WHO’s programme of work on Older People, Ageing and the UN Decade of Healthy Ageing

Member State Information Session

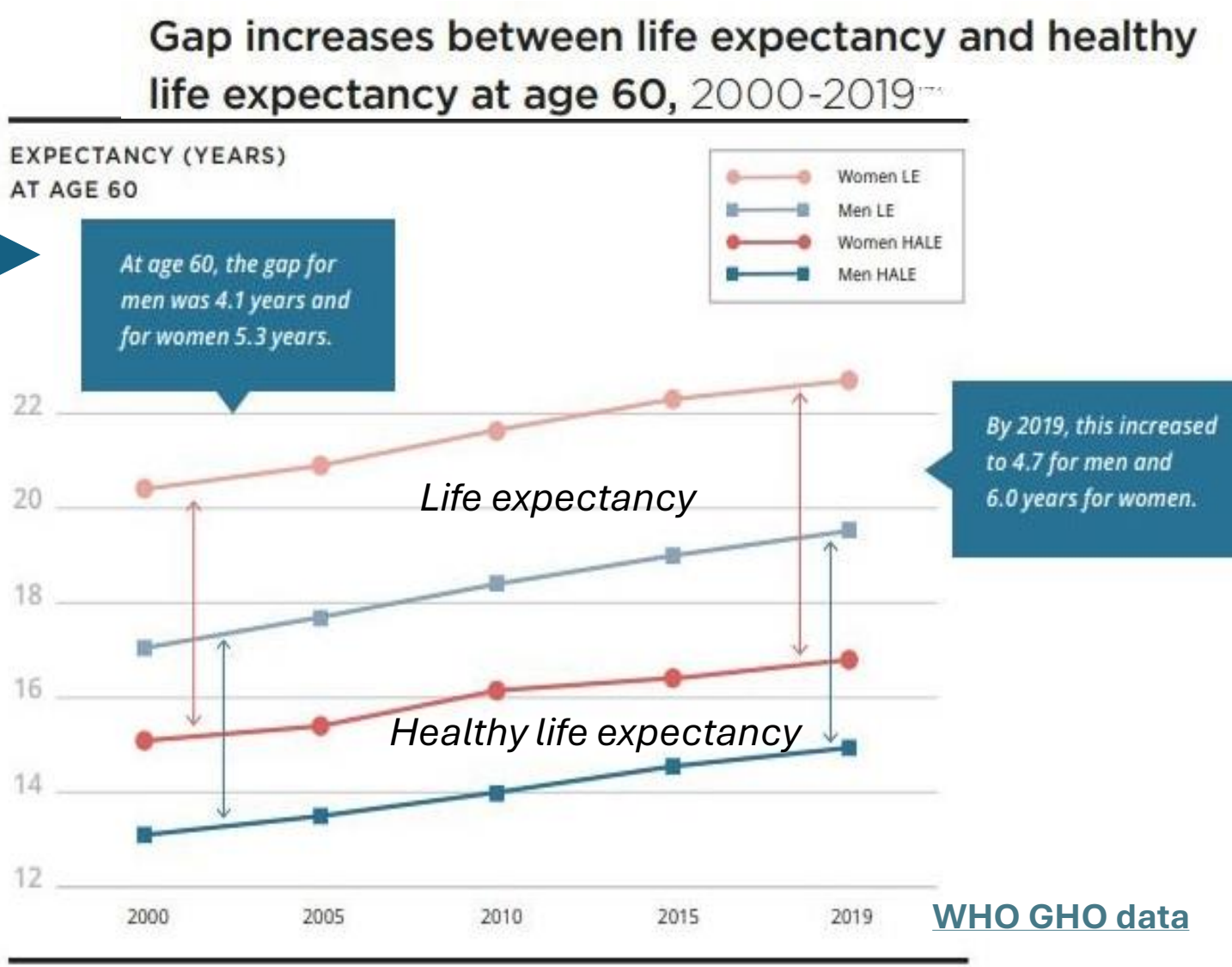
3 September 2025

Final presentation with embedded links to key documents

World Health Organization

Global Population Ageing

- By 2030, **1 in 6 people** globally will be 60 years of age or older; by 2050, this will be 1 in 5 people.
- Global average **gap** between life expectancy and healthy life expectancy **continues to increase**, at birth and at age 60.
- **Older women live longer in poor health than older men**.
- Two-thirds of older people live in **middle income countries.**
- In 2020, **at least 142 million** older persons globally were unable to meet their basic needs**; only 25%** of countries had some comparable information on older persons.
- Governments from **every region and income group** express concerns about the sustainability of financing and delivery of care and other essential social services that reach older people.



