



**REPORT ON THE PREPARATORY REGIONAL EXPERT MEETING:  
THIRD REGIONAL REVIEW OF THE MADRID INTERNATIONAL  
PLAN OF ACTION ON AGEING IN ASIA AND THE PACIFIC**

**14-15 JUNE 2017**

**BANGKOK**

The designations employed and the presentation of the material in this report do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the Secretariat of the United Nations concerning the legal status of any country, territory, city or area or of its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers and boundaries. Bibliographical and other references have, wherever possible, been verified. The United Nations bears no responsibility for the availability or functioning of URLs belonging to external entities.

This report has been issued without formal editing.

The report may not be reproduced or reprinted without the permission of the United Nations.

Copyright © United Nations, Bangkok 2017

All rights reserved

Social Development Division  
United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific  
United Nations Building  
Rajadamnern Nok Avenue  
Bangkok 10200 Thailand  
E-mail: [escap-sdd@un.org](mailto:escap-sdd@un.org)

## Contents

Background.....	4
Overview and objectives of the Regional Expert Meeting .....	4
Opening Ceremony.....	5
High-level panel: The future of population ageing in the Asia- Pacific region.....	5
Third review of the Madrid Plan of Action – Progress in implementation.....	7
Panel discussion: Progress and challenges in strengthening the protection of human rights of older persons .....	8
Identifying regional priorities for the implementation of the MIPAA: Emerging areas .....	9
Closing the gaps: Challenges, opportunities and emerging regional policy priorities for the implementation of the MIPAA.....	18
Recommendations and closing of the Regional Expert Meeting .....	20
List of Participants.....	21

## **I. Background**

The Asia-Pacific region is experiencing population ageing at an unprecedented pace, with the number of older persons – defined as the population of 60 years and older - expected to almost triple from 514 million in 2015 to more than 1.31 billion by 2050. By then, one in four people in the region will be over 60 years old, while the “oldest-old”, those above 80 years of age, will constitute about one fifth of all older persons. In addition, due to the longer life expectancy for women, the majority of older persons are women. This demographic transition towards an ageing society in the Asia-Pacific region has deep social, economic and political implications.

## **II. Overview and objectives of the Regional Expert Meeting**

The Preparatory Regional Expert Meeting: Third Regional Review of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing was held from 14 to 15 June 2017 in Bangkok, Thailand organized by ESCAP. More than fifty participants had been drawn from governments in the Asia-Pacific region, as well as think tanks, academic institutions, civil society, older persons organizations, UN organizations, specialized agencies, sustainable development practitioners, and independent experts.

The Meeting took place within the context of the forthcoming Third Regional Review of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing and within the framework of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The objectives of the Meeting were as follows:

1. To review and exchange good practices and experiences that promote a developmental approach to population ageing through the mainstreaming of older persons into international and national development plans and policies across all sectors;
2. To discuss elements of a draft outcome document for the Intergovernmental meeting on the Third Regional Review of the MIPAA to be held from 12 - 14 September 2017. The outcome document is expected to serve as a regional framework of action to support countries to comprehensively address the remaining challenges in the effective implementation of MIPAA within the framework of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The Meeting focused on critical measures to address population ageing and promote the rights of older persons in the region. In view of the three priority areas of the MIPAA, and as a result of preliminary data analysis of MIPAA surveys received from countries in the Asia-Pacific Region, particular emphasis was placed on the following three thematic areas which contributed substantially to the outcome document: (a) Older persons and development: Poverty and Income Security (b) Advancing health and well-being into old age: Universal Health Care (c) Ensuring enabling and supportive environments: The Data Revolution

The Government experts presented country-level experiences and new policy priorities, which informed the deliberations on identification of regional priorities and challenges for the implementation of the MIPAA, and how to close the gap of existing challenges. Lastly, the draft outcome document for the implementation of the MIPAA in advance of the Intergovernmental Meeting on the Third Regional Review of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing was discussed amongst experts and government focal points.

### **III. Opening Ceremony**

The meeting was opened by Mr. Kaveh Zahedi, Deputy Executive Secretary, ESCAP and presentation on objectives and programme of the Regional Expert Meeting by Ms. Vanessa Steinmayer, Section Chief, a.i., Sustainable Demographic Transition Section (SDTS), Social Development Division, ESCAP.

### **IV. High-level panel: The future of population ageing in the Asia-Pacific region**

The high-level panel entitled “The future of population ageing in the Asia-Pacific region: Demographic trends” was moderated by Ms. Vanessa Steinmayer, Section Chief, a.i., of ESCAP’s Sustainable Demographic Transition Section. It featured presentations by Mr. John Piggott, Director, ARC Centre of Excellence in Population Ageing Research (CEPAR) of the University of New South Wales, Australia; Mr. Du Peng, Professor of Renmin University, China; Mr. Keisuke Nakashima, Associate Professor, Global Issues and International Business at Kobe City University of Foreign Studies; and Ms. Gita Sen, Professor & Director, Ramalingaswami Centre on Equity and Social Determinants of Health of the Public Health Foundation of India.

Mr. Piggott commenced his presentation by emphasizing the 3P’s that contributed to economic growth: Population; Participation; and Productivity. It was estimated that in the next 25 years, the growth rates of population and participation in the labour force would be modest but, the growth rate of productivity will fall significantly due to the convergence of technology.

In terms of population, Mr. Piggott noted that migration was a potent source of economic growth. In the near future, some countries such as the United States and Australia would have limited workforce without migration. Furthermore, the mechanism by which migration flows from the country with low productivity to the country with high productivity, created the opportunities for the workers to obtain the benefit of learning-by-doing, that could, in turn, significantly contribute to economic growth.

In terms of participation, Mr. Piggott noted the important roles of older workers and women workers played in contributing to economic growth. It was reported by the ILO that the participation rates of the older workers and women workers in the labour force were

expected to increase in many countries. Accordingly, Mr. Piggott suggested that the access age to the labour force should be adjustable and not fixed on the current life expectancy.

In terms of productivity, Mr. Piggott pointed out that the trend of having tertiary education continued to increase. Considering the high level of informality in many economies, increasing levels of education could help to make a transition towards formality, which would, in turn, help raising the level of productivity in these countries.

