**HelpAge response to the December 2014 EU Council Conclusions on the post-2015 framework**

The independent Affiliates of the HelpAge EU network would like to congratulate the EU Member States on the adoption of the Council Conclusions on a transformative post-2015 on 16 December[[1]](#footnote-1).

We welcome the emphasis on a single, universal post-2015 framework that integrates the three dimensions of sustainable development. We also commend the continued focus on ensuring a human rights-based approach in the future framework. We expect that this will be further developed in the intergovernmental negotiations in order to more concretely identify and address the structural causes of poverty, inequality and climate change referred to in the Conclusions.

Below we present specific responses to certain elements of the Council Conclusions. The HelpAge EU network collectively views these elements as those most relevant to the realities facing older people globally and the most essential for a framework that is fully inclusive of all people of all ages.

**Leave no-one behind**

We welcome the explicit reference to older people as well as the importance of ensuring that no person is denied their universal human rights regardless of their age, among other factors. However, we note that the reference is specifically in the context of vulnerability. It is also important to recognise the vast contributions and capacity of the world’s growing numbers of older people.

The reference to the Open Working Group[[2]](#footnote-2)’s (OWG) commitment to disaggregate data by income, gender, age, and other factors to ensure that no-one is left behind is very welcome. We agree that the need to develop statistical capabilities is also important, particularly given the scarcity of data relating to some issues, especially older age. EU Member States should be mindful of the fact that this evidence gap has in part been driven by the invisibility of this issue in the MDG framework.

**Social protection**

We are pleased to see the continued reference to ‘*social protection for all’* in line with the ILO’s Recommendation 202 on National Social Protection Floors[[3]](#footnote-3) and reflecting the OWG Outcome Document Target 1.3. We urge EU Member States to reinforce the commitment to implement universal social protection floors in all countries.

It is important that in discussions around targets and indicators for social protection, there is explicit reference to the widely-endorsed ILO Recommendation 202, which stands as the most appropriate normative framework for measuring the expansion of social protection. The *adequacy* of social protection programmes should also be recognised as key, although further work may be needed to agree on appropriate benchmarks and develop the evidence base for this.

**Health**

We are pleased that the critical importance of Universal Health Coverage (UHC) is recognised in relation to the achievement of sustainable development. It is disappointing, however, that non-communicable diseases (NCDs) are not mentioned at all, despite accounting for an increasing share of the global disease burden and disproportionately affecting older people.

We encourage EU Member States to continue to support the life-course approach reflected in OWG Outcome Document Goal 3 *‘Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages’* and to ensure dedicated targets on UHC and NCDs. We strongly urge Member States to use the term ‘avoidable mortality’ rather than the discriminatory language of ‘premature mortality.’

**Population dynamics and ageing**

The Council Conclusions highlight some cross-cutting issues, including migration and mobility. This narrow focus only on certain aspects of population dynamics is too limited in our view. The EC Communications on post-2015 have helpfully emphasised the significant implications of population ageing, particularly on developing countries in years to come[[4]](#footnote-4) and the need to ensure that population dynamics are mainstreamed across all aspects of the framework[[5]](#footnote-5). It is a concern therefore that population dynamics and ageing were omitted in the recent Conclusions.

Population ageing is a triumph of development efforts and a core component of demographic transition, which is transforming societies and economies around the world. EU Member States should not treat this global megatrend with complacency and must work to ensure that its implications are fully addressed across all aspects of the future framework.

**Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment**

We are pleased to see the strong emphasis on gender equality and women’s empowerment and ending discrimination in all its forms and violence against women and girls. However, the fact that the Conclusions did not reinforce the more age-inclusive language of the Beijing Platform for Action and the OWG Outcome Document is a missed opportunity. The Beijing Platform for Action underlines that commitments and action to further gender equality and the rights of women and girls must address women’s entire life-course and the language of *‘girls and women of all ages’* is used throughout its text. The OWG Outcome Document Goal 5 underlines the importance of achieving gender equality and empowering ‘*all women and girls’*.

As populations age dramatically around the world and women live longer lives than ever before, it is crucial that Member States do not fall short of the commitments already made in the Beijing Platform for Action. We strongly urge EU Member States to consistently adopt the language of *‘girls and women of all ages’* in the forthcoming negotiations.

**We wish EU Member States fruitful negotiations through 2015 and look forward to a continued dialogue on these issues.**

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1. <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/EN/foraff/146311.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/focussdgs.html> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. <http://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:12100:0::NO::P12100_ILO_CODE:R202> [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. <http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/documents/2013-02-22_communication_a_decent_life_for_all_post_2015_en.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. <http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/sites/devco/files/part1-a-decent-life-for-all.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-5)