

## Statement for the High-Level Meeting on Universal Health Coverage on achieving health equity for persons with disabilities and older people

Governments have committed to ensuring that no one is left behind in Universal Health Coverage (UHC) and to reaching the furthest behind first. Yet today, 1.3 billion persons with disabilities continue to experience multiple barriers to enjoying their right to the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health. Persons with disabilities of all ages experience lower quality services or find the health and care they need is inaccessible and unaffordable. Many face catastrophic health expenditure, poverty, and much poorer health outcomes.

UHC will only be achieved through concerted action to tackle these inequities across the continuum of care, with increased investments in inclusive and rights-based health systems that are people-centred, community-based and founded upon primary health care and whole-of-society approaches – actions that benefit everyone.

Population ageing, the escalating prevalence of non-communicable diseases and the heightened risks for persons with disabilities and older people from pandemics, climate-related disasters and other health emergencies and humanitarian crises make this an urgent priority.

To leave no one behind in progress towards UHC, we urge governments to:

- Implement the recommendations of the **WHO Global Report on Health Equity for Persons with Disabilities** and accelerate action to achieve the ambitions of the **UN Decade of Healthy Ageing**.
- **Promote a human rights-based approach to health and UHC**, ensuring **non-discrimination, progressive universalism, and inclusive health financing and governance**, with the full **participation** of persons with disabilities and older people at all levels.
- Ensure the **availability, accessibility, acceptability and quality of person-centred primary health care** close to where people live and reaching the furthest behind first.
- Ensure that **essential service packages** enable persons with disabilities and older people to enjoy their right to the health-related goods, facilities, services and information they need across the continuum of care, throughout the life course and on an equal basis with others. This must include improved coverage and accessibility of mental health services, sexual and reproductive health services; health information; nutrition services; vision and hearing services; oral and skin health services; dementia services; neglected tropical diseases and wider communicable and non-communicable disease prevention and care; immunization; rehabilitation and assistive products; palliative and end of life care; and integrated, long-term and rights-based care and support within the community.
- Prioritize the **access, inclusion and rights of persons with disabilities of all ages who are at higher risk of intersecting forms of discrimination and disadvantage** and most exposed to negative social determinants of health. This must include action to identify, include and fulfil the right to health for women and girls, children and older people with disabilities, those living in poverty, and those who are displaced or in remote or insecure contexts.
- Ensure equity, inclusion, meaningful participation and the protection and rights of persons with disabilities and older people in **health emergencies, pandemics, humanitarian crises and disaster preparedness, response and recovery**, including their right to health and continuous access to services and products.
- Develop competencies for disability and age inclusion for the **health and care workforce** and provide training for all service providers.
- Ensure systematic collection, analysis, reporting and use of **health and care-related data** disaggregated by gender, age and disability, alongside other characteristics, to inform equity-based decision-making.

**This statement is supported by the following 58 organizations:**

Able Child Africa  
Advantage Africa  
Aga Khan University Pakistan  
Age International  
Age Nigeria Foundation  
Ageing Concern Foundation (ACF), Kenya  
Ageing Nepal  
Alzheimer's Disease International  
Anandini  
Anjuman Samajee Behood, Pakistan  
Association for Gender Awareness & Human Empowerment (AGAHE), Pakistan  
Association of the Physically Handicapped Adult, APHA, Pakistan  
Buzurg Dost Network, Pakistan  
Christian Blind Mission (CBM)  
Community Development Foundation (CDF), Pakistan  
Disability Aid Foundation, Somalia  
Disability Rights India Foundation  
Down Syndrome International (DSi)  
Fourth Wave Foundation, India  
Gramin Vikas Vigyan Samiti (GRAVIS), India  
HelpAge Deutschland  
HelpAge International  
Human, Environmental and Leadership Prevalent Center (HELP Center), Nigeria  
Humanity & Inclusion (also known as Handicap International Federation)  
I Care Rwanda  
Initiative for Development Empowerment Axis (IDEA), Pakistan  
Institute of Mathematical Sciences (IMSc), India  
Integrity Action  
International Association for Hospice and Palliative Care  
International Centre for Evidence in Disability, London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine  
Janaseva Foundation, Pune, India  
Juzoor for Health and Social Development, Palestine – West Bank and Gaz  
Karunalya Social Welfare Foundation, India  
Khmer HIV/AIDS NGO Alliance (KHANA), Cambodia  
Light for the World  
Mission Armenia NGO  
Modern Thinkers Foundation, Ghana  
MSI Reproductive Choices  
National Age Network of Zimbabwe  
NCD Alliance  
NSINDAGIZA Organization, Rwanda  
PRO Global/Pensioners without Borders  
Rural Peoples Sangam, India  
Senior Citizens Association of Zambia, Zambia  
Sense International  
Sightsavers  
Silver Inning Foundation, India  
Support To Older People-Zambia  
Sustainable Health Equity Movement | SHEM  
Swadhikaar, India  
Tesfa Social and Development Association, Ethiopia  
The Leprosy Mission England & Wales  
The Missing Billion Initiative  
UNASCAD (Union des Amis Socio Culturels d'Action en Developpement), Haiti  
United for Global Mental Health  
Voice for Rights Children & Youth Network, Pakistan  
WHPCA  
Young Power in Social Action (YPSA), Bangladesh