In conclusion, Mr. Piggott highlighted the three focal areas that constructed the 3P Policies for higher economic growth: (a) Pension portability; (b) pension age; (c) and pension design. He ended his remarks by mentioning that only a few countries were currently working towards preparation for the ageing society, and that there was a need for developed and developing countries to work together to improve the adequacy of social protection schemes and programmes.

Mr. Du Peng, commenced his presentation by explaining the demographic trends in Asia and the Pacific. In 2015, only Japan was a super aged society, but by 2050 this will include Republic of Korea and Singapore, while China will have over 500 million older persons. He further highlighted that two-thirds of world's ageing population would be in Asia and the Pacific region, which made it a large obstacle for achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in the region. Mr. Du Peng added that the decreased capacity of the family care in particular, has emerged as a new challenge to the region.

He then deliberated on the considerable diversity in the region as a result of different levels of economic development, industrial structure, urbanization and culture. Even within the same country, there were significant disparities between rural and urban areas. Young people tended to move towards urbanized and industrialized areas and leave behind the old people to care for themselves. Due to the culture of filial piety, children would be reluctant to send their parents to nursing homes. At the same time, there was a little interest among young people to work in jobs supporting the old. Furthermore, Mr. Du Peng noted that the speed of ageing society was rather rapid and was a universal phenomenon. He then concluded with the following recommendations: changing governmental attitudes on social care; developing ageing-in-place and policy on family development; implementing universal social security and social care system; promoting the role of older persons' associations; and promoting age-friendly environments.

Mr. Keisuke Nakashima began his presentation by noting that countries in Asia and the Pacific enter the ageing stages a lot more rapidly than the developed states such as the United States of America and France. It would take less than 30 years for an ageing society to transform into an aged society, and only around 10 to 15 years to transform from aged to super-aged society. He also noted that this unprecedented age wave has come on top of and complicate the existing challenges of modernization, such as the rapid industrialization and urbanization, weakening family institutions and widening income gaps. Such circumstances have posed several challenges to the region, particularly in terms of the old-age poverty and humanitarian issues. Mr. Nakashima emphasized that whether the countries prosper as they age will depend critically on the policy choices they make. He then concluded with the following recommendations: adopting strategic and forward-thinking approach;

implementing inclusive, comprehensive, and integrated policies in which all sectors share the same vision; promoting the active role of the private sectors; endorsing globalization strategies in which migration and out-sourcing are embraced in order to boost economic growth.

Ms. Gita Sen commenced her presentation by discussing the need to focus on inequality of older persons from two angles: age-based inequality and all other forms, including gender, economic, ethnic and others. She then highlighted the three key challenges of South and Central Asia: (1) weak social infrastructure; (2) size of informal sector; (3) weak institutions. Ms. Sen emphasized that people could not afford to stop working because there are relatively insufficient policy and program capacity to support the dual existence of young and old population.

Ms. Sen further explained that when inequality was viewed in connection with other issues, such as gender, education and migration, rather than merely as an economic problem, the challenges of inequality and poverty become much more complicated to deal with. She proposed that by large, the policy focus should remain on engaging the older persons, however, more effort is required to attract the necessary financial and human resource support. Ms. Sen concluded her presentation by noting that ageing policy should not start at old age as people age differently according to their life circumstances such as nutrition, access to care and services, work and education.

In the ensuing discussion, it was mentioned that old people play an enormous role in informal care, including taking care of their grandchildren and that old people are productive in both formal and informal sector. It was argued that helping the people to stay healthy, would also help them to perform their roles for longer. However, policies are generally geared towards younger people, as a result, older workers have to compete with younger workers. It was briefly discussed that 'ageing in place' contains hidden costs for women, as it involves women taking care of older family members.

## **V. Third review of the Madrid Plan of Action - Progress in implementation**

This session, moderated by Ms. Vanessa Steinmayer, ESCAP, was reviewing the outcomes of the first preparatory Regional Expert Forum on Integrated Care for Older Persons, held from 17 - 19 March 2017 in Nanjing, China. It featured a presentation by Mr. Yi Chen, Chairman of the Board, Zhongshan College, Nanjing, China. Following Mr. Chen's presentation, participants undertook the first reading of the proposed draft Outcome Document for the Asia-Pacific Intergovernmental Meeting on the Third Review and Appraisal of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing to be held from 12 -14 September 2017.

## **VI. Panel discussion: Progress and challenges in strengthening the protection of human rights of older persons**

This session was based on a presentation from Mr. Rio Hada, Team Leader, Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR). The panel discussion was moderated by Ms. Channe Lindstrøm Oğuzhan, Social Affairs Officer, ESCAP.

In his presentation, Mr. Rio Hada shared the human rights perspective of older person in MIPAA. He stated that MIPAA has put emphasis on equality, non-discrimination, participation and accountability which is a major step forward from welfare-oriented approach towards a right-based approach. However, MIPAA remains essentially a non-binding commitment.

Mr. Hada provided an overview of the normative progress on population ageing. In 2010, the General Assembly established the Open-ended Working Group on Ageing, for the purpose of strengthening the protection of human rights of older persons; In 2013, Human Rights Council established the mandate of the independent expert on the enjoyment of all human rights by older persons; In 2015, the Inter-American convention on protecting the human rights of older persons was established; In 2016, there was a protocol to the African Charter of Human and People's Rights on the rights of older persons in Africa. Mr. Hada then described the challenges that are confronted by MIPAA from the human rights perspective as follows; uneven attention to the human rights of older persons by UN HR mechanisms; disconnection between MIPAA reviews and the HR monitoring mechanisms; lack of a dedicated international legal instrument and agreed international standard; lack of national legal framework focused on OPs; uneven implementation on the ground; lack of disaggregated data; and weak accountability system. He noted that elderly abuse, in particular, remains an important challenge, as older women continue to face numerous discriminations.

Mr. Hada suggested the key directions to enhancing the rights and protections through MIPAA: reaffirm the human rights of older persons, address key human rights principles of equality and non-discrimination, participation and accountability; ensure participation of older persons; improve data availability and disaggregation; establish more robust monitoring and accountability by linking with UN Human Rights mechanisms; SDG reviews and roles of national human rights institutions; and mainstream human rights of older persons in the UN system and across the region.

