



**Pre-Budget Submission 2016
Department of Foreign Affairs**

'People do not trust me...because of my age.'

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1. Introduction

Age Action was established in 1992 as the voice for older people and the leading advocacy organisation on ageing issues.

We act both as a network of organisations and individuals, including older people and carers of older people, and a service provider, assisting thousands of older people every year.

Our mission is to empower all older people to live full lives as actively engaged citizens and to secure their rights to comprehensive high quality services according to their changing needs.

While our work predominantly focuses on older people in Ireland, our Ageing and Development programme works on global ageing and issues faced by older people in the global south – e.g. access to social protection, health and HIV/AIDS and the inclusion of older people in humanitarian response or emergency situations.

The aim of this work is to raise awareness about these issues with the general public, older people, politicians and policy makers, and development organisations in Ireland.

We achieve this through development education, producing materials, engaging in campaigns and building support among relevant stakeholders on ageing and development issues and the rights of older people.

2. Context

At times I feel affected and lonely especially when I am told that what is being done and discussed is not for me as I am old (Female, 50-59 years, Uganda)¹.

People do not trust me because they fear I may not deliver because of my age (Group Discussion, Mozambique)¹.

Money is always a problem. My husband has been sick for 11 years and I had expected my children to look after us. Yet now I am looking after my sister's children (Zaina (61), Tanzania)².

Life is very difficult for me...Luckily, I have been receiving the pension for the last five years. It is my only source of income and allows me to buy milk and food each day. I heard about the pension through my brother and my older people's association. The pension enables me to go on religious pilgrimages, which are very important to me (Chandra (80), Nepal)².

Sources: ¹Global Alliance for the Right of Older People (2015) *In our own words – What older people say about discrimination and human rights* – available at www.helpage.org

²HelpAge International (2014) *Global Age Watch Index 2014- Insight report* – available at www.helpage.org

Population ageing is a global phenomenon and is occurring faster in developing countries which have less time to adjust to the consequences of this change. By 2050, older people will account for 20 per cent of the population in developing countries, the same proportion currently experienced in developed countries.

At Age Action we build solidarity between older people in Ireland and in developing countries. As is evident from the quotes above, older people in Ireland and the global south share many similar experiences of growing older. We encourage older people here to become more aware of the similarities and differences between them and their counterparts in the developing world. Our hope is that they will then act and advocate for a more just and equal society for older people everywhere.

In a world where there is an ever increasing older population there is also an urgent need now, more than ever, for development policy makers to pay attention to both the needs and contributions of older people when they are devising policy and programmes. This relates to development organisations, politicians and policy makers in government.

3. Official Development Assistance

Age Action urges the Government to outline a credible plan to achieve its commitment to spend 0.7 per cent of GNP in official development assistance (ODA). Ireland's spending currently stands at 0.39 per cent and this has fallen steadily since 2008.

While the Government has recommitted to achieving the 0.7 per cent target by 2030, this is simply too far in the future. The target must be reached before then and a plan is urgently needed to outline how this will be achieved.

The new Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) must be financed and Ireland must outline clearly how we will help to deliver these goals. Public support for our overseas development programme is still high despite the recession, as proven by a Eurobarometer on

development released in early 2015. Almost three in four Irish people believe overseas aid should be increased¹.

We support Social Justice Ireland’s recommendation in their Budget Choices document that sets out a realisable timetable to achieve the 0.7 per cent GNP target by 2020.

Table 1: Social Justice Ireland Pathway to reach ODA target of 0.7 per cent by 2020

Year	GNP	% of GNP to achieved 0.7 target by 2020	Required budget for ODA in each year in €m’s	Increase in Budget allocation for ODA in €m’s
2015	168,950	0.35	602	
2016	176,850	0.42	742	140
2017	182,375	0.49	893	151
2018	188,250	0.56	1053	160
2019	193,950	0.63	1221	168
2020	199,875	0.7	1398	177

Social Justice Ireland (2015) *Budget Choices* – available at www.socialjustice.ie

Overseas aid is crucial as it explicitly focuses on the poorest countries and poorest people, including older people. It invests in public goods. Aid is more stable and predictable than private finances and invests in the foundations for the economy such as education, health, infrastructure and governance.

4. Including Ageing in Development Programmes

Population ageing is one of the most significant features of the 21st century and has important and far-reaching implications for all aspects of society. In 2013 11.7 per cent (809 million people) of the total global population was over 60 years old. By 2050 that will be 21.1%, more than two billion people.

By 2030 there will be more people over 60 than children under 10². Population ageing is occurring faster in developing countries. Today, about two-thirds of the world’s older people

¹ See the Dóchas website here <http://www.dochas.ie/news/dramatic-increase-number-irish-people-who-think-we-should-increase-overseas-aid>

² UNDESA, World Population Ageing 2013 here <http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/publications/pdf/ageing/WorldPopulationAgeing2013.pdf>

live in developing countries and in 2050, nearly 80 per cent of the world's older population will live in the less developed regions³.

Age Action urges Irish Aid to include ageing and older people in its development policies and programmes to adequately prepare and plan for this demographic change.

This includes ensuring data gathered in all its programmes is disaggregated by age (among other things, e.g. disability, gender). Our partners in HelpAge International publish the annual Global AgeWatch Index and the October 2013 edition noted a serious lack of data in key geographical regions including Africa, the Middle East and the Caribbean⁴.

Recommendations

Commit to achieving the 0.7 per cent of GNP target by 2020 and set out a timetabled plan to do so. As a first step provide an additional €140m to overseas development assistance in Budget 2016 (0.42% of GNP).

Include ageing and older people in Irish Aid development policies and programmes and ensure data disaggregated by age is gathered in all of its programmes.

5. More Information

For further information please contact:

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³ UNDESA, World Population Ageing 2013 here

<http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/publications/pdf/ageing/WorldPopulationAgeing2013.pdf>

⁴ The 2014 Global AgeWatch Index is available here <http://www.helpage.org/global-agewatch/>