Ageing-related Policies and Priorities in Voluntary National Reviews (2016-2023): An Update

Key Messages:

- Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) submitted in the period 2016-2023 showed varying levels of awareness of and response to population ageing.

- The top 5 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) under which older persons received the most attention in Member States' reporting are: Goal 1 (No Poverty), Goal 3 (Good Health and Well-Being), Goal 5 (Gender Equality), Goal 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth) and Goal 10 (Reduced Inequalities).

- Participation is a critical component of the achievement of SDGs. This participation must come from older persons themselves and their representative organizations.

- A social definition of who is "older" is required in any policy action to support the inclusion of older persons. A social definition is one in which older age, in interaction with various barriers, may hinder full and effective participation of older persons in society on an equal basis with others.

- Much of the data related to the SDG indicators is not disaggregated into older age, which limits inclusion in evidence-based policymaking opportunities and VNRs. Without disaggregated data, nuanced and targeted actions cannot respond to intersectionalities.

With just 6 years remaining until the target date for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the issue brief provides an update on the progress made since 2015 towards achieving the SDGs, in particular its aspects of relevance to older persons and population ageing.

Besides providing examples of approaches taken by countries to integrate the SDGs into national plans and policies, the Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) also shed light on the challenges in fully implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Overall, only 17 per cent of the SDG targets are on track, nearly half are showing minimal or moderate progress, and progress on over one third has stalled or even regressed.

Between 2016–2023, 329 VNRs were presented at the High-Level Political Forum on sustainable development by 188 countries, the majority of which included references to population ageing or older persons (see Figure 1).

Figure 1: VNRs that include mentions of older persons, 2016-2023 (Percentage)
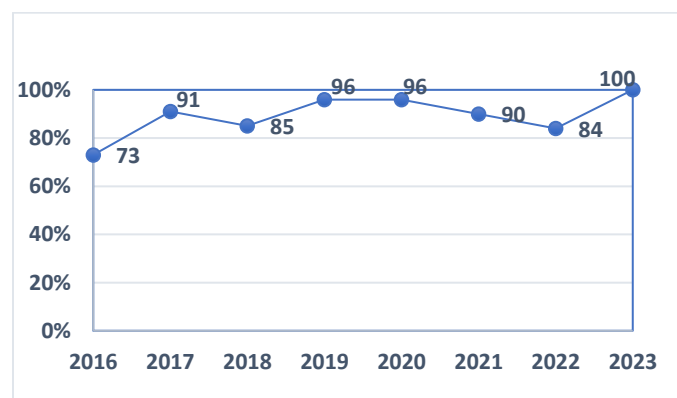
The relevance of population ageing for Government policies is well documented, however, in practice and in global policy conversations on actions for achieving the SDGs, older persons and population ageing are often overlooked or, where included, are often only a mention among groups left behind. Interventions to achieve the SDGs have so far fallen short of responding to the key demographic shift in societies.

As population ageing is growing in intensity around the world, so too must policy action. The implementation of the SDGs cannot be turbocharged, across different makeups in national demographics and in different contexts, without addressing the effects of these changes in both mainstreamed and targeted ways.

Trends of population ageing

Population ageing is a universal phenomenon. Virtually every country in the world is experiencing growth in both the size and the proportion of older persons in the population. Many VNRs acknowledged that ageing populations would have important implications for achieving the SDGs. Population ageing should not be viewed as intrinsically negative but a triumph of development. For example, older persons are often referred to as a burden in national budgets and as an impediment to the achievement of the SDGs.

National policies, strategies, and legislation

Several countries reported on their national strategies, legislative frameworks and actions plans that specifically address ageing-related issues. Only some countries included ageing-related priorities in their national sustainable development strategies.

Stakeholder engagement and consultations

Policymaking must include the participation of older persons, yet few countries emphasized the importance of engaging with older persons as a stakeholder group in the process of preparing their VNRs. Others reported holding preparatory workshops and consultations with the participation of older persons. There would likely be greater inclusion in the VNRs if the participation of older persons were supported, from planning and developing policies to budgeting and implementation and included in every phase of the processes related to the SDGs.

