



**World Health
Organization**

REGIONAL OFFICE FOR **Africa**

AFR/RC70/INF.DOC/1

6 October 2020

REGIONAL COMMITTEE FOR AFRICA

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

Seventieth session

Virtual session, 25 August 2020

Agenda item 18.1

**PROGRESS REPORT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE GLOBAL STRATEGY AND
PLAN OF ACTION ON AGEING AND HEALTH 2016–2030**

Information Document

CONTENTS

	Paragraphs
BACKGROUND	1–3
PROGRESS MADE.....	4–8
NEXT STEPS	9–11

BACKGROUND

1. The world is experiencing a demographic transition with the global population ageing rapidly. By 2050, the number of people aged 60 years and older will more than double from about one billion in 2019 to 2.1 billion¹ globally. The population of older people will grow fastest in Africa, from 32 million to about 101 million in 2050, with profound health and social consequences.¹
2. In 2016, the Sixty-sixth Regional Committee for Africa endorsed the implementation framework² (AFR/RC66/19) for the Global strategy on ageing and health³ 2016–2020 (WHA69.3). The Framework provides programmatic and policy orientations for accelerating the achievement of the goals of the Global strategy in the Region.
3. This report summarizes the progress made in implementing the regional framework on ageing and health and proposes the next steps.

PROGRESS MADE

4. **Assessment of the health and social needs of older people:** A protocol as well as assessment tools for a situation analysis of the health and well-being of older persons have been developed and are being adapted for use by Member States. In 2018 and 2019, Botswana, Burundi, Cameroon, Eritrea and Nigeria conducted baseline assessments to inform their national strategic plans on healthy ageing.
5. **Development of comprehensive national policies and costed plans to improve healthy ageing:** The number of Member States with multisectoral healthy ageing policies and strategic plans, and with a focal person for their healthy ageing programmes increased from 10 in 2017 to 23 Member States⁴ in 2019.
6. **Aligning health systems to the needs of older people:** All Member States except the seven⁵ scheduled for 2020 have been oriented on the WHO Integrated Care for Older People (ICOPE) guidelines using the primary health care approach. Country teams, consisting of health and social workers, received training on appropriate approaches to working together at the community level for early detection and management of declines in physical and mental capacities of older people, and how to support household caregivers.
7. **Establishment of evidence and partnerships to support the Decade of Healthy Ageing 2020–2030:** Member States are being sensitized on the fundamental shifts and priority areas of action

¹ United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (2019). World Population Prospects 2019, custom data acquired via website. <https://population.un.org/wpp/DataQuery/>, last accessed 14 February 2020.

² Resolution AFR/RC66/8, Multisectoral action for a life course approach to healthy ageing: Implementation framework for the African Region. In: *Sixty-Sixth Session of the WHO Regional Committee for Africa. Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 19-23 August 2016, Final Report*. Brazzaville, World Health Organization, Regional Office for Africa, 2016 (AFR/RC66/19) pp. 59-64.

³ WHA69.3. Global strategy and action plan on ageing and health 2016–2020: towards a world in which everyone can live a long and healthy life. In: *Sixty-ninth World Health Assembly, Geneva, 23–29 May 2016. Resolutions and decisions, annexes*. Geneva: World Health Organization; 2016:8–11 (WHA69/2016/REC/11; http://apps.who.int/gb/ebwha/pdf_files/WHA69-REC1/A69_2016_REC1-en.pdf#page=1, accessed [12 November 2019]).

⁴ Algeria, Benin, Burkina Faso, Botswana, Cabo Verde, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Madagascar, Mauritius, Niger, Nigeria, Mozambique, Rwanda, Congo, Senegal, United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia, Zimbabwe.

⁵ Central African Republic, Chad, Guinea, Sao Tome and Principe, Seychelles, Eswatini, Togo.

to foster healthy ageing and improve the lives of older people and their families and communities during the 10 years of concerted and sustained collaboration from 2020–2030, also referred to as the *Decade*. Member State representatives have made inputs into the draft *Decade* proposal which is expected to be launched on 1 October 2020 on the International Day of Older Persons, following its endorsement by the UN General Assembly.

8. Although the Region has made modest progress, daunting challenges still have to be overcome to contend with the inevitable and potentially overwhelming health and social consequences of rapid population ageing. These challenges include: the lack of a national healthy ageing programme in about 50% of Member States and weak capacity to address the health and social needs of older people at the community level in an integrated manner through the primary health care system in countries where the programme exists. Other challenges include the lack of comprehensive long-term care systems for older people, low coverage of social protection schemes for older people and inadequate data for planning.

NEXT STEPS

9. Member States should:

- (a) take urgent steps to strengthen or establish multisectoral healthy ageing programmes, early in the Decade of Healthy Ageing 2020–2030;
- (b) train frontline health and social workers to provide integrated care for older people;
- (c) reinforce formal and informal long-term care at community level;
- (d) develop specialist care for older people;
- (e) provide effective social and legal protection for older people and support them during emergencies;
- (f) strengthen national systems to collect data for planning healthy ageing programmes.

10. WHO and partners should:

- (a) provide technical support to Member States to develop/align their national healthy ageing strategies with the priority actions of the Decade of Healthy Ageing 2020–2030;
- (b) mobilize additional resources to support Member States in implementing and scaling up integrated care for older people using the primary health care approach.

11. The Regional Committee noted this progress report and endorsed the proposed next steps.