



United Nations
Inter-Agency Group
on Ageing

Common Messages



October 2025

Acknowledgement

The Co-Chairs of the United Nations Inter-Agency Group on Ageing wish to express their sincere appreciation to all members of the Group for their active engagement and contributions in shaping the Common Messages. Special thanks are extended to members of the United Nations Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality for their collaboration and valuable inputs.

This document reflects the collective effort, commitment, and collaboration of all involved, and stands as a testament to the strength of our joint work.

2025 Co-Chairs,
UN DESA and UN ESCWA

Introduction

The United Nations Inter-Agency Group on Ageing (IAGA), referenced by the General Assembly in the context of its follow-up to the Second World Assembly on Ageing, including in resolution 79/147, and formalized by the Secretary-General's Executive Committee in its decision 2022/38, is coordinating the development of common messages, pursuant to the call made in that decision. A number of intergovernmental developments have further shaped the global agenda on ageing and the human rights of older persons. A summary of these is provided in the [Annex](#).

In this context, and informed by existing and newly adopted intergovernmental mandates on ageing and the human rights of older persons, IAGA is developing a set of common, system-wide messages to guide the United Nations system's contributions across relevant processes. These messages aim to support a coherent and unified approach to the well-being and human rights of older persons, and to lay the groundwork for the gradual development of a United Nations strategy on ageing that fully integrates age- and gender-responsive and rights-based approaches across the system.

Foundational core principles

The United Nations system's common messages on population ageing, older persons and their human rights are grounded in shared values and principles that guide our collective efforts. These principles reflect our commitment to coherence, impact, and align with relevant intergovernmentally agreed mandates, outcomes and priorities:

- Population ageing is a **human success story**, the result of improved public health and medical advancements, and overall socioeconomic development.
- **Population ageing is a demographic transformation** with profound consequences for every aspect of individual, community, national and international life, and must no longer be treated as a stand-alone issue or an afterthought.
- The promotion and protection of all **human rights and fundamental freedoms** form the foundation of an inclusive society for all ages, where older persons live in dignity and security, participate fully, without discrimination and violence, and on the basis of equality and dignity. Older persons should be able to pursue opportunities for the full development of their potential.
- **Gender equality** and the rights and contributions of older women are central to inclusive development. As the majority of older persons today, older women remain underrecognized despite their vital economic, social, and cultural roles. Addressing gender inequality throughout the life course is essential to ensure ageing policies are equitable, inclusive, and fully reflect the leadership and contributions of older women.
- Ensuring the **full, effective and meaningful participation of older persons** on an equal basis with others in decision-making and public life is essential. Older persons must be heard, valued, and engaged at all levels of policymaking and society.

-
- Recognition of the **diversity** among older persons, and the importance of applying a lens of non-discrimination across factors such as age, gender, race, disability, place of residence, and other relevant characteristics, to address disparities in access to services, social support, economic opportunities, and to ensure inclusion, equality, autonomy and independence for all older persons.
 - Adopting a **life-course approach** is vital to address population ageing and to inform policies concerning older persons and the protection of their human rights. It acknowledges the cumulative impact of experiences and inequalities from early life and calls for a shift from linear models of education, work and retirement toward more inclusive and flexible frameworks throughout life.
 - Recognition and visibility of the valuable contributions of older persons, alongside efforts to challenge ageism as well as **age-based discrimination**, are essential to fostering a **positive image of ageing** in society.
 - In an era of extended longevity and multigenerational coexistence, applying an **intergenerational solidarity lens** to address issues helps ensure that population ageing, as a demographic transformation, promotes cohesion, fairness and shared benefit for all generations.

24 Common Messages¹ for the United Nations System

Older Persons and Development	Advancing Health and Well-being into Old Age	Ensuring Enabling and Supportive Environments
1. Address how inequalities across the life course intersect to shape outcomes in older age	12. Promote accessible, age- and gender-responsive health care and health promotion for healthy ageing	17. Ensure inclusive humanitarian action for older persons
2. Address poverty and inequality in the context of ageing societies	13. Advance age- and gender-responsive care and support systems, including long-term care and support	18. Promote bridging the digital divide and advancing age-inclusive AI and emerging technologies and ensure that digital transformation processes do not lead to or exacerbate social exclusion of older persons
3. Promote the expansion and strengthening of universal social protection systems for all ages	14. Support Member States in strengthening food security and eliminating hunger among older persons	19. Promote ageing in place and build inclusive, age-friendly environments
4. Promote inclusive labour force participation, decent employment and entrepreneurship	15. Promote the mental health and psychosocial well-being of older persons	20. Advance inclusive environments through age-friendly rural development, urban planning, and universal design
5. Leverage the longevity economy by promoting financial inclusion for older persons and financial literacy	16. Advance efforts to prevent and address neglect, abuse and violence against older persons	21. Ensure inclusive climate action for older persons
6. Support Member States in mobilizing sustainable financing for inclusive development in ageing contexts		22. Promote equal access to justice for older persons
7. Support Member State efforts to protect and promote the human rights of older persons		23. Advance age-inclusive access to culture, travel and tourism
8. Promote gender equality and the rights, agency and contributions of older women		24. Strengthen data, research and evidence for ageing policy
9. Promote lifelong learning opportunities for all ages		
10. Promote the participation of older persons in decision-making		
11. Advance the rights of older persons in contexts of migration and displacement		