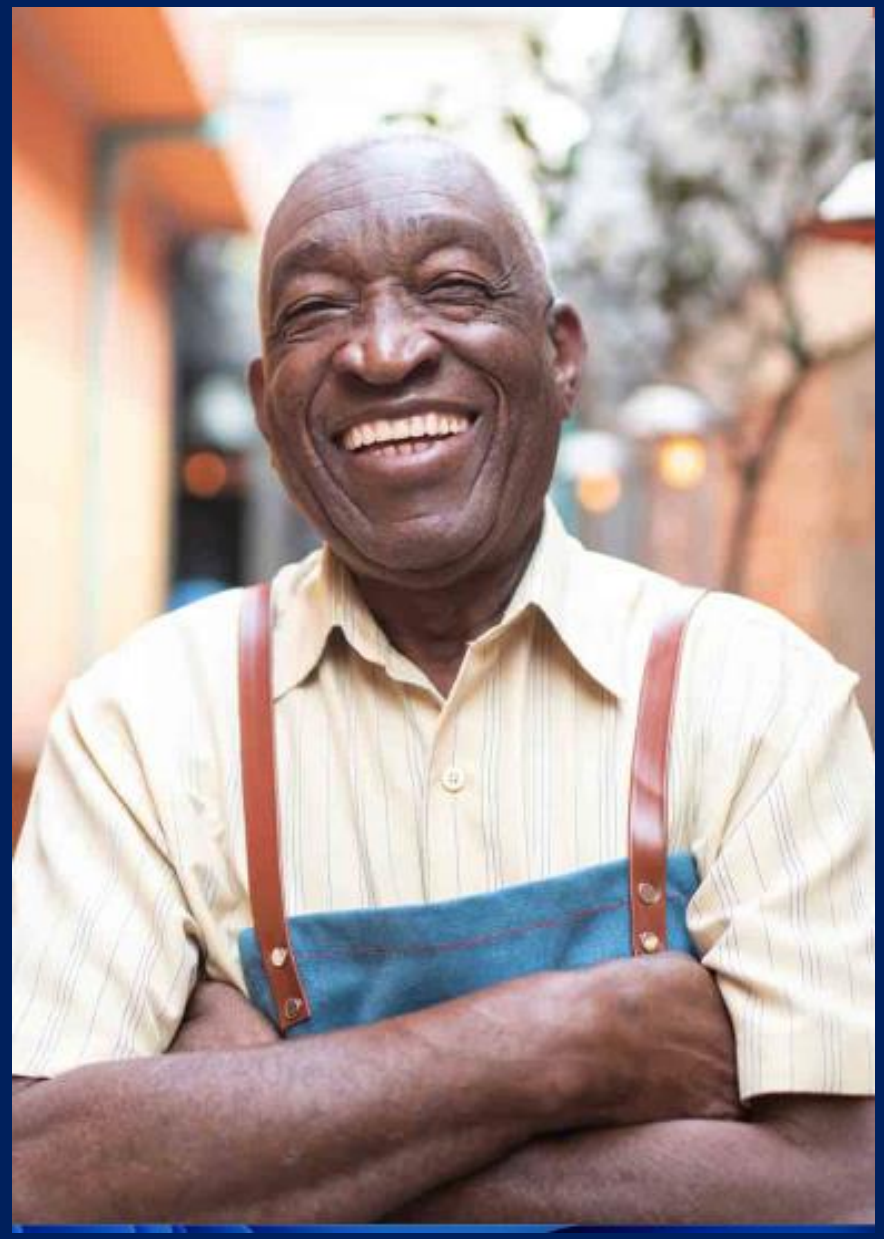
WHO GHO data

Overview of session



World Health Organization

1. Definition and Approach

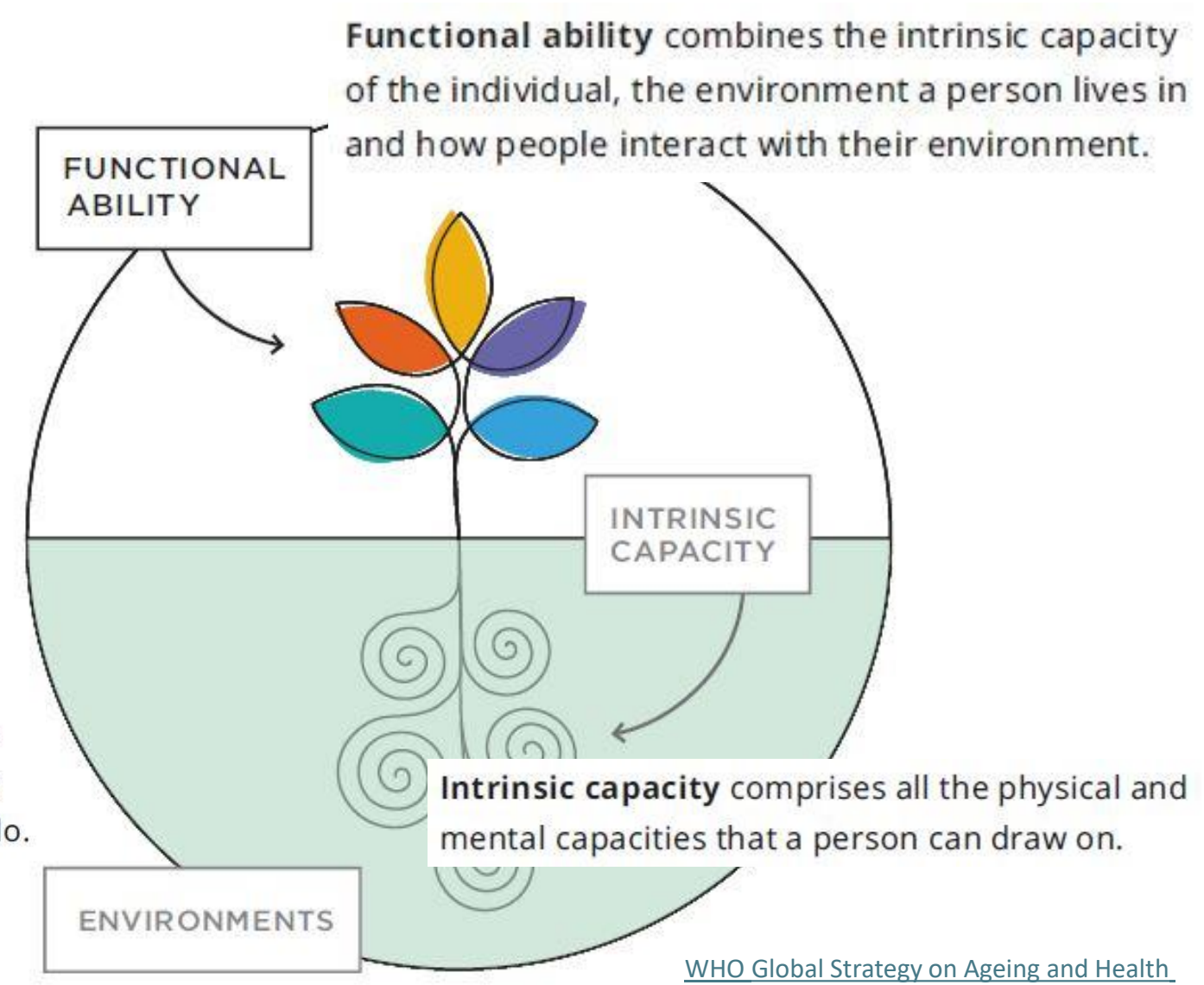


World Health Organization

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Healthy Ageing – Definition

Healthy ageing is a **rights-based response** to population ageing and "is the process of developing and maintaining the **functional ability** that enables wellbeing in older age."



WHO Global Strategy on Ageing and Health

UN Decade of Healthy Ageing - Action Plan

Action Areas:

- Combatting Ageism
- Age-friendly Environments
- Integrated Care
- Long-term Care

Enablers:

- Voices & Meaningful Engagement
- Leadership & Capacity Building
- Connecting Stakeholders
- Strengthening Data, Research & Innovation

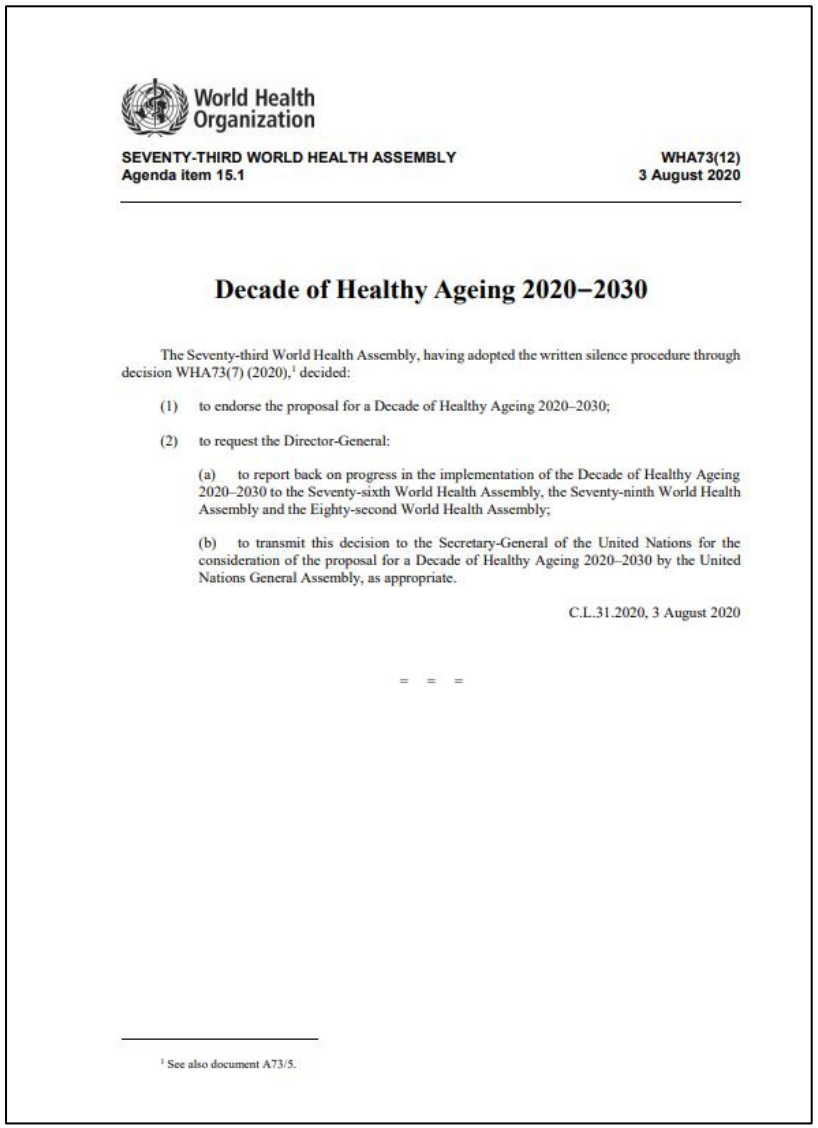
Potential Barriers to progress:

- Changing political will and global health landscape
- Limited resources invested by some countries
- No increase in the number of countries reporting having LTC polices

World Health Organization

Decade of healthy ageing

Endorsement by WHO and UN Member States



World Health Organization

SEVENTY-THIRD WORLD HEALTH ASSEMBLY
Agenda item 15.1

WHA73(12)
3 August 2020

Decade of Healthy Ageing 2020–2030

The Seventy-third World Health Assembly, having adopted the written silence procedure through decision WHA73(7) (2020),[1] decided:

(1) to endorse the proposal for a Decade of Healthy Ageing 2020–2030;

(2) to request the Director-General:

(a) to report back on progress in the implementation of the Decade of Healthy Ageing 2020–2030 to the Seventy-sixth World Health Assembly, the Seventy-ninth World Health Assembly and the Eighty-second World Health Assembly;

