultation were summarised in a synopsis report. Initiatives in 2022 will include strengthening the judicial protection of vulnerable adults in cross-border settings, as well as follow-up work to the EC Long-Term Vision for Rural Areas, including support for rural areas affected by population ageing, and demographic decline and a lack of economic opportunities. A European Care Strategy will be presented in the third quarter of 2022 and include a comprehensive framework from child-care to long-term care in both formal and informal care settings. Upon question from NGO representatives, Ms. Dentler specified that EC was not envisaging a White Paper on ageing, rather opting to mainstream the topic of ageing across a broad range of policy fields and initiatives.

16. Ms. Roxana Widmer-Iliescu, of the International Telecommunication Union, informed about the activities of ITU in the area of the digital inclusion of older persons. She informed that in response to the major megatrends of exponential rise of technology and population ageing, and in response to calls to end the digital divide, ITU had included population ageing in its work in recent years. ITU published a report on Ageing in the Digital World and developed a related video tutorial and online self-paced training course in multiple languages. She also reported that in 2021, the World Summit on the Information Society Forum had a special track on ICTs and older persons for the first time, and that the 2022 World Telecommunication and Information Society Day (17 May) will have the theme “Digital technologies for Older Persons and Healthy Ageing”.

17. Mr. Rio Hada, of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, reported on the adoption of the first standalone Human Rights Council resolution on the Human Rights of Older Persons on 7 October 2021 (resolution 48/3). He thanked Slovenia and other ECE countries for their leadership on this theme and support for the resolution. He informed that as per the resolution, a report on normative standards and obligations under international law in relation to the promotion and protection of the human

rights of older persons will be submitted to the forty-ninth session of the Human Rights Council in March 2022. The report will then be discussed in a multi-stakeholder meeting, the results of which will be submitted to the fifty-first session of the Human Rights Council in September 2022. NGO representatives welcomed the adoption of resolution 48/3 and called for inclusion of language from this resolution into the 2022 Ministerial Declaration.

18. The secretariat informed that the Resolution on the Follow-up to the Second World Assembly on Ageing is expected to be adopted by the General Assembly in December 2021.

19. The secretariat briefed participants about the forthcoming Regional Forum on Sustainable Development to be organized on 6 and 7 April 2022 in a hybrid mode in Geneva, under the thematic umbrella of “Building Back Better”. In 2022, five Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) will be under in-dept review: SDG 4, 5, 14, 15 and 17. The peer-learning sessions organized under the Regional Forum are currently being developed and the participation of SWGA is welcome, particularly on digital skills and literacy covered under SDG 4

## **IV. Fourth cycle of review and appraisal of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing and its Regional Implementation Strategy**

### **A. National review processes and briefing on the received country reports**

20. The secretariat reported on the state of submission of country reports as of 22 November. Out of 56 member States, 21 had submitted a report, 19 countries had promised to submit by the end of January 2022 the latest, and no information or indication of a timeline had been received from 16 member States. The secretariat shared some preliminary findings from the reports received which indicated that most countries used a participatory approach to develop national reports and followed the reporting guidelines issued by the Bureau. The growing importance of population ageing, the use of mainstreaming ageing approaches and the heavy impact of COVID-19 on older persons were addressed in a number of reports received so far.

21. The representative of Georgia shared country experience from the drafting of the national MIPAA/RIS review report and the bottom-up participatory approach that was adopted in the review process. Quantitative and qualitative data from a range of sources were used to draft the report, including information from questionnaires filled in by key stakeholders from the governmental and non-governmental sectors. Preliminary findings were discussed in stakeholder meetings organized by the Human Rights Secretariat of the Administration of the Government of Georgia, the coordinator of the review. The representative of Georgia also highlighted the interlinkages between the MIPAA/RIS review and other initiatives, including the follow up on the 2014 Roadmap on Mainstreaming Ageing developed by ECE with the support of UNFPA, the measures taken to address the negative impact of COVID-19 on older persons in Georgia and the ongoing drafting of the Second National Human Rights strategy of Georgia. Finally, she noted that Georgia would be submitting a national report for the first time, hopefully by the end of November.

