

DECADE OF HEALTHY AGEING BASELINE REPORT

SUMMARY

Decade of healthy ageing: baseline report. Summary

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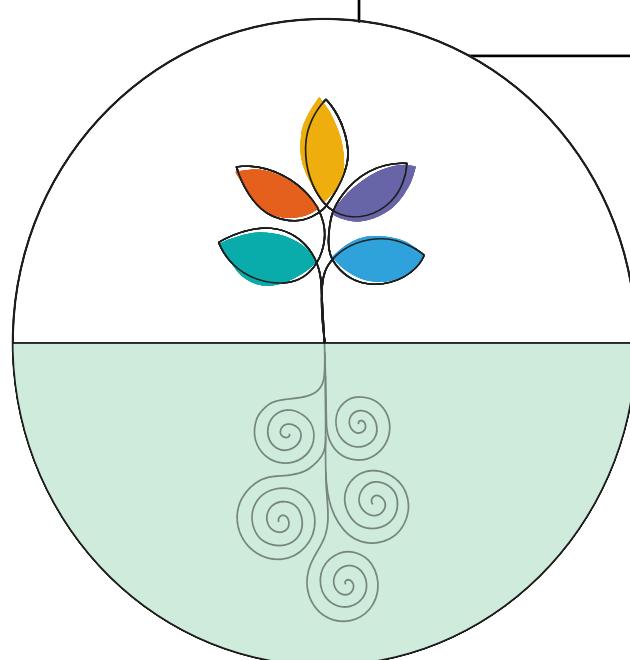
INTRODUCTION

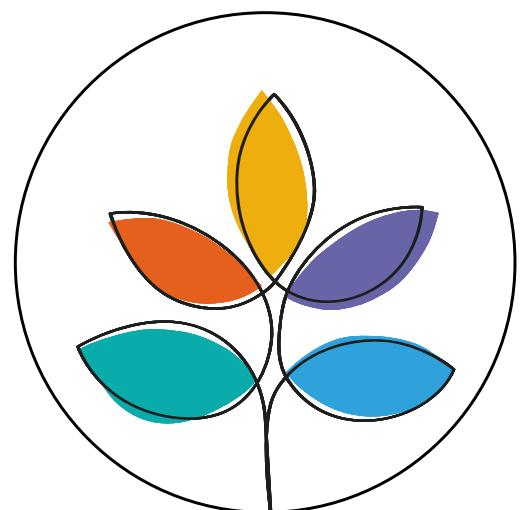
[The Baseline Report for the Decade of Healthy Ageing 2021–2030](#) addresses five issues:

1. **Healthy Ageing, the Decade's actions and enablers, and a pathway to accelerate impact by 2030.**
2. **Where are we in 2020?** The report provides a first-time baseline for healthy ageing worldwide.
3. **What improvements could we expect by 2030?** It documents progress and scenarios for improvement.
4. **How can we accelerate impact on the lives of older people?** It shows how older people and stakeholders can together optimize functional ability.
5. **The next steps, including opportunities to boost collaboration and impact by 2023,** the next reporting period.

