



Pre-Budget Submission 2018
Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

***“At my age it's not advisable to go on fishing
... but I have no alternative.”***

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1. Introduction

Age Action is the leading advocacy organisation on ageing and older people in Ireland. Our mission is to achieve fundamental change in the lives of all older people by eliminating age discrimination, promoting positive ageing and securing their right to comprehensive and high quality services.

We want to make Ireland the best country in the world in which to grow old and we work with older people to build a society free of ageism where their rights are secured.

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 developing countries – access to social protection, healthcare, and the inclusion of older people in policies and programmes.

The aim of this work is to raise awareness about these issues among the general public in Ireland.

We achieve this through public engagement, producing materials, engaging in campaigns and building support among key groups on ageing and development issues and the rights of older people.

This submission outlines our recommendations to the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade with regard to the budget allocation for 2018.

Separate to this we will make individual submissions to the following Government departments:

- Department of Employment and Social Protection;
- Department of Health;
- Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment;
- Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government;
- Department of Education and Skills.

2. Context

"[The health clinic] is too far for me to walk to. It takes a day to get there on foot and I don't have enough money to go by bus. If I am really sick and cannot walk, I just have to stay at home until I get better." (Chaussauca, 89, Mozambique)¹

"At my age it's not advisable to go on fishing. Many people discourage me, but I have no alternative. I want to raise the money to keep cattle and chickens to support my family." (Mambo, 75, Zanzibar)²

"The isolation is nearly killing us." (Megatwa, 80, Ethiopia)³

"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).⁴

Population ageing is a global phenomenon. This is occurring faster in developing countries, which have less time to adjust to the consequences of this change.

Currently two-thirds of the world's older persons live in developing regions and this population is growing faster than in developed regions.⁵

The number of older persons in sub-Saharan Africa has doubled since 1990 and is projected to more than triple between 2015 and 2050.⁶

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 in developing countries share similar worries about growing older – concerns about access to healthcare, income and loneliness.

We encourage older people in Ireland 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 advocate for a more just and equal society for older people everywhere.

¹ Cash transfers and older people's access to healthcare: A multi-country study in Ethiopia, Mozambique, Tanzania and Zimbabwe. HelpAge International (2017) – available at www.helpage.org

² Zanzibar and the universal pension (2017) – available at <https://helpage.exposure.co>

³ A Study of Older People's Livelihoods in Ethiopia. HelpAge International (2011) – available at <http://www.helpage.org/silo/files/a-study-of-older-peoples-livelihoods-in-ethiopia.pdf>

⁴ HelpAge International (2014) Global Age Watch Index 2014- Insight report – available at www.helpage.org

⁵ See UNDESA World Population Ageing 2015 – available at <http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/theme/ageing/WPA2015.shtml>

⁶ See UNDESA Population Facts April 2016 – available at http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/publications/pdf/popfacts/PopFacts_2016-1.pdf

Given this ever increasing older population there is an urgent need for development policy-makers to pay attention to both the needs and contributions of older people when they are devising policies and programmes.

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).

While the Government has committed 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 Irish public remain supportive of our overseas development programme and believe we should spend much more than we currently do.

According to the results of an MRBI poll conducted by Dóchas in April 2017, Irish people on average believe we should be spending 9.36 per cent of our GNP on overseas development, whereas we actually spent 0.33 per cent in 2016.

As a starting point, we support Social Justice Ireland's recommendation in their Budget Choices document that sets out a realisable timetable to incrementally increase overseas aid to reach 0.59 per cent of GNP by 2024.

Table 1: Social Justice Ireland Pathway to reach ODA target of 0.59 per cent of GMP by 2021

Year	GNP	% of GNP to achieve 0.59 target by 2021	Required budget for ODA in each year in €m's	Increase in Budget allocation for ODA in €m's
2017	204,285	0.32	650	-
2018	211,435	0.36	756	106
2019	217,356	0.40	860	104
2020	222,355	0.43	966	106
2021	227,024	0.47	1,075	109
2022	231,792	0.51	1,188	113
2023	236,660	0.55	1,304	116
2024	241,630	0.59	1,426	122

Social Justice Ireland (2017) *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. More stable and predictable than private finances, aid invests in public goods and in the foundations of the economy such as education, health, infrastructure and governance.

4. *Measure what you treasure: ensure data disaggregation by age*

By 2030, it is projected that older persons will outnumber children aged 0-9 years (1.4 billion vs. 1.3 billion) and that by 2050, there will be more older persons aged 60 or over than young people aged 10-24 years.⁷

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 Irish Aid programmes are disaggregated by age (as well as gender and disability).

The Sustainable Development Goals contain a commitment to increase significantly the availability of high-quality, timely and reliable data, which should be 'disaggregated by age' among other characteristics. This is essential for addressing the serious lack of data in key geographical countries and for ensuring effective policies and interventions.

Recommendations:

1. Commit to achieving the 0.7 per cent of GNP and implement the timetabled plan to achieve 0.59 per cent of GNP by 2024 outlined by Social Justice Ireland. As a first step provide an additional €106 million to overseas development assistance in Budget 2018 (0.36 per cent of GNP) [**Cost: €106 million**].
2. Ensure data disaggregation by age in all programmes.

For further information please contact:

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⁷ See UNDESA World Population Ageing 2015 here <http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/theme/ageing/WPA2015.shtml>