STAKEHOLDER GROUP ON AGEING

Ensuring the Sustainable Development Goal Indicators are age inclusive

February 2016

The commitment to 'leave no one behind' in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is essential to ensuring the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is truly inclusive and fit for purpose in a rapidly ageing world. We recall the commitment that 'no goal or target be considered met unless met for all social and economic groups'.[1] The indicators used to monitor progress must reflect these commitments. This is why data must be collected, analysed and used for all people of all ages.

The Stakeholder group on Ageing congratulates members of the Inter-Agency Expert Group on SDG Indicators (IAEG-SDGs) and staff of the United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD) on bringing the process of developing an ambitious proposal for a global indicator framework to a successful conclusion.

Nevertheless, gaps remain in the proposed global indicator framework which should be addressed at the UN Statistical Commission and in the work plan of the IAEG-SDGs going forwards.

Age brackets and upper age limits

We welcome the widespread support from Member States and civil society during consultations for the removal of age brackets for indicators to measure non communicable diseases (3.4) and violence against women (5.2).

Age brackets and upper age limits are incompatible with the promise that Member States have made to 'leave no one behind'. Where they still exist, concrete commitments must be made to removing them.

- **We strongly urge the UN Statistical Commission to accept indicators for targets 3.4 and 5.2 as proposed by the IAEG-SDGs.**

- **Where age brackets persist, these must either be removed during the UN Statistical Commission or a programme of work put in place to ensure their removal at the earliest possible occasion. Examples include indicators for targets 3.7 on access to sexual and reproductive health-care services, 5.3 on harmful practices such as FGM and 5.6 on universal access to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights.**

Outstanding gaps

We recognise the work that the IAEG-SDGs has done in ensuring that there is at least one indicator to measure each target. However, the proposed list does not reflect the IAEG's agreement[2] that indicators should cover the specific groups of the population and address other elements of disaggregation when these are specified in the targets. We are particularly concerned about indicators for targets 2.2 on malnutrition and 16.9 on legal identity for all.

We welcome the fact that members of the IAEG-SDGs envisage further methodological work with a view to continuously improving the indicators and the availability of data to address these

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[1] Synthesis Report of the Secretary-General On the Post-2015 Agenda
[2] Report of the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators, paragraph 27, December 2015

shortcomings.[3] It is disappointing however that this work to address these gaps has not been included in the proposed work plan[4] from the IAEG for the period 2016/2017 laid out in the report.

- **Further indicators must be developed to measure progress for older persons under targets 2.2 and 16.9.**

- **We urge Member States to make concrete commitments on how they will address gaps in the indicators list in the IAEG-SDGs work plan to be approved at the UN Statistical Commission.**

Data disaggregation

Disaggregation is more than just a technical discussion. It goes to the heart of the human rights approach to achieve universality and leave no one behind. The Stakeholder Group on Ageing strongly supports the commitment to increase significantly the availability of high-quality, timely and reliable data disaggregated by age and other characteristics outlined in target 17.18.

Despite significant progress, a number of the indicators proposed in the IAEG-SDGs' report to the UN Statistical Commission fall short of this commitment, especially in relation to age, meaning that it will not be possible to adequately monitor progress against the agreed targets. Full age disaggregation is essential across all goal areas together with sex disaggregation. Age and sex disaggregation will illuminate the unique and often invisible intersectional and cumulative discrimination which older women are subjected to.

We are unaware of discussions on the proposed age cohorts to be applied for age disaggregation. Consistent application of age disaggregation across the life course is critical for SDG indicators to ensure that no one is left behind.

- **In its work going forward, we urge the IAEG-SDGs to consider this issue and reject a blanket cohort of 60 or 65+ to measure outcomes for older persons. The existing UNDESA recommendation to disaggregate by 5 year bands from age 60 onwards can be implemented.[5]**

Fit for purpose data systems

Demand for data and statistics on older persons has been strengthened by the negotiations on the Sustainable Development Goal framework. However, while the Sustainable Development goals and targets have given timely attention to the rights and needs of older persons, and age brackets have been removed from some key indicators, some issues of critical concern for older persons are not easily captured or quantifiable using mainstream statistics. New and innovative approaches to data collection are needed.

Attention must now be paid to ensure that the data systems which underpin the indicators collect, analyse and report data across the life course. Age exclusive surveys must be changed. For example, target 3.8 on universal health coverage has an indicator to measure coverage of tracer interventions including hypertension and diabetes which are key health concerns for older people. However, the current data source for these measures is population based surveys which have upper age limits.

- **We urge the IAEG-SDGs to consider the availability of data across the life course in its decisions regarding tiering of indicators. An indicator must not be classified as tier 1 if the data source that supplies it is age exclusive.**

Upon request, we can provide a list of detailed comments on indicators relevant to older persons. For further information: Sylvia Beales: sbeales@helpage.org Erica Dhar: edhar@aarp.org

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[3] Report of the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators, paragraph 31, December 2015
[4] Report of the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators, paragraph 37, December 2015
[5] UNDESA United Nations Demographic Yearbook review, National reporting of age and sex-specific data, Implications for international recommendations 2004