

Asia-Pacific Report on Population Ageing 2022

Trends, policies and good practices regarding
older persons and population ageing





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Trends, policies and good practices regarding older persons and population ageing

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Foreword

In 2022, one in seven people are aged 60 years or older in Asia and the Pacific. By 2050, one in four people are projected to belong to this age group. Thus, the share and the number of older persons in the region is growing very fast, and, compared to other world regions, at an unprecedented pace. Although population ageing is a human success story – the result of improved public health and medical advancements, and overall socioeconomic development – it also presents challenges that are exacerbated when it occurs rapidly and affects a large number of people.



Almost 20 years ago, United Nations Member States recognized that – due to the historic shift from high to low levels of mortality and fertility, coupled with increased longevity, or the demographic transition – the world was undergoing a transformation from a mostly youthful population to a population with a growing share of older persons. In order to address the challenges and opportunities of this transformation, and to build a society for all ages, they adopted the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, the global guiding framework on this topic.

This report has been prepared in follow up to the Asia-Pacific Intergovernmental Meeting on the Fourth Review and Appraisal of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, convened from 29 June to 1 July 2022. It draws together documents prepared for the review and appraisal process, including voluntary national survey responses by ESCAP members and associate members, summaries of consultations with civil society organizations, and the report and outcome document adopted at the intergovernmental meeting. It combines qualitative and quantitative analysis at national, subregional and regional levels, and considers good practices and lessons learned in national implementation, while addressing emerging issues, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, climate change and digital transformations.

The analysis – which is highly relevant to policymakers, academics, United Nations entities and civil society organizations – shows that countries have come far, but challenges remain. New laws and action plans have been adopted and implemented, many of them focusing on healthy ageing, care, social protection, life-long learning, gender, age-based discrimination and abuse. Yet, as some of the main challenges, countries have identified misconceptions and stereotypes about population ageing and older persons, lack of data at the national and subnational levels, and lack of human resources dedicated to population ageing. Moreover, the promotion and protection of the human rights of older persons remains a challenge. Providing social protection, affordable and universal access to health care, including long-term care, and the integration of health and social care remain distant goals for several countries.

The COVID-19 pandemic has devastated the lives of many older persons and their families. At the same time, good practices have emerged from the pandemic, such as the use of telehealth, upskilling and reskilling prospects for older persons, and opportunities for intergenerational exchange. For the first time in an ESCAP survey leading up to a review and appraisal of the Madrid Plan of Action, a sizable number of countries reported on efforts to address the impact of climate change on older persons and on how they contribute to climate change mitigation and adaptation. Member States also acknowledged the synergies between the Madrid Plan of Action, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the United Nations Decade of Healthy Ageing. Most importantly, member States and stakeholders emphasized that older persons are development actors, and their voices and actions must be recognized.

This is the first review and appraisal of the Madrid Plan of Action in Asia and the Pacific to take place during the Decade of Action. ESCAP works closely with member States and civil society to build capacity, support national assessments, and share experiences and good practices. ESCAP also collaborates with member States and civil society to enhance existing and new forward-looking policies and action plans, as mandated in the outcome document of the fourth review and appraisal. This report and a related dedicated website: <https://www.population-trends-asiapacific.org> present the latest information and tools on population ageing in Asia and the Pacific. They provide the basis for supporting member States and civil society in accelerating the implementation of the Madrid Plan of Action in the region.

ESCAP stands ready to work closely with its member States and stakeholders to build a sustainable society for all ages in Asia and the Pacific.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A. Salsiah'.

Armida Salsiah Alisjahbana

Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations
and Executive Secretary of ESCAP

Executive summary

Asia and the Pacific is ageing very rapidly

In 2022, 670 million people aged 60 years or older reside in Asia and the Pacific, roughly one in every seven people. It is projected that by 2050 that number will have doubled to 1.3 billion, or one in four people. Older women account for 54 per cent of Asia and the Pacific's older persons, and, given their longer life expectancy, that share increases with age. Compared with other regions of the world, population ageing in Asia and the Pacific is very rapid, the result of drastic declines in fertility and mortality, and increased life expectancy. Given the sheer number of older persons, what happens to them in the region will shape trends at the global level. Moreover, because population ageing is occurring so quickly, countries in the region have little time to address its challenges and opportunities.

More people are surviving to old age, and those who do tend to live longer. However, even with longer life expectancy, it is projected that older persons will spend an increasing number of their later years in ill health. This will affect women in particular, because they generally outlive men. Demographic and epidemiological transitions have resulted in a rise in non-communicable diseases (NCDs). These have become the leading cause of death in older persons, both in Asia and the Pacific, and globally. Nonetheless, in lower-middle income and low-income countries, older persons are still threatened by communicable diseases. Such countries face a double burden of disease.

As people age, they are more likely to be affected by disability. It is estimated that Asia and the Pacific is home to more than 700 million persons with disabilities, most of them older persons. A recent study noted that, in 2020, there were 59 million people with dementia globally, including 29 million in Asia (He and others, 2022). Older persons with disabilities often have compounding vulnerabilities and face significant barriers to full and effective participation in society. Moreover, women, especially those in developing countries, often enter old age with the accumulation of a lifetime of gender-based disadvantages. Over the life course, they typically have had fewer opportunities for education, lower likelihood of being covered by social protection, and limited access to health services, land ownership and income. In old age, they frequently continue to

perform unpaid care work in the home and often must work to maintain their own livelihoods. These challenges and obstacles affect their social and economic situation in later life and increase their risk of living in poverty, ill-health and isolation.

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a devastating impact on the health, and social and economic situation of older persons in the region. Based on the latest data, between 2019 and 2021, older persons at age 60 in Asia and the Pacific lost 1.5 years in life expectancy, due mostly to COVID-19. In addition to the direct effects, movement restrictions, lockdowns and delaying regular health check-ups have had significant physical, social and mental health impacts on older persons. Particularly for those living alone, social isolation has been accompanied by loss of social support. Access to information and communications technology (ICT) has been crucial for mitigating the negative social effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. However, owing to the "grey" and gender-related digital divides, not all older persons have benefitted from ICTs. Existing digital inequalities have been further exacerbated for many during the pandemic. In spite of this, throughout the pandemic, older persons have served as caregivers and provided crucial social and economic support to family and friends.

Older persons are development actors

As population ageing has been featuring more prominently on national agendas, governments in Asia and the Pacific have established or strengthened existing government bodies, coordination mechanisms, and national committees that oversee relevant policies and programmes. They have also adopted or revised policies and action plans on older persons. Although COVID-19 has affected the adoption and implementation of some plans, considerable progress has been made throughout the region. Many of these new laws or programmes focus on health and healthy ageing, care, social protection and gender. From the voluntary national survey developed and administered by ESCAP in lead up to the mid-2022 intergovernmental meeting to review and appraise the implementation of the Madrid Plan of Action in Asia and the Pacific, several member States reported having taken measures to promote the active participation of older persons in society. That stated, it was noted that the level of actual involvement of older persons in formulating plans and measures varied. Nevertheless, countries and stakeholders unanimously acknowledged the

need to improve the position of older persons, in particular older women, in society and called for changing perceptions of ageing among both younger and older generations.

Community-based older people's associations (OPAs) play an important role in ensuring greater participation of older persons in policy and decision-making and in improving their living conditions. Almost all countries in the region now have OPAs of some kind. Moreover, many countries reported on volunteer initiatives with older persons as active participants or as recipients of volunteer assistance or support. These activities provide training opportunities, social participation and inclusion, and strengthen intergenerational solidarity. Countries have also implemented measures to enhance social and cultural recognition of older persons.

