



Asia Pacific Regional CSO Engagement Mechanism

SESSION 2: REGIONAL PRIORITIES FOR IMPLEMENTATION: STATISTICS AND MAINSTREAMING OF THE SDGS TO ADDRESS VULNERABILITY

Older Persons Constituency Statement

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Asia Pacific is ageing at an unprecedented pace. Today, the region is home to over half of the world's population of older persons (define as 60 years old and over) and this is expected to increase exponentially in the coming years.

Although, population ageing is one of humanity's greatest triumphs as it increases life expectancy, what can older person expect from society they helped build all their lives? What is in store for our fathers, mothers, grandparents, elder individuals and for those of us who are approaching our older age?

More often than not we see older persons with less chances of employment and less and unequal access to adequate healthcare, finance and even ignored in times of disasters. The informality of labor and underdeveloped social protection system in the most countries in the region leaves vast majority no access to income security at old age. In the Philippines, half of the older Filipinos receive no pension at all. Moreover, many older persons become subject of discrimination, ridicule and even abuse. In China, Elder abuse was reported by 36 percent of the participants, with psychological abuse being the most common form of mistreatment, followed by caregiver neglect, physical abuse, and financial exploitation.¹ There exist also a wide disparity between developing and developed countries. The first group of aging societies in Asia – Japan, Republic of Korea, Singapore, and Taipei, China – are all relatively rich, and many of the institutional elements that are important in aging societies are in place² while the rest has a lot of catching up to do.

Complicating the picture, some issues of critical concern for older persons are not easily captured or quantifiable using mainstream statistics.

Ageing is both an opportunity and a challenge. We call on you to:

1. Recognise that population ageing is a success, not a burden. Older persons and people with disabilities are also vibrant and productive members of society. Therefore, population ageing should be considered in the regional megatrends and age as one of the cross-cutting issues that must be taken into account across all goals and targets;

¹ Wu, L., Chen, H., Hu, Y., Xiang, H., Yu, X., Zhang, T., et al. (2012). Prevalence and Associated Factors of Elder Mistreatment in a Rural Community in People's Republic of China: A Cross-Sectional Study. *Plos One*, 7(3), e33857.

² <http://www.adb.org/sites/default/files/publication/30041/aging-economic-growth-asia.pdf>



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2. For the regional member states who are members of the IAEG-SDGs working on global indicators to pay particular attention to ensuring that data sets underpinning indicators are age inclusive and will measure progress in older age;
3. For the development of a regional indicator framework that includes measurement into older age as a central priority to future-proof the regional statistical framework and provide the global leadership needed on ageing statistics;
4. Alongside other marginalized groups, older persons must be included in the formal implementation processes of the framework, through their systematic engagement in consultation, information and participation in the mechanisms for planning, monitoring, review and reporting.

Ageism must end now. After all, everyone who doesn't die young are sure to grow old. Then, we will all benefit from what Older Persons are fighting for now.