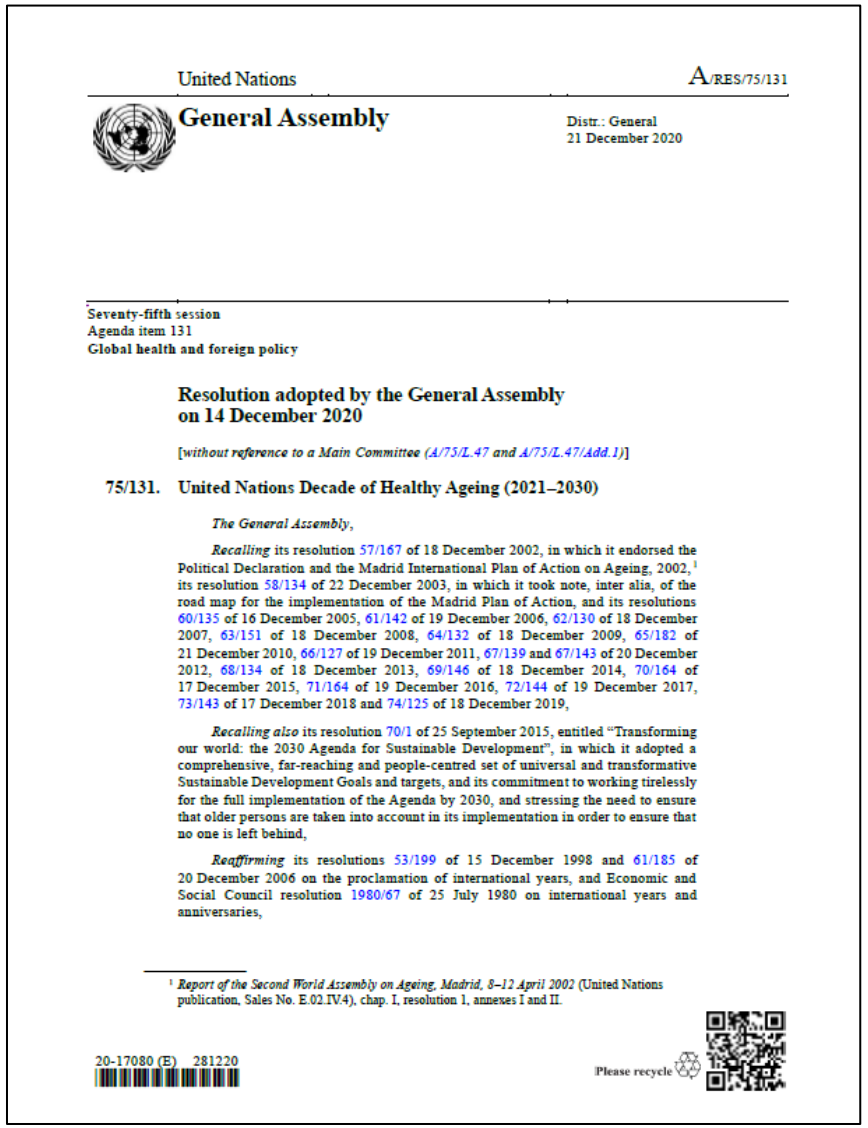
(b) to transmit this decision to the Secretary-General of the United Nations for the consideration of the proposal for a Decade of Healthy Ageing 2020–2030 by the United Nations General Assembly, as appropriate.

C.L.31.2020, 3 August 2020

= = =

[1] See also document A73/5.

WHA Resolution



United Nations A/RES/75/131

General Assembly

Distr.: General
21 December 2020

Seventy-fifth session
Agenda item 131
Global health and foreign policy

Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 14 December 2020

[*without reference to a Main Committee (A/75/L.47 and A/75/L.47/Add.1)*]

75/131. United Nations Decade of Healthy Ageing (2021–2030)

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolution 57/167 of 18 December 2002, in which it endorsed the Political Declaration and the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, 2002,[1] its resolution 58/134 of 22 December 2003, in which it took note, inter alia, of the road map for the implementation of the Madrid Plan of Action, and its resolutions 60/135 of 16 December 2005, 61/142 of 19 December 2006, 62/130 of 18 December 2007, 63/151 of 18 December 2008, 64/132 of 18 December 2009, 65/182 of 21 December 2010, 66/127 of 19 December 2011, 67/139 and 67/143 of 20 December 2012, 68/134 of 18 December 2013, 69/146 of 18 December 2014, 70/164 of 17 December 2015, 71/164 of 19 December 2016, 72/144 of 19 December 2017, 73/143 of 17 December 2018 and 74/125 of 18 December 2019,

Recalling also its resolution 70/1 of 25 September 2015, entitled "Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development", in which it adopted a comprehensive, far-reaching and people-centred set of universal and transformative Sustainable Development Goals and targets, and its commitment to working tirelessly for the full implementation of the Agenda by 2030, and stressing the need to ensure that older persons are taken into account in its implementation in order to ensure that no one is left behind,

Reaffirming its resolutions 53/199 of 15 December 1998 and 61/185 of 20 December 2006 on the proclamation of international years, and Economic and Social Council resolution 1980/67 of 25 July 1980 on international years and anniversaries,

[1] *Report of the Second World Assembly on Ageing, Madrid, 8–12 April 2002* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.02.IV.4), chap. I, resolution 1, annexes I and II.

20-17080 (E) 281220

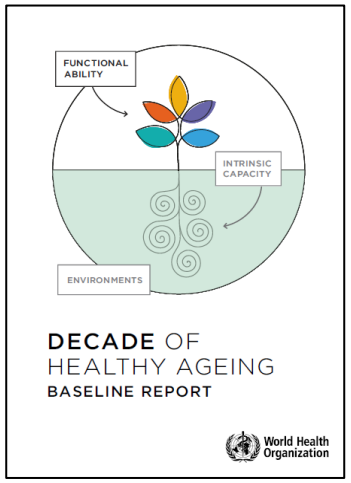
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UNGA Resolution

Commitments of WHO and UN Member States

Commitment Area	WHA 73.12	UNGA A/RES/75/131
Healthy Ageing Across the Life Course	**Promote lifelong health and prevention strategies**	**Promote healthy ageing as part of the 2030 Agenda; ensure older persons are not left behind.**
Combat Ageism & Promote Human Rights	**Call for combating ageism and promoting dignity**	**Address age discrimination, neglect, abuse, and violence; uphold dignity and rights.**
Age-Friendly Environments	**Support creation of age-friendly environments**	**Foster environments that support older persons' abilities and participation.**
Health Systems & Long-Term Care	**Emphasize integrated care for older people and long-term care systems**	**Deliver integrated, person-centered health services and long-term care; including the right to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health.**
Multisectoral Action & Inclusion	**Encourage multisectoral collaboration**	**Encourage multisectoral responses and inclusive development strategies.**
Research, Monitoring & Data	**Support monitoring and evaluation of ageing policies**	**Strengthen data systems and research on ageing; ensure disaggregated data.**
Participation of Older Persons	**Recognize older persons' contributions and participation**	**Ensure older persons contribute to and benefit from development.**
Support for Caregivers	**Acknowledge role of caregivers and need for support**	**Recognize and support the role of caregivers.**
Equity & Social Protection	**Promotes equity in access to health & social services**	**Ensure access to social protection, food, housing, justice.**

UN Decade - Timeline



2020

Baseline Report

WHA & UNGA Resolutions

WHO Ageing Data Portal

Strengthening global evidence and partnerships resulting in impactful actions (2021-2025)

2021

Framework for countries to achieve an integrated continuum of long-term care

UN Global report on Ageism

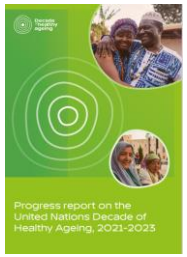
Launch of the UN Decade Platform

2022

Priorities for tackling abuse of older people (2021–2030)

First Mentoring Program on Age-friendly Environments

Healthy Ageing 50 Leaders



2023

Progress report 2023

National programmes for age-friendly cities and communities: a guide

2024

Long-term care for older people: package for UHC

Integrated care for older people: guidance for person-centred assessment and pathways in primary care, 2nd ed

Global Ageing Population Survey

Making older people visible in SDG monitoring

First on-line Training program: Age-friendly environments

2025

Recommended indicators to monitor UN Decade progress

Framework to implement a life course approach in practice

Accelerating progress and measurable impacts in countries through investments and stakeholder engagement (2026-2030)

2026

Progress report 2026

2027

2028

2029

Progress report 2029

2030

Final report

Decade of healthy ageing

WHO Mission on Older People and Healthy Ageing



WHO Global Programme of Work 14

Joint outcome 4.2. Equity in access to sexual, reproductive, maternal, newborn, child, adolescent and **older person health** and nutrition services and immunization coverage improved

"A lifecourse approach will be taken to address gaps in access to essential services, including essential nutrition services, for maternal, newborn, child and adolescent health, as well as for adults and older people."

"For older persons, integrated health and social care will be promoted to ensure a continuum of care and ageing in place. Research will be advanced in all these areas."

