Statement from the International Federation on Ageing
on the occasion of the launch of the WHO, World Report on Ageing and Health

The International Federation on Ageing (IFA) applauds the thoughtful and visionary approach of the World Health Organization in the World report on ageing and health launched on the 30th September 2015. For the first time, evidence on a global basis has been comprehensively and carefully analysed to inform a new paradigm on Healthy Ageing, where a person is not defined nor stereotyped by a specific level of functioning or health.

“The interplay between the intrinsic capacity of an individual and their environment is refreshing and a potential ‘game changer’” said Mr Bjarne Hastrup, IFA President and CEO, DaneAge. At the heart of this dialogue is the confirming statement that ageing is a valuable process and that society is better off for having these older populations.

Unprecedented population ageing and associated demographic upheavals such as globalisation and urbanization form a backdrop to five main objectives that speak to fostering Healthy Ageing in all countries through the alignment of a person’s needs, health and informal and formal care systems and the environment that goes well beyond bricks and mortar.

Symbolic of the potential impact of this body of work is the prominence on not only ‘measuring and monitoring’ but also on understanding the dynamic nature of policy necessary to enhance a person’s capacity to age well irrespective of illness, morbidity or other health conditions. “This is the time to level the playing field for older people, and eliminate differences arising from social and economic disadvantage”, said Dr Jane Barratt, Secretary General, International Federation on Ageing.

The IFA especially welcomes the way in which the WHO has responded to a gap in the current model of age-friendly cities and communities through exploring five interconnected domains of functional ability including building and maintain relationships, being mobile and the ability to contribute which are essential for older people to do the things that they value.

The IFA urges all stakeholders, across sectors and across disciplines, to stand behind this ground breaking report; and to help connect and create networks to drive innovation and change toward sustainable and purposeful outcomes for future generations. The underlying principles of human rights, equity, and non-discrimination and social cohesion between generations are the foundation stones for the future WHO Global Strategy and Action Plan on Ageing and Health.

“The WHO World report on ageing and health, (Mr Hastrup said), is not for the book shelf, it is a living breathing testament to all older people who have fought for their voice to be heard at all levels of government, across disciplines and sectors.”

Congratulations to the World Health Organization and especially to Director, Dr Margaret Chan and the many WHO professionals including Dr John Beard, Director, Department of Ageing and Life Course and his staff for their outstanding leadership.

The International Federation on Ageing (IFA) is
An international NGO with a membership base comprising government, NGOs, industry, academia and individuals in 70 countries; and has General Consultative Status at the United Nations and its agencies including the World Health Organization. Our vision is a world of healthy older people whose rights and choices are both protected and respected and this is enacted through being a global point of connection and networks of experts and expertise to influence and shape age-related policy.