1. Introduction

The World Health Organization organized a side event to understand delegates and other participants’ views on what a **Decade of Healthy Ageing 2020-2030** should achieve. The event explored synergies between policy instruments – including the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing 2002, the WHO **Global Strategy and Action Plan on Ageing and Health 2016-2030**, and Agenda 2030 – to catalyze meaningful and measurable impact to improve older peoples’ lives. Distinguished speakers, panelists and over 50 participants discussed good practices and new evidence that can guide actions from 2020 to 2030 to support **Healthy Ageing** in countries, at different levels and involving multiple stakeholders.
2. Program: A Decade of Healthy Ageing 2020-2030

10:00 am Welcome by Co-Chairs
Lisa Ainbinder, UN Programme on Ageing, Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA)
Werner Obermeyer, Deputy Executive Director, WHO Office at the United Nations

10:10 am Opening Remarks
H.E. Dr Toshiya Hoshino, Ambassador, Deputy Permanent Representative of Japan to the United Nations
Sylvia Paola Mendoza Elguea, Third Secretary, Permanent Mission of Mexico to the United Nations

10:30 am Moderator Comments: WHO Global Strategy and Action Plan
Dr Ritu Sadana, Senior Health Advisor, World Health Organization

10:40 am Brief Talk: National Ageing and Health Policies & alignment with Healthy Ageing  Minxia Luo, University of Zurich

10:50 am Panelists
Dr Cynthia Stuen - Representing International Federation of Ageing
Beth Finkel, State Director, AARP New York – Representing AARP

11:00 am Moderated Discussion - Guiding Questions

1. What impacts do we expect by 2030? What would success look like globally and nationally in 2030?
2. What good practices and new evidence can guide actions that will increase overall impact and reduce inequities? To support Healthy Ageing, are there specific global public goods we should ensure?
3. What new partnerships can better guide and accelerate actions? Can we create new forms of accountability?
4. How can we create synergies between the MIPAA, GSAP, and Agenda 2030 to ensure accelerated progress, and that impacts are inclusive of older adults?

11:30 Closing Remarks
3. Program Summary and Highlights

The WHO side event on 2 February 2018 during the 56th Commission on Social Development attracted more than 50 participants, and marked WHO’s participation in the MIPAA third review discussions. It also offered a first attempt to understand delegates and other participants’ views on what a Decade of Healthy Ageing 2020-2030 should achieve.

Representatives from Member States described policies, legislative acts and signature programs at national, sub-national and community levels to advance Healthy Ageing. They also called for ensuring every country should be prepared as early as possible to address long term consequences of population ageing and health, in order to optimize Healthy Ageing. They also advocated that all countries should share experiences and increase cooperation to inform country-led impact requiring multi-sector and inter-sectoral commitment. Moreover, global policies, reports and frameworks, are useful and can be adapted to the specific priorities and context in countries or regions. Representatives from Civil Societies described advocating for policies and interventions that support older adults’ functional ability. This includes ensuring new evidence for interventions that are unique to older adults (such as improving cognitive, vision and immune functioning), as well as supportive environments that are age friendly. These should remove unacceptable barriers to accessing services and generate wellbeing across all ages.

Highlights (in order of program)

Lisa Ainbinder, UN Programme on Ageing, Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA) as co-chair noted that DESA “is pleased to support our colleagues at WHO in their implementation of a Decade for Healthy Ageing,” and that “WHO’s Global Strategy and Action Plan on Ageing and Health (2016-2020), which called for – and is preparing for – A Decade of Healthy Ageing (2020-2030) both aligns with and in many ways builds on the Madrid Plan, such as through its strong emphasis on combatting ageism and on improving measurement, monitoring and research on Healthy Ageing”...“The upcoming Decade of Healthy Ageing is an exciting opportunity to build momentum and significantly advance our common objectives towards fully meeting the health needs and concerns of older persons. My office is pleased to support our colleagues at WHO in their implementation of a Decade for Healthy Ageing.”

Werner Obermeyer, Deputy Executive Director, WHO Office at the United Nations, co-chair, discussed that Healthy Ageing and preparation for a Decade features within WHO’s new draft programme of work 2019-2023. He also discussed that in relation to WHO’s leading role to advance SDG3, Universal Health Coverage must be inclusive of older adults’ specific needs and avoid financial burden. He also pointed out that Healthy Ageing is relevant for all sectors beyond health - reflecting the spirit of MIPAA - and therefore requires intersectoral collaboration. He also called for continuing collaboration across the UN, as well illustrated with UN DESA.