Discrimination

Several VNRs identified older persons as one of the social groups most at risk of experiencing vulnerability to discrimination. For example, some VNRs addressed the consequences of age-based discrimination on the well-being of older persons in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. Other VNRs recognized that where additional grounds of discrimination intersect with old age, the risk of poverty increases. The intersection of age and gender was also addressed by some VNRs as grounds of discrimination for example. In the context of employment and decent work, some countries reported on age discrimination in the labour market, highlighting various barriers faced by older persons including limited access to training, incentives to retire early, as well as difficulty in finding work.

Violence, neglect, and abuse

Elder abuse, a human rights violation, was discussed in several VNRs. While some countries reported an increase of incidents of verbal, physical and financial abuse of older persons, others presented initiatives aimed at combatting elder abuse including within the context of domestic violence.

Science, technology, and innovation

Some VNRs noted the importance of science, technology, and innovation for achieving the SDGs. A number of VNRs noted the lack of digital skills among older populations and described digital literacy programmes aimed at older persons. Such interventions help ensure that older persons are not left behind in an increasingly digital world. The risks of digital exclusion have significant human rights and development implications, yet such risks were not discussed by countries reporting on the digitization of vital services as pension benefits, for example.

Incorporating SDGs at the local level

Some countries noted that achieving the SDGs requires local action in synergy with policies, as well as action at the national level, including steps towards incorporating an analysis of cross-cutting issues that takes into account the participation of older persons. Some VNRs showcased good practices of the role that local governments play in providing support for housing and healthcare to older persons with low incomes. Others raised concern over the ageing populations of many municipalities, noting that the demographic change would affect territorial cohesion, give rise to severe inequalities, and exacerbate the loss of culture and heritage.

Leaving no one behind

Many VNRs referred to older persons in the context of their pledge to leave no one behind. Some VNRs reported on targeted measures to mainstream that commitment into policies and programmes.

Other VNRs identified the need to take into account, inter alia, the ageing workforce when preparing for, and responding to, national and international challenges, while others drew attention to the vulnerability of older women to homelessness as a result of income insecurity and violence. The need to strengthen national systems and processes of accountability to monitor progress and provide remedies to address the needs older populations affected by conflict, natural disasters and health emergencies was highlighted.

A number of VNRs highlighted challenges presented by population ageing in the context of leaving no one behind. Some noted that population ageing and a

decline in the dependency ratio were holding back the economy and competitiveness.

Data collection and monitoring
Some VNRs highlighted the need for disaggregation of data by age. Others included specific age-related indicators or statistical annexes that exhibited those indicators.

Reference was made to the Titchfield Group on ageing related statistics and age-disaggregated data, established in 2018 by the Statistical Commission. The overall objective of the City Group is to identify and address existing issues and deficits in data on ageing. It aims to develop standardized tools and methods for producing both data disaggregated by age and ageing-related data. Supporting the capacity of national statistical offices to identify and address existing deficits in data on ageing, including age caps, gaps in coverage, limited information on intrahousehold dynamics, and the lack of consistent disaggregation by age in higher age groups, would contribute to the reporting and accountability processes for the SDGs.

A VNR reported that data disaggregation by gender, age, income, location, ethnicity, disability, refugee status or status as an internally displaced person, or and any other specific socioeconomic characteristics, is essential to developing and implementing effective policies concerning inequality and discrimination.

Much of the data related to the SDG indicators is currently not disaggregated into older age, limiting inclusion in evidence-based policymaking opportunities and in the actual VNRs. Increasing the availability of high-quality, timely and reliable data disaggregated by age, is a necessary component to develop potentially targeted interventions and improving response to population ageing in the SDGs.

International and regional cooperation
International and regional cooperation are central to implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and play a significant role in promoting issues related to older persons. Some VNRs included examples of strengthening policy and legal frameworks that specifically target older persons at the regional levels as a means to promote the inclusion of older persons. Other VNRs showcased relevant initiatives aimed at investing in as well as expanding the reach of social cash transfer programmes that target vulnerable households, including those of older persons. Others

noted programmes that support the provision of healthcare services delivered to older refugees. Some VNRs also reported on regional initiatives aimed at sharing knowledge and expertise gained from national experience, on long-term care and social welfare.