22. The representative of the Serbian Red Cross, who was closely involved in drafting the national MIPAA/RIS review report of the Republic of Serbia, reported on the participatory approach taken to develop the report. Data from government, academia, service providers, NGOs and older persons themselves were collected, with the Ministry of Labour, Employment, Veteran and Social Policy taking the leading role. For future reviews, better

awareness among stakeholders of the cross-cutting nature of ageing would be desirable. The final report was expected to be submitted soon.

## **B. Outlines for the Synthesis and the MIPAA/RIS +20 reports**

23. The secretariat presented the proposed outline of the Synthesis Report on the implementation of MIPAA in the ECE region between 2017 and 2022. The Synthesis Report will have a similar structure as the previous one in 2017, with some suggested changes: introduction of the bigger picture of 20 years of MIPAA/RIS implementation; focus on the impact of COVID-19 and highlight on the synergies between MIPAA/RIS and other global frameworks including the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the United Nations Decade of Healthy Ageing. The timeline of the preparation of the Synthesis Report was shared and member States were requested to submit national reports by the end of January the latest to allow timely finalization of the Report for SWGA review in April 2022, in anticipation of the June 2022 Ministerial Conference.

24. The secretariat presented the suggested elements of the MIPAA/RIS+20 report to be prepared as a background document for the 2022 Ministerial Conference. The secretariat reminded participants of the mandate given to develop this report at the thirteenth meeting of SWGA and shared propositions on the format and main elements. Regarding the format, it was suggested to use appealing visuals and limit the length to 20-30 pages. In terms of content, the report shall be a celebratory overview of the last 20 years, including an analysis of the most important trends affecting population ageing in the region, an overview of progress in implementing MIPAA/RIS since 2002 and an outline of the way forward.

## **C. Preparations for the regional Ministerial conference in 2022**

### **1. Organizational matters of the Ministerial Conference: date, venue and format**

25. The representative of the Italian host country team briefed participants on organizational matters of the Ministerial Conference to be held in Rome, Italy, on 16 and 17 June 2022. The title of the Conference was confirmed to be: A sustainable world for all ages: Joining forces for solidarity and equal opportunities throughout life. The Conference will address four main topics: (i) Active and healthy ageing; (ii) Long-term care and the role of families and caregivers; (iii) Mainstreaming ageing in all policies; and (iv) Lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic.

26. The host country expects about 400 participants to attend the Conference, from governments, academia and civil society. The Conference is planned to be held in person, but organizers are ready to accommodate a hybrid mode if needed. The suggested format of national delegations is a minister/head of delegation and three delegates. The host country will provide support for two delegates per country from the following eligible countries: Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, Republic of Moldova, Tajikistan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan. Travel and accommodation costs for around 150 NGO representatives and researchers who will attend the Ministerial Conference and the joint Forum of Civil Society and Scientific Research will be covered as well. The Host country is also preparing a social programme to accompany the Conference, including a welcome dinner for all participants.

27. The secretariat informed participants about the Informal Briefing to Permanent Missions on the MIPAA+20 review process in the UNECE region and the forthcoming UNECE Ministerial Conference on Ageing, which took place on 25 October 2021. The secretariat explained that two to three such briefings normally precede the Ministerial Conference, to keep member States up to date through Permanent Missions. 13 member

States were present at the first briefing. The Ambassador of Italy and the Chair of SWGA (Portugal) provided updates, while the secretariat shared organizational details, the timeline of drafting the Ministerial Declaration and some progress on the national MIPAA/RIS reporting. The secretariat also clarified that invitations for the Ministerial Conference will be sent out through Permanent Missions at the beginning of January 2022. National focal points will be informed that invitations were sent out. The secretariat advised to coordinate sending out the invitations for the Ministerial Conference and for the Joint Forum.

