Ageing Related Policies and Priorities in the Implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

- **As reported in the Voluntary National Reviews of 2016, 2017 and 2018**

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1.0 Introduction

The 2030 Agenda sets out a universal plan of action to achieve sustainable development in a balanced manner and seeks to realize the human rights of all people. It calls for leaving no one behind and for ensuring 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.

Between 2017 and by 2030, the target date of the SDGs, the number of persons aged 60 years or over is projected to grow by 46 per cent, from 962 million to 1.4 billion, globally outnumbering youth, as well as children under the age of 10[1], and this increase will be the greatest and the most rapid in the developing world. Preparing for an ageing population is vital to the achievement of the integrated 2030 Agenda, with ageing cutting across the goals on poverty eradication, good health, gender equality, economic growth and decent work, reduced inequalities and sustainable cities.

Three years into the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, a significant number of countries have embarked on the road to implementing the SDGs. At the national level, progress is monitored and reported in the context of the 'follow-up and review process'.[2] This process is largely based on the Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs), which are carried out by countries to track progress on their respective SDG implementation. Since the adoption of the 2030 Agenda, 111 countries[3] carried out a VNR.[4] Offering a perspective of countries' approaches to, and progress made on, their SDG implementation, the VNR reports describe the national SDG strategies, plans and frameworks, consultation processes, and progress on specific goals and policy developments e.g. ageing related policies and priorities in implementing the 2030 Agenda.

This analysis provides an overview of ageing related trends that feature in VNR reporting of 2016, 2017 and 2018. The scope of the analysis is limited to the content of the VNRs and highlights practices from the countries that participated in the VNR process. Drawing on the VNR reports, it provides information about ageing related policies and priorities that feature in the context of specific themes and processes relevant to the SDG implementation, as well as under specific Goals. The ageing related policies and priorities that were highlighted in the 2016, 2017 and 2018 VNRs are predominantly reported in the context of SDG 1 (No Poverty), SDG 2 (Zero Hunger), SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-being), SDG 4 (Quality Education), SDG 5 (Gender Equality), SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities), SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and

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[1] United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division, 2017. *World Population Prospects: 2017*, New York.

[2] After the adoption of the 2030 Agenda, a framework to ensure the 'follow-up and review' of the 2030 Agenda was agreed by the General Assembly. UN General Assembly. 2016. UN Resolution 70/A/684, *Critical milestones towards coherent, efficient and inclusive follow-up and review at the global level*. New York.

[3] This analysis is based on the information provided in all VNR reports of 2016, 2017 and 2018, with the exception of China, as the Chinese VNR report was not accessible at the time of research.

[4] In 2016, 22 countries reported; in 2017, 43 countries reported; and 46 countries reported at the HLPF in July 2018.

Communities), and SDG 13 (Climate Action). In its conclusion, the analysis summarizes main trends and considers issues in need of specific attention.

2.0 Ageing Related Policies and Priorities Reported in the VNRs

The review of the VNRs of 2016, 2017 and 2018 revealed that 85% of the 111 VNR countries include references to ageing related efforts in their VNRs. The references range from highlighting demographic changes and trends, to policies and programs that address aspects in the context of specific SDGs and targets. The following section summarizes the ageing related policies and priorities as reported within themes and processes that are applied in national SDG implementing approaches such as; the trend of population ageing and its challenges; national policies, strategies and legislation; stakeholder engagement and consultations; leaving no one behind; neglect, abuse and discrimination; mainstreaming and building on synergies between SDGs, SDG localization; international and regional cooperation; science, technology and innovations; and data collection and monitoring.

The Trend of Population Ageing and its Challenges

As the rapidly ageing population is likely to have significant implications for sustainable development, preparations for the consequences associated with ageing and old age are critical. The VNRs illustrate that many countries acknowledge the growing proportion of older persons as a trend. While some countries make reference to the ageing population as a development alongside trends such as climate change and rising inequalities, others raise concern or highlight initiatives aimed at addressing challenges faced in the wake of population ageing.

A number of countries - including the Czech Republic, Denmark, Ireland, Japan, Latvia, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Malta, Norway, the Republic of Korea, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia and Spain - make reference to the ageing population as a trend. Countries raise a variety of concerns that are linked to this trend and make reference to different measures that can address the impacts the ageing population. For instance, the Czech Republic highlights that infrastructure should be prepared to cope with its ageing population. Latvia raises concern over the ageing society's effect on increasing inequality. Japan is striving to provide a "Japan model" for a sustainable economy and society. Norway mentions consequences in terms of increased demand for better basic services from the local authorities and a need for physical environments adapted to the needs of older persons, including the building of homes dwellings and high building quality standards. Singapore refers to its long-term plan to build a 'Nation for All Ages', involving leveraging technology and re-design workplaces and jobs to allow older persons to remain active and employed. Slovakia highlights that the rapid ageing population will increase pressure on funding of social services especially in the healthcare and retirement sectors. Slovakia's priority is therefore to transition from an economy based on foreign investment, low wages and taxes to a knowledge-based economy. Moreover, Spain raises concern over territorial imbalances and extinction of municipalities as a result of a rapidly ageing population and a high rate of rural depopulation. It highlights that the risk of poverty and social exclusion has increased, especially in urban environments.

National Policies, Strategies and Legislation

Population ageing requires urgent action. Recognition of older persons' agency and acknowledgement of their human rights call for establishing policies that not only address the issues related to the current population but also anticipate the increase in numbers of the present generations as they age.[5] Despite of the need for urgent action, only a few countries – including Costa Rica, Jamaica, Malta and Romania - report on national policies that specifically address ageing related questions. For instance, Costa Rica's 'National Policy for Adults Seniors 2011-2012', aims among others to promote the development of older persons; boost the attention of public and private entities; and ensure a proper functioning of the programs and services. Jamaica's National Policy for Senior Citizens of 2018 constitutes the main framework for delivery of services to older persons, including health, education, intergenerational transfers and income security. In Malta, the National Strategic Policy for Active Ageing is implemented for the period 2014-2020. The policy aims to provide a holistic response to the multi-disciplinary needs of the growing older population, and improve social- and health care services. Also Romania reported on its 'National Strategy on Active Ageing, Promotion and Protection of Elderly and the Action Plans 2015–2020', which includes a range of measures related to employment, education, prevention of the risk of abuse and neglect, long-term care and participation of older persons in volunteering efforts.

As a part of their respective national SDG implementation efforts, many countries define sustainable development strategies. A few countries report in their VNRs on including ageing related priorities and plans in their sustainable development strategies. For instance, Jordan's 'National Plan for the Elderly (2016-2020)' is a part of its strategic approach to implement the 2030 Agenda. In Hungary, the 'National Framework Strategy on Sustainable Development' (NFSSD) (2012–2024) focuses on, among others, a stable and healthy population and meeting the challenges of older persons. The Republic of Korea's 'Third Basic Plan for Sustainable Development' takes into consideration emerging social concerns, including population ageing. Also Qatar's national sustainable development strategy, 'NDS 2018 -2022' includes the aim to advance issues related to older persons.

New legislation related to the ageing population was adopted in Panama and the Republic of Korea. In Panama, legislation expanding the coverage to support older persons in conditions of social risk, vulnerability, marginalization or poverty was adopted in 2013. The Republic of Korea reports on the establishment of a series of laws and policy proposals that respond to population ageing. These include: the Third Plan for Low Fertility and Ageing Society (2016-2020), the Framework Act on Low Fertility and Population Ageing (2014) and the Law for Promoting the Elderly-Friendly Industries (2013).

