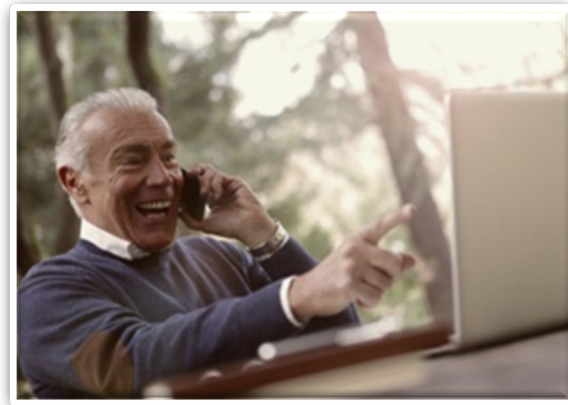


4th Policy Seminar on Ageing *Ageing in the Digital Era*

24 November 2021



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Let's set the scene...



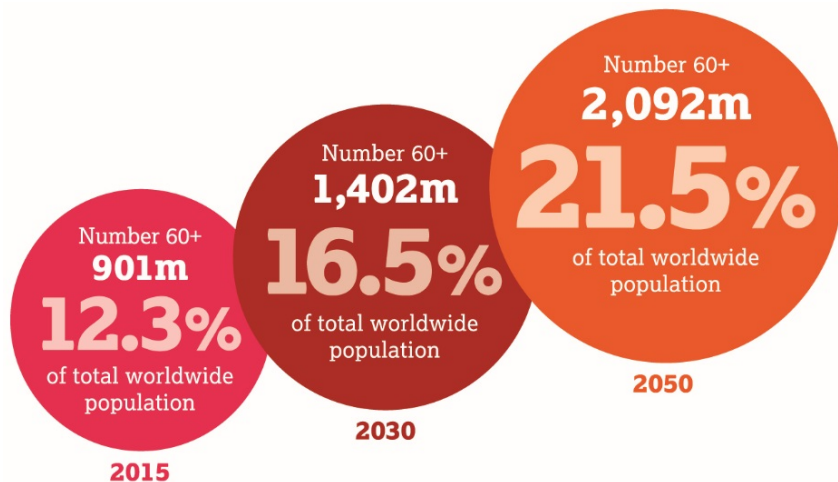
Source: [ITU-D Ageing in a digital world](#)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=41HiCZwPN5E>
Ageing in a digital world – from vulnerable to valuable

Global context: two megatrends that impact each other



1. Population ageing



2. The exponential rise of ICTs

At the end of 2019, just over half of the world's population was using the Internet.

[*ITU report, Measuring digital development: Facts and figures 2020*](#)

Between February and April 2020, global Internet traffic increased by nearly 40%. [*International Energy Agency Tracking Report 2020*](#)

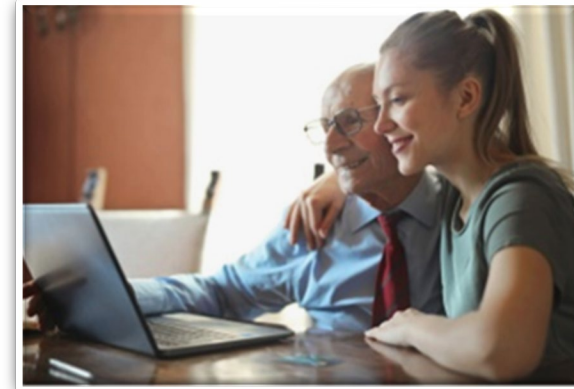


To achieve the goals of the [UN Decade of Healthy Ageing](#), we need to ensure that older persons are empowered by new technologies and are digitally included. Digital inclusion is fundamental for the development of inclusive, accessible and age-friendly environments that leave no one behind.

A digital age gap



- **A digital and technological age gap exists.** The gap is particularly severe for persons aged 75 or above. The data also shows wide differences between countries and regions.
- **The difference between usage in young people aged 15 to 24 and adults aged 75 and above :** in **Kazakhstan**, was **89.4** per cent in 2019; **84.7 per cent in Ukraine** in 2018; and **79.7 per cent in the Czech Republic** in 2019. These percentages fell in 2020 to **27.3 per cent in United Kingdom**, **27.8 per cent in Sweden** and **22.1 per cent in Denmark**.
- Data is also showing that in many countries and regions, during COVID19 **older adults have increased their contact with technology** .
- In the **United States** [Statista](#) indicates that **75 percent of adults over 65 years of age used the internet in 2021**.



