

# The Decade of Healthy Ageing: a focus on cultural diversity

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# Conflicts of interest

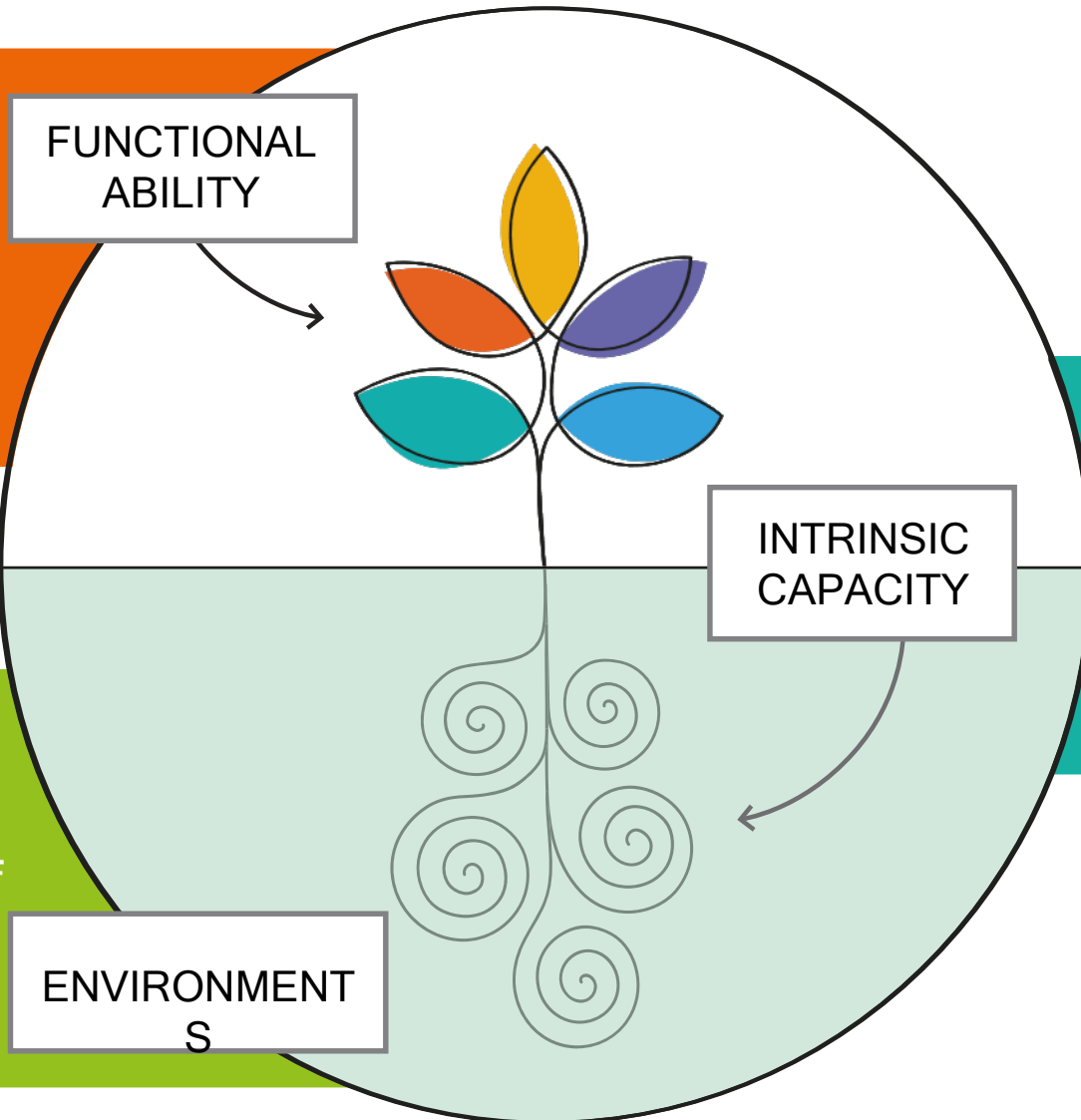


Nothing to declare

# Healthy Ageing

*The process of developing and maintaining the functional ability that enables well-being in older age*

The health-related attributes that enable people to be and to do what they have reason to value



The composite of all the physical and mental capacities of an individual

All the factors in the extrinsic world that form the context of an individual's life

