

Stakeholder Group on Ageing Position paper submitted to the High Level Political Forum 2019

Executive Summary

Ageing is a global phenomenon which has clear implications for the Sustainable Development Goals and efforts to reduce inequalities which increase throughout life as the impact of discrimination accumulates and people experience new forms of discrimination in older age. The current 962 million people aged 60 and above is projected to rise to 1.4 billion by 2030, with the highest proportional growth in Africa and Asia. Global ageing and growing inequalities are two trends which must be addressed together. Societal systems and policies must adapt in the context of population ageing. This change process is critical to wellbeing for all, not older people alone.

Lifelong learning, decent work and employment opportunities, tackling economic and social inequalities, ending ageism and ensuring equal rights in older age are frequently raised by older persons as issues of concern.

Member States are obliged to uphold universal values shared across continents and cultures and to ensure the equal rights of all persons in their territories in line with the principles and standards of international human rights treaties. Older persons must be protected by public policies that are aligned with these human rights principles and standards and are implemented by programmes that take a life course approach, are age inclusive, tackle ageism and address older persons' rights and needs. However, policies for ageing are often uncoordinated, fragmented or non-existent and lack attention to human rights standards.

Member States can accelerate progress by acknowledging and confronting ageism, a key driver of social and economic discrimination and inequalities in older age, which restricts the potential of millions to contribute to sustainable development. Ageist attitudes stereotype, discriminate and exclude older persons. Successfully confronting ageism unlocks a wealth of economic, social and individual capacity, supporting sustainable development.

Recommendations

SDG4

1. Ensure life-long learning opportunities that respond to the rights and preferences of older persons. Reskilling, training and retraining equips older persons to be active agents in a complex and changing world.
2. Adapt learning opportunities, content and methodologies to the interests and preferences of older persons.
3. Ensure basic literacy and numeracy for all older persons and enable digital inclusion, a prerequisite to fulfilling the right of all to education and ensuring full participation in society.

SDG8

4. Provide social protection and flexible working arrangements in order to facilitate and improve conditions for older persons in the informal and formal labour markets.
5. Recognise the specific contributions of older people in both urban and rural settings. This includes paid, unpaid and volunteer work.
6. Remove age restrictive policies on access to microcredit, loans and financial investments.
7. Enact and enforce national and global anti-age discrimination legislation and review age-related exemptions in existing equality legislation.

SDG10

8. Ensure all people across the life course have age, disability and gender-equitable social protection and pension systems by means of the universal implementation of Target 1.3 on social protection floors and other measures.
9. Enact affordable, high-quality, person-centred and accessible social services, including universal health care including long-term care, for all older persons.

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10. Ensure meaningful participation of older persons in all planning and decision-making processes, including through information on rights and entitlements.
11. Put in place a binding international legal instrument to protect the rights of older persons.

SDG17

12. Prioritise and finance the collection of age-disaggregated data at the national, regional and global level.
13. Support National Statistical Offices to gather, systematize and disaggregate age-related data.
14. Take notice of, finance and support the ongoing work of the Titchfield Group on Ageing-Related Statistics and Age-Disaggregated Data.
15. Ensure systematic inclusion of upper age groups in SDG monitoring and reporting.

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