

# “LEAVE NO ONE BEHIND”: A DISCUSSION PAPER ON OPTIONS FOR INTEGRATING YOUTH AND OLDER PEOPLE INTO THE POST-2015 DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

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This paper was prepared to stimulate an informal conversation with Member States and the UN System on the occasion of Open Working Group 8. The content may not wholly reflect any individual position by organisations and networks associated with this paper.

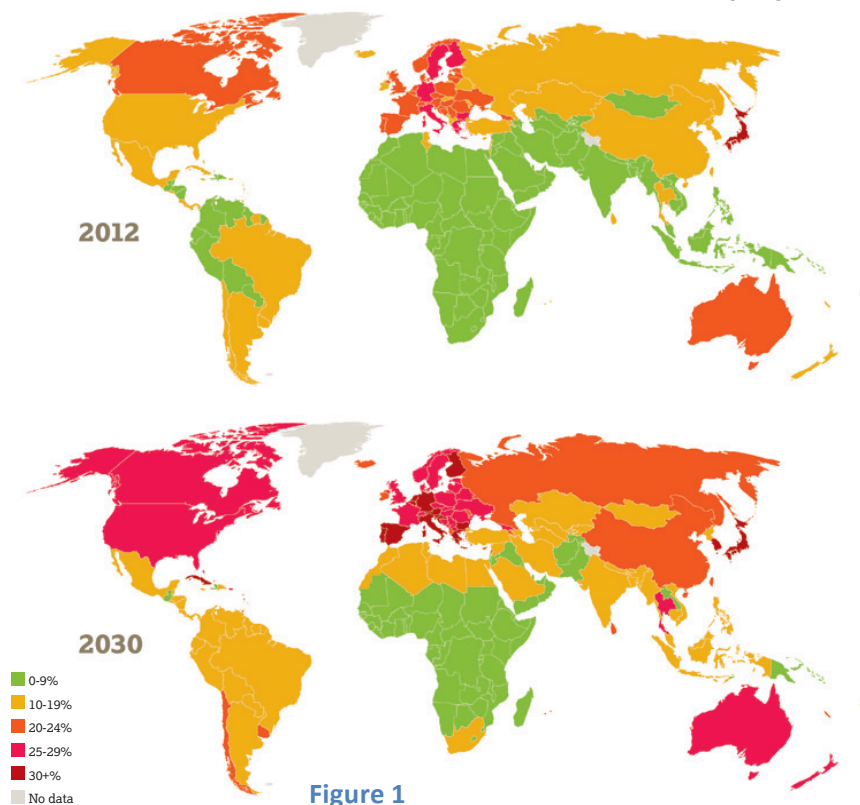
## Options summary

- Option 1: Recognition of age in meta-text only
- Option 2: Targets and indicators derived from current Indexes
- Option 3: An age lens on all goals underpinned by disaggregated and new data
- Option 4: Building goal(s) based on implementation existing commitments
- Option 5: Creating goal(s) based on emerging demographics and future generations

The options build on one another, are not mutually-exclusive and aim to facilitate further discussion as to how we can transform the post-2015 framework to recognize the importance of a whole-life approach to development.

## Introduction

In the context of ‘leaving no one behind’ in the SDGs, the aim of the conversation, is to outline commonalities that exist between issues highlighted by children & young people<sup>1</sup> and older people<sup>2</sup>



In writing this paper we aim to provide an innovative approach, which we believe is needed to ensure action for all ages. We aim to show that this requires going beyond just narratives and disaggregated data. It can utilize some pre-existing and new frameworks and should be based on existing agreements. This paper suggests options that go beyond siloed approaches to age related issues. Whilst children are also an important age sector, this paper has focused on youth and older people but the ideas outlined in it are relevant for all ages.

Source: UNDESA Population Division, Population Ageing and Development 2012, Wall Chart

<sup>1</sup> From the UN Major Group for Children and Youth's positions available at [www.childrenyouth.org](http://www.childrenyouth.org) and the Commonwealth Youth Development Index available at [www.youthdevelopmentindex.org](http://www.youthdevelopmentindex.org)

<sup>2</sup> From the HelpAge International/UNFPA 'Ageing in the 21st Century a celebration and a challenge' report available at [www.helpage.org](http://www.helpage.org) and Global Age Watch Index 2013 available at <http://www.helpage.org/global-agemwatch/>

## Our common agenda

The Sustainable Development Goals must be based on international human rights, standards and principles, including universality, non-discrimination, equality, participation, empowerment and accountability.

