International Federation on Ageing

TOWARDS COLLECTIVE ACTION ON HEALTHY AGEING AND LONGEVITY

Strategy 2026-2029

LONGER LIVES ARE BECOMING THE NORM.
ARE OUR SOCIETIES READY?

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WHY THIS MOMENT MATTERS

The world is ageing—rapidly, unevenly, and with far-reaching implications for every sector of society. By 2050, one in six people will be aged 65 or over [1]. This shift reflects one of humanity's greatest successes: longer lives. Yet many of the institutions, policies and social norms that shape daily life were designed for a different demographic reality, and they have not kept pace.

This longevity transition presents urgent challenges and extraordinary opportunities. How societies respond will shape whether population ageing becomes a driver of inequality and strain, or a powerful source of resilience, solidarity and sustainable development.

Healthy ageing, as defined by the World Health Organization (WHO), is the process of developing and maintaining the functional ability to enable wellbeing in older age [2]. The International Federation on Ageing (IFA) builds on and extends this understanding. Ageing is not solely a matter for older people. It is a universal, lifelong process that touches every generation and every system. It demands coordinated, intersectoral responses across health, economic, social, environmental and technological domains, and must be addressed through an intersectional lens that recognises inequities shaped by gender, geography, income, disability and other determinants.

The central challenge is not demographic change itself, but whether societies are prepared for longer lives. That requires a shift in mindset, from viewing ageing as a late-life issue to recognising longevity as a lifelong imperative, and redesigning systems so that health, skills, financial security and social connection can be sustained across extended lives. Preparing for longevity is not about doing more for older people alone; it is about building societies that work better for people at every age. As lifespans lengthen, labour markets, health systems, long-term care, housing and urban design, climate resilience, digital inclusion and financial systems must adapt. If responses remain narrow or siloed, inequities risk turning longer lives into extended vulnerability rather than opportunity. While international frameworks are advancing, many countries still lack the tools, data and governance needed to translate commitments into system-level change.

[1] United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division. (2020). World Population Ageing 2019.

[2] World Health Organization. (2015). World Report on Ageing and Health.

In this context, healthy ageing and longevity are both personal and societal imperatives. They require bold transformation in how policies are designed, systems are financed and governed, and how evidence is mobilised and applied. This means moving from reactive, age-segmented responses towards longevity-ready systems that support health, participation, security and connection across extended lives.

The IFA sits at the centre of this moment. As a trusted global convener, connector, knowledge broker and advocate with general consultative status at the United Nations (UN) and a non-State actor in official relations with the WHO, along with deep roots in civil society, the IFA works across sectors and regions to bridge insight, evidence, practice and policy.

IFA's strategy for 2026-2029, aligned with and contributing to progress toward the UN Decade of Healthy Ageing (2021–2030) and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, sets out a clear pathway for strengthening global collaboration, accelerating policy reform and amplifying perspectives from across sectors and regions.

This evolution of IFA's long-standing leadership is an invitation to think differently about population ageing: not as a burden to be managed, but as a foundation for thriving, inclusive and future-ready societies.

WHO WE ARE AND HOW WE WORK

The International Federation on Ageing brings together leaders, organizations, and communities to advance healthy ageing globally. Grounded in collaboration and guided by purpose, we work across sectors to influence policy, strengthen systems, and improve lives.

OUR MISSION

To drive global intersectoral collaboration on healthy ageing and longevity.

OUR VISION

A future where ageing is embraced as a strength and societies are equipped to enable everyone to age with choice, connection and dignity.

OUR VALUES

INTEGRITY
We build trust through honesty, transparency, and respect for every voice.

EQUITY
We advanced rights-based, inclusive approaches and tackle inequalities.

COLLABORATION
We form lasting partnerships and co-create with our global community.

INNOVATION
We test new ideas and embrace continuous learning.

COURAGE
We challenge the status quo and pursue transformative change.

ACCOUNTABILITY
We are steadfast in our mission and deliver on our commitments.

OUR ROLE IN THE GLOBAL ECOSYSTEM

The IFA is focused on shaping the enabling conditions – narrative, partnerships, evidence and policy - required for societies to adapt successfully to longevity. We connect people and knowledge, convene across traditional boundaries, and advocate for policies that place healthy ageing at the heart of global development.

To maintain focus, neutrality and impact, the IFA does not position itself as a direct service provider and does not seek to displace the organisations closest to communities. Our default approach is to work through trusted partners, strengthening their leadership and capacity, elevating insights from diverse contexts, and ensuring that national and subnational engagements are locally grounded and locally led.

