

Harnessing Intergenerational Benefits of Demographic Change in Asia and the Pacific: Engaging all Groups from Youth to Older Persons

Wednesday, 22 June 2022 (09:00-16:00, UTC+7)

Online meeting (Zoom)

Concept Note

Background

The Asia-Pacific region is demographically diverse. Some countries have youth bulges, many others are experiencing population ageing at an unprecedented pace. Sooner or later, all countries will experience population ageing, and hence, even countries with youthful populations can benefit from understanding the dynamics of population ageing in order to plan forward-looking policies that address age structure changes in the immediate and longer-term future. In Asia and the Pacific, the number of older persons is projected to more than double by 2050, when one in four people are projected to be 60 years or older. With an ageing population, the median age of the labour force in the region is projected to increase from 39.6 years in 2019 to 41.5 years in 2030. Compared to many other parts of the world, the pace of population ageing is much faster in Asia and the Pacific. Furthermore, as countries enter the late or post-dividend stage of the demographic transition, the total size of the working age population (15—64 years) decreases. An ageing labour force might result in declining productivity gains and slower economic growth in the case of shrinking savings and increased pressure on public finances as demand for pensions and health care rises.

In this context, it is important to understand changes across the entire demographic spectrum and identify workable and effective methods to strengthen the labour force participation of all members of society that wish to work. The labour force participation of older persons is guided by the interest of employers to employ older persons, as well as older persons' readiness and interest to continue to work. Older persons can also be

very effective in mentoring and preparing younger entrants for the labour market, and thus enhance harnessing the demographic dividend.

The challenges and opportunities faced are heightened by the Fourth Industrial Revolution, which is characterized by, among others, the rise in artificial intelligence. Rapid technological advancement has the potential to be disruptive to employment flows, creating a perpetual need for workers, especially for those at the medium-skill level, to reskill and upskill. This affects all workers and requires strategies to effectively address these concerns.

As part of its knowledge base, ESCAP is documenting and disseminating findings, good practices and lessons learned concerning intergenerational issues, the demographic dividend, the Fourth Industrial Revolution and labour force participation to support effective policymaking amidst demographic and technological changes across the Asia-Pacific region.

Organization

The meeting will be held on 22 June 2022, online, from 09:00-16:00 (UTC+7)

Purpose and expected outcomes

The purpose of the meeting is to review project activities in target countries (especially with regard to the ESCAP Indicator Framework used by countries still to harness the demographic dividend) and better understand challenges and opportunities (especially in the context of the Fourth Industrial Revolution), as well as learn from the experiences of good practice countries. In addition, a series of recommendations are to be developed. In the morning and afternoon sessions, experts will discuss presentations made on the aforementioned matters, including the content of the Indicator Framework and how to best utilize it, and the identification of workable and effective innovative methods to strengthen the labour force participation of older persons in the context of the Fourth Industrial Revolution. Discussions will also take place on what actions need to be taken to ensure continuing success of the project including through counterpart activities in the

target countries. A report of the meeting will be prepared, summarizing the discussions and recommendations.

As guiding questions for the meeting, participants are requested to consider:

- What good practices and lessons learned can be shared on harnessing the demographic dividend and on strengthening the labour force participation of older persons in Asia and the Pacific?
- What are the challenges that remain and how could these be addressed?
- What can be done to mitigate the impacts volatility (including from COVID-19, economic shocks and climate change), and benefit from ICTs?

Format and language

The meeting will be held in English and will feature presentations and structured interactive discussions, leading to the identification of key points and recommendations to advance project implementation.

Participation

Participants, in an expert capacity, are expected from ministries concerned with the demographic dividend and gender dimensions, as well as older persons and the future of work, such as ministries dealing with youth and ageing populations, gender and statistics, education, labour, health and foreign affairs, as well as relevant stakeholders from civil society, academia and the private sector. Participants are also expected from other United Nations entities.

Since the regional expert forum is held just prior to the Asia-Pacific Intergovernmental Meeting on the Fourth Review and Appraisal of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, it will benefit from synergies between both meetings.

Expected inputs from participants

Meeting participants are expected to have read the background documents related to the meeting, which will be sent electronically in due course. Active participation from all

participants is expected, leading to concrete recommendations and plans on how to move forward with project activities in the target countries.

Further information

For more information on the meeting, please contact Mr. Marco Roncarati (roncarati@un.org), and Mr. Young-jae Lee (young-jae.lee@un.org).