A better understanding, and responsiveness to, meeting the rights and needs of all people across the life-course will ensure the security and wellbeing of current and future generations. The background to this is that the world's population is both growing, ageing and changing fast, at an unprecedented rate. For this reason population dynamics and age need to be taken into account as new goals and targets are developed. Today approximately 44% of the world's 7.2 billion people are under 24 years old and, by 2030 one billion of the projected population of eight billion will be over 60 years old. In 2030 there will be more people over 60 than children under 10, with the most rapid change in age structures occurring in the developing world.

## Setting the scene

The rapid and unprecedented global demographic transition underway supports a life course approach to policy making. The opportunities and challenges of increased longevity will have particular consequences for the present youth bulge who will be the largest 'age bulge' - group of older people in history - by the end of 2030. Inequality and poverty in later life are directly related to inequalities of opportunity experienced when young.

Disaggregated population data projections, scenarios and analysis are necessary to chart progress and achieve goals and policies for both current and future generations.<sup>3</sup>

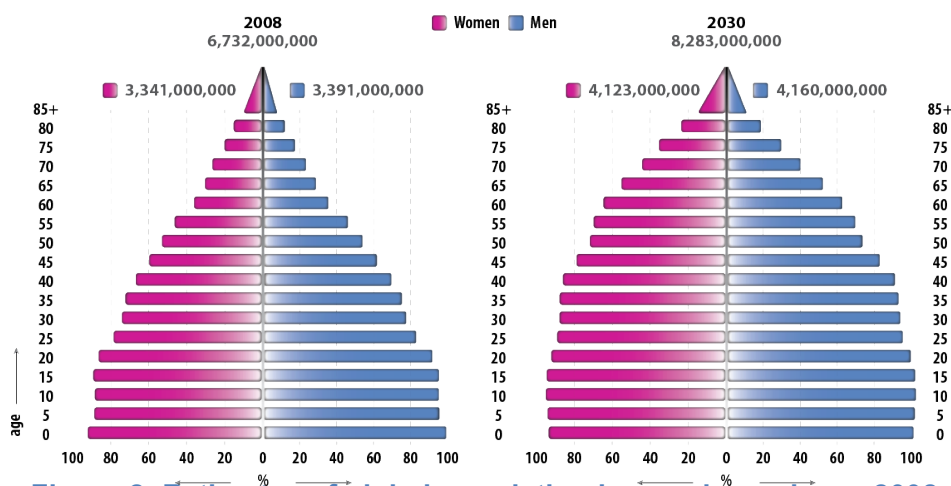


Figure 2: Estimates of global population by gender and age, 2008 and 2030, source: [www.i-pri.org](http://www.i-pri.org)

Addressing the full range of rights as interdependent and indivisible for people of all ages will benefit children & youth and older people now and into the future. They face discrimination in different aspects of their lives beyond income and health, for example being subjected to different types of violence and abuse, being denied the right to live autonomous lives and are excluded from

the decision-making processes that affect them. The two groups also suffer similar barriers based on chronological age discrimination. Discrimination on the base of age is alive and well for youth and older people – examples include youth and older people being denied access to sexual and reproductive rights when they are sexually active and people in old age being obliged to retire from employment when they are not ready to do so.

The issues at stake are not only social or economic. Children & youth and older people are more vulnerable to the impact of environmental disasters and are often not systematically included in measures to tackle risk and reconstruction. Excesses of present day over consumption and production will have to be borne by future generations of older people.

