

Sustainable Development Goals

A briefing for the HelpAge Global Network



*When you give
to older people*

they give back

The Sustainable Development Goals

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are a new, universal set of goals, targets and indicators that UN member states will be expected to use to frame their agendas and political policies over the next 15 years.

The SDGs follow, and expand on, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which were agreed by governments in 2000, and are due to expire at the end of this year.

This is a universal agenda. The goals will be applicable to all countries, regardless of their level of development – quite different from the Millennium Development Goals which they replace which applied only to developing countries.

What is on the table?

17 proposed goals (see appendix 1) and 169 proposed targets supporting these goals were presented to the UN General Assembly in September last year by an Open Working Group set up to develop a draft with input from the widest consultation programme in the history of the UN. Member states have been negotiating over the details since January in monthly intergovernmental meetings.

In September a UN Summit will be held in New York where governments are expected to agree a new UN Declaration which will include the final set of goals and targets, plus chapters on how the goals will be financed and implemented (Means of Implementation) and how progress will be measured along the way to ensure that progress towards the goals is on track (Follow up and Review). Assuming governments agree the Declaration, the goals will become applicable from January 2016.

How has HelpAge International been influencing the process?



Sylvia Beales, Head of Strategic Alliances, presenting issues of Ageing at the President of the General Assembly May session with Shegufta Sharmin, HelpAge International Bangladesh

The HelpAge International Secretariat together with organisations within the HelpAge Global Network has been at the forefront of bringing the voice, experience and visibility of older women and men from the grassroots and the network to the policy table in the SDG process – extending their reach and vision to ensure the SDGs and their implementation are fully inclusive of all people of all ages and from all walks of life.

Through direct participation, partnerships and the input of submissions, data and evidence HelpAge has been present in all key meetings – not only those at the UN in New York but also in Addis, Bangkok, Sendai and beyond.

Building on our collaborative approach, we co-founded the Stakeholder group on Ageing in New York which brings together the insight and experience of all the global networks of ageing to

the SDG process. This group has been able to claim a seat at the table alongside the traditional Major Groups to ensure that older people are heard in the process.

With the SGA, we have inputted to all consultations and have worked to have strong collaboration with global networks working on disability, women, children and youth and human rights amongst others.

Supported by the HelpAge International Secretariat, organisations within the HelpAge Global Network and the Stakeholder Group on Ageing are actively engaging with the Action/2015 campaign which was set up to raise awareness of the process in the public. Action2015 is a grassroots mobilisation calling on governments at all levels to commit to ambitious and transformative action to end poverty, address inequality and ensure sustainable development.

As part of the action/2015 campaign, HelpAge offices and affiliates in the network have been joining forces with youth organisations to call for a framework for all ages.

During May, an Action All Ages day took place with events Malawi, Kenya, Mongolia, Zimbabwe, South Africa, Philippines, Vietnam, Thailand, Nepal and Myanmar. Older people in Ethiopia joined with young people to campaign ahead of the Financing for Development Conference in Ethiopia, and attended this conference to great acclaim.

Desmond Tutu has also joined our campaign and recorded a special message on our behalf directed to world leaders calling for “all ages inclusion” in the new SDG framework.

Watch here: www.helpage.org/get-involved/campaigns/action2015/

How will the Goals be financed?

A major conference on financing, the Third International Conference on Financing for Development (FFD3), was held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, from 13-16 July. This was the third intergovernmental conference of a separate intergovernmental process which looks to address key financial and related issues pertaining to global development. The previous two conferences resulted in the Monterrey Consensus in 2002 and the Doha Declaration in 2008.

While the FFD and the SDG process have been separate, they have been feeding into each other and the Conference resulted in an intergovernmental negotiated and agreed outcome, which will constitute an important contribution to and support the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals.

Older people are in the outcome document in the sections dealing with universal roll out of social protection including floors and data disaggregation. Investment in better data is prioritised which is critical to making sure that progress for older people is visible and measurable. Overall however, civil society organisations and governments of the global south were disappointed with the outcome of Addis which did not result in significant new financing commitments. Discussion over the cost of financing the SDGs is likely to continue until the Summit in September.



