

High Level Political Forum 2018
Leaving no one behind: Are we succeeding?

Friday, 13 July 2018, 4:30 – 6:30 pm
UN Headquarters, Conference Room 4

Lead Discussant remarks of Sylvia Beales, Gray Panthers/Stakeholder Group on Ageing.

It is an honour to take my place as discussant as part of the Major Groups and Other Stakeholders mechanism representing the Stakeholder Group on Ageing.

Ageing is transforming our world. We are all ageing. Older persons are the fastest growing population group globally, reaching 22% by 2050 with 54 percent of that number being women, and almost 60 percent living in urban areas, with 46 per cent those aged 60 years and over living with disabilities. Older people experience complex forms of exclusion and marginalization based on a range of intersecting inequalities that reinforce discriminations based on age, gender and disability.

Policies and attitudes that support the contributions of older persons to civic life by enhancing their participation and recognising capacities and rights to – as opposed to need for – will lead to the dignified and secure old age we all aspire to. So these discussions are very important to us.

Leave No One Behind is not just business as usual. It means doing things differently. It means in particular taking a stand on inequalities which are growing, understanding the synergies between the goals and the consequences of not investing in and giving visibility to the left behind. It is not surprising that many actors are struggling to define or operationalize LNOB.

Reflecting back on key points of the week and what has been said in this panel we see that:

- Despite examples of good practice, collaborations and innovation - core requirements for life of all from cradle to grave and well being such as water, clean energy, accessible and safe cities and sustainable consumption are a long way off
- The aspiration of Leaving No One Behind in the implementation of the goals and targets is not yet backed up by finance and equitable policies
- While there is a shared appreciation of the urgency of change, greater responsibility and efforts are needed individually, collectively, by civil society, by elected governments and parliamentarians and by the private sector
- Increasing inequalities, xenophobia, unchecked injustices and violence are an immediate and pressing danger to all people and our planet

So, to the questions. In the first place what are 'effective policies and instruments that have reached people who were left behind? What are the challenges and lessons learned?'

The answer to this is that effective policies are those that are universal, laid out under the body of international human rights law and which respond to the rights of all people of all ages, in all diversity, geographical location and across the life course. Critical pathways and levers for Leave No One Behind are policies based on human rights standards. In other words it won't be possible to realize Leave No One Behind without being guided by human rights.

Policies that promote equality and non-discrimination in the enjoyment of all rights together with investment in technical and institutional capacity will tackle the inequalities and deprivations that marginalized people face, ensuring they can access and enjoy all their rights equally. Examples are policies and budgets that respond and take forward the right to social security, to social protection, to education, to health, to legal redress, to clean air, to water, to housing, to decent work and to freedom from abuse, discrimination and exploitation.

These policies work, make a difference, can be put in place everywhere and for all, and be underwritten by global and national financing.

The lesson learned is that political will is needed use the standards, to follow these pathways and pull these levers.

To the question of now we will know if we are succeeding. Data for SDG measurement is not yet fit for purpose. Data which does not recognise gender, sexual orientation, location, ethnicity, age, disability and civic status will not deliver the target 17.18. It is regrettable that data surveys with age cut offs of 49 64 or 70 years are still being used for analysis and policy making because it is clear that reliance on this data consciously excludes, makes invisible and discriminates against the growing population of older women and men, many of whom are disabled.

Serious investment in data and National Statistical Offices is needed to enable visibility of those not currently captured in the data sets. The recently established Titchfield CityGroup on Ageing-related Statistics and Age-Disaggregated Data will deal with gaps and standard setting in age data across the lifecourse is to be welcomed.

Data also needs instruments that aren't just about disaggregation but about individual experiences, such as the Individual Deprivation Measure. More participation and voice is needed of those left behind due to intersecting discrimination because of age, gender, disability, sexual orientation, class origin and so on.

On challenges and lessons learned we need to convince people and groups to participate in transformational change. Citizen, policy maker and elected official can apply transformation in practice by working together on a framework for SDG implementation that is underpinned by a shared belief in equality, social justice and human dignity across the whole life course.

By applying the rights framework for policy making, by budgeting, adopting and financing universal policies, collaborating across disciplines, cultures, and silos we will make the transformation we all want.

Thank you.

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