Stakeholder Engagement and Consultations

As a part of the VNR preparations and determining national approaches to implement the SDGs, many governments invite stakeholder representatives to provide input. The form of stakeholder engagement varies, ranging from stakeholder consultations in decision-making processes, to the establishment of multi-stakeholder partnerships to advance on certain SDGs and targets, to involving stakeholders in monitoring and reporting. While most countries facilitate stakeholder engagement and consultations, only a few countries report on engaging older persons. Among others, Jamaica

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[5] United Nations, HelpAge International and AARP. 2017. Ageing, Older Persons and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, New York.

highlighted the attention given to stakeholder engagement, including older persons, during the formulation and planning of the VNRs. Nigeria emphasized the need to include older persons as a stakeholder group. Workshops and consultations engaging older persons were reported by Lao PDR and Montenegro. Lao PDR reported on a two-day workshop, which discussed the draft of the VNR resulting in a series of recommendations among others the need to promote access for older persons to free health care. Montenegro's first phase of consultations "Montenegro We Want", gave special attention to the inclusion of marginalized groups, including older persons.

Leaving No One behind

The Agenda 2030 calls for 'leaving no one behind' and for ensuring that the SDGs are met for all segments of society, at all ages. With a particular focus on the most vulnerable groups, including older persons, national actions to 'leave no one behind' can enable and accelerate progress to achieve the SDGs. A significant number of countries, including Australia, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bangladesh, Cabo Verde, Canada, Finland, Jamaica, Lao PDR, Mexico, Montenegro, Republic of Korea, Sri Lanka and Tajikistan refer to older persons in the context of the principle of 'leaving no one behind'. While many of these countries refer to older persons as one of the main groups at risk of being left behind, some countries include concrete actions aimed to ensure that older persons aren't left behind. For example, Australia highlights the Government's work with the private sector and civil society to address gaps in workforce participation. Australia also refers to investigations carried out by the Australian Human Rights Commission on barriers to employment for, among others, older persons. It calls attention to the issue of older women's vulnerability to later-in-life homelessness, due to factors including a lack of retirement funds, financial dependence, and family and domestic violence. Cabo Verde highlights income transfer programs aimed at older persons, and the Government of the Bahamas, in collaboration with civil society, academia and the private sector has created a special zone for a traditionally marginalized region known as the "Over the Hill Community". The program serves as a pilot for a comprehensive poverty alleviation strategy focusing on social and economic empowerment, rejuvenation, smart and green technology and programs which focus on older persons. Bangladesh reported on the creation of one-stop information and service delivery outlets that are established in local governments. These so-called 'Union Digital Centers', provide older persons with free and fee-based access to public and private services such as registration, applications to government services, job applications, insurance, financial services and vocational training. Furthermore, a 'National Commission for Persons with Disabilities and the Elderly' was set up in Lao PDR and Tajikistan underscored the importance of monitoring and evaluation of disaggregated data as well as issues of SDG localization in meeting the needs of older persons.

A separate section on older persons in the context of 'leaving no one behind' was included in Jamaica's VNR, emphasizing the high risk of falling into poverty and need of special care for older persons, in particular older women. Jamaica introduced the Green Paper: 'National Policy for Senior Citizens' in 2018. The policy is the main framework for the delivery of services to older persons, including health, education, intergenerational transfers and income security. Jamaica highlighted that while several programs are being implemented to address the needs of older persons, further concerted actions are required.

A couple of countries, including Finland, Mexico, the Republic of Korea and Sri Lanka, highlight challenges around population ageing in the context of 'leaving no one behind'. In this regard, Finland highlights the importance of taking into account the ageing of the working-age population when preparing for, and responding to, national and international challenges. It states that the ageing

population and deterioration in the dependency ratio are holding back Finland's economy and competitiveness leading to reforms. Mexico (2016)[6] underscored, that bringing the 2030 Agenda closer to among others older persons is one of its major challenges. Sri Lanka also raised the challenges posed by population ageing and reported on the development of a new model for elder care, which aims to ensure the protection of vulnerable older persons as a part of its public investment program 2017-2020.

The Republic of Korea similarly listed population ageing related challenges; including the shrinking workforce, increase in the poverty rate, as well as a concentration of older persons in rural areas. In response, a series of laws and policy proposals were established in the Republic of Korea, such as; the Third Plan for Low Fertility and Ageing Society (2015), the Framework Act on Low Fertility and Population Ageing (2014), and the Law for Promoting Elderly-Friendly Industries (2013). The policies based on these laws and plans include the establishment of hospice care for older persons at home, the increase in the number of social workers for those with Alzheimer's disease, the increase of public care facilities for older persons and the increase of tailor-made public works for older persons. To respond to the consequences of the ageing society on social reproduction, polices have been established for the coverage of medical costs related to pregnancy, ante- and post-natal care, the provision of low-cost housing for newly married couple, the increase in public child care facilities and the increase in the among of time and incentives for parental leave.

Violence, Neglect, Abuse and Discrimination

Major challenges to the development and well-being of older persons are violence, neglect and abuse of - as well as discrimination towards older persons. The issue of violence, neglect and abuse of older persons has been acknowledged as a growing concern by most countries. A couple of countries such as; Australia, the Bahamas, Montenegro, Romania, Saudi Arabia and Sweden devote attention to this topic in their VNRs alongside concerns regarding discrimination towards older persons. For example, Australia highlights the efforts of the Australian Human Rights Commission, which among others addresses issues around age discrimination. Apart from the Commission's mapping of its work against the SDGs, the Australian VNR highlights the 'National Inquiry into Employment Discrimination Against Older Australians and Australians with Disability'. One of the outcomes of this inquiry was the development of a 'Good Practice Guide for Employers', which provides practical, realistic and evidence-based solutions for employers who wish to increase efforts toward employing older Australians.

The Bahamas reports that cases of abuse and neglect of older persons are on the rise including; verbal abuse, physical and financial abuse. The Bahamas listed the establishment of a national 'zero-tolerance' strategy for violent crimes – specifically murder, sex-related violence, crimes against children and older persons and home invasion as a priority for its justice administration.

The topic of elder abuse and discrimination is discussed in Romania's VNR, where concern is raised about the lack of information, debate and awareness of these issues. While there are no official statistics regarding the phenomenon of mistreatment, abuse and neglect of older persons, a Eurobarometer Survey on 'Health and Long-term Care' in the European Union (EU) found that 86% of the Romanian population consider that poor treatment, neglect and abuse of older people is widespread. This takes into consideration older persons living in poor conditions, and older persons receiving inadequate care and physical and psychological attention. As a consequence of the ageing

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[6] Mexico Reported in 2016 and 2018

population, Romania highlights the need to; i) promote adequate social inclusion public policies with attention to the role of older persons; ii) develop a policy focused on active ageing that is based on a comprehensive understanding of ageing related issues; iii) enhance participation and integration of older persons in the labor market; as well as iv) enhance attention and budget allocations to mitigate the risks and cover the needs associated with the ageing population and older persons.

Montenegro lists eliminating discrimination of older persons as one of the priority areas in its national strategy for sustainable development. 'The National Sustainable Development Strategy' of Montenegro (NSSD) recognizes 'the approach of key stakeholders towards sustainability development' as a priority for action. In order to achieve sustainable development with the participation of all stakeholders it, among others, aims to: eliminate discrimination against older persons, foster cultural diversities through the strengthening of cultural activity of marginal and marginalized groups of older persons and provide tolerance for this social group and prevent and mitigate the effects of population ageing. Sweden also referred to age discrimination, highlighting it had expanded the protection against age discrimination in 2013.

Saudi Arabia highlights a memorandum of cooperation, which was signed between the Saudi Human Rights Commission (SHRC) and the Ministry of Labor and Social Development to promote partnerships, follow-up on mandated tasks, and cooperation in such areas such as protection from abuse and the rights of older persons.