An important factor in ensuring active participation of older persons in society and development is continued involvement in the paid labour force. Older persons who remain in the workforce longer can maintain income security as well as their physical and mental health (Dannefer, 2003). Household and employment survey data show that many older persons in Asia and the Pacific are still employed, but older women in particular work mostly in the informal sector. Jobs in this sector, however, do not provide social protection, leaving older persons vulnerable and dependent on families and societies. To address this, some countries in the region provide decent, age-friendly and flexible employment opportunities for older persons. There are examples of re-skilling, upskilling and job-matching, as well as incentives for employers to retain or rehire older workers. However, age discrimination in the workplace still occurs in many countries in Asia and the Pacific, and only a few reported on legislation regulating the preferences, needs and rights of older persons in the labour market.

The majority of countries reported on initiatives that support access to knowledge, education and training over the life course, including in old age. Nevertheless, access to such services in rural areas and by older women were reported as lacking. Many countries reported promoting digital literacy via training and re-education programmes.

According to ESCAP survey responses, most countries plan to provide the protection necessary to assure minimum living standards for older

persons. Several countries reported having programmes to enable all workers to acquire basic social protection/social security, including, where applicable, pensions, disability insurance and health benefits. However, overall coverage levels remain low in several countries, with benefit levels barely covering daily expenses.

Healthy ageing is a must

The majority of countries in Asia and the Pacific, in particular those in East and North-East Asia, and South and South-east Asia, have established measures to promote healthy and active ageing of older persons. They have expanded health-care access and initiatives that empower older persons to exercise their rights and live with dignity. Moreover, awareness around healthy ageing has increased since the third review and appraisal of the Madrid Plan of Action, in 2017. However, gaps between policies and implementation remain and have been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition, coverage, accessibility and affordability of certain policies and programmes directed at older persons continue to pose a challenge.

National health strategies and plans exist in almost all countries in the region. Many of these target the general population and are integrated into high-level health or ageing policies and plans, and they often reflect action on NCDs. Several countries reported on dedicated strategies and policies supporting the well-being of older persons, but most initiatives concern treatment rather than prevention or promotion of health and well-being. Also reported were good practices on health screening programmes and health education of older persons. During the COVID-19 pandemic, OPAs and civil society organizations have played an important role in providing health services, promoting healthy lifestyles and supporting the well-being of older persons.

Integrating health and social care can support improved health and social care outcomes for older persons, and countries in Asia and the Pacific reported growing recognition of the need to adopt more holistic approaches to health-care provision. In some countries, such measures are a part of national strategic planning frameworks, while in others they are addressed at the institutional level. In addition, various social protection programmes that integrate health and social care were reported.

Improvements in universal access to health care have been documented in Asia-Pacific countries. Nevertheless, health-care coverage can vary widely, particularly as it affects persons in vulnerable situations, including older persons. Importantly, when assessing the availability and access of these services, financing must be considered. In many countries, public health-care expenditures are low, leading to high out-of-pocket expenditures. Since health-care expenditures tend to increase with age, countries with high out-of-pocket expenditures, in particular, face challenges in transitioning from “ageing” to “aged” and “super-aged” societies.¹

Over the past years, countries in Asia and the Pacific have developed or expanded their long-term care systems (ADB, 2021). Several countries have implemented some form of long-term care, including in-home, residential and community services. However, coverage levels, quality and affordability vary. Existing services are fragmented and in need of strong coordination. Measures to increase the quality of long-term care services to older persons range from community care to integrated approaches that promote health and prevention as part of broader systems of social protection. Access to long-term care was reported as limited for poor and homeless older persons, especially in remote areas. Indeed, providing long-term care to older persons has been particularly challenging during the COVID-19 pandemic. The majority of countries in the region also reported on the need for more specialized health and long-term care services, including geriatric and, specifically, gerontological training programmes.

ICTs are improving the ways that older persons receive care and their access to health-related information. In some circumstances, ICTs are reshaping health-care systems in fundamental ways. Often, general health information to improve basic health literacy is made accessible for older persons through specific online portals. Patient management systems provide online access to personal health-related information, and telehealth provides health services virtually. Yet, the digital divide and lack of digital skills can limit the utility of ICTs in health care for older persons.

Provisions for mental and neurological health services were reported by a larger and growing number of countries in the region than in the 2017

Asia-Pacific regional review and appraisal. However, in most cases, mental health initiatives relevant to older persons are subsumed under broader health strategies, programmes or frameworks. Some countries reported on recent initiatives aimed at addressing dementia, as well as educational and awareness-raising initiatives focusing on mental health. Despite such developments, there is insufficient data on the mental and neurological health of older persons, including longitudinal data.

Incidence of impairment and disability increases with age, and older persons, in particular older women, are often also persons with disabilities. The effects of impairment and disability are exacerbated by negative stereotypes, discrimination and abuse. All countries responding to the survey reported taking measures to support older persons with disabilities, such as rehabilitation services, appropriate care, and provision of assistive devices and social transfers, including disability allowances. Mostly, countries reported on general policies and laws that include disability measures. Only some countries have comprehensive measures that explicitly address the concerns of older persons with disabilities.

Enabling and supportive environments allow older persons to remain active, productive and fulfilled

Traditionally, older persons in Asia and the Pacific have lived with other family members. In most countries this still holds true, but urbanization, migration and shrinking family sizes are resulting in more older persons living alone, especially older women. Many countries in the region are promoting some form of ‘ageing in place’. There is also some awareness of age- and disability-friendly housing and infrastructure. Financial assistance and housing assistance programmes that address the housing needs of older persons were reported by some countries. Also, more countries provide older persons with accessible and affordable transport, mostly in the form of free or reduced fares and improved physical access. However, while support for older persons is provided in terms of affordable housing, public infrastructure and transport, it is unevenly distributed, both across and within countries, and generally considered insufficient.

¹ An “ageing society” is one in which 7-14 per cent of the population is aged 65+. For an “aged society” and a “super-aged society”, those 65+ comprise 15-20 per cent, and over 21 per cent, respectively.

As a consequence of urbanization in the Asia-Pacific region, older persons in rural areas are often left with reduced family support, which is considered a significant challenge (ESCAP, 2022g). In addition, lower population density in rural areas affects the development of infrastructure, which in turn affects access to services and activities. There are often gaps in service between capital cities and secondary and tertiary cities. Older women in rural areas are particularly vulnerable socially and economically, especially when they are restricted to non-remunerated work to support their families, or when they are dependent on others for support and survival. Very few countries reported on the condition of such older persons in rural and remote areas.

Migration to and from Asia and the Pacific is another regional megatrend, while the number of migrants within the region is growing. Often, migrants returning home are older and need support in being reintegrated. Domestic workers looking after older persons frequently live at the margins of society and are at an increased risk of abuse and violence. Very few countries reported on reintegration of older migrants and on protection for migrant workers who look after older persons.

The Asia-Pacific region is dependent on natural resources and the agricultural sector. It has densely populated coastal areas, weak institutions, lack of social protection and high poverty levels. In this context, it is highly vulnerable to climate change and other emergency situations. Climate change disproportionately affects the vulnerable, including many older persons. While older persons are negatively affected by climate change, they also contribute to it as a consumer group. At the same time, they contribute to climate activism. Countries reported on climate change mitigation and adaptation measures that factor in the role of older persons. There are a few national examples that take account of older persons in disaster risk reduction (DRR) initiatives. However, there are no dedicated or comprehensive policies on DRR strategies that give older persons a formal role and voice in formulating such policies.

Socioeconomic changes in Asia and the Pacific affect the provision of care to older persons. Where they still exist, intergenerational families are mostly on their own in caring for older persons. Yet, many countries in the region have prioritized caregiving in their policies and programmes. Some

provide financial allowances for family caregivers, day care centres for older persons, or family leave and flexible work arrangements that allow family members to look after older family members. Some countries reported that they provide training for caregivers, but only a few have established accreditation systems.