In the ensuing discussion, it was mentioned that while Latin America region has recently made MIPAA a legally binding commitment in the region, a similar imitative is absent in Asia and the Pacific region. However, it was agreed that such a movement would be encouraged in the region. It was further suggested that the UN should provide platforms for expert meetings to clarify issues that may emerge from conflicts between international conventions and national legislation.



## **VII. Identifying regional priorities for the implementation of the MIPAA: Emerging areas**

This session on was moderated by Mr. John Piggott, Director, ARC Centre of Excellence in Population Ageing Research (CEPAR), University of New South Wales in Australia and Ms. Gita Sen, Professor & Director, Ramalingaswami Centre on Equity & Social Determinants of Health, Public Health Foundation of India. It featured presentations by government experts from the following members and associate members: Azerbaijan; Bangladesh; Cambodia; China; India; Macao, China; Malaysia; Myanmar; Nepal; Republic of Korea; Sri Lanka; Thailand and Viet Nam.

### **Azerbaijan**

In her presentation, the expert from Azerbaijan, Ms. Nailya Verdiyeva, Demography and Population Development Sector Head at the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of Population, addressed the demographic changes and population ageing trends in Azerbaijan. She illustrated that the current percentage of working age population would shrink from 71 per cent to 61 per cent by 2050, while the dependency ratio would decrease from 12 to 3 over the same period.

Ms. Verdiyeva elaborated on the national policy and relevant strategies, policies and programmes of Azerbaijan to support the three key pillars of the MIPAA: older persons and development, advancing the health and well-being into old age and ensuring enabling and supportive environments. She highlighted that the specific focus areas of the government policies include: promoting recognition for older persons, developing lifelong education and training opportunities, incentivising employment and flexible hours for older persons, adaptation of social protection systems to the demographic changes more flexible working schedules for older persons; to adapt national social protection systems to the demographic changes; innovation in health care and social services, increasing the engagement of the private sector and promoting intergenerational solidarity.

Ms. Verdiyeva described the legislation and programmes related to older persons, including “Azerbaijan 2020: the vision of the future” Development Concept. She outlined measures to support the health and well-being of older persons, including through the National Strategy on non-communicable diseases and in-home social services for older persons living alone. Ms. Verdiyeva highlighted the measures to provide enabling and supportive environment, among which are homes for older persons, more accessible public transport and training of social workers.

Lastly, Ms. Verdiyeva illustrated examples of recognition for older persons’ rights and role in society through initiatives such as the “Month on Rights of Older Persons”, “Festival of Arts on Long-Livers”, Museum of the Long-Livers among others.

### **Bangladesh**

The expert from Bangladesh, Mr. Mostafa Kamal Mazumder, Deputy Secretary of Ministry of Social Welfare of Bangladesh, commenced his speech by introducing the

legislation and national policies on older persons in Bangladesh. He emphasized that the government efforts currently concentrate on the following areas: providing social assistance schemes and introducing universal contributory pension schemes; providing training programs for physicians, therapy health professionals and other health-care specialists supporting older persons; and improving accessibility of public utility services for older persons.

Mr. Mazumder noted that Bangladesh is rapidly becoming an aged society, with the share of older persons estimated to reach 19 per cent of the population within next five decades. He continued by highlighting the progress of the Government in implementing the MIPAA commitments since the adoption of the MIPAA in 2002. The Government has executed the National Policy of Older Persons in 2013. Mr. Mazumder reported about enactment of The Parents Care Act in 2013, which obliges the children to provide care for their parents, in order to enable the wellbeing of older persons through access to food, clothing, shelter and medical care. Also, a National Committee consisting of NGO members as well as governmental officials was formed to discuss the population ageing issues and to actively engage in policy formulation.

## **Cambodia**

The expert from Cambodia, Mr. Som Monorum, the Head of Technical Division of Cambodia National Committee for Older Persons at Ministry of Social Affairs Veterans and Youth Rehabilitation, commenced his remarks by describing the work of the Cambodian National Committee for Elderly, as an inter-ministerial body coordinating ageing issues in the country. He further highlighted the legislative frameworks relevant to older persons, including the Policy on the Elderly (2003), National Health Care Policy and Strategy for Older persons (2017), rectangular strategy, National Strategic Development Plan (2014-2018), the National Population Policy (2016-2030), and National Protection Policy Framework (2016-2025).

Mr. Monorum elaborated on a state pension system in Cambodia, which presently covers veterans, government and civil servants. The Health Insurance endorsed in 2017 is likewise targeted at civil servants. Contributory Pension Schemes are set up for private sector workers and members of the Older Persons' Associations (OPAs). Mr. He further reported on nursing subsidy to provide free access for primary health care services, and on humanitarian and disaster relief programmes, implemented by NGOs, private companies and universities.

Mr. Monorum described the Government's health-care policy and strategy, which aims to provide accessible and integrated health-care services including prevention, treatment, rehabilitation and palliative care services. Cambodia has a medical insurance system for civil servants and free health care to poor older persons.

Mr. Monorum added that Cambodia has conducted a Friendly Ageing Forum to consult older persons about their concerns and needs. The Government has established 1638 Older Persons Associations, which are involved in seven programmes including: (1) community health insurance, (2) contributory pension scheme, (3) saving for old age, (4) Rice

Bank and Cow bank (5) death contributory fund, (6) income generation, (7) Climate Change and Adaptation.

## **China**

Ms. He Changmei, Deputy Director of Department of Programme Development at China National Committee on Ageing (CNCA), reported on the government structures, legislation and policies on ageing. She indicated that the China National Working Commission on Ageing (CNWCA) consists of 32 central and state department representatives and people's groups, and that CNCA coordinates and promotes the work on ageing in China. CNWCA has a Secretariat, China National Committee on Ageing (CNCA), whose primary functions include: (1) researching and formulating development strategies and significant policies on ageing-related work, as well as coordinating and boosting the development planning of relevant departments for ageing-related work; (2) Coordinating and promoting relevant departments for protecting the rights and interests of older persons; (3) Coordinating and promoting relevant departments for strengthening macro guidance and comprehensive administration on the ageing-related work, as well as promoting the launch of a variety of activities that benefit the physical and mental health of older persons; (4) Guiding, supervising and inspecting the ageing-related work of all provinces, autonomous regions and municipalities directly under the Central Government; and (5) Organising and coordinating significant events related to the ageing-related work, launched by the United Nations and other international organisations in China.

