Organisational Statement for Tsao Foundation

Asia-Pacific Intergovernmental Meeting on the Fourth Review and Appraisal of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing


29 June 2022, 1400–1700hrs

Tsao Foundation is a Singapore-based civil society organization chartered in 1992 by the then 86-year-old Madam Tsao Ng Yu Shun and has been working with, and for the well-being of older people in an inclusive society over the past 30 years. Tsao has been involved with the US’ National Academy of Medicine’s (NAM) international initiative to produce a rigorously researched, evidence-based consensus report - a global roadmap on healthy longevity with a list of what we think are impactful policy recommendations. This report was just released on June 4, and we would like to share a summary of this report.

All countries, including Singapore, are aging at an unprecedented rate, and the population over age 65 has grown more rapidly than other age groups due to longer life spans and declining birth rates. Unfortunately, despite the gains in life expectancy, the number of years in good health has stayed roughly the same, and so people are living more years in poor health.

Evidence through the report suggests that the cost of continued inaction is more people living in poor health, suffering, and dependence; financial burdens on individuals and families; lost opportunities for people of all ages; gross domestic product that is lower than it would be with better health and full inclusion of older people; and increased fiscal burdens on governments for supporting unnecessarily high levels of illness and disability.

To retard these issues, the NAM commission concluded that by improving healthy longevity, the future of aging societies can be optimistic.

The commission identified overarching principles for achieving healthy longevity as:

1. People of all ages, particularly older adults, reach their full potential to live life with good health, function, meaning, purpose, and dignity.

2. Societies enable the best health and functioning that individuals at all ages are capable of attaining.

3. Societies reduce disparities and enhance equity within and among countries to realize the well-being and contributions of all people, including those of older ages.

4. The human, financial, and social capital of older people is realized for the benefit of all of society.

5. Societies use data and meaningful metrics to track the achievement of outcomes and guide decision making.

To operationalise these principles, the roadmap also includes long term goals to catalyse change towards healthy longevity. These goals are in turn enabled by supporting structures and recommendations to catalyse these necessary changes to achieve healthy longevity.
Every country has different paths to healthy longevity, and governments will need to establish calls to action to develop and implement data-driven all-of-society plans for building the organizations and social infrastructure needed to enable healthy longevity.

Tsao foundation endorses this consensus study report and supports calls for a collaborative approach towards a better future for all.

Please feel free to reach out to myself or any of my fellow foundation colleagues for a copy of the consensus report. Thank you!

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