¹ The common messages are organized to help readers navigate issues of interest. They are presented in line with the three priority directions of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing (MIPAA). **This does not imply a hierarchy of priority.**

1. Address how inequalities across the life course intersect to shape outcomes in older age

Ageing is a highly heterogeneous experience shaped by the accumulated impact of diverse experiences across the life course, resulting in diverse realities that must be recognized. Further, the compounded effects of ageism with other forms of discrimination, based on gender, disability, race, migration status, health conditions or socioeconomic background, can lead to systemic exclusion and reinforce cycles of disadvantage in later life. Older persons with disabilities, for instance, face distinct risks, are often excluded from disability policies and services, and are subject to harmful stereotypes that limit their autonomy and participation. In the absence of comprehensive human rights standards tailored to older age, such intersecting disadvantages remain poorly addressed. Addressing these inequalities requires robust data systems capable of capturing age, gender, disability, and other relevant characteristics, as well as institutional mechanisms to ensure the inclusion of those facing various forms of discrimination in the design and evaluation of public action. The United Nations should support Member States in building these systems and mechanisms to advance equality and inclusion in later life.

2. Address poverty and inequality in the context of ageing societies

While global advances in health and living conditions have led to longer lives, not all older persons have benefited equally,

with marked inequalities in income, access to services, and opportunities. Vulnerability to experience poverty tends to rise with age, particularly for those who are widowed, live alone, or face health challenges, groups in which women are overrepresented. In developing countries, where social protection systems, including pensions and health systems remain limited, older persons are more likely to experience persistent poverty, along with increased risks of food insecurity and malnutrition. Inadequate pension coverage, informal and unstable work histories, and insufficient access to health, long-term care and support, as well as rehabilitation services further deepen these vulnerabilities. Many older persons lack sufficient income when they retire or are forced to reduce their engagement in paid work due to health conditions or caregiving responsibilities. Disadvantages do not begin in old age but accumulate over the life course, shaped by gender, disability, ethnicity, education, and unequal access to decent work. Without swift policy action, future cohorts, especially those entering old age after decades of wage stagnation and informal employment, will likely face even greater insecurity. Poverty eradication strategies must place ageing at the center to achieve inclusive development for all, and the United Nations system should support Member States in this effort.

3. Promote the expansion and strengthening of universal social protection systems for all ages

Social protection is a cornerstone of inclusive societies and a critical tool to reduce inequality and poverty, with the

right to social security recognized in key international human rights instruments and guided by international social security standards. Yet many older persons, particularly in less developed countries, still lack access to adequate pensions, health care or long-term care and support, thus increasing their likelihood of experiencing poverty and social exclusion. Along the life-course, lack of social protection in case of maternity, unemployment, employment injury, family responsibilities, orphanhood or widowhood has important repercussions on life trajectories and poverty in old age. In crises, social protection systems have also proven to be key in protecting older persons, as underscored by the coronavirus COVID-19 pandemic. Given demographic projections, expanding universal, gender-responsive and life-course oriented systems, is increasingly urgent to ensure that no one is left behind. Ensuring access to non-contributory income support, particularly for those excluded from formal labour markets, should also be a priority to complement contributory pensions based on social insurance principles. While discussions on ageing and pensions often focus on the perceived burden on social protection systems, a forward-looking approach must balance sustainability, adequacy and inclusion, while recognizing the unpaid care, support and informal work contributions of older persons, the majority of whom are women. Many social security systems do not ensure consistency between disability-related schemes and old-age schemes, depriving older persons with disabilities of access to disability-related benefits and supports in older age. Reforms focused only on sustainability risk lowering benefits and deepening old-age inequalities. The United Nations should support Member States in strengthening universal social protection systems, including floors,

through data, policy guidance and capacity building.