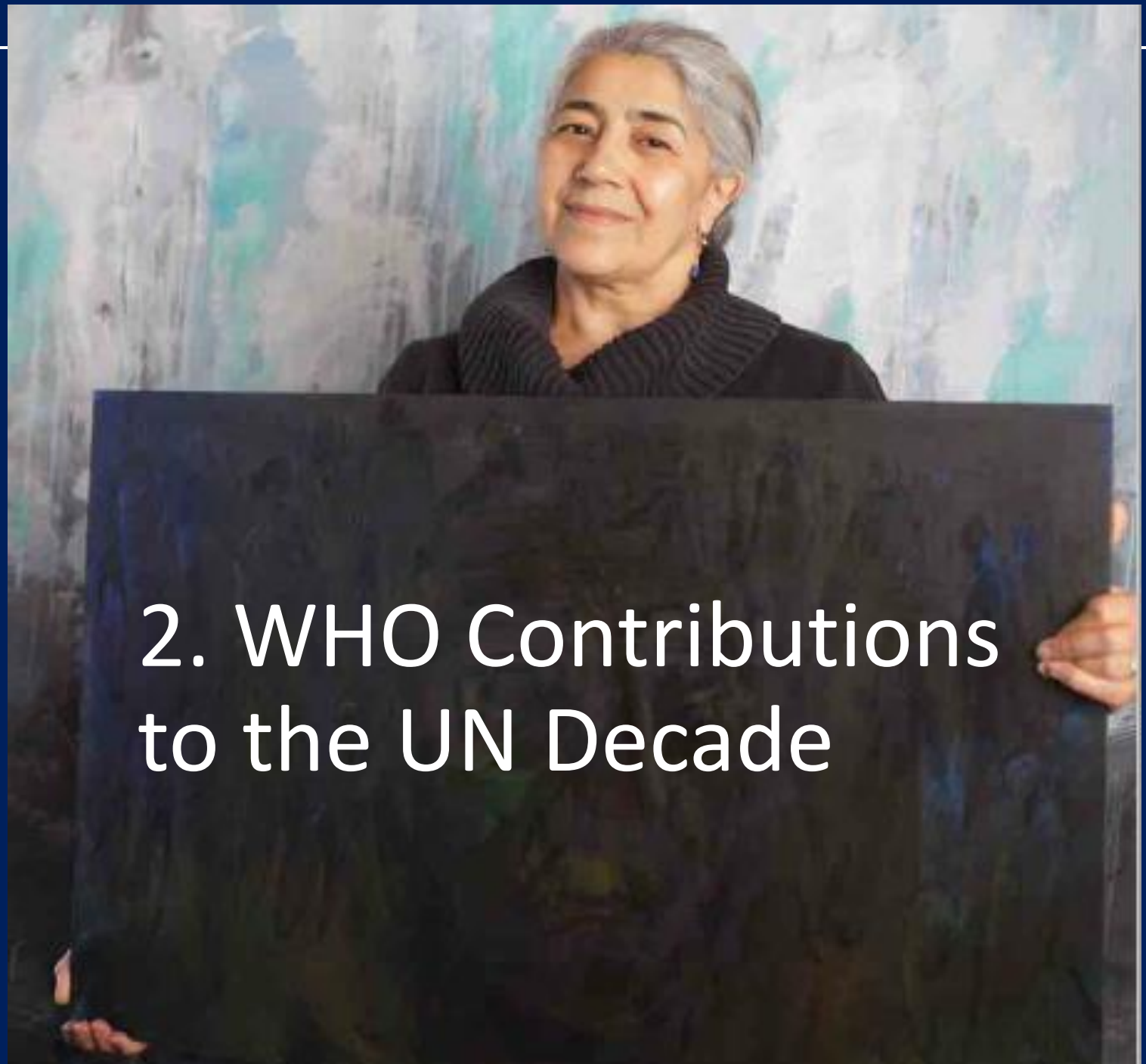
Joint outcome 2.1. Health inequities reduced by acting on social, economic, environmental and other determinants of health

"Particular attention will be given to ensuring programmes reach people in vulnerable situations or facing marginalization and discrimination, including among others, persons with disabilities, migrants and displaced and older populations."

WHO Contributions

- Leadership
- Norms & Standards
- Research
- Monitoring
- Technical Support

World Health Organization



2. WHO Contributions to the UN Decade

World Health Organization

© Barbara Donaubauer

Action Area 1: Combatting Ageism

WHO is working to change how we think, feel, and act towards age and ageing by generating evidence on ageism, building a global coalition to combat ageism, and developing tools and resources that can be used by others to take action.
This work is caried out as part of the Global campaign to combat ageism.

- 1 in 2 people are ageist towards older people, with rates higher in lower income countries
- Ageism is harmful - earlier death, poorer physical and mental health including onset of depression, social isolation and loneliness, unhealthy behaviors (e.g. smoking, drinking, etc.) and poorer quality of life
- Ageism exacerbates other forms of disadvantage related to sex, disability and race

Highlights (2021-2025)

- 2021 UN Global report on Ageism, led by WHO
- 2023 Connecting Generations: planning and implementing interventions for intergenerational contact
- 2024 Global Survey (815 people in 88 countries) - 88% want to be more engaged in the Global Campaign to combat ageism
- 2025 WHO Ageism scale (tested in 5 countries, in use in 19 countries from across WHO regions - photo shows data collection using the scale).

Impactful Leadership (Voices & Meaningful Engagement)

The WHO Ageism Scale is the only tool that comprehensively measures ageism and yields new insights.

- **Inclusive & Acceptable** – developed with and suitable for older persons
- **Translatable** – available in 10 languages, including all official UN languages
- **Strong Psychometric Properties**– demonstrates reliability and validity



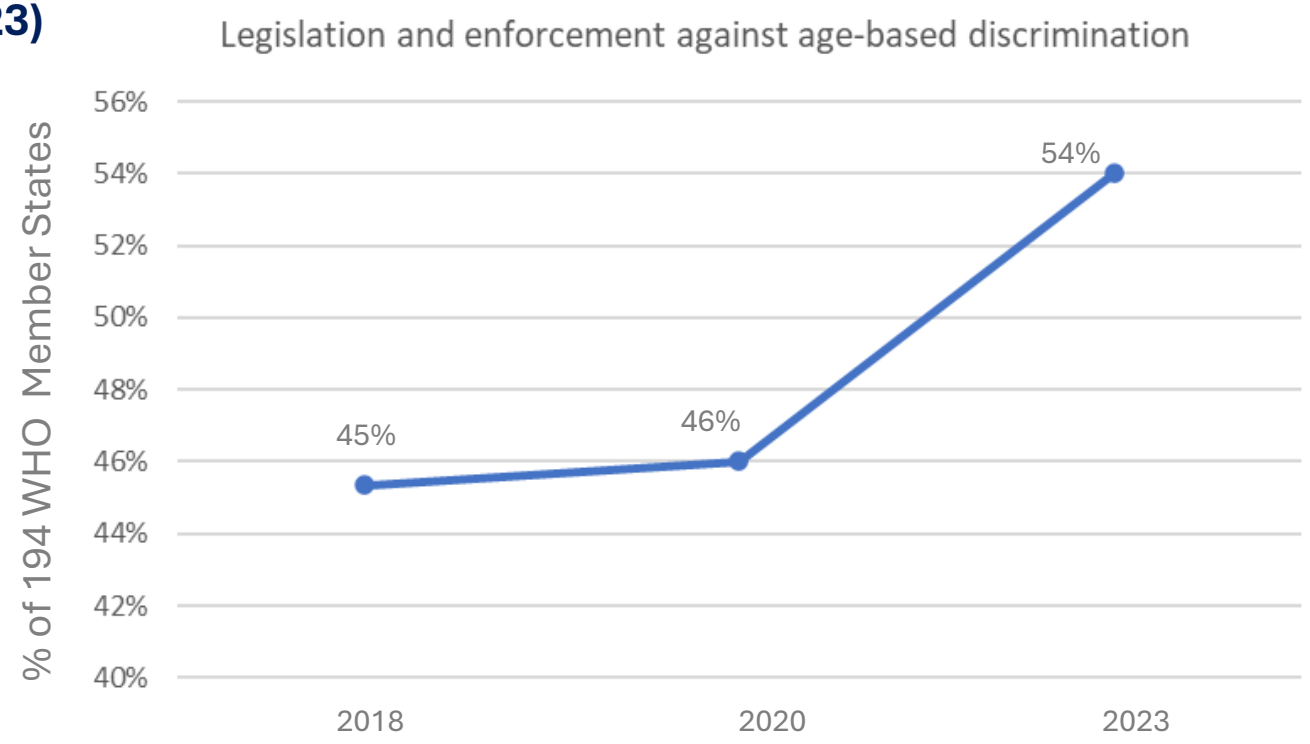
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Action Area 1: Combatting Ageism

Key Indicator: Number of countries with national legislation and enforcement strategies against age-based discrimination

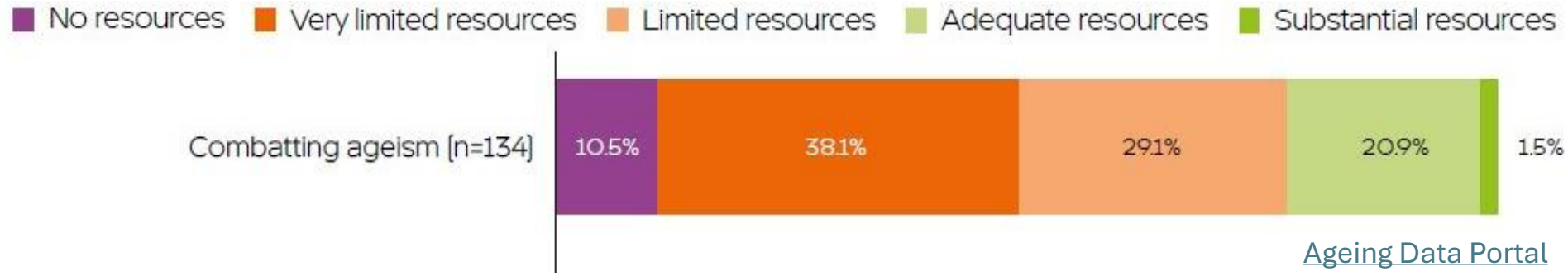
Global Progress (2018, 2020, 2023)

2023: 61 countries reported do not know or did not respond



Resources to implement Action Area 1 (2023)

Of those who reported, 48.6% of countries responded no or very limited resources.



