

WHA58.16 Strengthening active and healthy ageing

The Fifty-eighth World Health Assembly,

Having considered the document on International Plan of Action on Ageing: report on implementation;¹

Noting that more than 1000 million people will be over 60 years old by 2025, the vast majority in the developing world, and that this figure is expected to double by 2050, which will lead to increasing demands on health and social-service systems worldwide;

Recalling resolution WHA52.7 on active ageing that called upon all Member States to take appropriate steps to carry out measures that ensure the highest attainable standard of health and well-being for the growing numbers of their older citizens;

Recalling also United Nations General Assembly resolution 58/134 of 22 December 2003, which requested the organizations and bodies of the United Nations system and the specialized agencies to integrate ageing, including from a gender perspective, into their programmes of work;

Recalling further United Nations General Assembly resolution 59/150, which called on governments, the organizations of the United Nations system, nongovernmental organizations and the private sector to ensure that the challenges of population ageing and the concerns of older persons were adequately incorporated into their programmes and projects, especially at country level, and invited Member States to submit, whenever possible, information to the United Nations database on ageing;

Acknowledging the active ageing policy framework, WHO's contribution to the United Nations Second World Assembly on Ageing, and its vision for the framing of integrated intersectoral policies on ageing;²

Mindful of the important role played by WHO in implementing the objectives of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, 2002, particularly Priority Direction II: Advancing health and well-being into old age;

Recognizing the contributions that older persons make to development, and the importance of lifelong education and active community involvement for older persons;

Stressing the important role of public-health policies and programmes in enabling the rapidly growing numbers of older persons in both developed and developing countries to remain in good health and maintain their many vital contributions to the well-being of their families, communities and societies;

Stressing also the importance of developing care services, including eHealth services, to enable older persons to remain in their homes for as long as possible;

¹ Document A58/19.

² Document WHO/NMH/NPH/02.8.

Underlining the need for incorporating a gender perspective into policies and programmes relating to active and healthy ageing;

Welcoming WHO's focus on primary health care, such as the development of "age-friendly" primary health care,

1. URGES Member States:

- (1) to develop, implement and evaluate policies and programmes that promote healthy and active ageing and the highest attainable standard of health and well-being for their older citizens;
- (2) to consider the situation of older persons as an integral part of their efforts to achieve the internationally agreed development goals of the United Nations Millennium Declaration, and to mobilize political will and financial resources for that purpose;
- (3) to take measures to ensure that gender-sensitive health policies, plans and programmes recognize and address the rights and comprehensive health, social-service and development needs of older women and men, with special attention to the socially excluded, older persons with disabilities, and those unable to meet their basic needs;
- (4) to take steps and encourage measures to ensure that resources are made available for persons or legal entities who take care of older persons;
- (5) to pay special attention to the key role that older persons, especially older women, play as caregivers in their families and the community, and particularly the burdens placed on them by the HIV/AIDS pandemic;
- (6) to consider establishing an appropriate legal framework, to enforce legislation and to strengthen legal efforts and community initiatives designed to eliminate economic, physical and mental elder abuse;
- (7) to develop, use and maintain systems to provide data, throughout the life-course, disaggregated by age and sex, on intersectoral determinants of health and health status in order to underpin the planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of evidence-based health-policy interventions relevant to older persons;
- (8) to undertake education and recruitment measures and incentives, taking into account the particular circumstances in developing countries, in order to ensure sufficient health personnel to meet the needs of older persons;
- (9) to strengthen national action in order to ensure sufficient resources to fulfil commitments to implementing the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, 2002, and related regional plans of action relating to the health and well-being of older persons;
- (10) to develop health care of older persons within primary care in the existing national health systems;
- (11) to provide progress reports on the status of older persons and on active and healthy ageing programmes when making country health reports;

(12) to support WHO's advocacy for active and healthy ageing through new, multisectoral partnerships with intergovernmental, nongovernmental, private-sector and voluntary organizations;

2. REQUESTS the Commission on Social Determinants of Health to consider including issues related to active and healthy ageing throughout the life-course among its policy recommendations;

3. REQUESTS the Director-General:

(1) to raise awareness of the challenge of the ageing of societies, the health and social needs of older persons, and the contributions of older persons to society, including by working with Member States and nongovernmental and private-sector employers;

(2) to provide support to Member States in their efforts to fulfil their commitments to the goals and outcomes of relevant United Nations conferences and summits, particularly the Second World Assembly on Ageing, related to the health and social needs of older persons, in collaboration with relevant partners;

(3) to continue to focus on primary health care, with an emphasis on existing community structures where applicable, that is age appropriate, accessible and available for older persons, thereby strengthening their capability to remain vital resources to their families, the economy, the community and society for as long as possible;

(4) to provide support to Member States, by promoting research and strengthening capacity for health promotion and disease prevention strategies, policies and interventions throughout the life-course, in their efforts to develop integrated care for older persons, including support for both formal and informal caregivers;

(5) to undertake initiatives to improve the access of older persons to relevant information and health-care and social services in order, particularly, to reduce their risk of HIV infection, to improve the quality of life and dignity of those living with HIV/AIDS, and to help them support family members affected by HIV/AIDS and their orphaned grandchildren;

(6) to provide support to Member States, upon request, for compiling, using and maintaining systems to provide information, throughout the life-course, disaggregated by age and sex, health status and selected intersectoral information, on determinants of health, in order to underpin the planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of evidence-based health-policy interventions relevant to older persons;

(7) to strengthen WHO's capacity to incorporate work on ageing throughout its activities and programmes at all levels and to facilitate the role of WHO regional offices in the implementation of United Nations regional plans of action on ageing;

(8) to cooperate with other agencies and organizations of the United Nations system in order to ensure intersectoral action towards active and healthy ageing;

(9) to report to the Sixtieth World Health Assembly, through the Executive Board, on progress made in implementing this resolution.

(Ninth plenary meeting, 25 May 2005 –
Committee B, second report)