4. Promote inclusive labour force participation, decent employment and entrepreneurship

As populations age, more older persons are staying in the workforce than before, making it essential to ensure they can participate on an equal basis with others and that the contributions of older workers are recognized and supported. Given demographic trends, labour participation among older persons is expected to increase, with many continuing to seek job opportunities, whether by choice or out of necessity. Whatever the circumstance, policies should remove the barriers faced by older workers, while also protect their right to freely choose to work or to retire at an appropriate age. Employment policies should aim at providing decent employment opportunities for all, including to older workers. They should address the widespread reality of informal work, which, for many older persons, is a last resort in the absence of formal employment opportunities or adequate pensions, and support transitions from the informal to the formal economy. Fostering decent employment, entrepreneurship and supporting lifelong learning are also key to expanding opportunities for older persons, not only as workers but also as business leaders and innovators. Strengthening initiatives that support older persons' entrepreneurship, such as improving access to financing and tailored business development services, can further unlock their potential and contribute to inclusive economic growth. A multigenerational workforce can be a source of resilience, enabling the transfer

of knowledge and experience while fostering inclusive, age-diverse work environments. The United Nations should support Member States in advancing these priorities through policy guidance, knowledge sharing and capacity building.

5. Leverage the longevity economy by promoting financial inclusion for older persons and financial literacy

Population ageing and increased longevity are transforming the structure of economies, labour markets and public finances around the world. As the proportion of older persons rises, patterns of production, consumption, savings, taxation and investment shift in ways that will require forward-looking policy responses. The longevity economy, encompassing the economic activity associated with older persons and longer lives, offers opportunities for innovation, productivity gains, and growth, particularly through sectors such as health, housing, care and support services, education, and technology. Public-private partnerships with appropriate safeguards can foster innovation in age-friendly goods and services, while promoting ethical and inclusive market development. However, to fully realize these opportunities and mitigate inequality, older persons must be supported in maintaining financial security and autonomy. Financial exclusion remains widespread among older persons, especially those in the informal economy, due to barriers that include low financial and digital literacy, lack of tailored financial products, and risks of exploitation. The United Nations should advocate for the longevity economy to be harnessed as a driver of inclusive growth and resilience in an ageing world, while supporting Member

States in expanding safe, inclusive, and accessible financial systems and providing lifelong financial education to enable older persons to benefit from these opportunities.

6. Support Member States in mobilizing sustainable financing for inclusive development in ageing contexts

Sustainable and inclusive financing strategies are essential to address the economic and social implications of population ageing in both developed and developing contexts. Yet in many countries, ageing-related investments remain underfunded or fragmented, and social protection coverage insufficient. Integrating ageing into fiscal planning and prioritizing equitable investment in social protection including pensions, health, long-term care and support, and support systems across the life course can help ensure more resilient and inclusive societies. Global commitments on financing for development reaffirm the importance of investing in universal, nationally appropriate social protection systems and securing predictable, uninterrupted funding for essential services, including during shocks and crises. Ageing societies, regardless of income level, benefit from approaches that are fiscally sound, rights-based, and responsive to accumulated inequalities. Poorly designed policies risk shifting fiscal pressures onto older persons, through reduced benefits or increased out-of-pocket costs, or onto younger and future generations, through rising debt or constrained fiscal space. Inclusive and forward-looking strategies, supported by international cooperation, equitable tax systems, and innovative financing, can help expand fiscal space while balancing

sustainability with social justice. The United Nations system should support Member States in these efforts, including through policy guidance and capacity building.

7. Support Member State efforts to protect and promote the human rights of older persons

Older persons face challenges related to the enjoyment of all human rights in different areas and those challenges require in-depth analysis and action to address protection gaps. The full realization of all human rights and fundamental freedoms for older persons should be promoted and ensured, including by progressively taking measures to combat age discrimination, neglect, abuse and violence, as well as social isolation and loneliness, to provide social protection, access to food and housing, healthcare, and long-term care and support services, employment, information and communications technologies, including new technologies, assistive technologies, legal capacity and access to justice and to address issues related to social integration and gender inequality through mainstreaming the rights of older persons into sustainable development strategies, urban policies and poverty reduction strategies, bearing in mind the crucial importance of intergenerational solidarity for social development.

8. Promote gender equality and the rights, agency and contributions of older women

Older women are central to families, communities and economies, yet their rights, agency and contributions remain underrecognized in global and national

agendas. Women tend to live longer than men and thus comprise the majority of older persons, especially at advanced ages, but often spend these years in poorer health and with fewer protections. Lifelong gender inequalities, from gaps in education and decent work to disparities in health, pensions and social protection, accumulate in later life and heighten the risk of economic insecurity and exclusion. This reality is especially pronounced in rural areas, where older women play vital roles in food production, natural resource management and community life. Despite their contributions, they often face barriers such as limited access to land, credit, agricultural inputs, decent employment, social protection, healthcare and social services, which undermine their well-being. Climate change and environmental challenges further intensify these vulnerabilities, underscoring the urgency of tailored support. To ensure that older women are recognized as rights holders, leaders and contributors, gender equality must be integrated across all ageing policies and programmes. This includes closing gaps in social protection including pensions, valuing unpaid care work, promoting decent work including for those in the care sector, ensuring equitable access to health and long-term care and support, and lifelong learning, and supporting meaningful participation in decision making and economic life. Policies should also reflect the diverse experiences of older women, particularly in agriculture and rural livelihoods, to strengthen economic resilience, promote intergenerational solidarity and advance sustainable development. The United Nations should support Member States in achieving these goals.