In practice, this means the IFA typically does not implement local programmes or hyper-local activities, and we prioritise collaboration with regional aggregators and in-country actors to avoid duplication or competition. Where capacity is limited, or where there is a strategic opportunity to catalyse systems change, the IFA may play a more active role for a defined period to support knowledge mobilisation, capacity development, convene stakeholders, or advance policy initiatives, always with the intention of enabling sustainable local ownership and transitioning to partner-led approaches as capabilities grow.

> **IFA is most valuable as a bridge between local innovation and global influence—offering visibility, credibility, and collaboration opportunities.**
>
> IFA member, Ireland

INSIGHTS THAT SHAPED THIS PLAN

This strategic plan reflects the collective insight of IFA members, partners and global stakeholders. Through surveys, interviews and dialogues, we listened carefully to what matters most to those working across the field of population ageing. Several clear themes emerged.

ACTIVE CO-CREATION

Our community wants to actively shape solutions—co-designing advocacy campaigns, participating in thematic working groups, and driving progress alongside the IFA. Stakeholders reaffirmed IFA's credibility as a trusted global convener with standing at the UN and WHO, while emphasizing that members are central to its legitimacy. At the same time, they called for greater clarity and focus in how we articulate our identity, positioning, and added value.

TRUSTED CONNECTOR

Stakeholders identified IFA's core strength as a neutral global convener, providing a safe, non-partisan and technically credible space for governments, civil society, academia, industry and philanthropy to address shared priorities in healthy ageing and longevity. Its role as connector and knowledge broker is central to bridging sectors and regions around a common agenda.

EQUITY AND VOICE

A powerful message emerged on equity and representation: the voices and priorities related to population ageing in low- and middle-income countries must move from the margins to the centre of global debates. As many countries age before they develop, stakeholders called for deeper and more intentional engagement in these contexts, including stronger cross-regional learning, solidarity and mutual accountability.

FROM INSIGHT TO ACTION

There was a clear call for a more "full-circle" approach that links high-level policy influence with tangible outcomes. Stakeholders want the IFA to help translate global guidance into action, to elevate underrepresented issues, and to ensure that convening power is exercised not only through flagship global events but through sustained engagement that connects regions, sectors and disciplines over time.

These insights form the foundation of this strategy. They have helped us prioritise where the IFA can be most catalytic, clarified our role as connector, convener, knowledge broker and advocate, and anchored our vision in the realities and aspirations of those shaping responses to population ageing around the world.

OUR SHARED IMPACT BY 2029

Against the backdrop of rapid demographic shifts and evolving global priorities, the IFA is committed to working with regional networks, technical partners and national stakeholders to help unlock the potential of population ageing. Our aim is to amplify local realities, strengthen capacity, and ensure that global commitments to healthy ageing and longevity are informed by, and responsive to, diverse contexts.

Our core role is to bring together the actors most capable of creating meaningful change across sectors, regions and disciplines. As a trusted global convener, we act as a bridge between policy and practice, translating global frameworks into regional and national agendas, and fostering alignment among governments, multilateral institutions, civil society, academia and industry.

Through strategic convening, knowledge mobilisation and policy influence, the IFA helps to surface emerging issues, promote innovative solutions, and create spaces where evidence, experience and leadership converge to inspire concrete action. With strong roots in civil society and formal relationships with the UN and WHO, the IFA is well placed to support the translation of best practices into commitments, and commitments into tangible outcomes grounded in principles of human rights and equity.

OVER THE LIFE OF THIS PLAN, THE IFA AIMS TO CONTRIBUTE TO FOUR INTERLINKED AREAS OF IMPACT

This strategic plan is both a framework and an invitation to collective action. It recognises population ageing not only as a challenge, but as an opportunity for societies to thrive through inclusion, innovation and shared responsibility.

MOBILISING KNOWLEDGE

Evidence, data and innovation on healthy ageing and longevity are identified, synthesised and shared across countries and sectors in ways that accelerate effective action and support better decisions.

CHANGING MINDSETS

Communities, institutions and systems recognise ageing as a lifelong process with social, economic and intergenerational value for society as a whole. Ageism is challenged, and intergenerational solidarity is strengthened.

REFORMING POLICY

Global, regional and national policies reflect the realities of population ageing, with healthy ageing embedded as a core element of inclusive, rights-based and longevity-ready health, care, economic and social systems.

