

International Day of Older Persons

The Resilience and Contributions of Older Women in Asia and the Pacific

30 September 2022 (12:00-13:45 UTC+7)

Online (Zoom)

CONCEPT NOTE

(Draft as of 9 September 2022)

1. Introduction

In 2022, 364 million older women (60 years or over) are residing in Asia and the Pacific, representing 54 per cent of the region's older persons. For the group 80 years or over, they represent 62 per cent. Thus, women account for most of all older persons in the region, and given their longer life expectancy, their share increases with age.

Women contribute to societies throughout their entire lives. In old age, they continue to support families through their work, both in the formal and informal sectors. They provide unpaid care for children, grandchildren and older family members, give shelter and emotional support, and are the backbone of families and communities.

Yet, women, especially those in developing countries, enter old age with the accumulation of a lifetime of gender-based disadvantages. Over the life course, they typically have fewer opportunities for education and work in the formal labour markets. They lack social protection, including health care, and they often do not have access to land ownership and income. They are often economically dependent on their spouses or other male household members. As women generally outlive men, and their spouses are often older, they experience widowhood at higher rates than men. As widows they are vulnerable to discrimination, financial hardship and isolation. These experiences affect their social and economic situation in later life and increase their risk of living in poverty, ill-health and isolation.

The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated existing inequalities, with the past three years intensifying the socioeconomic, environmental, health and climate related impacts on the lives of older persons, especially older women. Yet during the pandemic and across the region, older women provided food and shelter for family members returning from cities to the countryside, looking after children, grandchildren and other older family members, and contributing to the families' income and livelihoods.

Beginning in 2021, ESCAP members and associate members, as well as non-government stakeholders, commenced to review and appraise the implementation of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, the global guiding document on population ageing, for the fourth time. This process culminated in an intergovernmental meeting held at ESCAP from 29 June to 1 July 2022. The meeting, which resulted in a report and outcome document, brought together representatives of 30 member States, over 20 non-government stakeholder groups, and representatives of United Nations entities and

intergovernmental organizations. In follow-up to the intergovernmental meeting, ESCAP, with support from the Asia-Pacific Informal Regional Network of Focal Points on Ageing, drafted the Asia-Pacific Report on Population Ageing 2022, drawing on the inputs and outcomes of the review and appraisal process, combined with latest evidence on ageing levels and trends.

2. Objective

The theme for the 2022 International Day of Older Persons is: The Resilience and Contributions of Older Women. The commemoration of this day in Asia and the Pacific will focus on the specific situation of older women in the region, and it will provide an opportunity for member States and non-government stakeholders to celebrate the contribution of older women to societies all across the region. It will discuss the significant role older women play in traversing everyday challenges and contributing to their solutions with resilience and fortitude. Findings and recommendations from the Asia-Pacific Report on Population Ageing 2022, as they relate to the situation of older women, will also be presented at the event.

The meeting will explore the following questions:

- What is the social and economic situation of older women in Asia and the Pacific?
- Longer but not healthier lives – what are the specific health challenges of older women and what should be done to ensure healthier lives?
- How has COVID-19 affected the lives of older women and their families all across Asia and the Pacific?
- How are older women contributing to societies across the region, and how can societies ensure that these contributions are recognized and valued?
- What can be done to build resilience of older women?
- What are governments and stakeholders doing to address the challenges and opportunities older women face during these challenging times, and what more can be done?

3. Participants

Representatives of government representatives, international organizations and relevant stakeholders are invited to attend.

Interested participants are requested to register at: <https://zoom.us/meeting/register/tJMld-yhqTgjG9RZWclwCggedKinGg22huQk>

4. Date and format

The event is organized online on 30 September, 12:00-13.:45, Indochina Time.

The event will be recorded and posted on ESCAP website at: <https://www.population-trends-asiapacific.org/mipaa>.

5. Background documents

Asia-Pacific Report on Population Ageing 2022: <https://www.unescap.org/kp/2022/asia-pacific-report-population-ageing-2022-trends-policies-and-good-practices-regarding>

2021 ESCAP Population Data Sheet: <https://www.population-trends-asiapacific.org/population-data>

Report on the Asia-Pacific Intergovernmental Meeting on the Fourth Review and Appraisal of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing (ESCAP/MIPAA/IGM.3/2022/3)

https://www.unescap.org/sites/default/d8files/event-documents/MIPAA_IGM.3_3_E_0.pdf

Outcome document Accelerating Implementation of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, 2002, to Build a Sustainable Society for All Ages in Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP/MIPAA/IGM.3/2022/3/Add.1)

https://www.unescap.org/sites/default/d8files/event-documents/MIPAA_IGM.3_3_Add.1_E.pdf

Additional information is available on the UN ESCAP website dedicated to population ageing:

<https://www.population-trends-asiapacific.org/mipaa>.