9. Promote lifelong learning opportunities for all ages

Lifelong learning is essential to foster well-being, participation and adaptability in ageing societies. However, older persons may face multiple barriers to learning, including ageism, digital exclusion, cost, lack of time, and limited access to employer-supported training. These constraints reduce their ability to participate in the labour market, engage with emerging technologies, and benefit from continued education, including by improving mental well-being and social inclusion through both formal and informal learning. Existing data, while limited, shows that participation in lifelong learning among older persons is stagnant or even declining in many countries, underscoring the need for greater public investment. Policies must recognize the right to lifelong learning and embed age-inclusive strategies into education, labour, housing, and health systems, while addressing structural inequalities accumulated over time, especially for women, and recognizing the value of experience gained with age. The United Nations system should support Member States in creating inclusive learning ecosystems that reflect demographic change, uphold the dignity and potential of older persons, and advance intergenerational solidarity.

10. Promote the participation of older persons in decision-making

Older persons should remain integrated in society, actively participate in the formulation and implementation of policies that affect their well-being, and share their knowledge and skills with younger generations. Negative

perceptions about older persons' participation, particularly when they are unable or choose not to engage in economically valued activities, undermine their autonomy and violate their right to participate fully. An enabling environment should be fostered for the equal, full, effective and meaningful participation of older persons in political, social, economic and cultural life, while taking into account the diversity of their situations and addressing population ageing alongside cumulative forms of discrimination, including those arising from ageism and other inequalities across the life course. Policy processes and decision-making relevant to older persons should also strive for gender parity and ensure their full and meaningful participation. The United Nations system should support Member States in creating inclusive policy processes and decision-making structures that guarantee the equal, full and meaningful participation of older persons.

11. Advance the rights of older persons in contexts of migration and displacement

Older persons face specific vulnerabilities in the context of mobility, whether as migrant workers, seeking to reunite with family members, or in situations of exploitation, destitution, persecution or conflict. Migration and displacement can erode traditional support systems and limit access to services, particularly when compounded by legal, linguistic, or mobility barriers as well as discrimination including on grounds of age, gender, nationality or migration status. Equality of treatment of non-nationals in social protection systems is a key principle of international social security standards but often not respected by national law, exposing older migrants to increased

risks of poverty and ill-health. Bilateral or multilateral social security agreements can help to ensure income security for migrants including those who return to their country of origin in old age. In humanitarian crises, older persons face heightened risks yet often remain overlooked as a group with distinct needs, despite their equal protection under international human rights and humanitarian law. Some are left behind due to physical limitations or because of social roles they assume, such as unpaid and often burdensome caregiving responsibilities in skipped-generation households. Migrant care and support workers, including domestic workers, also often have their own care and support needs in older age overlooked, leaving many with few savings, limited access to decent work and social protection, and at risk of irregular status or ill-treatment. In urban settings, older migrants may experience poverty, social isolation, and inadequate housing. The rights of older persons to receive care and support from their children who have migrated abroad, their roles as caregivers within families in the context of migration, and the rights of older migrants themselves are also inherent in the right to family life. At the same time, older persons in displacement settings often serve as community leaders, mediators, and custodians of cultural heritage through their lived experience and knowledge, thus contributing to resilience, continuity, and identity preservation during crises. Policymakers should recognize and support these roles, engaging older persons as active participants in recovery, social cohesion and community resilience, rather than viewing them solely as recipients of aid. The United Nations should support Member States in developing and implementing programmes that integrate older migrants and displaced older persons into the social and economic fabric of host

communities, remove barriers to essential services, and recognize and support the role of older persons as caregivers and community anchors, especially in displacement settings.

