

# Solidarity across generations is vital for sustainable development, UN special event hears

1 August 2017 – The wisdom, experience, energy and ideals of the old and the young are vital to realizing the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), United Nations [Secretary-General](#) António Guterres said today, stressing that they together can help break the cycles of poverty that have lasted for generations.

“The youth and the older persons in this room have wisdom, experience, energy and ideals,” the UN chief said in his [video message](#) to a [special event](#) at UN Headquarters, “Intergenerational Dialogues on the Sustainable Development Goals,” which was also addressed by his newly-appointed Envoy on Youth, Jayathma Wickramanayake, and the President of the General Assembly, Peter Thomson.

“Together, you can help break cycles of poverty that have lasted for generations and trigger transformational change that endures for generations to come,” Mr. Guterres stressed.

The event aimed to raise awareness of the valuable role youth and the elderly can play together in implementing the [SDGs](#) ambitious and all-encompassing development targets agreed by more than 190 countries nearly two years ago to ensure growth and protect the people and planet.

Mr. Thomson, now in his late-60s, talked about his own youth growing up in the Pacific island of Fiji, before mountains of plastic waste and ocean-warming had begun to threaten its very existence.

He said he was determined to use his experience in order to speak out on behalf of the SDGs for many years to come.

“We are going to ensure that all people, young and old, recognize themselves as the owners, drivers and beneficiaries of the SDGs [...] As a grandfather, I care for all my being that we will bequeath sustainable world to our grandchildren and those who come after,” he said.

Ms. Wickramanayake, who is 26, stressed that “building bridges for different generations to work together in a mutually empowering relationship is one of the most important factors affecting the implementation of the SDGs.”

“It needs to be recognized that generations do not operate as a binary,” she said. “Solidarity across generations is key for social development, and for this we require new approaches in the workforce, in education, and in socioeconomic development. Aging populations must work with younger populations to foster successful and reciprocal intergenerational

relations and partnerships, which will lie at the core of every well-integrated society.&#8221

Non-governmental organizations (NGOs), including the Major Group on Children and Youth and the Stakeholder Group on Ageing, were also represented at today's event, which was co-hosted by the Department of Public Information (DPI) and NGO/DPI Executive Committee.