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**For Immediate Release**

## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **UNITED NATIONS INTERNATIONAL DAY OF THE OLDER PERSONS (UNIDOP) 2022** **THEME – RESILIENCE OF OLDER PERSONS IN A CHANGING WORLD**

The 1<sup>st</sup> of October every year as designated by the United Nations general assembly resolution 45/106 is set aside as International Day of Older Persons. As such, in collaboration with our partners, we are pleased to celebrate all older persons in Ghana for all their numerous contributions to the national agenda. Even though Ghana's population remains largely youthful, the size of the elderly population has been growing consistently.

Indeed, the constant threat to human lives from natural disasters, terrorist attacks, disease epidemics, threats of wars, economic hardship to global warming; has made our world quite challenging to live in with every passing moment. However, all hope is not lost as these times have taught us more about the need for building resilient societies and systems amidst the present dangers.

The theme for this year: **Resilience of Older Persons in a changing world**, and rightly so has the following objectives

1. To highlight the resilience of older persons in the face of environmental, social and economic challenges
2. To raise awareness of the importance of improved worldwide data collection, disaggregated by age and gender
3. To highlight the need for a legally binding instrument on the rights of older persons and intersectional person-centred human rights approach for a society of all ages.
4. To increase awareness about the immense benefits of investing in the health of older persons among policymakers and the general public
5. To call on stakeholders, partners and civil society to include older persons in the centre of all programmes ensuring gender equalities

As we commemorate the day for the most successful group of human beings ('the older persons') who have shown resilience over the decades despite all the perilous exposure they have experienced, it is important for us to note that we must all get involved in playing our diverse roles. We continue to implore all stakeholders and partners to align their programmes and harmonize their financing towards

improving the health of older persons as there is compelling evidence that investing in the well-being of older persons yields many health and socio-economic benefits.

Indeed, the Healthy Ageing Programme under the Family Health Division of the Ghana Health Service is coordinating quality service delivery that ensures that there is access to preventive and curative services, which take care of common diseases of older persons irrespective of their social status. In this regard, with the support of the World Health Organization, the National Standards and Protocols for Healthy Ageing have been drafted and processes are currently underway for its finalization as a major boost to ensure healthy ageing for older persons in Ghana.

In as much as we admire and celebrate the resilience of older persons in this changing world, the Ghana Health Service is inspired not to rest its oars until a resilient healthcare delivery system is established in the country.

We know it takes intentional, collective, coordinated and collaborative efforts from the various components of our health care delivery machinery as well as our health partners and other related agencies to achieve this. In view of this, the health sector is taking steps to make Universal Health Care (UHC) Package accessible throughout the country by 2030 to improve access to high-quality health care irrespective of ability to pay. We, therefore, urge all stakeholders and partners to align their programmes and harmonize their financing towards the implementation of this roadmap.

The service feels indebted to all its retired workers whose efforts whilst in active service have helped put the care in health care in every location where the service is found. We are pleased to say that the older person groups still form a good number of our Outpatient Department per capita reflecting the trust they have placed in us to deliver quality care to them. We do not take this for granted at all but rather are encouraged to give them the best healthcare experience at access levels.

On this special occasion, it is my pleasure to wish you all older persons a healthy day and only continues to hope that, in our quest to develop our country, issues of older persons will continue to remain a priority and high on the agenda. In meeting this objective, older persons who form a significant proportion of the population would have a reason to live and continue to be a vital tool in development.

As we celebrate this year's United Nations International Day of the Older Person, the Ghana Health Service would like to make the following recommendations:

- 1. The entire citizenry adopt a lifestyle that maintains a good blend of adequate rest, physical activity, and exercise as these have long-term health benefits**
- 2. All Ghanaians will adopt a healthy nutritional lifestyle that integrates a daily consumption of fruits and vegetable**
- 3. We all take a participatory approach towards the preservation of our ecosystem and the facilitation of a safer built environment for all Ghanaians.**

We wish to by this communicate add our voice to the passionate appeal by the various stakeholders of geriatric care in Ghana for an expedited passage of the aged bill into law by the august parliament as

this will set the right policy environment for a holistic approach towards older persons care in the country and further build a healthier older adult population.

Once again, we want to congratulate all older persons in Ghana on their day's celebration for showing the character, discipline and fortitude to thrive amidst our changing worlds.

Ayekoo. Long live the Republic of Ghana, and our older persons.

Your Health, Our Concern!

**SIGNED**

**DR. PATRICK KUMA-ABOAGYE**

**DIRECTOR-GENERAL**