Older people and youth meet with Ethiopia State Minister of MoLSA ahead of the FFD conference in Addis in July

Are older people visible in the new framework?

As most advocates for older people will know, older people were made invisible by the Millennium Development Goals which were very narrow in focus and had a strong focus on child and maternal health. Several other social groups were also excluded by the MDG framework.

The new framework makes a strong promise to “leave no one behind” which applies to older people amongst others.

We have worked hard to make sure age is visible in the new framework and we have succeeded. Even though the specific mentions of older people are fewer than we wanted, there are several references to older persons, “all ages” and “all women and girls” and lifecourse.

Below are some key examples of language that we think is particularly significant for older people in the goals:

Goal 1 : End poverty in all its forms everywhere

Goal 3: Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at **all ages**.

Goal 4: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and **promote lifelong learning opportunities for all**.

Goal 5: Achieve gender equality and empower **all women and girls**.

Goal 6: Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation **for all**.

Goal 8: Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work **for all**.

Goal 10: Reduce inequality within and among countries

Goal 17: Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalise the global partnership for sustainable development

It must be stated that the commitment to “leave no one behind” means that all of the goals are relevant to older people, even if they do not explicitly say so. For example, Goal 11 to “Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable” is important for older people living in urban areas.

There are further relevant references in the targets.



Ms Yeshiemebebet, of HelpAge Global Network affiliate EEPNA, meets Special Advisor to the Secretary General on post 2015, Dr Amina Mohammed

It sounds like it is all agreed. What is there left to influence?

It is true that quite a lot has happened already and it is very unlikely that the 17 goals will change, there is still plenty to influence.

Text of the declaration

The draft of the outcome document for the Summit in September, which will include the goals and targets, is still being negotiated among member states. We have already been successful in influencing the zero draft and ensured 'age' is included in two key places in the current draft in paragraphs 18 and 23.

Targets

Like the goals, the targets are quite fixed and there are unlikely to be many, if any changes at this stage. However, we are continuing to campaign about target 4.3 on NCDs which we feel uses discriminatory language because it refers to reducing "premature mortality" which we feel sends a strong signal that governments do not value a person's life when they reach older age. We are urging member states to use the word "preventable" which was used in the NCD Political Declaration agreed by the General Assembly in 2012.

Measurement

As the saying goes, what gets measured gets changed. **This could not be more true in the case of the SDGs.**

A process to develop indicators to measure the goals and targets is underway and will not be concluded until March next year. There is a great deal of pressure to cap the number indicators at 100. Given that there are 169 targets, it is clear that not everything will be measured. Furthermore, if the datasets used include arbitrary age limits, or if data is not disaggregated by age, older people risk becoming invisible in the framework once more.

Here are some examples from the a first list of proposed priority indicators compiled by UN Statistics Division:

- Goal 2, on hunger, target 2.2, refers explicitly to addressing the nutritional needs of older persons, but has indicators that are focused solely on children under the age of 5.
- Target 3.4 on NCDs has an indicator that excludes people over 70 years despite this being the age group most affected by NCDs.
- Target 5.2's indicators for the elimination of violence against women and girls are discriminatory and unacceptable. Excluding women over 49 leaves out over 23% of the female population.

Fortunately, the process to develop the indicators is still open and will continue into next year.

Implementation

Once the global framework is agreed, each country will embark on a process of contextualising the framework to the national level. It is vital that older people do not become invisible in the frameworks as they are applied to the national level.

While important successes have been made in the framework, the way the framework is implemented will be critical. It is critical that the voices of older people remain loud and clear as the process shifts from setting the framework to actually implementing it.

Follow up and review

Monitoring the implementation of the SDGs will be led at the global level by an intergovernmental body called the High Level Political Forum (HLPF). The HLPF was set up in 2012 and replaces the Commission for Sustainable Development (CSD).

Discussions are ongoing about the role and function of the HLPF, as well as the mechanisms for monitoring implementation of the goals at regional and national level. A key part of these discussions is how different stakeholders can have a role in the follow up and review process.

