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Joint Expert Group Meeting on  
**Older Persons and Intergenerational Solidarity**

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United Nations Conference Centre, Bangkok, Thailand

**Report of the meeting**

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## Introduction

The joint expert group meeting on “Older Persons and Intergenerational Solidarity” was organized by the Programme on Ageing of the Division for Inclusive Social Development of the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA), and the Social Development Division of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UN ESCAP). It was held on 10-11 October 2023 in person at the United Nations Conference Centre in Bangkok with an online option.

The 2021 report of the Secretary-General entitled “Our Common Agenda” calls for renewing solidarity,<sup>1</sup> including a “profound deepening of solidarity between generations.”<sup>2</sup> In the context of progressive population ageing and the gradual extension of human longevity, strengthened solidarity between generations requires a better understanding of how intergenerational solidarity is operationalized at the policy level. The principle of intergenerational equity, which recognizes responsibilities of current generations towards future generations, has deep roots in diverse cultural and religious traditions and is reflected in the Charter of the United Nations.<sup>3</sup>

Intergenerational solidarity is central to sustainability. In the [2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#), member States declared that they “are determined to protect the planet from degradation, including through sustainable consumption and production, sustainably managing its natural resources and taking urgent action on climate change, so that it can support the needs of the present and future generations.” At the mid-point review of the 2030 Agenda, the Secretary-General’s 2023 report on progress<sup>4</sup> concludes that there has been a “limited focus on a life course and intergenerational approach” across socio-economic systems that could be used to help older persons recover from past deprivations. The pledge contained in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development that “no one will be left behind” cannot be realized without attention to the well-being of older persons.

The Political Declaration<sup>5</sup> adopted at the Second World Assembly on Ageing<sup>6</sup> in 2002 recognized that solidarity between generations at all levels – in families, communities and nations – is fundamental for the achievement of a society for all ages. The Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing (MIPAA)<sup>7</sup> reflects on external factors impacting intergenerational solidarity, including urbanization, migration, the nuclearization of families, population ageing, and digital and social exclusion. It notes that “one of the principles in the Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development and Programme of Action adopted at the World Summit for Social Development is the creation of a framework by member States to fulfil their responsibility for present and future generations by ensuring equity across the generations.”<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> General Assembly [resolution 57/213](#) defines “solidarity” as “as a fundamental value, by virtue of which global challenges must be managed in a way that distributes costs and burdens fairly, in accordance with basic principles of equity and social justice, and ensures that those who suffer or benefit the least receive help from those who benefit the most;”

<sup>2</sup> UN Secretary-General, [Common Agenda Report English.pdf \(un.org\)](#) (2021).

<sup>3</sup> [https://www.un.org/en/content/common-agenda-report/assets/pdf/Common\\_Agenda\\_Report\\_English.pdf](https://www.un.org/en/content/common-agenda-report/assets/pdf/Common_Agenda_Report_English.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/report/2023/The-Sustainable-Development-Goals-Report-2023.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> [Political Declaration and Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing](#)

<sup>6</sup> [Second World Assembly on Ageing, Madrid, 8-12 April 2002](#)

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>8</sup> Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, II A paragraph 17. [Political declaration and Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing](#)

Importantly, renewing solidarity between generations at all levels must be anchored in the human rights of all members of society. Human rights are universal and do not diminish at older ages. Government obligations to respect, protect and fulfill rights apply equally to all age groups. Intergenerational solidarity is an expression of this principle of equality and is applicable to generations that exist today and to those not yet born.

The nine sessions of the joint Expert Group Meeting “Older persons and intergenerational solidarity” were conducted in person, with some participants connecting virtually. The meeting brought together experts from national member States, civil society, academia and the United Nations system. Experts were invited to submit written inputs in advance. These, in addition to the presentations received, are available on the [DESA](#) and [ESCAP](#) websites of the meeting. The sessions consisted of discussions among experts and participants based on the substantive inputs towards proposing concrete policy recommendations. A pre-meeting [discussion paper](#) entitled “Intergenerational Solidarity and Equity for Future Generations of Older Persons Through a Human Rights Lens” was drafted by UN DESA.

Participants were asked to address good practices, lessons learned and gaps in policymaking, focusing on an intergenerational approach in order to:

- a) Establish the scope of intergenerational solidarity and examine its link to discussions about future generations, based on existing policy frameworks at the regional and national levels.
- b) Explore different policy approaches undertaken by member States in Asia and the Pacific regarding intergenerational solidarity, identifying best practices, challenges and gaps.
- c) Discuss the impact of these different policy approaches on the human rights of older persons in the region and propose recommendations concerning policies to improve intergenerational solidarity from a human-rights perspective.

The conclusions and recommendations of the expert group meeting will inform the upcoming report of the Secretary-General on Ageing, which offers the analytical backdrop to the deliberations of the Third Committee of the General Assembly on social, humanitarian and cultural issues.

## **Opening Session**

**Mr. Srinivas Tata** (Director of the Social Development Division, UN ESCAP) opened the meeting and welcomed experts. In his remarks, Mr. Tata reflected on the demographic trends in Asia and the Pacific, noting that at present nearly 700 million individuals are aged 60 or older, while 1 billion people are aged 14 or younger. Population trends show that by 2050 the percentage of older persons will have increased markedly in the region. Such rapid population ageing is occurring in countries that may not yet have experienced economic affluence, in contrast to more developed countries for whom the ageing process took longer. In recognizing the importance of adopting a life course perspective to understand the process of population ageing, Mr. Tata noted that intergenerational solidarity is fundamental and rooted not only on key United Nations documents such as the United Nations charter and MIPAA, but also in cultural and religious traditions of the Asia and Pacific region.

**Ms. Julia Ferre** (Social Affairs Officer, Programme on Ageing Section, Social Inclusion and Participation Branch, Division for Inclusive Social Development, DESA) provided an overview of the meeting and explained the process whereby written inputs, presentations and interactive discussions during the expert group meeting are used to inform the technical support that the United Nations provides to member States through intergovernmental processes. She noted that recent assessments on the implementation of different frameworks, including MIPAA, indicate a lack of emphasis on intergenerational solidarity. At the same time, member States are increasingly recognizing the importance of intergenerational solidarity as well as the concept of the life course approach. There is a need, however, to improve capacity-building on how to operationalize these concepts at the policy level. Ms. Ferre encouraged experts to engage actively in all discussions and welcomed their participation.

## **Session I. Ageing and Intergenerational Solidarity – Setting the Stage**

The session was moderated by **Mr. Paul Ong** (Chief Strategy Officer, Tsao Foundation, Singapore).

**Ms. Aliye Mosaad** (Social Affairs Officer, Programme on Ageing Section, Social Inclusion and Participation Branch, Division for Inclusive Social Development, DESA) began the first session by delivering an overview [presentation](#) of intergenerational solidarity within existing relevant policy instruments. She addressed how the World Summit for Social Development in 1995 laid the groundwork for a society that embraces all ages, an idea central to MIPAA which was adopted by the General Assembly in 2002. This concept of a society inclusive of all ages underpinned MIPAA's focus on integrating older persons into participatory processes, a significant aim of social integration. The Second World Assembly on Ageing recognized the profound implications of demographic changes, placing ageing and the rights of older persons on the international agenda for the first time, linking it to broader socio-economic development and human rights frameworks.

Ms. Mosaad highlighted that MIPAA established three objectives: including older persons in development, enhancing wellbeing and health in old age, and creating enabling and supportive environments. It emphasizes the importance of intergenerational interdependence and solidarity for societal development, considering the rights and freedoms essential for fostering relationships between generations. These themes were reinforced by the outcomes of the Fourth Review and Appraisal of the implementation of MIPAA<sup>9</sup>, which took place against the backdrop of the devastating coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. The findings of this process, with the engagement of member States and civil society organizations where a majority of persons in the world aged 60 years and over reside, highlighted the continued relevance of the principles and objectives of MIPAA. During the same time period, however discussions related to ageing issues and older persons in voluntary national reviews on the implementation of the Sustainable Development Agenda 2030 had declined. Ms. Mosaad emphasized that the findings also indicate that the global consensus achieved at the Second World Assembly on Ageing is now more crucial than ever, with projections indicating a significant increase in both the share and the number of older persons in the total population by 2050. Despite advances, disparities existed among and within regions in the rate of

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<sup>9</sup> [E/CN.5/2023/6](#) and [Corrigendum](#)

implementing MIPAA, with older persons often overlooked in decision-making processes and continuing to encounter challenges in various sectors, such as the labour market. The need for age-disaggregated data to inform evidence-based policymaking was also critical.

Ms. Mosaad discussed that while the Fourth Review and Appraisal of the implementation of MIPAA had highlighted positive examples of initiatives promoting ageing in place and long-term care, there were still gaps in the provision of care and support services, including in the Asia and the Pacific region. She noted that efforts were continuing to encourage member States to adapt systems to the realities of an ageing population to promote better understanding across generations. The shift towards recognizing older persons as integral participants in and contributors to society rather than as economic burdens, was vital. She emphasized that this repositioning was essential for sustainable development and aligned with efforts to build a society for all ages that values the participation and development of every generation.

**Mr. Eduardo Klien** (Regional Representative, HelpAge International, Asia-Pacific Regional Office, Thailand) provided a [presentation](#) in which he shared examples of lessons learned on intergenerational solidarity from overseeing programmes and partnerships with a focus on older persons in the Asia-Pacific region. Mr. Klien also submitted a [paper](#) on the topic. In his presentation, Mr. Klien explored the concept of intergenerational reciprocity, which he described as a cornerstone of social structure in societies of the Asia and the Pacific region, which is underpinned by the mutual exchange of support between generations, particularly within families and communities. He noted that this exchange is not limited to material goods but also encompasses non-material aspects such as care and emotional support, driven by a sense of obligation and shared identity. However, Mr. Klien pointed out that rapid demographic changes and evolving social practices are reshaping these traditional forms of intergenerational collaboration. The family, particularly through multigenerational households, has been the primary setting for this reciprocity. While a significant portion of households in the Asia and the Pacific region, especially in lower and middle-income countries, still maintain this structure, urbanization, migration, and changing demographics are leading to a decline in such living arrangements. Mr. Klien noted that a large majority of older persons in countries such as Bangladesh, India, Malaysia, Myanmar, and Viet Nam live in multigenerational households, whereas more developed economies like Japan and the Republic of Korea see lower percentages of this household living arrangement. He also underscored that the notion that living in the same household as the only measure of intergenerational support is not always relevant. In more developed economies, living apart, but within close proximity, has become a common way of maintaining familial bonds, a shift facilitated by improved housing and financial conditions. Additionally, he mentioned that economic factors such as migration have given rise to new forms of support, like remittances, which continue the spirit of intergenerational reciprocity despite physical distance.

