



Asia Pacific Regional CSO Engagement Mechanism

Session 5. Mayor's Panel: Localising SDGs

Presented by Pam Rajput, Older People Constituency

Sustainable Development in an Ageing Region

Excellency, Ladies and Gentlemen,

As representative of the older person's constituency, we believe that sustainable development will only be achieved if everybody is included particularly older persons who are usually left behind.

Population ageing is a global issue and Asia Pacific Region is not exempted. This has been recognized to have implications to the attainment of sustainable development goals (SDGs) if not addressed by the government particularly the issues on health care and income security.

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. In 2016, approximately 12.4 percent of the population in the region was 60 years or older, but this is projected to increase to more than a quarter — or 1.3 billion by 2050.

By 2050, nearly 8 in 10 of the world's older population will live in the less developed regions. This is especially pertinent for a region such as Asia and the Pacific, which comprises some of the wealthiest nations, as well as some of the poorer countries in the world.

More often than not we see older persons with less chances of employment and less and unequal access to adequate healthcare and finance. The informality of labor and underdeveloped social protection system in most countries in the region leaves vast majority no access to income security at old age.

Cases of migration are high but older person remains in the community to contribute to the development of their family and community as well. Migration of children to urban and/or abroad to get employment (which is supposed to be available in their own countries) adds burden to older persons by replacing the responsibility of the parents in taking care of their grandchildren.

Another case, children who migrate often find it difficult to cope with city life and choose to leave their old parents in the village, causing problems of loneliness and lack of care givers for old parents. Parents in this circumstance cannot always count on financial support from their children and may have to take care of themselves.

There are major limitations in analysis of old age poverty in a number of developing countries, has revealed major limitations in analysis of old age poverty using household survey data. Whether older people appear to be more or less poor is strongly influenced by assumptions (specifically equivalence scales) about which there has been limited analysis in developing countries.

Complicating the picture, some issues of critical concern for older persons are not easily captured or quantifiable using mainstream statistics. Age exclusive surveys must be changed. For example, target 3.8 on universal health coverage of the Sustainable Development Goals has an indicator to measure coverage of tracer interventions including hypertension and diabetes which are key health concerns for older people. However, the current data source for these measures is population based surveys which have upper age limits.

We believe that SDGs 2030 will only be achieved if it's localize. This means development of appropriate and sustainable programs and services that will address the need of the people particularly those marginalized and vulnerable are key to SDG 2030.

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

1. Recognize that population ageing is a success, not a burden. It is a triumph of humanity and of development.
2. Development of appropriate, sustainable and accessible programs and services.
3. Approaches to disaggregating data by age throughout the life-course must be robust and reliable and include sensitivity testing, in particular in relation to poverty data.
4. Universal approaches to social protection will ensure coverage of the poorest, especially to people who move in and out of poverty line.
5. Alternative methods of poverty measurement suggest old age poverty could be higher.

Discrimination based on disability and age must end now. We are standing ready to provide you with our experiences. Finally, I encourage all governments here to adopt the principles of Development Justice as you advance your work through ESCAP as well as at national, international and global levels.

Older Person Constituency
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