Ms. Changmei further illustrated that China has set up contributory pension schemes including urban employee's basic endowment insurance system, endowment insurance system for urban and rural residents, supplementary pension systems and occupational pension systems. China also has non-contributory pension and social assistance schemes such as old age allowance policy, endowment service subsidy policy and nursing subsidy policy. She added that as measures to enhance engagement of older persons, the Chinese government is implementing the "Silver Age Programme", and is gathering the knowledge and expertise of older persons through the "Pilot Programme on Organising Elder Intellectuals to Assist in the Development of the Western Regions" and through "Opinions on the Furtherance of Roles of Retired Professional and Technical Personnel".

## **India**

Ms. Ghazala Meenai, the Joint Secretary of Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment in India, provided an overview of the current demographic profile of India. While the proportion of older persons made up 8.6 per cent of the total population in 2011, it is expected to reach 12.4 per cent by 2026. The Government of India has implemented a policy entitled "the National Policy on Older Persons" in 1999 in order to ensure financial and food security, healthcare, shelter, protection against abuse and exploitation, equitable share in development, as well as to facilitate active and productive ageing. The Government has also enacted "the Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens Act" in 2007 to ensure maintenance, shelter, healthcare, safety and security for older persons.

Ms. Meenai illustrated various policy measures for older persons and development; National Social Assistance Programme (NSAP) offers pension to all senior citizens living below poverty line. India's National Council of Senior Citizens advises the Central and State Governments on issues related to the welfare of senior citizens. Ms. Meenai further expressed the commitment of her country to advancing health and well-being into old age. India implemented the National Programme for Health Care of the Elderly (NPHCE) in 418 districts of 34 States, and has launched a Longitudinal Ageing Study in India (LASI) to assess the health status of older persons.

In order to ensure enabling and supportive environments for older persons, India has launched Accessible India Campaign to create age-friendly cities with barrier free environment in buildings, public toilets, buses, bus-stands, airports and other public places.

### **Macao SAR, China**

Ms. Kit Leng Kam, Chief of the Residential and Integrated Service Unit of Senior Service Division at the Social Welfare Bureau of Macao SAR commenced her presentation by introducing the "Ten-Year Plan of Action on Services for Older Persons 2016-2025" that is currently implemented in Macao SAR. The Action Plan consists of three phrases – short-term phrase (2016 – 2017), interim phrase (2018 – 2020) and long-term phrase (2021 – 2025), comprising of more than 400 measures in total. Until the end of 2016, 94 of the 196 short-term measures have been accomplished, including establishment of Dementia Medical Centre and Dementia Day Care Centre for older persons; provision of vocational training for older persons; an integrated digital platform which provides information related to welfare and services for older persons; provision of training to medical staff of specialties related to older persons; promoting the development of volunteer associations of older persons; alternations of existing sidewalks and enhancements of barrier-free access facilities. To further protect the rights and well-being of older persons, the Macao SAR Government has commenced the legislative work on "Legal System for Protection of Rights and Interests of Older Persons."

Among the policies for older persons and development, the "Social Security System" provides basic social security for Macao residents aged 65 or above, and the bill on "Non-mandatory Central Provident Fund System" has been approved by the Legislative Assembly and it will be effective on 1 January 2018 in order to reinforce financial security of older persons. In Macao, older persons are entitled to free public health services such as primary prevention, outpatient specialist care and medical treatments. Future plans to further advance the healthcare and medical services include the implementation of the 'Optimization Plan of Health System Infrastructure', particularly in relation to dementia services. Macao is ensuring ageing-friendly and supportive communities by paying particular attention to home safety of the older persons and measures to reduce accidents through the 'Project on Improved Promotion of Home Security'. The government is also planning to formulate the "Macao's Guidelines on Barrier-Free Environment and Universal Design" to facilitate an age-friendly environment.

In her remarks, Ms. Kam added the government's determination to protect older persons and formulate long-term policy planning for them, and illustrated that the priority of the Government is to take preventative, people-oriented services which particularly focus

on the most vulnerable older persons. Ms. Kam also advocated the participation of individuals, families, community, government, and society as a whole, and highlighted that the government needs to provide diversified complementary measures for families in order to support them to take care of their older members.

## **Malaysia**

Ms. Zarena Shuib, Principal Assistant Secretary of Policy and Strategic Planning Division at Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development in Malaysia, described that Malaysia is becoming an aged society by 2030; the proportion of citizens aged 60 or above was 9.2 per cent in 2015 and it is expected to rise to 15.3 per cent by 2030. The Malaysian government implemented the National Policy and Plan of Action for Older Persons in 2011, which includes six strategies such as promotion and advocacy, life-long learning, safety and security, governance and shared responsibility, intergenerational solidarity, and research and development. The Malaysian government set up the National Advisory and Consultative Council for the Older Persons to monitor the implementation of the policy and the plan of action.

Ms. Shuib reported that the Bantuan Orang Tua (Assistance for Older Persons) provides a monthly cash allowance to older persons from low income families, and the Private Aged Healthcare Facilities and Services Bill set a minimum standard for the care of older persons in the private institutions to ensure their dignity and well-being. Ms. Shuib further shared progress of the Ministry of Urban Wellbeing, Housing and Local Government; Physical Planning Guidelines for Older Persons are currently drafted to construct appropriate elderly living settlements and supporting facilities. Universal Design Planning Guidelines (2011) outlines the needs for planning of facilities and designing the urban environment that focus on providing barrier free facilities.

Ms. Shuib concluded her presentation by emphasizing the Malaysian government is actively working on ageing issues by strengthening the monitoring, implementation and reporting structure between national, states and local governments, as well as by ensuring an affordable, just and financially sustainable social protection system along with affordable health and life insurance for the elderly.