The concept of intergenerational reciprocity is also evolving in the context of climate change, where actions or inactions on mitigation and adaptation are creating new dynamics between generations. Community-level initiatives across the Asia and the Pacific region exemplify innovative approaches to fostering intergenerational collaboration. In Thailand, the Foundation for Older Persons' Development (FOPDEV) encourages age-inclusive practices in disaster preparedness, while in Sri Lanka, the tree planting programme of HelpAge Sri Lanka aims to foster collaboration between older persons and school children in climate action. Similar initiatives are seen in the Philippines, where campaigns challenge stereotypes directed towards older persons, and in India, where initiatives of HelpAge India involve older persons in digital

literacy and relevant savings schemes. These community-level innovations extend to other countries as well, with examples from the Republic of Korea, where older persons engage in solidarity activities with youth, and Viet Nam, where Intergenerational Self-Help Clubs (ISHCs) incorporate both older and younger members.

These initiatives illustrate that while the forms of intergenerational support may vary, the underlying principles of intergenerational reciprocity remain deeply rooted in the societies of the Asia and the Pacific region. The concept of intergenerational reciprocity in the region is essential to the fabric of societal relationships. Against a backdrop of intersecting trends such as shifts in the population age distribution, urbanization, and climate change, the essence of intergenerational support endures. Through innovative practices and policies, and by embracing new forms of collaboration, societies in the region, continue to uphold and adapt the traditions of intergenerational reciprocity, ensuring the transmission of skills, knowledge, experience, as well as care, and support across generations. Mr. Klien highlighted that this evolving intergenerational landscape is crucial not only for sustaining cultural values but also for addressing the contemporary impact of climate change and technological advancements on older persons in the region.

**Mr. Andrew Byrnes** (Emeritus Professor of International Law and Human Rights, University of South Wales, Australia) focused his [presentation](#) on intersectionality and intergenerational solidarity. He discussed the concepts of intersectionality and intergenerational solidarity from a human rights perspective. Mr. Byrnes also submitted a [paper](#) on the topic. Mr. Byrnes explained how intersectionality, a term originally coined by Ms. Kimberlé Crenshaw, examines how various personal and group identities intersect to create unique forms of oppression. The use of the term has since extended beyond legal contexts to understand discrimination, disadvantage, and exclusion based on multiple attributes. Intersectionality refers to the idea that one person can belong to multiple distinct groups, each subject to systematic discrimination. The concept recognizes that overlapping memberships can lead to experiences of discrimination distinct from those faced by individuals in single identity groups.

Furthermore, Mr. Byrnes described intergenerational solidarity as a concept which focuses on the relations between generations, particularly concerning support between younger and older members of society. The concept addresses issues related to population ageing, sustainability, and the ethical dimensions of these relationships. Intergenerational solidarity seeks to provide a descriptive and normative account of social relations, structured along the axis of age. It examines the patterns of support between different generations and the sustainability of existing arrangements in the context of population ageing. The concept also delves into the political and ethical aspects of these arrangements.

Mr. Byrnes expanded on the question of whether the two concepts of intersectionality and intergenerational solidarity, can complement each other, with a focus on human rights. He posed several questions to consider, including whether intergenerational solidarity contributes to the enjoyment of human rights, if human rights norms inform intergenerational solidarity, and whether a new international convention on the human rights of older persons can promote both human rights and intergenerational solidarity. He also delved into the concept of intersectionality, emphasizing its relevance in international human rights law, where it is used to understand discrimination faced by specific groups of women based on various intersecting characteristics. He elaborated that the concept of intergenerational solidarity is also explained, highlighting its role in fostering social cohesion and addressing issues like the coronavirus

disease (COVID-19) pandemic and climate change. He also acknowledged the heterogeneity within generations and the need for intersectional analyses to avoid simplistic generational divisions.

Mr. Byrnes discussed how the idea of intergenerational solidarity contributes to the protection of human rights, especially for marginalized groups of older persons identified through intersectional analysis. He emphasized that policies promoting intergenerational solidarity often entail benefits for various groups within society. He also argued that establishing a convention on the human rights of older persons is necessary to address the limitations of existing human rights frameworks and to better protect the rights of older individuals. Such a convention would incorporate intersectional perspectives, guiding policies and promoting the rights of diverse groups of older persons. Additionally, he underscored the economic and social contributions made by older persons, emphasizing the need to recognize these contributions in narratives of intergenerational justice and equity. A new convention would not only acknowledge these contributions, but also create opportunities for older persons to continue contributing positively to society throughout their lives.

### *Key messages from the interactive discussion*

During the interactive discussion, the following issues were raised:

- Despite declines in fertility and increased migration, including rural-to-urban migration, intergenerational reciprocity remains strong in most countries in the region; new forms of support, like remittances, have emerged and continue the spirit of intergenerational reciprocity despite physical distance.
- Gaps in solidarity between different generations may be partly explained by challenges in and barriers to intergenerational communication.
- Encouraging the use of technology and innovation to improve data collection methods is recommended to gain a better understanding of changing family structures and compositions.
- Mental health is an emerging issue globally, that requires a life course approach.

## **Session II. Key Concepts and Overview of Intergenerational Solidarity for Asia and the Pacific**

The session was moderated by **Ms. Karen Gomez Dumpit**, (Chair of the Philippine Working Group for an ASEAN Human Rights Mechanism, Philippines).

In her remarks, **Ms. Bethany Brown** (Independent Human Rights Expert) discussed intergenerational solidarity and equity for future generations of older persons through a human rights lens. She referred to MIPAA, noting that it states “Solidarity between generations at all levels — in families, communities and nations — is fundamental for the achievement of a society for all ages”. MIPAA calls for the “strengthening of solidarity through equity and reciprocity between generations.” This requires addressing ageism and ensuring older persons

enjoy their human rights on an equal basis with others. Intergenerational solidarity is a cross-cutting issue that affects all aspects of societal organization, human rights and development. She explained that it provides the framework for determining the duty owed to future generations of all ages.

Ms. Brown provided an overview of how intergenerational solidarity is embedded in sustainable development and stressed the importance of setting these discussions in ongoing policy discussions and decisions regarding the human rights of individuals of all ages, in present and future generations. She noted that future generations of older persons will make up an increasing proportion of the population. In just a few decades, by 2050, the number of persons aged 65 years or over is expected to double to more than 1.6 billion. Globally, the number of persons aged 65 years or over is projected to more than double, accounting to 24 per cent of the world population by 2100. The number of older persons as a percentage of the population will be higher in more developed regions than in less developed regions in 2100. Yet, in absolute numbers, most older persons worldwide will live in less developed regions. Ms. Brown noted that in 2022, more than twice as many people aged 60 years or over lived in less developed regions than more developed regions.

These demographic trends reinforce the importance of including older persons, along with other generations, in future policymaking. Solidarity between existing and future generations requires intergenerational equity. Current designs that exclude older persons from planning and implementing policies for the future further prejudice all actions against future older persons, rendering them invisible and therefore further magnifying harms against them. A life course approach to intergenerational solidarity for future generations responds to the fact that all older persons will have lived through childhood, youth, middle age and into older age. Children and youth lack the experience of growing old. Current children and youth may be most likely to outlive current older generations, but one day, they will be living as older persons themselves. Ms. Brown noted that while this point may be obvious, it is too-often lost in the context of operationalizing intergenerational solidarity for future generations.

Ms. Brown addressed the issue of ageism, a type of discrimination against older persons based on their actual or perceived older age. Ageism represents a major barrier to older persons' equal enjoyment of their human rights on an equal basis with others. Many older persons face deeply detrimental ageism which can be ingrained as to be unconscious. Importantly, Ms. Brown noted that this is true across cultures. She further noted that while international human rights law prohibits discrimination and defines some statuses as explicitly protected, it does not explicitly protect older age. Without explicit recognition of old age as a prohibited ground for discrimination in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights<sup>10</sup>, or subsequent human rights treaties, the law in this area has been lacking. Ms. Brown provided an overview of some human rights principles of intergenerational solidarity, particularly the right to participation, the right to life in the context of climate change, the right to an adequate standard of living, and the right to health.

**Mr. Rintaro Mori** (Regional Adviser, Population Ageing and Sustainable Development, Asia and the Pacific Regional Office, UNFPA) provided an overview of changing social and demographic dynamics in the region, to frame his analysis of the life course approach to intergenerational solidarity. Mr. Mori also provided a [paper](#) on the topic. He argued that a life course approach, which emphasizes the sequential events and developmental steps throughout

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<sup>10</sup> [Universal Declaration of Human Rights](#)

an individual's life, is an effective policy option to approach population ageing. Many events that happen in later life could be underpinned by fertility and lifestyle decisions, as well as social expectations and preferences during the early phases of the course of the life of an individual. For example, social inclusion of older persons could be achieved, among other things, by partnering with youth communities. Enabling an environment that addresses gender inequality so that women, who wish to do so, can work and have children at the same time, is also necessary. Furthermore, Mr. Mori noted that there should be an increase in investment in sexual, reproductive, maternal, neonatal and child health to improve lifestyles and to promote healthy ageing.

Mr. Mori explained that the life course approach recognizes that the foundations for lifelong well-being are already laid before birth, and that much can be done to protect and promote well-being and resilience through the early years, into adulthood and then onto healthy older ages. The life course approach is built around five priorities across the life course that are vital for good physical and mental health: starting well, developing well, living well, working well and ageing well. He added that the promotion of a life course approach to population ageing should be based on demographic intelligence. Objective information including population data and scientific evidence from high quality policy evaluation should inform policy and programme development.

Mr. Mori highlighted a growing understanding that chronological age is no longer a good measurement of being old and emphasized that all population data should be disaggregated by age, which would allow analysts to gain deeper insights beyond the traditional boundaries of age-categories throughout the life course. Implementing a life course approach will impact a range of social policies, which necessitates, the need to ensure that the beginning stages of implementation take place. He asserted that an inclusive and participatory macro-level policy dialogue is the key starter to assess and address policies related to social protection, health promotion and others, while ensuring a human-rights based approach for all generations. National Transfer Accounts analysis will be useful to apply policy estimations and development in the context of macro-level policy dialogues.