Despite the respect older persons traditionally receive in many Asia-Pacific countries, ageism is on the rise both in the region and globally (ESCAP, 2022h). Some ESCAP member States reported on constitutional guarantees of equality and human rights, and some reported on specific anti-age discrimination laws as well as laws designed to prevent and punish against elder abuse. However, such laws and policies often focus on the family as a whole rather than on older persons specifically. Monitoring and reporting mechanisms are in place in a few countries. Some countries reported having services for victims of neglect, abuse and violence against older persons, including training, but these remained the exception. Several countries reported on enhancing the public recognition of older persons with regard to their authority, autonomy, self-determination, wisdom, productivity and contribution to society. There were also challenges related to lack of data on neglect, abuse and violence against older persons.

Asia and the Pacific is a driving force of ICT development and adoption, and some countries reported significant progress in providing accessible and affordable access to ICTs and in raising the level of digital literacy of older persons. Yet, the region is also the most digitally divided in the world, and there are disparities across age (the “grey digital divide”) and gender that particularly affect older women.

Almost half of the countries reported that a lack of age-disaggregated data is a concern for the Government. Moreover, some countries stressed the importance of capacity-building assistance as a way of increasing the availability of timely, relevant and high-quality data disaggregated by income, gender, age, ethnicity, migratory status and other criteria at the national and provincial level. Some countries reported on recent surveys with a focus on older persons.

Recommendations

1 Older persons and development

Develop, strengthen and implement comprehensive and integrated policy frameworks that address and mainstream population ageing, with due regard to gender and disability. Adopt a human rights-based, people-centred and life-course approach to ageing, in line with the Madrid Plan of Action and the 2030 Agenda and mobilize all necessary resources and support in that regard. Member States should use the United Nations high-level political forum to report on the situation of older persons across all SDGs on a regular basis

Support the formation and strengthening of OPAs and civil society organizations, in recognition of the diversity of older persons, and provide effective community mechanisms for strengthening the voices of older persons in policymaking.

Promote the right to work of older persons by providing access to full and productive employment and decent work under healthy, flexible and age-friendly conditions. Combat abuse, neglect and all forms of discrimination in the workforce and elsewhere. Assess the impacts of the gig-economy and remote work.

Ensure lifelong learning through training, retraining and skills development, for as long as people want and are able to do so. Ensure access to training in digital skills, particularly for older persons in informal work and in rural areas.

Ensure financial security in old age and mainstream ageing issues into poverty-reduction measures, women's empowerment strategies and national development plans. Also expand overall coverage of and access to sustainable social protection systems and pension schemes, including, but not limited to, social pensions, non-contributory pensions, and disability benefits to workers in the informal sector and migrants.

Promote policies and national action plans that prepare for and respond to population ageing throughout the life course and strengthen intergenerational solidarity through volunteering, education and other opportunities for intergenerational exchange.

2 Older persons, health and well-being

Accelerate efforts towards the achievement of universal health coverage so that all older persons, without discrimination, enjoy their right to the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health. In this regard, ensure that access to quality health care is affordable, and invest in a life-cycle approach to healthy ageing with a focus on mental and physical health.

Encourage and facilitate physical activity, healthy nutrition and preventive health interventions, and strengthen health literacy, mental health and well-being, social participation, and intergenerational ties.

Apply community-based and inclusive approaches to health-care provision that consider the needs, preferences and rights of older persons, with particular attention to women, older persons with disabilities and vulnerable older persons.

Incorporate the concept of self-care into policies on ageing, including into social and health related efforts. Promote self-care across the life cycle, to contribute to health and well-being in old age, and to reduce the burden of ageing on health-care systems.

Provide and enhance access of older persons to primary health care without discrimination and invest in integrated and person-centred service delivery, including by integrating social and health-care services and developing a health workforce with the relevant skills.

Invest in palliative and end-of-life care services, strengthen data collection to enable evidence-based policy design on the health and long-term care needs of older persons, **learn from the experiences of COVID-19,** and ensure that, despite global health crises, older persons have access to essential services.

Develop and implement high-quality, integrated and flexible long-term care systems with public, private and community providers that foster a community-based and ageing-in place approach, including comprehensive mental health services. In this regard, promote long-term care as a positive social and economic care and employment strategy, while recognizing the contributions and enhancing the capacities of formal and informal caregivers and volunteers, including family members.

Address the rising prevalence of mental health and neurodegenerative diseases among older persons. Accordingly, train and build the capacities of those in the medical field with regard to mental health issues,

including by learning to better diagnose, raising awareness, addressing stigma, and promoting self-care throughout the life course. Also, develop plans that address dementia, including Alzheimer's disease, and improve the quality of health care, social care and long-term care support for people living with dementia and their families.

Address the concerns of older persons with disabilities, bearing in mind that disability increases with age and specific health concerns exist, as well as mainstream ageing into disability-related measures and vice-versa.

3 Ensuring enabling and supportive environments

Promote and protect the right to adequate housing for older persons, ageing in place and intergenerational housing options. In this regard, strengthen equitable and affordable access to sustainable basic physical and social infrastructure for all, without discrimination, and ensure that services respond to the needs, preferences and rights of older persons, regardless of where they live.

Give greater priority to poverty-related challenges, and universal and green design, as well as independent living of older persons, and develop age- and disability-friendly housing, transport and infrastructure, and financial assistance programmes.

Strengthen data collection, analysis and dissemination regarding age-friendly communities and consult local and regional authorities to better understand areas of concern, challenges and opportunities.

Ensure the security and safety of older persons living alone, recognizing that they are a resource, and encourage and support independent living.

Direct greater attention to the intersection of population ageing and climate change, and its consequences for the region. Reduce the contribution that older persons make to greenhouse gas emissions, protect them from climate impacts and harness their potential in climate action.

Protect older persons from all manner of emergencies, including disasters, armed conflict and climate change, by means of respecting and promoting their human rights, and meaningfully engaging them and their organizations in the preparation, response and recovery stages of emergencies.

Promote skill and competency development and continuous training of health and social care workers in geriatric and home-based care. Strengthen

intergenerational relations, accreditation systems, quality standards and monitoring mechanisms. Support and invest in innovations and advanced technologies that meet the highest standard of services and care for older persons.

Advocate for the quantification of the caregiving contribution of older persons to the economy in national accounts, including recognition of unpaid care for family members, in particular by women, and ensure that research on national accounts informs policymaking.

Respond to the changing care needs in the region by developing new approaches and policies for a continuum of care. Strengthen home-based services and integrate care into the local community.

Address the challenges related to rising prevalence of ageism, including through adopting related WHO good practices and communicating a positive image of older persons. Promote educational and intergenerational interventions on age discrimination and ageism, improve data and research to better understand ageism and how to reduce it, and build a movement to raise awareness and change the narrative around age and ageing.

Combat violence, neglect, abuse and ill-treatment against all older persons by: stronger legislation, multi-sectoral cooperation and public-private partnerships, and the engagement of older persons; awareness raising, including through the media; data collection and analysis on elder abuse, disaggregated by sex, age, care need level and other characteristics; monitoring and reporting; increasing the scope and variety of preventive and protective measures, and care-services, including mental health care.

Ensure new technologies, especially ICTs, are affordable, accessible and reliable and promote literacy, numeracy, technological skills, training and retraining, while ensuring that the right to privacy is respected.

Support the collection, analysis and dissemination of age- and sex-disaggregated data, without age-caps, and invest in capacity-building on data collection, analysis and dissemination. Also, promote multi-stakeholder partnerships for multidisciplinary and intergenerational research on ageing

Engage, on a regular basis, with other member States and stakeholders on the topic of population ageing, including at regional and subregional forums, and ensure regular sharing of good practices, experiences and lessons learned, including from unsuccessful attempts in mainstreaming ageing.

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Abbreviations and acronyms

ASEAN Association of Southeast Asian Nations

DRR disaster risk reduction

ECE United Nations Economic Commission for Europe

ESCAP United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

ICT information and communications technology

NCD non-communicable disease

NTA National Transfer Account

OPA older people's association

SDG Sustainable Development Goal

WHO World Health Organization



Three generations of villagers along the shoreline on one of the Carteret Islands, Papua New Guinea. Photo: IOM/Muse Mohammed

Introduction

Population ageing is a global and regional megatrend,¹ and Asia and the Pacific is experiencing this at an unprecedented pace. In 2022, 61 per cent of the world's older persons² were residing in the region, or some 672 million people aged 60 years or over. By 2050, 26 per cent of the Asia-Pacific region is projected to be comprised of older persons, some 1.3 billion people, representing 63 per cent of the global total. Population ageing presents challenges and opportunities to older persons and their families, and it affects all aspects of societies. It is an important multidimensional reality of major relevance for sustainable development.

The Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, 2002,³ which complements the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, is the global guiding

framework on population ageing. Other relevant and related international frameworks include the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development, and the United Nations Decade of Healthy Ageing (2021–2030). The Madrid Plan of Action recommends systematic reviews of its implementation by Member States for its success in improving the quality of life of older persons. Thus, reviews and appraisals are an integral part of its implementation. Since its adoption, and in accordance with General Assembly and Economic and Social Council resolutions, the Madrid Plan of Action has been reviewed at the global, regional and national levels three times.⁴ The fourth national reviews and appraisals took place in 2021, to be followed by reviews and appraisals at the regional and global levels in 2022 and 2023, respectively.

1 In 2020, the United Nations Economist Network identified the following interconnected five global megatrends which are driving fundamental societal change: climate change; demographic shifts, particularly population ageing; urbanization; and the emergence of digital technologies. For more information, see: <https://www.un.org/development/desa/publications/wp-content/uploads/sites/10/2020/10/20-124-UNEN-75Report-Full-EN-REVISED.pdf> (accessed 18 August 2022).

2 Unless otherwise noted, in this report, older persons will be defined as being aged 60 years or older.

3 Report of the Second World Assembly on Ageing, Madrid, 8-12 April 2002 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.02.IV.4), chap. I, resolution 1, annex II, paras. 131 and 132.

4 The Madrid Plan of Action mandated the Commission for Social Development to conduct global reviews and appraisals. It also recognized the important role of the United Nations system, including the regional commissions, in assisting governments in its implementation, follow-up and national monitoring. United Nations regional commissions were identified as having "... responsibility for translating the International Plan of Action on Ageing, 2002, into their regional action plans. ... The Economic and Social Council could strengthen the capacity of the regional commissions in this respect." ECOSOC resolution 2020/8 invited Member States to "identify actions they have taken since the third review and appraisal, with the aim of presenting this information to the regional commissions during 2022 and invites each Member States to decide for itself the actions or activities it intends to review; utilizing a bottom-up participatory approach." The Council also invited Member States to consider collecting and utilizing a combination of quantitative and participatory qualitative data gathering and analysis and requested the regional commissions to continue to facilitate the review and appraisal exercise at the regional level.

In accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 2020/8, the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) organized the fourth review and appraisal in Asia and the Pacific beginning in 2021. The review and appraisal process consisted of:

- A Nomination of national focal points on ageing (December 2020 onwards)
- B Voluntary national survey on the implementation of the Madrid Plan of Action by member States (June 2021 onwards)
- C Consultations with national focal points on ageing on the survey and national reviews (6–7 May 2021, 9 August 2021 and 29 October 2021)
- D Consultations with non-government stakeholders (7 April 2022, 28 April 2022, 19 May 2022 and 8 June 2022)
- E Asia-Pacific Intergovernmental Meeting on the Fourth Review and Appraisal of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing (29 June – 1 July 2022)

ESCAP drafted papers on the consultations with the national focal points on ageing. It also summarized and analysed responses to the voluntary national surveys and the outcomes of consultations with civil society organizations, and submitted them to the aforementioned intergovernmental meeting.⁵ At the meeting, member States adopted a report, consisting of a procedural part, the account of proceedings and an outcome document (ESCAP, 2022a; ESCAP, 2022b). The outcome document comprises annex 1 of this publication.

The Asia-Pacific Report on Population Ageing 2022 is unique as it combines the latest research and statistical evidence on the levels and trends in population ageing, mostly taken from the World Population Prospects 2022 and other publicly available global datasets, with an assessment by governments and stakeholders of the situation of older persons and relevant policies and programmes. The report is structured along the three priority directions of the Madrid Plan of Action: (a) older persons and development; (b) advancing health and well-being into old age; and (c) ensuring enabling and supportive environments. Moreover, there is a chapter on data and research, and the final chapter contains conclusions and recommendations.

Gender considerations and the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on older persons and their families are mainstreamed throughout the report. Issues concerning the nexus between older persons and the effects of climate change and disasters are also addressed.

In this report, the compilation of information from countries is not exhaustive. Rather, it draws together quantitative and qualitative information from voluntary national surveys by member States; summaries of stakeholder consultations; deliberations at the intergovernmental meeting, including statements by member States, civil society organizations and international organizations; and the report of the meeting, including its outcome document. Where needed, the information is supplemented by additional research. For the full list of survey responses and summaries of the stakeholder consultations, see: <https://www.unescap.org/events/2022/asia-pacific-intergovernmental-meeting-fourth-review-and-appraisal-madrid-international>.

The analysis focuses on the regional, subregional and national levels in Asia and the Pacific. It reveals similarities and differences between member States regarding priorities, challenges, opportunities, good practices and lessons learned in addressing population ageing. It also provides recommendations for mainstreaming ageing into national policy frameworks and action plans, in line with those of the outcome document adopted at the fourth review and appraisal of the Madrid Plan of Action in Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP/MIPAA/IGM.3/2022/3/Add.1). To this effect, it deepens the understanding of the situation of older persons in the region, with relevance to policymakers, non-government stakeholders, researchers and other interested parties.

Good practices, policies and programmes from around the region referenced throughout the report are currently being compiled and summarized in the dashboard of policies on ageing that ESCAP is finalizing. By the end of 2022, it will be posted at: <https://www.population-trends-asiapacific.org/population-ageing>. The dashboard is a “living tool”, and government focal points on ageing and stakeholders from across the region are invited to review it and suggest further inputs by writing to escap-sdd@un.org. Information on the levels

5 All summaries and papers prepared for the intergovernmental meeting are available at: <https://www.unescap.org/events/2022/asia-pacific-intergovernmental-meeting-fourth-review-and-appraisal-madrid-international>.

and trends of population ageing in Asia and the Pacific, using the latest data from World Population Prospects 2022 and other publicly available datasets, are currently being updated on the ESCAP dashboard on data concerning ageing to be available later in 2022 at: <https://www.population-trends-asiapacific.org/data>.

By July 2022, 22 ESCAP member States⁶ had submitted responses to the voluntary national survey: Armenia; Australia; Azerbaijan; Bangladesh; Bhutan; Cambodia; India; Japan; Kazakhstan; Kyrgyzstan; Macao, China; Malaysia; Maldives; Mongolia; the Philippines; the Republic of Korea; the Russian Federation; Singapore; Tajikistan; Thailand; and Türkiye (table 1). Since ESCAP and the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) have some of the same member States, ESCAP used 4 survey responses submitted to ECE. Together, the 22 countries/areas represent about 85 per cent of the population aged 60 years or over in the Asia-Pacific region.⁷

About 30 ESCAP member States and 23 stakeholder groups attended the intergovernmental meeting and delivered statements. More information on the meeting participants and their deliberations can be found in the report of the meeting (ESCAP/MIPAA/IGM.4/2022/3).

Of the 22 countries that responded to the voluntary national survey, 15 identified priority actions for implementing the Madrid Plan of Action. As indicated in figure 1, countries appeared to prioritize health-related objectives, such as training

of caregivers and health professionals, and the promotion of health over the life course. Objectives related to older persons and development were also important, such as those on education and training, and active participation in society. It is worth pointing out that issues related to older persons in rural areas, images of ageing and older persons in emergency situations appeared less important.

Countries also identified challenges to the development and implementation of legislation focusing on older persons (figure 2). Misconceptions and stereotypes about population ageing and older persons – followed by lack of data at the national and subnational levels, and lack of human resources dedicated to population ageing – were highlighted as the main challenges.

