



**World Health
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RESOLUTION

HEALTHY AGEING IN THE AFRICAN REGION: SITUATION ANALYSIS AND WAY FORWARD (Document AFR/RC63/4)

The Regional Committee,

Recognizing that ageing is becoming a major challenge in Member States;

Recalling World Health Assembly resolutions WHA58.16 and WHA65.3 that urged countries to improve health care services for elderly persons within existing national primary health care systems, and Resolution AFR/RC62/R6 that reaffirmed the right to health for vulnerable and marginalized populations;

Having considered the technical document entitled ‘Healthy ageing in the African Region: situation analysis and way forward’, highlighting the urgent need to address the issues and challenges of the elderly in the Region;

Cognizant of the importance of the 2002 Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing and the African Union Policy Framework and Plan of Action on Ageing that provide guidance to Member States in developing national policies and programmes;

Noting that a number of Member States have to make the issue of healthy ageing a priority in their national health and development agenda and to address ageing with a comprehensive multisectoral approach in order to respond adequately to the basic needs of an ageing population;

Concerned that health systems have not been prepared to respond to the needs of the rapidly ageing population including preventive, curative, palliative and specialized care, and that this is putting an additional strain on already overstretched health systems;

Considering that gender-based inequities affect mostly elderly women, leading to feminization of poverty, disempowerment, discrimination and violence against them;

Aware of the need to conduct research within the African context on specific issues arising from the inadequacy of social insurance protection, the dynamics of multigenerational households, and the relationship between ageing and urbanization;

Noting with deep concern the absence of economic support systems for most of the elderly people, the declining family support and the increasing tendency towards family nuclearization, leaving the elderly totally abandoned and unsupported;

Recognizing the pivotal role elderly people play in society as a source of wisdom and custodians of traditional knowledge, and their potential contribution to the development of countries;

1. URGES Member States:

- (a) to give greater priority in their national development frameworks to issues related to population ageing and develop or strengthen national health policies and programmes targeting the elderly through a holistic and intersectoral approach;
- (b) to undertake needs assessments on the health status of the elderly;
- (c) to strengthen appropriate service delivery for the elderly within existing national health systems to provide specialized health care that is affordable, and pay special attention to the training of health professionals and home-based aid nurses/family caregivers on care for the elderly;
- (d) to integrate palliative care within primary health care setting and define a minimum care package targeting different providers of care;
- (e) to encourage measures that improve gender-sensitive interventions in order to address the specific health problems related to the ageing of women and men, and provide effective social and legal protection for the elderly population;
- (f) to identify priority interventions to address the nutritional needs of poor elderly people in order to ensure their food security and improve their access to adequate nutrition;
- (g) to protect and assist elderly persons during emergency situations;
- (h) to conduct research tailored to the needs of elderly people and support the collection of gender- and age- specific data on health issues related to ageing for policy planning, monitoring and evaluation;
- (i) to continue to highlight the importance of the primary health care approach and promote healthy lifestyle early in and throughout life for the prevention and management of diseases;
- (j) to increase awareness of the need to improve family and community support for the elderly right from primary education, initiate intergenerational solidarity actions aimed at promoting positive attitudes among the youth towards elderly people and put in place supportive policies for family members caring for the elderly.

2. REQUESTS the Regional Director:

- (a) to further raise awareness of the challenges posed by the ageing of the population and propose innovative policies and strategies to promote active and healthy ageing;
- (b) to support a study on the impact of ageing on health systems and make recommendations to guide policies, strategies and resource mobilization;

- (c) to continue supporting countries to develop appropriate strategies and plans to promote healthy lifestyles at early age in order to reduce the burden of chronic diseases and address their risk factors;
- (d) to provide technical support to Member States for the development of policies and the prioritization of interventions targeted at the elderly;
- (e) to facilitate and support the sharing of information and experience on healthy ageing in the Region;
- (f) to align and harmonize reporting between World Health Assembly and Regional Committee resolutions on the elderly in order to avoid multiple reporting;
- (g) to propose a regional implementation framework for active and healthy ageing in countries;
- (h) to report on the progress made to the Regional Committee every two years.