Some countries used regional platforms to share lessons on the Goals, assess targets and indicators to provide a monitoring framework to regularly assess the situation of older persons in their region within the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The COVID-19 pandemic
Many VNRs highlighted the pervasive impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on inequality levels, together with the different national policy responses. Some VNRs also recognized that the pandemic particularly negatively affected older persons and exacerbated the risks they already faced. In this context, some presented the measures undertaken to provide support, particularly in the form of medical care and emotional support during the period of social isolation, as well as financial aid such as cash grants.

Despite the disproportionate effects of the pandemic on older persons, little attention was paid to older persons in the VNRs immediately following the pandemic, as evidenced in the decrease in the mentions of older persons in 2021 and 2022. See Figure 1. One potential reason for this lack of attention is the unavailability of data. The proportion of countries surveyed with difficulty collecting data on older persons ranged from 25 to 29 per cent across income groups.

Without disaggregated data, nuanced and targeted actions cannot respond to intersectionalities, such as the experiences of urban older women in the contexts of Goal 11, on sustainable cities, or Goal 5, on violence against older women. Even for the most widely recognized Goal, ending poverty, the Goal under which older persons received the most attention in the reviews, there is a critical gendered component that is overlooked without disaggregation.

Noteworthy, is that all VNRs submitted in 2023 included references to older persons under the SDGs. A closer examination of these inputs showed that some VNRs mentioned specific programmes and policies related to population ageing and older persons, while others included mentions of older persons as part of a broad range of social groups, identifying them as one of

multiple groups at risk of social exclusion and discrimination.

Figure 3. Percentage of VNRs that refer to older persons and population ageing, by Sustainable Development Goal (2016-2023)
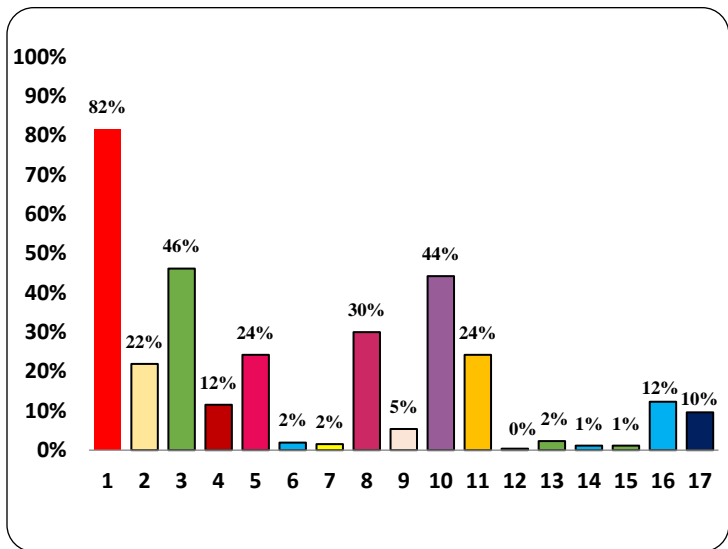
Reporting on Older Persons under specific Sustainable Development Goals (2016-2023)

The analysis of VNRs from 2016-2023 showed that 260 out of 329 VNRs referred to older persons under the SDGs, often as a mention among social groups left behind.

Goal 1 (no poverty)

Afghanistan, Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belgium, Belize, Benin, Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cabo Verde, Cambodia, Cameroon, Canada, Central African Republic, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Comoros, Costa Rica, Cote dʻIvoire, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czechia, Democratic Peopleʻs Republic of Korea, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Estonia, Eswatini, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, Gambia, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guatemala, Guinea Bissau, Guyana, Honduras, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kenya, Kuwait, Kyrgyz Republic, Lao Peoples Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Lesotho, Lesotho, Liberia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Madagascar, Malaysia, Mali, Malta, Mauritius, Mexico, Moldova, Monaco, Montenegro, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Nigeria, North Macedonia, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Palau, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Romania, Russian Federation, Rwanda, Samoa, Saint Kitts and Nevis, San Marino, Sao Tome and Principe, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Seychelles, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, State of

Palestine, Sudan, Suriname, Sweden, Switzerland, Tajikistan, Timor Leste, Thailand, Togo, Tunisia, Türkiye, Turkmenistan, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, United Republic of Tanzania Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Zambia, Zimbabwe.