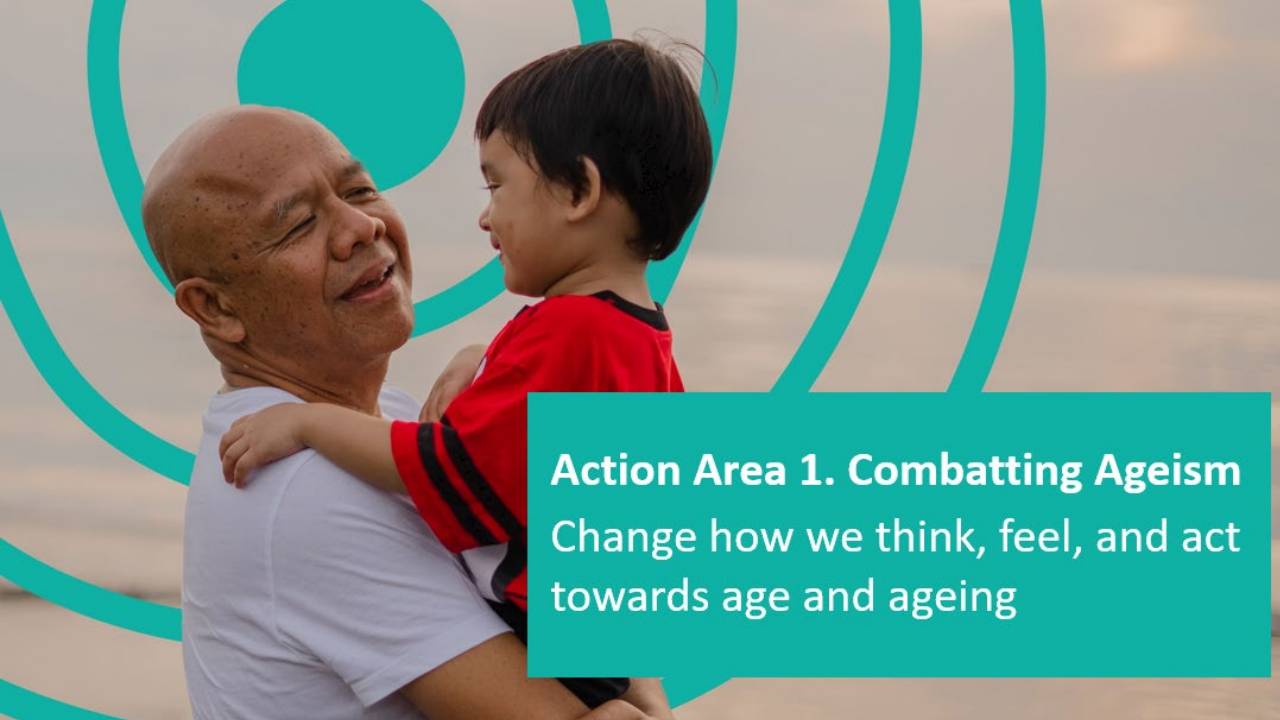


# Decade of healthy ageing

2021-2030:

*A unique opportunity to work together to transform  
the world to be a better place to grow older*

Global collaboration that will bring together **diverse sectors and stakeholders**, including governments, civil society, international organizations, professionals, academic institutions, the media and the private sector.



**Action Area 1. Combatting Ageism**  
Change how we think, feel, and act towards age and ageing



**Action Area 2. Age-friendly Environments**  
Ensure that communities foster the abilities of older people



**Action Area 3. Integrated Care**  
Deliver person-centred integrated care and primary health services responsive to older people



**Action Area 4. Long-term Care**  
Provide access to long-term care for older people who need it

# Cultural diversity matters in healthy ageing

Ageing is not experienced the same way across cultures

Cultural beliefs shape expectations about autonomy, family roles, caregiving, and dementia

Without cultural responsiveness, policies and interventions risk being ineffective or even harmful

Ensuring healthy ageing requires understanding how culture influences health behaviours and access to care



# How culture shapes ageing experiences

## Health beliefs

Cultural norms influence help-seeking, trust in health services, and interpretations of symptoms

## Family and caregiving models

Expectations regarding children's roles, gendered responsibilities, and community support

## Language and communication

Migration and minority status create barriers to screening, diagnosis, and continuity of care

## Perceptions of autonomy and independence

What constitutes “good care” varies across cultures



# Risks of a One-Size-Fits-All approach



Interventions may be **unacceptable, misunderstood, or under-utilized** when not adapted to cultural norms