Mr. Mori concluded by emphasizing that the ultimate goal of the application of a life course approach to population ageing should be to invest in all generations, as well as focus on the intergenerational aspects of social policies and programmes. This would ensure people have flexibility in their choices throughout their lives, with regard to learning, working, childbearing/rearing, and care, in order to build a society that supports wellbeing, productivity, and connection across all ages.

In her presentation, **Ms. Bussarawan Puk Teerawichitchainan** (Associate Professor and Co-Director, Centre for Family and Population Research, National University of Singapore) explored recent trends in international solidarity in Asia and the Pacific. She submitted a [paper](#) on the topic. Ms. Teerawichitchainan noted that Asia is ageing faster than the rest of the world. Adults aged 65 years or over account for 9 per cent of Asia's total population and are projected to increase to 23 per cent by 2060. In the foreseeable future, the region will be home to many of the world's older persons at ages 80 and higher. The expert noted that this trend is taking place alongside other societal changes in the region, including rapid economic development, urbanization, growing inequality, transformations in filial piety and changing gender expectations. Ms. Teerawichitchainan shared her views on concerns around how these changes may undermine current old-age support systems, which would render older persons particularly

at risk of experiencing vulnerabilities, as old-age social protection and long-term care systems in many Asian and Pacific countries are largely underdeveloped or non-existent.

Ms. Teerawichitchainan also noted that one aspect of intergenerational relationships that has consistently undergone significant changes in recent decades in the region is changing patterns of living arrangements among older persons in Asia and the Pacific because of rapid population ageing, decreasing marriage and fertility rates, and increases in migration, with several countries witnessing a substantial decline in intergenerational co-residence. Despite significant changes in the living arrangements of older persons, that the evidence from several Asia settings consistently suggest that intergenerational support remains strong along several dimensions of intergenerational solidarity, such as intergenerational transfers and personal care and support. Further, she noted that evidence from contexts within the region, generally do not find that public social protection systems to older persons crowd out intergenerational support from adult children to older parents.

In examining changing social and demographic trends in Asia and the Pacific, Ms. Teerawichitchainan stated that social and demographic changes have not yet altered intergenerational solidarity relations at present time in several contexts within the region. The expert shared available evidence showing that families, parents and adult children are actively making choices to adjust to the evolving social and economic landscape brought about by social changes, allowing them to sustain relationships and support exchanges. While these adaptations may alter traditional family structures, they still enable extended family relationships and many of their functions to persist. Looking ahead, she emphasized the importance of paying attention to how structural transformations will continue to affect kin availability and kinship ties, which may in turn have implications for intergenerational solidarity.

Concluding, Ms. Teerawichitchainan remarked that while intergenerational solidarity remains largely intact in several contexts within the region, geographical dispersion of family members due to increasing migration and changing patterns of kin availability may present significant future challenges, particularly regarding long-term care provision. She suggested that stakeholders should maintain continuous monitoring of the evolving situation of older persons and their families.

### *Key messages from the interactive discussion*

During the interactive discussion, the following issues were raised:

- Research on intergenerational solidarity mainly focuses on family bonds and needs to be expanded to other areas, including all generations, community and other non-kin support such as neighbors and friends.
- The role of family members continues to be a key factor in intergenerational solidarity. Incorporating a life course approach to public policies to strengthen intergenerational solidarity by addressing the determinants of healthy ageing and of economic security, among others, should also support family-oriented policies and programmes to foster intergenerational relations among family members.

- The inherent value of older persons is recognized and cherished in the region. Their universal human rights are also inherent to older persons from Asia and the Pacific regardless of the perception by society of their worth or their economic contributions.
- Intergenerational solidarity is intrinsically linked to intergenerational dependency and this raises the issue of the implicit agreement between generations to cooperate for social benefits and changes to that agreement. All generations are dependent on each other. As societies become more advanced economically and as family structures, functions and values change in the region, traditional notions of dependency at older ages become less valid. Yet, intergenerational solidarity is required to sustain them. Policymakers must steer away from putting the needs of younger and older persons against each other and consider effective and equitable social and economic policies that support the reconciliation of conflicting work and family demands and that strengthen intergenerational solidarity in the region.
- Decreasing household sizes, in some countries of the region, impacts the role of inheritance decisions, as an underlying reason and motivation for intergenerational support from adult children to older relatives.
- Promoting a person-centered, life course approach and other considerations that safeguard human rights to understanding intergenerational solidarity, contributes to combatting ageism.
- Research on intergenerational solidarity is important for the formalization of policies. Currently, research mainly focuses on family bonds, and further research is needed to consider all aspects of intergenerational solidarity.
- Civil society, including non-governmental and community-based organizations constitute valuable contributions to the care and support services for older persons in the region. The role of civil society is important in supporting member States, and in ensuring that older persons are treated fairly and with dignity.
- Frameworks on intergenerational solidarity must acknowledge, among other differences, the great disparities between rural and urban realities in the Asia-Pacific region.

### **Session III: Economic Perspectives on Intergenerational Solidarity**

The session was moderated by **Mr. Simon Brimblecombe** (Chief Technical Adviser, International Labour Organization (ILO), Bangkok).

In her [presentation](#), **Ms. Makiko Matsumoto** (Employment Specialist, International Labour Organization (ILO), Bangkok) discussed intergenerational employment dynamics and labour market resilience in Asia and the Pacific. In doing so, Ms. Matsumoto provided an overview of the consequences of the demographic transition for labour markets. She noted that old age dependency ratio (persons aged 55 years or over) is mildly related to higher per capita income while child dependency ratio (0 to 14 years) more systematically affects countries with lower per capita income. Emerging economies in the region are experiencing the fastest rate of demographic change. These countries are ageing rapidly before becoming high-income

countries. Ms. Matsumoto explained that both the old age dependency ratio and the child dependency ratio coexist with high youth unemployment rates, even though replacement demand of retired workers should contribute to better youth employment prospects.

She stated that structural changes in the economy and the labour market are necessary to adapt to demographic shifts. Ms. Matsumoto pointed out that improving labour productivity requires the development of new technology or new techniques of production. On the one hand, these technologies might be perceived as difficult for some older persons to adapt to and, on the other, they might challenge the ability of younger workers to have sufficient opportunities to acquire new or required skills fast enough. She added that improving labour productivity will also demand better health among workers, as well employment adjustments toward more productive sectors such as manufacturing, which are currently experiencing a declining share of youth.

Ms. Matsumoto explained some of the main challenges in ensuring that the working-age population economically supports older persons who are not working. Many older persons decide to remain in the labour market to support themselves or their family members. She cited Thailand as an example, where the labour force participation rate for persons aged 55 years or over in the last decade has remained steady. At the same time, in the face of insufficient productive employment in the region, particularly for youth cohorts, the growth in labour productivity is not fast enough. She added that the skills and experience of older workers may no longer be sufficient in the context of the speed of technological progress. The underdevelopment of care systems also limits the participation of women, including older women, in the labour market. Ms. Matsumoto noted that the above challenges contribute to concerns over the sustainability of social security systems in the region.

Ms. Matsumoto concluded her presentation with some policy considerations, including: ensure the empowerment of older persons as an essential element for active ageing; invest in skills development opportunities for the working age population to adjust to technological progress; develop the care economy and attract more workers into the care field, so as to enable fuller participation in the labour market and generate more income earning opportunities in the region; strengthen and continue investing in social security systems; and encourage national policies to provide investment environments to ensure that the needs and productive employment opportunities for youth are met.

**Ms. Wassana Im-em** (Technical Specialist, UNFPA Asia-Pacific Regional Office) delivered a [presentation](#) on generational economy in the context of demographic diversity in Asia and the Pacific. Ms. Im-em also submitted a [paper](#) on the topic. She shared demographic data from the region and emphasized that the region is demographically diverse. She noted that while several countries are projected to experience population ageing over the next decades, the percentage of the population aged 65 years or over is around 6 per cent in Bangladesh, Cambodia, Nepal; around 5 per cent in the Maldives and the Philippines; around 4 per cent in Pakistan and Lao People's Democratic Republic; and around 3 per cent in Papua New Guinea. Simultaneously, populations in other countries of the region are also projected to age even though the average number of children per woman has not significantly declined. With the rapid fertility decline, it is projected that in a decade, the proportion of the older population will outgrow the population of children. For instance, within slightly over three decades, it is projected that the number of older persons will outnumber children in Thailand. This demographic trend is projected to be underway in Viet Nam (within 60 years) and in Indonesia

(within 90 years), followed by the Philippines, Pakistan, and Fiji. By 2060, one-third of Thailand's population will be 65 years or over; a situation currently experienced by Japan today.

In preparing for the impact of population ageing in the region, Ms. Im-em noted that a useful perspective is provided by the National Transfer Account (NTA) approach. NTAs provide a coherent accounting framework of economic flows from one age group or generation to another, typically for a national population in a calendar year. NTAs are consistent with the System of National Accounts (SNA) and provide measures by single year of age of the sources of income (labour incomes, assets, receipt of public or private transfers), and the uses of income (final private and public consumption, transfer payments of individuals to their families and government and saving). The primary aim of NTAs is to understand how different generations contribute to and benefit from the economy. NTA data can be used to assess the sustainability of social welfare systems, population ageing, and intergenerational wealth transfers.

Ms. Im-em highlighted that demographic dividends are not automatic. Realizing demographic dividends requires appropriate policies and investment in education, health and employment opportunities to harness the potential of the growing working-age population. She also shared data on changing family living arrangements in the region and noted that such changes have implications for social protection and family welfare support. The expert highlighted that often, the contributions of women to childcare and old age support are socially and economically unrecognized. Ms. Im-em concluded her presentation by stressing the need for political will and collaboration of diverse stakeholders at community, sub-national, national, and regional levels in preparing for population ageing.

