

Mobilizing Action and Driving Engagement |

The Role of Civil Society
in the UN Decade of Healthy Ageing

Virtual Colloquium

Summary Report
23 August 2022

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	2
THE UN DECADE OF HEALTHY AGEING	2
ACTION AREAS AND ENABLERS	2
CIVIL SOCIETY MAPPING AND ENGAGEMENT INITIATIVE	3
COLLOQUIUM: EXPLORING THE ROLE OF CIVIL SOCIETY IN DECADE	3
INSIGHTS FROM THE COLLOQUIUM	4
FORMALISING COLLABORATION	4
WHY AN ALLIANCE?	4
KEY ELEMENTS FOR SUCCESS	5
GOALS AND OBJECTIVES	6
SHARED CORE VALUES	6
NEXT STEPS	6
COLLOQUIUM PROGRAM	7
COLLOQUIUM PROGRAM	8
COLLOQUIUM PROGRAM	9
COLLOQUIUM PRESENTERS	10

INTRODUCTION

The United Nations (UN) Decade of Healthy Ageing was endorsed by the 73rd World Health Assembly on 3 August 2021 and welcomed by the UN General Assembly on 14 December 2021. The Decade is to be a global collaboration, aligned with the last ten years of the UN Sustainable Development Goals, that brings together governments, civil society, international agencies, professionals, academia, the media, and the private sector to improve the lives of older people, their families, and the communities in which they live.

Population ageing is a powerful and transforming force that impacts the social, health and economic fabric of society. The next ten years will be foundational to improving the lives of older people, their families, and the communities in which they live now and for generations to come.

Policies impacting the lives of older people cut across many governmental portfolios such as health and digital literacy, food security and nutrition, human rights, ageism, housing, financial resilience, and long-term care to mention just a few. Common cross-cutting policy agendas that draw on evidence from all levels of government rarely make the necessary connections and linkages for a comprehensive plan of action. There is a clear gap of evidence-to-action where the bottom-up approach meets the top-down approach to policy that civil society can help inform and drive.

Civil society organizations working together represent a defining force to help influence and shape policy that impacts the lives of current and future generations of older people. Together they play a pivotal role in reinforcing the need for strategic action across sectors, disciplines and government ministries, with a common goal of improving the health (in the broadest sense) and wellbeing of older people, and protecting their rights, during and living with the impact of the pandemic. Strong leadership that includes civil society is needed to realise the potential of the Decade of Healthy Ageing for current and future generations of older people.

THE UN DECADE OF HEALTHY AGEING

The UN Decade of Healthy Ageing is a timely and unprecedented global collaboration, building upon and responding to global commitments and calls for action. It is based on the Global Strategy and Action Plan on Ageing and Health (2016–2030) as a result of the World Report on Ageing and Health (2015) informed through extensive consultation. The Decade is aligned with the UN Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing and supports the realization of the 2030 Agenda and the global pledge that no one will be left behind and that every human being will have the opportunity to fulfil his or her potential in dignity.

ACTION AREAS AND ENABLERS

To foster healthy ageing and improve the lives of older people and their families and communities, fundamental shifts will be required not only in the actions we take but in how we think about age and ageing. The Decade will address four areas for action.

1. Ageism – Change how we think, feel and act towards age and ageing
2. Age-Friendly Environments – Ensure that communities foster the abilities of older people
3. Primary Integrated Care – Deliver person-centred integrated care and primary health services responsive to older people
4. Long-Term Care – Provide access to long-term care for older people who need it

Driving policy development and change requires sustained and innovative efforts to give voice to the issues, engage across stakeholders, create and strengthen evidence and demonstrate and give life to leadership. These essential elements known as the Decade enablers independently and collectively are an important operational framework.

An online exchange platform on the Decade has been established to connect and convene the stakeholders who promote the action areas at country level and those seeking information, guidance and capacity-building. It represents a different way of “doing business”, to ensure reach and impact.

CIVIL SOCIETY MAPPING AND ENGAGEMENT INITIATIVE

Connecting stakeholders, hearing their voices and being authentically engaged are the foundations to driving agendas to improve the quality of life of older people around the world. Towards positioning the crucial role of civil society in the success of the Decade, an interactive dialogue on the theme of “Strengthening connections across sectors: Building partnerships for healthy ageing in and beyond the COVID-19 era” was convened with Dr Tedros, Director General, World Health Organization (WHO) in November 2020.