<sup>3</sup> See 'Population Dynamics in the post -2015 Development Agenda: Report on the Global Thematic Consultation on Population Dynamics': UNFPA, UNDESA, UN-Habitat, IOM, 2013 New York

## **OPTIONS**

### **Option 1: Recognition of age in SDG meta-text only**

A narrative in the meta-text only option would provide context on age-specific issues. For example existing text on these issues includes:

- The UN High Level Panel report (p17).... “Young people must be subjects, not objects”
- The Future We Want (paragraph 135)... “We also commit to... a safe and healthy living environment for all, particularly children, women, elderly and disabled.”
- The Rio+20 Outcome Document *The Future We Want* (origin of the Sustainable Development Goals process) recognizes youth as a priority in a number of areas, for example employment: “We recognize the need for a global strategy on youth and employment.”<sup>4</sup>. Youth have also been outlined as one of the Secretary General’s priorities. Older people however, are only mentioned alongside other constituencies in broader terms, for example “We also commit to... a safe and healthy living environment for all, particularly children, youth, women, elderly, and disabled.”<sup>5</sup> UN Principles of the rights of Older Persons and the provisions of the 2002 Madrid International plan of action underscore the principles of international human rights, standards and principles<sup>6</sup> to implement action on ageing, with universality, non-discrimination, equality, participation, empowerment and accountability at the core.
- The Secretary General’s 2013 report “*A Life of Dignity for All*” recognises the phenomena of population ageing. The policy responses for youth and older people were offered as: “Countries with a high proportion of young people need to offer education and opportunities for decent work. Countries with an ageing population need policy responses to support the elderly so as to remove barriers to their full participation in society while protecting their rights and dignity” (p 14-15).

This approach is sometimes seen as highlighting the importance of age-related issues and is a clear first step. Additional language is required which would include phrases such as “for all persons regardless of age and ability”, “of all ages and abilities” and “throughout the life-course” in all SDGs, targets and indicators.

Even though this basic foundation has been agreed it remains of concern that the narrative is not consistent in its approach to population ageing and its implications for all age groups. Narrative on its own would not ensure an action-oriented framework that “leaves no one behind” and it would significantly fall short of harnessing the contributions of young people and older people. It would also lead to a post-2015 framework that would be unable to respond to the significant demographic shifts that will take place in the next 15 years. Therefore going beyond a pure narrative in the meta-text is required for a true transformative shift.

### **Option 2: Targets and indicators derived from current Indexes**

Use of the domains derived from the Global Age Watch Index and the Youth Development Index could provide viable frameworks on which to set specific targets and indicators under agreed goals. These Indexes use pre-existing data sets that are internationally recognized and comparable between countries. The need for more and improved data has been articulated for both youth (World Programme of Action for Youth) and older people (Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing) and these Indexes have been developed as a starting point to monitor progress on youth development and older peoples well being. They set out domains and indicators for the measurement of well-being and quality of life for youth

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<sup>4</sup> The Future We Want paragraph 24

<sup>5</sup> The Future We Want paragraph 135 (see above)

<sup>6</sup> (a) General Assembly resolution 46/91 of 16 December 1991, Annex on United Nations Principles for Older Persons and (b) Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, as endorsed by the General Assembly in its resolution 57/167 of 18 December 2002 on the Second World Assembly on Ageing.

and older people respectively. There is remarkable convergence on the core domains of each Index.



**Commonwealth Youth Development Index:** agreed by the Ministers of Youth of Commonwealth States and recognised by the Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting of 2013. The Index assesses youth development according to 15 indicators that are grouped into five key domains: **Education, Health and Well-being, Employment, Civic Participation and Political Participation.** Similar to the Human Development Index, the YDI calculates a score for each country between 0–1 that indicates the national average. The Index currently has data for 170 countries.

## Global AgeWatch Index 2013

**Global Age Watch Index 2013:** developed and constructed by HelpAge International from international data sets grouped under a dash board of 13 indicators with four domains (**Income status, Health status, Education and Employment, and (factors of) the Enabling Environment**) using the HDI as a model. The domains were identified by older people and policy makers as key enablers of older people's wellbeing. They describe means to extend capabilities in older age. The Index currently has data for 91 countries (89% of the world's over 60s) and growing as data becomes available.

Below is an illustrative suggestion of how these pre-existing data sets can be clustered for use in the post-2015 framework, integrating core thematic areas into a common agenda.

Secure income, appropriate and accessible health care, decent work, education and opportunities to participate and live without discrimination (the enabling factors) are necessary at all stages of life. The degree of achievement of these areas provides a lens through which core concerns can be viewed for appropriate policy responses and policy can be implemented and monitored for success over time.