### *Key messages from the interactive discussion*

During the interactive discussion, the following issues were raised:

- Labour productivity and labour participation rates among women remain crucial issues in policy discussion around demographic changes and population ageing in the region.
- Older persons should be able to decide whether they wish to continue working beyond retirement ages. At the same time, a large proportion of older workers in the region are employed in the informal sector, characterized by unsafe and unhealthy working conditions, and where retirement ages do not apply.
- It is important to develop new measures to assess the situation of the labour force, that move beyond average distribution of GDP and incorporate measures centered on the well-being of people, including older persons. This includes new thinking around the use of indicators such as the dependency ratio, which views population ageing from a conventional perspective.
- Despite remarkable socioeconomic progress in Asia and the Pacific, critical social protection coverage gaps persist. In many countries in the region, less than one fifth of older persons are covered by at least one social protection benefit. Social protection systems need to be strengthened and made available and accessible to older persons, in particular older persons with disabilities.

- Further research is encouraged to better understand the contributions of older persons, in particular older women who care for family members, including children, mostly in countries with high rates of emigration of parents of dependent children.

## **Session IV: Country-Specific Cases on Intergenerational Solidarity with a Focus on Gender and Pensions**

The session was moderated by **Ms. Tengku Aizan Hamid** (Gerontologist and Independent Expert, Malaysia).

**H.E. Mr. Chan Narith** (Undersecretary of State of the Ministry of Economy and Finance and Secretary-General of the National Social Protection Council, Cambodia) shared the national experience of Cambodia on strengthening future and present pensions in his [presentation](#). H.E. Mr. Narith also submitted a [paper](#) on the topic. H.E. Mr. Narith explained that a strong culture of family support exists in Cambodia, with around 70 per cent of older persons relying primarily on their families for support, mostly in the form of clothing, food, as well as medication and medical services. He noted that given the current population projections and the ageing of the population, the Government has identified the urgency to develop a well-rounded pension system that safeguards the economic security of older persons and their families.

H.E. Mr. Narith highlighted that, the National Social Protection Council, responsible for implementing the Cambodian National Social Protection Policy Framework (2016-2025), has recently undergone reforms and put forward various relevant programmes. In 2022, the first pension scheme for formal private workers was launched in Cambodia. He explained that the contribution, compulsory for all employers and employees, requires both parties to pay 2 per cent each in the first five year, with the rate gradually increasing over time.

Regarding the existing pension system for public workers in Cambodia, H.E. Mr. Narith noted that demographic factors are key and have direct implications for the financing of the pensions system, and that the current funding method will put significant strain on the national budget in the future. As a result, consideration for pension reforms for civil servants is currently being discussed in the country. These reforms aim to increase pension scheme uniformity and pave the way for a future general scheme. H.E. Mr. Narith shared another example of a relevant programme entitled the “Family package of social assistance”, a set of integrated benefits that comprehensively addresses risks experienced by vulnerable members of poor households across the life course. The package is intended to integrate all existing and planned social assistance benefits in the country – including the “Cash Transfer for Children from Poor Households in Primary and Secondary Schools”, “Cash Transfer for Persons with Disabilities” and the planned “Cash Transfer for Elderly People”.

Looking towards the future, H.E. Mr. Narith stressed the importance of continuing with the establishment of a multi-tiered pension system in the country that is contributory in nature and aims towards universality.

In her [presentation](#) **Ms. Shen Ke** (Professor of Demography, Fudan University, China) explored gender inequality in public pension and family support from an intergenerational perspective in China. Ms. Ke also submitted a [paper](#) on the topic. Research conducted by Ms.

Ke and her team that applies the NTAs method to data from a 2010 nationally representative household survey, showed that gender differentials in public pension transfers were pronounced after the age of 65. She noted that women's disadvantage in pension benefits results from their employment histories and a fragmented pension scheme. A much higher proportion of older women than older men were previously employed in agriculture, in informal sectors or unemployed with barely any entitlement to public pensions before 2009. After the introduction of the New Rural Pension Scheme in 2009, pension coverage was extended but vast differences in benefit amounts across pension schemes persist. Ms. Ke noted that despite existing pension schemes, such as the urban employee pension scheme or the civil servants pension scheme, a gender gap exists in pre-retirement earnings and occupational rankings, which leads to differentiated pension benefits.

Ms. Ke also pointed to several interesting contrasts between men and women in pension transfers. First, she noted that pension benefits for women aged in the late 1950s were higher than those for men, as a reflection of earlier withdrawal from the labour market for urban women. Second, she observed that pension benefits for men increased substantially over age groups, in comparison to those of women.

In terms of gender inequality in family support, Ms. Ke noted that the family is considered a key source of old age support in China. Multiple surveys in the country reveal that the ideal living arrangement for both older parents and adult children is "a bowl of soup's distance" rather than under the same roof, as nearby living maintains frequent contact and mutual support while at the same time assures independence and privacy. Looking at gender inequality in family support in terms of parent-child proximity and the quality of relationship between older parents and their children, research conducted by Ms. Ke shows that a higher percentage of older women co-reside or live close to children compared to their male counterparts. Further, among those who co-reside or live next to their children, a larger proportion of female older persons retain a harmonious relationship with their children than older men.

Ms. Ke concluded that there is a mixed picture of gender inequality at old ages in China. On the one hand, the gender gap in public pension benefits persists and is getting wider at older ages. On the other hand, older women receive more family support than older men, and the significance of family support for older parents' life satisfaction is more noticeable for females than that for males.

**Mr. Simon Brimblecombe** (Chief Technical Adviser, International Labour Organization, Bangkok) began his [presentation](#) by examining current gender gaps in social protection and their consequences for women. He noted that poverty in retirement affects women to a greater extent than men. Women have lower incomes and live longer. While social security retirement systems can do much to improve the situation, Mr. Brimblecombe discussed that more needs to be done. In particular, he identified the need to carry out actuarial analyses that identify the issues affecting women in pensions and adopt appropriate reforms, such as minimum pensions and/or indexation, among others. Mr. Brimblecombe pointed out that social security benefits and financing also have the potential to mitigate negative labour market impacts for women.

Mr. Brimblecombe argued that the current design of pension systems in countries of the region often led to worse outcomes for women. For example, theoretical net replacement rates were lower for women than men in China, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Pakistan, Singapore, Sri Lanka and Viet Nam. Yet, Mr. Brimblecombe explained that the reality was often even worse,

because theoretical replacement rate calculations concealed the following issues: salaries were lower for women; women contributed less to contributory systems; unpaid care time performed by women was generally not accounted for; there were lower employment rates among women, particularly older women; there was lower salary progression; and there was higher reduction in purchasing power over the years.

Mr. Brimblecombe proposed policy measures to pension systems including: equalizing retirement ages; promoting career average salary schemes; reducing minimum service requirement; flexible contribution design; strengthening “tier 0” non-contributory pensions, indexation; and ensuring a minimum of pensions in the form of regular income, not lump sums. In terms of labour market measures, Mr. Brimblecombe proposed: the recognition of unpaid care work in national accounts; the establishment of paid parental leave policies and care provisions; adopting measures to increase the labour participation rate of older women; facilitating flexible and predictable working hours; improving coverage and adequacy in sectors where female workers are overrepresented; and improving salary levels of female workers. He also suggested some administrative measures geared towards reducing the social protection gender gap and facilitating the measures explained above including improving access to benefit information; improving affiliation and contribution payment procedures; assisting with regards to the claim and payment of benefits; improving coordination among agencies and working closely with representatives of sectors where women workers are overrepresented.

### *Key messages from the interactive discussion*

During the interactive discussion, the following issues were raised:

- Amid rising intergenerational conflicts in countries where families struggle to cope with the provision of care and support to older children, such as in some contexts in the region where one person might be expected to care for several older relatives, many older persons continue to provide unrecognized and unpaid care and support to grandchildren, including through financial contributions, which in turn contributes to the well-being of the family.
- Non-contributory pensions, even when available, are often inadequate. Raising non-contributory pensions is needed to ensure the economic security of older persons, particularly older women.
- While acknowledging the specific challenges older women face, particularly in terms of economic insecurity, the issue of the isolation of older men in societies was raised. Gendered differences in older age may imply that older women continue to perform a role in their households and may therefore be better integrated, in comparison to older men.
- Member States should revisit their social protection programmes and expand coverage to older workers in the informal economy.

## Session V: Policy Innovations and Realities in Health, Long-Term Care, and Family Support

The session was moderated by **Mr. Marco Roncarati** (Social Affairs Officer, Sustainable Demographic Transition Section, Social Development Division, ESCAP).

In his presentation, **Dr. Thaworn Sakunphanit** (Vice Chairperson, Foundation for Research Institute on Social Protection and Health, Thailand) provided an overview of policy approaches to long-term care, support services, and family support within the Asia and the Pacific region. Dr. Sakunphanit also submitted a [paper](#) on this topic. He highlighted a major challenge within the landscape of long-term care policy, which he described as the shift away from traditional family-provided care models for older persons. In his [presentation](#), Dr. Sakunphanit provided examples of the current situations of long-term care in countries within the region, including Australia, China, Japan, the Republic of Korea, Singapore and Thailand. He noted that historically, in many countries, the responsibility for the care of older persons has rested with family networks. However, societal changes including smaller family sizes, a marked decline in multigenerational living arrangements, the rise in life expectancy, and the increase in the number of older persons choosing to live independently, have resulted in a greater need for the external provision of care and support. He discussed that traditionally, family caregiving was predominantly undertaken by women. Today, many women have entered the workforce, and the informal caregiving role is becoming an increasingly important public issue. Member States need to recognize the value of care, including informal care, and explore policies and programmes to support it.

In the context of long-term care, Dr. Sakunphanit described the reality experienced by many older persons and their families who often rely on foreign workers to perform care work under less favorable conditions, such as temporary contracts and unpredictable schedules, for lower wages, and with fewer rights. These workers also tend to be assigned to the most challenging care recipients. He highlighted that rising health and long-term care expenditure will exacerbate the pressure on public finances. Dr. Sakunphanit also underscored the need for policies that support informal caregiving, while offering job opportunities, financial assistance, and social benefits.

Dr. Sakunphanit noted that investments in the care economy have been found to possibly yield a higher increase in gross domestic product (GDP) than equivalent investments in construction, for example. From his research, he explained that improved long-term care services contribute to this link through reduced hospital admissions and drug spending. This also is due to the broader economic benefits that manifest in the form of increases in GDP through the professional development of formal caregivers and the creation of new jobs. He presented a case study from Thailand that reinforces the idea that training paid caregivers within the long-term care sector not only enhances service quality, but also contributes positively to national economic growth. Dr. Sakunphanit also highlighted that a comprehensive long-term care policy framework extends beyond care services alone. It encompasses ancillary support such as adequate housing, modified living spaces and accessible transportation for older persons. Best practices in these areas can be found regionally, yet their effectiveness depends on coordinated governance structures. He emphasized that multi-level governmental roles are imperative to integrate services provided by families, communities, and the private sector to collectively support older persons.