During the process so far, the Stakeholder Group on Ageing has been able to claim a seat at the table during discussions with civil society as an 'Other Stakeholder' alongside the 'Major Groups'. There is still space to advocate to ensure that this space is maintained in the follow up and review process. It is also critical that older people are part of the discussions at national level and become recognised as a key constituency in the follow up and review process at regional and national level and consulted on an equal basis with Major Groups.

Information and communication

The way the SDGs are communicated after the UN Summit is critical to their success. We must ensure that information communicated at global, regional and national level about the new framework is accessible to older people so that they are able to hold their governments to account. Decisions about communicating the SDGs globally have not yet been taken.

In addition to influencing plans by the UN and governments on communicating the goals, we can also join campaigns focussed on raising awareness of the SDGs such as Action 2015 and Project Everyone.

Can I get involved?

There are still lots of opportunities to get involved, whether it is lobbying your national government ahead of the Summit in September, joining coalitions at national level, linking with other constituency groups such as disability and women's groups, contact regional and national bodies to find out how older people will be represented at national and regional level or sharing information about the SDGs with older people to ensure they understand how the process affects them and can mobilise around the SDGs.

If you are planning a media launch or stakeholder event for the **Global AgeWatch Index 2015**, please note that the launch date is 9 September which is an excellent opportunity to link the index to the SDG process ahead of the summit in September, highlighting the issues of older people and also the critical data gaps that exist which, if not filled, will be a barrier to measuring progress against the SDGs.

If you would like to get involved please contact:

Verity.mcgivern@helpage.org or sbeales@helpage.org

To get involved with the action/2015 campaign please contact

jemma.stovell@helpage.org or beth.howgate@helpage.org

More information:

[Post 2015 Information Portal](#)

[Goals and Targets](#)

[FFD3 Outcome document](#)

key messages

Throughout the negotiations, the focus of our advocacy on the content of the goals and targets has been on:

- Social protection floors
- Non Communicable Diseases
- The inclusion of older women in gender focussed goals and targets
- The need for data disaggregated by age
- Human rights as an underpinning theme

These priorities will remain relevant as the framework is applied to the national level (differing in priority according to national realities). However, as the global process shifts towards follow up and review and a focus on indicators, the key messages will shift to the messages below.

1. Leave no one behind

Governments have made a bold and unprecedented promise to leave no one behind in the SDG process.

The outcome of the SDG negotiations must signal that there is determined political will to make visible and concrete the promise to leave no one behind.

The SDGs must signal a step-change in understanding the importance of older people and population ageing in this new agenda for global action.

2. A universal pledge

This is a universal agenda. The goals will be applicable to all countries, rich or poor, developed or developing. Older people everywhere must enjoy equal access to the benefits.

3. Participation in implementation and review

Older people must be recognised as participants in their own development.

In implementing the SDGs, Governments must support contributions from older people and people with disabilities in budgets, plans, training and response mechanisms for humanitarian, national disaster management and climate policies.

The follow up and review framework must ensure transparency and accountability of member states to their older citizens to guarantee the equitable environment for people of all ages and abilities to be active contributors and participants in development.

4. Data for inclusion and accountability

In order to 'leave no one behind' a substantial and visible increase in investment and capacity to strengthen global and national statistical and reporting systems to disaggregate data by sex and age must be a priority.

Governments must prioritise the means to measure progress towards the implementation of SDGs transparently and accountably within a framework which provides equity for older people and that recognises their vast contribution to sustainable development.

Appendix 1: The 17 proposed goals

1. End poverty in all its forms everywhere
2. End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture
3. Ensure healthy lives and promote wellbeing for all at all ages
4. Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all
5. Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls
6. Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all
7. Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all
8. Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment, and decent work for all
9. Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialisation, and foster innovation
10. Reduce inequality within and among countries
11. Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable
12. Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns
13. Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts (taking note of agreements made by the UNFCCC forum)
14. Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development
15. Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification and halt and reverse land degradation, and halt biodiversity loss
16. Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels
17. Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalise the global partnership for sustainable development

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