**HELPAGE INTERNATIONAL – GOALS, TALKING POINTS AND EXPERIENCE EXAMPLES**

**OUR GOALS**

* Help establish ageing as a key issue for emerging and developing economies
* Build recognition that population ageing is a key issue for post -2015 framework
* Encourage countries to develop national economic, social and cultural plans for ageing and development and implement key recommendations of report

**OUR TALKING POINTS**

**1. Ageing will impact on economic growth of emerging and developing countries**

Worldwide population ageing is triggering social and economic revolutions that will have a profound consequence on cultural and institutional dynamics.

Population ageing is going global, it is not just a developed world concern, it is happening fastest in developing countries, yet there is a serious blind spot in how thought leaders, global institutions and governments are communicating and suggesting changes for the developing world and emerging economies.

A new Ageing and Development Framework is needed. Population ageing ­- especially in the developing world - requires urgent, strategic action at national, regional and global levels.  Culture, policy and political changes aligned to existing core national interests on economic growth, modernization and urbanization are required to prepare for the opportunity of a world that is no longer young and where we can live longer healthier lives

* Already life expectancy at birth is over 80 in 33 countries, just 5 years ago only 19 countries had reached this figure
* By 2050 80% of the world’s older people will be living in developing countries and in the developed world there will be two elderly people for every child. Wherever you are, population ageing demands radical and innovative approaches to policy and practice.
* Regional stats on people over 60
* No country is exempt:  today 15 countries have more than 10 million older people, 7 of these are developing countries. (China, India, USA, Indonesia, Brazil, Japan, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Russian Federation, Mexico, Germany, Italy, France, UK, Spain).
* Ban Ki Moon, UN Secretary General, today said that, “the social and economic implications of this phenomenon are profound, extending far beyond the individual older person and immediately family touching broader society and the global community in unprecedented ways” at the launch in Japan of landmark UNFPA and HelpAge International report, “Ageing in the 21st Century – A celebration and a challenge”.
* The continued transformation of emerging and developing markets depends on putting ageing at the heart of national and global development plans.

**2. Invest in ageing**

We need to start investing in our growing older populations through increased employment, business opportunities and pensions, supporting their roles as care givers to children, the oldest old and the sick, improving access to quality health care, particularly by increasing investment in the prevention and treatment of non-communicable diseases including dementia.

With the right measures in place to secure health care, regular income, and legal protection as we age, there is a "longevity dividend" to be reaped by current and future generations.

* In economic terms, substantial numbers of older people contribute to their families by supporting younger generations financially and to local and national economies by paying taxes. For example, 67 per cent of older parents in the Philippines help their children financially, as do 55 per cent in Thailand.[[1]](#endnote-1)[i] In Australia it is estimated that women between the ages of 65 and 74 years contribute $16 billion per year in unpaid caring and voluntary work.[[2]](#endnote-2)[ii]  In 1982 there were no aged economies, in which consumption by older persons surpassed that consumed by youth. In 2010 there were 23 aged economies in the world.
* The ‘Voices Consultation’ revealed that while a third of the respondents worked in paid employment in the last month, two thirds wish they had the opportunity to work for money. About half of the older persons worry about their financial situation and face problems in paying for basic needs and services. Two thirds of the respondents (66 per cent) rate their current health status either as fair, bad or very bad. One third found it hard or very had to access health care.
* The report calls for stronger leadership and an end to the mismanagement of population ageing. Older people are invisible on the global stage. The Millennium Development Goals do not include older people. There is no binding international human rights instrument for older people. Poverty data is not disaggregated by age and evidence shows the gap across the poverty, health, inclusion and contributions of older people, is systematically excluding them from development plans and public policy provision. Monitoring mechanisms that end at age 49, such as those reporting on HIV and violence, are outdated and discriminatory.

