

Decade of Healthy Ageing 2020-2030

Update 1: March 2019

This is the first progress update on the process for developing the *Decade of Healthy Ageing* (2020 – 2030) aligned to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

This update focuses on: explaining *Healthy Ageing*; how the idea of a *Decade of Healthy Ageing* came about; how the *Decade* will be developed; and provides summaries of key fora, meetings and events that have taken place or are planned. Future updates will be bimonthly.

What is *Healthy Ageing*?

Healthy Ageing is the process of developing and maintaining the functional ability that enables wellbeing in older age. The key terms are described in the box below.

Key terms: *Healthy Ageing*

Functional ability is about having the capabilities that enable people to be and do what they have reason to value. There are five key domains of functional ability, each of which can be enhanced (or constrained) by environmental factors. These are the abilities to: meet basic needs; learn, grow and make decisions; be mobile; build and maintain relationships; and contribute to society.

Being able to live in environments that support and maintain your intrinsic capacity and functional ability is key to *Healthy Ageing*. Functional ability is made up of the intrinsic capacity of the individual, relevant environmental characteristics and the interaction between them.

Intrinsic capacity comprises all the mental and physical capacities that a person can draw on and includes their ability to walk, think, see, hear and remember. The level of intrinsic capacity is influenced by several factors such as the presence of diseases, injuries and age-related changes.

Environments include the home, community and broader society, and all the factors within them such as the built environment, people and their relationships, attitudes and values, health and social policies, the systems that support them and the services that they implement.

Why a Decade of Healthy Ageing?

A commitment to the SDGs means a commitment to:

- fostering *Healthy Ageing* – because it is a prerequisite to ensuring healthy lives, promoting well-being, achieving gender equality, reducing inequities and making cities inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable; and
- taking concerted actions to formulate evidence-based policies across all sectors that strengthen the abilities of older persons.

At the World Health Assembly in 2016, 194 countries adopted a [Global strategy and action plan on ageing and health](#) (2016 – 2030). The Strategy provides the vision and objectives for 14 years (2016 – 2030), and an Action Plan outlining actions that need to be taken between 2016 – 2020 to develop the evidence base and partnerships for a *Decade of Healthy Ageing* (2020 – 2030).

Informed by the evidence in the [World report on ageing and health](#) and aligned with the SDGs, the Strategy called for transformative change. Member States envisioned that change to be a world where people can live long and healthy lives. To achieve this, WHO needs to lead a decade of coordinated global action to foster *Healthy Ageing* across the SDGs, in collaboration with Member States and international and national partners. More information on healthy ageing and the SDGs can be found at: <https://www.who.int/ageing/sdgs/en/>

What is the process for developing the Decade?

The *Decade of Healthy Ageing* is proposed as a global collaboration, led by WHO, that will work to improve the lives of older adults, their families and the communities in which they live. During 2018, preparations began for developing the *Decade* and are intensifying into 2019.

In 2018, WHO undertook three steps as preparation for developing the *Decade* proposal:

1. **A survey targeting focal points on ageing** in countries was carried out between October and December 2018 **to identify possible priorities for the *Decade of Healthy Ageing***. A total of 174 people from 81 countries, from all regions, responded to the survey. When asked “*What issues should the Decade focus on?*”, respondents prioritized:
 - Improved engagement with older people;
 - Better understanding of older people’s needs and unmet needs;
 - Developing and strengthening health and long-term care, specifically at community level;
 - Improved multisectoral action through for example age-friendly cities and communities.

2. An analysis of previous Decades and partnerships to learn what works.

Since 1960, the United Nations has relied on International Decades of Action to pursue programmatic objectives. Ten years of push and sustained, coherent action on a development issue can advance implementation, catalyse commitment, build momentum, mobilize resources and positively impact lives.

Work to advance the *Decade of Healthy Ageing* draws from the previous experiences of other UN Decades. In 2018, using a comparative analysis research design, WHO conducted a review of previous health-related Decades which revealed a number of success factors as summarised below.

UN Decade success factors

- Ensure the powerful cause has a human face
- Identify Member State Champions, and at an early stage
- Identify and engage with committed partners, particularly civil society
- Transform the “ecosystem” (cross-sectoral collaboration and coordination, financing, accountability) not just the issue
- Having a strategic policy framework and global plan
- Articulate linkages and practice package solutions
- Focus on country level support.