**Mr. Paul Ong** (Chief Strategy Officer, Tsao Foundation, Singapore) delivered a [presentation](#) on the importance of intergenerational support systems in ageing societies. He also submitted a [paper](#) on this topic. Mr. Ong discussed the work of the Alliance on Longevity in Asia-Pacific (ALAP), which is a coalition formed to improve the well-being of older persons in the Asia and the Pacific region, by sharing knowledge and collaborating on multi-country ageing-related initiatives. The Alliance represents a collective of civil society organizations from countries including Bangladesh, Cambodia, India, Indonesia, Nepal, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Viet Nam. Emphasizing the need for a life course-based approach to policy and systems planning, ALAP addresses the rapid demographic shift towards an ageing population in the region, where older persons are expected to make up 21 per cent of the population by 2050. He explained that the transition to ageing societies is occurring more swiftly in the Asia and the Pacific region than in historically more developed countries. Thus, the approach used by ALAP advocates for handling health challenges across the life course, rather than in a linear fashion, citing life expectancy gains in Cambodia, China, and Singapore. Ageing is relevant to everybody, not only those who are disease-free. Healthy ageing requires optimizing functional ability among those with disease, it also requires person-centred integrated care that focuses on people's capacities and disease management that reflects personal goals. As countries progress from addressing acute health conditions to combating non-communicable diseases and promoting the role of lifestyle on prevention of non-communicable diseases, health systems must therefore adapt to extended longevity, but also adding healthy life to years.

Mr. Ong highlighted the importance of intergenerational equity and described it as the fair distribution of resources among generations sharing the same social space. This concept addresses the implications of longer life expectancies on areas such as employment, education, caregiving, and social equity. Within the framework of the life course approach, continuous learning and education play a critical role, enabling individuals to adapt to the evolving impact of extended longevity and the changing nature of work and social circumstances. Lifelong educational opportunities are essential in equipping people of all ages with the skills necessary to thrive in an ageing society. Mr. Ong underscored the importance of community-based approaches to health and social care and support, where older persons are empowered to exercise choice and autonomy, including managing self-care and using health services, in partnership with healthcare providers.

**Dr. Ryosuke Fukuda** (Director, Planning and Coordination Office for Training of Physicians, Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, Japan) submitted a [paper](#) which explores Japan's Long-Term Care Insurance (LTCI) system amidst the pressures of demographic change coupled with societal transformation. In his paper, he outlined how Japan's LTCI system, established in 2000, is a pioneering social insurance mechanism designed to address the needs of its ageing population. Every citizen over the age of 65 years is entitled to receive services commensurate with their level of need, determined by a formal assessment process. LTCI is funded through a combination of Government taxes, premiums from insured individuals aged 40 years and above, as well as user co-payments. Dr. Fukuda elaborates that the backdrop for Japan's LTCI system was due to both a rising population of older persons, the erosion of traditional family-based care, inefficiencies in welfare services, and escalating care costs. The system ensures that when an older person requires care, they can receive services that match their certified care level.

Two decades since its inception, the LTCI system has seen the number of its users triple, with corresponding growth in care facilities. Dr. Fukuda states that, today, the system is widely

accepted and valued, yet faces significant sustainability challenges. The Japanese population is not only ageing, but the total population has begun to decline. The proportion of those aged 75 years or over will continue to increase, expected to surpass 25 per cent of the total population by 2055. Simultaneously, the working-age population that supports the system through taxes and premiums is shrinking. These demographic shifts have resulted in LTCI costs significantly rising since its inception, posing questions about financial sustainability. With fewer working-age contributors and increasing numbers of older persons beneficiaries, Dr. Fukuda recommends that the system's financial strain be evaluated. He explained that in order to address the concerns, Japan is debating various cost-sharing and human resource strategies. A tiered premium system based on income exists to distribute the financial burden equitably, with discussions ongoing about how to adjust this balance, particularly considering the anticipated rise in premiums. The LTCI has also seen changes in user co-payments, which initially were a flat rate but have since been adjusted to scale with income levels, thereby reflecting an individual's ability to pay.

Dr. Fukuda also highlights another critical issue of the workforce. Japan currently needs more caregivers than are currently available. Initiatives to address this shortfall include improving work conditions and salaries for caregivers, developing diverse recruitment strategies, and considering foreign workers. Since reforms in 2009, there have been concerted efforts to improve the salaries of caregivers, narrow the wage gap with other industries, and make the sector more attractive. These efforts are ongoing, with a strong consensus on the importance of improving caregiver treatment as a means of sustaining the LTCI system. While Japan's LTCI system is considered by Dr. Fukuda as a model of comprehensive care for older persons, ensuring its sustainability in the face of an ageing society requires a delicate balance of financial and human resource strategies. Affordability, equity, and workforce stability are at the forefront of policy considerations as Japan continues to adapt to the needs of its ageing population.

**Ms. Aminath Jameel** (Chief Executive Officer, Aged Care Services Maldives, Maldives) delivered a [presentation](#) on aged care and shifting intergenerational dynamics in the Maldives, a small island developing state. Ms. Jameel also submitted a [paper](#) on this topic. She focused her discussion on the shifting landscape of the conventional extended family structure, historically rooted in cross-generational solidarity, now experiencing significant transformations due to rapid socio-economic developments. Ms. Jameel highlighted how in recent years she has seen the strong bonds that once existed in families, as well as in the island communities, gradually fading away. She explained that the previous community framework was characterized by mutual aid and respect for older persons, who contributed to family welfare and the upbringing of children. Family cohesiveness once existed through regular family gatherings to mark special cultural and religious occasions such as naming ceremonies, religious festivals, and anniversary days, that enabled family members of all ages to meet and spend time together. Yet, today that dynamic is eroding as globalization and urbanization, among other trends, have led extended families to decrease and become nuclear families. Furthermore, many young people have migrated to larger islands for better education and employment opportunities, leaving older family members behind. She underscored that this evolution has decreased intergenerational care and assistance, with younger generations now often relying on the State for aged care. Such altered living arrangements, roles, statuses, and youth attitudes have impacted the support and care of older persons.

Ms. Jameel explained that many older Maldivians are struggling to adapt to new lifestyles and technological advancements, widening the generational divide. Social perceptions by older persons towards youth as embodying negative behaviors have additionally widened age-related rifts between the younger and older generations. Despite high literacy in Dhivehi, the local language predominately used among the older Maldivians, many lack English and digital literacy. Most younger Maldivians rely on digital technology and primarily speak English over the national language, which has added another layer of complexity to the generational divide. To ease family care burdens, the Government provides health coverage and monthly monetary benefits for those aged 65 years or over. Ms. Jameel stated that the increased use of advancing technologies presents opportunities to enhance cross-generational communication and interactions over distance. However, she noted that addressing access by older persons to technology and training needs is crucial to avoid deepening the digital divide, including in services such as banking and medical consultations, as they transition to online platforms.

### *Key messages from the interactive discussion*

During the interactive discussion, the following issues were raised:

- Consider reviewing existing policies to ensure that they foster stronger connections between generations, and thus promote social cohesion.
- Improve the coordination of primary health care, long-term care and social services as well as other related community-based services.
- Give priority to the empowerment of older persons and their inclusion in the development and strengthening of long-term care services.
- Highlight the importance of addressing the concerns of member States for sustainable and cost-effective approaches.
- Share lessons learned from successful initiatives, such as Singapore's Proximity Housing Grant policy, which aims to aid families in the country by encouraging adult children to live near their parents, to provide care and support.

## **Session VI: Home and Community – The Fabric of Intergenerational Living**

The session was moderated by **Mr. Napaphat Satchanawakul** (Social Affairs Officer, Sustainable Demographic Transition Section, Social Development Division, ESCAP).

**Ms. Tengku Aizan Hamid** (Gerontologist and Independent Expert, Malaysia) delivered a [presentation](#) on older Malaysians with a focus on living arrangements and intergenerational networks. Ms. Hamid also submitted a [paper](#) on the topic. She discussed how Malaysia is undergoing rapid demographic shifts with the population of older persons expected to double in just over two decades. The traditional family structure, with large multi-generational households, is evolving due to changing fertility rates, later marriages, and the impact of urbanization, which has significantly increased since the 1970s. These changes are leading to more nuclear family units and the development of retirement communities in urban areas as

younger people leave rural settings. Ms. Hamid highlighted the importance of understanding these shifts for planning intergenerational support and caregiving within families. Accurate and consistent data on living arrangements are also essential for capturing the social dynamics shaped by these demographic changes, particularly as they may affect perceptions of how older persons live. She noted that research indicates that in Malaysia, older women are more likely to live alone or in extended family settings than older men, reflecting gendered differences in living patterns.

Ms. Hamid elaborated on the cultural expectations around family support, such as filial piety, and how it plays a significant role in the care of older persons. She underscored how there is often a shift in family dynamics, as changes in the size of social networks for older individuals often diminish with age, due to significant life events such as the death of friends and relatives. Therefore, presuming co-residence with adult children as an all-encompassing solution is an oversimplification, as it may lead to conflicts stemming from differences in values and expectations by members of both generations. Ms. Hamid recognized that the evolving and dynamic nature of these relationships is critical in designing supportive systems for older persons. She also highlighted challenges due to the lack of longitudinal data, which limits the full understanding of intergenerational support and exchange dynamics within and between households.

Ms. Hamid expounded on the role of the family in supporting older persons, which remains significant in Malaysia, and that the capability of families to maintain traditional support roles is being challenged by the demographic changes. Despite policy efforts by the Ministry of Women, Family, and Community Development and the Ministry of Health, there is the concern that modernization and economic pressures are altering family support mechanisms. Demographic shifts have resulted in the emergence of “bean-pole families”, where there are fewer children in each generation. While the tradition of living with family members persists, there has been a shift from multi-generational living arrangements to nuclear households, which necessitates policy initiatives to better support caregivers and improve community-based services. Ms. Hamid noted that for some older persons, social networks may include friends and relatives that are not immediate family members. Therefore, the availability or proximity of individuals does not necessarily translate into tangible support. Malaysia's unique ethnic diversity further influences these family dynamics, yet the current social protection systems are not adequately mitigating the pressures on families and social networks. There is a pressing need for policies that reflect a deeper understanding of the living arrangements and intergenerational networks of older persons, to ensure they are effective and responsive to the nation's rapid social and demographic changes.

