

# AGE-FRIENDLY CITIES AND COMMUNITIES



# THE DUBLIN DECLARATION

Dublin, September 2011

## THE AGE-FRIENDLY CITY AND OLDER PEOPLE

### DECLARATION

On the occasion of the 1<sup>ST</sup> International Conference 'Building the WHO Global Network of Age-Friendly Cities', held in Dublin, Ireland on 28-30 September 2011, **the undersigning cities recognise that:**

1. Ageing is a matter that affects all of us, at an individual level but also at the level of society. In a world in which life expectancy is increasing at the rate of over two years per decade, and the percentage of the population over 65 years is projected to double over the next forty years, the need to prepare for these changes is both urgent and timely.
2. Making the world a better place to grow old in will require a major shift in the way old age and older people are conceptualised in order to focus on the opportunities as well as the challenges of an ageing population. What is needed is new thinking and practice, supported by evidence, that focuses on promoting quality of life and well-being, valuing the contribution older people make in their communities, promoting their functional capacity, and removing the barriers which limit or inhibit their choice and ability to live life to the full.
3. Where we live, our physical, social and cultural environment, greatly impacts upon how we live. The significance of 'place' in all our lives cannot be overestimated. The built environment impacts on the quality of all of our lives and can make the difference between independence and dependence for all people, but especially for those growing older. Place is inseparable from our sense of identity and this is true for people of all ages, including older people.
4. Cities must equip themselves with the necessary means and resources and systems of resource distribution to promote equal opportunities and the well-being and participation of all citizens, including their older citizens. By 2030, two-thirds of the world's population will be living in cities, and the major urban areas of the developed world will have 25 per cent or more of their population people aged 60 and over. However, many older people in developed and developing countries live and will continue to live in rural and sometimes remote communities. These communities must also develop the capacity to promote the health, well-being and participation of their older citizens.
5. An age-friendly city and/or community encourages active ageing by optimising opportunities for health, participation and security in order to enhance quality of life as people age. Developing age-friendly processes and practices will vary from place to place. Solutions that work in more developed countries may need to be radically adapted for less developed countries and vice versa, because of the different issues and challenges each faces. Developing age-friendly processes will also need to recognise the gender aspect of ageing and develop solutions to meet the varying needs of women and men as they age.
6. It is the challenge of the community and its social organisations to promote more favorable conditions for the full development of all persons, including that of older people, avoiding or removing all causes that hinder or prevent such development. In doing so, it is necessary to consider the differences between citizens, including age differences, as a part of the diversity of which society is made up, designing services and structures so that they can be used by everyone, and making unnecessary, as far as possible, the existence of specific elements for older people. There is a need for enhanced international co-operation to protect and promote the human rights of older people at community, city and state level.

7. An age-friendly city, in accordance with the framework developed by WHO<sup>1</sup>, is one in which service providers, public officials, community leaders, faith leaders, business people and citizens recognise the great diversity among older persons and the importance of health to them, promote their inclusion and contribution in all areas of community life, respect their decisions and lifestyle choices, and anticipate and respond flexibly to ageing-related needs and preferences.
8. There is a need to recognise that a significant proportion of our older population, many of them living in developing countries, are at greater risk of living in poverty. Planning for poverty reduction at all levels needs to meaningfully address the concerns of older people and develop policies which include specific measures to alleviate poverty among older people.
9. Planning for environmentally, economically and socially sustainable communities is a crucial concern for local government, and such planning needs to take account of the ageing of populations and the role older people can play as a key resource, and meet the specific needs of older people outlined in this Declaration.

## COMMITMENTS

***Therefore, the undersigning cities and communities make the following commitments that shall be known as the Declaration of Age-Friendly Cities and Communities, and they commit in the first place to:***

- a) Promote the Declaration of Age-Friendly Cities and Communities in appropriate national and international forums, fostering the maximum adherence possible to its principles and premises, and promote the enactment of regulations at all levels which will establish what is required, in terms of plans, programmes and resources, in order to implement the commitments in this Declaration within a reasonable period of time.
- b) Initiate processes of collaboration to support the full application of the commitments in the Declaration of Age-Friendly Cities and Communities, including participating in the WHO Global Network of Age-friendly Cities. This will involve commencing a 5-year cycle of continual assessment and improvement to make their community and city more age-friendly, and throughout the process, participating in the Network to support its role as a platform for mutual support, discussion and learning.
- c) Develop communication channels and networks between the various cities and communities to stimulate and support advances in the promotion of equal rights and opportunities for older citizens and to share learning about advances in policies and practices which improve their lives.

***The undersigning cities and communities also commit, where it is within their area of responsibility and economically feasible, to implement the following specific actions:***

---

<sup>1</sup> World Health Organization (2007). Global Age-friendly Cities: A Guide. Geneva: WHO

- I. Promote among the general public **awareness of older people**, their rights, their needs, their potentials, and highlight the positive social, economic and cultural contribution they make.
- II. Ensure that the views and opinions of older people are valued and listened to and that structures and **processes of citizen-centred engagement** are developed to ensure that older people have a meaningful involvement in decision making and are actively involved in the design and creation of innovation and change.
- III. Adopt measures to develop **urban and other public places** that are inclusive, sharable and desirable to all, particularly older people, and ensure that publicly used buildings promote the dignity, health and well-being of users of all ages, and are fit for purpose to meet the changing needs of an ageing society.
- IV. Promote and support the development of neighbourhoods and communities for all ages that are diverse, safe, inclusive and sustainable, and that include **housing** for older people that is of the highest quality. Particular attention should be given to the housing needs of older people in assisted living, residential care and nursing homes where their dignity and autonomy is at greater risk.
- V. Work to establish **public transport systems** that are available and affordable to older people, and are 'seamless' within and across the various modes of transport that exist. The transport system should also promote and facilitate personal transport use such as cycling and driving by older people. As these become more difficult, personal alternatives such as affordable taxis and car pooling, which interconnect with the public system, should be made available.
- VI. Promote the **participation of older people in the social and cultural life** of their community by making available a diverse range of events and activities that are accessible, affordable and tailored to be inclusive of them and promote their integration into the community. This should include the promotion of intergenerational activities.
- VII. Promote and support the development of **employment and volunteering opportunities** for older people and recognise their positive contribution, to include the provision of lifelong learning opportunities in order to empower them and promote their autonomy.
- VIII. Ensure that a comprehensive and integrated range of affordable, easily accessible, age-friendly and high quality **community support and health services** is available to older people, to include health promotion and prevention programmes, community-based support services, primary care, secondary acute hospital, rehabilitation services, specialist tertiary, long-term residential and end of life care.

Dublin, 29 September 2011

**SIGNATURES OF CITY AND COMMUNITY MAYORS AND LEADERS:**

**DECLARATION ENDORSED BY:**

WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION  
GLOBAL NETWORK OF AGE-FRIENDLY CITIES  
IRELAND'S AGE-FRIENDLY COUNTIES PROGRAMME  
THE INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION ON AGEING