This and other interactive dialogues prompted the civil society mapping and engagement initiative led by the International Federation on Ageing (IFA), the International Longevity Centre Global Alliance (ILC Global Alliance), HelpAge International and the NGO Committee on Ageing (Geneva). The initiative represented a unique opportunity to explore the many faces of civil society that inform and impact the lives of older people.

In order to maximize impact and engagement with this important mapping exercise the Decade Platform was used as the home for the developed survey and helped to ensure and underscore the strong relationship between this initiative and the UN Decade while also framing future actions and intentions.

More than 280 organizations from 74 countries across every UN and WHO region of the world participated in the initiative. Participants identified key opportunities and areas for collaboration and indicated interest in being part of a colloquium to learn more about the Decade; and explore mechanisms by which we can best work together, share resources and tools, learn lessons from one another and help accelerate our organisational agendas with concrete actions.

COLLOQUIUM: EXPLORING THE ROLE OF CIVIL SOCIETY IN DECADE

The Colloquium served as a point of connection for organisations who participated in the civil society mapping and engagement initiative and others to come together around the question of how to work toward a common agenda that supports individual organisational agendas while at the same time strengthening key intergovernmental directions.

Considering the diverse range of participating organisations this forum helped to improve awareness and understanding of the role civil society could play in the Decade while exploring opportunities to be authentically and meaningfully engaged towards driving good policy and practice during this period and beyond.

The agenda was designed, through plenary and breakout sessions, to understand the nature and form of models of collaboration to amplify the voice of civil society throughout Decade

INSIGHTS FROM THE COLLOQUIUM

Active engagement from attendees was foundational and manifest in the forum by highlighting the organisational work already being undertaken in some of the Decade action areas. However, there was an agreed need for collective and concerted collaboration for many reasons including the fact that individual inputs and actions at an organizational level are not sufficient in generating the intended scope of impact. Immediate opportunities for action included:

- Aligning with existing government and intergovernmental agendas and priorities to help in create political buy in and amplify impact;
- Engaging with existing initiatives to reduce redundancies and highlight opportunities for adaptation, refinement and the development of novel ideas and strategies that can help mitigate existing gaps;
- Creating a shared calendar of events where lessons learned could foster engagement and opportunities for collaboration across diverse stakeholders;
- Maximize opportunities for thoughtful and meaningful inclusion of the voices of older people and those most in need throughout decision making and implementation processes; and,
- Ensuring all activities are informed, developed, and grounded in an equity-based approach and leverage the key strategies proven to work in reducing or eliminating ageism, namely: policy and law, educational activities and intergenerational interventions as highlighted within the WHO Global Report on Ageism.

While participating CSOs were diverse in nature and purpose, an understanding of key priorities, which in many cases are far more related in practice, was fostered during the forum. For example, priority areas such as housing, social isolation and digital inclusion may seem independent but upon closer inspection these can also all be viewed as key elements and considerations in the development and implementation of age-friendly environments, a key action area of the Decade. Similarly, intergenerational activities, diversity, accessibility, and inclusion are linked to ongoing efforts towards ensuring the perspectives of older people, particularly the oldest old and those facing the most marginalization through the global campaign to combat ageism.

Establishing mechanisms and structures for collaboration and alignment across a diverse range of CSOs, such as an alliance, can be a powerful mechanism not only towards amplifying efforts, impact and success across the Decade but can help reduce decrease resource expenditures by avoiding duplication and redundancies in existing initiatives and sharing and leveraging transferable knowledge and expertise.

FORMALISING COLLABORATION

Formal collaboration across civil society to help drive the agenda of the Decade was an agreed outcome of the Colloquium and this decision was well supported during the course of the event by presentations and dialogue among the key experts.

The advantages and disadvantages of formal vs informal engagement were explored through the experiences of the Noncommunicable Diseases (NCD) Alliance and the Sun Alliance.

WHY AN ALLIANCE?

Current mechanisms to help facilitate collaboration across diverse stakeholders during the Decade are in the main being led by the WHO and the UN. For example, UN Agencies are undertaking joint planning processes through the UN Inter-Agency Group on Ageing; mayors and community leaders are being

encouraged to leverage the WHO Global Network for Age-Friendly Cities and Communities to help coordinate and collaborate plans and actions; and WHO expert groups that include members of civil society (the Clinical Consortium on Healthy Aging, The Global Network on Long-Term Care and The International Consortium on Metrics and Evidence for Healthy Ageing) provide forums and collaborative opportunities for academics and professionals.

