



Eradicating Poverty in an Ageing World:

Recommendations for the UN Secretary General Report on Post-2015

"As the international community embarks on an effort to articulate the post-2015 development agenda, it is clear that the issue of population ageing should be fully addressed as part of this process...population ageing can no longer be ignored."
(UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon, Preface to *Ageing in the 21st Century*)

We welcome the ambition of the High-Level Panel and the Sustainable Development Solutions Network reports on the post-2015 agenda. The proposals have the potential to make a significant difference to the lives of people of all ages. The plans to eradicate poverty and deliver sustainable development for all people in all countries must take account of the rapid ageing of the world's population, which is happening most rapidly in developing countries. The effectiveness of current and future development goals is threatened by the UN not addressing the significance of population ageing more clearly.

As organisations with global reach working on ageing and development issues, we have put forward concrete proposals to ensure the new framework responds to population ageing. These proposals resonate with the HLP and the SDSN priorities, of which we would emphasise the importance of:

- The transformative shift – 'leave no one behind'
- Disaggregating data by age
- Ensuring universal health coverage for all people at all stages of life
- Recognising the importance of social protection
- Embedding human rights in the next framework
- Recognising that inequality must be addressed for the next framework to be successful

Given the above priorities, it is disappointing that the HLP and SDSN reports lack a strong narrative on population ageing. The transition from high numbers of young people to high numbers of old people in all countries needs explicit policy responses to ensure we maximise the social and economic opportunities that this transformation brings. Realising these dividends requires recognising the contributions that older people make in eliminating extreme poverty and protecting our environment.

Without a clear narrative on ageing within the next global framework, there is little assurance that people in later life will be included in the target and indicator setting nor benefit from the programmes and interventions that will be created as a result.

By 2030, the number of people globally over the age of 60 will outnumber children under the age of 10. The development gains of populations as a whole are under threat if development responses are not adapted to changing population structures. Data from Bangladesh shows that people living

in households headed by older people have benefited less from development gains than those in households headed by younger people. With population ageing, more people will be living in households headed by older people. This means that maintaining, let alone improving, standards of living and quality of life requires policies that take into account the vulnerabilities associated with old age. Eliminating poverty and achieving environmental sustainability means taking account of ageing explicitly as part of the development process and ensuring that people's rights and needs are promoted and supported across their whole lifecourse.

We therefore urge the UN Secretary General to make population ageing, and older people specifically, more visible in the report he presents to Member States this autumn. A statement is required that recognises the significant demographic changes taking place globally and the importance of population ageing for tackling poverty and environmental sustainability.

Recommendations:

- **Include the following wording in the SG report** *"Improved life expectancy and lower fertility mean that lower and middle income countries are experiencing a significant shift in population to an ageing society. The opportunities of ageing will be maximised by countries investing in the secure, active and healthy ageing of their populations. As population structures change, laws, policies, budget allocation, social attitudes and institutional practice will have to adjust accordingly to eradicate extreme poverty and achieve sustainable development."*
- **Include 'age' specifically** when referring to inequality and social groups that have been marginalised – this is especially important for data disaggregation as the HLP report was inconsistent on this point in its own text;
- **Learning the lessons of the MDGs:** Without specific reference to older age in the goals, targets and indicators of the MDGs, it has been possible to bypass older people in the development and implementation of poverty reduction programmes. This oversight should be recognised in the Secretary General's report.

We urge Member States to follow through on the ambitions of the HLP and SDSN reports and ensure that the next framework is one that truly leaves no one behind. We believe that a post-2015 framework that does not explicitly recognise the rights, needs and aspirations of older people cannot be considered legitimate nor will it be effective at tackling poverty.

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