H.E. Dr Toshiya Hoshino, Ambassador, Deputy Permanent Representative of Japan to the United Nations, discussed in detail Japan’s role in “promoting a global agenda on Healthy Ageing” within Japan and on the global stage. A major component is Japan’s long-standing commitment to Universal Health Coverage inclusive of older adults, and reliance on innovation to be more efficient and effective. Dr Hoshino described other policy and program initiatives, including a national action plan on determinants of health, engagement of local governments, long-term care insurance, and community based activities. Dr Hoshino called for countries to share experiences and increase cooperation. He also advocated that all countries need to prepare for the long-term consequences of population ageing and health, as early as possible, in order to optimize Healthy Ageing.
Sylvia Paola Mendoza Elguea, Third Secretary, Permanent Mission of Mexico to the United Nations, acknowledged the presentation was prepared by Dr Luis Miguel Gutiérrez Robledo, Director, National Institute of Geriatrics. She highlighted Mexico’s commitment to Healthy Ageing over the past 20 years, with a timeline indicating policy, legislative acts and signature programs. Learning and refinement of the country’s approach was communicated through “10 commandments and 4 steps” for an action plan to implement Healthy Ageing with impact. This included being inspired by WHO’s global reports and frameworks, and adapting these to the specific priorities and context in Mexico and Latin America, requiring multi-sector and inter-sectoral commitment; advocacy; developing long term care; and research and innovation as a basis for evidence based action and implementation. Step 10 notes “with a successful strategy and action plan for Healthy Ageing, we can envision a decade of Healthy Ageing to follow.”

Dr Ritu Sadana, Senior Health Advisor, WHO, provided a brief introduction to the Decade of Healthy Ageing, including a time line positioning the WHO GSAP between MIPAA and SDGs and the desirability to draw on all political commitments; unpacking the concept of Healthy Ageing including what are trajectories of intrinsic capacity and functional ability; launching the publication of the GSAP with the WHO Director-General, Dr Tedros’ foreword; highlighting mid-term status on national commitment from WHO Member States, including Health Ministries with focal points on ageing (107) and countries with an ageing and health strategy (83); and noting per strategic objective, an important contribution the secretariat with partners has made to advance the implementation and scaling up of activities.

Minxia Luo, Department of Psychology, University of Zurich, gave an overview of an in-depth review of 12 countries’ national policies on ageing and health, from all regions of the world. This review assessed on one hand, the extent to which these national policies were aligned with the GSAP’s five strategic objectives, and on the other, what accountability mechanisms are included. She pointed out that some alignment is expected, given that Member States contributed to the negotiation of the GSAP. She also pointed out that details matter in terms of resources allocated to implement policies and what is actually covered within the health sector or beyond. This work was carried out in collaboration with WHO.

Dr Cynthia Stuen, representing the International Federation on Ageing, spoke about the ways IFA is advocating for policies and interventions that support older adults’ functional ability. This includes ensuring new evidence, and testing ways to shape management and implementation. She described four important initiatives over the past year addressing priority concerns of older adults: improving cognitive reserve; addressing diabetic retinopathy and vision loss; ensuring vaccinations improving immune systems specific to older adults, are available at scale; and supporting age friendly environments. IFA advocates for more education and stronger care pathways to help facilitate health system navigation. Moreover, addressing ageism and improving equity across the life course are important issues that cross-cut these strategies, so that as people get older they may continue to do what they value and be partners in a sustainable environment.

Beth Finkel, State Director, AARP New York, representing AARP (formerly known as the American Association of Retired Persons), opened her remarks by noting that “the UN 2030 Agenda’s transformational vision and the pledge to “leave no one behind” means including people of all ages,” yet she described that the health system has responded inadequately to the changing requirements of older populations, and older people face unacceptable barriers to accessing services. She described AARP’s efforts at the local level—that are a prime target for improvements in healthy aging – and are focused on maximizing the functional abilities of residents. AARP’s signature community-based effort is the Network of Age-friendly Communities—and has 203 member communities now also members of the
WHO Global Network of Age-friendly Cities and Communities. New York and now Massachusetts have also joined as age friendly states.