There is however no unifying mechanism to support, facilitate and drive the collaborative efforts of civil society. The Sun Alliance and NCD Alliance have demonstrated that there is strength in a formal body with governance and management structure, this is also instrumental in:

- Enhancing alignment and coordination among partners;
- Increasing resource availability;
- The sharing of complementary skills, new ideas, credibility, and constituencies; and.
- The broadening of scope from each organisation's own work and enlarging support bases.

Informal coalitions, while useful, do not allow for integration and participation among multilateral agencies such as the World Health Organization. This was exemplified by Dr Parsons Perez who indicated that this was a significant driver and motivating factor in the transition of the original informal NCD Alliance to its current position as an incorporated NGO. This development was essential to securing official relations as a non-state actor at the WHO and a seat at the table for discussions regarding ongoing progress, priorities and actions with key multilateral agencies and respective member states.

A civil society alliance established now at the start of the Decade would not only help to fill an important gap towards fostering collective meaningful engagement but also provide a unique opportunity to link with other actors, both to political spheres and to individual citizens as well as across other multistakeholder groups such as the WHO Healthy Ageing Collaborative set to be launched in September 2022. Such an alliance could also be an important first step in bolstering domestic, regional, and global support to civil society, helping to raise the profile of participating CSO organizations while also strengthening collective power.

Closely related to this, and of particular relevance in the context of the Decade, is the need to interact with and responding to the needs of governments at a national level. As such there is a significant advantage in an alliance that represents the collective voice of civil society. This is expected to maximize the likelihood and propensity for governments to collaborate with civil society in a meaningful way and foster positive relationships both throughout and beyond the Decade.

A civil society alliance will also help to hold governments and other key stakeholders accountable towards ensuring that the rights of older people and the work on key action areas remain high on political agendas in the face of austerity and shifting priorities throughout the Decade.

KEY ELEMENTS FOR SUCCESS

Governance and Management

Dr Parsons Perez, NCD Alliance and Mr Mhuru, CSO-SUN Alliance, Zambia believe that one of the most crucial components in establishing a sustainable alliance across civil society is strong leadership, clear strategic direction and clear communication that helps to frame the governance and management structure. This is essential to building collective trust and transparency.

The NCD Alliance, in growing from an informal coalition to one of the most influential CSO alliances globally, has undergone tremendous transformation since its inception in 2009.

One of the key learnings throughout this process has been co-designing the framework of a governing/decision making body, a coordinating agency (Secretariat), clear membership structure and working committees/groups. Having a strong governance structure as was also the case for the CSO-SUN Alliance greatly impacts the sustainability of an alliance, instances in which strong governance is not established can often lead to the dissolution. Steering groups and the secretariat are also crucial in organizing and coordinating group efforts and play a key role in ensuring accountability of the actors and members belonging to an alliance.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

A set of clear and attainable goals was viewed to be central to the successful delivery of concrete outcomes and indicators of success. Both Dr Parsons Perez and Mr Mhuru regarded the degree of alignment across Colloquium attendees as extremely positive and encouraged the group to consider goals and objectives as both strategic and opportunistic in nature, grounded in core values and organized around shared solutions rather than problems. As reinforcement to this message the NCD Alliance has had great success in aligning their objectives with government and intergovernmental agendas and priorities, to facilitate and foster collaboration with these entities and more effectively help inform and shape policy.

SHARED CORE VALUES

While competing priorities are inevitable when working across diverse sectors, they also underscore the rich diversity of experience while also recognising the core shared values that remain central to all work being undertaken by the alliance. These core values as, Dr Parsons Perez describes, are ultimately what binds members of an alliance together. Not every priority can be addressed and disagreements at times can be inevitable but having core values that resonate and bind each member of the group together are fundamental to maximizing success and fruitful working relationships among an alliance. This is also important in ensuring that the overall mission of the alliance is not diluted and in fostering confidence and continued buy in among members. In the context of a CSO Alliance for the Decade of Healthy Ageing, some of the key elements identified by participants include core values such as upholding the dignity of older persons, human rights, equity, and gender.

NEXT STEPS

With overwhelming agreement from participating organizations for the establishment of a formal Civil Society Alliance for the Decade of Healthy Ageing to support, inform and drive progress across the Decade, and a clear articulation of the urgent need for action, the IFA and partners, including the ILC Global Alliance, HelpAge International and the NGO Committee on Ageing (Geneva) will continue efforts towards establishing the foundations for this important alliance including the identification of a steering committee, representative of the diversity of civil society, to help guide future actions.