## **Myanmar**

Ms. Khin Thiza, Deputy Director of Department of Social Welfare at Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement in Myanmar introduced the institutional frameworks that guide the protection and support of older persons. These include the 2014 National Plan of Action on Ageing, the Law on older persons enacted in 2016, and the Rules for the implementation of the Law 2017 which deals with a draft 20-year National Policy on Ageing and the review on 2014 Action Plan. Myanmar implemented the National Social Protection Strategic Plan which has two flagship programmes – Social Pension and promotion of Older People's Self-Help Groups. Ms. Thiza added that First national universal social pension commenced in June this year (2017) for older persons aged 90 years and over.

The measures to advance health and well-being of older persons include day care centres, community based home care programmes and care giver training. The government also makes efforts to promote access to health care and to support homes for older persons who live in vulnerable and isolated settings.

Ms. Thiza reported that the Myanmar government is working on launching the National Committee for Older Person where policies and action plans are discussed and presented before submission to the Cabinet. To ensure an enabling and supportive environment, the Myanmar government also works in close collaboration with CSO and HelpAge International.

## **Nepal**

Mr. Janga Bahadur Gurung, the Deputy Chief of Mission to ESCAP from the Embassy of Nepal, commenced his presentation by introducing legislations and national policies on older persons in Nepal. Nepal has enacted various policies for older persons such as the Senior Citizens Policy and Working Policy 2002, Senior Citizen Act 2006, the National Action Plan for Senior citizens 2006, and Senior Citizens Regulations 2008, as well as has coordinated the policies with the Central Level Senior Citizen Welfare Committee and other ministries to enhance the welfare of older people.

Mr. Gurung added that Nepal has an Old Age Allowance budget for older persons along with non-contributory pension system for government officials. The Nepalese government allows the chiefs and members of constitutional bodies to work until the age of 65, and no age limit is set for politicians in order to encourage older people to engage more in decision making process. He also added that the government puts more efforts to provide financial support for older persons and to utilize their expertise in proper fields.

Mr. Gurung reported that the government prioritizes providing healthcare services for senior citizen, when administering the budget. The Senior Citizens Treatment Guidelines 2005 ensures the poor old people to be provided with free medicine and treatment. Mr. Gurung added that the government should provide insurance scheme and subsidized health service to its senior citizens living in poverty.

In relation to measures to ensure enabling and supportive environment, the Nepalese government established Pashupati Bridrashram, a shelter of older persons in 1976, where it currently accommodates a total of 230 older persons. The government also offers a fifty percent discounted transportation fees for older persons and has enacted rules, laws and acts to address neglect, violence and abuse against older persons and to recognise roles and contributions of older persons. Mr. Gurung further reported that the government of Nepal should continue its course to provide appropriate shelters and affordable transportation for older persons, and should develop and implement various policy measures to protect and enhance the lives of older persons.

## **Republic of Korea**

Mr. Kyungchan Kim, the Deputy Director of the Division of Population Policy Coordination at Ministry of Health and Welfare in the Republic of Korea, discussed the legislations and national policies for older persons of the Republic of Korea. In terms of legislation, Mr. Kim introduced the Framework act on low birth rate in an aging society 2005 and Welfare of Older Persons Act 1982 which was recently revised in 2015. He illustrated that ROK also has a national plan called the Basic Plan on Low Fertility and Aging Society which has been implemented over the three phases – 2006-2010, 2011-2015, and 2016-2020. The government allocated the budget of 1.4 billion USD for the Ageing society policy in 2017, in order to strengthen the older person income security, implement policy for active aging, and increase the employment of female and older persons.

Among measures for older person participation, the ROK government set up the Long-term Care Committee and supports numerous civic organizations working for older persons. ROK has a wide range of programs such as National Pension scheme (1988), Basic Livelihood Security System (2000) and Basic Pension scheme (2014) for social protection for older persons, and Public financed employment program for elderly (2004) to support older persons employment. The government also set up the statutory retirement age through the Act on prohibition of age discrimination in Employment and Aged Employment promotion (1992) and revised the retirement age at 60 in 2008.

Mr. Kim presented that the government of ROK has implemented various policies to advance health and well-being into old age. Health insurance especially for dental denture and dental implants and healthy living exercise programs for elderly both for indoor and outdoor are in place to promote healthy and active aging. The government provides health care services including the National Health Insurance (universal coverage, 1989), the Long-term Care Insurance for the Elderly (secondary, 2008), the Customized Visiting Health Management Project and the Elderly Care, along with developing the Dementia Early Diagnosis Project and establishing the call center for dementia people to help persons with dementia.

To ensure enabling and supportive environment for older persons, the ROK government has expanded the supply of rental housing for older persons and the number of low-floor buses and elevators at subway stations for older persons' convenience. In addition, as an effort to improve the quality of older persons' care services, the care worker training institute provides 240-hour courses and the law requires passing an examination to become a care services worker. The government not only provides abuse prevention education in close collaboration with social organizations, but operates shelters for abused elderly in order to address neglect, abuse, violence against older persons.

Mr. Kim added that the Republic of Korea will become an aged society next year. He concluded his presentation by emphasizing the government is actively preparing various policy measures for older persons' financial risk, health care, active aging, personal relations, etc. Moreover, the government announced 1st five-year plan on supporting preparation for later life which consists of diagnosis, consulting, oversight services for 30-50s' preparing their later lives. This plan encourages the citizens to prepare their later lives earlier, so that people can prevent future risks and the government can save costs to alleviate poverty. For sustainable development goals along with those of MIPAA, the ROK government tries to reduce a relative poverty rate of elderly and to increase disability adjusted life expectancy.

## **Sri Lanka**

Mr. Suvinda Singappuli, the Director of Ministry of Social Empowerment and Welfare in Sri Lanka, presented the legislations and policies for older persons. The government enacted Protection of the Rights of Elders Act No. 09 of 2000 enacted in 2000, which amended by the Act No.05 of 2011, and established the National Secretariat for Elders and National Council for Elders under the Act No. 09 of 2000. It also allocated the budget of 86.3 million USD on policies and programs for older persons.

