



2019 HIGH LEVEL POLITICAL FORUM
Session on SDG 10 – reduced inequalities, 11 July 2019

Empowering people and ensuring inclusiveness and equality

Madam moderator, distinguished colleagues - it is a privilege through my presence as discussant to bring the voices of millions of older people to this session. In 1995 the concept of social integration was established to create an inclusive society, “a society for all”, as one of the key goals of social development at the World Summit for Social Development.

So this is not a new global issue, yet it is a new world where more global citizens are vulnerable through experiencing inequity and discrimination - based on income, age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion or economic or other status within a country.

Reflecting for a moment on the unspoken tension between inequity and empowerment, inclusiveness and equality. We are asking that the most vulnerable global citizens be part of this conversation, yet the environment in which they are borne and will die does not (for many) build on their resilience, persistence and street smarts.

At the heart of this theme is “trust” - the firm belief in the reliability, truth, ability, or strength of someone or something.

- Apply best practices for reducing inequality that deliver genuine impact are based on knowing those who we don't know – those invisible citizens of the world who we talk about but cannot find because the data is not available or not sufficiently disaggregated.
- Be serious about addressing individual and social attitudes, stereotypes and behaviours towards people on the basis of their age, as well as the laws, policies and institutions that either perpetuate ageism or do little to stop it – ageism is one of the primary and most insidious barriers.
- Change the narrative around the value of equality in the context of older people - they are neither a burden nor part of a tsunami; they contribute significantly to the social and economic fabric of a nation.
- Consider the formal interlinkage not only between SDGs but most importantly the linkages with the WHO 13th GWP and the Decade of Healthy Ageing – the GNAFCC, the Immunisation Strategy based on a life-course approach and life-long learning which are cross cutting issues and a key action which have all significant returns of investment to address health inequalities.

The biggest single risk for lowering inequality in the next 12 months is our collective inaction, and the normalisation that inequality will not only continue to exist for some generations to come but may leave a footprint on societal attitudes.

Trust is not a commodity that can be bought and sold, it is built on integrity, authenticity, honesty and doing what we say we are going to do. Older people, as with all ages, have the right to a world where they are invested in, where their contributions, their fears, their concerns and their experiences and expertise are not put to one side or included in a tokenistic way. It is unacceptable now in 2019 (with some 11 years left) to hear that not only are we behind in milestones, but we will not reach targets. Transformative change cannot be only words, we call on champions to coalesce and drive positive change.

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