



Permanent Mission of the
Argentine Republic
United Nations
Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Worship



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Making Sustainable Development Work at All Ages: Eradicating Poverty and Promoting Prosperity for Older Persons

Side event of High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development
14 July 18:15-19:30
Conference Room 6, UNHQ

Concept Note

1. Background

The 2030 Agenda sets out a universal plan of action that seeks to eradicate poverty as its overarching goal. It envisions shared prosperity and respect for the human rights of all people. It calls for ensuring that no one is left behind and that the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are met for all segments of society, at all ages, with a particular focus on the most vulnerable—including older persons.

Population ageing is a major global trend that affects all countries and reflects significant achievements of human development such as improved health, greater longevity and lower mortality (UN 2017). In 2017, there are an estimated 962 million people aged 60 or over, comprising 13 percent of the global population, and this number is projected to reach 1.4 billion in 2030 (UNDESA 2017). Over the next 15 years, the number of older persons is expected to grow fastest in Latin America and the Caribbean, with a projected 71 per cent increase in the population aged 60 or over, followed by Asia (66 per cent), Africa (64 per cent), Oceania (47 per cent), Northern America (41 per cent) and Europe (23 per cent) (UNDESA 2015). At the same time, what matters is not only the numbers but also the diversity of older persons in terms of their needs, capabilities and experiences that are shaped by their age, gender, health, education, income, family status and other factors.

Despite growing recognition of the importance of ageing and the rights of older persons, older persons as yet have not benefitted systematically from development gains, as they continue to be overlooked by development policy and discourse and face multiple challenges (UNFPA and HelpAge International 2012). In many national settings, population ageing has raised concerns about the provision of adequate social protection (ILO 2014), and increased the pressure on public health systems, including growing demand for long-term care (WHO 2015). Moreover, many older persons continue to experience poverty in multiple dimensions, along with violence, abuse and discrimination on the grounds of age and gender, which severely undermines their rights. All these challenges are obscured by gaps in data and statistics on older persons that would give an insight into their widely variable situations.

With the correct policies in place that support the economic and social inclusion of older persons, population ageing presents significant opportunities for sustainable development and is likely to have far-reaching implications for all sectors of society, including labour markets, financial and health systems; demand for goods and services; and urban planning and infrastructure development.



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Evidence shows that older persons make important contributions to economic development and labour productivity through participation in the formal or informal workforce. Furthermore, older persons, particularly older women, play a vital role in providing unpaid care for spouses, grandchildren and other relatives (UN Women 2015). In addition, many older persons are actively participating in community and civic life and thus can contribute to strengthening social capital (OECD 2007). This all is essential to ending poverty, promoting prosperity and achieving more sustainable outcomes.

To achieve truly inclusive and sustainable development, it is vital to adopt a life-course approach to ageing and ensure that older persons lead self-determined, healthy and productive lives, while being able to exercise their rights. With the adoption of the SDGs the time has come for the formation of global multi-stakeholder partnerships to meaningfully advance these aims. With joint efforts, Governments, UN agencies, civil society and other stakeholders can support setting a new agenda of active and healthy ageing that can reduce the vulnerabilities and enhance the rights of older persons, and thus fulfil the promise of the 2030 Agenda to leave no one behind.

2. Objectives

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Finland, the Permanent Mission of Argentina to the United Nations in New York, UNDP, UNDESA, HelpAge International, along with other partners in the UN system and civil society, are convening a meeting to focus attention on the issues of ageing, poverty and prosperity in the context of the 2030 Agenda. Participants will discuss existing evidence related to the situation of older persons in different regions, countries and local settings, and across a range of SDGs. The discussion will also explore ways to more effectively work together to enhance and mainstream ageing issues in support of SDG implementation, promote the rights of older persons and develop sustainable partnerships, while building on good practices and supporting better collection of age-disaggregated data.

3. Questions for discussion

- i. How are countries addressing ageing and the SDGs? Is ageing being sufficiently mainstreamed across the goals? How are the SDGs translating into policies and programmes pertinent to older persons at the national level?
- ii. What is being measured, what needs to be measured?
- iii. What do we, the partners with different mandates, roles and responsibilities, want to achieve in relation to the ageing agenda and what can we do to make it happen? How does the UN system envisage moving forward in a coherent way to address ageing in the 2030 Agenda?
- iv. What networks and resources exist or should exist to move this agenda forward more systematically?
- v. What are the specific entry points and levers in bringing about this change, and how can we use them?



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Agenda

1. Ageing in the context of the 2030 Agenda

- UNDESA (TBC): overview of ageing dynamics and its relevance to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

2. Sharing experiences in addressing poverty and economic insecurity among older persons: insights from Member States and civil society

- Ms. Eppu Mikkonen-Jeanneret (Senior Adviser for Global Social Policy, Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland): Life-course risks from a gender perspective
- Mr Ariel Gonzalez Serafini (First Secretary, Permanent Mission of Argentina to the United Nations): Inclusion of older persons in the national level implementation of SDGs in Argentina
- Mr Justin Derbyshire (CEO, HelpAge International): Eliminating poverty and promoting well-being for older persons from a multidimensional perspective
- Ms Emem Omokaro (Dave Omokaro Foundation, Nigeria): demographic trends and the situation of older persons in Nigeria

3. Q&A

References

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