12. Promote accessible, age- and gender-responsive health care and health promotion for healthy ageing

Access to affordable, quality, and age- and gender-responsive health care is essential for older persons to achieve the highest attainable standard of health. Health systems must deliver a continuum of care across the life course, spanning prevention, diagnosis, treatment, rehabilitation, long-term and palliative care and support and assistive devices, while responding to the evolving needs of ageing populations. Recognizing the goal of healthy longevity is vital: policies must preserve not only lifespan but also the years lived in good health, functional ability, and well-being. Health promotion and disease prevention are critical to maintaining autonomy, preventing long-term impairments, and improving quality of life in old age. Addressing mental health and providing psychosocial support are also important to combat isolation and foster well-being. Universal health coverage should be delivered without age discrimination, ensuring that older persons, including those in vulnerable situations, can access needed services without financial hardship. Particular attention should be paid to the training of health and care and support professionals in geriatrics and gerontology, the expansion of community-based and long-term care and support options, and the development of integrated, person-centred, and human rights-based service models. The United Nations should

support Member States in building inclusive health systems and advancing policies that promote healthy ageing.

13. Advance age- and gender-responsive care and support systems, including long-term care and support

As populations age, care and support needs are expanding in scale and complexity, ranging from long-term and rehabilitative services to palliative and end-of-life care, across diverse settings. Yet many such systems remain fragmented and under-resourced, with the bulk of care provided informally by women, including older women, and migrants, often unpaid, unrecognized, and lacking adequate working condition and support. Older persons' important role as care givers, often when in need of care themselves, needs full recognition. A human rights-based approach must place the dignity, autonomy, and preferences of older persons at the core of care and support systems, whether as recipients or providers of care and support. Comprehensive systems should recognize care and support as a shared societal responsibility, while ensuring that families are not left to shoulder the burden alone. Policies should support community-based, family, peer and professional caregivers through training, decent work, labour and social protection, and respite. Palliative and end-of-life care should be accessible and integrated into health systems. Care and support systems should aim to ensure quality, affordability, and choice, enabling older persons to receive care and support in ways that respect their rights, support ageing in place, and uphold their dignity and social inclusion. The United Nations system should support Member States in developing age- and gender-responsive

integrated care strategies, grounded in intergenerational solidarity, sustainable financing, and universal social protection.

14. Support Member States in strengthening food security and eliminating hunger among older persons

Older persons have distinct nutritional needs, including in terms of water intake, calories, protein, vitamins and minerals, and face heightened risks of food insecurity due to limited income, restricted mobility, and because they may be overlooked in the design of nutrition programmes. These vulnerabilities can be further exacerbated by climate change, which disrupts food systems, affects the health and needs of older persons in a distinct way, and constrains outdoor labour for older workers with few alternative livelihood options. In humanitarian settings, food aid often fails to meet older persons' dietary requirements, and mobility constraints can hinder their access to essential resources. Despite these challenges, older persons are key contributors to national food systems, particularly in low- and middle-income countries, where they often make up the majority of the agricultural workforce in rural areas. Their knowledge, labour, and stewardship of land and other natural resources are essential in safeguarding food security across generations. Addressing these realities requires tailored health and nutrition interventions, as well as policies that take into account rural ageing and agricultural livelihoods, to ensure the well-being and inclusion of older persons while strengthening food security across generations. The United Nations system should support Member States in achieving these objectives through inclusive nutrition programmes,

agricultural policies and targeted interventions that ensure older persons' right to adequate food and nutrition.

15. Promote the mental health and psychosocial well-being of older persons

Mental health and psychosocial well-being are integral to healthy ageing, but these dimensions remain insufficiently addressed in public health strategies and services for older persons. Conditions such as depression, anxiety, cognitive decline, and grief are often dismissed as normal aspects of ageing, leading to underdiagnosis and limited access to age-appropriate support. Social isolation among older adults, while it has been linked to increased risks of depression, cognitive decline, and premature mortality, remains overlooked in ageing policies and in service design. Multiple factors, including bereavement, deteriorating physical health, the heavy workload for caregiving, and displacement during crises, may increase older persons' vulnerability to mental distress. The United Nations should support efforts to integrate mental health services into primary and community care and support systems, expand outreach to older populations in vulnerable situations, and promote awareness to reduce stigma and ensure older persons' dignity and agency in care and support.

16. Advance efforts to prevent and address neglect, abuse and violence against older persons

Older persons have the right to live free from all forms of neglect, abuse – including physical, psychological, emotional, sexual and financial and

material abuse – as well as violence, yet these violations remain widespread and underreported. Globally, one in six older persons is estimated to experience abuse, with evidence suggesting that this prevalence increased significantly during the coronavirus COVID-19 pandemic. Risk is heightened for older women, older persons with disabilities, and those in institutional care, humanitarian settings, or experiencing displacement. Older persons, in particular older women, may also face harmful practices, such as accusations of witchcraft. Ageism, stigma, and social isolation, compounded by weak reporting systems and legal protections, perpetuate a culture of silence and impunity. Most existing responses remain fragmented, underfunded, and often limited to general or domestic violence laws that fail to address the specific vulnerabilities faced by older persons. Preventing and responding to violence and abuse requires effective strategies, coordinated action across sectors, and investment in prevention, detection, reporting and accountability mechanisms. The United Nations should support Member States in developing age-sensitive legislation and policies, improve data and awareness, and ensure that violence and abuse against older persons are addressed as human rights violations.