Ageing Data Portal

Action Area 1: Combatting Ageism

WHO Proposed Focus (2026-2027)

- Support the development of a UN legally binding instrument on the promotion and protection of the human rights of older persons
- Promote use of 3 evidence-based strategies
- Review national legislation and enforcement strategies against age-based discrimination
- Strengthen research and training on ageism in health and long-term care
- Promote use of the WHO Ageism Scale
- Expand and mobilize 800+ coalition



World Health Organization

Action Area 2: Age-friendly Environments

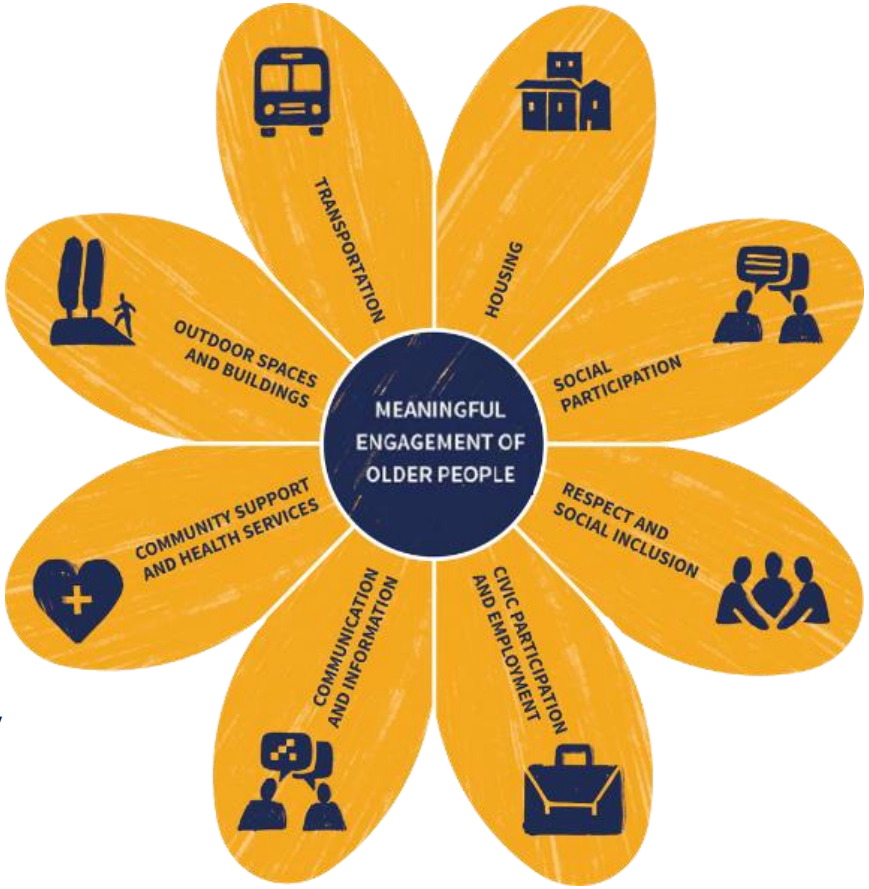
WHO works to create and sustain age-friendly environments by improving the knowledge base on the topic, developing training and support tools that can be used by others to act across sectors, and supporting its Member States at national and local levels through WHO's Global Network for Age-friendly Cities and Communities.

Highlights (2021-2025)

- Mentoring program **and** training tools on Age-friendly environments, jointly developed with WHO Regions and MS, **with 12,000+ people trained to date**.
- National programmes for age-friendly cities and communities: guide and toolkit, led by WHO and currently supporting implementation in several MS.
- **Dedicated funding schemes** unlocked support to action in communities, having older people as beneficiaries or implementers (e.g., Australia, Brazil, Chile, France, New Zealand, Wales).

Impactful Leadership (Connecting Stakeholders)

- WHO leads the single largest Global Network for Age-friendly and Communities, with **1700+ cities and communities** committed to become more age-friendly **across 60 countries**, covering **320+ million people**.
- The Global Network also counts with 21 national and subnational programmes already affiliated as well as several other MS in the process of developing their programmes, supported by WHO guidance and direct assistance **across all WHO levels**



WHO age-friendly domains of action

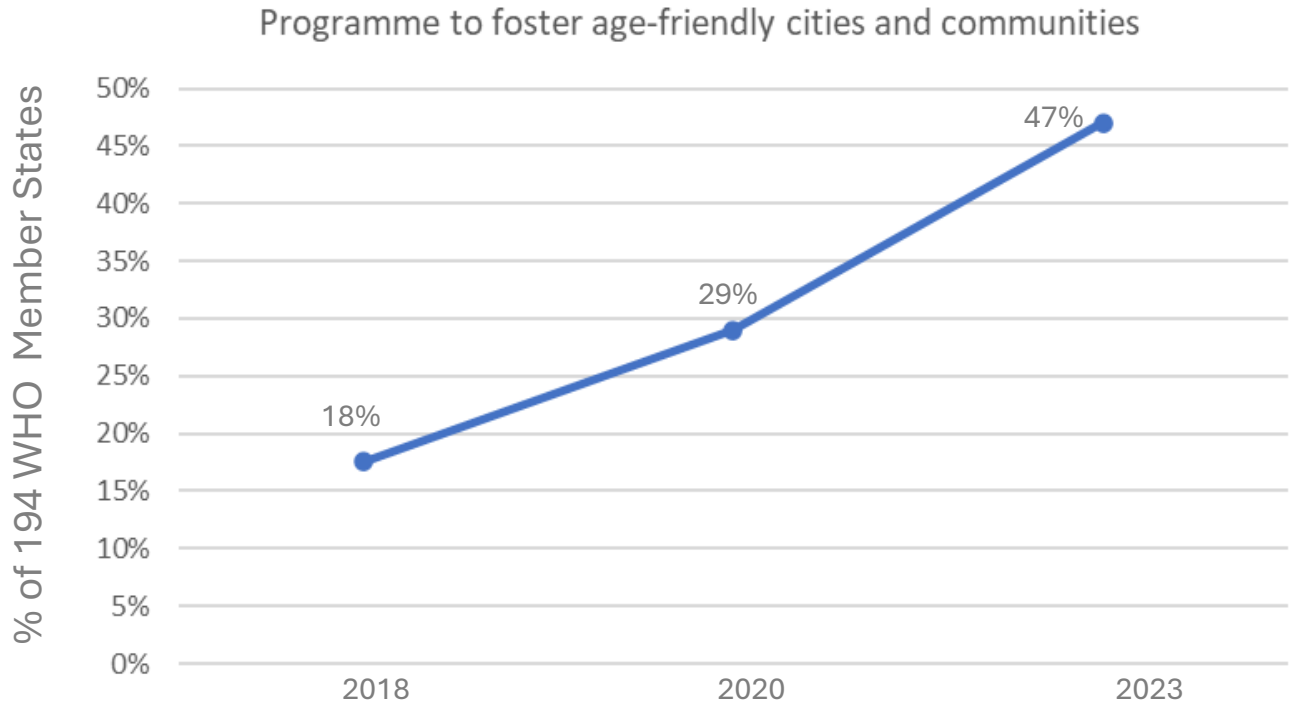
World Health Organization

Action Area 2: Age-friendly Environments

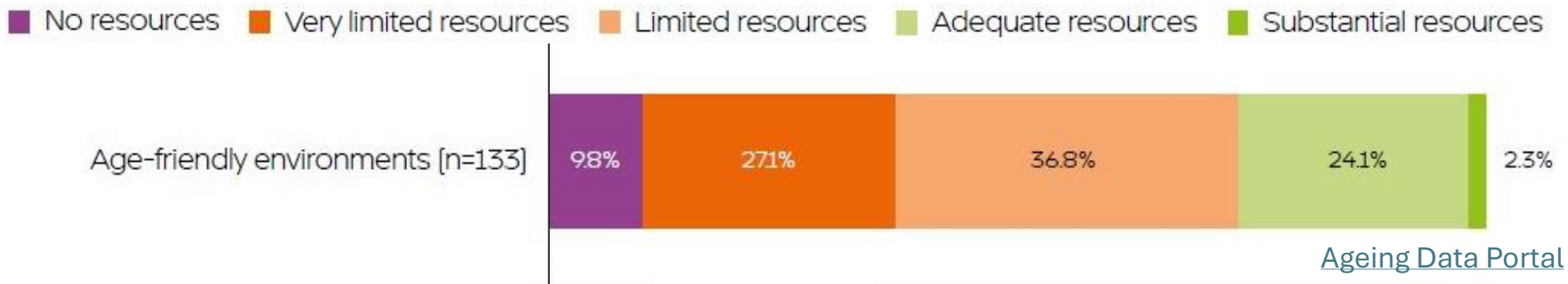
Key Indicator: Number of countries with a national programme to support activities in line with the WHO Global Network for Age-friendly Cities and Communities

Global Progress (2018, 2020, 2023)

2023: 61 countries responded
do not know or did not respond



Resources to implement Action Area 2 (2023)



Of those who reported, 36.9% of countries responded no or very limited resources.