EMPOWERING PARTNERS

IFA members and partners have access to the knowledge, tools and platforms they need to lead advocacy, shape policy and promote age-inclusive practices in their own contexts.

HOW WE CREATE CHANGE

TO HELP ACHIEVE THESE OUTCOMES, THE IFA WORKS THROUGH FOUR PRIMARY LEVERS

NETWORKS AND PARTNERSHIPS

We work across regions and sectors to surface priorities and mobilise influence. We strengthen networks and coalitions so that insights from diverse contexts can inform cross-regional and global policy and practice. We facilitate cross-regional learning, exchange and joint agenda-setting, and collaborate with multilateral and multisectoral partners to advance shared priority actions on healthy ageing and longevity. We expand and diversify our membership to include influential actors such as regional implementers, advocates, academics, civil society organisations and networks, industry partners and government representatives.

IN PRACTICE

Over the summer of 2025, the IFA launched a survey for older persons at the midpoint of the UN Decade of Healthy Ageing in all UN languages, alongside a survey for multi-sectoral stakeholders. These surveys gathered insights, challenges, opportunities and priorities that will be used to inform multilateral agendas and strengthen global understanding of population ageing.

STRATEGIC AND CATALYTIC CONVENING

We create spaces that connect people, knowledge and action. We convene technical experts and practitioners to surface insights and evidence, and host networking and knowledge-sharing events—such as the Global Café series—to connect stakeholders across regions and disciplines. We bring together multisectoral and intersectional stakeholders to align on priorities and collective action, and we position the biennial IFA Global Conference on Ageing as a premier platform for global knowledge exchange, connection and joint action.

IN PRACTICE

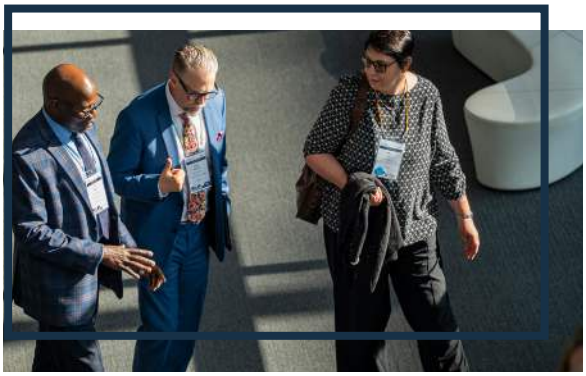
Through the Global Café series, the IFA has created informal, accessible spaces for stakeholders to connect across regions and disciplines, and to explore cross-cutting, topical issues ranging from care economy, digital inclusion and assistive technologies, age-friendly environments, the intersections between hearing, vision and brain health, and the impact of longevity on workforce and economic productivity.

EVIDENCE AND FORESIGHT

We equip partners with insights and tools that shift thinking and inform action. We curate intersectional insights and knowledge on emerging trends in population ageing and long-term implications of longevity, and develop, curate and share evidence-based reports, toolkits, guidelines and training for governments and multisectoral partners. We partner with academic institutions and independent experts in research, data collection and synthesis, and we translate global policy into regionally relevant resources that support advocacy and implementation.

IN PRACTICE

When adult immunisation emerged as a critical yet underprioritised issue in healthy ageing, the IFA worked with experts and regional partners to understand gaps and barriers. Through expert meetings and regional consultations, the IFA developed evidence-based reports and policy recommendations tailored to specific contexts, and established Vaccine4Life as a knowledge repository to enable global advocacy and action.



ADVOCACY AND POLICY

We influence policy and systems through targeted, evidence-informed advocacy. We drive visibility through strategic communications, media engagement and campaigns aligned with key policy moments and events. We co-develop advocacy positions and shared messaging with IFA members and partners to amplify impact, and engage directly with governments and institutions to embed and advance healthy ageing policies across diverse priorities and agendas. We advocate at the UN, WHO and other multilateral bodies—both independently and in collaboration with partners—through policy briefs, consensus statements, formal submissions and high-level side events.

IN PRACTICE

When gaps in the protection of older people's rights became increasingly visible at the UN, the IFA worked with members and partners to build a clear, shared case for a UN convention on the rights of older persons. Through joint advocacy statements, formal submissions, and high-level engagement at the UN and with governments, the IFA contributed to the milestone decision to move towards the formal drafting of such a convention in April 2025.