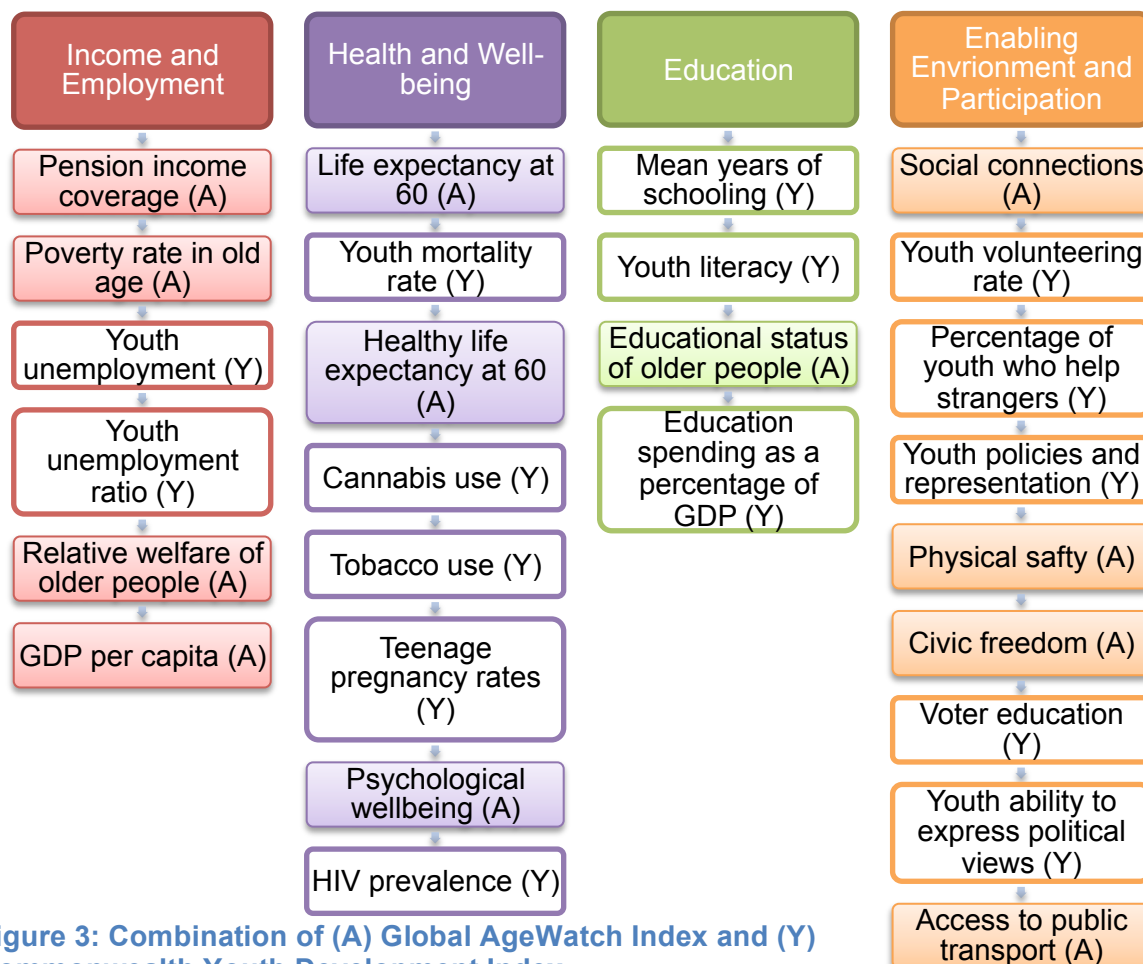


Figure 3: Combination of (A) Global AgeWatch Index and (Y) Commonwealth Youth Development Index.

This option uses pre-existing data-sets and can be developed further. More data on age is needed to reach out to fields such as the environment to fulfil the aspiration of the data revolution.

### **Option 3: An age lens on all goals underpinned by disaggregated and new data**

Age is a cross-cutting issue for the Post-2015 framework and there is a strong case for ensuring that an age lens is applied to all goals. For this to happen data-sets which specifically exclude people due to age (e.g. DHS surveys that focus on 15-49 age range) must be revised. Without accurate and adequate data that is disaggregated by age as well as by gender and disability it is difficult for policy makers to make choices based on sound evidence and future projections. Data that paints a vivid picture of global changes in age structures, which encompass both the 'youth bulge' and current and future 'age bulge', with its opportunities and its challenges, is long overdue.