**3. Develop National Action Plans, laws with budgets attached**

Countries that develop national economic, social and cultural plans for ageing are those that will be most successful.  The continued mismanagement of global ageing is not an option; doing so would have huge financial and human costs. New plans, laws and budgets are needed – priorities include:

* Extend universal measures for social protection and old-age pension coverage especially where a large proportion of the labour force is found in the informal sector.
* Introduce flexible employment, lifelong learning, removal of forced retirement and retraining opportunities to enable people to continue working as they age in accordance with their capacity, experience and preference.
* Support communities and families to develop support systems which ensure that older persons are not isolated as they age and can also receive the long-term care they need.
* Support the development of international human rights instruments, such as a convention on the rights of older people
* Support national efforts to develop comparative research on ageing, and ensure that gender- and culture-sensitive data and evidence from this research are available to inform policymaking.
* Ensure the inclusion of older people in national development and humanitarian response and that the post 2015 framework is age inclusive.

**4. Formulate specific development goals relating to the older population for the post-2015 process**

The post 2015 global framework must respond to global population ageing and seek to reduce inequality in life expectancy and increase healthy life expectancy.   Population ageing and increased longevity are positive developments and a success story in terms of social and human development indexes. The implications of ageing for human rights, economic, social, political and cultural development must be recognised as one core pillar of the debate underpinning any future post-2015 framework.  Ageing populations, population growth, youth bulge, migration and urbanisation are all key demographic trends / shifts which interact with one another and need to be addressed using an intergenerational and life-cycle approach to reducing inequalities and poverty.

The post-2015 development agenda should incorporate goals, targets and indicators that are responsive to different stages of the life course and, where relevant, specifically relate to older age by

* Integrating a target on life expectancy at birth as a measure of human development for all ages.
* Adopting the approach of social protection floors to guide countries in extending social protection systems and as a way of measuring progress.
* Including targets to improve healthy life expectancy to reduce the time people spend in ill health.

**EXAMPLES OF HELPAGE GOOD PRACTICE**

Countries of the future will be those that recognise where urgent reform is needed to support older people continue to play an active part in society for longer and recognise ageing as a lifelong process that does not start at age 60. Please use your own experience here too.

**Health**

**Problem**: Vietnam is ageing at an unprecedented level. 8.9% of the people were 60 years and above in 2012. By 2050, 30.8% of the total population of Vietnam will be over the age of 60 – making it the tenth most rapidly ageing country in the world. According to the Viet Nam Household Living Standard Survey (VHLSS) in 2008 around 43 percent of older people are still working, most self-employed in agricultural activities with low and unstable income. Most older Vietnamese live in rural areas – around 71.7%, with the vast majority involved in agricultural production.[[3]](#footnote-1)[1] Many older people and their families are struggling with low incomes and poor overall health,

**Solution**: HelpAge International and the Vietnam Women’s Union have supported the establishment of 628 intergenerational self-help clubs. Each club has 50-70 members, about 70 per cent of whom are older people, 70 per cent women and 70 per cent poor or near-poor.

The clubs are supported to manage their own activities and become more financially sustainable. For example, they organize social and cultural events, exchanges and information-sharing and physical exercise. They run health education sessions including nutrition awareness, prevention of non-communicable diseases and self-care. They organize home visits by volunteers and regular health check-ups, as well as distributing publications and training materials on health care and entitlements.

**Problem**: Older people in developing countries carry almost three times the burden of visual impairment as those in the developed world. According to the World Report on Disability 2011, there are 94.2 million people in developing countries with visual impairment, as compared to 15 million people in developed countries.

**Solution**: eye camps - A significant proportion of these can be corrected or resolved at very little cost. HelpAge work in Sudan, Tanzania, India.

**Income security**

Worldwide, growing numbers of older people want to remain economically active. Measures introduced to encourage older workers to remain in employment include; education and training, career counselling, job creation and flexible working schemes. Extending working lives and increasing the employment rates of older workers is an economic investment and high on the policy agendas of most developed countries. Of 164 countries with a statutory retirement age, 43 increased the age between 2002 and 2009.

**Problem:** Sustainability of social security systems is of particular concern in the developed countries, while social protection and old-age pension coverage remain a challenge for developing countries where a large proportion of the labour force is in the informal sector. Globally, just one third of countries, covering only 28 per cent of the world’s population, have comprehensive social protection schemes covering all branches of social security.