Mainstreaming and Building on Synergies Between SDGs

The cross-cutting themes embedded in the 2030 Agenda, and the inter-linkages among the SDGs, require coordinated action across policy areas. The integrative nature of the 2030 Agenda calls for comprehensive actions and recognition of synergies and trade-offs between SDGs. Ageing is an example of an area that cuts across several SDGs, for example, poverty eradication, good health, gender equality, economic growth and decent work and reduced inequalities. A few countries – including Belgium, Costa Rica, Ecuador and the Republic of Korea introduce initiatives that address population ageing while building on synergies between a several SDGs. While some countries introduce plans targeted at a number of priority areas, including ageing, others target achievements across SDGs with benefits for older persons. One example is presented by Belgium, which refers to a second multi-year plan that was approved in 2016 and consists of 36 measures that address four major challenges; climate, energy transition, employment and ageing. Costa Rica highlights the work of a network consisting of faith communities, foundations and associations (FBO) that promotes human dignity, quality of life and use of sustainable human resources to contribute to the SDGs. FBO has reactivated programs to combat poverty, gender equality for vulnerable groups, including older persons that addresses SDG 1 (Poverty Reduction), SDG 5 (Gender Equality) and SDG 10 (Reducing Inequalities). Ecuador highlights an academic partnership that linked 46 programs in 2017. Based on transferring knowledge with the aim of developing human and the welfare of society, the programs contribute to 11 SDGs and benefit among others older persons. Since 2014, the government of the Republic of Korea has implemented the 'Three Year Plan for Economic Innovation', which aims at reforming the public sector and targets SDGs that are mainly associated with social and economic development. Its expected outcomes associated with welfare and income for among others older persons, economic participation, and a fair and transparent business environment are particularly aim at achieving the SDGs such as SDG 1 (No Poverty), SDG 2 (Zero Hunger), SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-being), SDG 4 (quality Education), SDG 5 (Gender Equality), SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), SDG 10 (Reducing Inequality) and SDG 17 (Partnerships to achieve the Goals).

SDG Localization[7]

Some countries highlight activities related to population ageing in the context of local efforts to implement the SDGs. For instance, Latvia and Malta underscore the importance of the functions of local governments in addressing the needs of older persons. Latvia highlights the important role of local governments in view of reducing the risk of poverty, for example, in providing support for housing and health care to older persons with low incomes. It moreover states that depopulation poses a challenge to local governments of rural areas, affecting the provision of social services for older persons.

With a reference to localizing the SDGs, Argentina highlights the need for incorporating an analysis that identifies cross-cutting issues and takes the participation of among others older person into consideration. Spain raises concern of the effects of the ageing population on local communities, affecting territorial cohesion, giving rise to inequalities, exacerbating the loss of biodiversity, and of diversity in terms of culture and heritage, as well as the abandonment of traditional activities, climate change and environmental conservation. In order to determine policies and actions that address these developments, Spain calls attention to the need to identify and measure at an appropriate territorial level.

As a successful example of SDG localization targeted at older persons, Thailand refers to the Umong Municipality in Lamphun province. The municipality supports local residents through a 'Community Welfare Fund', which among others targets older persons. The Fund aims to provide financial support to those vulnerable to poverty and incentivized people to save money and benefit from access to social welfare. This in turn helps reduce poverty, promote dignity, enhance resilience to external shocks and help build a sense of belonging in their community.

International- and Regional Cooperation

International- and regional cooperation can play a significant role in the promotion of issues related to older persons. The VNRs of Ireland, Italy and Japan include examples of how international cooperation supports the needs of older persons. For instance, Irish Aid contributes to a Social Cash Transfer programme in Malawi that support the most vulnerable households including older persons. Italy reported on the attention it is paying to the protection of older persons in the process of aligning the strategic guidelines of Italian Development Cooperation and humanitarian aid.

In terms of regional efforts, Japan highlights its intention to contribute to building sustainable social security systems in order to respond to the rapid changes of the demographic structure in Asia. In this relation, Japan hosted an event on strengthening Health Systems and Promoting Universal Health Coverage (UHC) at the 50th annual meeting of the Asian Development Bank (ADB) in Yokohama in May 2017. Furthermore, a memorandum of understanding was signed between the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) and the ADB in order to establish a strategic partnership to strengthening health security and promote UHC. In July 2017 the first Health Ministers Meeting on UHC and Ageing was convened under the framework of ASEAN Japan cooperation. Moreover Japan launched 'The Asia Health and Wellbeing Initiatives' which provide Japanese knowledge and expertise on long-term care and social welfare systems as well as support long-term care and related business providers' overseas advancement.

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[7] Several initiatives that involve local efforts are included under SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities) on p. 15.

Another regional initiative that is utilized to address the need of older persons, features in the VNRs is the 'Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived' (FEAD), which is referred to by Malta and the Netherlands. Malta highlighted the fund in reference to periodic distribution of food packages. The Netherlands refers to the use of resources from FEAD mainly to help older persons in the context of SDG 1 (Poverty Reduction).

Science, Technology and Innovation

Science, technology and innovation (STI) can serve as enablers for SDG implementation and help countries deal with ageing related challenges. A few countries, such as Andorra, Costa Rica, Jamaica, and Romania included in their VNR programs and efforts utilizing STIs that, for example, strengthen older person's skills and/or support their access to technology. Andorra highlighted an initiative by the Crèdit Andorrà Foundation, which has created a space for older persons and offers, for example, free of charge training and activities on new technologies such as power point programs, publishing, digital videos, cloud data, and memory stimulation by means of computer science. Costa Rica highlights the 'Intelligent Community Centers Program', which aims to eliminate the technological gap of vulnerable groups, including older persons by, for example, offering digital and technological education and training. Jamaica also reported on progress made in improving access to information and communications technology. In the context of 'leaving no one behind', it gives special attention to among others older persons through capacity-building and providing equipment. With a view to providing public safety, Romania highlights the use of 'smart' technologies that are applied to measure the security of older persons, especially in difficult climatic conditions. Furthermore, Slovenia stressed the benefits of innovation as a solution to the rapidly ageing population.

Data Collection and Monitoring

Indicators that are disaggregated by age were requested by the United Nations Statistical Commission in relation to the monitoring of progress on the SDGs. In the VNR reports, some countries highlight the need for disaggregation of data by age. Others include specific age-related indicators or statistical annexes that display these indicators. For instance, Belgium emphasized that whenever possible, preference should be given to indicators that can be disaggregated by among others age. Thailand includes the ageing society as a major issue in the context of the development of data and formulation of indicators. It highlights the need for quality and up-to-date statistical information that supports policy planning, decision-making and monitor outcomes. The Philippines identified the need for technical support to conduct poverty-related studies on determining the thresholds for older persons.

Specific indicators that relate to data collection regarding older person, were listed by Guinea and the Republic of Korea. In this regard, Guinea highlights target 1.3.1 'Proportion of the population benefiting from basic education systems social protection, by sex and by population groups (among other older persons)' and the Republic of Korea defines the proportion of older persons (%) in view of defining indicators in the social dimension of the 2030 Agenda. The statistical annexes of the VNRs of Benin[8], Botswana[9] and Peru[10] referred to indicators with a view to SDGs 1 (Poverty

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[8] 1.2.1 Proportion of the population living below the national poverty line, by sex and age ; 1.3.1 Proportion of the population benefiting from social protection floors or systems, by sex and by population group (incl. older persons); 3.3.1 Number of new HIV infections per 1,000 HIV-negative people, by sex, age and major population groups 8.5.1; Average hourly earnings of male and female employees by occupation, age and type of disability; 8.5.2 Unemployment rate, by sex, age and type of disability; 10.2.1 Proportion of people living

Reduction), SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-Being), SDG 4 (Quality Education), SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), SDG 10 (Reducing Inequalities) and SDG 16 (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions).

3.0 Ageing Related Efforts Reported under Specific Goals

The review of the VNRs revealed that a variety of ageing related policies and priorities are reported in the context of specific Goals. The majority of Goal specific efforts are concentrated under SDG 1 (No Poverty) and SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-being). A considerable number of efforts are reported under SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities), SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities), SDG 4 (Quality Education) and SDG 2 (Zero Hunger). A few countries highlight ageing related efforts under SDG 5 (Gender Equality), and one country reports on ageing related efforts within the scope of SDG 13 (Climate Action).