Ageing Data Portal

Action Area 2: Age-friendly Environments

WHO Proposed Focus (2026-2027)

- **Support the sustainable expansion** of WHO's Global Network for Age-friendly Cities and Communities (included in the WHO Investment Case as a key action to address health determinants over the next 4 years)
- **Strengthen training and mentoring opportunities** for local and national age-friendly programs as well as for practitioners in health and other sectors
- **Map and disseminate evidence on effective interventions** to create age-friendly environments, and foster knowledge translation with policymakers and practitioners
- Support the organization of the **3rd World Congress of Age-friendly Cities and Communities** (June 2026, Spain)



Is your city or community part of the WHO Global Network for Age-friendly Cities and Communities?

Does your country have a national programme on Age-friendly Cities and Communities?

World Health Organization

Action Area 3: Integrated Care for older people

WHO supports Member States in advancing person-centred, integrated care by producing evidence, guidance, and resource packages.

- Nearly half of the global population lacks access to essential health services; where available, care is often fragmented and of poor quality.
- Integrated care reorients health systems to meet individuals' needs across their life course, ensuring a continuum of coordinated services that reduces fragmentation, optimizes resources, and improves care quality and efficiency.

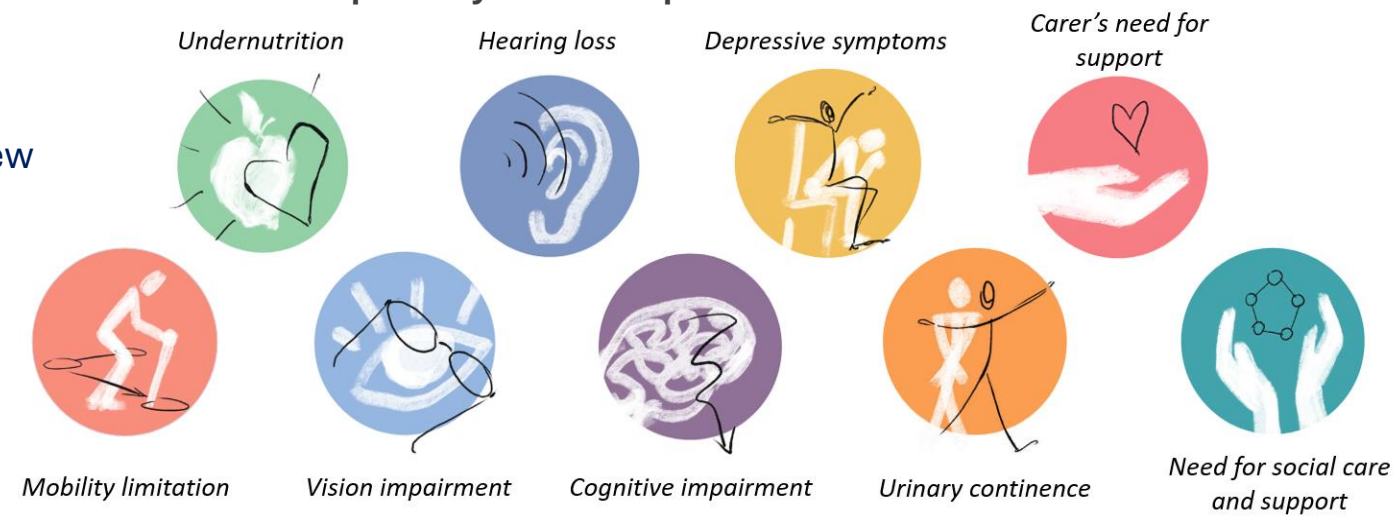
Highlights (2021-2025)

- Integrated Care for Older People (ICOPE) Handbook to support care in community and primary care settings (2024)
- Technical support (including training programmes) in more than 20 countries across the 6 WHO Regions (on-going)
- France decides Nationwide scale-up of the ICOPE programme addressing reduced capacities and loss of autonomy (i.e., basic assessment of the ICOPE care pathway (2025)

Impactful Leadership (Strengthening data, research, and innovation)

- Global Ageing Population Survey (GAPS) national (in 2 countries) and pilot (in 4 countries) testing including review by the TAG on monitoring & evaluation for the UN Decade
- ICOPE implementation pilot testing (in 4 countries), reported in: ICOPE implementation pilot programme: findings from the 'ready' phase (2022)
- Coordination of multistakeholder groups with special expertise in care for older persons to develop technical products (Clinical Consortium on Healthy Ageing)

Practical care pathways to be adapted for the local context address:

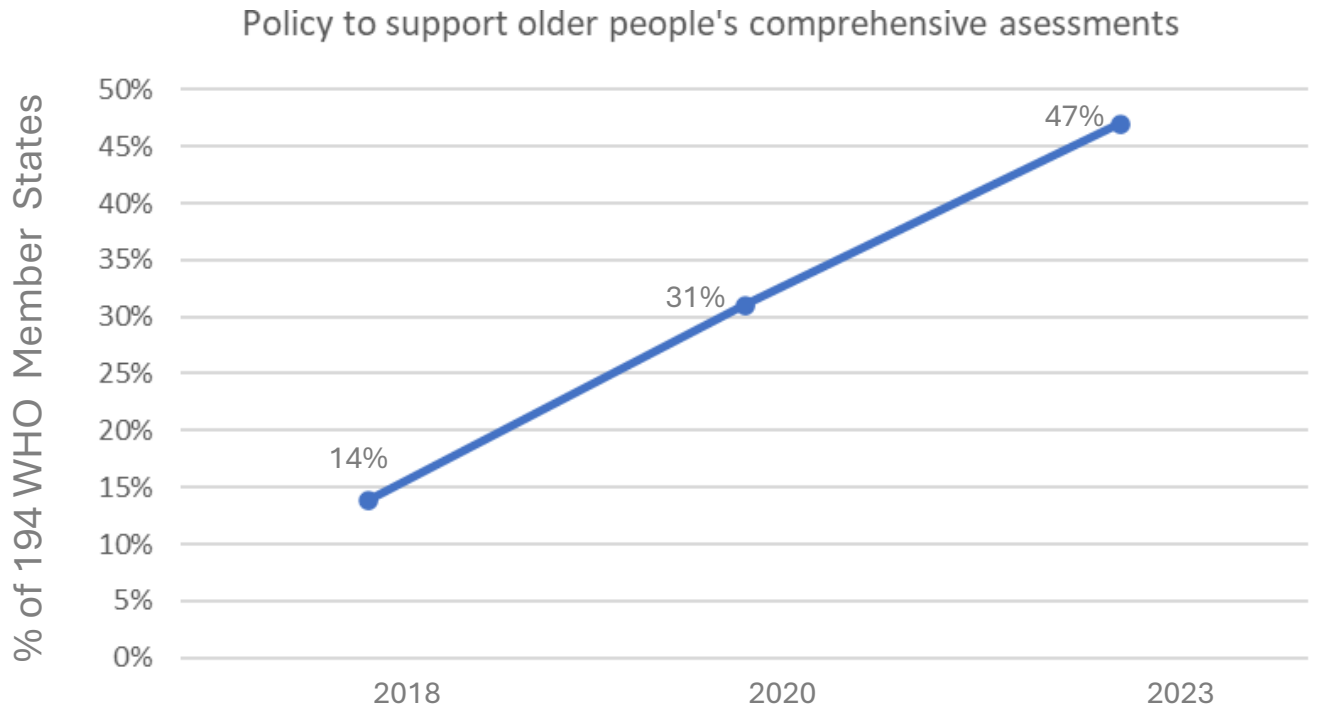


Action Area 3: Integrated Care for older people

Key Indicator: Number of countries with national policies in place to support comprehensive assessments of the health and social care needs of older people

Global Progress (2018, 2020, 2023)

2023: 61 countries responding do not know or not reporting



Resources to implement **Action Area 3 (2023)**

Of those who reported, 36.4 % of countries responded <u>no or very limited resources</u>



Ageing Data Portal

Action Area 3: Integrated Care for older people

WHO Proposed Focus (2026-2027) including global goods and tailored support as requested

