

# Tapping into talents of older persons can boost Global Goals, says UN on International Day

1 October 2017 – On the International Day of Older Persons, the United Nations is urging the world to tap into the often overlooked contributions of older persons, and calling for integrated care to improve well being and ensure they have the opportunity to contribute to development.

By the year 2050, [one in five people](#) in the world will be aged 60 and older. It's our goal to ensure that all older people can obtain the health services they need, wherever they are, wherever they live," said Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Director-General of the World Health Organization ([WHO](#)) in a news release.

Older adults are more likely to experience chronic conditions and often multiple conditions at the same time. Yet today's health systems generally focus on the detection and treatment of individual acute diseases.

WHO's new [Guidelines on Integrated Care for Older People](#) require health and social care providers to coordinate their services around the needs of older people through approaches such as comprehensive assessment and care plans.

Yet, even in the rich world, people may not be getting the integrated services they need. In a survey of 11 high-income countries, up to 41 per cent of adults aged 65 or older reported care coordination problems in the past two years.

"The world's health systems aren't ready for older populations," said John Beard, Director of the Department of Ageing and Life course at WHO, adding that WHO's new guidelines provide the evidence for primary care workers to put the comprehensive needs of older people, not just the diseases they come in to discuss, at the centre of the way they provide care.

The International Day of Older Persons is annually observed on 1 October to encourage efforts to counter negative stereotypes and misconceptions about older persons and ageing.

***Younger generations must act now to stamp out human rights denials in old age*** [UN expert](#)

Also marking the Day, the UN Independent Expert on older people's rights, Rosa Kornfeld-Matte, urged those in power today to provide decent futures for older people noting that they themselves will be affected by the issue in years to come.

Unlike action on climate change, which will be our legacy for future generations, [young people in positions of power today will themselves not escape ageism](#), discrimination and the denial of human rights in older age

unless we recognize now that there is a need for concrete action,&#8221 she explained.

With this in mind, she called on States to step up their efforts to determine the best way to strengthen the protection of the human rights of older people and to consider the various proposals that have been made, including the elaboration of a dedicated instrument on the rights of older people.

This year's [theme](#), 'Stepping into the Future: Tapping the Talents, Contributions and Participation of Older Persons in Society,' is about enabling and expanding the contributions of older people in their families, communities and societies at large.

The theme underscores the link between tapping the talents and contributions of older persons and achieving the implementation of the [2030 Agenda](#) for Sustainable Development and the [Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing](#), which is currently undergoing its third review and appraisal process.