The following chapters analyze the voluntary national survey responses in the context of population ageing levels and trends. The chapters also draw from summaries of stakeholder consultations and deliberations at the intergovernmental meeting, with supplementary information from additional research. Furthermore, the chapters, drawing principally from the survey responses, provide an account of the challenges, lessons learned, good practices and priority actions in addressing population ageing in Asia and the Pacific. The examples showcase highlights from the survey responses, and were selected to present a broad range of good practices and lessons learned, with consideration of geographically balanced representation.

TABLE 1 Countries/areas that submitted voluntary national survey responses on the implementation of Madrid Plan of Action by July 2022

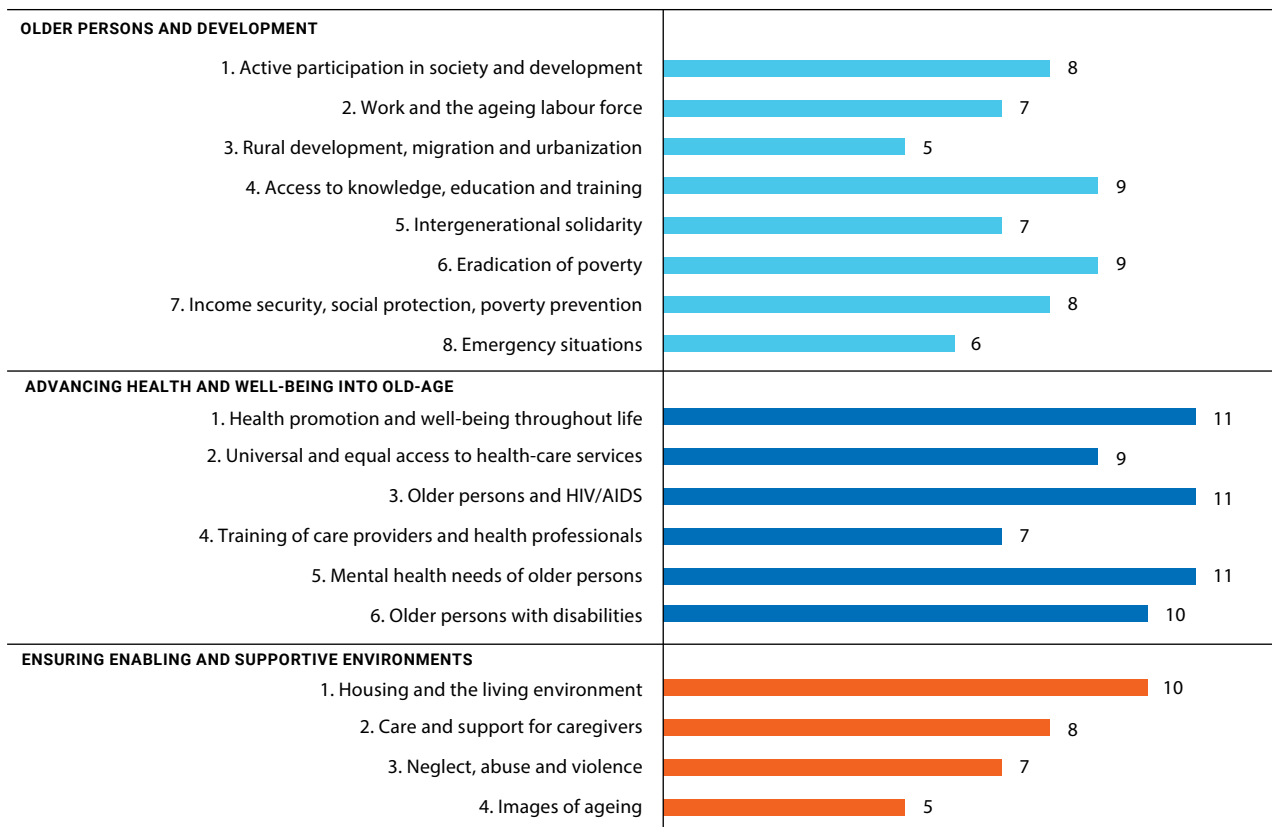
East and North-East Asia	North and Central Asia	South and South-West Asia	South-East Asia	Pacific
China	Armenia*	Bangladesh	Cambodia	Australia
Japan	Azerbaijan*	Bhutan	Malaysia	
Mongolia	Kazakhstan**	India	Philippines	
Republic of Korea	Kyrgyzstan	Maldives	Singapore	
Macao, China	Russian Federation*	Türkiye**	Thailand	
	Tajikistan*			

Note: countries marked with * only submitted a survey to ECE; countries marked with ** submitted a survey to both ECE and ESCAP.

6 For a list of ESCAP member States, see: <https://www.unescap.org/about/member-states>.

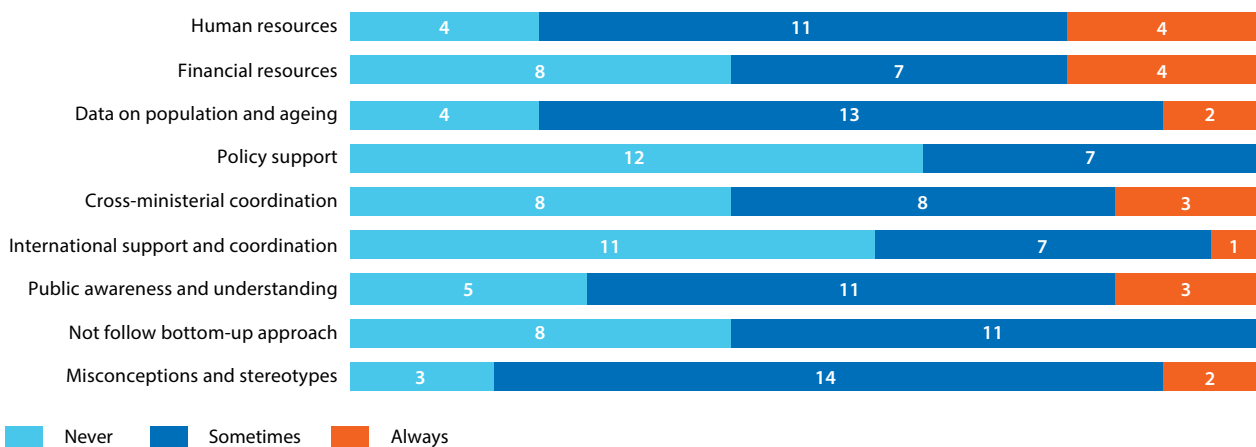
7 For the full list of voluntary national survey responses, see: www.population-trends-asiapacific.org/mipaa.

FIGURE 1 Member State priorities for implementing the Madrid Plan of Action, by priority area and objective (n=18)



Source: ESCAP 2021/2022, Voluntary national survey on the implementation of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing in Asia and the Pacific responses. Available at: <https://www.population-trends-asiapacific.org/mipaa/voluntary-national-survey-response>

FIGURE 2 Member State challenges to the development and implementation of legislation with a focus on older persons and population ageing (n=19)



Source: ESCAP 2021/2022, Voluntary national survey on the implementation of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing in Asia and the Pacific responses. Available at: <https://www.population-trends-asiapacific.org/mipaa/voluntary-national-survey-response>

Chapter 1

Population ageing: levels and trends





Older men in conversation at Jongmyo Park, in downtown Seoul, Republic of Korea. Photo: UN Photo/Kibae Park