SDG 1: End Poverty in All its Forms Everywhere

Poverty is a major threat to the well-being of older persons. SDG 1 (Poverty Reduction) is therefore of significant importance when it comes to monitoring of progress of the ageing related aspects of the 2030 Agenda. Ageing related targets under SDG 1 that are of relevance are; i) target 1.1: eradicate extreme poverty for all people everywhere, currently measured as people living on less than $1.25 a day; ii) target 1.2: reduce at least by half the proportion of men, women and children of all ages living in poverty in all its dimensions according to national definitions; target 1.3: implement nationally appropriate social protection systems and measures for all, including floors, and by 2030 achieve substantial coverage of the poor and the vulnerable.

Countries highlighting ageing related questions in the context of SDG 1 are: Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Belgium, Benin, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Costa Rica, Cyprus, Denmark, Ecuador, Egypt, Estonia, India, Indonesia, Jamaica, Jordan, Kenya, Latvia, Lebanon, Lithuania, St. Maarten, Malta, the Netherlands, Nigeria, Panama, Poland, Portugal, the Republic of Korea, Romania, Senegal, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Sri Lanka, State of Palestine and Thailand. A few countries, including Belgium and Denmark, report on improvements made in reducing the risk of poverty among older persons. Also in Canada, older persons no longer face disproportionate rates of poverty partially due to programs such as the 'Guaranteed Income Supplement, the Old Age Security Program' and the 'Canada Pension Program'.

The majority of the above listed countries report on social services and social protection programs that address the needs of older persons and eliminate the risk of falling into poverty. Specific strategies were highlighted in the VNRs of Armenia, Azerbaijan, Malta and Romania. Aremnia's '2017-2021 Strategy for Overcoming the Consequences of Ageing and for Social Protection of the Elderly' aims at improving the care and social services system, promoting healthy and active life, ensuring economic safety and social inclusion, participation in community life and decision-making

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with income over 50% below average income, by age, sex and disability; 16.2.2 Number of victims of human trafficking per 100,000 population, by sex, age and form of exploitation.
[9] 1.3.1 Proportion of population covered by social protection floors/systems, by sex, distinguishing children, unemployed persons, older persons, persons with disabilities, pregnant women, newborns, work - injury victims and the poor and the vulnerable;
[10] Indicator 4.4.1: Proportion of youth and adults with information and communications technology (ICT) skills, by type of skill.

processes. The strategy also envisages support to the families for enabling older persons to stay in a family environment. Azerbaijan highlighted the 'State Program for Strengthening Social Protection of Older People' (2017-2021), and Malta introduced its 'National Strategic Policy for Poverty Reduction and for Social Inclusion 2014-2024'. The policy focuses on four main groups, including older persons and addresses poverty from six dimensions; income and benefits, employment, education, health and environment, social services, and culture. Romania's 'National Strategy on Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction' (2015-2020) takes into consideration the risk of poverty for older persons and provides recommendations for combatting the possible negative consequences of demographic ageing by using the economic and social value of older persons.

An increase in social services and expansion of social protection systems targeted at the well-being of older persons, were reported by Benin, Canada, Chile, India, Indonesia, St. Maarten, Portugal, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Qatar and the State of Palestine. Benin (2018)[11] reports on working towards significant improvement in the living conditions of the most vulnerable populations, including older persons, which will involve setting up a new social protection system, through the 'Insurance for the Strengthening of Human Capital' (ARCH). The Canadian Government increased the 'Guaranteed Income Supplement' for the lowest-income single seniors, which helps improve the financial security of close to 900,000 vulnerable seniors and has helped to lift 57,000 older persons out of poverty. India highlighted the 'Strengthening Social Safety Nets: The National Social Assistance Program', which provides pension to among others older persons. To ensure that older persons with low social economic status have access to basic services, Indonesia expanded its so-called 'Family Hope Program' (PKH) in 2016. St. Maarten reported that it is developing social protection policies for among others older persons, with the aim of ensuring basic protections, providing universal access to adequate, safe and affordable housing, and upgrading slums. To ensure inclusive development, Singapore introduced policies focusing on e.g. retirement support for older persons such as the 'Silver Support Scheme'. Singapore also highlighted the introduction of 'Medifund Silver' that provides targeted financial assistance for covering medical care of low-income older patients. Furthermore, a 'Community Network for Seniors' was initiated to strengthen coordination and collaboration between government agencies and community-based stakeholders to leverage strengths and resources, connect, and support older persons living in the community. In Sri Lanka the 'Welfare Benefit Board' (WBB) was established in 2016 and is tasked with the creation of an integrated social safety net with a unified social registry and the formulation of appropriate selection criteria for each social protection programme targeted at among others older persons. The State of Palestine reported that it is working to establish a social protection floor starting with allowances to among others older persons. Moreover, Thailand highlights the establishment of Community-based centers for promoting quality of life and occupations and schools for older persons, as well as a house refurbishment project for older persons. It furthermore states that older persons are given access to loans through an 'Older Fund'.

Countries that report on cash transfers to older persons are; the Bahamas, Brazil, Ecuador, Egypt, Jamaica, Kenya, Nigeria the State of Palestine and Thailand. Brazil reported on improvements that were made in the management and targeting of the 'Continuous Cash Benefit' (BPC) program, which operates based on the constitutional right for the provision of a monthly income for older persons and people with disabilities living in extreme poverty. Ecuador highlights the program "My Best Years" that supported 33000 older persons with a bonus of USD 100 monthly to protect the well-being of vulnerable older persons. In 2015, Egypt introduced the 'Takaful and 'Karama' cash transfer schemes providing financial support with the aim to eliminate absolute poverty and cover the basic needs of

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[11] Benin reported in 2017 and 2018 at the HLPF

among others older persons. Also Nigeria reported on a new 'Unconditional Cash Transfer' program (UCT), which provides social security for among others older persons.

Challenges related to the social services and poverty reduction efforts were reported by Costa Rica, Lebanon, Lithuania, Singapore and Slovenia. Lebanon reports that a lack of appropriate social protection and health services for older persons is a major challenge. Also Lithuania lists population ageing as a significant challenge for its social policy, and aims to maintain the sustainability of the pension system. Singapore highlighted the increasing demands on social spending as a result of its rapid ageing society, particularly in relation to growing healthcare expenditure. Slovenia underscores that the reduction of the risk of poverty among older persons, especially women, presents a challenge. Also Canada made reference to older women at risk of poverty, and raised in this relation concern over the provision of adequate and affordable housing. In view of specific ageing-related challenges under SDG 1, Costa Rica referred to a workshop held by the 'Technical Secretariat of the SDGs with Older Persons', which was organized in the context of its VNR preparations. The workshop aimed to identify a series of multidimensional challenges in generating social well-being, reducing poverty and inequalities with a view to the ageing population. The outcome identified a need for: i) a national proposal for those older persons who exceed the poverty line or multidimensional poverty, ii) strengthening the care programs for homeless older persons; iii) ensuring full compliance with the decent employment exchanges and recognize good practices of employment for older persons; iv) training for older persons to enhance access to the labor market or generate entrepreneurial skills V) implementing differentiated attention mechanisms and welfare programs for older persons.

Poland highlighted a number of new initiatives that aim to reduce poverty among the older population, including the Care 75+ program, which commenced in 2018. The program is aimed at increasing the accessibility of care services and specialist services for single and older persons aged 75+, who live in communities with a population of up to 40,000. Furthermore, the 'Multiannual Senior+ Programme' (2015-2020) and the 'Governmental Programme for Social Activity of Older Persons' (2014-2020) (ASOS) focuses e.g. on the development of a network of daycare homes and social activity for older persons. Moreover, the 'Friendly Poland - Accessibility Plus Programme', aims to improve the quality and independence of life of among others older persons. This is to be achieved by improving the accessibility of public areas, products and services in terms of architecture, information and communication. Poland also reports on the introduction of measures aimed at providing older persons (75+) with a selection of free drugs, foodstuffs for special nutritional purposes and medical devices.

Canada, Cyprus, the Kingdom of the Netherlands make reference to local efforts that aim to reduce poverty. In 2015, the Toronto City Council adopted a 20-year poverty reduction strategy with 17 recommendations to help provide a safety net to prevent people from falling into poverty and a lifeline to help lift people out. Actions to implement the strategy are spread throughout the city, focus on under-served areas and aim to address a full range of target groups such as older persons. The strategy focuses on housing stability, services access, transit equity, food security, the quality of jobs and incomes, and systemic change.