82 per cent of the VNRs submitted in the period 2016-2023 and that referred to older persons under the SDGs, did so under Goal 1 (no poverty). Social protection, including old age contributory and non-contributory pensions, was recognized in virtually all the VNRs as the front-line response to the income insecurity experienced by many older persons. Most of the VNRs underscored and stressed the capacity of social protection tools to protect older persons from poverty or reduce poverty in old age. However, based on the reporting, progress towards achieving Goal 1 through the provision of social benefits has been mixed.

Other initiatives highlighted in several VNRs to strengthen social protection for older persons included the introduction and/or strengthening of non-contributory pensions. Some VNRs reported on the provision of non-monetary contributions and recognized their role in tackling poverty among older persons.

Measures to address poverty by increasing employment among older persons were identified by some countries in their reporting on Goal 1. Such measures were often linked to changes in statutory retirement ages. A VNR identified several challenges at the national level with regard to addressing the informality on future pensions.

Goal 2 (zero hunger)

Albania, Algeria, Argentina, Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Benin, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cambodia, Cameroon, Chile, Comoros, Croatia, Côte dʻIvoire, Cuba, Cyprus, Ecuador, Fiji, Eswatini, Greece, Guyana, Iceland, Indonesia, Israel, Jamaica, Japan, Kuwait, Kyrgyz Republic, Lao Peoples Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Maldives, Malta, Mauritius, Mexico, Micronesia, Namibia, Netherlands, North Macedonia, Norway, Panama, Philippines, Portugal, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Slovenia, Singapore, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Tajikistan, Thailand, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Viet Nam, Zambia

A total of 22 per cent of the VNRs submitted in the period 2016-2023 explicitly referred to older persons under Goal 2 (zero hunger). Some Member States addressed the Goal by highlighting measures undertaken to ensure appropriate and adequate provision of accessible nutrition and food for older persons, in particular in the context of institutionalized care.

Goal 3 (good health and well-being)

Algeria, Andorra, Antigua and Barbuda, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belgium, Bhutan, Brunei Darussalam, Cabo Verde, Cambodia, Chile, China, Colombia, Comoros, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czechia, Denmark, Dominica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Eritrea, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Guatemala, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Kenya, Kuwait, Lao Peoples Democratic Republic, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Malaysia, Maldives, Malta, Mauritania, Mauritius, Micronesia, Moldova, Mongolia, Montenegro, Nepal, Netherlands, Nicaragua, Nigeria, North Macedonia, Palau, Panama, Peru, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Romania, Russian Federation, Rwanda, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Serbia, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Somalia, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sweden, Tanzania, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Tunisia, Türkiye, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Viet Nam, Zambia.

A total of 46 per cent of the VNRs submitted in the period 2016-2023, and that referred to older persons under the SDGs, did so under Goal 3 (good health and well-being). The VNRs included discussions of the multiple challenges faced by older persons in accessing adequate health care. Higher poverty rates among older persons were seen to be associated with the unmet need for health services. Some VNRs reported income decrease amongst people of all ages during the pandemic, while facing an increase in health care out-of-pocket spending; a reality that was experienced by older persons to a greater extent than other groups. Lack of national health and nutrition surveys that are inclusive of people above age 60 years was highlighted as a challenge in understanding the needs of older persons, and as a factor in deepening inequalities in access to health care.

Some VNRs reported that changes in population ageing structures had a substantial effect on disease structures. Other VNRs discussed the gap between the average life expectancy and the healthy life expectancy in the context of Goal 3. The need to maintain and improve the quality of life of persons living with illness was raised, as was the importance of re-examining health care delivery systems.

Population ageing was linked in many of the VNRs with the increased need for mental health services. The rise in the number of people with mental health conditions and with dementia was referenced in several VNRs as was the need to strengthen health-care services in those areas. Some VNRs stressed the adverse impacts of loneliness and isolation on the health of older persons. Others stressed the higher prevalence of suicide among older persons.