## **2. Research and NGO forum format and preliminary agenda**

28. Ms. Heidrun Mollenkopf, from AGE Platform Europe, introduced the organizing committee of the joint Forum of Civil Society and Scientific Research and presented its preliminary agenda. The main objective of this first joint Forum will be to break down silos and exchange the experiences of civil society and the knowledge of academia. The Forum also aims to contribute to the Ministerial conference by identifying priorities for future policies on ageing. The Forum will take place on the day preceding the Ministerial Conference, on 15 June 2022 in Rome. It will have three sessions addressing the main topics of the Ministerial Conference but will also explore other themes identified by civil society and scientific organizations. The major output of the Forum will be a joint declaration/statement, which will be discussed during the fourth session of the Forum and will be presented to the Ministerial Conference. The Forum will have interpretation in Italian and the three working languages of ECE, English, French and Russian.

## **D. Deliberations on the proposed thematic content of the Ministerial Conference and the draft text of the ministerial declaration**

29. The representative of the Republic of Moldova reported on the latest developments from the Conference Content Group and introduced the proposed thematic content and preliminary structure of the Conference. The three expert panels will address the following themes: (1) Promoting active and healthy ageing throughout life, (2) Ensuring access to long-term care, and support to families and caregivers, (3) Mainstreaming ageing to advance a society for all ages.

30. The representative of Norway presented on behalf of the Declaration Drafting Group the current version of the draft Ministerial Declaration. The draft was prepared following the format of the previous Lisbon Declaration, introducing a general approach to adapt to the different national policy contexts, and covering most ageing policy issues. The majority of proposed amendments received during the initial consultation with the national focal points were incorporated in the text. The declaration makes reference to the impact of COVID-19, and links MIPAA+20 and ageing to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the United Nations Decade of Healthy Ageing.

31. Participants expressed their appreciation to the Declaration Drafting Group and the secretariat for their work on the draft Ministerial Declaration. In the follow-up discussion, Italy suggested to highlight the intersection between ageing and disability in the Declaration preamble, and to refer to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Furthermore, it was indicated that the role of NGOs in policymaking was not reflected clearly enough in the draft. Canada suggested to add explicit reference to emergency situations, while Azerbaijan recommended to include conflict and post-conflict situations. Sweden propounded to highlight the individual rather than the group, to strengthen the rights-based approach in the declaration, and to highlight the importance of ensuring the full enjoyment of human rights by older persons.

32. During the breakout session, participants, divided into three groups (one in-person and two online), discussed the format and agenda of the 2022 Ministerial Conference and

made suggestions for speakers as well as side events. The draft text for the Ministerial Declaration was considered in detail and several suggestions were made to amend the text.

33. Work under item 4(d) continued on the second day of the SWGA meeting, starting with information by the secretariat on the timetable for formal consultations on the Ministerial Declaration. Following the decision of the SWGA meeting, the revised draft of the Ministerial Declaration will be shared for a two-month formal consultation starting in mid-December. The draft text will be sent to member States through Permanent Missions and national focal points on ageing as well as to the NGOs represented at SWGA. The objective of the first round of formal consultation is to solicit substantive comments and/or agreement on the draft text of the declaration in particular from relevant ministries and governmental agencies of member States. The Bureau of SWGA will meet in early March 2022 to discuss proposed changes. In mid-March a second round of formal consultation will be launched, aiming to inform of the pre-final text of the declaration and indicate the unresolved issues if any. The second round of consultations will last three weeks, followed by final reconciliations on bilateral/plurilateral basis in case of conflicting remarks and requests. The draft Ministerial Declaration should be ready in May. The declaration will be presented during the morning session of the High-level segment of the Conference giving a couple of hours for delegations to discuss and make any potential final amendments. A negotiation team will be present to facilitate these discussions in case necessary.

