

HelpAge messages for the Dec 2014 EU Council Conclusions on the post-2015 framework

We would like to commend the work of EU Member States to develop and support a strong post-2015 sustainable development framework. We welcome the commitment in the Council Conclusions of June 2013 to ensure a human rights-based approach encompassing all human rights and addressing justice, equality and equity, good governance, democracy and the rule of law.

Human rights are universal, indivisible and interdependent and for a future framework to promote and protect the human rights of all people of all ages without discrimination on any grounds, it must include concrete commitments to leave no-one behind.

To ensure that a future framework delivers effectively for all people of all ages, the HelpAge EU network has prepared the following **five key messages** to support the development of the next Council Conclusions on post-2015. These key messages take into account the EC Communication 'A Decent Life for All: from vision to collective action' of June 2014, the Council Conclusions of June 2013 and the content of the Open Working Group (OWG) on Sustainable Development Goals' Outcome Document.

KEY MESSAGES

- 1. In support of the priority areas of poverty eradication, inequalities and decent work for all, there must be a clear commitment to implement national universal social protection floors in all countries and support the gradual implementation of social protection systems providing higher standards of social guarantees.**

We welcome both the Council and Commission's references to social protection floors in previous policy documents. It will be important, however, to ensure that these references are not omitted in the forthcoming Council Conclusions and that EU commitments are not weaker than existing international agreements, in this case as set out in the ILO's Recommendation 202 on National Social Protection Floors.

- 2. The framework should tackle cross-cutting issues such as population dynamics, including ageing, migration and human mobility, which should be mainstreamed throughout.**

Future challenges must be viewed in the context of demographic trends. However, references to population dynamics, including ageing and migration, have been inconsistent and patchy in the EC Communications and were absent in the Council Conclusions of July 2013. Such a commitment to mainstreaming population dynamics and its various components would underpin efforts to ensure that the framework is truly people-centred.

- 3. To address entrenched patterns of discrimination and inequalities, it will be essential to ensure the availability of high-quality, timely and reliable data disaggregated by age, gender, disability, income, race, ethnicity, migratory status, geographic location and other characteristics relevant in national contexts. The empowerment and meaningful participation**

of people of all ages without discrimination in decision-making and monitoring should be integrated across the whole framework.

This is critical to ensure a human rights-based approach and full transparency and accountability and this language should be used consistently in support of the leave no-one behind principle. The 'bottom-up' participatory approach is core to the implementation of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing endorsed by the General Assembly in its resolution 57/167 on 18th December 2002. It will also be important to ensure that the necessary capacity-building support and investment is provided to developing countries to strengthen data systems.

- 4. A global goal should be to ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all people at all ages. This must be supported by universal, age-inclusive and appropriate health targets, including a stand-alone target on non-communicable diseases (NCDs). This target must emphasise the reduction of the risk of avoidable mortality and the importance of prevention, treatment management and care for people of all ages.**

We are concerned with the OWG's use of the discriminatory term 'premature mortality' and urge the EU to use the term 'avoidable mortality'. We welcome the inclusion of NCDs in the EC Communication 'A Decent Life For All: from Vision to Collective Action', however we are concerned about the proposal to combine the varied and complex challenges of both communicable and non-communicable diseases into a single target.

- 5. A stand-alone goal to achieve gender equality and empower girls and women of all ages is critical. This must be complemented by mainstreaming the promotion and protection of the human rights and empowerment of girls and women of all ages across all aspects of the framework.**

The debate on achieving gender equality still fails to take into account rapid global ageing. Gender-based and other intersecting inequality can accumulate over a woman's life time and be exacerbated in old age. Many surveys, including on violence against women, stop at age 49. This equates to at least one third of a woman's life being ignored.

We urge EU Member States to build these key messages into the development of the Council Conclusions to be adopted in December 2014 to ensure a **human rights-based, inclusive and people-centred position**. We wish you successful negotiations over the coming weeks.



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