**Mr. Waqar Shahid Puri** (Senior Program Manager, Transforming Communities for Inclusion (TCI-Global), Pakistan) presented on the topic of intergenerational solidarity and the inclusion of older persons with psychosocial disabilities. He also submitted a [paper](#) on this topic. Mr. Puri highlighted the importance of advocating for the centrality of cross-disability movements by empowering persons with psychosocial disabilities to be at the forefront of these initiatives. He emphasized the critical importance of upholding and respecting the dignity, identity, and autonomy of every individual, along with the fundamental right to inclusion and support services within community settings, irrespective of disability status or age. Mr. Puri noted that this is particularly crucial for older persons living with a psychosocial disability, who face forced institutionalization and lack access to mainstream services and social protections,

including health coverage and insurance policies. The inadequacy of data on this topic further obscures the barriers faced by this group, exacerbating their vulnerability, particularly during humanitarian crises.

Mr. Puri elaborated on how the digital divide significantly disadvantages many older persons, making it difficult for them to engage with increasingly complex online systems for financial management and essential services, often leading to their exclusion or their reliance on others and potential exploitation. Furthermore, global migration trends contribute to the isolation of many older persons, leaving them to manage family and community responsibilities, including farm labour, in the absence of the younger generation who often move to urban areas for more opportunities. This has led to a growing trend in middle and high-income countries within the Asia and the Pacific region, where older family members are increasingly being placed in long-term care facilities or assisted living homes that often lack familial support. Additionally, there is a frequent practice of institutionalizing persons with disabilities. In these care facilities and institutions, older persons, particularly older women with disabilities and those with dementia or chronic illnesses, face high risks, including barriers to reporting abuse and access to justice.

To foster inclusion, and to prevent the practice of institutionalization or segregation of older persons from society, Mr. Puri emphasized the crucial role of family and community support. He noted that such support is essential for enabling older persons to live equally within their communities and to access services on an equal basis with others. He also recommended that member States design and implement support services that involve both older and younger generations, ensuring that policy provisions respect the rights and dignity of older persons and support their autonomy. Mr. Puri added that information systems used by the Government must be clear and accessible, allowing older persons to obtain necessary information independently, without reliance on the younger generation. In addressing the digital gap, member States should be called upon to ensure that older persons have equitable access to digital platforms and services. Mr. Puri emphasized that promoting digital literacy through targeted programmes can equip older persons with essential skills to navigate the digital world safely and independently, enabling them to access health care and other services on an equal basis with others.

**Ms. Aidai Kadyrova**, (Director, Babushka Adoption Foundation, Kyrgyzstan) delivered a [presentation](#) on intergenerational insights and experiences from Kyrgyzstan. She provided background information on Kyrgyzstan, including its unique geopolitical context, mountainous topography, and diverse population. In recent years, there has been an increased focus on the well-being of older persons (aged 65 years or over), who constitute 5 per cent of the population and comprise about 320,000 persons. The Government of Kyrgyzstan has embraced the National Concept for Active Longevity and implemented a national action plan to enhance the quality of life for older persons since 2019. Ms. Kadyrova noted that intergenerational solidarity is a cornerstone of these efforts, with initiatives such as the Babushka Adoption programme promoting home care and support through sponsorship programmes, humanitarian aid, advocacy, and recreational activities. Also, students in the Kyrgyz Academy provide medical and social support in the homes of older persons. Furthermore, civil society organizations engage in events and campaigns advocating for the rights of older persons. However, challenges such as inadequate financial resources, ageism in employment, and ongoing rights violations persist.

To address these challenges, Ms. Kadyrova presented recommendations which include the full implementation of MIPAA, encouraging Kyrgyzstan to incorporate initiatives related to the

United Nations Decade of Healthy Ageing, and fostering a culture of best practice sharing. Despite the current lack of communication between the younger and older generations, there's a push for education that fosters respectful and caring attitudes towards older persons, emphasizing the transmission of values, culture, and heritage. Projects are underway to provide opportunities for youth to engage with older generations, share experiences, understand their life paths, and assist them with modern information technologies. These interactions aim to alleviate loneliness among older persons, enhance their active participation in socio-economic and democratic development, and establish robust intergenerational relations. Ms. Kadyrova explained how such initiatives strive to reduce social tension, build tolerance, and create partnerships, leveraging the wisdom of older persons to foster mutual understanding and societal harmony.

**Ms. Karen Gomez Dumpit** (Chair of the Philippine Working Group for an ASEAN Human Rights Mechanism, Philippines) delivered a [presentation](#) on filial-piety laws in the Asia and the Pacific region. Ms. Dumpit also submitted a [paper](#) on this topic. She provided examples to better understand the impact of filial piety laws across various countries in the region, which stipulate that adult children have a statutory duty to support their parents who are unable to sustain themselves financially. These laws are based on the principles of reciprocity and intergenerational fairness.

In the Republic of Korea, while traditional filial practices are preserved, the law does not directly mandate adult children to support their ageing parents. Instead, it underscores the significance of family and the growing ageing population, promoting support through indirect enforcement, policy, and programmes rather than penal sanctions. Singapore's approach involves a legal framework enabling parents aged 60 years or over, who cannot provide for themselves, to seek maintenance from their adult children. This process is facilitated by the Commission of the Maintenance of Parents, which favours mediation over court proceedings. Additionally, Singapore offers the Proximity Housing Grant, a programme designed to encourage family units to reside closer, thereby strengthening familial support systems for older persons. An additional law called the Singapore's Maintenance of Parents Act, in place since 1995, requires adult children to contribute to the maintenance of their parents who have reached 60 years of age, through monthly allowances or lump-sum payments.

Malaysia lacks specific legislation to protect the rights of older persons to filial support. Consequently, older parents may face challenges in securing judicial support to enforce their right to receive support from their adult children. In the Philippines, the Constitution implies a family duty to care for older members, and the State may create social security programmes for them. A recent legislative initiative, aiming to criminalize the deprivation of support to older and indigent parents, proposes to legally obligate children to provide for their parents under penalty of imprisonment.

Bangladesh enacted the Parents Maintenance Act in 2013, which entitles parents to seek compensation if their adult children fail to provide maintenance without a valid reason. Similarly, laws in China, revised in 2013, stress caring for the spiritual and emotional needs of older persons, with an expectation of visits and communication from their family members. India's Maintenance and Welfare of Senior Citizens Act, established in 2007, mandates adult children and grandchildren to support at least one older person relative.

Ms. Dumpit highlighted that while these laws aim to ensure the well-being of older persons through family support, their enforcement can be problematic. The compulsory nature of such laws may not necessarily foster genuine intergenerational solidarity and may instead lead to negative impacts, such as straining family relationships or turning familial duties into financial transactions. Additionally, the implementation of these laws demonstrates a foundational form of intergenerational solidarity, expressed in the smallest and most fundamental unit of society - the family. Still, there is the need for ongoing discussions regarding the most effective and ethical approaches to supporting older persons, while maintaining their dignity, independence, and family harmony. Ms. Dumpit recommended a focus on a human rights-based approach, in line with establishing a legal instrument such as a Convention on the Rights of Older Persons. She believes such a convention could provide a balanced solution, positioning the State as the primary duty bearer and ensuring the rights of the most vulnerable older persons are protected.

### *Key messages from the interactive discussion*

During the interactive discussion, the following issues were raised:

- Recognize the interconnectedness of the various issues related to the fabric of intergenerational living. Silo-based and patch-work policy approaches cannot find solutions across the sectors.
- Gain a better understanding on the topic of aged care to encompass processes, standards, and critical elements.
- Highlight that the human rights dimension is often neglected from the long-term care and support market, including the distinction between for-profit and non-profit care.
- Invest in aged care by facilitating partnerships between all levels of Government, civil society, the private sector, and older persons themselves.
- Cross-cultural comparison of filial piety and its implications for the well-being of older persons is crucial for strengthening intergenerational solidarity in the region.

### **Session VII: Lifelong Learning – Bridging the Gap Through Education**

The session was moderated by **Ms. Aliye Mosaad** (Social Affairs Officer, Programme on Ageing Section, Social Inclusion and Participation Branch, Division for Inclusive Social Development, DESA).

**Ms. Mo Wang** (Programme Specialist, UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning) delivered a [presentation](#) on a global view of promoting intergenerational exchanges around lifelong learning. She discussed how higher education institutions are actively adapting their strategies to accommodate the learning needs of ageing societies by embracing the concept of lifelong learning for all age groups. Implementing such strategies, she explained, aligns with

UNESCO's advocacy for flexible and non-discriminatory access to education, as detailed in the 'World Declaration on Higher Education for the Twenty-First Century'. The declaration urges higher education to operate within a lifelong learning framework, ensuring that individuals can pursue education at any stage of life without barriers.

Ms. Wang expanded on how this shift towards inclusive education necessitates a substantial cultural transformation within higher education institutions, which have historically catered mainly to younger students. In recent years, there has been an increasing effort to incorporate the educational pursuits of older persons into the core functions of many higher education institutions. She highlighted that Dublin City University (DCU) in Ireland stands out in this respect, with Ireland being the first country to fully affiliate with the World Health Organization's Global Network of Age-friendly cities and communities. DCU has initiated several programmes to better serve older persons, including involving them in research initiatives that utilize participatory models, thereby enriching research and actively engaging older persons in the generation of knowledge. DCU has also expanded social engagement opportunities, aiming to enhance older persons' involvement in university life through cooperative efforts with broader institutional services such as DCU Access. Furthermore, DCU has diversified its educational offerings, providing a spectrum of learning options that include vocational, non-vocational, formal, and informal education, all intended to promote an integrated, intergenerational learning environment.

Ms. Wang elaborated how the interaction between different generations within the university setting has presented a wealth of benefits. Based on interview data, it was found that older persons enjoy knowledge acquisition, enhanced self-concepts and intergenerational encounters in such settings. On the other hand, younger students develop a stronger sense of confidence from the wisdom and knowledge exchange they experience with older learners. The entire university community gains from the increased awareness and the establishment of intergenerational relationships.

