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**HelpAge International Press Release: STRICTLY EMBARGOED UNTIL 00.01am local time Wednesday 9 SEPTEMBER 2015**

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**GLOBAL AGEWATCH INDEX 2015:** Headlines

* Switzerland tops this year’s Index as the best country to live for older people;
* The Index includes 96 countries but 98 countries had to be left out through lack of data. Only 11 out of 54 countries in Africa included.
* Poverty rates in old age missing from international data sets in at least 93 countries; millions of older people missing from the data;
* Inequality among older people increasing - life expectancy gap at age 60 between countries at the top and bottom of the Index has widened from 5.7 years in 1990 to 7.3 years in 2012;
* Impact of austerity on older people increasing;
* Investing in people throughout their lives reaps dividends in later life.

**Today (Wednesday 9 September 2015), HelpAge International is launching the Global AgeWatch Index 2015, ranking 96 countries according to the social and economic wellbeing of older people. The Index represents 91 per cent of people aged 60 and over, some 901 million people, measuring the wellbeing of older people in four key areas: income security, health, personal capability and an enabling environment.**

**What’s new in 2015?**

Globally, Switzerland (1) is judged the best place for older people to live, closely followed by Norway. Apart from Japan (8) all the top 10 countries are in Western Europe and North America. Afghanistan (96) is ranked last.

All regions are represented in the lowest quarter, with countries in Africa making up half of those with low income security rankings and poor health results.

Greece (79) Venezuela (76) and Turkey (75) are in a similar position to sub-Saharan African and Asian countries.

“The big story this year in the Index, is that millions of older people are invisible, living their lives in countries where information on the quality of older age is missing from international data sets,” said Toby Porter, Chief Executive, of HelpAge International. “The Index includes 96 countries but 98 countries had to be left out because we do not have enough information.

“Poverty rates in old age are missing from international data sets in at least 93 countries. It’s particularly shocking in Africa where there was only enough data available to include 11 out of 54 countries.

“Consequently, we know more about the needs of older people in Norway and Luxembourg, two of the richest countries in the world, than we do about those in Liberia and Burundi, two of the poorest.”

Against a back drop of global ageing there is a danger that wellbeing in older age is going backwards not forwards. Data shows that the gap in life expectancy at age 60 between countries at the top and bottom of the Index has widened from 5.7 years in 1990 to 7.3 years in 2012. This inequality will grow without more focus on this age group and better targeted policies. Austerity measures are already affecting older people in Europe.

“Later this month, governments will be signing up to the UN Sustainable Development Goals, committing us to universal goals and targets until 2030,” said Porter. “Ageing has started to be recognised in the Sustainable Development Goals, following the commitment set by the UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon to ‘leave no-one behind’.

“The Global AgeWatch Index can help show the impact that implementing the Sustainable Development Goals will have on the lives of older people but we need to fill the data gaps to complete the picture,” he added. “Improved national, regional and global data, broken down by age and gender will help us to fully understand how men and women experience ageing around the world.”

Countries that do well in the Index are thinking about ageing. They have data on older men and women and consult them on targeted approaches to meet their needs and build on their experience and skills. These countries score highly in all four areas, have social pensions, accessible and appropriate healthcare, promote and support flexible working as well as life-long learning for older people and have created a secure and supportive environment for people of all ages.

The Sustainable Development Goals with their 17 goals and 169 targets will be adopted at the United Nations at the end of September. By the time they reach their fruition in 2030, the proportion of people aged 60 and over, globally, is predicted to rise from 12.3 per cent now to 16.5 per cent. Three-quarters of this number will live in developing countries.

In a message accompanying this year’s Index, Archbishop Desmond Tutu said: “I want to tell the world that I count, that older people everywhere count and that people of all ages should be included in the Sustainable Development Goals.”

[**www.globalagewatch.org**](http://www.globalagewatch.org)

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**Notes to Editors:** **RELEASE: STRICTLY EMBARGOED UNTIL 00.01am Wednesday 9 SEPTEMBER 2015**

**1. Download the Global AgeWatch Index 2015,** **case studies, photos and infographics:**

<https://helpage.box.com/s/8az4hq1n1sm8ojanpku37p07mf8rltga>

**2. Available for interview:**

Toby Porter, Chief Executive, HelpAge International

Professor Asghar Zaidi, Centre for Research on Ageing, University of Southampton (academic consultant to the Index)

Sir Richard Jolly, Honorary Professor and Research Associate of the Institute of Development Studies at the University of Sussex, architect of the Human Development Report, and Chair of the Friends of the Index.