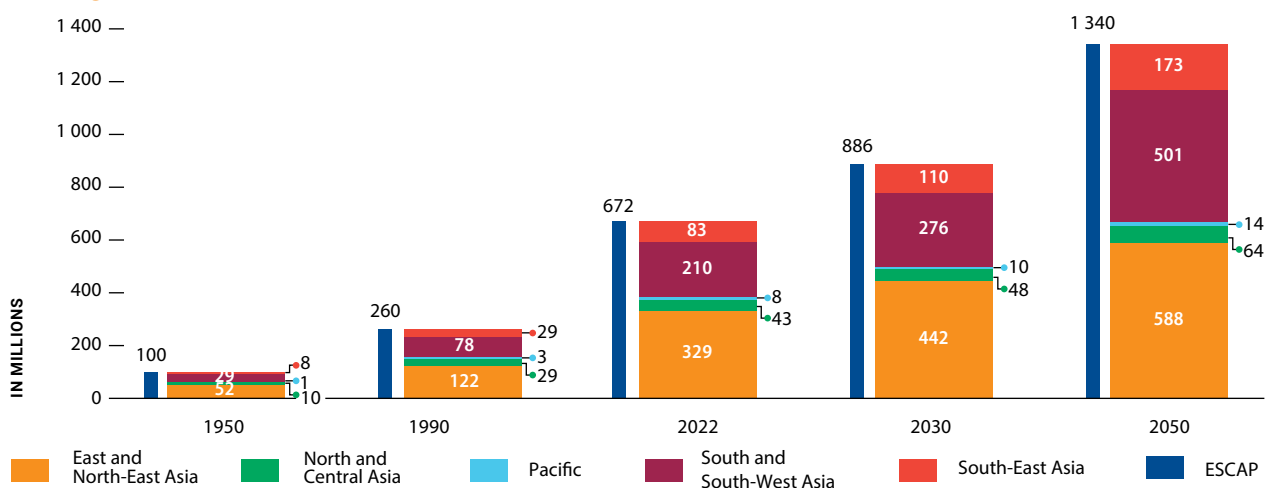
In 2022, one in seven people in Asia and the Pacific are 60 years or older, or 670 million people. By 2050, the number of older persons is projected to have doubled, reaching 1.3 billion, or one in four people. Older women account for 54 per cent of all older persons, and, given their longer life expectancy, their share increases with age.

Most older persons currently reside in East and North-East Asia, followed by South and South-West Asia, South-East Asia, North and Central Asia, and the Pacific. By 2050, the majority of all older persons will still be residing in East and North-East Asia, but

the number of older persons in South and South-West Asia will have grown the most, doubling from 210 million to 501 million over the next thirty years (figure 3).

In 2022, older persons account for 20.1 per cent of the population of East and North-East Asia, 17.9 per cent of the population of North and Central Asia, and 17.7 per cent in the Pacific. In South-East Asia and in South-West Asia, about 12.1 and 10.0 per cent of the population, respectively, are aged 60 years or over (table 2).

FIGURE 3 Number of people aged 60 years or over in Asia and the Pacific and by subregion, 1950, 1990, 2022, 2030 and 2050



Source: United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (2022). World Population Prospects 2022, Online Edition.

China (265 million) and India (149 million) currently have the largest numbers of older persons in the world (table 3). Globally, there are 22 countries with 10 million or more people aged 60 years or over, and 12 of them are in Asia and the Pacific. By 2050, China is projected to have 509 million older persons, while 348 million people aged 60 years or over will be in India. The number of countries with 10 million or more older persons globally is projected to increase

to 34 by 2050, and 14 of these countries will be in Asia and the Pacific.⁸

In 2022, Japan (35.8 per cent), Hong Kong, China, (28.7 per cent) and the Republic of Korea (25.5 per cent) have the highest proportions of people aged 60 years or over. By 2050, more than 40 per cent of their total populations, as well as that of Singapore, are projected to consist of older persons (table 4).

TABLE 2 Proportion of people aged 60 years or over in Asia and the Pacific, by subregion, 1950, 1990, 2022, 2030 and 2050

Subregion	1950	1990	2022	2030	2050
	Proportion as a percentage				
ESCAP	6.8	7.9	14.3	18.1	25.9
East and North-East Asia	7.8	9.0	20.1	27.2	39.2
South-East Asia	4.7	6.6	12.1	15.1	22.0
South and South-West Asia	5.8	6.2	10.0	12.2	19.5
North and Central Asia	8.2	13.4	17.9	19.5	25.3
Pacific	10.9	12.7	17.7	19.7	24.1

Source: United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (2022). World Population Prospects 2022, Online Edition.

TABLE 3 Top 10 countries with the largest numbers of people aged 60 years or over in Asia and the Pacific, 1950, 2022 and 2050

Rank	1950		2022		2050	
	Country	Number (millions)	Country/area	Number (millions)	Country	Number (millions)
1.	China	43.6	China	264.7	China	509.4
2.	India	19.1	India	148.7	India	347.6
3.	Russian Federation	7.9	Japan	44.4	Indonesia	64.9
4.	Japan	6.4	Russian Federation	33.0	Japan	45.3
5.	Pakistan	2.9	Indonesia	29.9	Russian Federation	43.4
6.	Bangladesh	2.3	Pakistan	15.9	Bangladesh	43.4
7.	Indonesia	2.2	Bangladesh	15.9	Pakistan	43.4
8.	Viet Nam	1.7	Thailand	15.8	Iran (Islamic Republic of)	30.1
9.	Iran (Islamic Republic of)	1.4	Viet Nam	13.6	Viet Nam	28.4
10.	Türkiye	1.2	Republic of Korea	13.2	Türkiye	26.4

Source: United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (2022). World Population Prospects 2022, Online Edition.

TABLE 4 Top 10 countries/areas with the highest proportion of the population aged 60 years or over in Asia and the Pacific, 1950, 2022 and 2050

Rank	1950		2022		2050	
	Country/area	Percentage	Country/area	Percentage	Country/area	Percentage
1.	New Zealand	13.2	Japan	35.8	Hong Kong, China	48.3
2.	Georgia	12.9	Hong Kong, China	28.7	Republic of Korea	46.4
3.	Australia	12.5	Republic of Korea	25.5	Japan	43.7
4.	Kyrgyzstan	12.1	Singapore	23.0	Singapore	41.5
5.	Armenia	11.1	Russian Federation	22.8	China	38.8
6.	Nauru	11.0	Australia	22.6	Thailand	38.3
7.	Sri Lanka	11.0	New Zealand	22.2	Macao, China	36.5
8.	Palau	10.7	Thailand	22.0	Maldives	34.1
9.	Kazakhstan	10.1	Georgia	21.0	Russian Federation	32.6
10.	Kiribati	10.0	Niue	21.0	French Polynesia	31.8

Source: United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (2022). World Population Prospects 2022, Online Edition.

8 The 22 countries with 10 million or more older persons in 2022 worldwide, ordered by size of their older population, are: China, India, United States of America, Japan, Russian Federation, Brazil, Indonesia, Germany, Italy, France, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Thailand, Mexico, Viet Nam, Republic of Korea, Spain, Türkiye, Ukraine, Nigeria and Iran (Islamic Republic of). By 2050, the following 34 countries are projected to have 10 million or more older persons: China, India, United States, Brazil, Indonesia, Japan, Russian Federation, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Mexico, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Germany, Viet Nam, Türkiye, Thailand, Nigeria, Philippines, United Kingdom, Egypt, France, Italy, Republic of Korea, Spain, Ethiopia, Colombia, Canada, Algeria, Poland, Argentina, Saudi Arabia, Ukraine, South Africa, Democratic Republic of the Congo and Myanmar.