A few countries highlighted efforts in terms of monitoring of ageing related progress under SDG 1. Among others Argentina listed indicators that were formulated to monitor progress of target 1.3 and to measure the proportion of older persons covered by social protection services. Senegal also reported on the intention to develop effective policies, supported by reliable statistical data, to protect and empower the most vulnerable people including older persons.

SDG 2: End hunger, Achieve Food Security and Improved Nutrition, and Promote Sustainable Agriculture

Poverty that is characterized by malnutrition is a major threat to the well-being of older persons. SDG 2 (Zero Hunger) among others consists of target i) 2.2 that aims to end all forms of malnutrition, including addressing the nutritional needs of adolescent girls, pregnant and lactating women and older persons by 2030; as well as ii) target 2.4 on ensuring sustainable food production systems and resilient agricultural practices that strengthen capacity for adaptation to climate change, extreme weather, drought, flooding and other disasters.

Albania, Argentina, Jamaica, Lebanon, Malta, Portugal Senegal, Slovenia and Sweden make reference to older persons in their VNRs under the SDG 2 (Zero Hunger). While most of the listed countries refer to the overall importance of addressing malnutrition vis-à-vis older persons, concerns related to malnutrition reflected in older persons particularly in the context of institutionalized care, were raised in the VNRs of Sweden and Slovenia.

Specific initiatives were reported by Malta, Lebanon, Portugal and Senegal. In Malta, Food Aid Programmes have been implemented through the EU co-financed Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprives (FEAD), which among others addresses food deprivation and targets the most deprived households, including older persons, through the periodic distribution of food packages. Lebanon highlights programs that address hunger and household nutrition, such as providing a free hot meal to older and poor persons once a week through existing charities and food vouchers. Portugal highlights the introduction of a new food basket, which takes into consideration the specific needs of specific social groups, including older persons. With a view to target 2.2, Senegal highlights its 2018-2022 'National Food Security Support Program and National Strategy for Food Security and Resilience' (SNSAR). Argentina reports on the formulation of an indicator that measures the proportion of households receiving complementary monetary assistance for the acquisition of food on the total of poor households. The indicator is reflecting the objectives of the 'National Food Security Plan' that among others targets older persons who live in socially unfavorable conditions and are prone to nutritional vulnerability.

SDG 3: Ensure Healthy Lives and Promote Well-Being for All at All Ages

Population ageing reflects achievements of human development such as improved health, greater longevity and lower mortality.[12] At the same time, a key challenge related to the ageing population is the rising pressure on public health systems to adapt to meet the growing demand for age-appropriate care, including long-term care, services and technologies for prevention, detection and treatment of disease.[13] Population ageing together with the epidemiological transition and related lifestyle changes are among the major factors of the rising incidence and prevalence of non-communicable diseases.[14] SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-Being) consists of a number of targets that are of significance for ageing related issues; i) target 3.3: end the epidemics of AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria and neglected

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[12] United Nations. 2017. Monitoring of population programmes, focusing on changing population age structures and sustainable development, in the context of the full implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development Report of the Secretary-General. E/CN.9/2017/3, New Yok.

[13] World Health Organization. 2015. World Report on Ageing and Health, Geneva.

[14] United Nations, HelpAge International and AARP. 2017. Ageing, Older Persons and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, New York.

tropical diseases and combat hepatitis, water-borne diseases and other communicable diseases by 2030; ii) target 3.4: reduce by one third premature mortality from non-communicable diseases through prevention and treatment and promote mental health and well-being by 2030; iii) target 3.8: achieve universal health coverage, including financial risk protection, access to quality essential health-care services and access to safe, effective, quality and affordable essential medicines and vaccines for all; and iv) target 3.C: substantially increase health financing and the recruitment, development, training and retention of the health workforce in developing countries, especially in least developed countries and small island developing States.

A considerable number of countries made reference to older persons under SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-Being). These are: Australia, Belgium, Cabo Verde, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cyprus, Denmark, Ecuador, Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Kenya, Lithuania, Malaysia, Malta, Montenegro, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Romania, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sweden and Thailand. While many of these countries list older persons as a vulnerable group, a number of countries emphasize concern over the effect of a rapidly ageing population on the financing base of welfare- and health care system such as; Belgium, Lithuania, Portugal, Romania, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia and Sri Lanka. Countries apply various solutions that help address this challenge. For instance, Lithuania increased the availability of primary health care providers. Portugal expanded the access to the health services through its 'National Network of the Integrated Continued Care', in order to guarantee care and support to older persons. Romania assumed improving long-term and health care for dependent older persons and decreased dependence of older persons as part of its 'Active Ageing concept', which is a strategic objective of the National Strategy for promotion of Romania's 'Active Ageing and Elder Protection 2015-2020'.[15] Singapore is exploring innovative solutions for high quality health care services at affordable cost and recognizes the importance of preventive care. Singapore invests in health promotion, early vaccination, and screening for diseases. In Slovakia, the challenge of the need for primary health care providers in the wake of the ageing population is tackled by rolling out plans to develop integrated centers of healthcare provision throughout the country.

Initiatives that strengthen the care of older persons were listed in the VNRs of Belgium, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador and Japan. In Belgium, 'Flanders Care' acts as a catalyzer for system innovation in the organization of care services, putting the patient central stage and adapting the services offered to society's needs, among others the changing care needs of older persons. Accessibility is also one of the principal objectives of a 'Patients' Future Pact'. The Walloon Health Observatory, through the analysis of socio-sanitary data is carrying out a study (2015-2019) on mental and primary health care, population ageing, the quality of hospital care and health promotion.

Countries that envisage strengthening the delivery of health care services to older persons are; Malaysia and Portugal. Portugal envisages the expansion of the Cuidados Continuados de Saúde Mental (Continued Mental Healthcare), as well as areas that require specific intervention such as dementia. Successes were reported by Malaysia, which highlights the 'Partnership with Non-Governmental Organizations' to serve social groups with specialized needs such as older persons.

In order to promote ageing with well-being and healthy lifestyles, Columbia among others deployed a strategy that contemplates actions of prevention and care for the four non-communicable diseases: diabetes, cardiovascular diseases, cancer and diseases chronic respiratory. Costa Rica reported on the development of a "National Care System" that among others includes long-term public policy on care of among others older persons. Ecuador highlighted a 'Neighborhood Medical Strategy': door-to-door recruitment strategy for people requiring care among others to older persons. The Government of

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[15] A detailed technical analysis of the context of the current situation and policy challenges in this area can be found in the World Bank report "Living Long, Staying Active and Strong: Promotion of Active Ageing in Romania" (2014).

Japan is implementing measures including lifelong preventive care and support to accelerate the rate of expansion of healthy life expectancy exceed that of average life expectancy, and to extend the average healthy life expectancy by more than two years by 2025.

Some countries - including Cabo Verde, Denmark, Ireland, Indonesia, Italy, Kenya, Malta, Poland and Sweden – refer to plans, strategies and programs targeted at improving good health and well-being of older persons. As a part of adapting to a new health sector governance agenda, strengthening public health programs for among others older persons was reported by Cabo Verde. In Denmark, a national action plan for older medical patients together with regional initiatives focuses on preventing unnecessary hospitalizations and increasing coherence across the health care sector. Ireland reports on progress in promoting population health for older persons in the form of a 'National Positive Ageing Strategy'. Indonesia highlights the 'Healthy Lifestyle Community Movement' (Gerakan Masyarakat Hidup Sehat/Germas), which is a cross-sector movement aimed at improving a healthy lifestyle of the community. One example of the Movement's efforts is the regional based integrated elder care post for Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs) (Pos Pembinaan Terpadu/Posbindu). Italy highlighted the 'National program of care services for children and older persons who are not self-sufficient'. Since 2013, the Kenyan Government has been promoting reforms in the 'National Hospital Insurance Fund' (NHIF) to make it one of the key drivers for achieving universal health coverage and to allow access to comprehensive health care for among others older persons. Malta highlights a project that covers the delivery of medications to the homes of older patients and the opening of new care homes as well as services that include a physical education programme for older persons to promote active ageing and to maintain and improve physical well-being Poland's 'National Health Programme' for 2016-2020, includes the promotion of healthy and active ageing as one of its six priority areas. Poland also promotes the Active Ageing Index, which aims to measure the potential of older people to participate more in the economy, society and independent living. The active ageing index was developed by combining measures from four areas: employment; participation in the society; independent living in health and safety; potential and conditions for active ageing. The Government of Sweden has made several efforts to raise the quality of elder care, increase security for older persons and to improve the conditions for a gender-equal, equitable and equivalent care in the entire country.