Ms. Wang also noted that integrating older persons into intergenerational learning environments does not inherently result in effective educational interactions. It is overly simplistic to assume that all older persons will find intergenerational learning environments equally gratifying. The design and execution of educational programs must be thoughtfully approached, with a clear focus on the specific needs and preferences of older persons. Informed by the disciplines of social and educational gerontology, she discussed how this targeted approach should be evident in both the curriculum and the organizational structure of educational institutions, ensuring that the needs of older persons are met. This necessitates a well-orchestrated approach to management, strong support from institutional leadership, and proactive engagement with external community stakeholders.

**Ms. Siu Ling Maureen Tam** (Professor and Head, Elder Academy, The Education University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong, China) discussed Hong Kong's approach to lifelong learning across generations. She also submitted a [paper](#) on the topic. In addressing the challenges of a rapidly ageing population, Ms. Tam discussed how Hong Kong has pioneered the promotion of lifelong learning through the innovative concept of 'elder academies'. The initiative, she explained, aims to foster intergenerational solidarity via a network of learning institutions created through cross-sectoral collaboration. Since the late 1980s, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have been instrumental in initiating lifelong learning programmes for older persons, primarily catering to leisure and practical needs. The role of the Government in

these educational endeavors remained minimal until the formation of the Elderly Commission (EC) in 1997, which began advising on policies concerning the ageing population, including lifelong learning.

Ms. Tam explained how the EC has since urged the Government to pursue a more unified and proactive approach to lifelong learning for older persons, emphasizing its importance for active, quality ageing. The development of learning for older persons in Hong Kong is divided into two distinct periods in Ms. Tam's [presentation](#). The pre-1997 era saw mostly non-formal, community-level education initiatives, while the post-1997 era, marked by the EC's establishment, witnessed a more coordinated government-backed approach to learning opportunities for older persons. A cornerstone of this strategic shift was the introduction of the Elder Academy Scheme in 2007, a collaboration between the EC and the Labour and Welfare Bureau. She described how this scheme aimed to orchestrate lifelong learning efforts under a unified framework, providing seed funding for academies across all 18 districts. Initially focused on primary and secondary schools, the network has expanded to tertiary institutions, tailoring to a broad spectrum of learning needs and promoting cross-generational engagement. The scheme underscores objectives such as promoting continuous learning, maintaining well-being, fostering a sense of worth, optimizing resources, and enhancing intergenerational solidarity. In 2009, further support for lifelong learning was established through the Elder Academy Development Foundation. This foundation funds projects that encourage active learning and societal contribution among older persons. The curriculum of elder academies is diverse, offering academic and leisure activities without stringent admission requirements, aiming for stress-free and barrier-free learning experiences.

Ms. Tam discussed how the Elder Academy Network uses a unique cross-sectoral collaborative approach, involving co-investment from Government and stakeholders, and emphasizing intergenerational learning and solidarity. It leverages synergies between older and younger generations, facilitating reciprocal teaching and learning experiences across various subjects, which enhance social cohesion and understanding. Ms. Tam also highlighted the challenges faced by the Elder Academy Network, including irregular funding and market-oriented pressures that require providers to balance between immediate learner demands and long-term educational goals. Ms. Tam noted that the Elder Academy Scheme remains in need of a formal evaluation, with a comprehensive assessment to inform its efficacy and value, and to guide future improvements.

**Ms. Aminta Permpoonwivat** (Chancellor's Scholar, Vanderbilt University, United States) delivered a [presentation](#) on the power of intragenerational and intergenerational learning from the perspective of youth in the region. She highlighted that in the Asia and the Pacific region, the concept of intragenerational and intergenerational learning serves as a basis for bridging generational gaps and strengthening social cohesion. Ms. Permpoonwivat noted that while many older persons hold a wealth of traditional knowledge, many younger generations offer digital literacy skills that are important in a technology-driven world. In her view, political inclinations may also differ, with younger individuals often embracing what are considered to be more progressive viewpoints, whereas older generations may align with more established political entities. These intergenerational gaps provided opportunities for cross-generational exchange of knowledge.

She proposed an approach to bridge the gaps through knowledge exchange projects. For instance, in Thailand, the richness of indigenous knowledge, typically confined within local

communities, is recognized as a heritage that needs to be preserved and shared. Mentorship programmes, where older volunteers guide and serve as role models for the youth, are instrumental in conserving and disseminating this local wisdom. Creating intergenerational workspaces is another step towards fostering dialogue and understanding between generations. Such environments promote a sense of belonging and mutual respect, essential for social cohesion.

Furthermore, Ms. Permpoonwiwat described how leveraging technology is also crucial. With many of today's youth embedded in the digital revolution, she noted that it is imperative to ensure that digital literacy programmes are inclusive, offering accessible interfaces and online communities for older persons. Hands-on training programmes can also play a significant role in achieving this inclusivity. Ms. Permpoonwiwat underscored the need to shift prevailing perceptions of education as merely a means to secure employment needs towards viewing education as a fulfilling, lifelong project. This can be achieved through formal educational reforms, informal learning projects, and making education and training accessible to all ages. Policies that advocate for lifelong learning, she highlighted, are essential to support individuals in continuously acquiring new skills and knowledge throughout their lives. Ms. Permpoonwiwat stressed the importance of recognizing the value of intergenerational solidarity through reciprocity between generations.

### *Key messages from the interactive discussion*

During the interactive discussion, the following issues were raised:

- The importance of recalling that older persons are not one homogeneous group when considering policies to promote access to lifelong learning by older persons in the region.
- Securing funds to finance lifelong learning for older persons in the region requires commitment and long-term and predictable financing from member States to mobilize such funding amidst rising demands.
- Evidence points to the trickle down of the benefits and knowledge gained from lifelong learning programmes to the next generation.

## **Session VIII: Good Practices and Climate Action in Intergenerational Solidarity**

The session was moderated by **Mr. Eduardo Klien** (Regional Representative, HelpAge International, Asia-Pacific Regional Office, Thailand).

**Ms. Tran Bich Thuy** (Country Director, HelpAge International, Viet Nam), delivered a [presentation](#) on intergenerational self-help clubs in Viet Nam. She also submitted a [paper](#) on the topic. Ms. Thuy provided insights into the Intergenerational Self-help Club (ISHC) model in Viet Nam. She emphasized the organizational structure of ISHCs, highlighting that each club typically comprises 50-70 members in one village, with at least 50 per cent of the leaders being females who are elected every 2 years. This detail underscores the gender inclusivity and

grassroots nature of these clubs. She highlighted this within the context of a demographic shift that presents significant social, health, and economic implications, particularly given Viet Nam's status as a lower middle-income country with limited resources to address the challenges posed by rapid ageing. Despite recent progress, Ms. Thuy noted that approximately 15 per cent of older persons in Viet Nam live in poverty or near poverty, and 54 per cent do not have social or contributory pensions. The average life expectancy in Viet Nam is nearly 74 years, but the average healthy life expectancy (HALE) is only 64 years, posing a challenge to the commitment by the Government to achieve at least 68 years of HALE by 2030.

Ms. Thuy underscored that many older persons in Viet Nam are active, with some still working, volunteering, or engaging in community leadership roles. They often participate in the informal economy. Despite their contributions, Ms. Thuy pointed out that older persons are not fully integrated into socio-economic policies and are often seen as passive beneficiaries rather than active agents of change. As such, the intergenerational gap is widening due to ageism and the impact of the digital world, leading to reduced understanding and interactions among generations. In response to these challenges, Viet Nam has adopted the ISHC model. ISHCs are voluntary community-based organizations with diverse membership, including older persons, women, and those facing social or economic difficulties. The objectives of ISHCs includes improving the well-being of members and their communities, promoting the roles of older persons in health promotion and development, and enhancing interactions with local authorities and service providers.

Ms. Thuy discussed how the ISHCs engage in various activities across eight care areas, including mental and social care, income-generating activities, health care, community-based care, self-help and community support, lifelong learning, rights and entitlements, and resource mobilization. The activities benefit both members and non-members, fostering happiness, solidarity, confidence, empowerment, health, and wealth among participants. Moreover, ISHCs promote intergenerational bonding by breaking down stereotypes and promoting mutual understanding and interaction between generations. This leads to shared learning, preservation of local stories and customs, and increased awareness among younger generations about preparing for their own older age.

The ISHC model gained recognition and support from the Vietnamese Government, with plans to expand the model nationally. As of 2022, there were approximately 5,400 ISHCs across Viet Nam, and the goal is to establish 10,000 ISHCs by 2030. The model has also received international recognition and awards for its innovative approach to addressing the challenges of rapid ageing and ageism. The ISHC model in Viet Nam continues to offer community-based solutions to the country's rapid ageing population, promoting mutual support, intergenerational solidarity, and improved well-being for older persons and their communities. It serves as a promising approach to addressing the social, health, and economic implications of ageing in a resource-constrained environment.

**Dr. Prakash Tyagi** (Executive Director, GRAVIS, India) delivered a [presentation](#) on climate action in Asia and the Pacific and provided examples on the importance of intergenerational solidarity in this regard. He also submitted a [paper](#) on the topic. Dr. Tyagi highlighted that the climate crisis has had a profound impact on communities across the Asia and the Pacific region, particularly in India, where older persons and intergenerational solidarity play pivotal roles in shaping climate adaptation strategies. He explained that the unique challenges faced by these communities stem from their heavy reliance on natural resources, agriculture, densely populated coastal areas, inadequate climate-resistant infrastructure, and a significant portion of

the population living in poverty. Over the past six decades, temperatures in this region have increased at a rate surpassing the global average, leading to more frequent and severe weather events such as droughts, heatwaves, floods, and cyclones. These climate-related phenomena have not only displaced communities but have also compromised their health, increased poverty levels, and forced them into a constant state of survival mode.