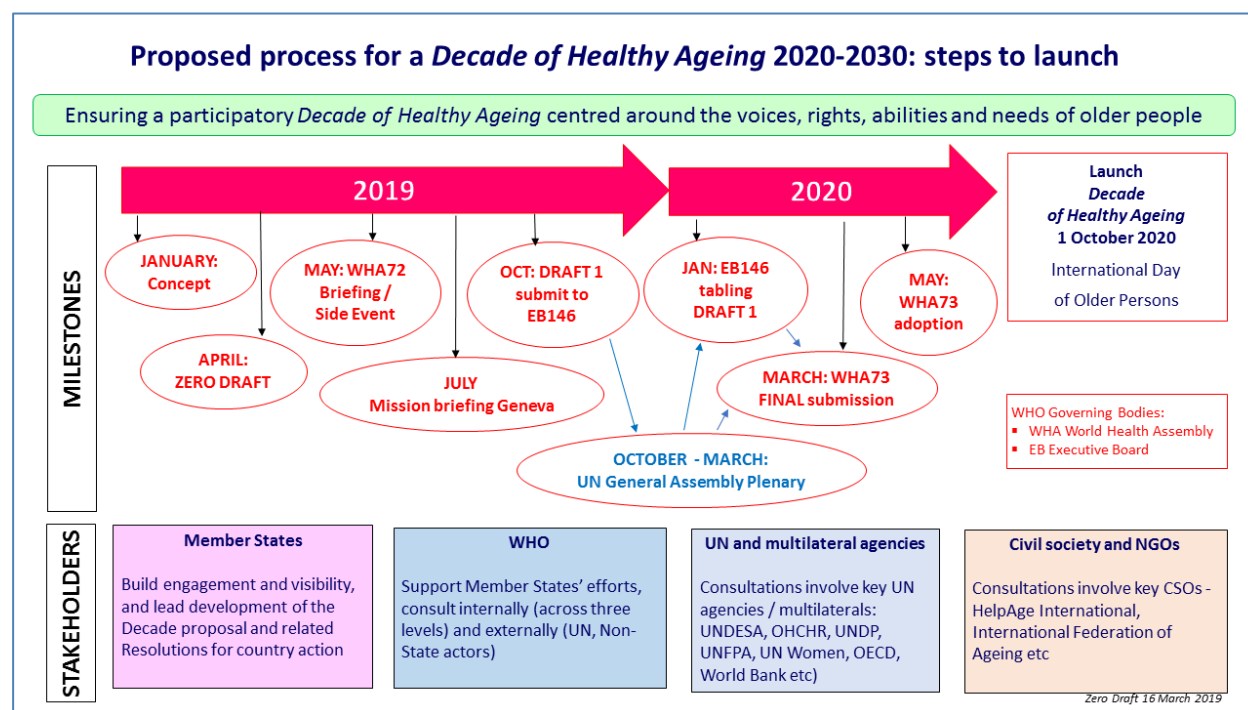
Barriers to success

- Losing sight of country level implementation
- Resource limitations
- Lack of cross-sectoral outreach
- Decade fatigue.

3. Initiate discussions on the *Decade*. In 2018, the following opportunities for consultation were taken:

- 2 February, in New York, United States of America, during a joint WHO and UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) side event “MIPPA Meets SDG3 - A Decade of Healthy Ageing” at the [56th Commission on Social Development](#);
- 11 August, in Toronto, Canada, during the meeting of affiliates to the [Global Network for Age Friendly Cities and Communities](#);
- 15-16 November, in Geneva, Switzerland, at the stakeholder meeting on the platform for population ageing;
- 21-23 November, in Santiago, Chile, during a regional meeting entitled *Integrated care for elder people. Are we prepared?*; and
- 11-12 December, in Geneva, Switzerland, during the [Clinical Consortium on Healthy Ageing](#).

For 2019, [the figure below](#) (click to enlarge) outlines the process, including the main activities by stakeholder groups and the key milestones, to advance towards the *Decade* launch on 1 October 2020.



Key milestones during the process include the development of a draft proposal for the *Decade*, broad stakeholder consultation and discussions at the United Nations General Assembly, the WHO Executive Board and World Health Assembly. To develop the *Decade* proposal, we need to engage people from around the world to identify priorities and to develop a framework for policy, practice and advocacy that will help countries achieve the SDGs.

Ageing and health on international and regional agendas

Countries recognise that, although we are living longer than ever before, people around the world are missing out on a good later life due to poor health, gaps in health and care services, and physical and social barriers that limit older people's inclusion and participation in all areas of community life. Members of WHO's Executive Board have identified key political opportunities to discuss and influence the *Decade*, including Chile (at meetings of Asia-Pacific Regional Cooperation [APEC](#)), Japan (at the [G20](#)) and Finland (during their [Presidency of the Council of the European Union](#), EU), as summarised below:

Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation, APEC

APEC seeks to support sustainable economic growth and prosperity through free trade and economic cooperation in the Asia-Pacific region. APEC economies are among those with the most rapidly ageing populations. There is recognition of the importance of adapting not only health care systems, but entire economies, to better respond to the needs of an ageing population. The scheduled August 2019 High-Level Meeting (HLM) (see events calendar below) under the theme of ‘*Healthy Economies in an Aging World*’ will aim to demonstrate how economies experiencing population ageing can invest, through a variety of innovative partnerships, to ensure stable economic growth and development. The Health Working Group will focus more specifically on “*Supporting Health Across the Life Course*”, reflecting the importance of addressing the social determinants of Healthy Ageing and the need for continued investments from birth to end of life to maintain healthy economies.



