



POSITION PAPER SUBMITTED TO THE 2023 HIGH LEVEL POLITICAL FORUM BY THE STAKEHOLDER GROUP ON AGEING (SGA)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The world's population is ageing. There are 727 million persons aged 65 and over in 2020, with projected growth to 1.5 billion in 2050 (UNDESA, 2020). In 2021 older persons accounted for more than one billion people, with 70% living in low- and middle-income countries (AARP, 2021), the majority of which live in urban areas (HelpAge International). To ensure that neither today's nor future generations of older persons are left behind, the full implementation of Agenda 2030 must include the means for older persons to enjoy their independence, preserve their dignity, participate fully in society and attain their rights. Society's perception of older persons and older age/ageing needs to be transformed to accept older persons as valuable contributors to their families, communities and the national economy, not merely as recipients of medical rehabilitation and social welfare.

A human rights and life-course approach is necessary to ensure the intersection of the global megatrends of urbanization and population ageing (UNDESA, 2020). Policies and programmes that promote healthy ageing also benefit younger people as they age.

Technological advances present opportunities to achieve Agenda 2030. However, older persons are at risk of being left behind in the digital world due to increasing digitalization of everyday life. In the European Union, almost 40% of those aged 65 to 74 do not use the internet (EU, 2021). Efforts to ensure access to and knowledge of digital technology for those over 65 are essential. The International Telecommunications Union's report on Ageing in a Digital World provides an age inclusive roadmap to follow.

Member States have committed to protection of the human rights of older persons in a number of areas: through the establishment of the United Nations Decade of Healthy Ageing, 2021-2030; adoption by the Human Rights Council of its resolution 48/3 which encourages States to take measures to combat ageism and eliminate age discrimination; the establishment by the World Health Organization (WHO) of a Global Network of Age-friendly Cities and Communities.

The SGA recommends that Member States and sub-national and local governments put in place policies, programmes and budgets that:

- (a) Include older persons in the development of information and communication technology (ICT);
- (b) Adopt age inclusive ICT accessibility and quality standards and provide appropriate training to guarantee the use of digital technology by older persons, recognizing the need to overcome sensory and cognitive conditions for some older persons;
- (c) Ensure participation of older persons in all their diversity in the development of master urban and territorial plans;
- (d) Contribute to the global effort of the United Nations Decade of Healthy Ageing, 2021-2030;
- (e) Engage in WHO's Age-friendly Cities and Communities initiatives;
- (f) Adopt mainstreaming ageing policy implementation tools and carry out age-sensitive analysis;
- (g) Implement the New Urban Agenda as a roadmap to improving the lives of older people in cities;
- (h) Collect and use age inclusive disaggregated data reaching all older persons;
- (i) Support the efforts of the United Nations Open-ended Working Group to create a convention to protect the rights of older persons.

500 words

Sources:

United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs World Population Ageing 2020 Highlights, <https://www.un.org/development/desa/pd/content/world-population-ageing-2020-highlights>

AARP Innovation and Leadership in Healthy Aging, 2021

HelpAge <https://www.helpage.org/what-we-do/ageing-cities/>

United Nations Economist Network Shaping the Trends of Our Time, 2020

European Union, <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/products-eurostat-news/-/edn-20210517-1>, 2021

ITU. Ageing in a Digital World-From vulnerable to valuable, 2021,

https://www.itu.int/dms_pub/itu-d/opb/phcb/D-PHCB-DIG_AGE-2021-PDF-E.pdf

World Health Organization: <https://extranet.who.int/agefriendlyworld/>

UNHabitat, <https://habitat3.org/wp-content/uploads/NUA-English.pdf>