**Solution:** Over 100 countries in the last decade have put in place social (non-contributory) pensions, in recognition of old age poverty. A survey by HelpAge International in 50 developing countries found the cost of universal pension for over 60s would range between only 0.7 to 2.6 per cent of GDP. The impact of a universal pension in the Yucatan, Mexico, with a value equal to only 5 per cent of average income was found to increase visits to the doctor by 22 per cent.

**Problem:** Rural ageing has major implications for the composition of the rural labour force. Many countries agricultural labour force is ageing and there is urgent need to adapt farming technologies and policies to the capacities and needs of older farmers. The Indonesian Ministry of Agriculture estimates that 80 per cent of the nation's 140 million farmers are now aged 45 or older. In a decade, the average age of China’s population of working farmers is predicted to be over 50, or even over 60. **Solution**: HelpAge is working with local government in China to deliver agricultural subsidies and training to older farmers through older peoples associations.

**Contribution**

Older persons make massive contributions to the society– as mediators, educators, workers, volunteers, homemakers, caregivers and a source of knowledge, historical memory and guardians of culture. Increasingly, older generations are becoming active in political processes, forming their own organizations and campaigning for change.

**Problem**: There are significant numbers of “skipped-generation” households consisting of children and older people, especially in rural areas, as a result of rural to urban migration of “middle-generation” adults and HIV- related deaths. UNICEF estimated 40-60 per cent of orphaned and vulnerable children in east and southern Africa were cared for by their grandparents, usually their grandmothers. World Bank statistics show 81 per cent of orphans who have lost both parents being looked after by older people in Zimbabwe. In rural China, grandparents care for 38 per cent of children aged under five whose parents have gone to work in cities. These families often struggle with poverty and education.  **Solution**: Social pensions are a lifeline for older people bringing up children, HelpAge provides technical support to governments on the feasibility and delivery of pensions.

**Problem**: Ageing issues are not addressed in national or local elections and ageing is not strong on the political agenda. **Solution**: support older people to use their vote and voice to demand change. Because of the global Age Demand Action campaign supported by HelpAge in over 60 countries over **10 million** older people have the potential to benefit from new and improved policies during the past five years.\*

\*based on a five-year review by Health Poverty Action, *Assessing the impact of HelpAge International’s Age Demands Action campaign,* March 2012

**Age discrimination is still pervasive around the world**

**Problem:** Many people fear the ageing process and old age itself. Sixty-seven per cent of those surveyed for this report said they believed that age discrimination exists in older people’s everyday lives.  Fifty-three per cent said that it was very difficult to pay for essential services. Old age may be experienced as a time of opportunity and positive contribution, but it can also be experienced, often by the same person, as a time of increasing vulnerability and lack of protection. Frailty and loss of physical and mental faculties can place older persons in situations of insecurity and exclusion. This makes them vulnerable to attitudes and behaviour that can lead to the toleration of human rights abuse in old age**. Solution:** HelpAge is working to secure a convention on the rights of older people.

**Older people in Emergencies**

**Problem:** Older persons who find themselves in conflict situations, natural disasters, are particularly vulnerable. Yet, analysis of over 6,000 projects from 14 UN Consolidated Appeal Processes (CAP) and four Flash Appeals between 2010 and 2011 shows that: only 61 funded projects (1%) target older people or people with disabilities, in 21 countries, no projects in any sector target older people - this includes Chad, Central African Republic and 16 countries in West Africa. **Solution:** Responding to the needs of older men and women in emergencies is a particular priority. In emergencies, older men and women are some of the most vulnerable due to age-related concerns. As well as assisting older people in our own emergency programmes, HelpAge works closely with national and international humanitarian actors to influence policy and practice to ensure the specific needs of older people are addressed.

1. [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. [1] <http://ijsse.com/sites/default/files/issues/2012/Volume%202%20Issue%203,%202012/Paper-27/Paper-27.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)