Ms. Singappuli highlighted the measures for older persons and development. The government facilitates participation of older persons in decision-making and policy-formulation by working with the Citizen Consortia in the process of revising current national policy on Ageing. Not only both contributory and non-contributory pension schemes and social assistance schemes are set in place to provide social protection for older persons, but the government provides grant for income generating activities to older persons to increase employment. The government also addresses the needs of older persons in humanitarian and disaster relief programs.

The Sri Lankan government created the directorate for youth, elderly and disabled persons and provides an affordable access to primary and secondary health care. Various measures to advance health and well-being for older persons include offering geriatric and gerontological training, elderly homes and mental services for older persons.

The government of Sri Lanka runs the Elder Care Assistant Programme and confers the accreditation through the Vocational Training Authority. The maintenance board was established in 2002 for the purpose of listening to more voices from elders, as an effort to address neglect, violence, abuse against older persons and to recognize their contributions to society.

In summary, Sri Lanka achieved almost seventy percent of MIPAA recommendations so far. As Sri Lanka has encouraged older persons' active participation in society and development, more older persons are engaging in decision-making processes at all levels, the number of older persons living in poverty has decreased, and the living standards for elderly homes have been improved.

## **Thailand**

Ms. Siriwan Aruntippaitune, a Senior Expert on the Elderly at the Department of Older Persons of Ministry of Social Development and Human Security in Thailand, introduced the institutional arrangements in place to support and protect older persons. Thailand has implemented 2 national plans on older persons which spans from 1982 to 2021, adopted a Thailand Declaration on Older Persons in 1999, enacted the Act on Older Persons in 2003 for ensuring comprehensive welfare services, and conducts Older Persons National survey every 5 years.



For older persons and development, Thailand encourages participation of older persons in various spheres of life through Older Persons Associations, clubs, schools, centres, and older persons brain bank. The government extended the years of retirement in government offices and private sectors, as a measure to increase employment and re-employment of older persons. Thailand provides the older age allowance, old age insurance, and has a National Saving Fund and Older Persons Fund to ensure income security of its older citizens.

In relation to measures on advance health and well-being into old age, the Thai government provides a Universal Health Care Coverage, which includes free prevention, treatment, rehabilitation and referral system for older persons. Older persons are also entitled to dental care, eye care, mental health care, home-based care and long term care.

Ms. Aruntippaitune reported that the government is taking steps to create enabling and supportive environments for older persons. The government collaborates with local organisations and volunteer caregivers to facilitate home improvements and create more age-friendly settings. The measures to create supportive environment include providing supportive transportation and public facilities and establishing Older Persons centers to encourage older persons' networking, engagement and participation in society, and offering Older Persons loan and reverse mortgage for more affordable housing.

Ms. Aruntippaitune concluded her presentation by emphasizing the Thai government is actively moving forward Thailand responsiveness on rapid ageing via close collaboration among all stakeholders from the government, academia, business sectors and civil society.

## **Viet Nam**

Ms. Le Minh Giang, the Office Director of the Office of Vietnam National Committee on Ageing, commenced her presentation by describing the current legislations and policies on older persons in Viet Nam. The Vietnamese government has strengthened implementation of the Older Persons Law (2009) and developed national policies and programme for socio-economic development of older persons 2012-2020. The government ensures the rights of older persons by promoting their role, voices and participation in decision-making process, and addresses gender and age discrimination, including issues regarding ethnic minority, disabled persons and poverty rate of women.

For older persons and development, Ms. Giang reported that the government provides re-employment opportunities for older persons through employment and vocational training, increases access to financial services, and considers raising the retirement age for both men and women. Furthermore, the government is working on improving the social protection policies for old age such as comprehensive pension system—social insurance and social assistance, by reducing the age of receiving social pension and increasing the amount of benefits.

The measures to advance health and well-being into old age include implementing universal health coverage 2020 (health insurance for older persons, the National programme on health care for older persons period 2017-2025, and the national policies to promote healthy living for older persons with focus on disease prevention and health promotion. The

Vietnamese government also increases the access to primary health care in order to deal with increased non-communicable diseases along with geriatric and gerontological training in order to provide better service to older persons, and develops the national strategy and enhances research on long-term care for older persons.

To ensure enabling and supportive environment, Viet Nam is developing age-friendly, affordable living conditions such as housing, clean water and transportation system for older persons, working closely with all stakeholders including state, family, community and private sectors for better coordination, quality and effectiveness of delivery services. Other measures to create age-friendly environment include policy mechanisms to encourage further engagement of civil society and private sectors in social and health care services for older persons, to increase training for caregivers and assistance to family caregivers, and to strengthen the quality of health care and monitoring mechanisms. The government enhances the information collection on older persons and data analysis to devise better policies and develop programs for older persons.

In her summary remarks, Ms. Giang expressed the government's determination to improve the quality of life for older persons via recognizing the roles and commitment of older persons in society, providing old age income protection and healthcare services and promoting age-friendly communities through sustainable and accessible infrastructure systems. In this regard, Ms. Giang advocates strengthening the capacity of and enhancing collaboration among the government departments and agencies, corporate bodies, civil society, and voluntary welfare organizations, for more inclusive society for older persons.

## **VIII. Closing the gaps: Challenges, opportunities and emerging regional policy priorities for the implementation of the MIPAA**

This session comprised a poster exhibition prepared by several experts. Within the context of the three thematic focus areas of the MIPAA, each presenting expert prepared a poster representing challenges, opportunities, and emerging regional policy priorities for the implementation of the MIPAA, with a focus on one or more of the following sub-texts: (a) Older persons and development: Poverty and Income Security; (b) Advancing health and well-being into old age: Universal Health Care; (c) Ensuring enabling and supportive environments: The Data Revolution.

As part of the session, the meeting participants were invited to move freely between posters and form discussion groups, exchanging their knowledge and ideas around the topic of individual posters. Following the discussions, the Rapporteurs of the session, Mr. Atiqur Rahman, Professor, Institute of Social Welfare and Research, University of Dhaka and Mr. Raja Kumaran, President, Fiji Council of Social Services highlighted the key reflections from these deliberations.