Benefits programs for older patients involving drug subsidies were highlighted by Jamaica and Poland. An increase in drug subsidies was reported by Jamaica highlighting the Jamaica Drug for the Elderly Programme (JADEP). In Poland, the program Medicines 75+ aims at among others ensuring access for older persons to free medicines as well as medical devices related to the treatment of old age diseases.

The Kingdom of the Netherlands highlights its research areas at specialized institutes such as the Amsterdam Institute for Global Health and Development and the Rotterdam Global Health Initiative, which among others focus on ageing and Alzheimer's disease.

Challenges in the health care sector were reported by Costa Rica, Jamaica and Sri Lanka. Costa Rica lists a number of challenges that were defined during a 'Workshop on Older Persons', which was organized as a part of the VNR preparations by the SDG Secretariat. The outcome identified; improving health care services, reducing waiting lists, improve access to healthcare, establish measures for promoting active ageing and strengthening the care network to prevent older persons assuming roles as care givers as key challenges. Jamaica lists the strengthening of rehabilitation services for vulnerable persons, including older persons as a challenge. Sri Lanka highlights the effect of the ageing population on the increasing prevalence of NCDs, which needs to be addressed.

SDG 4: Ensure Inclusive and Equitable Quality Education and Promote Lifelong Learning Opportunities for All

Enhancing access to education and installing measures that address challenges that undermine older persons' access to education can among others support promoting older persons' employment as well as reducing poverty and inequality. SDG 4 (Quality Education) consists of; i) target 4.3, which aims to ensure equal access for all women and men to affordable and quality technical, vocational and tertiary education, including university; ii) target 4.4: substantially increase the number of youth and adults who have relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship by 2030; and iii) target 4.6; ensure that all youth and a substantial proportion of adults, both men and women, achieve literacy and numeracy by 2030.

A few countries, including Greece, St. Maarten and Romania highlight ageing related efforts in the context of SDG 4 (Quality Education), particularly by applying Lifelong Learning strategic efforts. Greece refers to the ageing population as one of the challenges, which can be addressed by the concept of Lifelong Learning. The Greek law on Lifelong Learning from 2010 sets the basis for the planning and implementation of a national holistic strategy on lifelong learning and for the creation of the 'National Network of Lifelong Learning' (NNLL), which encompasses all lifelong learning governing bodies and service providers and operators.

As a part of promoting access to high quality education and educators in the interests of Lifelong Learning, employment and entrepreneurship, St. Maarten reports on educational programs that support older persons. Romania also promotes the inclusion of older persons in its Lifelong Learning Strategy, which follows three pillars: (i) access and incentives for participation; (ii) quality and relevance; and (iii) partnerships for better information and includes older persons in its strategic objectives. The Lifelong Learning Strategy includes investments in community learning centers which should cover employment aspects, such as reskilling - including for older workers - as well as aspects related to health, elder care, financial and legal planning for retirement and inheritance management, as well as benefits of technology to enhance social connectedness.

SDG 5: Achieve Gender Equality and Empower all Women and Girls

Older women tend to be more marginalized and disadvantaged than older men, with evidence showing higher rates of poverty among older women in both developed and developing countries. Relevant ageing related targets under SDG 5 (Gender Equality) are; i) target 5.2 to eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls; ii) target 5.4: to recognize and value unpaid care and domestic work through the provision of public services, infrastructure and social protection policies, and the promotion of shared responsibility within the household and the family as nationally appropriate and iii) target 5.5: to ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life.

Despite of the high risk of vulnerability of older women, only three countries, including Canada, Latvia and Singapore make reference to ageing related issues under SDG 5. For instance, Canada highlights its strong commitment to achieving gender equality among others by the increase in the 'Guaranteed Income Supplement payments for low-income seniors', 70% of whom are women. Latvia underscores the importance of access to care services for older family members, which is relevant in view of target 5.4 – to recognize and value unpaid care and domestic work. Due to the ageing population, care needs for young and old alike underscore the urgency for implementing target 5.4. Singapore, refers to the 'Retirement and Re-employment Act', which enables older persons to

continue working beyond retirement and refers to schemes - such as the 'Silver Support Scheme' and 'Pioneer Generation Package' - that further enhance financial assistance for older or retired women.

SDG 8: Promote Sustained, Inclusive and Sustainable Economic Growth, Full and Productive Employment and Decent Work for All

Population ageing provides opportunities as well as implications for the economy and labour markets. Opportunities that ageing populations provide to sustainable development are associated with the active participation of older persons in the labour market. In this regard, targets under SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth) that are relevant include; target 8.5: to achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men, including for young people and persons with disabilities, and equal pay for work of equal value by 2030; target 8.8: to protect labour rights and promote safe and secure working environments for all workers, including migrant workers, in particular women migrants, and those in precarious employment.

A number of countries, including Australia, Belgium, the Czech Republic, Ecuador, Estonia, France, Greece, Japan, Lithuania, Romania, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Sweden, Switzerland and Thailand make ageing related references in the context of SDG 8. Australia's and Singapore's VNR refer to population ageing as a factor that limits long-term, economic and income growth and emphasize the need for structural reforms. Full employment and decent work for older persons are highlighted as a challenge in the VNRs of the Czech Republic, Ecuador and Sweden. The need to - and intentions to - enhance the participation of older person's in the labour market are raised by Estonia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovenia, Switzerland and Thailand. Estonia underscores the need for measures that target among others older persons to participate in the labour market. Also Romania encourages a longer working life and emphasizes that the older population is an underused resource of its economy. Romania intends to increase older persons' labour market participation by implementing older persons employment schemes. Slovenia highlights the need to increase the level of employment in younger and older age groups, by e.g. ensuring the development of suitable skills for life and work. To maintain high labour market participation and good working conditions, the Swiss government encourages the labour market participation of among others older persons. Thailand also highlighted its Governments efforts to promote decent employment for older persons.

A specific program that encourages the participation of older persons in the labour market was reported by Japan. Under the "Plan for Dynamic Engagement of All Citizens", Japan aims to achieve a society where all citizens, including older persons can play active roles in all places including the workplace, at home and the local community. It among others promotes employment of older persons by providing support for companies to extend the retirement age to 65 and offer employees opportunities for continued employment after reaching the retirement age.

SDG 10: Reduce Inequality Within and Among Countries

Population ageing takes place alongside rising inequalities within and among countries. Some societies age faster than others and inequalities have been increasing from one generation to another. Inequalities in education, health, employment and income start building up from early ages affecting life expectancy, health and income levels.[16] In this context, SDG 10 (Reducing Inequalities) includes; target 10.2: to empowering and promoting the social, economic and political inclusion of all,

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[16] Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). 2017. *Preventing Ageing Unequally,* Paris.

irrespective of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion or economic or other status by 2030, and target 10.3: ensuring equal opportunity and reducing inequalities of outcome, including by eliminating discriminatory laws, policies and practices and promoting appropriate legislation, policies and action in this regard.