Leveraging the lessons learned and insights from the Mobilizing Action and Driving Engagement Colloquium, future actions will focus on the development of appropriate governance, management structure, and funding opportunities for the proposed alliance.

The IFA, the ILC Global Alliance, HelpAge International and the NGO Committee on Ageing (Geneva) look forward to the opportunity to reconvene with organizations who participated in the colloquium in the near future to help further inform these foundational structures as well as continue to drive this exciting work forward through the identification of shared priorities and the formal launch of the CSO Alliance for the Decade of Healthy Ageing.

COLLOQUIUM PROGRAM

Time	Session: 14 July 2022
9:00 a.m. - 9:10 a.m.	<p>Welcome and opening Remarks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ms Jane Barratt, Secretary General, International Federation on Ageing
9:10 a.m. - 9:30 a.m.	<p>Keynote Address – The Role of Civil Society in the UN Decade of Healthy Ageing</p> <p>The UN Decade of Healthy Ageing is an opportunity to work together to improve the lives of older people, their families, and the communities in which they live. Civil society organisations (CSOs) represent a defining force to help influence and shape policy that impacts the lives of current and future generations of older people.</p> <p><i>Presenter</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ms Alana Officer, Unit Head on Demographic Change and Healthy Ageing, Department of Social Determinants of Health, Division of Healthier Populations, World Health Organization
9:30 a.m. - 10:30 a.m.	<p>Identifying shared priorities and opportunities for future collaboration</p> <p>Civil society organisations are unique and powerful voices working with and on behalf of their constituents and are much more influential when working together than when acting alone.</p> <p>Achieving health for all, including the current and future generations of older people, is only conceivable when we share the valuable resources, knowledge and close community connections that make us who we are and what we stand for.</p> <p>Working towards a common agenda even when our organisations come to issues from different perspectives enriches the policy dialogue and maximizes potential for success</p> <p>Breakout Groups</p> <p>Active engagement from attendees is paramount to the success of this important colloquium. With this in mind, breakout groups will be utilized to maximize opportunities for robust discussion and ensure that the unique and diverse voices from participating civil society organizations are meaningfully incorporated and engaged.</p> <p>Each breakout group will self-select an ambassador who will help facilitate discussion as it relates to the guiding questions provided below and will be responsible for reporting back on key takeaways to the larger group.</p>

COLLOQUIUM PROGRAM

Time	Session: 14 July 2022
9:30 a.m. - 10:00 a.m.	<p>Session 1 Guiding Questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What does successful engagement in the Decade look like and what would it mean to your organisation? • What are key areas for action during the Decade? <p>Attendees are encouraged to discuss short term (low hanging fruit), medium term, and long-term goals (aspirational).</p>
10:00 a.m. - 10:15 a.m.	<p>Report Back</p> <p>Groups report back on the guiding questions.</p>
10:15 a.m. - 10:45 a.m.	<p>Session 2 Guiding Questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is collaboration across diverse sectors possible in driving ageing agendas, and if so what are the essential ingredients of success • What are some examples of shared priorities and opportunities that could be included in a common agenda for the Decade
10:45 a.m. - 11:05 a.m.	<p>Report Back</p> <p>Groups report back on the guiding questions.</p>
10:45 a.m. - 11:05 a.m.	<p>Health Break</p>
11:20 a.m. - 12:20 p.m.	<p>Moderated Panel – Successful Multisectoral Collaboration</p> <p>The more stakeholders that are connected across sectors and disciplines, the greater the possibility they have for leveraging resources; sharing learning and experience; supporting diffusion of policy, and concrete action. The UN Decade will promote partnering for multidisciplinary and collaborative action that unites organisations and people around the world.</p> <p><i>Facilitator</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prof Julie Byles, Director of the Research Centre for Gender, Health and Ageing <p><i>Presenters</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dr Cristina Parsons Perez, Capacity Development Director, The NCD Alliance • Mr Mathews Mhuru, Country Coordinator, CSO-SUN Alliance Zambia

COLLOQUIUM PROGRAM

Time	Session: 14 July 2022
12:20 p.m. - 12:45 p.m.	Q&A– Successful Multisectoral Collaboration
12:45 p.m. - 1:00 p.m.	Closing Remarks Synthesis of key takeaways and discussion of potential next steps towards the establishment of an alliance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ms Jane Barratt, Secretary General, International Federation on Ageing
1:00 p.m.	Close

COLLOQUIUM PRESENTERS

Opening and Closing Remarks – Dr. Jane Barratt

Secretary General, International Federation on Ageing

Jane M Barratt, Ph.D. is the Secretary General, International Federation on Ageing (IFA) an international non-government organisation with general consultative status with the United Nations and its agencies including formal relations with the World Health Organisation (WHO).