Pressure on health-care systems as a result of increased demand for long-term care and support services was addressed in several VNRs. Some of the challenges identified related to lack of capacity, insufficient financial resources, the impact of rural to urban migration on availability of long-term care and support service providers, as well as the changing situation of families and domestic roles, among others.

Goal 4 (quality education)

Andorra, Australia, Bahrain, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brunei Darussalam, Central African Republic, Comoros, Croatia, Cuba, Denmark, Estonia, France, Greece, Guatemala, Iceland, Kuwait, Madagascar Maldives, Moldova, Montenegro, Netherlands, Nigeria, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Sweden, Timor-Leste, Tanzania, United Republic of Tanzania, Uganda, Viet Nam

Only 12 per cent of the VNRs submitted in the period 2016-2023, and that referred to older persons under the SDGs, did so under Goal 4 (quality education), particularly in the context of lifelong learning, employment, and entrepreneurship. Some VNRs referred to training and activities on new technologies for older persons.

Goal 5 (gender equality)

Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzeg ovina, Canada, Chile, Costa Rica, Cuba, Cyprus, Czechia, El Salvador, Estonia, Eswatini, Finland, Ghana, Guatemala, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Jamaica, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, Latvia, Lesotho, Lithuania, Malta, Marshall Islands, Moldova, Morocco, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Pakistan, Palau, Paraguay, Portugal, Saint Lucia, Sao Tome and Principe, Singapore, Slovenia, Spain, Sudan, Timor Leste, Tunisia, United Kingdom, Uruguay, Venezuela, Viet nam, Zambia, Zimbabwe

A total of 24 per cent of the VNRs submitted in the period 2016-2023, and that referred to older persons under the SDGs, did so under Goal 5 (gender equality). Some VNRs identified older women as a group that was particularly at risk of poverty; a risk that was reported to be exacerbated by widowhood. Women often face higher risks and greater burdens as a result of inequalities experienced during the life course, as well as the intersection of age and gender as grounds of discrimination. Some VNRs reported that women were seen to experience worse health conditions than men in old age, as a consequence of lifelong gender inequalities.

A VNR noted that the gender pay gap increased with age, highlighting factors that accounted for the larger pay gap for older women in the country including; time taken out of the workforce to care for children, better qualification of younger women compared with their male peers than was the case among older workers, and lower earnings progression over the career course of women with respect to men. In several VNRs, the unequal distribution of care responsibilities within the

family was identified as affecting the capacity of women of all ages to engage in full-time formal employment.

Many VNRs noted that the underlying drivers of gender inequality perpetuated gender gaps in access to social protection, which compounded the risk of poverty among older women. Initiatives to address the gender gap in access to social protection were reported by several VNRs.

Elder abuse was discussed in several VNRs in the context of Goal 5. A VNR reported on national programmes to prevent and address domestic violence, which included domestic violence units for the prevention of elder abuse.

Goal 6 (clean water and sanitation)
Antigua and Barbuda, Guyana, Jamaica, United Kingdom, Zimbabwe

Only 5 out of 260 VNRs submitted in the period 2016-2023, and that referred to older persons under the SDGs, did so under Goal 6 (clean water and sanitation), noting that the aim is to become more resilient and sustainable to meet global challenges, such as climate change and an ageing population.

Goal 7 (affordable and clean energy)
Andorra, Belgium, Greece, Poland, Saint Kitts and Nevis.

Only 5 out of 260 of the VNRs submitted in the period 2016-2023, and that referred to older persons under the SDGs, did so under Goal 7 (affordable and clean energy), emphasizing the importance of guaranteed universal access to clean, affordable, reliable, and modern energy services, and prioritizing social groups experiencing vulnerabilities, including older persons.