34. The SWGA meeting continued with the presentation of proposed amendments to the draft text of the Ministerial Declaration during the breakout session. The rapporteurs from the three breakout groups read out amended paragraphs, which were then discussed and agreed upon by SWGA members. A summary of the main amendments follows below:

- The rights-based approach and related language was strengthened in the Declaration, as suggested by Sweden;
- Language on creating conditions for longer working lives was added;
- New subparagraph “recognizing the intersectionality between disability and ageing across different areas of everyday life” was added under para 5, as suggested by Italy;
- References to emergency and conflict situations were added in relevant paragraphs, as suggested by Sweden and Azerbaijan;
- The aspect of meaningful engagement and participation of older persons in processes concerning their interests has been strengthened as suggested by Sweden, Italy and NGO representatives;
- The paragraph on pensions was moved up to immediately follow the paragraph on longer working lives, in order to highlight the entitlement to pension after a life of work, as suggested by Belgium;
- References to autonomy and accumulated disadvantages through the life-course were added;
- The paragraph on the terms of employment and working conditions of health and care workers was moved up to immediately follow the paragraph on investments in health and care services;
- In the paragraph on palliative care, mention of “dying in dignity” was introduced to the text, as well as a call for integrating palliative care services in the continuum of care and support, as suggested by Belgium and NGO representatives;
- In the paragraph on mainstreaming ageing the agreement was reached with Canada to make reference not only to a “national strategic framework for mainstreaming ageing”, but also a national process for mainstreaming ageing;
- Throughout the Declaration and as per the suggestion of Sweden, “older people” were rephrased as “older persons”, “vulnerability” as “vulnerable situation”, “vulnerable groups” as “persons in vulnerable situations” and “gender-sensitive” as “gender-responsive”.

35. The rapporteurs also summarized breakout group discussions on the format and agenda of the Ministerial Conference. There has been broad agreement on the title of the Conference, as well as the structure and content, across the groups. It was noted that two slots for side events do not have a theme yet and a suggestion was made to include the implementation of the Decade of Healthy Ageing, and country experiences with COVID-19 response. All proposals will be discussed with the Conference Content group and the Host country team in due time.

36. The coordinator of the Conference Content Group (Republic of Moldova) reported that the in-person breakout group suggested: (i) to include ‘protection from violence, abuse and neglect in the digital environment’ among subthemes of Expert Panel I; (ii) to stress the issue of investing in long-term care in Expert Panel II; (iii) consider the issue of mainstreaming ageing by local authorities in Expert Panel III; and explore the interest of having a young person as speaker in the High-Level Panel.

37. The secretariat noted that there has been broad agreement on the amended title of the High-Level Panel of the Conference, to include reference to the COVID-19 pandemic: “Joining forces for solidarity and equal opportunities throughout life: building forward on lessons learnt from the COVID-19 pandemic. The representative of the Serbian Red Cross reminded that 15 June, which is the date of the Civil Society and Scientific Research Forum, is World Elder Abuse Awareness Day and suggested to mark it with a dedicated event.

## **V. The Standing Working Group on Ageing work programme for the fourth implementation cycle of the Regional Implementation Strategy for the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing - implemented activities in 2021 and plans for 2022**

### **A. International cooperation, exchange of experience and policy discussion**

38. The secretariat provided a brief outline of the Policy Seminar on “Ageing in the Digital Era” that was taking place at the Palais des Nations in Geneva and online on 24 November 2021. SWGA members were invited to provide feedback and proposals for potential topics of the next Policy Seminar in 2022. The topic for the Policy Seminar in 2022 will be agreed by the Bureau based on questionnaire results. The SWGA agreed to explore the possibility of extending its formal annual session from two to three days starting in 2023 in order to accommodate an interactive in-depth policy discussion on a chosen topic.

