Response to the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals Co-chairs Working Document for 5-9 May session of the Open Working Group

April 2014

- **The SDGs must reflect the reality of the world as we find it; respond to the fact that *the world is ageing;* and ensure opportunities for increased longevity**
- **The framework must be grounded in human rights principles including universality, non-discrimination, equality, participation, empowerment and accountability**
- **We welcome the move towards universality, a step towards *a society of all ages for all ages*. Alongside the inclusion of universal goals and targets, we must find the specificity that articulates how goals and targets will be delivered for all people, including in older age**
- **The success of the framework to 'leave no one behind' will be based on how goals and targets are monitored. Indicators must require collection of data for *all people of all ages*, with data disaggregated by *sex and age***

We congratulate the co-chairs of the Open Working Group (OWG) on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for their Working Document, their move towards a universal approach in line with the commitment to 'leave no-one behind', and their efforts in compiling universal targets. The goals and targets in the Working Document provide an important basis for continued discussion.

While we welcome the move towards universality, more must be done to ensure that goals and targets are truly universal. We must find the specificity that articulates how goals and targets will be delivered for all people, including in older age, and how specific issues can be recognised and addressed throughout the SDGs. To this end, we welcome the language 'for all people'. We strongly recommend strengthening this language further to be inclusive of *'people of all ages'*. A good example of this is the goal of the provision of quality education and life-long learning for all, which would be strengthened by the addition of *people of all ages*.

We urge Member States to adopt the wording *'all people of all ages'* wherever possible in the goals and targets. This will help to ensure that all people, irrespective of their age, are included, and enables the framework to recognise the specific issues resulting from population ageing, and the challenges faced by people in older age. One of the most urgent concerns of people in older age is income security.[1] **For this reason we continue to support the call for the elevation of social protection to the goal level.**

In order to achieve a framework that is inclusive of people of all ages, indicators must require the collection and analysis of data for all people of all ages, with data disaggregated by sex and age, at a minimum, with additional disaggregation as appropriate. They must be supported by clear reporting requirements and guidelines and strengthened, more inclusive data collection mechanisms. A range of indicators will be needed, including structural and process indicators that capture laws, legislation, social norms and behaviour, alongside numerical outcomes.

---

[1] UNFPA and HelpAge International 2012 Ageing in the 21st Century: a celebration and a challenge

Recommendations

Focus Area 1: Poverty eradication, building shared prosperity and promoting equality

Target 'b': amend to: *'reduce the proportion of **people of all ages** living below national poverty lines by 2030'*
Target 'c': replace with: 'By 2030, implement nationally appropriate universal social protection floors ensuring coverage of the most marginalised.'

Rationale:
In support of a universal approach, the Recommendation Concerning National Floors of Social Protection was adopted at the 101st session of the International Labour Conference and emphasises the ***"universality of protection"*** as a key principle in terms of the responsibility of the State. The 2012 Rio+20 resolution[2] states ***"the need to provide social protection to all members of society, fostering growth, resilience, social justice and cohesion, including those who are employed in the informal economy. We strongly encourage providing social protection floors for all citizens."*** In 2010, the important omission of social protection was acknowledged in the outcome document from the UN MDG Summit, which stated that progress towards the MDGs could be accelerated by ***"Promoting universal access to public and social services and providing social protection floors".***

With equality positioned under Focus Area 1 in the Working Document, a clear target on universal social protection systems is critical as its redistributive role contributes significantly to reducing inequalities. While universal social protection systems directly address income poverty, they also have major impacts on other aspects of human development, including food security, education and health, and will therefore support the achievement of targets in other Focus Areas.

Poverty in all its forms can only be truly eradicated if all people, irrespective of age are reached with poverty eradication interventions and strategies. A core strategy is the implementation of universal social protection systems, which build resilience and prevent people from falling into poverty. A residual approach with particular emphasis on the poorest and most vulnerable will only result in limited progress towards this goal. Any targets on social protection must therefore be universal in nature. The implementation of nationally-defined basic social protection floors is not optional but essential in all countries. In line with a human rights based approach, we recognise the need to agree steps towards the progressive realisation of targets, with an initial focus on the most marginalised. The goals and targets to be achieved by 2030 must, however, be universal.