17. Ensure inclusive humanitarian action for older persons

In humanitarian crises, including armed conflict, displacement, and climate-related disasters, older persons face distinct vulnerabilities. In spite of this, their rights, needs, and capacities are frequently overlooked in emergency preparedness, response, and recovery, with humanitarian assessments and policies often focusing on children and

younger adults, therefore neglecting the specific vulnerabilities and contributions of older persons. Barriers to mobility, communication, and access to services place older persons at heightened risk, particularly where ageism, disability, displacement or gender discrimination intersect. The disruption of support networks and the trauma experienced during humanitarian crises are also key challenges that exacerbate their vulnerability. Digital exclusion further compounds these risks, as humanitarian actors increasingly rely on technology to disseminate critical information, leaving older persons without access to essential updates on rights, entitlements, and services. This invisibility is reinforced by a lack of age-disaggregated data and age-inclusive planning. At the same time, older persons often serve as first responders and agents in times of crisis. Humanitarian responses should actively engage community structures led by or supporting older persons, recognizing their role in identifying needs, facilitating access to services, and fostering resilience. Across its work, the United Nations system should support the operationalization of inclusive humanitarian responses, strengthen national preparedness systems, ensure accessible services, and safeguard the dignity, safety, and rights of older persons in crises.

18. Promote bridging the digital divide and advancing age-inclusive AI and emerging technologies and ensure that digital transformation processes do not lead to or exacerbate social exclusion of older persons

Digital technologies and artificial intelligence offer powerful tools to improve the lives of older persons, with applications ranging from health care and finance to mobility and independent living. Yet the digital divide, shaped by age, income, gender, disability and geography, continues to exclude many older persons. Some groups, such as older women in underserved or remote areas, face compounded barriers due to intersecting inequalities, including limited access to reliable internet, lower digital literacy, lower incomes and fewer training opportunities. Meaningful inclusion requires investment in accessible infrastructure, targeted efforts to close the urban-rural, age and gender digital gaps, the promotion of lifelong digital literacy tailored to the needs and learning styles of older persons, and their active involvement in designing and testing technologies. Online safety and protection from fraud, including identity fraud, fraud by impersonation of a trusted individual or organization and romance fraud, are critical to promoting confidence and engagement. Programmes and policies addressing technology-based crimes should particularly consider older persons' vulnerabilities and include appropriate safeguards to uphold their privacy and autonomy. Digital transformation should support continued access to participation in social and cultural life, work, lifelong learning, entrepreneurship and public services. Digital transformation of public service delivery, in particular social protection benefits and services, including health care, should be carefully designed to promote inclusion and facilitate access rather than introducing additional barriers for older persons. The United Nations system advocates for a human rights-based, age-inclusive digital transformation that respects privacy, autonomy and informed consent. Emerging technologies must avoid ageist

bias, support choice in care, and uphold dignity and agency. Access to essential services must never rely solely on digital means, and human interaction must remain central to care and support. The United Nations system should support Member States in advancing these priorities through data collection and analysis, policy guidance, and capacity building to strengthen regulatory and institutional frameworks.

19. Promote ageing in place and build inclusive, age-friendly environments

Ageing in place is the preferred option for most older persons, reflecting the desire to remain in their homes and communities, surrounded by familiar environments and relationships, for as long as possible and under conditions of dignity, safety and autonomy. Supporting this choice requires integrated policy efforts that adapt care and support systems, housing, public infrastructure, access to assistive devices and technologies, and social protection frameworks to evolving demographic, social and economic realities. It also entails enabling families, communities, businesses and ensuring that Governments fosters inclusive, age-friendly and gender-responsive environments that promote intergenerational solidarity and social inclusion. This is particularly important in underserved areas, where limited access to healthcare, public transportation and social support often undermines older persons' ability to age safely and with dignity in their communities. Ageing in place should be promoted not only as a right and a policy goal, but also as a central pillar of age-responsive development. This includes ensuring a continuum of care and support that promotes a shift from institutionalization

toward independent living and community inclusion, while ensuring that institutional care remains a choice, alongside investments that reflect the diverse needs, capacities and preferences of older persons. The United Nations system should support Member States in advancing these efforts.