39. The secretariat informed participants about the recently issued Policy Brief No. 26 on Ageing in the Digital Era and thanked SWGA members for their country-example contributions. The secretariat also presented an outline for Policy Brief No. 27 provisionally titled Mainstreaming Ageing Revisited. Meeting participants were invited to comment on the outline. Policy Brief No. 27 shall be finalized in January 2022. SWGA agreed that Policy Brief No. 28 will be on the topic “Joining forces for solidarity and equal opportunities throughout life”, dedicated to the theme of the 2022 Ministerial Conference. In the discussion that followed, an NGO representative suggested introducing Policy Brief No. 27 on mainstreaming ageing at a side event of the Regional Forum on Sustainable Development. The secretariat took note of the proposal and will explore if the format of the Regional Forum allows it.



## **B. Guidelines and policy recommendations, advisory services, and capacity-building**

40. The secretariat presented the pilot toolkit on stage 1 of the Guidelines for Mainstreaming Ageing. The toolkit is designed to be short and visual, providing step-by-step suggestions and templates. Translation of the tool into national languages is encouraged. SWGA accepted the presented toolkit and welcomed additional tools to help operationalize stages 2–5 of the Guidelines.

41. The secretariat reported on the introductory online workshop on getting started with mainstreaming ageing that took place on 10 November 2021 and pointed out that in their feedback participants expressed a strong interest in further workshops on different aspects of mainstreaming ageing. To develop additional tools for the next steps, the secretariat called for volunteers from among SWGA members to support this work. The secretariat presented initial ideas on developing a training course on mainstreaming ageing in 2022. Several participants welcomed the ideas and provided suggestions on the target audience, length, and content of the training modules. SWGA supported the development of a training course on mainstreaming ageing and suggested to continue with online workshops on various aspects of mainstreaming ageing at regional, national and local level.

42. The secretariat briefed participants on a series of three online workshops held in April–June 2021 to support the preparation of the national reports on MIPAA/RIS implementation. The NGO representative from BAGSO commented on the workshop dedicated to meaningful participation of older persons and civil society in policymaking. She noted that the workshop was a successful joint effort between ECE, NGOs, and the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth of Germany.

43. The secretariat informed participants about the jointly organized ESCAP and ECE Informal subregional consultation with North and Central Asian countries on the fourth MIPAA review that took place on 29 October.

44. SWGA members were invited to inform about the relevant trainings, workshops and seminars held in the course of 2021. Red Cross Serbia organized webinars on the World Elder Abuse Awareness Day (15 June 2021) to address the issue. The NGO Committee on Ageing in Geneva held a special event on ageism during the last HRC negotiation around the resolution. Norway set up a centre for age-friendly Norway that carries out capacity-building activities.

## **C. Monitoring the Regional Implementation Strategy for the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing and building evidence base for policymaking**

### **1. 2020 Active Ageing Index and Generation and Gender Programme update**

45. The secretariat informed SWGA members about updated 2020 Active Ageing Index (AAI) indicators for EU countries, as well as Iceland, Norway, and Switzerland. The secretariat noted that Kazakhstan, Azerbaijan, and the Republic of Moldova managed to produce their AAI during the last year, and the respective country reports will be uploaded to the AAI wiki. The secretariat reminded participants that the AAI wiki is being maintained and the index is updated every two years. The secretariat informed that under the Generations and Gender Programme (GGP) the GGP-II round of surveys is ongoing and the number of countries undertaking it is growing.

## 2. Exchange on national monitoring frameworks

46. The representative of UNFPA Moldova office informed participants that GGP 2020 data collection in Moldova was completed based on a sample of 10,000 persons in the country despite the challenges posed by COVID-19. The Generations and Gender Survey (GGS) included additional modules to respond to local context and make the collected data useful for AAI calculation. Based on the survey results, the Moldovan team computed an updated version of the AAI in 2020 and launched it in October 2021. AAI is seen as important tool to monitor country progress in MIPAA/RIS implementation, to inform policy making, and to advocate for further resources for promoting active ageing. Ensuring not only nationally but also sub-nationally representative sample frame for Generations and Gender Survey is a challenge to be addressed in the future.