Representing over 75 million older people through the membership of the IFA, Jane has direct responsibility for the corporation's global operational performance, quality and strategic implementation, and business development. This includes leadership at the United Nations Economic and Social Council in New York, Geneva and Vienna and the WHO.

Among her many current positions Jane is a Member of Vision Academy, Director, Baycrest Health Sciences and Chair of the Education Advisory Committee, Associate Scientist, Sinai Health System, Member, Global Committee for the DR Barometer Program, and Member of the International Council for Adult Immunisation.



Keynote Presentation – Ms. Alana Officer

Unit Head, Demographic Change and Healthy Ageing, Department of Social Determinants of Health, Division of Healthier Populations, World Health Organization, Switzerland

When Ms. Officer joined the WHO in 2006, she originally served as Coordinator for the Disability and Rehabilitation Team from 2007 to 2014. In 2014, she made the move to the Department of Ageing and Life Course where she led the development of the World Report on Ageing and Health, and the development of the Global Strategy and Action Plan on Ageing and Health. Alana coordinated the development of the UN Decade of healthy ageing and oversees the WHO's work on ageism and age-friendly environments key themes of the IFA 15th Global Conference on Ageing.

As a global thought leader, Ms. Officer's intellectual rigour, authenticity and inspiration stand apart from the best, as does her commitment and dedication to the field of healthy ageing. The IFA is thrilled that her powerful voice will be showcased at the conference to challenging thinking and bring a knowledgeable, evidence-based perspective on how to bring about positive change for an ageing population.

Successful Multistakeholder Collaboration Panel - Dr. Cristina Parsons Perez

Capacity Development Director, The NCD Alliance

Dr Cristina Parsons Perez is the Capacity Development Director for the NCD Alliance where she is responsible for strengthening national and regional civil society to drive NCD prevention and control. She oversees flagship initiatives such as the NCD Alliance Advocacy Institute, the Our Views, Our Voices initiative and the Global NCD Alliance Forum. She co-chairs the NCD Lab on Meaningful engagement of people living with NCDs and mental health conditions with WHO and brings organisational perspectives as member of the OECD PARIS survey patient advisory panel.



Cristina has over 15 years of health advocacy and capacity development experience, having consulted with Catalyst Consulting Group, worked at the American Cancer Society's Global Health Department as Director of Cancer Advocacy, and worked at Breakthrough Breast Cancer UK (Breast Cancer NOW) developing policy and mobilising grassroots. She has a PhD in gene therapy from University College London.



Successful Multistakeholder Collaboration Panel - Prof. Julie Byles

Director of the Centre for Women's Health Research, School of Medicine and Public Health, University of Newcastle Australia

Emeritus Professor Julie Byles AO BMed PhD FAAHMS is a Fellow and life member of the Australian Association of Gerontology. She is also Chair of the Hunter Ageing Alliance, Head of the International Longevity Centre – Australia, co-President of the International Longevity Centre Global Alliance, and Chair, Social Research and Planning Sub-committee International Association of Gerontology and Geriatrics (Asia Oceania). She was a founding investigator and Director of the Australian Longitudinal Study on Women's Health with a particular interest in the health of the oldest women who are now turning 100, and the next cohort who are now in their 70s. Her work includes how health and social care can support people throughout later life.

Successful Multistakeholder Collaboration Panel

Mr. Mathews Mhuru

Country Coordinator, CSO-SUN Alliance, Zambia

Mathews Mhuru is Country Coordinator at the Zambia Civil Society Scaling Up Nutrition Alliance (SUN), the SUN network dedicated to fostering the formation of civil society alliances (already existing in 42 SUN Countries as of today) and to representing over 4,000 organisations – diverse, non-profit groups including human rights defenders, community organisations, women's groups, small farmers, research entities, child rights organisations and more. Mathews is a member of the SUN Executive Committee, a global governance body of the SUN Movement, and is the immediate past chair of the Global SUN Civil Society Network, Supporting SUN Civil Society Alliances as they work to influence governments and private sector organisations in the fight against malnutrition.