G20

The G20 is made up of the world's 19 largest economies and the EU. Population ageing is a common social and economic agenda, with 70% of all older people living in G20 countries. Ageing is a cross cutting theme in G20 discussions for 2019. There was a specific focus on ageing within the health working group (HWG) which met in Tokyo on 28 February and 1 March 2019 to initiate discussions and share national experiences on how to:



- foster healthy and active ageing through measures to prevent and manage non-communicable diseases and implement community-based multi-sectoral policies;
- improve the quality of life of people with dementia and their families through comprehensive measures including prevention, early detection, management and creation of communities that are inclusive of people with dementia; and
- sustain health and social care through medical and long-term care policies and financing measures that will require consistent dialogue between Health and Finance Ministries.

G20 members and other invited countries expressed broad support for the *Decade of Healthy Ageing*. WHO's contribution to this meeting is [available here](#).

Council of the European Union

It is important that arrangements for managing the social and economic changes brought by the ageing population are also made at EU level to maintain its global competitiveness. As part of the official programme for the Finnish Presidency of the Council of the European Union, Finland will organize a high-level Silver Economy Forum in Helsinki on 9–10 July 2019, co-hosted with the Global Coalition on Ageing. The Forum will bring together actors from the public sector, non-governmental organizations and business.



Consultations build momentum on the *Decade of Healthy Ageing*

Across the world there are significant differences between countries and regions with respect to ageing. Regional consultations provide important opportunities to identify common priorities and share national experiences which can enable others to build on what is working. In late 2018 and early 2019, two regional opportunities were taken to consult on the *Decade of Healthy Ageing*, as follows:

Countries in the region of the Americas, in Santiago de Chile

The Americas are ageing fast. Strengthening health and social care systems and their linkages with other sectors, such as housing, transportation, labour and urban development, will be key to responding well to this demographic change.

From 21-23 November 2018, the Government of Chile, a long-standing leader on ageing, hosted a high-level political forum alongside a meeting on integrated care for older adults, in partnership with Pan American Health Organization/World Health Organization (PAHO/WHO). The high level political forum was attended by the First Lady of Chile, the Minister and Vice Ministers of Health of Chile, the Vice Ministers of Health from Argentina and Costa Rica, government officials from ten countries in the Region (Argentina, Brazil, Costa Rica, Cuba, Jamaica, Mexico, Trinidad and Tobago, Uruguay, Peru), as well as countries and agencies of international cooperation including Japan, Korea and Canada. The meeting outcome was the Declaration of Santiago which proclaimed support for a *Decade of Healthy Ageing* (2020-2030).

Countries in the European region, in Moscow

From 26-27 February 2019, 32 Member States from across the WHO European Region met in Moscow, Russian Federation, for a workshop on policy innovation for active and healthy ageing. The workshop was a timely opportunity for Countries to discuss how to stimulate actions for the *Decade*, ensure older people are at the centre and what a successful *Decade* would look like and be measured.



A clear message from the consultation was that, although at different stages and system capacities, all countries are travelling on the same journey towards population ageing. More needs to be done everywhere to ensure that health and social systems are getting ready, and that social attitudes and values related to age and ageing also shift accordingly.

Upcoming events relevant to the *Decade* during 2019

March	11 - 20	63rd session Commission on the Status of Women	New York
April	7	World Health Day	<i>global</i>
	9	Launch of Universal Health Coverage Commission	Mexico
	15 - 18	UN Open-Ended Working Group on Ageing	New York
May	20 - 28	Seventy-Second World Health Assembly (WHA)	Geneva
	TBD	G20 2 nd Health Working Group Meeting (at WHA)	Geneva
June	6	AARP Global Conference: Disrupt Aging – the future of work for all generations	Washington D.C.
	24 - 28	PAHO Directive Council	Washington D.C.
	28	G20 Joint Session of Health and Finance Ministers	Tokyo
	28 - 29	G20 Leaders' Summit	Osaka
July	10 - 11	Silver Economy Forum , hosted by the Government of Finland under their Presidency of the Council of the European Union	Helsinki
	TBD	G20 3 rd Health Working Group Meeting	Tokyo
August	18	Policy Dialogue on "Health Across the Life Course" - Prevention Measures to support an ageing population within APEC Economies	Puerto Varas, Chile
	19 - 20	Health Working Group meeting	Puerto Varas, Chile
	20 - 21	APEC 9th APEC High Level Meeting on health and the economy. Healthy Economies in an aging world	Puerto Varas, Chile
	26 - 27	APEC Meeting in Mexico on Long-Term Care at the community level	Mexico City D.F., Mexico
	28 - 30	6 th Tokyo International Conference on African Development, TICAD7	Yokohama
September	17 - 19	Global Ageing Conference "This is LTC". AARP and Ontario Long Term Care Association	Toronto
	From 24th	74th UN General Assembly	New York
	30 - 4 Oct	PAHO Directing Council	Washington D.C.
October	1	International Day of Older Persons	<i>global</i>
	18	G20 4 th Health Working Group	Okayama
	19 - 20	G20 Health Ministerial Meeting	Okayama
November	16 - 17	31 st APEC CEO Summit	Santiago

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