## 3. Statistical annex of Synthesis report

47. The secretariat informed on the status of compiling the Statistical Annex to the Synthesis Report using some demographic and socio-economic data and AAI indicators. Indicators to be included in the Synthesis Report will be consistent with the ones used in previous Synthesis Reports, including gender disaggregated as well as total data. The secretariat will explore the possibility to upload compiled data in Excel format to the website to facilitate academic and research use.

48. The SWGA approved the Programme of Work implementation report for 2021.

## VI. Activities under United Nations Economic Commission for Europe / United Nations Population Fund / World Health Organization / Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights / Help Age International Joint Programme on Ageing “Building forward better in light of Covid-19”

49. The representative of UNFPA Serbia office informed participants about the regional launch of the UN Global Report on Ageism held in Belgrade on 27 September 2021 and organized under the Regional Joint Programme on Ageing led by UNFPA, WHO, UNECE, OHCHR and HelpAge International. She noted that prior to the global launch of the UN Global Report on Ageism, Serbia compiled a special report on discrimination against older persons at the national level, which was launched in May 2021. The report was used to inform Serbia’s MIPAA/RIS review report.

50. The representative of WHO Europe briefed the participants on the Road Map for the Decade of Healthy Ageing in the European region. He introduced the main elements of the Decade Joint Action Programme: combatting ageism, ensuring that communities foster the abilities of older person, integrated person-centred care, and long-term care. The four flagship initiatives of the WHO Europe programme of work - pan-European mental health coalition, better health through digital health, European immunization agenda 2030, and behavioural and cultural insights on healthy behaviours - are also relevant for enhancing active and healthy ageing. He reminded about the European healthy cities network and informed that policy guidance on age-friendly environments is being translated into a number of European languages. Finally, he noted that the Joint Programme on Ageing is a prominent example of strengthened coordination and cooperation on ageing issues amongst United Nations agencies and various stakeholders since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic.

51. The secretariat briefly informed participants about the findings of a rapid assessment pilot on the impact of COVID-19 on long-term care for older persons in Kazakhstan that was

initiated and conducted by the secretariat as part of the Joint Programme on Ageing. The rapid assessment was designed to evaluate the initial impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on long-term care (LTC) services and piloted in Kazakhstan, focusing on the two cities of Almaty and Nur-Sultan. Findings have shown that COVID-19 exacerbated some pre-existing challenges in LTC services, but with time, some new longer-term measures to address LTC system challenges in the country were initiated.

## **VII. Programme of work of the Population component of the Housing, Land Management and Population subprogramme for 2022 and recommendations on key components of the programme of work for 2023**

52. The secretariat introduced the draft programme of work of the Population component of the subprogramme on Housing, Land Management and Population for 2022 as outlined in the document ECE/WG.1/2021/5. The major outputs for the coming year will be the Guidelines-based online training programme contributing to setting up strategic frameworks for mainstreaming ageing by member States, and the successful conclusion of the regional MIPAA/RIS review with the 2022 Ministerial Conference on Ageing adopting the Ministerial Declaration that outlines the goals and main actions for healthy and active ageing in 2023-2027.

53. The secretariat also presented the key components of the programme of work for 2023 (ECE/WG.1/2021/INF) to provide a broader picture on the future work plan. In addition to the usual SWGA programme related deliverables, a regional conference on population and development issues to mark the periodical review of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development is planned to be organized in partnership with UNFPA regional office in Istanbul.

54. SWGA adopted and recommended to the ECE Executive Committee for approval the draft of the programme of work of the Population component of the Housing, Land Management and Population subprogramme for 2022.

55. For 2023, reflecting on the earlier proposal under agenda item 5(a), SWGA suggested to explore the possibility of extending its annual session from two to three days.

