



**Pre-Budget Submission 2017
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 Ireland's 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 tens of 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 – access to social protection, health and HIV/AIDS and the inclusion of older people in humanitarian response and 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.

This submission outlines our recommendations to the Department of Foreign Affairs with regard to the budget allocation for 2017.

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

- Department of Communications, Climate Change and Environment;
- Department of Education and Skills;
- Joint Submission to the Departments of Finance and Public Expenditure Reform;
- Department of Health;

- Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government;
- Department of Social Protection.

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.

“One of my most joyous moments is when I receive my pension, adding to the money I make from my traditional medicine. I can pay my grandson’s university law fees”. (C Mama u Mtalane (93), South Africa)³.

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. Currently two-thirds of the world’s older persons live in developing regions and their numbers are growing faster than in developed regions⁴.

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 – concerns about access to healthcare, income and loneliness.

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 policies and programmes.

¹ Global 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

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

³ HelpAge International (2015) Global Age Watch Index 2015 – Insight report – available at www.helpage.org

⁴ See UNDESA World Population Ageing 2015 here <http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/theme/ageing/WPA2015.shtml>

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 0.38 per cent of GNP.

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.

Public support for our overseas development programme is still high despite the recession, as proven by a Eurobarometer on development released in 2015. Almost three in four Irish people believe overseas aid should be increased⁵.

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 2021.

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
2016	168,495	0.38	640	
2017	173,887	0.42	734	94
2018	178,582	0.46	829	95
2019	183,403	0.51	928	99
2020	188,355	0.55	1032	104
2021	193,252	0.59	1140	108

Social Justice Ireland (2016) *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

⁵ See the Dóchas website here <http://www.dochas.ie/news/dramatic-increase-number-irish-people-who-think-we-should-increase-overseas-aid>

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 2015, 1 in 8 people worldwide was aged 60 or over (12.5 per cent) and by 2030, older persons are projected to account for 1 in 6 people globally (16.7 per cent).⁶

By 2030, it is projected that older persons will outnumber children aged 0-9 years (1.4 billion vs. 1.3 billion) and by 2050, there will be older persons aged 60 or over than adolescents and youth aged 10-24 years.⁷ As already noted population ageing is occurring faster in developing countries.

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 are disaggregated by age (among other things, e.g. disability, gender). Our partners in HelpAge International publish the Global AgeWatch Index and the 2015 edition noted a serious lack of data in key geographical regions including Africa as well as the Middle East, Pacific, and Caribbean regions⁸.

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 2021 outlined by Social Justice Ireland. As a first step provide an additional €94 million to overseas development assistance in Budget 2017 (0.42% of GNP) [Cost: €94 million].
2. 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. Conclusion

If you require any further information please do not hesitate to contact us at the details below.

⁶ See UNDESA World Population Ageing 2015 here <http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/theme/ageing/WPA2015.shtml>

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

⁸ The 2015 Global AgeWatch Index is available here <http://www.helpage.org/global-agewatch/>

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