Drivers of population ageing

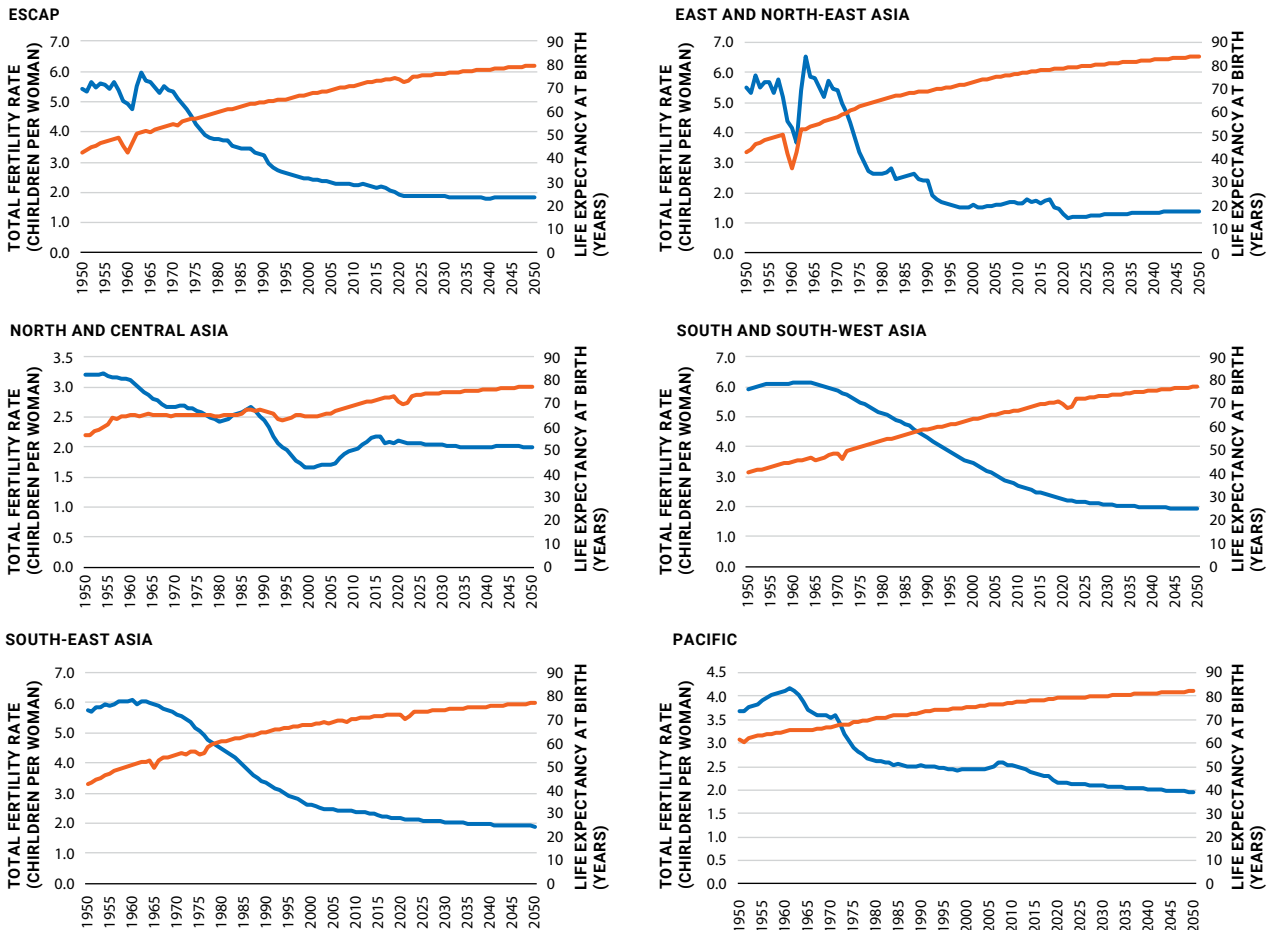
Over recent decades, countries in Asia and the Pacific have experienced significant and rapid declines in fertility and mortality, coupled with increased longevity. The onset and pace of this process, referred to as the demographic transition, has varied by country, but it has generally resulted in the absolute and proportionate growth of the older population in the region.

Total fertility has decreased by more than half in Asia and the Pacific, from 6.0 children per woman in 1963 to 1.9 children per woman in 2022. The decline has been most significant in East and North-East Asia, where fertility has decreased from 6.5 children per woman in 1963 to 1.2 children per woman in 2022 (figure 4). Although past and current fertility levels and the speed of the fertility decline vary among subregions, in 2022, 26 of the 58 countries/areas with available data in the region have total fertility rates below the replacement level of 2.1 children per woman, accounting for 82 per cent of the total

population in Asia and the Pacific, or 3.8 billion people. According to the latest projections from World Population Prospects 2022, once the total fertility rate of countries has reached (and fallen below) a level of 2.1 children per woman, fertility is projected to not exceed replacement level again by 2050. In some countries with fertility levels far lower than replacement level, fertility might increase again, such as in Japan, the Republic of Korea and Thailand, but it is not projected to surpass replacement level by 2050. Thus, population ageing might slow, but population decline will not reverse and most likely will continue.

In order to respond to rapid population ageing, some Governments have recently considered pronatalist and pro-migration policies. However, studies have shown that to reverse long-term trends in fertility decline (and eventual population decline), both unprecedented and ultimately unrealistic increases in fertility and migration over decades would be required (He and others, 2022; UN DESA, 2001).

FIGURE 4 Total fertility rate and life expectancy at birth in Asia and the Pacific and by subregion, 1950–2050



Source: United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (2022). World Population Prospects 2022, Online Edition.

Living longer and healthier lives?

As fertility rates fall towards the replacement level of 2.1 children per woman, mortality declines, especially at older ages, assume an increasingly important role in population ageing. Since the 1950s, life expectancy at birth in Asia and the Pacific has increased by about 30 years, from 42.9 years in 1950 to 73.0 years in 2022. Over the next 30 years, it is projected to increase by another 6.5 years. Not only are more people surviving to old age, once they are there, they tend to live longer. For example, in the region, life expectancy at age 60 is projected to increase from 19.9 years in 2022 to 23.9 years in 2050, which represents a rise of 20 per cent. For older persons aged 80 years or over, life expectancy over the same period is projected to increase from 7.7 years to 9.6 years, which represents a rise of 25 per cent. Thus, the older the age group, the more significant are the expected relative gains in life expectancy.

Reductions in mortality have generally been substantially higher among women than men in almost all age groups. For example, the female advantage in life expectancy at birth ($e(0)$, female – $e(0)$, male) has increased in Asia and the Pacific from 3.4 years in 1950 to 5.2 years in 2022, although there are variations by country. By 2050, this gender gap is projected to decline slightly to 4.8 years. In 15 countries/areas in the region, female life expectancy

at birth now exceeds 80 years, compared to 9 countries/areas where male life expectancy at birth surpasses 80 years. By 2050, in more than 29 countries/areas in the region, women are projected to live to more than 80 years of age, while in only 16 countries/areas, are men expected to live beyond 80 years of age. Thus, longer life of older women presents a particular challenge for countries in which women are less likely to be covered by social protection. This leaves them at an increased risk of poverty in old age.

Gender differences in life expectancy at age 60 are particularly relevant to the study of the situation of older persons in the region (table 5). At age 60, older persons in Macao, China; Japan; Australia; Hong Kong, China; Singapore; the Republic of Korea; and French Polynesia are currently estimated to live for about another 26 years or more. In all seven countries/areas, the remaining life expectancy at age 60 is higher for women than men, with women in the Republic of Korea and Japan expected to live more than an extra 5 years, compared to men. Afghanistan, Kazakhstan and Fiji have the lowest levels of life expectancy at age 60, and the female advantage in life expectancy is particularly low in Afghanistan (although it is even lower in India). Differences in the female advantage in life expectancy in old age are often related to different risk factors, behaviours, lifestyles of women compared to men.