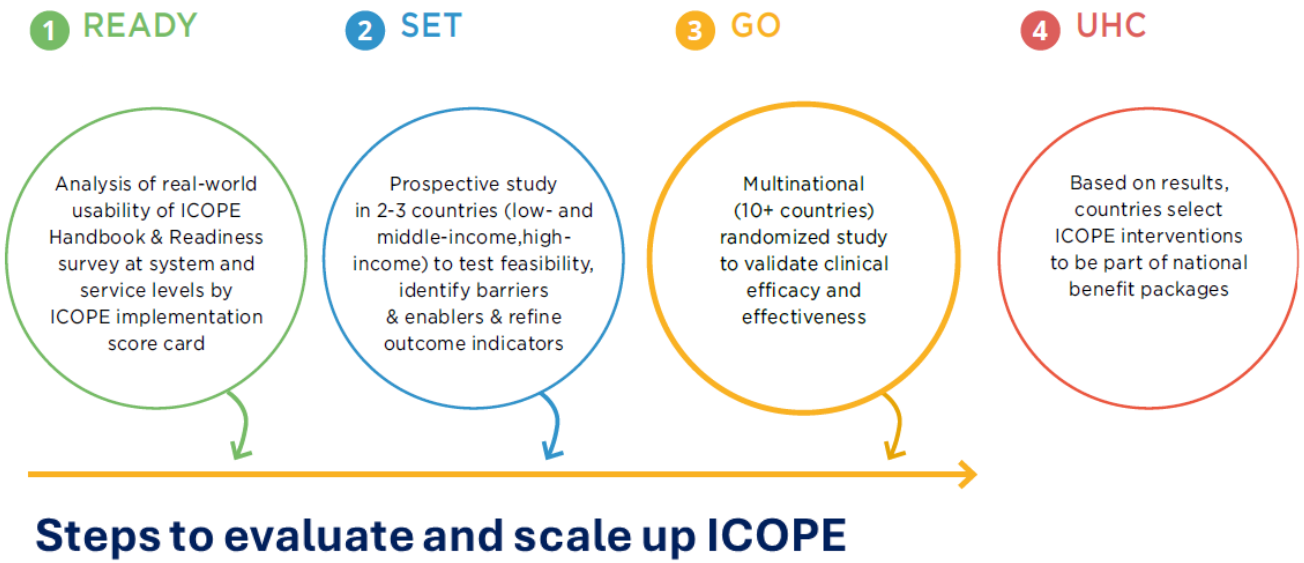
- **Building capacity of health and care workers** on how to deliver person-centred, integrated care to older persons
  - Training programmes for health and care workers, including family and unpaid caregivers
  - Strengthening Regional - Country Offices capacities to respond to countries when requested

- Technical guidance for quality of care for older people (**focusing on age-friendly primary health care**)

- Support developing, integration and implementing **essential UHC package for older people**

- Support development of models of integrated care for older people that are adapted and implemented in local contexts, **benefiting from existing human and infrastructural resources**

- **Global Initiative on Geroscience** in all regions to explore the biological foundations of ageing and intrinsic capacity declines, and support the development of preventive strategies (enabler: Strengthening data, research, and innovation)



Action Area 4: Long-term Care

WHO works with Member States to assess and build sustainable long-term care systems, by providing guidance and sharing knowledge.

- About 65% of older people will probably need care and support from others to perform activities of daily living.
- Unpaid, informal care accounts for 80% of all long-term care provided in Europe while formal care services account for the remaining 20%. Globally, only 16% of low-income countries provide support for unpaid, informal carers.
- **More than 80% of the global COVID-19–related deaths between 2020 and 2021 occurred among people aged 60 years or older.** The COVID-19 pandemic exposed vulnerabilities of care systems, including inadequate long-term care services and poor integration with health care delivery.

Highlights (2021-2025)

- Global framework for countries to implement long-term care
- UHC package of long-term care interventions + GPW indicator Percentage of older people receiving LTC at a residential care facility/home
- WHO Europe's State of LTC toolkit in partnership with the European Commission
- Health ministers in the Region of the Americas agree on a policy to strengthen long-term care

Impactful Leadership (Leadership & Capacity Building)

- Requested by the Government of China to support building its national LTC insurance system.
- WHO collaborated with the National Health Security Administration to conduct high-level policy dialogues, with CO-RO-HQ engagement, including WHO Regional Director for the Western Pacific and HQ Assistant Director-General.
- Included capacity-building workshop, exchanges of expertise and practices from other regions and countries.



WHO-NHSA LTC Policy Dialogue, Nantong, China, November 2024

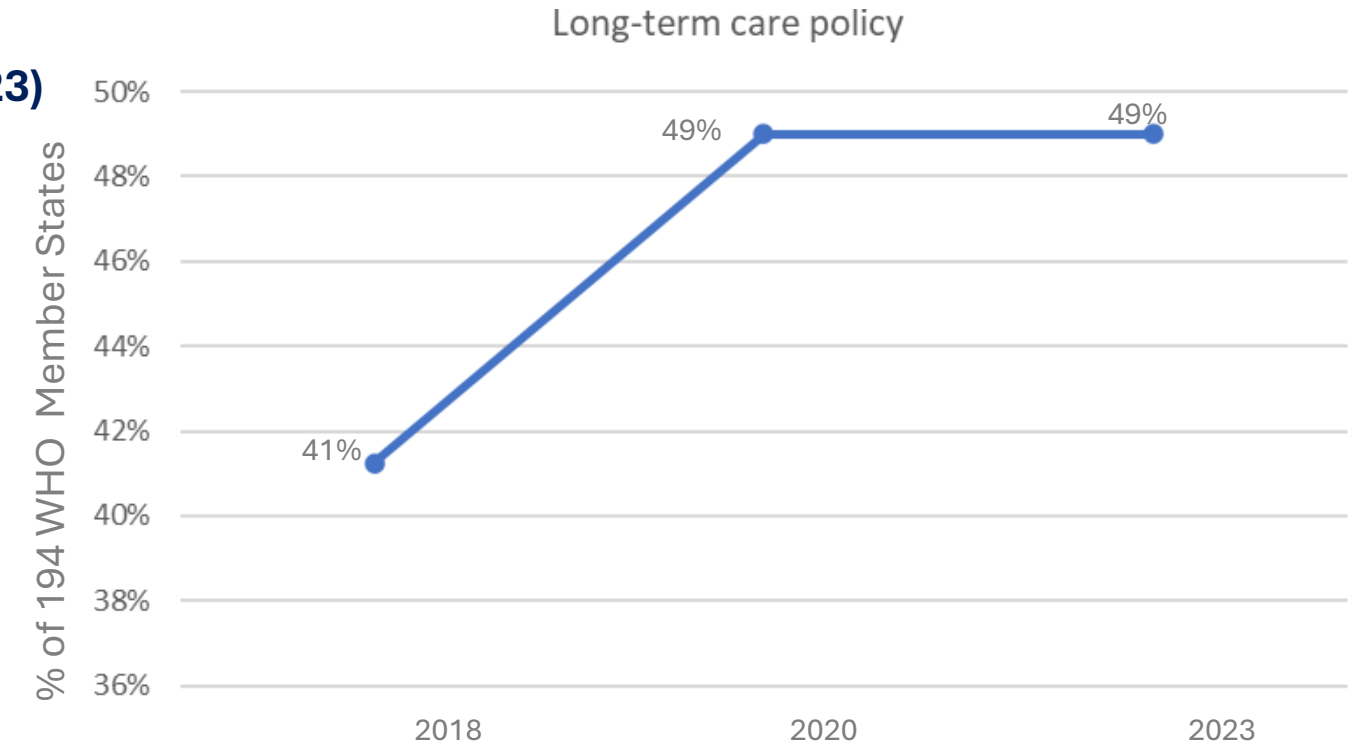
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Action Area 4: Long-term Care

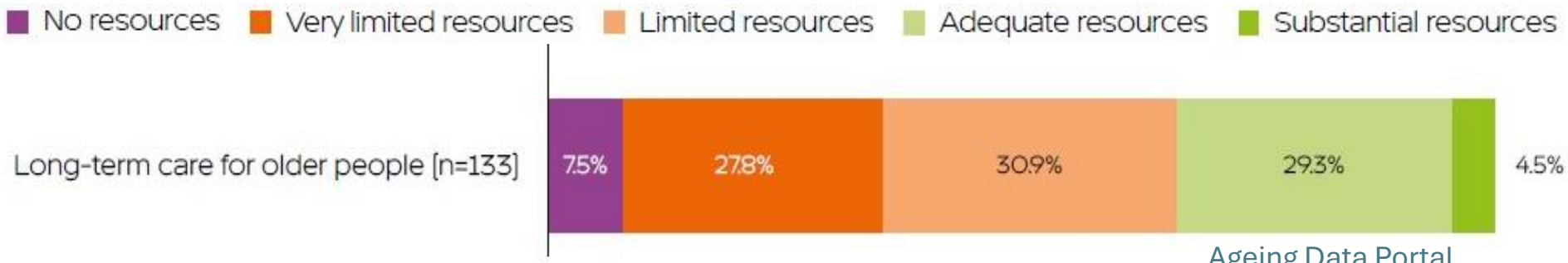
Key Indicator: Number of countries with a national policy on long-term care, including homes, communities and institutions when needed

Global Progress (2018, 2020, 2023)



2023: 61 countries responding do not know or not reporting

Resources to implement **Action Area 4 (2023)**



Of those who reported, 35.4% of countries responded no or very limited resources

Ageing Data Portal

Action Area 4: Long-term Care

WHO Proposed Focus (2026-2027)