CROSS-CUTTING FOCUS AREAS

As the IFA looks ahead, we are building on a strong foundation: a global network, trusted expertise and an evolving understanding of where our work can have the greatest impact. The next phase is about purposeful focus: bringing coherence across our priority areas, deepening areas where there is already momentum, and creating space to engage new voices and sectors.

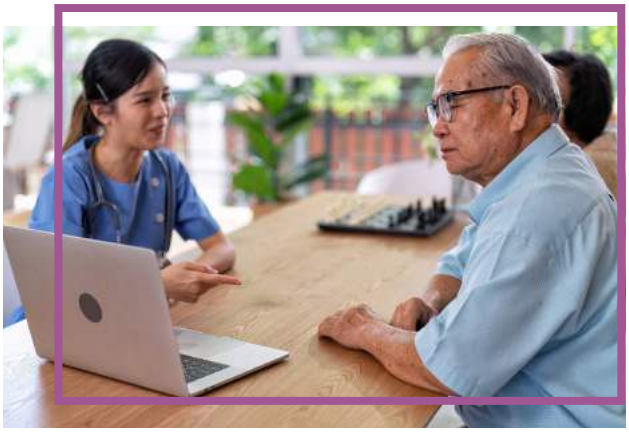
These focus areas are interconnected and mutually reinforcing. Together, they reflect a comprehensive, multisectoral, intersectional and life-course approach to advancing healthy ageing and supporting longevity-ready societies. They will guide how we convene, mobilise knowledge, shape narratives and align advocacy.

These focus areas will continue to be refined and co-created with IFA members, partners and communities. The voices of those most affected by population ageing will remain central to shaping where we focus, how we act and what we elevate on the global stage.

RIGHTS OF OLDER PERSONS, ENDING AGEISM AND INTERGENERATIONAL SOLIDARITY

We will advance the protection and realisation of older persons' rights by supporting legal and policy frameworks that uphold dignity, autonomy and equity. We will tackle ageism in institutions, systems and culture, and strengthen public narratives that recognise the value of older persons. We will also promote intergenerational solidarity, elevating mutual support, shared responsibility and meaningful connection across generations.

PERSON AND RELATIONAL-CENTRED HEALTH AND CARE CONTINUUM



We will accelerate integrated and equitable approaches to health promotion, disease prevention and care across the whole life course. This includes strengthening adult immunisation, reducing the burden of non-communicable diseases, and improving attention to cognitive health, sensory health and mental wellbeing. We will promote equitable access to quality long-term care and community-based models that support functional ability and independence.

AGE-FRIENDLY COMMUNITIES AND LONGEVITY-READY ENVIRONMENTS

We will promote inclusive environments that support wellbeing across the life course, including support to the WHO age-friendly framework and the Global Network for Age-friendly Cities and Communities, as well as other emerging models and innovations. We will highlight how urban design, transport, housing, public spaces and social participation shape health, connection and safety as communities adapt to population ageing and longer lives.

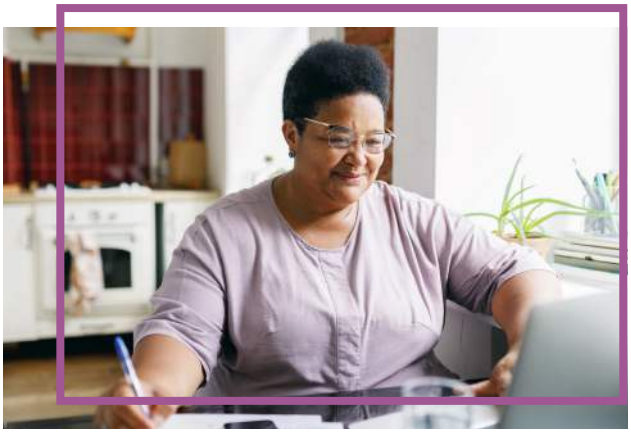
FUTURE OF WORK, FINANCING, AND LONGEVITY ECONOMIES

We will catalyse collaboration so economies and financial systems are fit for longer lives, advancing longevity-ready investment and financing approaches that support sustainable responses to population ageing. This includes engaging with extended working lives, shifting labour markets, informal work and unpaid caregiving as part of the growth of care, purple, silver and longevity economies.

CLIMATE RESILIENCE AND PLANETARY HEALTH

We will strengthen the integration of ageing into climate resilience and planetary health agendas, advancing policies and practices that recognise the interconnected relationship between environmental sustainability, human health and longevity. This includes reducing climate-related risks for older people, supporting age-inclusive adaptation planning, addressing environmental determinants of health across the life course, and recognising older persons as contributors to preparedness, response, recovery and sustainable transitions.

DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION AND INCLUSION



We will champion rights-based and inclusive digital transformation so technologies and digital systems support healthy ageing across the life course. This includes shaping how tools such as artificial intelligence, assistive technologies and gerontechnology are designed, governed and deployed, and how digital services are accessed and trusted. We will elevate evidence and practice that strengthen inclusion, protect rights and safety, and improve health, autonomy, participation and connection.

HOW WE WILL DELIVER

This strategy builds on the IFA's long-standing leadership, partnerships and contributions to global policy and practice. Over the next three years, we will deepen our impact by focusing our efforts, strengthening our foundations, surfacing innovations, and amplifying what already works. As we refine our focus areas, the IFA will continue to lead, convene and influence, moving from alignment to acceleration, and from discrete action to systems change.

These focus areas will continue to be refined and co-created with IFA members, partners and communities. The voices of those most affected by population ageing will remain central to shaping where we focus, how we act and what we elevate on the global stage.

2026–2027 | STRENGTHEN AND ALIGN

We will expand and diversify our membership and partnerships, strengthen governance and organisational capacity, and sharpen our convening, knowledge and advocacy platforms to reflect priorities across regions.

2027–2028 | APPLY AND DEEPEN

We will translate shared priorities into coordinated action through regional engagement, learning exchanges, and joint advocacy tied to key global moments. The IFA 18th Global Conference on Ageing in fall of 2027 will be a major milestone to connect leaders, elevate innovations, align agendas and accelerate

2028–2029 | INFLUENCE AND AMPLIFY

We will scale what works through stronger policy influence, clearer narratives, and member- and partner-led impact stories, and use IFA's convening power and technical insight to help shape the next phase of global healthy ageing and longevity agendas beyond 2030, ensuring population ageing remains central to future commitments and implementation pathways.

WHAT IT WILL TAKE

To deliver this strategy, IFA will strengthen the foundations that make sustained, high-impact collaboration possible. These are deliberate investments in our capacity and systems so we can convene effectively, mobilise knowledge, support partners, and help translate global commitments into meaningful change as societies adapt to longer lives.

We will **invigorate and diversify our membership and partnerships,** expanding representation across regions and sectors including implementers, advocates, academia, civil society, and private sector, while building out mechanisms for deeper engagement and collective impact.

We will also **build the organisational capabilities needed to deliver at greater scale**. This includes investing in people, through strategic recruitment, professional development and a learning-oriented culture, alongside modernising our technology and platforms to better enable stakeholder engagement, virtual convening and knowledge mobilisation. Forming a global network of thought leaders and advisers will further ensure our work remains rigorous, responsive and grounded in evidence.

Finally, we will **strengthen sustainability and accountability**. We will diversify funding through institutional, philanthropic and private sector support aligned with our mission, and we will invest in inclusive leadership and governance to ensure clear direction, global representation, strong oversight and long-term organisational resilience.

> **Eliminating silos between sectors has tremendous potential for crosspollination of innovative solutions. Yet leaders of various organizations and entities often need a mechanism to make the connection. I believe IFA could function as the connector on an even larger scale.**
>
> IFA member, Ireland

BUILDING LONGEVITY-READY SOCIETIES TOGETHER

Population ageing is reshaping every society. Whether longer lives become a foundation for equity and resilience, or a driver of deeper inequality, depends on the choices we make now.

Population ageing is not a speculation; it's a present reality. The real question is whether our systems, institutions and communities will be ready.

The IFA exists to help societies adapt successfully to population ageing and longevity by shaping the enabling conditions for change: shared narratives, partnerships, knowledge and policy that make healthy ageing possible across the life course. We convene across sectors, turn evidence into practical insight, and support partners to translate commitments into locally led action, elevating voices across regions to help define what "ready" looks like.

JOIN US.

Be part of the IFA community – as a member, partner, funder, technical collaborator or champion – and help build a world where ageing is embraced as a shared strength. Bring your experience, your influence, your investment, and your voice.

Together, we can challenge ageism, accelerate solutions that work in real contexts, and build longevity-ready societies that align lifespan, healthspan and wealthspan so people everywhere can live and age with health, choice, connection and dignity.

International Federation on Ageing

Address

1 Bridgepoint Drive, Suite G.238,
Toronto, ON, Canada
M4M 2B5

Contact

communications@ifa.ngo

www.ifa.ngo

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