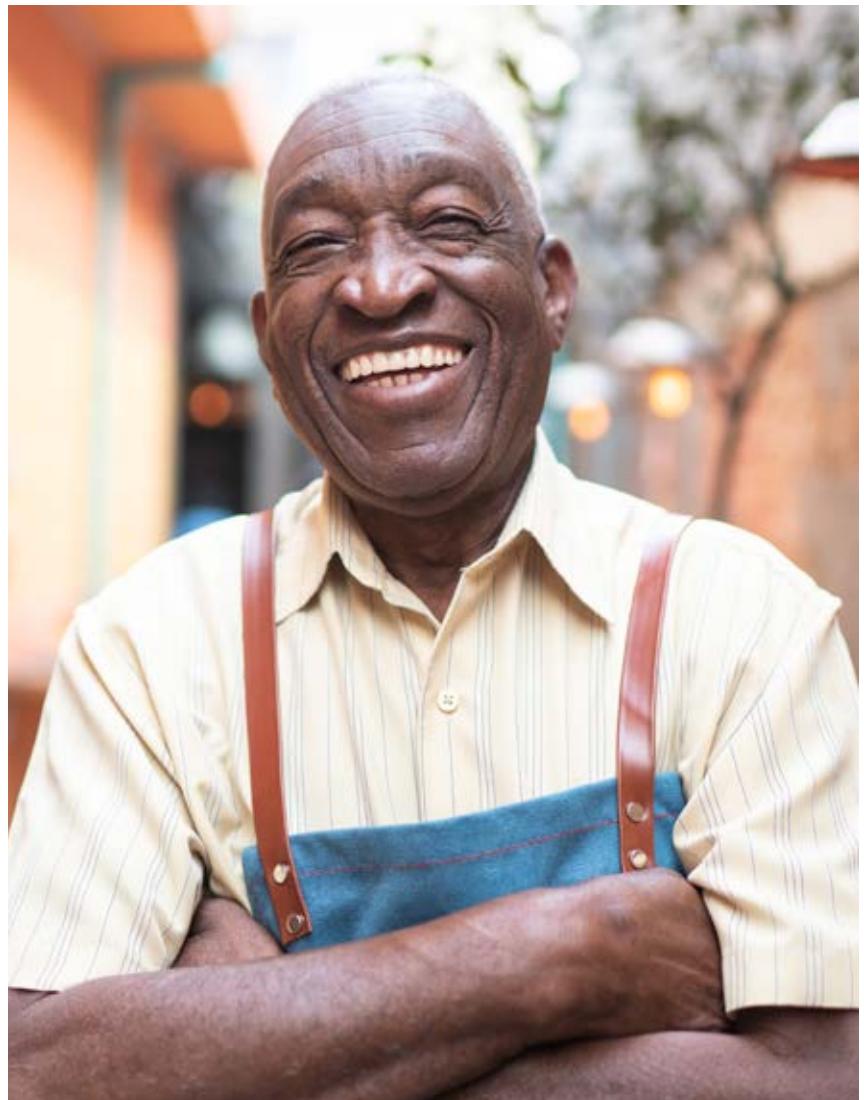
THE REPORT STRESSES THAT

- At least 142 million older persons worldwide are unable to meet their basic needs.
- Optimizing functional ability is a key to healthy ageing.
- Governments and other stakeholders must invest in data to monitor healthy ageing across the life course.
- Actions must be accelerated to make a measurable impact on older persons by 2030; older people must be involved at all stages.
- Global evidence and cases highlight what can be done and what we can learn.





Healthy ageing is
“the process of developing and
maintaining the functional
ability that enables well-being
in older age”.



1

GETTING READY FOR THE DECADE OF HEALTHY AGEING 2021-2030

Each older person can drive change

The [number of older persons worldwide](#) (2021) is slightly more than 1 billion – about 13.5% of the global population. By 2030, 1 in 6 persons will be 60 years of age or older.

Older people are at the centre of a new action plan on ageing and health. [The United Nations Decade of Healthy Ageing 2021–2030](#) brings together governments, civil society, international agencies, academia, the media and the private sector to collaborate in improving the lives of older people, their families and their communities. The vision is a world in which all people can live long and healthy lives.

[The Decade](#) provides opportunities to work together to improve functional ability by 2030, with meaningful engagement and empowerment of older people from the beginning. It addresses four areas for action at multiple levels and in multiple sectors in order to promote health, prevent disease, maintain intrinsic capacity and enable functional ability. The action areas are:

- change how we think, feel and act towards age and ageing;
- ensure that communities foster older people's abilities;
- deliver person-centred integrated care and primary health services that respond to older people's needs; and
- provide access to long-term care for older people who need it.

HEALTHY AGEING

Healthy ageing is relevant to everybody and is about creating the opportunities that enable people to be and do what they value throughout their lives. The goal of the Decade is to optimize older people's functional ability.

Functional ability refers to people's abilities to: 1) meet their basic needs to ensure an adequate standard of living; 2) learn, grow and make decisions; 3) be mobile; 4) build and maintain relationships; and 5) contribute to society. Functional ability combines the intrinsic capacity of the individual, the environment a person lives in and how people interact with their environment.