Uniform global practice can unintentionally reinforce **inequalities** affecting minority ethnic groups or migrants

Lack of cultural relevance reduces the **effectiveness** of age-friendly environments, integrated care, and long-term care

Ignoring cultural contexts undermines the Decade's goal: enabling functional ability for all older people

# Cultural diversity across the Decade's Action Areas



## Action Area 1: Combatting ageism

Age stereotypes differ across cultures; messaging must be culturally grounded

## Action Area 2: Age-friendly environments

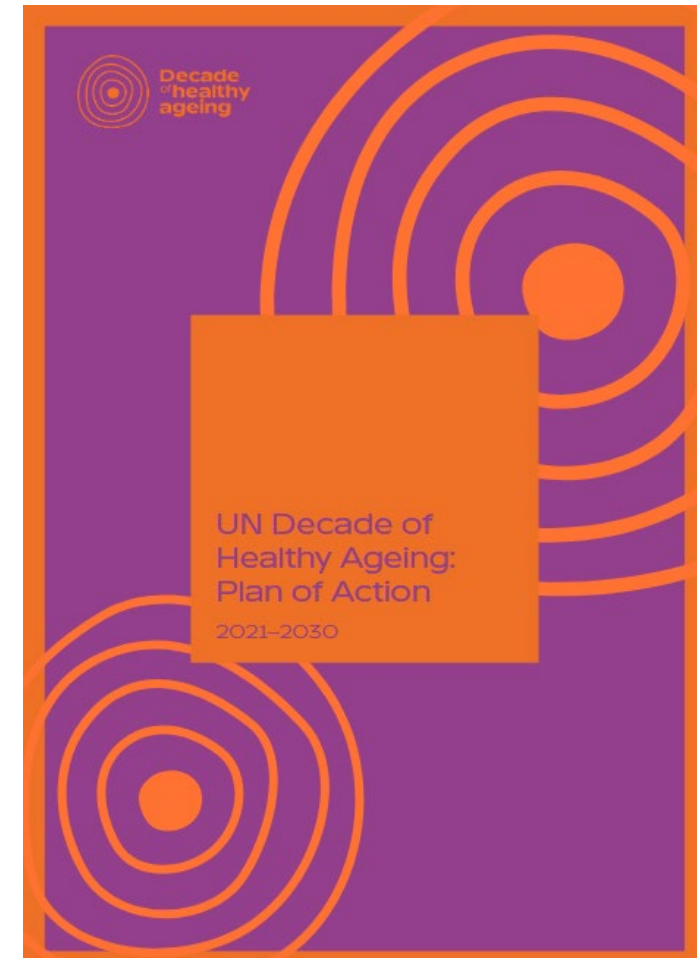
Environments should reflect cultural preferences for community design, social participation, and intergenerational interaction

## Action Area 3: Integrated care

Requires cultural competence, multilingual communication, and understanding culturally shaped health behaviours

## Action Area 4: Long-term care

Must respect cultural expectations for family involvement, decision-making, and end-of-life practices



# Integrating cultural diversity in healthy ageing



## Co-design with communities

Older adults from diverse backgrounds must participate meaningfully in planning and evaluation

## Context-sensitive implementation

Adapt global frameworks to local cultural realities

## Culturally inclusive data

Collect, disaggregate, and use data that reflect ethnic and cultural diversity

## System accountability

Health and social systems must be held responsible for addressing inequalities

## Respect for cultural diversity

Uphold autonomy, dignity, and values shaped by culture



# Key messages - Call to action

## **Cultural diversity is essential to healthy ageing**

Ageing is shaped by cultural norms, beliefs, family structures, and social expectations

## **The Decade of Healthy Ageing provides a global framework for equity**

## **One-size-fits-all models risk widening inequalities**

Interventions not shaped by cultural understanding can be ineffective, poorly adopted, or harmful



## **Cultural responsiveness must be intentional**

This includes co-designing, implementing context-sensitive solutions, collecting inclusive and disaggregated data, and ensuring accountability for equity

## **Call to action**

To deliver real impact during the Decade of Healthy Ageing, global and local systems must embed cultural diversity at every level (policy, research, service design, and practice)



**Thank you!**

Our vision  
is a world in which  
**all people**  
can live long  
and **healthy lives.**

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