Three elements are proposed (a – c below):

- a) Use the domains outlined above and also include new data sets that clearly include young people and older people, including more data under current domains listed above. For example:
  - Monitoring extension of **social protection floors** and non-contributory pensions
  - % **GDP spent on support** for children, youth and older persons associations.
  - Extended **healthy living and daily activity** indicators
  - Barriers to **employment based on age**
  
- b) Monitoring framework that includes data disaggregated by age. For example: making sure that all data is disaggregated by year cohorts so that no year group can be "left behind".
  
- c) All goals have some target/indicator that looks at the issue through an age-lens. For example:
  - **Water and sanitation:** young people who collect water unable to attend school and older people who pay others to collect water and are water-poor.
  - Reduction of **unsustainable patterns of consumption and production:** management of natural resources ensuring their availability to present and future generations
  - Protection and support to **small scale farmers** of all ages and abilities
  - Full **access to natural resources** for all people of all ages and abilities
  - Upgrading of skills and access to environmental sound **technology** for all people of all ages and abilities
  - Consideration and action on contribution and concerns of children and youth and older persons in all **humanitarian and conflict** settings including disaster risk and recovery plans and their implementation
  - Freedom from fear and **violence** across the life course
  - **Gender equality** for all ages and abilities.

To ensure that age has a higher profile in the framework it is important that we go beyond just disaggregated data. It is important that age is presented with a narrative. Some specific indicators related to age could foster political will and ambition to invest in and drive progress in these crucial areas.

### **Option 4: Building goal(s) based on implementation existing commitments**

Fulfilment of pre-existing agreements such as the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing (MIPAA) and World Programme for Action on Youth (WPAY) could be included in the

framework to ensure that pre-existing agreements are not only fulfilled but also reported on in a universal and transparent way.

It is desirable to include reporting on progress with measurements which have policy & financing modalities. This would ensure that present agreements are building blocks for the new framework For example:

- 100% reporting on progress to fulfilment of these agreements
- All countries have national plans on these respective frameworks
- % of national budgets spent on fulfilment of national plans
- Young people and older people involved in the review and implementation of the frameworks at a national level.

### **Option 5: Creating goal(s) based on emerging demographics and future generations**

Building on international agreements, far-reaching goals which build on the work of MIPAA and WPAY, respond to the latest population dynamics and support planning for future generations.

For this to happen a data revolution is needed that picks up on our changing world. It is most important that policy makers have and use accurate and adequate data that is disaggregated by age as well as by gender and disability. Data that paints a vivid picture of global changes in age structures, which encompass both the 'youth bulge' and current and future 'age bulge', along with life in older age and its challenges is long overdue.

Currently that absence of data on children and youth and that for older people from many data systems used routinely for development planning and analysis renders them invisible. Data systems are not fit for purpose in today's ageing world<sup>7</sup>. The absence of good age disaggregated data in many data systems may reflect both age discrimination and a culture of ageism. Global coordinated action is needed at all levels of the data system to improve its quality and range. At the same time attention to gender equality, so that all forms of violence against women of all ages can be prevented and eliminated, with guarantees of equal rights of women of all ages, including their right to own and inherit property, sign a contract, register a business and open a bank account and the elimination of discrimination against women of all ages in political, economic, and public life, will underpin successful development.

This option provides the means to commit to re-orientate development planning according to population dynamics, the creation and development of new data sets and better use of existing data.

### **Conclusions**

Whatever options are chosen ensuring the society for all requires new frameworks. The new sustainable development agenda must ensure accountability to children & youth and older people. It must further their economic and personal security, support improved access to health, education and basic services, deliver decent and full employment and foster an enabling environment that enhances participation, active citizenship, and freedom from age related discrimination across the life course.

The principle of 'leaving no one behind' means that no goals or target can be met unless it is shown to be met by all groups and must include age. This requires attention to improved data that is disaggregated by age, sex and other factors and understanding of the diversity of these groups their intersecting issues and the impact of discrimination and inequality. Better use of existing data is required as well as attention to filling gaps. Leaving no one behind means commitment to ensure that all elements of the post 2015 agenda are pertinent to and enjoyed by all people across the life-course.

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<sup>7</sup> Albone R et al 'Older People Count: Making Data Fit for Purpose': Global AgeWatch Policy Brief 4: HelpAge International, London January 2014