## **VIII. Financing of the work programme**

56. The secretariat informed the SWGA about the availability and use of regular budget and extrabudgetary resources in 2021 and the financing of the programme of work in 2022. The secretariat's regular budget staff consist of two professionals (P5 and P2) and one programme assistant. The P2 post has been vacant and frozen for recruitment between January and mid-August 2021. On 15 August 2021, thanks to a renewed Managed Reassignment Programme for professionals at P2 level, a new team member joined the Population Unit.

57. The secretariat thanked Germany, Portugal, Austria, Estonia, Norway, Portugal and Switzerland for their financial contributions amounting to USD 475,057 in total to the Ageing-Phase III fund since its establishment in December 2019. This allowed to temporarily hire a P3 staff member to support the implementation of the SWGA work programme in 2021. The secretariat also acknowledged in-kind contributions by Austria and Germany in the form of translating policy briefs and the Guidelines for Mainstreaming Ageing into German. The secretariat also thanked the UNFPA Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia for translations into Russian language of the Guidelines for Active Ageing Index in non-EU countries and at subnational level, as well as of the policy briefs no. 22, 23, 24 and 25.

58. The Chair invited the SWGA members to inform about potential funding pledges or eventual in-kind contributions. Germany already pledged to further contribute EUR 100,000 to the Ageing-Phase III fund. Estonia pledged to contribute EUR 3,000.

59. The secretariat appreciated the great financial and organizational contribution of Italy in hosting the Ministerial Conference on Ageing in 2022.

## **IX. Other business, summary and conclusion of the meeting**

60. The Chair, assisted by the secretariat, summarized the main items discussed, and the Standing Working Group on Ageing confirmed the decisions taken at its fourteenth annual meeting. An overview of decisions is included in Annex I.

61. The fifteenth meeting of the SWGA will take place on 21-22 November 2022 in Geneva, Switzerland. The date of the fourteenth meeting of the Bureau has been provisionally set to 3-4 March 2022, in Geneva, Switzerland.

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## Annex I

### Decisions taken at the fourteenth meeting of the Standing Working Group on Ageing

- SWGA adopted the agenda (ECE/WG.1/2021) without amendments.
- SWGA recommended member States to use the language enshrined in the Human Rights Council Resolution 48/3 on the human rights of older people in the 2022 Ministerial Declaration.
- SWGA approved the title and thematic content of the Ministerial Conference on Ageing to be held in Rome on 16 and 17 June 2022.
- SWGA agreed on the acceptable amendments and asked the Secretariat to incorporate them into the draft text of the Ministerial Declaration and submit the draft for formal consultations with member States.
- SWGA agreed to explore the possibility of extending its formal annual session from two to three days starting in 2023 in order to accommodate an interactive in-depth policy discussion on a chosen topic.
- SWGA agreed that the topic for the Policy seminar in 2022 will be decided by the Bureau based on questionnaire results.
- SWGA accepted a draft for Policy Brief #27 on Mainstreaming Ageing.
- Policy Brief #28 will be on topic “Joining forces for solidarity and equal opportunities throughout life”.
- SWGA accepted the format and content of the toolkit on stage 1 of the Guidelines for Mainstreaming Ageing and welcomed the development of additional tools to help operationalize stages 2–5 of the Guidelines.
- SWGA supported the development of a training course on mainstreaming ageing and suggested to continue with online workshops on various aspects of mainstreaming ageing at regional, national and local level.
- SWGA approved the report on the implementation of its work programme in 2021.
- SWGA adopted and recommended to the Executive Committee for approval the draft Programme of work of the Population component of the Housing, Land Management and Population subprogramme for 2022.
- SWGA approved the list of main decisions of its fourteenth meeting as presented by the Chair.
- The date and place of the next SWGA Bureau meeting has been tentatively set to 3 and 4 March 2022 in Geneva.
- The fifteenth meeting of SWGA will take place on 21 and 22 November 2022 in Geneva.