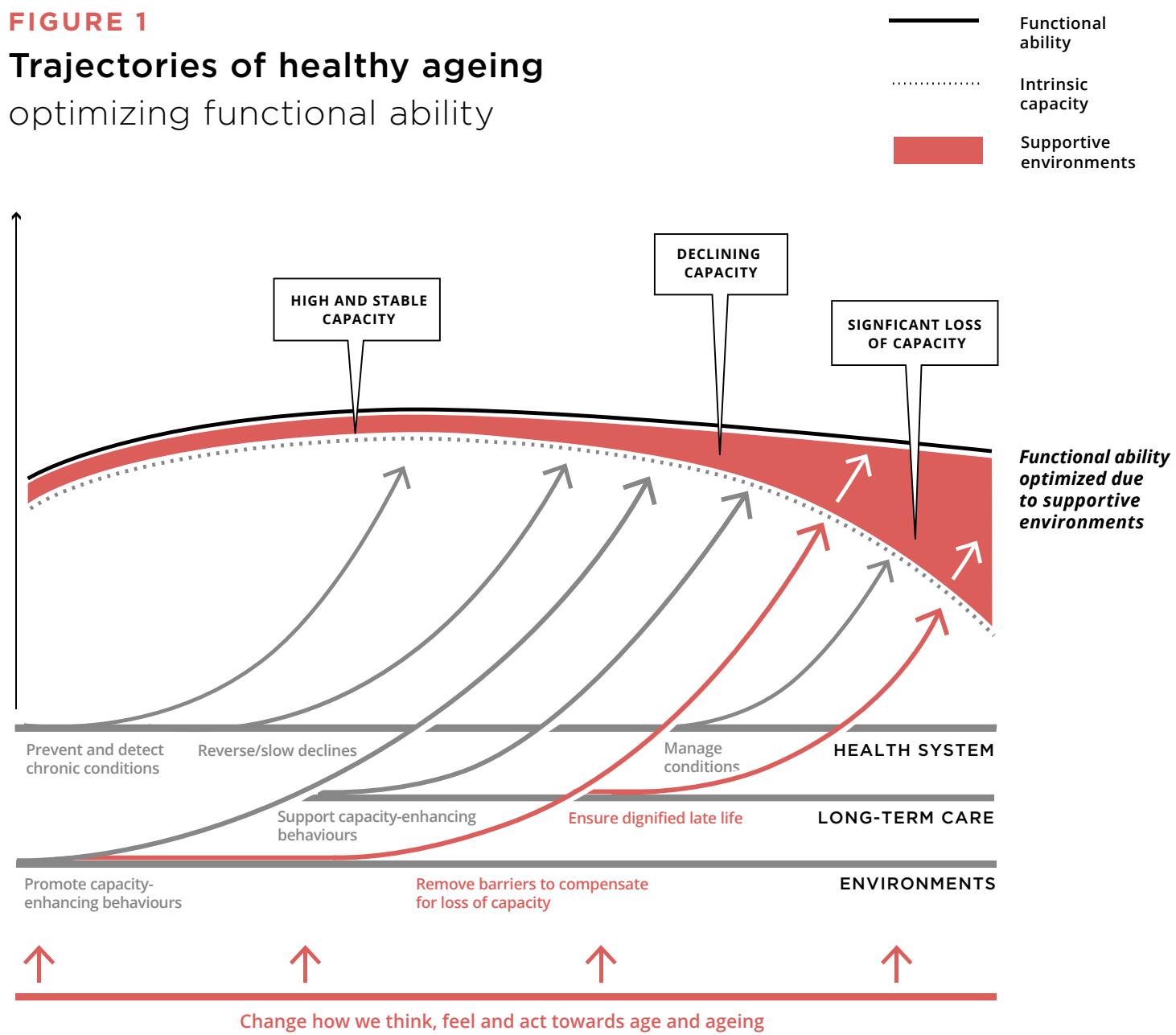
Intrinsic capacity comprises all the physical and mental capacities that a person can draw on, including a person's locomotor capacity (physical movement), sensory capacity (vision and hearing), vitality (energy and balance), cognition and psychological capacity. These capacities are interrelated and contribute to functional ability. For example, hearing helps people to communicate, maintain autonomy, and sustain mental health and cognition. Significant declines are closely related to care dependence in older age.

