**Population of over 60 year-olds to reach one billion within the decade,**

**finds new UN Report;**

**Report Calls for Urgent Action by Governments to Address the needs of the “Greying Generation”**

* 80% of world’s older people will live in developing countries by 2050
* Over 60 population will be larger than the under-15 population in 2050

**Tokyo, 1 October 2012—** The number of older persons is growing faster than any other age group, says a new report,*Ageing in the Twenty-first Century: A Celebration and a Challenge*, released today on International Day of Older Persons by UNFPA, the United Nations Population Fund, and HelpAge International.

The new report underlines that, while the trend of ageing societies is a cause for celebration, it also presents huge challenges as it requires completely new approaches to health care,

retirement, living arrangements and intergenerational relations.

In 2000, for the first time in history, there were more people over 60 than children below 5. By 2050, the older generation will be larger than the under-15 population. In just 10 years, the number of older persons will surpass 1 billion people—an increase of close to 200 million people over the decade. Today two out of three people aged 60 or over, live in developing and emerging economies. By 2050, this will rise to nearly four in five.

If not addressed promptly, the consequences of these issues are likely to take unprepared countries by surprise. In many developing countries with large populations of young people, for example, the challenge is that governments have not put policies and practices in place to support their current older populations or made enough preparations for 2050.

Speaking at the report’s launch in Tokyo, UNFPA Executive Director, Dr. Babatunde Osotimehin, said: “People everywhere must age with dignity and security, enjoying life through the full realization of all human rights and fundamental freedoms.”

“Longer life expectancy,” he added, “was a goal of the Cairo International Conference on Population Development in 1994. More action needs to be taken to achieve this for all people; new poverty goals must not exclude older people.”

Important progress has been made by many countries in adopting new policies, strategies, plans andlaws on ageing, according to the report. For example over 100 countries in the last decade have put in place non-contributory social pensions, in recognition of old age poverty. But much more needs to be done to fulfill the potentialof our ageing world.

Forty-seven per cent of older men and nearly 24 per cent of older women participate in the labour force. Yet, despite the contributions that a socially and economically active, secure and healthy ageing population can give to society, the report also notes that many older persons all over the world face continued discrimination, abuse and violence. The report calls for governments, civil society and the general public to work together to end these destructive practices and to invest in older people.

The report also includes the stories of 1,300 older men and women who participated in group discussions in 36 countries around the world. Their first-hand accounts and testimonies add the perspectives of the older population supporting efforts for better understanding and immediate action to meet their needs.

Richard Blewitt, Chief Executive Officer of HelpAge International, said: “We must commit to ending the widespread mismanagement of ageing. Concrete, cost effective advances will come from ensuring age investment begins at birth - fully recognizing the vast majority of people will live into old age. Global and national action plans are needed to create a pathway to transform the explosive number of people over 60 to become growth drivers and value creators. By revolutionizing our approach and investing in people as they age we can build stronger, wealthier societies. Social protection and age friendly health care are essential to extend the independence of healthy older people and prevent impoverishment in old age.”

“These actions,” added Mr. Blewitt, “should be based on a long-term vision, and supported by a strong political commitment and a secured budget.”

 “Ageing is a lifelong process that does not start at age 60. Today’s young people will be part of the 2 billion-strong population of older persons in 2050,” said Dr. Osotimehin. “This report shows that, with actions taken now, we can all benefit from the longevity dividend– increasingly in the developing world - now and in the future.”

\*\*\*

**Notes to Editors**

-UNFPA, the United Nations Population Fund, is an international development agency delivering a world where every pregnancy is wanted, every childbirth is safe and every young person’s potential is fulfilled.

-Help Age International, helps older people claim their rights, challenge discrimination and overcome poverty, so that they can lead dignified, secure, active and healthy lives.

Today, UNFPA and HelpAge are hosting high-profile press conferences and a symposium in Tokyo. These events will be followed by similar launches around the world.

Today’s global launch will be followed by a day of global activism in which more than 60,000 older persons aged 60 or over, from 60 countries, will be campaigning as part of Age Demands Action (ADA). This global grassroots campaign calls on governments, the international community and civil society to address the rights, concerns and needs of older persons.

To celebrate the release of the report, UNFPA and HelpAge International are launching, *60 over 60*, a list of 60 inspiring and influential older people over 60, and we need your help. You can nominate yourself, or an older person you admire - we are looking for a diverse group representing many nationalities and ages.

There are 3 ways you can nominate your inspiring older person for the 60 over 60 list:

* Visit [www.7billionactions/60over60](http://www.7billionactions/60over60) to submit a photo and short story, telling us in 150 words or less about the nominee’s accomplishments and qualities.
* Post an image to the [UNFPA](http://www.facebook.com/pages/UNFPA-United-Nations-Population-Fund/16322678622) or [HelpAge](http://www.facebook.com/HelpAgeInternational)’s Facebook wall with a short text of XX words or less.
* Share a tweet of 140 characters or less, using the #60over60 hashtag

**Nominations will close on 23 November 2012.**

All qualifying nominees will be posted on the 60 over 60 webpage of the [7 Billion Actions](file:///C%3A%5CUsers%5Cjensen%5CAppData%5CLocal%5CTemp%5C7billionactions.org%5C60over60) platform. An expert panel of respected public figures working with older people, or older people themselves, will narrow the list down to 60 people and it will be announced in December.Contacts: Mandy Kibel, UNFPA, +1 212 297 5293, kibel@unfpa.org; Omar Gharzeddine, UNFPA, +1 212 297 5028, gharzeddine@unfpa.org and Meg Rowley, +1 212 541 2481, meg.rowley@portland-communications.com

Contact: Rachel Trayner, HelpAge, +44 (0) 207 148 7623, +44 77 3898 2122, rtrayner@helpage.org