Goal 8 (decent work and economic growth)
Argentina, Australia, Bahrain, Belarus, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina , Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Cabo Verde, Canada, Central African Republic, Chile, Columbia, Congo, Côte d´Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Czechia, Dominica, Denmark, Ecuardo, El Salvador, Estonia, Eswatini, France, Greece, Indonesia, Iraq, Ireland, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, Latvia, Lao Peoples Democratic Republic, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Malaysia, Malta, Marshall Islands, Mauritius, Moldova, Mongolia, Montenegro, Nigeria, North Macedonia, Norway, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Philippines, Poland, Qatar, Romania, Russian Federation, San Marino, Senegal, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sri Lanka, Suriname, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, Timor Leste, Turkmenistan, Uruguay, Venezuela

A total of 30 per cent of the VNRs submitted in the period 2016-2023, and that referred to older persons under the SDGs, did so under Goal 8 (decent work and economic growth). Several VNRs addressed the impact

of population ageing on labour markets. Many VNRs revealed that higher unemployment rates, the prevalence of informality and widespread ageism were the main barriers faced by older persons in accessing decent work.

The reduction in the size of the working-age population and the pressure on public finances due to the rising number of people above retirement ages were highlighted in the VNRs. In this context, several VNRs included discussions on the need to reform existing pension systems, as well as increase the labour force participation among certain age groups, including older persons.

In many of the VNRs, three broad types of measures were identified for addressing the diverse situation of older persons in the context of Goal 8: (a) improving social protection systems; (b) promoting decent work among older persons; and (c) in some cases, raising official or statutory retirement ages.

Many countries shared initiatives in their VNRs that sought to improve income among older persons through employment, including the promotion of more flexible working arrangements, professional development programmes, lifelong learning and training, economic incentive schemes, as well as the provision of assistance to older persons who owned businesses to help revamp their product line and image.

Goal 9 (industry, innovation, and infrastructure)
Benin, Costa Rica, Dominica, Ecuador, Jamacia, New Zealand, Portugal, Serbia, Spain, Slovakia, Thailand, United Kingdom,

Only 5 per cent VNRs submitted in the period 2016-2023, and that referred to older persons under the SDGs, did so under Goal 9 (industry, innovation, and infrastructure). VNRs reported on investments in resilient infrastructure to better digitally connect remote and rural communities and to decrease barriers that prevent access by older persons to public transport, communal areas, and other resources.

Goal 10 (reduced inequalities)
Afghanistan, Albania, Andorra, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belgium, Benin, Bhutan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brunei Darussalam, Cabo Verde, Cambodia, Canada, Central African Republic, Chad, Chile, Colombia, Congo, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cuba, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Estonia, Fiji, Greece, Guatemala, Guyana, Honduras, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Israel, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Latvia, Lesotho, Lithuania, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Mauritania, Mexico, Moldova, Mongolia, Montenegro,

Namibia, Nepal, New Zealand, North Macedonia, Norway, Panama, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Oman, Qatar, Romania, Russian Federation, Rwanda, Saint Lucia, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Serbia, Seychelles, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, , Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, United Republic of Tanzania, Uzbekistan and Viet Nam

A total of 44 per cent of the VNRs submitted in the period 2016-2023, and that referred to older persons under the SDGs, did so under Goal 10 (reduced inequalities). Several VNRs highlighted the pervasive impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on inequality levels. In most of the VNRs, older persons were recognized as a population group at risk of being left behind in sustainable development. In many countries, older persons were identified as one of the social groups most at risk of experiencing vulnerability to social exclusion and discrimination. The economic inequalities experienced by many older persons were addressed in several VNR. Links were made between the increased risk of exclusion and higher poverty rates, and the lack of access to adequate social protection among older persons. To reduce inequalities experienced by older persons, a VNR reported on efforts to integrate population ageing as a core consideration in the national development strategy and in employment-related policies, in addition to crafting effective policy responses and action plans targeting older persons.

Goal 11 (sustainable cities and communities)
Andorra, Argentina,Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Bhutan, Cambodia, Cameroon, Canada, Chile, Comoros, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czechia, Denmark, Ecuador, Estonia, Fiji,Finland, Greece, Guatemala, Guyana, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Jamaica, Japan, Latvia, Kuwait, Maldives,Moldova, Montenegro, New Zealand, North Macedonia, Norway, Palau, Panama, Qatar, Romania, SanMarino, Sao Tome and Principe, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Thailand, Tunisia, Türkiye, Turkmenistan, United Kingdom, Viet Nam, Zambia, Zimbabwe .