A significant number of countries highlight ageing-related actions under SDG 10 (Reducing Inequalities) e.g. Belgium, Benin, Bhutan, Canada, Costa Rica, Jamaica, Latvia, Namibia, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, Sweden and Thailand. Some of these countries, including Bhutan, Canada, Costa Rica, Poland, Portugal and Saudi Arabia, highlight policies and plans that aim at reducing inequalities specifically targeting older persons. Canada for instance, focuses on ensuring that opportunity, growth and prosperity benefit all Canadians, including through strengthening social protection programs for low-income seniors. Costa Rica highlights its 'National Policy for Older Persons' as a measure to reduce inequality. Poland implements social activities aimed at reducing inequality through, for example, the promotion of professional and social activities of older persons. And, Portugal reports on a compensatory increase in value of pensions covering invalidity and old-age pensions, retirement and the reform of the social protection system in 2017. Support mechanisms were recovered to guarantee the minimum social standards for citizens in greater vulnerability, such as the Rendimento Social de Inserção (Social Integration Income) and the Complemento Solidário para Idosos (Senior Citizens Pension Supplement). Portugal also installed measures to strengthen inclusion and increase access to public spaces for among others older persons. Bhutan conducted a Vulnerability Assessment identifying 14 vulnerable groups including older persons and launched savings products for older persons with the aim to strengthen financial inclusion. Saudi Arabia reports on a plan for development of a Social Protection Strategy, which aims to develop regulations and policies designed to help poor and vulnerable groups cope with crises and shocks, create job opportunities, investment in human capital and protection of older persons. Singapore adopted a more proactive approach to reducing inequality in order to provide support to the less well-off by among others introducing targeted assistance to older persons.

A few countries – including Belgium and Benin highlight the prioritization of specific targets under SDG 10 (Reducing Inequalities). For instance Benin (2017)[17] prioritizes the targets 10.1, 10.2 and 10.3 and underlines the need for investment in data collection, analysis and disaggregated data by age. With a view to target 10.2, and in the realm of mobility, Belgium reported it places special focus on specific needs in terms of among others age.

With the aim of reducing inequality, the Government of Mali adopted the 'Program for the Support of the Poor Old People' (PAPADEM) and created the 'House of Elders', which studies and researches geriatrics aims to produce knowledge on aging and the care of poor older persons.

Jamaica and Latvia refer to increasing the well-being of older persons as a main challenge in reducing inequality. Namibia highlights the divide between rural and urban areas, which includes larger segments of vulnerable groups such as older persons as a key challenge.

SDG 11: Make Cities and Human Settlements Inclusive, Safe, Resilient and Sustainable

The population of older people living in cities is increasing rapidly. The dynamics between the ageing population and urbanization have a significant effect on among others urban planning, well-being and the protection of human rights. Managing urbanization through e.g. integrated spatial and urban

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[17] Benin reported in 2017 and 2018 at the HLPF.

planning that takes into consideration older citizens is therefore important. This is among others embraced by SDG (Sustainable Cities and Communities) and its target 11.2 that aims to provide access to safe, affordable, accessible and sustainable transport systems for all, improving road safety, notably by expanding public transport, with special attention to the needs of those in vulnerable situations, women, children, persons with disabilities and older persons by 2030; and target 11.7 that aims to provide universal access to safe, inclusive and accessible, green and public spaces, in particular for women and children, older persons and persons with disabilities by 2030. As the population of older persons living in urban area is increasing, this SDG is of critical importance when analyzing progress on the SDGs in an ageing related context. Among others, Andorra, Albania and Qatar make reference to the targets 11.2 and 11.7. For instance, the 'Qatar National Master plan 2018-2032' includes a number of urban development policies and procedures for the expansion and development of open spaces, parks and recreational services aimed at providing public spaces that are vital, attractive and accessible for all users. The plan also aims to use natural and urban garden landscaping designs as basic tools in the design of public spaces and open areas, among others older persons.

Some countries, including Andorra, Bhutan, Jamaica, Japan and Singapore highlight initiatives that aim at providing safe, affordable and sustainable transport for all. For instance, Bhutan refers to the 'Bhutan Transport 2040: Integrated Strategic Vision' that concerns urban public transportation services and has introduced spaces and designated seating for among others older persons. Jamaica facilitates access to transportation by providing concessionary fares to among others older persons. The Japanese Government has promoted the adoption of barrier-free design of transportation facilities and vehicles in line with the 'Act on Promotion of Smooth Transportation', of for example, older persons. To make the streets safer for among others older persons, Singapore envisages 50 'Silver Zones' that will be implemented by 2023 in areas with high senior resident populations, amenities which seniors frequent, or higher accident rates involving senior pedestrians. These 'Silver Zones' have road safety features, such as lower speed limits, center dividers, and road humps and chicanes that slow down motorists and remind them to look out for pedestrians.

Other countries highlight plans that address ageing related issues as a part of 'smart cities' concepts that encourage innovative solutions. In Greece, the city of Trikala stands out as a so-called 'smart city'. Technology-powered solutions are integrated into the daily life of the municipality, and government services through e-governance are delivered to citizens, which among others provides tele-health care for older persons. In 2017, Canada[18] launched the 'Smart Cities Challenge', which is a competition open to all municipalities, local or regional governments, and Indigenous communities and aims at empowering communities to address local issues through new partnerships and the use of data and connected technology. Winning communities will be awarded with prize money to help implement them. Targeted solutions with a view to e.g. social services for older persons are encouraged.

     The Government of Japan has been promoting the 'Future City' concept, which aims at creating urban cities and communities with sustainable economic and social systems. The initiative is designed to address challenges such as ageing and environmental issues, to promote the creation new values in environmental, social and economic aspects in order to build a city where everyone wants to live and everyone is empowered. Moreover, Japan is promoting city planning that aims at realizing of the concept of a 'Network-based Compact City' that among others aims at realizing communities where older persons can live safely, obtain medical and access to other facilities. This concept aims to induce urban facilities and dwellings around hubs and networks of public transportation, as well as to promote the formulation of sustainable local public transportation networks that are well-balanced between convenience and efficiency. In a similar spirit, Singapore highlights the concept of an

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[18] Canada also reported on efforts initiated by the Toronto City Council in the context of Goal 1 (Poverty Reduction), p. 11.

'Enabling City', which aims to transform Singapore into a city for older persons to live independently while remaining integrated in the community. In this context, Singapore is enhancing parks with senior-friendly amenities, and is introducing barrier-free accessibility, more seating and community spaces in housing estates, and a program to equip apartments with senior-friendly fittings. To better engage older persons, day care, health and community programs are integrated in the housing estates. Moreover, a network of therapeutic gardens that support e.g. older persons with dementia are piloted. Canada is promoting diverse communities and building housing that is fully integrated, close to transit, work and public services— into the community. Inclusion, participation, accountability and non-discrimination guide a strategy to prioritize investments for among others older persons.

Other initiatives under SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities) are highlighted by Spain and Greece. Spain refers to the "Elderly Care Strategy" of the Madrid Community and Greece refers to a network of one-stop-shops for health care, psychological, social and legal services, which were established by the Municipality of Athens, which also implements a series of initiatives for among others older persons.

SDG 13: Take Urgent Action to Combat Climate Change and its Impacts

SDG 13 (Climate Action) has several targets on strengthening human resilience and adaptive capacity to climate–related hazards and natural disasters, as well as institutional capacity, policies and measures. While older persons are more vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, only one country reported on ageing related efforts in the context of SDG 13 (Climate Action). Andorra highlighted its resilience and climate change training in particular in order to increase the resilience to possible natural disasters and climate change. In cooperation with a number of partners, the Department for Civil Protection actively works on training and awareness of the Andorran population. Training in the field of first relief and natural risk management was also addressed to older persons.

4.0 Conclusion

Preparing for an ageing population is an important component of achieving sustainable development by 2030. In light of the increasing ageing population and to ensure progress towards the SDGs, ageing related action is necessary to help achieve the SDGs.

The review of the VNRs 2016-2018 illustrates that ageing related policies and priorities are included in the VNRs of a significant number of countries. Approximately 85% of the 111 VNRs feature references to the ageing population and/or older persons in some form or another. However, while 85% of the VNRs include references of concern to ageing and older persons, most references feature in the context of: i) the ageing population as a trend and concerns over rapid ageing, ii) dependency ratios (and ageist measurement); iii) concerns over sustainability of social services, pension- and health care systems; and iv) ageing as a factor that limits long-term, economic and income growth.

