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Development of a proposal for a Decade of Healthy Ageing 2020–2030

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Purpose

1. In resolution WHA69.3 (2016), the Sixty-ninth World Health Assembly adopted the Global strategy and action plan on ageing and health. It provided the political mandate to, inter alia, establish the global evidence and partnerships needed to set up a decade of concerted global action, the Decade of Healthy Ageing 2020–2030. Pursuant to the resolution, leveraging the experience and lessons learned from the implementation of the Global strategy and action plan on ageing and health, the Secretariat is working to develop a proposal for a Decade of Healthy Ageing 2020–2030 with Member States and with inputs from partners, including United Nations agencies, other international organizations and non-State actors. The proposal for a Decade of Healthy Ageing, which would extend the action plan from 2020 to 2030, will be submitted to the Executive Board at its 146th session in January 2020. A summary of the draft proposal is outlined in the present document.

Background

2. Populations around the world are ageing at a faster pace than in the past and this demographic transition will have an impact on almost all aspects of society. The world has united around the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development: all countries and all stakeholders pledged that no one will be left behind and determined to ensure that every human being can fulfil their potential in dignity and equality and in a healthy environment.

3. A decade of concerted global action on Healthy Ageing is urgently needed. Already, there are more than 1 billion people aged 60 years or older, with most living in low- and middle-income countries. Many do not have access to even the basic resources necessary for a life of meaning and of dignity. Many others confront multiple barriers that prevent their full participation in society.

Vision of the Decade of Healthy Ageing

4. The vision for the Decade is a world in which everyone can live a longer and healthier life. This is the vision of the Global strategy and action plan on ageing and health;¹ it is linked to the three priority directions of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing and reflects the pledge in the 2030 Agenda to leave no one behind. To foster Healthy Ageing, a multisectoral and multistakeholder response is required. The Secretariat will explore with the United Nations General Assembly their interest in calling for a United Nations Decade on Healthy Ageing, led by WHO. A United Nations Decade would have the potential to build on and strengthen existing synergies, align with United

¹ Document WHA69/2016/REC/1, Annex 1. The proposal for a Decade of Healthy Ageing would extend the action plan from 2020 to 2030.

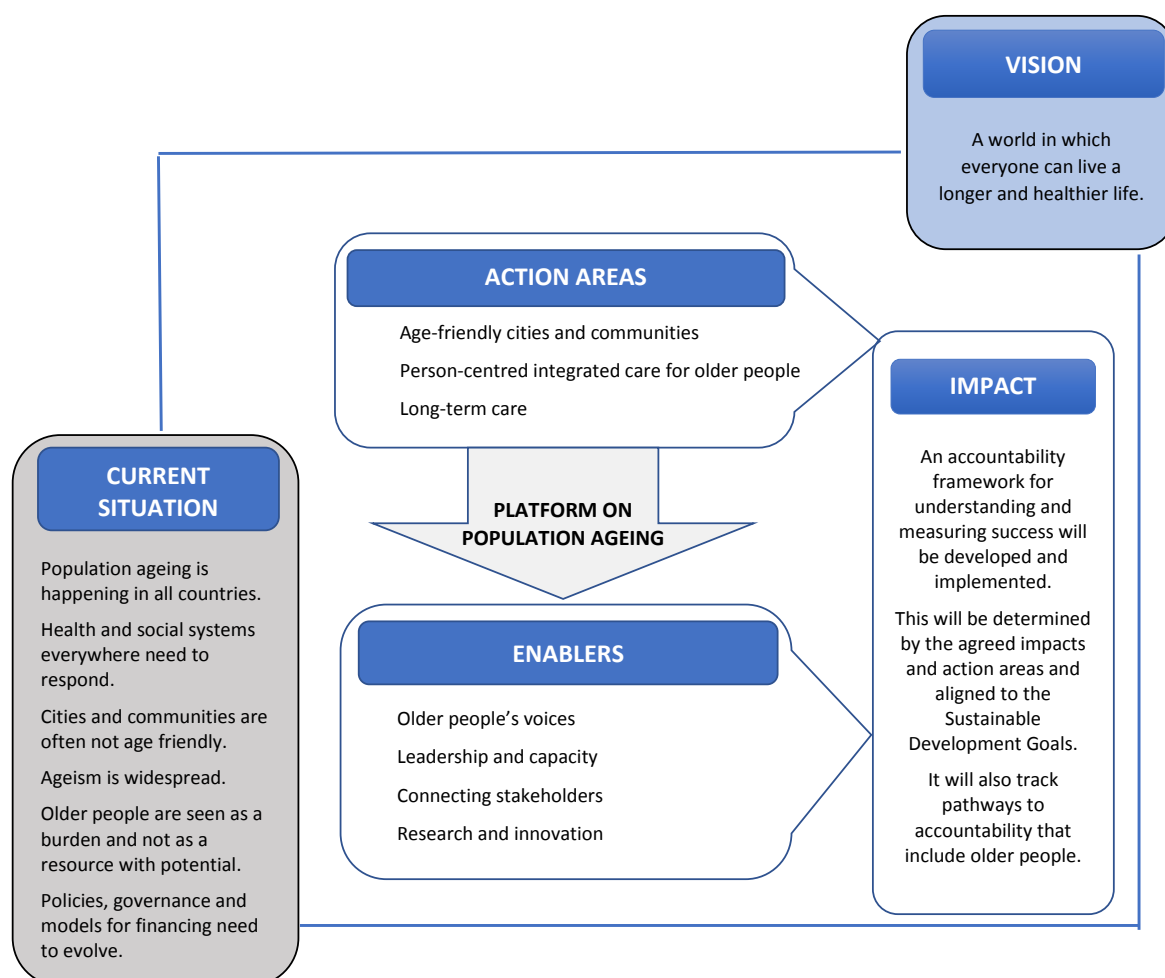
Nations reform, effectively foster longer and healthier lives and harness the opportunities that population ageing provides.