Dr. Tyagi underscored that within the framework of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Climate Action (SDG 13) holds a unique status, as it is the only goal in the Asia and the Pacific region that has seen deteriorating outcomes between 2015 and 2023. Thus, the lack of timely and effective measures to combat climate change threatens to exacerbate existing crises and undermine sustainable development efforts. Moreover, he explained that many countries in the region lack the financial resources and data necessary to support comprehensive climate adaptation and mitigation initiatives. One distinctive approach to climate adaptation in the region is the involvement of older persons and the promotion of intergenerational solidarity. These communities, often living in arid zones like the Thar Desert, face a myriad of challenges brought on by climate change. The Thar Desert, the largest desert in the Indian subcontinent, is predominantly inhabited by farming communities relying heavily on rainfed agriculture. These communities experience recurrent droughts, acute water shortages, and food scarcity. The impacts of climate change have intensified these challenges, adversely affecting agriculture, depleting groundwater resources, and degrading soil quality.

Dr. Tyagi expressed concern about the vulnerability experienced by older persons within these communities. They are highly susceptible to the effects of temperature extremes, face an increased risk of diseases, and have limited access to essential resources and decision-making processes. Furthermore, the invaluable contributions of older persons often go unrecognized within their families and communities, leading to a decline in self-esteem and dignity. To address these complex challenges, organizations like GRAVIS have implemented innovative approaches that place intergenerational solidarity at the forefront of climate adaptation strategies. GRAVIS, a non-governmental organization working in the Thar Desert, focuses on improving the lives of communities through integrated, community-based approaches, with a special emphasis on involving older persons.

Dr. Tyagi described one notable component of GRAVIS's approach, which is the formation of Intergenerational Learning Groups (ILGs) at the community level. These groups, he explained, bring together individuals from different generations within the community to actively engage in climate adaptation. ILGs serve as platforms for intergenerational dialogue, knowledge exchange, and collaboration, allowing older persons to share their wealth of life experiences and wisdom, while younger generations contribute their energy and innovative perspectives. This collaborative approach not only bridges generational gaps but also fosters mutual understanding and empowers communities to develop holistic climate adaptation strategies.

Furthermore, GRAVIS has successfully implemented climate adaptation interventions such as rainwater harvesting systems, farming dykes, and horticulture units. These initiatives have enhanced water and food security and empowered older persons to take on leadership roles in their communities. Dr. Tyagi emphasized that by involving older persons as custodians of these assets, GRAVIS has increased their control over essential resources and elevated their status within their families and communities. Recognizing and harnessing the unique strengths and contributions of older persons enables communities to build resilience and effectively address the challenges posed by climate change. GRAVIS's approach serves as a remarkable example

of how intergenerational collaboration can empower communities to adapt, thrive, and sustainably manage their environment in the face of climate adversity.

### *Key messages from the interactive discussion*

During the interactive discussion, the following issues were raised by youth speakers:

- A significant intergenerational divide existed in addressing climate change, often marked by reciprocal blame. This situation mirrored the climate justice debate between developed and developing countries, perpetuating a cycle of blame across generations.
- The critical importance of combining the skills of the older generation with the complementary skills of youth was emphasized. Organizations that encouraged active participation from both younger and older individuals were vital in enhancing intergenerational solidarity and effectiveness in climate action.
- The potential of technology as a tool for increasing knowledge and awareness about climate change was highlighted. Educational programmes and training could be adapted for diverse age groups, integrating digital and practical methods. Additionally, the protection of rural and coastal environments should be prioritized, due to their heightened vulnerability to climate change.
- There was the need for more inclusive language in climate dialogues. Younger generations stood to gain significantly from the experiences and sustainable practices of older persons, particularly from those in the Global South and indigenous peoples. Such knowledge transfer was essential for cultivating intergenerational respect and developing a comprehensive repository of conservation knowledge.

## **Session IX: Interactive Discussion on Policy Recommendations**

**Experts proposed and submitted recommendations around different dimensions:**

### *Legislation, policies, and partnerships*

- Call on member States to adopt measures consistent with their international human rights obligations to eliminate discrimination based on age and age-based stereotypes.
- Call on member States to develop and implement policies, legislation, plans and programmes that integrate the impact of intersecting discriminations experienced throughout the life course, including gender and disability.
- Call on member States to adopt appropriate legislative and policy measures in accordance with their human rights obligations to ensure that all older persons enjoy their right to live free from violence, exploitation and abuse in the family and in the community.
- Encourage member States to mainstream population ageing and the concerns of older persons in policies that promote intergenerational solidarity across the work of all

relevant ministries and sectors, thus strengthening cross-sectoral coordination among all relevant stakeholders.

- Stress the primary responsibility of member States in providing and ensuring access to basic social services, bearing in mind the needs and preferences of older persons, and recognize the key role played by civil society and local community-based groups within national level coordination mechanisms on issues related to intergenerational solidarity.
- Call on member States to consider the development and adoption of global intergovernmental instruments that promote and advance the human rights and well-being of all generations, particularly those of older persons, including a possible international convention on the human rights of older persons.
- Encourage member States to adopt innovative policy approaches and provide sufficient funding to enable older persons to age in place in dignity and advance on a de-institutionalization agenda.
- Ensure that the United Nations systematically adopts a life course and intergenerational approach to its work and upcoming milestones, including the Summit of the Future and the proposed World Social Summit.
- Facilitate global exchanges to strengthen shared learning and to leverage global programmes on healthy ageing, mental support to older persons and digital literacy at the national level.
- Ensure that all relevant stakeholders, including older persons themselves and associations for and of older persons,<sup>11</sup> participate fully and without discrimination and on equal basis with others in decision-making processes at all levels and are enabled to apply an intergenerational approach to policymaking.
- Support intergenerational dialogues to develop mutual understanding of respective capabilities and vulnerabilities and to define a common action agenda for adaptation, mitigation and nature conservation.
- Support youth groups and older people's associations to co-design climate adaptation and mitigation projects, including nature-based solutions, building on best practice.
- Provide opportunities for older persons and youth in rural areas to ensure that older persons are not left behind and take steps to ensure the provision of support to older persons, as informal caregivers, particularly in areas at risk of climate change.
- Identify and document best practices led by civil society for advocacy purposes and for inclusion in long term planning on policies related to intergenerational solidarity.

### *Financial considerations*

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<sup>11</sup> Organizations of older persons comprise of a group of older persons, where older persons constitute a majority of the overall staff, board, and volunteers in all levels of the organization.

- Call upon member States to utilize National Transfer Accounts (NTA) methods to develop a comprehensive account of resource reallocations between generations, encompassing the age and the gender perspective. Advocate for the quantifying of the multifaceted contributions of older persons to the economy in national accounts. This should include acknowledging the value of paid and unpaid caregiving for family members, primarily provided by women, as well as volunteering, and other forms of community engagement activities, and to ensure that research on national accounts informs policymaking.
- Identify and acknowledge the multiple contributions of older generations to society, including by rethinking and redesigning current measures of labour force participation that better capture the contributions of older persons, among other unpaid care work and volunteering.
- Recognize that changing demographic, economic and social circumstances demand forward thinking policies and investment in older persons, whose potential is a powerful basis for future development.
- Recognize that investing in intergenerational solidarity policies can support economic growth, by preventing or delaying the financial burden currently associated with population ageing, particularly in health and long-term care.
- Recognize that the contributions of older persons are a form of social solidarity and should be seen as part of intergenerational solidarity and contributing to intergenerational justice.
- Promote the critical role of older persons in sharing skills, knowledge and experience whether in the workplace, or during their role as mentors, mediators and advisers, or as relates to traditional, conventional and rural livelihoods and ensure the transfer of knowledge across generations. Recognize the potential of older persons as leaders in the family and community for education, communication and conflict resolution.
- Recognize the role of families, particularly of women, in providing unpaid care work to older persons, and develop new policies approaches that support and empower families, carers and dependent older persons to live in dignity.

#### *Research and data*

- Develop a common understanding of intergenerational solidarity that can be operationalized at the national policy level, while ensuring that the needs, interests and contributions of all generations, including those of older persons, are equally integrated.
- Collect, use and disseminate both quantitative and qualitative data on measures related to intergenerational solidarity, and improve capacity building in that area. Do not age-cap data and collect age-disaggregated data across the life course.
- Update current measurements so as to ensure that statistical systems are able to account for family dynamics within households, and better capture the multidimensional contributions of older persons to their families and to societies at large.

- Ensure that unpaid care work of older persons, often older women, is accounted for in national accounts.
- Provide support and training to unpaid care workers.
- Ensure that data collection systems and research at the national and international level are enabled to capture the longevity dividend and that this information is adequately disseminated among all relevant stakeholders.
- Ensure that long-term care policies reflect the role of migrants in the care economy, promote decent work conditions for migrant carers and foster collaboration between countries in cases of cross-border care economies.
- Gather data and carry out research on the impact of migration of younger generations on older persons in countries with high rates of emigration.

### *Communication*

- Recall that a positive view of ageing is an integral aspect of MIPAA.
- Advance narratives that seek to reframe our common understanding of old age and older persons as a way to promote solidarity between generations, emphasize the impact of the life course approach on policymaking, and advocate for the human rights of individuals of all ages.
- Advocate for a new agreement between generations to cooperate for social benefits that moves away from a charity model, incorporates new demographic trends, new social dynamics and is based on a life course approach, promotes human rights and moves away from narratives around intergenerational conflict.
- Provide lifelong learning across generations that seek to promote intergenerational solidarity and understanding between the old and young, abate tensions between generations through co-learning for mutual benefits based on a collaborative approach involving joint efforts from stakeholders of all sectors.

## **Closing**

In closing the meeting, **Ms. Sabine Henning** (Chief, Sustainable Demographic Transition Section, Social Development Division, ESCAP) expressed her gratitude to all experts for their participation and engagement and to the staff of DESA and ESCAP for successfully organizing the meeting.

She noted as life expectancies increased, more people of different age groups were living together for longer periods, making intergenerational relations a must for an inclusive future where no one was left behind. Forward-looking policies were needed to deliver prosperity to all members of present and future generations. The Seventh Asian and Pacific Population Conference was scheduled to take place in Bangkok from 15 to 17 November 2023 and

provided an opportunity for ESCAP member States, civil society, academia, the private sector and United Nations entities to discuss issues related to the demographic transition, population ageing and intergenerational solidarity in Asia and the Pacific. All expert group meeting participants were invited to follow the deliberations of the intergovernmental meeting online.

Ms. Henning concluded by pointing out that DESA and ESCAP stood ready to support member States in addressing issues related to intergenerational relations and the life-course perspective to population ageing.

Recognizing the excellent collaboration with the colleagues from DESA and the support from all colleagues in the Sustainable Demographic Transition Section of ESCAP, she then closed the meeting.

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