Despite of the need for action, older persons and ageing related policies and priorities are still absent in many national plans and SDG strategies. Only a few VNR countries report on specific national policies on ageing or new legislative measures that can help address the challenges related to the ageing population. Including ageing policies and priorities as a part of national plans and SDG strategic efforts can among others help limit the impact of the rapidly ageing population, which are raised by many of the VNR countries.

To ensure progress towards the SDGs, it is critical to proactively include older persons in the planning, implementation and monitoring process of the SDGs. The VNR process has, by some countries been utilized as an opportunity to include older persons in e.g. consultation processes, stakeholder engagement mechanisms and workshops. In terms of monitoring and data collection efforts, only a few countries report on the development of specific ageing related indicators, disaggregation efforts or data collection efforts.[19] An increasing focus on ageing in the various stages of the follow-up and review process of the SDGs – including the VNR process - can add understanding to the ageing-related issues in the context of the 2030 Agenda. Furthermore, data collection efforts that include older persons and age-disaggregated data are critical for defining policies, developing strategic efforts and measures, as well as monitoring and reporting progress on ageing related aspects in the implementation of the SDGs.

While a significant number of countries feature older persons and ageing-related aspects in the context of the principle of 'leaving no on behind', older persons are predominantly addressed as a vulnerable group. Despite of the importance to address exclusion and vulnerability of older persons, it is critical to recognize older persons' potential and contributions, which can support the achievement of the SDGs. Major challenges related to the vulnerability of older persons are violence, neglect and abuse of - as well as discrimination towards older persons. While some attention is devoted to these issues in the VNRs, further policy development and implementation to be human-rights-based, age-sensitive and all-age inclusive are needed to reduce these vulnerabilities and help fulfill the pledge of the 2030 Agenda to 'leave no one behind'.

The integrative nature of the 2030 Agenda calls for comprehensive actions and recognition of synergies and trade-offs between SDGs. Ageing is an example of an area that cuts across several SDGs, for example, poverty eradication, good health, gender equality, economic growth and decent work and reduced inequalities. While many countries report on a variety of programs and projects aimed at older persons, only a few examples of initiatives that build on synergies among a number of SDGs feature in the VNRs. The ageing-related cross-cutting themes embedded in the 2030 Agenda, and the inter-linkages among the SDGs, require coordinated action across policy areas.

A few countries referred to utilizing STIs to deal with aging related challenges, highlighting the benefits of STIs as a solution to the rapidly ageing population. Some countries highlight addressing ageing related questions through international- and regional cooperation, e.g. in development cooperation and humanitarian aid approaches. Coordination and cooperation with global- and regional organizations can generate sustainable partnerships and promote good practices on ageing related questions in the context of the 2030 Agenda.

In terms of action under the specific SDGs, the review of the VNRs shows that a variety of ageing related action is reported in the context of specific SDG 1 (No Poverty), SDG 2 (Zero Hunger), SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-being), SDG 4 (Quality Education), SDG 5 (Gender Equality), SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities), SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities), and SDG 13 (Climate Action). The main ageing-related aspects and actions reported under these SDGs are:

- SDG 1 (No Poverty): The majority of Goal specific efforts are reported under SDG 1, with most countries reporting on specific social services and – in some cases increased - social protection efforts that address the needs of older persons and eliminate their risk of falling into poverty, including cash transfers. While some countries report on improvements made in reducing the risk

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[19] Not all countries include a Statistical Annex in the VNR report

of poverty among older persons, others list reducing poverty among older persons as a challenge. A few countries highlight efforts in terms of monitoring of ageing related progress under SDG 1.

- SDG 2 (Zero Hunger): Some ageing related aspects were raised in the context of SDG 2 such as; the overall importance of addressing malnutrition vis-à-vis older persons, concerns related to malnutrition reflected in older persons in care-settings and a number of food security programs that target the older population.

- SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-being): Considerable action is reported under SDG 3 with the majority of countries reporting on care related aspects, listing various programs and approaches that contribute to the health related targets of importance to ageing related aspects. While the effects of a rapidly ageing population on the financing base of welfare- and health care system are underscored in a number of VNRs, other countries refer to specific plans, strategies and programs targeted at improving good health and well-being of older persons.

- SDG 4 (Quality Education): A few ageing related actions were reported under SDG 4, which mainly is taking place as a part of Lifelong Learning approaches.

- SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth): In the context of SDG 8 some countries raise the need to - and intentions to - enhance the participation of older person's in the labour market. Others refer to population ageing as a factor that limits long-term, economic and income growth and emphasize the need for structural reforms. A few countries list specific programs aimed at increasing access of older persons to the labour market.

- SDG 10 (Reducing Inequalities): A significant number of countries highlight policies and plans that aim at reducing inequalities targeting older persons under SDG 10. Measures that are reported under this Goal include social protection measures, a vulnerability assessment and support programs for older persons facing poverty. Increasing the well-being of older persons and the divide between rural and urban areas are reported as challenges in reducing inequality.

- SDG 5 (Gender Equality): Older women tend to be more marginalized and disadvantaged than older men, and face higher rates of poverty. Nevertheless, only 3 countries addressed the topic of older persons under SDG 5. The limited action is particularly critical in view of the high risk of vulnerability of older women, including the risk of neglect, abuse and violence of older women and e.g. growing reports of witchcraft accusations in Africa.

- SDG 11: Progress within the scope of SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities) is reported in terms of providing safe, affordable and sustainable transport for all; as well as universal access to safe, inclusive and accessible, green and public spaces. A number initiatives featured as 'smart cities' are reported on as well as strategic plans designed by city Councils that specifically address ageing related challenges. Including ageing related policies and priorities in the context of SDG localization efforts is reported by some countries and can contribute to accelerating progress on achieving sustainable development. SDG localization[20] takes e.g. into account the functions of local governments, including cities, which in many cases play a significant role in addressing the needs of older persons e.g. in the form of providing services, planning or in data collection.

- SDG 13 (Climate Action): Despite of the significant affects climate change can have on older persons, only one country reports on ageing related efforts with a view to SDG 13. The action

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[20] SDG localization concerns all local efforts, and goes beyond cities

concerns resilience and climate change training and aims to increase the resilience of among others older persons to possible natural disasters and climate change.

The review of the VNRs 2016-2018 shows that the concentration of ageing-related efforts reported by countries, feature in the scope of SDG 1 (Zero Poverty) and 3 (Good Health and Well-being). A considerable number of efforts are reported under SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities), SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities), SDG 4 (Quality Education) and SDG 2 (Zero Hunger). Limited action was reported under Goals 5 (Gender Equality), which includes a number of targets relevant to the well-being and rights of older women, such as target 5.2: eliminating all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation and target 5.4: recognizing and value unpaid care and domestic work through the provision of public services, infrastructure and social protection policies, and the promotion of shared responsibility within the household and the family as nationally appropriate. Also little to no action was reported under Goal 13 (Climate Action), which includes several targets on strengthening human resilience and adaptive capacity to climate–related hazards and natural disasters, that are of concern to older persons.

Furthermore, the VNR review shows, that a few goals and targets of relevance to ageing related aspects were left unaddressed. Among these are; SDG 9 (Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure), target 9.3: increase the access of small-scale industrial and other enterprises, particularly in developing countries, to financial services including affordable credit and their integration into value chains and markets; SDG 16 (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions), target 16.1: reducing all forms of violence and related death rates everywhere and target 16.7: ensuring responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision making at all levels. Also no ageing related actions were reported in the scope of SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals), target 17.18: enhancing capacity-building support to developing countries, including for least developed countries and small island developing states, to increase significantly the availability of high-quality, timely and reliable data disaggregated by income, gender, age, race, ethnicity, migratory status, disability, geographic location and other characteristics relevant in national contexts by 2030.

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