- **Global standards on long-term care** – in progress
- Provide **capacity building resources** and support mechanisms for **unpaid (informal, family) carers** and **health and care workers** in long-term care settings
- Support countries in assessing, designing, financing and implementing **sustainable and equitable** long-term care systems
- Share knowledge and evaluated practices of long-term care, focusing on home and **community-based** models to ensure **ageing in place** and value older persons' rights
- Synthesize evidence, data and information to prepare a **series of policy briefs on long-term care**



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3. Working in partnership



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Across UN, as a UN Decade – 27 UN agencies including

UN DESA

UNITED NATIONS HUMAN RIGHTS OFFICE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER

UNFPA

UN WOMEN

UN-HABITAT

International Labour Organization

WHO/ HQ Regional & Country Offices



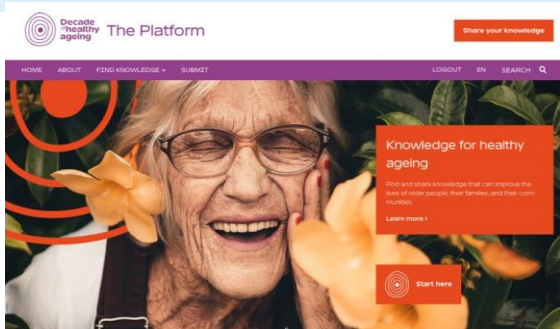
Case studies on progress and impact (map from the 2023 progress report for the UN Decade)

Coordination of the Decade, with WHO as lead agency

World Health Organization

United Nations Inter-Agency Group on Ageing

Decade Platform supports knowledge exchange



WHO Collaborating Centres

National Institute for Public Health and the Environment
Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport
WHO Collaborating Centre on Life Course and Health

tilda
Staidéar Fadaimseartha na hÉireann um Dhul in Aois
The Irish Longitudinal Study on Ageing

Trinity College Dublin
Coláiste na Tríonóide, Baile Átha Cliath
The University of Dublin
WHO Collaborating Centre for Longitudinal Studies on Ageing and the Life Course

Hôpitaux de Toulouse
Toulouse GÉRONTOPÔLE
WHO - Collaborating Centre for Frailty, Clinical Research and Geriatric Training

مؤسسة حمد الطبية
Hamad Medical Corporation
Hamad
HEALTH · EDUCATION · RESEARCH
صحة · تعليم · بحوث

WHO Collaborating Centre for Public Health aspects of musculo-skeletal health and ageing

LIÈGE université
Médecine

Non-State Actors in official relations WHO

ifa International Federation on Ageing

HelpAge International

CSOs and other groups examples

AGE Platform Europe

VILLES AMIES DES AÎNÉS
RÉSEAU FRANCOPHONE

TCG Ageing

Other institutions examples

OECD
BETTER POLICIES FOR BETTER LIVES

THE WORLD BANK

4. Next steps to accelerate impact

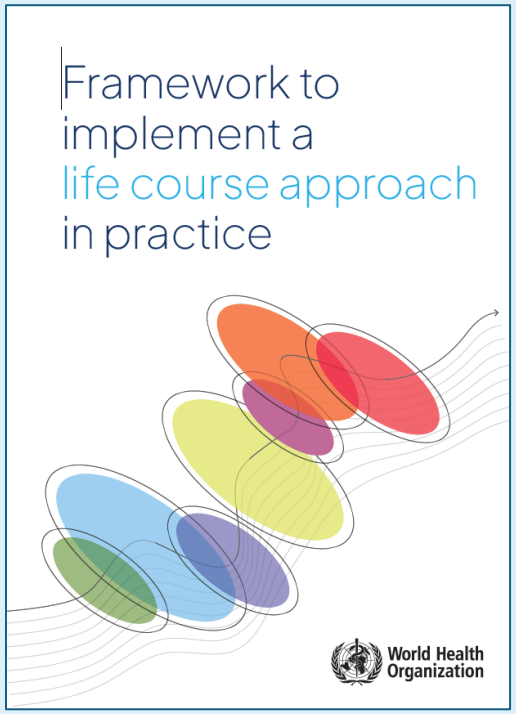


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Working across the life course

GPW 14 Joint Outcome 4.2



Report launched in June 2025

World Health Organization

Focus on the whole person

Promote health equity

Enable early, evidence-based action

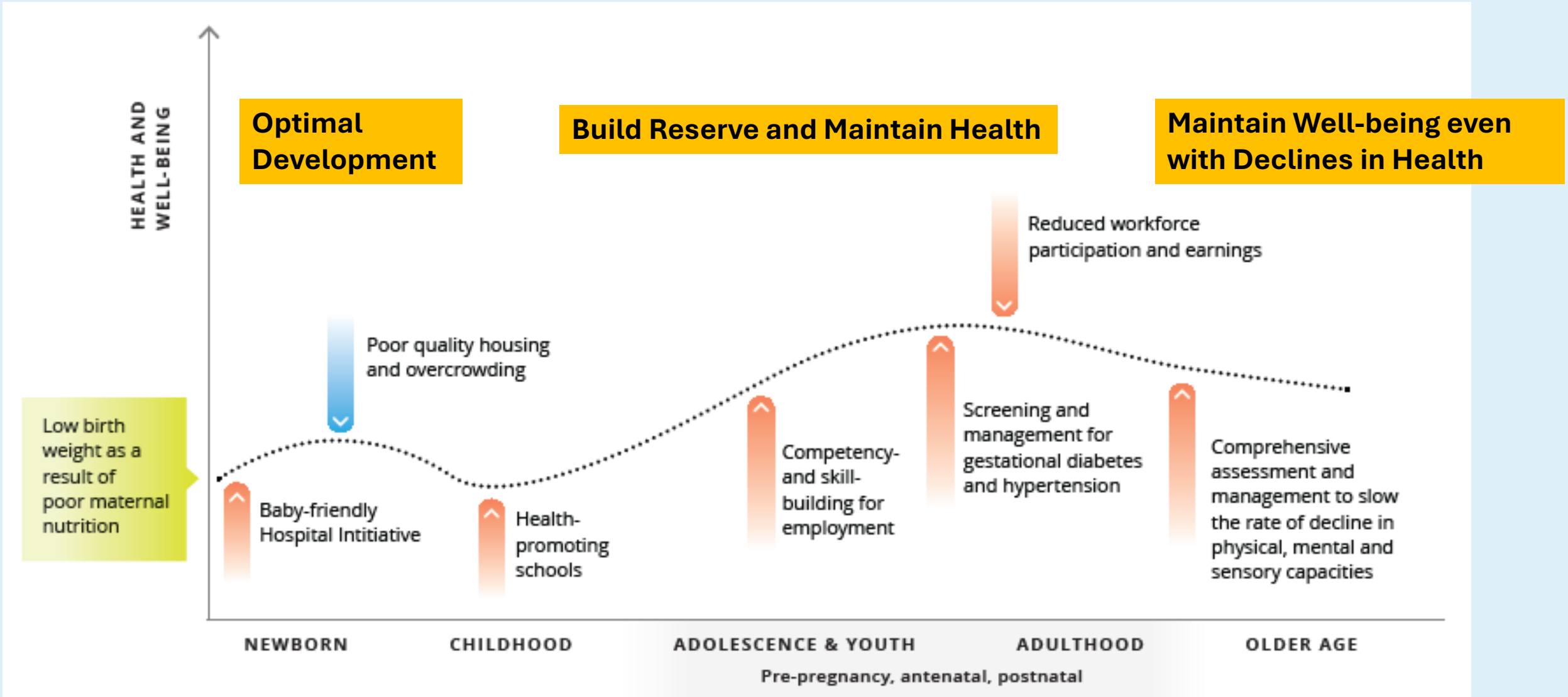
Put in place appropriate evidence-based action that is impactful in local context

Ensure evidence-based actions are taken together (with other sectors and people of all ages)

Ensure actions connect all life stages and critical, sensitive periods

Life course approach to Healthy Ageing

GPW 14 Joint Outcome 4.2



Immediate Next Steps

- **Mandatory reporting on the mid term progress of the UN Decade in 2026**

Online survey covering nine modules via WHO Integrated Data Platform (in progress).
Multi-sectoral input coordinated by national focal points (in 2022, 136 countries reported 112 focal points).
Builds on previous baseline (2020) and process evaluation (2023) of the UN Decade.
Streamlined reporting synchronized with the UN Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing and its Fifth review (2026-2027).

WHA short report to be first presented at the February 2026 Executive Board, then World Health Assembly
UNGA report to be presented at the September 2026 UN General Assembly

- **Finalizing 2026-2027 Work Plan**

WHO's leadership in implementing the UN Decade -- and the added value with its work plan on older people, ageing and life course, within evolving context – will be critical to overcoming barriers to progress and seizing the unique opportunity the Decade offers.

Evidence, tools and collaborations to support and sustain national investments and impactful actions.

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Thank you

Further information on the UN Decade of Healthy Ageing (2021-2030) and WHO's work on older people, ageing and health is available at: https://www.who.int/initiatives/decade-of-healthy-ageing and https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/ageing-and-health.

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