Focus Area 3: Health and population dynamics

Goal: we strongly support the goal of 'healthy life at all ages for all'

Target 'c': amend to: *'reduce by x% the risk of **avoidable/preventable mortality** from non-communicable diseases (NCDs), injuries and promote mental health, with a strong focus on prevention **for all people of all ages'***

Target 'd': amend this target to: *'achieve Universal Health Coverage (UHC), including financial risk protection, **for all people of all ages'***

---

[2] 'The Future We Want' UNGA A/RES/66/288 Para 156

Additional target 'i': include the additional target: *by 2030 increase by x years healthy life expectancy at birth and at age 60*

Rationale:
Significant improvements have been made in health outcomes as demonstrated by the progress towards achieving the health related MDGs. A success of health sector improvements is the trend of population ageing, with most rapid gains being made in the developing world. While global population ageing is in part an outcome of progress in the health sector, it also presents a major challenge and the need for health systems that support ageing populations. A universal goal of *healthy life at all ages for all* recognises this reality.

Universal health coverage should be the instrument to achieving the goal. As defined by the WHO, UHC should include both coverage of health services and financial risk and targets are needed that measure both aspects. While we welcome the inclusion of target 'd' we disagree with the focus on the most marginalised and the potential inclusion of any target or indicator focused on access for 80 per cent of the poorest 40 per cent of the population as a proxy for universal coverage. As with social protection, while we recognise the need to agree steps towards the progressive realisation of targets, goals and targets to be achieved by 2030 must be universal.

Targets should also focus on the unfinished business of the health MDGs and incorporate emerging health issues related to population ageing, including the rise in prevalence of, and morbidity and mortality due to non-communicable diseases (NCDs). People aged 60 and over account for 75 per cent of deaths from NCDs in LMICs.[3] We welcome the inclusion of a target on NCDs but disagree with setting a target on 'premature mortality' defined by an arbitrary chronological age. This would institutionalise age discrimination in the delivery of health outcomes.

Given the global trend of population ageing, with people aged 60 and over projected to constitute 16 per cent of the total worldwide population by 2030[4], the framework must include a target that addresses not only this increasing longevity, but also the quality of life of people as they age. We therefore recommend the addition of a target on increasing healthy life expectancy at birth and 60.[5]

Focus Area 5: Gender equality and women's empowerment

Goal: amend to: *'attain gender equality and **empowerment of women of all ages** everywhere'*

Target 'j': amend to: *'promote the availability of gender **and age** disaggregated data to improve gender equality policies, including gender sensitive budgeting.'*

Rationale:
We welcome the commitment to a goal on gender equality and women's empowerment. Today, women over 49 make up over 20 per cent of women in the world, and that number is projected to rise.[6] Despite a growing body of evidence on discrimination affecting women in older age, the

---

[3] United Nations, Prevention and Control of Non-communicable Diseases: Report of the Secretary-General, 2011

[4] UNDESA Population Division, Population Ageing and Development, World Population Prospects: the 2012 Revision, 2013

[5] Measured by the World Health Organisation

[6] http://esa.un.org/wpp/Excel-Data/EXCEL_FILES/1_Population/WPP2012_POP_F09_3_PERCENTAGE_OF_TOTAL_POPULATION_BY_BROAD_AGE_GROUP_FEMALE.XLS

challenges they face are almost entirely absent from the debate on the achievement of the MDGs for women and girls. Neither the extraordinary resilience of older women, nor the discriminatory laws, policies and social norms which reinforce the poverty and exclusion many experience in older age are being addressed in the post 2015 dialogue.

Women in older age experience multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination. Gender-based and other intersecting inequality can accumulate over a life time and be exacerbated in older age. This can have devastating effects for women in older age unless specifically addressed. The post-2015 framework must, therefore, tackle gender inequality in all its dimensions. Through the explicit recognition of an approach for *women of all ages* and a clear commitment to the disaggregation of data by sex and age across all targets, the framework must recognise that gender inequality affects women at every stage of their lives, including in older age.

Focus area 8: Economic growth, employment and infrastructure

Target 'b': amend to: *achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all **people of all ages** who seek employment including for marginalised groups by 2030*

Additional target k: *By 2030 older workers are provided access to education or vocational training, re-skilling or other means to maintain their employability.*

Rationale:
Proposed additional target 'k' seeks to achieve the MIPAA Objective of "Equality of opportunity throughout life with respect to continuing education, training and retraining as well as vocational guidance and placement services."[7] It is supportive of target 8 b, which we recommend maintaining with the minor addition of 'people of all ages'. Achieving these targets will improve universal access to decent work.

---

[7] United Nations 2002 Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing Para 40