

Statement of Mauritius

Resumed 73rd Session of the World Health Assembly- Committee A “Decade of Healthy Ageing”, Friday, 13 November 2020

Chair,

I would like to convey the greetings of the Honorable Minister of Health and Wellness of the Republic of Mauritius who cannot be personally present to-day.

In Mauritius, some 12% of the population is aged 65 years and older. In Africa, this group stands at around 5% in comparison. To address this issue, the Government has formulated a comprehensive National Population Policy with healthy ageing as a core pillar.

In 2050, when the world population aged 60 years and older would have moved from 1 billion currently to 2 billion, it is expected that some 80% of this group will be residing in low and middle-income countries where healthcare for such category of people may not be easily accessible both from a logistical and a financial perspective.

Whilst we salute the increase in life spans, we acknowledge that most countries are already over-burdened by high levels of communicable and non-communicable diseases and, in recent times, have been further challenged by the COVID-19 pandemic. Diverting attention and resources to the issue of healthy ageing in such a situation is clearly not at the top of the agenda even though we are everyday witnessing the extreme vulnerability of the elderly in the face of the pandemic.

As we start the Decade of Healthy Ageing 2020-2030, the Mauritius delegation would like to humbly suggest that as part of the actions to be undertaken by the World Health Organization during this decade, we consider:

- (i) the mapping out of universal best practices with respect to handling elderly communities so that countries may adapt such practices as appropriate to their situations;
- (ii) that WHO develop guidelines on how to grow a more concerted and collaborative approach among stakeholders such as governments, civil society and international organizations to facilitate the lives of the elderly;
- (iii) and that in the eventuality the Universal Health review crystalizes, a specific chapter be devoted to the issue of healthy ageing to evaluate the state of preparedness of each country.

Thank you, Chair.