Environments are where people live and conduct their lives. Environments shape what older people with a given level of intrinsic capacity can be and do. These include the home, community and broader society and relate to products, equipment and technology that facilitate older peoples' capacities and abilities; the natural or built environment; emotional support, assistance and relationships provided by other people and animals; attitudes since these influence behaviour – both negatively and positively; and services, systems and policies that may (or may not) contribute to enhanced functioning at older ages.

Healthy ageing is influenced by multiple factors throughout the life course, including those identified as priority areas of action in the Decade. Over time, these factors result in trajectories of intrinsic capacity and functional ability for each person, or for a group of people (Figure 1). Trajectories are also influenced by local and global events, as demonstrated by the COVID-19 pandemic, and can be shaped by other drivers such as climate change.

Almost all determinants of healthy ageing can be improved by policies aimed at different levels (household, communities, regional, national or global). Actions that dismantle discrimination and level up socioeconomic conditions are likely to uplift the trajectory of healthy ageing for everyone.

FIGURE 1
Trajectories of healthy ageing
optimizing functional ability



ACCELERATE IMPLEMENTATION AND OPTIMIZE FUNCTIONAL ABILITY

Our challenge is to see meaningful and measurable improvements in the lives of older people, their families and their communities by 2030.

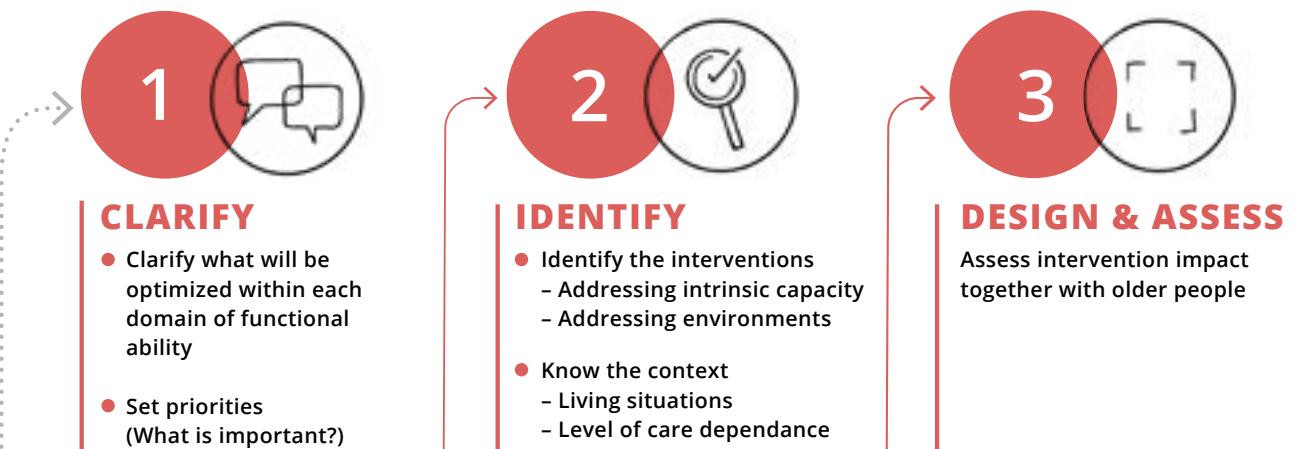
Partnerships are needed with older people, decision-makers in governments and those who design and implement community programmes. Action needs to be informed by evidence and aligned with older people's expectations.

Strong collaboration for transformative change will benefit from four “enablers” that are outlined in the Decade, including:

- meaningful engagement with older people, families, caregivers and others;
- building capacity for integrated action across sectors;
- linking stakeholders to share experience and learn from others; and
- strengthening data, research and innovation to accelerate implementation.

FIGURE 2

The pathway to optimize functional ability



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