Poster presenters included: Mr. Eduardo Klien, Regional Representative, East Asia/Pacific Regional Development Centre (EAPRDC), HelpAge International; Mr. Himanshu Rath, Founder, Agewell Foundation; Ms. Aabha Chaudhary, Chairperson, Anugraha; Mr. Nuno Meira Simoes Cunha and Ms. Celine Bista, International Labour Organisation.

Several themes emerged during the discussions. Income security and employment of older persons was one of the key areas of concern. It was highlighted that, as people now live longer, they needed savings to last a longer time beyond the working age, but often cannot save enough to cover living costs in the old age. It was also noted the limited capacity in many countries to provide universal pensions in the near future, and proposed that people are provided with better savings opportunities.

It was further emphasized that the income generating opportunities in most countries were tailored towards younger population, consequently, many retired older persons spend as much as 30 years out of employment. Many older persons beyond the age of 60 have the capacity to work, but often do not have the work opportunity and/or the skills to meet the workplace needs. To fill in this gap, there is a need to establish adequate government programmes on training and re-training of older persons. Employment is not only advantageous to older workers, as they carry the knowledge and experience that the employers can benefit from. It was also mentioned that many older persons want a break from life-long employment, which should also be considered in devising policy solutions.

Another area of discussion was the care to older persons and its funding challenges. It was stressed that, in the light of changing family structures, it is no longer possible to fully rely on families to look after the older persons. It was noted by one participant that, despite obvious policy needs, it is challenging to transform intentions into actions due to a significant shortage of funding. Another participant suggested that the choice of funding allocation will be important. In many Western countries, around 10 per cent of the GDP is allocated on ageing-related spending, as compared to 2.5 per cent in most Asian countries. It was further suggested that, large sources of government revenue are lost in the informal sector – in Thailand for example, the share of informal economy is estimated to be around 60 per cent. Efficiency of policy implementation was also a topic of concern. China was highlighted as a good example, while many others are experiencing a significant delay between adoption of a policy or an action plan and its execution.

Mr. Klien informed the meeting that HelpAge is currently working on population ageing as a demographic issue rather than exclusively focusing on the needs of older persons. His presentation concerned knowledge development and the results of a HelpAge study conducted in Bangladesh, Nepal, Philippines, Viet Nam and Thailand as well as transformative actions and strategies. Viet Nam and Philippines were highlighted as remarkable examples with strong older persons associations – in Viet Nam, for example, as high as 70 per cent of OPA members are older persons. It was further noted that OPA's in South-East Asia have particularly active female members.

Mr. Himanshu Rath noted the fact that almost every older person has family, but there is a disconnect among the family members primarily because of economic reasons. For example, although many Asian countries have old age homes, the capacity and number of homes are very limited. Mr. Rath also mentioned that the lack of models for old-age well-being leads to confusion and problems on how to prepare.

Ms. Chaudhary noted the gender differences such as literacy or engagement in formal vocations including in her posters that presented an interpretation of the current Indian population ageing situation and the existing policies and schemes of India. She also

mentioned that India provides diverse vocational and skill training programs targeted for urban educated elderly or urban poor elderly.

Related to the posters from ILO, Mr Cunha remarked that the posters captured issues on pension systems and income security schemes in the region as well as the values and SDGs of the ILO related to population ageing. The challenges of income security systems including adequacy and sustainability were discussed and addressed in the posters as well. The posters imply that possible recommendations to tackle those challenges include regional collaborations and partnerships, unified definitions and indicators to measure the progresses among the countries.

Meeting participants noted the disintegration of traditional Asian family structures and the support systems that are needed to replace the dependency on the family to take care of their family members in old age. Further, it was pointed out that since the population of older persons is not a homogenous group, increasingly specialized and targeted policies are needed to address older persons' issues such as differentiated pension systems or social assistance needed for different groups of older persons, e.g. older persons with low-income living in marginalized areas, older persons with low-income living in urban slums, and a very small number of educated and rich older persons living in urban areas.

In conclusion, the challenges and hard tasks ahead require collaboration, partnership and joint action to tackle the issues related to population ageing such as income security and changing family structures. Analysis of the 27 ESCAP MIPAA survey responses noted some gaps amongst the countries on stages and issues of population ageing. The excellent poster presentations of the presenters and active engagement and discussion of all the participants in the meeting were appreciated.

## **IX. Recommendations and closing of the Regional Expert Meeting**

As a result of data analysis of MIPAA surveys received from 25 countries, a number of draft recommendations for the Outcome Document of the Asia-Pacific Intergovernmental Meeting on the Third Review and Appraisal of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing was tabled for discussion.

It was discussed whether, in the views and opinions of the assembled experts, these recommendations accurately reflect the recommended priority actions of individual countries and the Asia-Pacific region as a whole. The outcome of discussions in the form of recommendations were submitted as a draft outcome document to the Asia-Pacific Intergovernmental Meeting on the Third Review and Appraisal of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, Bangkok, from 12-14 September 2017.

The meeting was officially closed by Ms. Vanessa Steimayer, Social Development Division, ESCAP. Participants were thanked for their active contributions and high degree of commitment to the successful Regional Expert Meeting.

## List of Participants

### GOVERNMENT EXPERTS

#### AZERBAIJAN

Ms. Naila Verdiyeva, Demography and Population Development Sector Head, Employment Policy and Demography Department, Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of Population of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Baku

#### BANGLADESH

Mr. Md Mostafa Kamal Mazumder, Deputy Secretary, Ministry of Social Welfare, Bangladesh Secretariat, Dhaka

#### CAMBODIA

Mr. Monorum Som, Deputy Director of Elderly Welfare Department, and Head of Technical Division of Cambodia National Committee for the Elderly, Ministry of Social Affairs Veterans and Youth Rehabilitation, Phnom Penh

#### CHINA

Ms. He Changmei, Deputy Director of Department of Program Development, China National Committee on Ageing, Beijing

#### INDIA

Ms. Ghazala Meenai, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment, New Delhi

#### IRAN, ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF

Mr. Ali Gholampour, Minister Counsellor and Deputy Permanent Representative to ESCAP, Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Bangkok

#### MACAO, CHINA

Ms. Kit Leng Kam, Macao, China

Mr. Sio Un Choi, Macao, China

Mr. U Keong Cheang, Macao, China

#### MALAYSIA

Ms. Zarena Shuib, Principal Assistant Secretary, Policy and Strategic Planning Division, Ministry of Women, Family & Community Development, Kuala Lumpur