20. Advance inclusive environments through age-friendly rural development, urban planning, and universal design

Older persons in both rural and urban areas face growing disparities in access to essential services, infrastructure, technologies, and participation in community life. In rural areas, outmigration, geographic isolation, and limited infrastructure often heighten social exclusion and income insecurity among older persons, especially older women and older persons with disabilities. In urban contexts, rapid population ageing calls for city planning that ensures safety, accessibility and dignity for older residents. Universal design, essential for enabling mobility, independence, and full participation, is often absent from the built environment, digital interfaces, and public services, excluding older persons with functional limitations or disabilities. Accessibility and participation in community life should be considered rights to be guaranteed throughout the life course. The United Nations system should support Member States in advancing integrated planning and policies for rural revitalization, age-friendly cities and universal design, ensuring inclusive environments that allow older persons to age in place with dignity while benefiting people of all ages and abilities.

21. Ensure inclusive climate action for older persons

Older persons face increased vulnerability to the impacts of climate change, due both to age-related health conditions and systemic shortcomings in emergency preparedness and climate responses. At the same time, they bring valuable experience and community ties that can contribute meaningfully to climate change adaptation and mitigation, particularly in intergenerational settings. Nonetheless, pre-existing conditions, reduced mobility, and limited social support heighten the risks older persons face during extreme weather events and environmental hazards. These vulnerabilities are further compounded in settings where many lack access to basic services. Older persons engaged in agriculture face particular risks from climate-related stressors such as heat exposure, crop failure, and extreme weather events, which threaten both health and livelihoods. Such risks are often exacerbated by limited access to healthcare, emergency services, infrastructure and social protection, particularly in underserved areas. Moreover, climate policies, emergency systems, and disaster preparedness plans often overlook the specific challenges experienced by older populations, reinforcing patterns of exclusion. Older women, often bearing caregiving responsibilities, may be especially affected. Tasks such as collecting water, already physically demanding, become more burdensome when sources dry up due to drought. Their role in ensuring household food and nutrition is also undermined by disrupted food production, which can lead to shortages, malnutrition, and negative health outcomes that disproportionately affect older women. The United Nations system should support

Member States to systematically integrate the rights, needs and capacities of older persons in climate-related action through inclusive policies, age-disaggregated data collection, resilient infrastructure planning and tailored adaptation measures that protect health, dignity and well-being across the life course.

22. Promote equal access to justice for older persons

Older persons face multiple barriers to accessing justice, including discrimination, digital exclusion, lack of legal assistance, denial of legal capacity or support they may require in exercising their legal capacity, and complex procedures that do not respond to their needs or circumstances. Age-sensitive legal systems involve procedural accommodations, specialized training for justice personnel, and accessible legal aid and support, as well as accessible and age-responsive legal proceedings. Justice systems should recognize and respond to intersecting vulnerabilities, such as those based on gender, disability, race, language, literacy, cognitive health, rural residence, or on other grounds; and uphold the autonomy and legal capacity of older persons. New approaches that build on legal empowerment strategies, including tailored legal literacy programmes, must be developed alongside older persons as well as organizations or associations that represent them. Age-inclusive access to justice requires awareness-raising, robust data, regulation of non-State actors, and safeguards in emerging areas such as digital courts and automated decision-making through the use of artificial intelligence and other digital technologies. Raising awareness, legislative and policy reform and addressing institutional mistrust are

essential to ensuring that older persons can exercise their rights and access justice without discrimination or delay. The United Nations system should support Member States in advancing inclusive justice systems that reflect the dignity, diversity, and evolving realities of older persons.

23. Advance age-inclusive access to culture, travel and tourism

Promoting age-inclusive travel and tourism supports healthy ageing, social participation, and inclusive economic growth. Older persons represent a growing segment of global travelers, yet their needs are often overlooked in tourism planning, cultural participation and cross-border services. Accessible, safe, and responsive opportunities for travel and cultural engagement can enhance well-being and strengthen both creative and tourism sectors. Older persons also contribute significantly as workers, volunteers, and cultural actors. Inclusive strategies, such as barrier-free infrastructure and intergenerational engagement, can unlock new markets and foster social cohesion. Consular services are essential in ensuring that older persons can travel and reside abroad with safety and dignity. Age-sensitive consular systems, with accessible communication, trained staff, and tailored support during crises, help protect the rights and security of older persons, particularly in emergencies. The United Nations system should support Member States in advancing inclusive approaches to culture, travel and tourism through policy guidance, capacity building, and knowledge exchange to promote safe, accessible and meaningful mobility for older persons.