**Participants reflected on what a Decade of Healthy Ageing 2020-2030 could achieve**, with the following key messages:

- Impacts expected by 2030 include an indicator on older adults' participation in decision making; targets on levels and distributions including access to interventions & impact on health, including intrinsic capacity and functional ability, and overall wellbeing

- Practices and new evidence that can guide actions to increase overall impact and reduce inequities: consider healthy ageing in the most appropriate place, whether at home and when not possible, within supportive environment including institutions; increase normative tools and their scale up in countries; better information on costs to implement strategies and specific programs; removing ageist terminology, indicators and practices, such as indicators of “premature death” and those that do not include adults over the age of 70

- New partnerships that can better guide and accelerate actions, and new forms of accountability: increase "cross fertilization" and less silos within UN agencies, across ministries at the national and sub-national settings. All UN institutions who have programmes on ageing and on determinants of ageing should collaborate and draw on all policy instruments to enable countries to scale up interventions that address uniqueness of older adults.

- Approaches to create synergies between the MIPAA, GSAP, and Agenda 2030 to ensure accelerated progress include: Every country to be prepared and committed to Healthy Ageing; Keep relying on civil society organizations to push for advances and demand accountability; and a key role for WHO, ensure Universal Health Coverage dialogue is inclusive and specific to older adults’ needs and rights.

Overall, participants agreed that with Member States and stakeholders, **WHO should develop a proposal for a Decade of Healthy Ageing 2020-2030 involving intersectoral collaboration, in alignment with Agenda 2030, for consideration by Member States during 2019.**

Participants received a copy of the newly published *Global strategy and action plan on ageing and health*, and signed up to receive updates on progress towards a Decade of Healthy Ageing 2020-2030.

**Acknowledgements**

For this event to be organized and take place with the participation of a wide range of stakeholders, the Department of Ageing and Life Course, WHO is grateful for the collaboration with UN DESA, WHO Office at the UN, Member States including Governments of Canada, Japan and Mexico and Non-State Actors including AARP, International Federation on Ageing, HelpAge International, and the International Association of Geriatrics and Gerontology, among others.
4. Background

Healthy Ageing is defined as the process of developing and maintaining the functional ability that enables wellbeing in older age. It is made up of two important concepts. The first is intrinsic capacity, which refers to the composite of all the physical and mental capacities that an individual can draw on at any point in time. However, intrinsic capacity is only one of the factors that will determine what an older person can do. The other is the environments they inhabit and their interactions with them. These environments provide a range of resources or barriers that will ultimately decide whether people with a given level of capacity can do the things they feel are important. Thus, while older people may have limited capacity, they may still be able to shop if they have access to anti-inflammatory medication, an assistive device (such as a walking stick, wheelchair or scooter) and live close to affordable and accessible transport. This combination of individuals and their environments, and the interaction between them, is their functional ability, defined as the health-related attributes that enable people to be and to do what they have reason to value.

Political commitment – Healthy Ageing and the WHO Global strategy and action plan on ageing and health (GSAP)

Promoting Healthy Ageing, and building systems to meet the needs of older adults, will be sound investments in a future where older people have the freedom to be and do what they value. In 2016, the World Health Assembly unanimously endorsed the “Multisectoral action for a life course approach to Healthy Ageing: global strategy and plan of action on ageing and health” in 2016, found here: [http://www.who.int/ageing/WHO-GSAP-2017.pdf?ua=1](http://www.who.int/ageing/WHO-GSAP-2017.pdf?ua=1) The GSAP outlines a framework for action that can be taken by all relevant stakeholders across the 15-year period of the Sustainable Development Goals to contribute to achieving the vision that all people can live long and healthy lives. It also has two goals. The first goal, “Five years of evidence-based action to maximize functional ability that reaches every person,” is framed around ensuring that this action is taken as widely as possible and in ways which ensure that particular attention is paid to those with the least access to the resources they need to maintain their functional ability. The second goal, “By 2020, establish evidence and partnerships necessary to support a Decade of Healthy Ageing from 2020 to 2030,” seeks to use the five-year period 2016–2020 to fill these gaps and ensure that Member States and other stakeholders are positioned to undertake a decade of evidence-informed, concerted action from 2020 to 2030.

In 2017, WHO carried out a series of consultations with experts, WHO staff and key stakeholders to identify transformative actions for getting the world to the point where it can take on a decade of concerted action, aligned to Agenda 2030. The WHO Global Strategy and Action Plan outlines several milestones, including developing a proposal for a Decade of Healthy Ageing 2020–2030, in open consultation with Member States, entities representing older people, bodies of United Nations system and other key partners and stakeholders. [The WHO Side Event at the 56th Commission on Social Development kicks off discussions on shaping this proposal.](http://www.who.int/ageing/WHO-GSAP-2017.pdf?ua=1)