#### MYANMAR

Ms. Khin Thuza, Deputy Director, Department of Social Welfare, Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement, Nay-Pyi-Taw

#### NEPAL

Mr. Janga Bahadur Gurung, Counsellor/DCM, Embassy of Nepal in Bangkok, Bangkok

#### REPUBLIC OF KOREA

Mr. Keoung Chan Kim, Deputy Director, Division of Population Policy Coordination, Ministry of Health and Welfare, Seoul

#### RUSSIAN FEDERATION

Mr. Alexander Smirnov, Minister-Counsellor and Deputy Permanent Representative to ESCAP, Embassy of the Russian Federation in the Kingdom of Thailand, Bangkok

#### SRI LANKA

Mr. Suvinda Samarakoon Singappuli, Director, National Secretariat for Elders, Ministry of Social Empowerment & Welfare, Colombo

#### THAILAND

Ms. Siriwan Aruntippaitune, Expert on the Elderly, Ministry of Social Development and Human Security, the Department of Older Persons, Bangkok

Ms. Arpar Ratanapitak, Senior Professional Social Worker, Ministry of Social Development and Human Security, the Department of Older Persons, Bangkok

#### VIET NAM

Ms. Giang Le Minh, Office Director, Viet Nam National Committee on Ageing (VNCA), Hanoi

-----

#### EXPERTS

Dr. Aabha Chaudhary, Chairperson, Anugraha, New Delhi, India

Mr. Yi Chen, Board Chairman, Zhongshan College, Nanjing, China

Mr. Peng Du, Professor, Renmin University of China, Beijing, China

Ms. Wendy Holmes, Independent International Public Health Consultant, Colombo, Sri Lanka

Mr. A.S.M. Atiqur Rahman, Professor, Institute of Social Welfare and Research, University of Dhaka, Dhaka, Bangladesh

Mr. Krishna Gautam, Chairperson, Ageing Nepal, Kathmandu, Nepal

Ms. Reiko Hayashi, Director, Department of International Research and Cooperation, National Institute of Population and Social Security Research (IPSS), Tokyo, Japan

Ms. Manori Kaluthantiri, Senior Lecturer, Department of Demography, University Of Colombo, Colombo, Sri Lanka

Mr. Sawang Kaewkantha, Senior Professional Social Worker, Department of Older Persons, Ministry of Social Development and Human Security, Thailand

Ms. Thelma Kay, Independent Expert, Singapore

Mr. Eduardo Klien, Regional Director, HelpAge International, Asia/Pacific, Chiang Mai, Thailand

Mr. Raja Kumaran, Interim President, Fiji Council of Social Services (FCOSS), Suva

Ms. Baralee Meesukh, Head of Regional Network Development, HelpAge International, Chiang Mai, Thailand

Mr. Peter Morrison, Regional Programme Adviser, HelpAge International, Asia/Pacific, Chiang Mai, Thailand

Mr. Keisuke Nakashima, Associate Professor, Global Issues & International Business, Kobe City University of Foreign Studies, Kobe, Japan

Mr. John Piggott, Scientia Professor of Economics and Director, ARC Centre of Excellence in Population Ageing Research (CEPAR), UNSW Sydney, Australia

Dr. Linchong Pothiban, Associate Professor Faculty of Nursing, Chiang Mai University, Thailand

Mr. Himanshu Rath, Chairman, Agewell Foundation, New Delhi, India

Ms. Siriphan Sasat, Associate Professor Faculty of Nursing, Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok, Thailand

Ms. Gita Sen, Professor & Director, Ramalingaswami Centre on Equity & Social Determinants of Health, Public Health Foundation of India, Bangalore, India

Ms. Nor Shafaleena Shaik Abdul Shukkor, Assistant Vice President, Corporate Strategy & Performance, Kumpulan Wang Persaraan (Diperbadankan), Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

Ms. Nhung Pham Tuyet, Deputy Head of International Department, Viet Nam Association of the Elderly (VAE), Ha Noi, Viet Nam

## UNITED NATIONS BODIES AND SPECIALIZED AGENCIES

United Nations Population Funds (UNFPA), Bangkok	Mr. Christophe Lefranc, Technical Adviser on Population and Development (Data and Census), UNFPA, Asia-Pacific Regional Office
UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), Geneva	Mr. Rio Hada, Team Leader, Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, Development and Economic and Social Issues Branch, Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)
International Labour Organization (ILO), Bangkok	Ms. Celine Peyron Bista, Chief Technical Advisor on Social Protection Mr. Nuno Meira Simoes Cunha, Senior Technical Specialist on Social Protection

## CSOs AND OTHER ORGANIZATIONS

Asian Forum for Population and Development (AFPPD), Bangkok	Ms. Seema Gaikwad, Policy Research and Advocacy Advisor
---	---

## OBSERVERS

- Ms. Namhui Hwang, Research Fellow, Population Policy Research Department, Korea Institute for Health and Social Affairs, Sejong City, South Korea
- Ms. Haiou Li, Vice Chairman, Zhongshan College, Nanjing, China
- Ms. Niger Dil Nahar, Programme Officer, United Nations World Food Programme (WFP), Dhaka, Bangladesh
- Ms. Nekehia Quashie, Postdoctoral Research Fellow, College of Population Studies, Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok, Thailand

## ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMISSION FOR ASIA AND THE PACIFIC (ESCAP)

### SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT DIVISION

Mr. Nagesh Kumar	Director
Mr. Patrik Andersson	Section Chief, Sustainable Socioeconomic Transformation Section
Ms. Vanessa Steinmayer	Section Chief, a.i., Sustainable Demographic Transition Section



Mr. Osama Rajkhan	Social Affairs Officer, Sustainable Demographic Transition Section
Mr. Marco Roncarati	Social Affairs Officer, Sustainable Demographic Transition Section
Ms. Channe Lindstrøm Oğuzhan	Associate Social Affairs Officer, Sustainable Demographic Transition Section
Ms. Alida Taghiyeva	Consultant, Sustainable Demographic Transition Section

\*\*\*\*\*