Action areas in the Decade on Healthy Ageing

5. The Decade of Healthy Ageing is proposed as a global collaboration led by WHO that will bring together governments, international organizations, health professionals, academic institutions, the media, the private sector and civil society. The collaboration focuses on three action areas (see Fig.) that are intended to improve the lives of older people, their families and their communities:

- (a) develop **age-friendly cities and communities** that foster the abilities of older people;
- (b) deliver **person-centred integrated care for older people** at the level of the community to ensure that older people get the care they need as close as possible to where they live;
- (c) provide older people with access to **long-term care** at the community level so that every older person gets the care and support they need when they cannot take care of themselves.

Fig. Decade on Healthy Ageing (2020–2030): from vision to impact



6. Given that fostering Healthy Ageing requires fundamental shifts – not just in the actions we take, but in how we think and feel towards age and ageing – combating ageism¹ will be integral to the three action areas.

Activities during the Decade on Healthy Ageing

7. The activities will:

- focus on the second half of life, given the unique issues that arise in older age, and the limited attention this period has received compared with that given to other age cohorts;
- take place at the local, national, regional and global levels, with a focus on improving the lives of older people, their families and their communities;
- be crafted in ways that overcome, rather than reinforce, inequities linked to individual factors;² without doing so, policies and programmes would risk widening the gaps and leaving some older people behind;
- tackle the current challenges that older people face, while anticipating the future for those who will journey into older age.

8. A **platform** will be established that strengthens and expands existing partnerships and alliances such as the WHO Clinical Consortium on Healthy Ageing,³ the WHO Global Network for Age-friendly Cities and Communities⁴ and the Titchfield City Group on Ageing.⁵

9. The platform will also build on and complement other WHO initiatives, such as the WHO Academy and Innovation Hub, with a focus on **four enablers** across the three action areas of the Decade on Healthy Ageing. These are:

- (a) ensuring that the voices of older people are at the heart of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of actions;
- (b) nurturing leadership and building capacity at all levels to take appropriate action that is integrated across sectors;
- (c) connecting diverse stakeholders around the world to share and learn from the experience of others;
- (d) catalysing research and innovation to identify successful interventions.

¹ Ageism is the stereotyping, prejudice and discrimination towards people based on age.

² Individual factors include gender, ethnicity, level of education, civil status or where a person lives.

³ For more information, see the WHO Clinical Consortium on Healthy Ageing webpage (<https://www.who.int/ageing/health-systems/clinical-consortium/en/>, accessed 19 June 2019).

⁴ For more information, see the WHO Global Network for Age-friendly Cities and Communities (https://www.who.int/ageing/projects/age_friendly_cities_network/en/, accessed 19 June 2019).

⁵ For more information on the Titchfield City Group on Ageing, see <https://www.un.org/development/desa/ageing/news/2018/03/title-statistics-commission-endorses-new-titchfield-city-group-on-ageing/>, (accessed 19 June 2019).

10. Underpinning this work will be an **accountability framework** to measure progress towards political commitments. A shared understanding of what success will look like will be developed through a process of multistakeholder, collective dialogue and co-creation. This iterative approach will be determined by the agreed impacts and action areas. It will align and build on existing global policy commitments and instruments (such as the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing) as well as regional plans (such as the Association of Southeast Asian Nations Strategic Framework on Social Welfare and Development 2016–2020), and will use existing indicators (such as those of the Sustainable Development Goals), where possible, by disaggregation of data by age.

11. **A participatory approach is being taken for the development of a proposal for a Decade on Healthy Ageing.** A detailed proposal for a Decade on Healthy Ageing is being developed through a broad multistakeholder consultative and iterative process before the anticipated launch date of 1 October 2020.¹ Mechanisms to **manage the Decade of Healthy Ageing** will be developed as part of this process and will be led by WHO with support from key United Nations entities (such as the International Labour Organization, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, United Nations Development Programme, United Nations Human Settlements Programme, United Nations Population Fund and UN Women) and will be developed:

- to ensure actions are country led, drawing on the leadership of governments, in partnership with civil society;
- to be aligned with United Nations reform and work to strengthen the United Nations system delivering as one on ageing.

ACTION BY THE REGIONAL COMMITTEE

12. The Regional Committee is invited to comment and provide input on the draft proposal for a Decade of Healthy Ageing. This will inform the text of the document that will be submitted for consideration by the Executive Board at its 146th session.

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¹ See the timeline of milestones, products and processes in the development of a proposal for a Decade of Healthy Ageing (<https://www.who.int/ageing/decade-process-may2019.PNG>, accessed 25 June 2019).