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ACTIVE AGEING AND QUALITY OF LIFE IN OLD AGE

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PREFACE

Adjusting societies to population ageing is a distinct challenge of our time. Active ageing has been developed as a strategy to leverage the potential of individuals to improve awareness of what every one of us can do to keep fit and healthy for as long as possible. Physical activity, healthy eating, life-long learning and staying integrated in the work life as a paid employee, as an entrepreneur or as a volunteer – all these are elements of an active life style that should characterize the whole life-course. To allow individuals to live and age actively, societies have a responsibility to invest in conducive frameworks. Such investments can take place in the prevention and health care sectors, in education and labour markets. At the same time, citizens should be able to rely on a supportive infrastructure in case of real need and frailty.

The present paper provides an important input to the discussion of these elements of an integrated approach to active ageing. It provides a source of inspiration for member States concerned with the implementation of active ageing policies. The paper is based on the key note speech by Prof. Dr. Clemens Tesch-Römer of the German Centre of Gerontology in Berlin and is the result of his research and the discussion it incurred among member States during the Fourth meeting of the UNECE Working Group on Ageing in November 2011.

The UNECE Working Group on Ageing was established as an intergovernmental body reporting to the UNECE Executive Committee in 2008. It facilitates and monitors implementation of the international policy framework on ageing as set out in the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing (MIPAA) and its Regional Implementation Strategy (RIS), both adopted in 2002. The Working Group on Ageing has become an important forum where member States can discuss strategies and good practice examples in response to ageing in the region.

The year 2012 has been proclaimed the *European year for active ageing and solidarity between generations*. The in-depth discussion on active ageing during the Working Group meeting in November 2011 and the incurring paper represent the UNECE contribution to this debate and pave the ground for further elaborations on the issue at the UNECE Ministerial Conference *Ensuring a society for all ages: promoting quality of life and active ageing that takes place in Vienna, Austria*, on 19-20 September 2012.

UNECE is grateful to the author for his contribution and to UNECE member States for their work on this paper and encourages governments, stakeholders and individuals to take it to the next level – to fill it with life and make it happen.

Sven Alkalaj
Executive Secretary
United Nations Economic Commission for Europe



CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY.....	vii
1. INTRODUCTION	
1.1 Definitions of active ageing.....	1
1.2 General characteristics of ageing processes	2
1.3 Quality of life.....	3
1.4 Investments in active ageing.....	4
2. EARLY INVESTMENTS IN ACTIVE AGEING	
2.1 Health	9
2.2 Social integration	9
2.3 Participation.....	10
2.4 Early investments: interventions for health, integration and participation	11
3. LATE INVESTMENTS IN ACTIVE AGEING	
3.1 Health	13
3.2 Social integration	14
3.3 Participation.....	14
3.4 Late investments: interventions for health, integration and participation	15
4. INVESTMENTS IN SOCIETAL FRAMEWORKS FOR ACTIVE AGEING	
4.1 Health	17
4.2 Social integration	19
4.3 Participation.....	20
4.4 Investments in societal frameworks: Health, integration and participation	22
5. POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS	
5.1 Towards a broader understanding of active ageing	23
5.2 Setting the framework for active ageing.....	25
5.3 Fostering healthy biographies.....	26
5.4 Supporting social integration	27
5.5 Encouraging societal participation	27
REFERENCES	

List of figures

Figure 1 : Domains of active ageing and quality of life.....	4
Figure 2 : Hypothetical representations of three types of investments in active ageing.....	5
Figure 3 : Further life expectancy and healthy life expectancy at age 65 in Europe.....	18
Figure 4 : Hypothetical representations of life courses	24

List of tables

Table 1 : Theoretical combinations of objective and subjective quality of life.....	3
Table 2 : Employment rates by age group	21