Jane Scobie, architect of the Global AgeWatch Index and report author, HelpAge International

Mark Gorman, senior policy advisor, HelpAge International

Regional experts on ageing from around the globe

**3. Population ageing**

The Index follows the success of:

Ageing in the Twenty-First Century: A Celebration and A Challenge" [http://www.unfpa.org/public/home/publications/pid/11584](http://www.unfpa.org/public/home/publications/pid/11584%20)

Global AgeWatch Index 2014

<http://www.helpage.org/global-agewatch/reports/global-agewatch-index-2014-insight-report-summary-and-methodology/>

**4. Construction of the Index:** The Index provides an overview of the quality of life experienced by older people in 96 countries. A dashboard of thirteen separate indicators has been put together under the four domains of income security, health, capability and enabling environment. Together this information measures the economic, social and political elements that interact to create a healthy environment for later life.

The Global AgeWatch Index has been created because of the overall lack of information on ageing combined with poor understanding of the effects of ageing on exclusion and marginalisation in services such as health care, education, training and pension provision.

HelpAge has developed the Index as a way to:

Democratise international data by presenting it in a form that assists governments and policy makers to develop their own solutions to the challenges facing their growing older populations.

Highlight data gaps in terms of both countries and areas of life relevant to the wellbeing of older people.

Broaden policy makers’ understanding of the needs of older people to help us realise the multidimensional nature of later life.

Provide countries with a baseline from which to measure future progress and to learn from one another. The Index is a long-term project to be updated with an annual ‘age’ report focusing on a key trend or element each year.

The main target audiences include governments, policy makers, UN agencies, development agencies, HelpAge Affiliates and partners, community organisations and campaign groups, civil society networks and coalitions, older people and the general public.

**5.** **Stories**: HelpAge can develop stories, provide case studies and organise media visits to undertake feature stories relating to the Index. Please contact Media Manager, Sarah Gillam – details at the bottom.

**6. Global Age Watch Index ranking table**

Switzerland (1) Norway (2) Sweden (3) Germany (4) Canada (5) Netherlands (6) Iceland (7) Japan (8) United States (9) United Kingdom (10) Denmark (11) New Zealand (12) Austria (13) Finland (14) Ireland (15) France (16) Australia (17) Israel (18) Luxembourg (19) Panama (20) Chile (21) Czech Republic (22) Estonia (23) Belgium (24) Spain (25) Slovenia (26) Uruguay (27) Costa Rica (28) Georgia (29) Cyprus (30) Argentina (31) Poland (32) Mexico (33) Thailand (34) Latvia (35) Columbia (36) Italy (37) Portugal (38) Hungary (39) Slovakia (40) Vietnam (41) Mauritius (42) Armenia (43) Ecuador (44) Romania (45) Sri Lanka (46) Malta (47) Peru (48) Bulgaria (49) Philippines (50) Kyrgyzstan (51) China (52) Albania (53) El Salvador (54) Bolivia, Plurinational State of (55) Brazil (56) Nicaragua (57) Tajikistan (58) Guatemala (59) Korea, Republic of (60) Croatia (61) Dominican Republic (62) Lithuania (63) Belarus (64) Russian Federation (65) Serbia (66) Bangladesh (67) Montenegro (68) Paraguay (69) Nepal (70) India (71) Mongolia (72) Ukraine (73) Indonesia (74) Turkey (75) Venezuela, Bolivarian Republic of (76) Moldova, Republic of (77) South Africa (78) Greece (79) Cambodia (80) Ghana (81) Honduras (82) Lao People's Democratic Republic (83) Morocco (84) Jordan (85) Nigeria (86) Iraq (87) Uganda (88) Rwanda (89) Zambia (90) Tanzania, United Republic of (91) Pakistan (92) West Bank & Gaza (93) Mozambique (94) Malawi (95) Afghanistan (96)

**HelpAge International helps older people claim their rights, challenge discrimination and overcome poverty, so they can lead dignified, secure, active and healthy lives. www.helpage.org**

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