24. Strengthen data, research and evidence for ageing policy

Good policymaking requires good data. Yet, there is still a persistent lack of high-quality, age- and gender- disaggregated data and dedicated research on older persons. This gap limits the ability of policymakers to design, target, and evaluate effective ageing-related policies across all sectors, from health, education and social protection to care and employment. Where household surveys are used as a primary source of data, they often fail to capture intra-household dynamics, making the needs, roles, and vulnerabilities of older persons invisible within families. In many policy domains, the only available data comes from high-income countries, which can obscure the lived realities of older persons in low- and middle-income settings, where a majority of them resides, globally. Even when age-disaggregated data exist, data collection systems often impose age caps, ignore diversity within the 60+ age group, or fail to reflect intersectional factors such as gender, disability, and socioeconomic status. Further, traditional indicators, such as dependency ratios and the use of chronological age, may create blind spots thereby hiding the circumstances and contributions of older persons. The United Nations system should support Member States in strengthening data systems, ensuring consistent age disaggregation, closing research gaps, and promoting the participation of older persons throughout the data cycle, so that policies are inclusive, evidence-based, and responsive to demographic realities.

Annex

Selected relevant intergovernmental developments since decision 2022/38

The General Assembly

Subsidiary Organ of the GA

May 2024: The General Assembly Open-ended Working Group on Ageing, at its fourteenth session adopted decision 14/1 on 24 May 2024. The decision puts forward 11 recommendations for Member States to consider in a non-exclusive manner, to address possible gaps in the protection of the human rights of older persons.

GA Plenary

August 2024: The General Assembly adopts resolution 78/324 on 13 August 2024, and

- *Decides* that the Open-ended Working Group on Ageing has completed its work, in view of the adoption of decision 14/1 by the Open-ended Working Group on Ageing in line with its mandate outlined in the resolution 65/182 and all subsequent resolutions on the follow-up to the Second World Assembly on Ageing, including 78/177 of 19 December 2023, and to conclude the mandate of the Open-ended Working Group on Ageing, under agenda item “Social development: social development, including questions relating to the world social situation and to youth, ageing, persons with disabilities and the family” of the Third Committee.
- *Urges* relevant United Nations bodies, respecting the relevant mandate, to further consider the recommendations as adopted by the Open-ended Working Group on Ageing in its decision 14/1.

December 2024: The General Assembly adopts resolution 79/147 on 17 December 2024,

- *Decides* to formally conclude the mandate of the Open-ended Working Group on Ageing, established by the General Assembly in its resolution 65/182, and notes with appreciation the completed work of the Working Group, in view of the adoption by the Working Group of its decision 14/1.

Subsidiary Organ of the GA

April 2025: The Human Rights Council adopts resolution 58/13 on 3 April 2025, and

- *Decides* to establish an open-ended intergovernmental working group with the mandate of elaborating and submitting to the Human Rights Council a draft international legally binding instrument on the human rights of older persons with the objective of promoting, protecting and ensuring the full enjoyment of human rights by older persons.

Economic and Social Council

June 2025: The Economic and Social Council adopts a resolution entitled “Mainstreaming a gender perspective into all policies and programmes in the United Nations system” on 4 June 2025, and:

- *Reiterating* the request of the General Assembly, in its resolution 79/226, for the United Nations development system to support Member States, upon their request and in line with national priorities, taking into account the needs of women and children, in their response to demographic trends and realities, and in this regard taking into consideration the needs and empowerment of older women.
- *Calls upon* the United Nations system, including its agencies, funds and programmes, within their respective mandates, to continue to work collaboratively to accelerate the full and effective mainstreaming of a gender perspective in the United Nations system at the global, regional and country levels, including by:
- Ensuring that adequate resources are allocated to capacity and technical helpdesks that support entities and United Nations country teams, including on demographic shifts, so as to ensure that policies address the needs of all women and girls throughout their life course;

June 2025: The Economic and Social Council adopts a resolution entitled “Modalities for the fifth review and appraisal of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, 2002” on 10 June 2025, upon the recommendation of the Commission for Social Development, and

- *Endorses* the timeline for carrying out the fifth review and appraisal of the progress in Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing;
- *Decides* on the procedure of the review and appraisal, including the global review and its format;
- *Requests* the regional commissions to continue to facilitate the review and appraisal exercise at the regional level, including by organizing regional review meetings;
- *Requests* the Secretary-General to submit two reports; one analyzing the preliminary findings, and a second presenting the conclusions of the fifth review and appraisal exercise.

Ministerial Declaration of the High-level Segment of HLPF

July 2025: The Ministers and high representatives at the 2025 High-level political forum on sustainable development declared:

We commit to ensuring healthy lives and well-being for all at all ages, to take collective, multisectoral action to significantly reduce maternal, perinatal, neonatal, infant and child mortality and morbidity and increase access to quality healthcare services for newborns, infants and children, as well as all women before, during and after pregnancy and childbirth, including through providing antenatal and postnatal care, sufficient numbers of skilled birth attendants, and adequately supplied birthing facilities, and to improve strategies for the ageing population in line with the United Nations Decade of Healthy Ageing (2021–2030).