BEYOND SMART



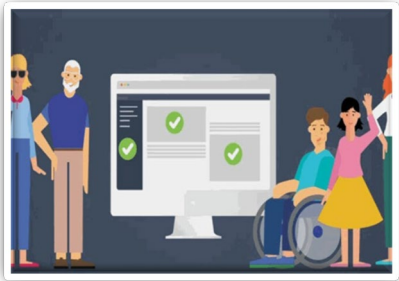
A **smart environment** includes connected, data-driven technology that is sensor-based and increasingly autonomous. The gathering and **analysis of data** is the cornerstone of a smart environment.



A **smart sustainable environment** includes using ICTs to improve quality of life, efficiency of urban operation and services, and competitiveness, while ensuring that **they meet the needs of present and future generations**.



How to build a digitally inclusive smart sustainable environment that meets the needs of every individual, regardless of their gender, age and ability ? All technology used in this environment should be **universally designed** and accessible so that **no one is left behind** in the data analysis, and solutions offered will enable everyone's participation with respect to economic, social, environmental and cultural aspects.



By ensuring ICT products and services are universally designed and accessible, everyone can participate and benefit from smart cities, communities and environments.

Some best practices



United Kingdom: Government Digital Strategy

- ❑ According to the UK Office for National Statistics, in England, the percentage of people aged 65 and over is projected to increase up to 20.7 percent of the total population in 2028. This demographic change has led to the **promotion of an active ageing agenda**.
- ❑ Meanwhile, the British government has an incentive to **move services from offline to digital channels** to reduce costs. The goal of the British government is to achieve **digital by default**, which refers to creating digital services that are so straightforward and convenient that all those who can use them will choose to do so, while those who can't are not excluded.
- ❑ Non-digital **alternative access to government transactional services is ensured in addition to providing assisted digital support**.
- ❑ The government has developed **policies that aim to increase the digital capability of UK citizens, including older generations**.

Some best practices



France:

- ❑ According to the [Institut national de la statistique et des études économiques](#), 19.6 per cent of the population in France was over 65 years of age in 2018. In 2070, France is projected to have more than one person aged 65 or over for every two people aged 20-64.
- ❑ The **French Red Cross started a digital transformation strategy in 2019, reflecting the current society in which people are living longer.** The strategy was strengthened during **COVID-19** to take into consideration how older persons, being far away from their families, were experiencing unprecedented stressful situations.
- ❑ During the periods of quarantine, **French companies** developed a set of digital solutions with the following objectives:
 - ✓ To stimulate cognitive functions, through fun experiences (e.g. [Anisen](#), [Exostim](#))
 - ✓ Immersive solutions to escape stress and increase well-being (e.g. [Lumeen](#), [FeelU](#))
 - ✓ To reduce pain and anxiety (e.g. [Music care](#))

Some best practices



Canada: the healthcare and long-term care sector

- ❑ **Technology is being used in long-term care facilities in [Canada](#) to help address some of the biggest problems facing residents in care homes during COVID-19.**

This includes:

- ✓ helping residents who travel around the facility with door sensors;
 - ✓ promoting **social interaction** among residents by delivering social **programming online**;
 - ✓ facilitating **virtual visits** with care providers, caregivers, families and friends;
 - ✓ **facilitating communication** between facilities and care providers, **through electronic health-record systems**;
 - ✓ **artificial intelligence to support early disease detection**, more precise diagnosis, and personalized treatments, or to continuously detect changes in activity and behaviour patterns for early detection of health issues.
- ❑ **To make smart healthcare and long-term care an inclusive reality, connectivity is needed. Technology should be available, affordable and accessible to all people.**
People need to be able to buy the wearable devices and home technologies, and applications and platforms need to be accessible so that every person regardless of gender, age, location, condition or level of digital ability will have access to the benefits of these innovations.