A total of 24 per cent of the VNRs submitted in the period 2016-2023, and that referred to older persons under the SDGs, did so under Goal 11 (sustainable cities and communities). Overall, VNRs addressed providing safe, affordable, and sustainable transport for all, as well as universal access to safe, inclusive, and accessible green and public spaces.

Goal 12 (responsible consumption and production)
Kyrgyz Republic.

Only 1 out of the 260 VNRs submitted in the period 2016-2023, and that referred to older persons under the SDGs, did so under Goal 12 (responsible

consumption and production). The review notes that the risks in the use and processing of raw materials are higher for social groups experiencing vulnerabilities, such as pensioners.

Goal 13 (climate action)
Andorra, Bahrain, Cuba, Lesotho, Palau, Portugal, Serbia, Uganda

While many Member States identified the adverse impacts of climate change in their VNRs, only 8 out of 260 submitted in the period 2016-2023, and that referred to older persons under the SDGs, did so under Goal 13 (climate action).

A VNR reported on a national institution that aims to build resilience to climate change through research, systematic observation, and training. In collaboration with other national partners, the institution provides basic relief assistance and natural risk management training targeted at older persons.

With reference to natural disasters, a VNR reported on enacting a climate-informed building code that considers climate mitigation and adaptation measures. Among other things, a state-of-the-art code will ensure that buildings are constructed to minimize damage during adverse weather and enhance the accessibility of public spaces for older persons and persons with disabilities.

Goal 14 (life below water)
Malta, Uruguay

Only 2 out of the 260 VNRs submitted in the period 2016-2023, and that referred to older persons under the SDGs, did so under Goal 14 (life below water). A VNR stressed that innovation, capacity building, and knowledge sharing are key to addressing the generational change in the labour market, making the blue economy more sustainable, competitive, and resilient to economic downturns or crises. The other VNR emphasized the importance of education for sustainable development and included an example of a project entitled the "Center of the Earth," which aims to build green skills for all, including older persons.

Goal 15 (life on land)
Denmark Lithuania

Only 2 out of 260 VNRs submitted in the period 2016-2023, and that referred to older persons under the SDGs, did so under Goal 15 (life on land). The VNR reported on the Reflow project, which aims to reduce plastic consumption and increase recycling, as well as to

construct an integrated day care and a centre for older persons through citizen involvement.

Goal 16 (peace, justice, and strong institutions)

Armenia, Barbados, Belgium, Brunei Darussalam, Cabo Verde, Chile, Côte d'Ivoire, Cuba, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Estonia, Guatemala, Indonesia, Israel, Japan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Lesotho, Liberia, Mauritius, Mozambique, Nicaragua, Palau, Portugal, Russian Federation, Sierra Leone, Slovakia, Slovenia, Timor Leste, Uzbekistan, Viet Nam.

12 per cent of the VNRs submitted in the period 2016-2023, and that referred to older persons under the SDGs, did so under Goal 16 (peace, justice, and strong institutions). Examples of measures reported on within the VNRs include ensuring legal certainty, strengthening and expanding the legal protection of older persons, and facilitating access to qualified State legal aid. A VNR reported on the adoption of key legal instruments to promote the inclusion and representation of veterans and older persons and to ensure social cohesion and continued peace.

Goal 17 (partnerships for the Goals)

Andorra, Austria, Central African Republic, Chile, Denmark, Indonesia, Iraq, Malawi, Moldova, Montenegro, Netherlands, Panama, Philippines, San Marino, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Türkiye, Vanuatu, Zimbabwe.

Only 10 per cent of the VNRs submitted in the period 2016-2023, and that referred to older persons under the SDGs, did so under Goal 17 (partnership for the Goals). A VNR reported on support provided to older persons through projects and activities undertaken by the National Cooperation and Coordination Agency. Another VNR noted that its National Sustainable Development Plan for the 2016 to 2030 period provides a strategy for upholding human dignity and the rights of all citizens, including older persons, in national legislation and institutions.

Notes