

PRESS RELEASE -
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Global experts gather at the IFA's 17th Global Conference on Ageing: YEBO/YES! Action on Ageing to Advance Evidence, Policy, and Practice to address critical issues of population ageing and shape societies where all can age with meaningful choice, voice and dignity.

TORONTO, SEPTEMBER 2025 - Against the backdrop of a rapidly ageing world, more than 500 leaders from 63 countries gathered in Cape Town for the International Federation on Ageing's 17th Global Conference on Ageing: YEBO/YES! Action on Ageing: Evidence | Policy | Practice, co-hosted by North-West University (NWU). This historic conference is the first global convening on ageing in the African continent, uniting policymakers, researchers, practitioners, and advocates to advance solutions toward age-friendly societies for all.

The global population of older people is expected to exceed 2 billion by 2050; the conference provided a critical platform for action. Delegates explored innovations in creating age-friendly environments, advancing the rights of older persons, harnessing technology for inclusion and independence, and strengthening health through a focus on immunization, sensory and cognitive health, nutrition and long-term care.

High-level side events, including the Age-Friendly Environments Collaborative Summit, a special convening to advance eye health co-hosted with Fred Hollows Foundation, and an exploration of the role of Development Finance Institutions in healthy ageing co-hosted with the Development Bank of Southern Africa, provided further opportunities for targeted discussions and action.

The opening keynote by Ms. Alana Officer, Unit Head of Demographic Change and Healthy Ageing at the World Health Organization, urged global action on ageing, particularly as countries fall behind on key milestones set out as part of the United Nations Decade of Healthy Ageing.

“The future is not something that we passively watch: the future is a game that we all get to play and enjoy together. Since ageing is the longest game each of us will ever play – let us make sure it’s a game worth winning.” Said Ms. Officer.

Through symposiums, workshops, paper presentations and working forums, participants explored solutions to pressing challenges such as improving access to care, enhancing age-inclusive policies, leveraging technology for older adults and advancing the inclusion of ageing within social development agendas. Vibrant networking opportunities reinforced the event’s role as a global platform for collaboration.

“The energy and ideas exchanged at the IFA's 17th Global Conference on Ageing build on the legacy of those who came before us and will continue to shape the way we approach ageing for years to come, cementing its importance as a trend that defines communities, societies and economies,” says Mr. Gregor Sneddon, the IFA’s Secretary General.

As delegates departed Cape Town, the call for unity and shared responsibility from NWU's Professor Jaco Hoffman was clear: "Let the young and the old dance together, let the young and the old sing together, let us dream together and plan together – but also act together." A fitting conclusion to a landmark event that calls the world to act, together, for healthy, inclusive, and sustainable ageing.

IFA is grateful to the support of the South African government, our partners, sponsors, and delegates who made this event possible. Conference highlights, photos, and session recordings will be available at ifaconf.ngo.

Following this resounding success, IFA's 18th Global Conference on Ageing will take place in Hong Kong in 2027, co-hosted with the Hong Kong Council of Social Service (HKCSS), to continue the momentum toward evidence-based action and policies that advance healthy ageing worldwide. Specific dates and additional details will be communicated through the official IFA website, www.ifa.ngo, and through its official social media channels.

About the International Federation on Ageing

The International Federation on Ageing (IFA) is an international, non-governmental organization (NGO) with a unique membership base comprising government, NGOs, academics, industry, and individuals in over 80 countries. Now over 48 years old, the IFA has become known as a leading and innovative organization that works across disciplines and sectors toward common goals that improve the lives of older people. Through the IFA's formal relations with the World Health Organization (WHO) and general consultative status at the United Nations and its agencies, the IFA is in the position to advocate directly with member states and contribute to and inform intergovernmental dialogue.