ITU's work in the digital inclusion of older persons in support of the UN Decade of Healthy Ageing



1. **Raising awareness:**

ICTs are a scalable means to encourage and enable healthy ageing.

2. **Providing policy and strategy recommendations:**

Guidelines on relevant policies and strategies to achieve digital inclusion globally and contribute to the United Nations Decade of Healthy Ageing.

3. **Identifying best practices and solutions:**

Good and successful practices exist in regions all over the world; sharing the implementation of these practices accelerates the digital inclusion process for all people, including the ageing population.

4. **Making relevant tools and resources available:**

Designing and developing tools and capacity building resources that aim to support all stakeholders' efforts to build digitally inclusive, accessible and age-friendly environments that enable social inclusion and economic development.

ITU Report

Ageing in the digital world – from vulnerable to valuable



The report's outcomes:

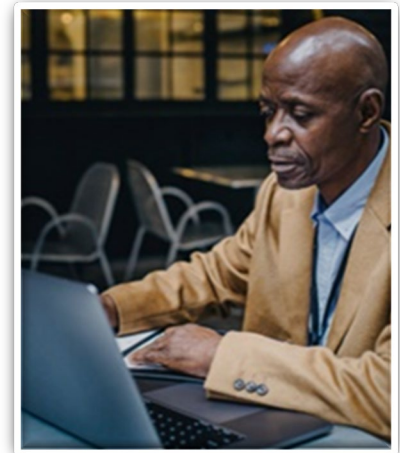
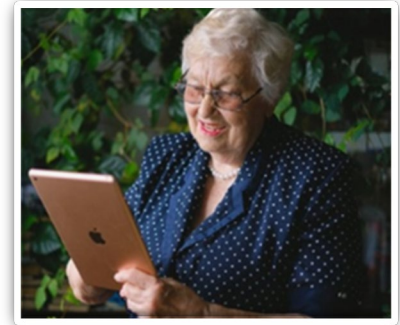
- ✓ **Focuses** on the role that ICTs can play in ensuring digitally inclusive communities in which older persons are active participants and valuable contributors **by raising awareness** about the importance of responding to the needs and requirements of ageing populations from the perspective of the ICT sector.
- ✓ **Helps ITU members** and **other stakeholders** to **understand** digital opportunities and **take advantage** of new possibilities for economic, social and political growth arising from increased digital inclusion and age-friendly digital environments.
- ✓ **Provides** guidelines and best practices to support all stakeholders' efforts to help older generations **by reducing** their age-related vulnerabilities and **fostering** their socio-economic development in order to create healthier and wealthier inclusive societies.

ITU online self-paced training course ICTs for better ageing and livelihood in the digital landscape



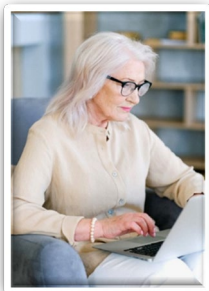
A free, online self-paced training course for all Member States, policy-makers and any other stakeholders working on and going through a process of digital transformation. The training course provides valuable information on:

- ✓ **The role of ICTs for better ageing and livelihood in the context of global megatrends**: challenges and opportunities to achieve the digital inclusion of older persons and to enable better ageing in the digital world.
- ✓ **Key elements for digital inclusion and the adoption of ICTs by older persons**: ICT accessibility requirements and standards as a catalytic driver to facilitate the digital inclusion of older persons and to build accessible, digitally inclusive and age-friendly environments.
- ✓ **Policy and strategy recommendations from the perspective of ICTs and ageing as an opportunity for better livelihood and independent living**: guidelines, solutions and good practices.



