Statement of Foundation for Older Persons’ Development (FOPDEV), Thailand at the Asia and the Pacific Intergovernmental Meeting for the 4th MIPAA Review, 29 June-1 July 2022, Bangkok

Respected chair, I am Janevit Wisojsongkram, representing the Foundation for Older Persons’ Development (FOPDEV), a national non-governmental organisation based in Thailand.

Population ageing in Thailand and in Asia and the Pacific region has brought both challenges and opportunities but most attention has exaggerated the negative impacts, reflecting a misguided societal perception towards older people and ageing. In reality, older people are significant contributors to families, societies, and national economies.

If you don't see them as a resource for strengthening the economy and building society, then you're pushing a self-fulfilling prophecy that they are a problem.

Based on FOPDEV’s experience directly working with older women and men in communities,

- Many work to support families
- Many contribute to community development, for example, leading or actively working alongside the younger generation on climate change adaptation (CCA) initiatives, being volunteers to provide care and support to dependent peers, and participating in the development of community plans and strategies
- Many, particularly older women care for grandchildren and sick and disabled family members, allowing other adult family members to work

We urge the governments and all stakeholders to view older women and men as a resource rather than a burden and invest in this growing segment of the population to address their needs and promote their full participation and continued contribution to national development. Gender considerations should be integrated into all efforts to ensure gender equality and fully tap into the potential of women.

These can be achieved through different efforts including promoting a) older people’s associations and their networks to serve as a mechanism for their participation in development, b) age-inclusive work and employment, c) age-inclusive community-based climate change adaptation initiatives to fully benefit from their local knowledge and life-long experience and d) strengthening the age care and old-age pension systems.