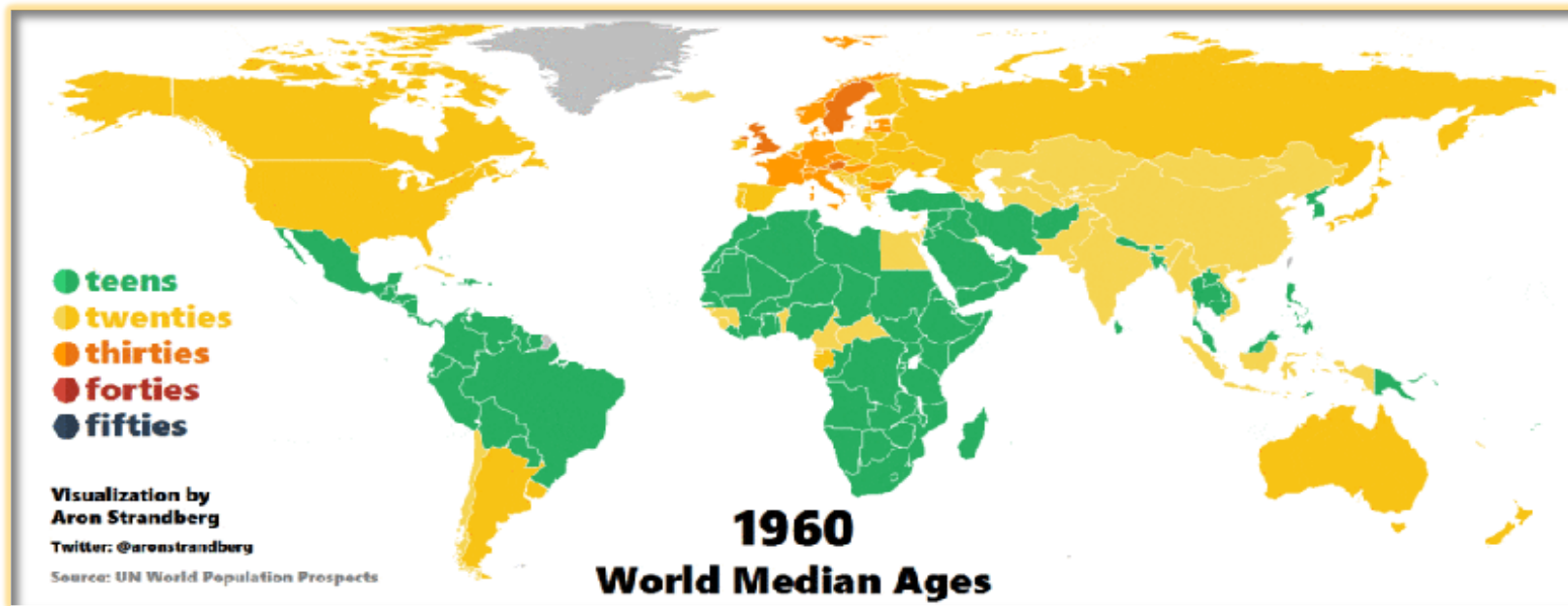
Looking ahead in the context of the two global megatrends: steps to be taken by all Parties

- ✓ **ALL Parties/ Stakeholders** should implement policies and strategies to take advantage of the digital opportunities for economic, social and political growth.
- ✓ **Governments** should apply and replicate good practices to formulate digital policies that support the better livelihood and socio-economic development of older persons by ensuring that environments are inclusive and accessible for everyone, regardless gender, age, ability or location.
- ✓ **The private sector** should consider new business opportunities and attract new users, as older persons have been an untapped market for technology yet make up an important sector of the population.
- ✓ **Civil society** should be involved in all related policies, strategies and processes where possible and encourage intergenerational support to facilitate the digital inclusion of older adults.



*The digital inclusion of older adults is a win-win for all Parties involved.
ALL of us have a role to play in building inclusive, accessible and age-friendly environments and societies and thus enable better ageing in the digital world!*

Final thoughts



- ✓ Our world is rapidly ageing: life expectancy is increasing in most countries around the world.
- ✓ ICTs are **part of the solution**: they can make a fundamental difference in creating accessible, inclusive and age-friendly digital environments and communities.
- ✓ Let's join efforts to ensure that through collective collaboration, we can build a world fit for everyone to enjoy!

What we do now and how we ensure better ageing in the digital world matters to us all!

Thank you for your attention!



For more information, you can scan the QR code of the ITU-D webpage on [Ageing in a digital world](#) or contact: Roxana WIDMER-ILIESCU at: roxana.widmer-iliescu@itu.int