TABLE 5 Ten countries/areas with the highest and lowest life expectancies at age 60 in Asia and the Pacific, by sex and female advantage ($e(60)$, female – $e(60)$, male), 2022

Rank	Country/area	Life expectancy at age 60, highest (years)			Female advantage
		$e(60)$	$e(60)$, male	$e(60)$, female	
1.	Macao, China	27.0	24.8	29.1	4.3
2.	Japan	26.9	24.3	29.4	5.1
3.	Australia	26.1	24.7	27.4	2.7
4.	Hong Kong, China	26.0	23.9	28.2	4.3
5.	Singapore	25.9	24.0	27.6	3.6
6.	Republic of Korea	25.7	22.8	28.2	5.4
7.	French Polynesia	25.5	23.5	27.7	4.2
8.	Thailand	25.2	22.5	27.5	5.0
9.	New Caledonia	25.0	22.5	27.4	4.9
10.	Guam	24.0	21.7	26.3	4.6

Rank	Country/area	Life expectancy at age 60, lowest (years)			Female advantage
		$e(60)$	$e(60)$, male	$e(60)$, female	
1.	Afghanistan	15.1	14.0	16.1	2.1
2.	Kazakhstan	15.5	13.2	17.2	4.0
3.	Fiji	15.5	14.2	16.8	2.6
4.	Indonesia	15.6	14.1	17.1	3.0
5.	Nauru	15.7	13.4	17.6	4.2
6.	Marshall Islands	15.7	14.4	17.3	2.9
7.	Tuvalu	15.9	13.6	18.1	4.5
8.	Papua New Guinea	16.0	14.6	17.7	3.1
9.	Palau	16.2	14.0	18.5	4.5
10.	India	16.3	15.4	17.2	1.8

Source: United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (2022). World Population Prospects 2022, Online Edition.



Young and older women from South-East Asia. Photo: Martine Perret

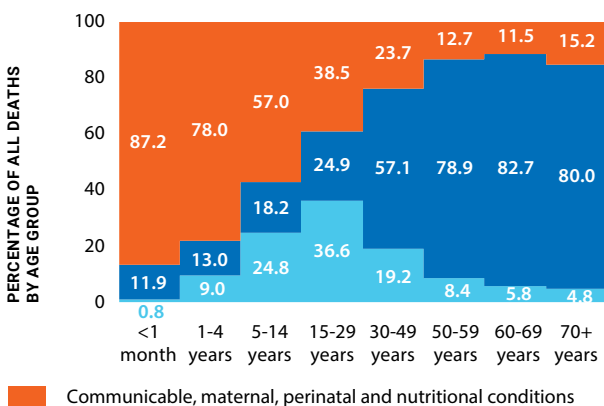
Living longer, however, does not always mean healthier lives. With the demographic and epidemiological transition under way, while people are living longer, they are also spending more years with disabling illnesses and/or injuries. This is particularly the case for women, as they generally outlive men.

Demographic and epidemiological transitions have resulted in a rise in non-communicable diseases (NCDs). In old age, they have become the leading cause of death globally and in Asia and the Pacific (figure 5). The most common NCDs are cardiovascular diseases

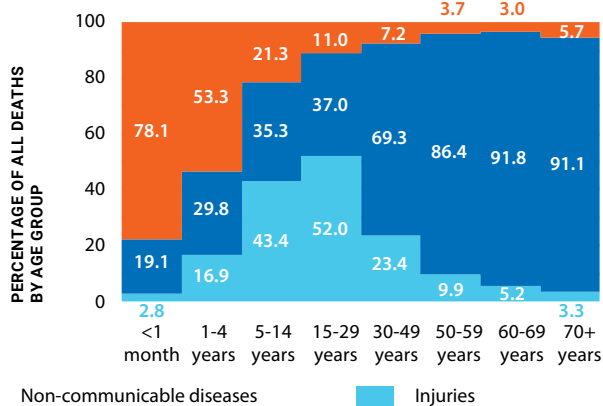
(including heart disease and stroke), diabetes, cancer and chronic respiratory diseases (including chronic obstructive pulmonary disease and asthma). While risk factors associated with NCDs – such as a sedentary lifestyle, tobacco use, excessive use of alcohol, and underlying physiological factors – can be identified over the lifespan, NCDs account for the largest share of cases of ill-health and are the main reason why older persons seek health care. Over the past few decades, the number of older persons being admitted to hospitals for cardiovascular, cerebrovascular and chronic respiratory illnesses, as well as for cancer, has increased significantly (Bloom, 2019).

FIGURE 5 Major causes of deaths by age in the WHO South-East Asia Region and the WHO Western Pacific Region, 2019

WHO SOUTH-EAST ASIA REGION

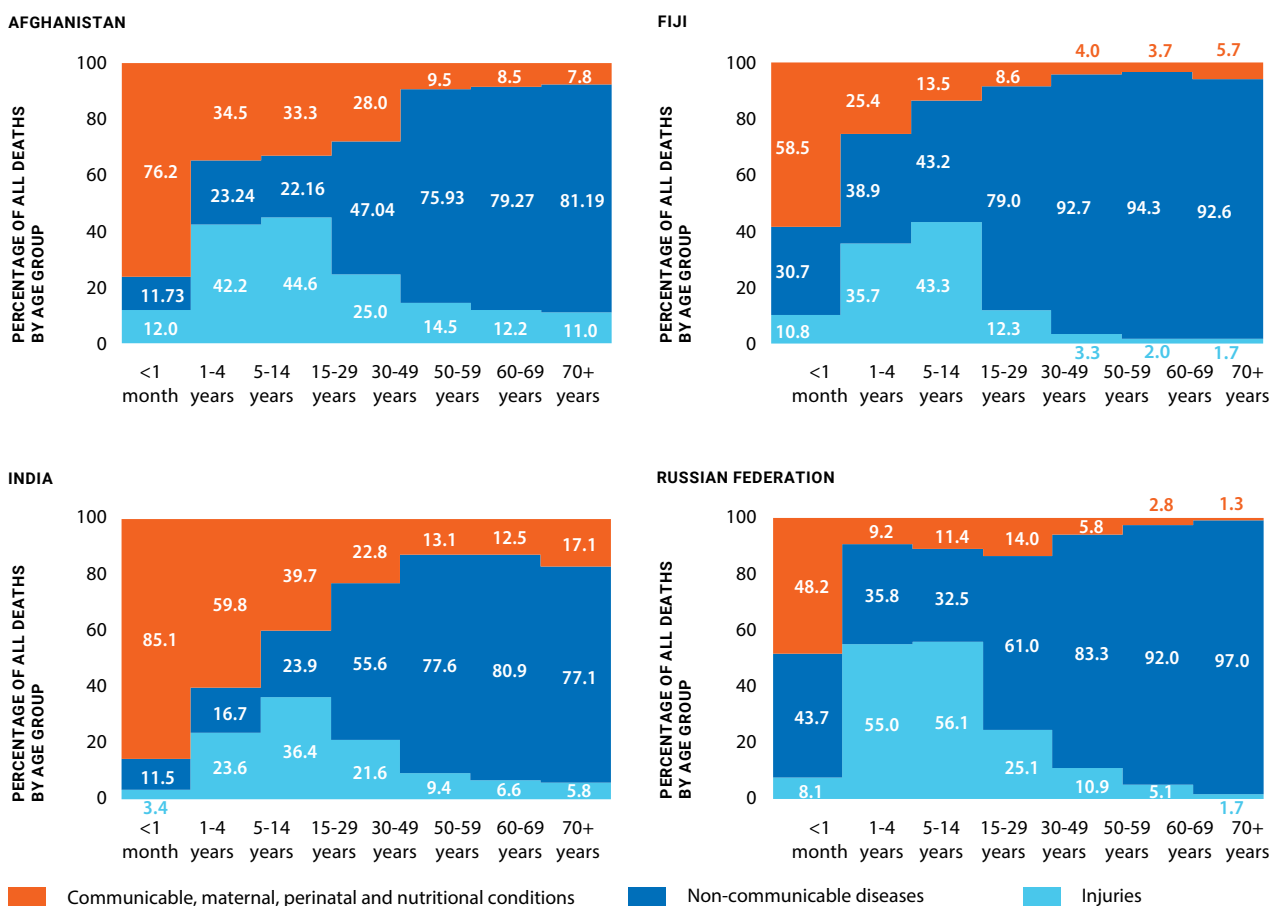


WHO WESTERN PACIFIC REGION



Source: WHO 2020. Global Health Estimates 2019: Deaths by Cause, Age, Sex, by Country and by Region, 2000-2019. Geneva. <https://www.who.int/data/gho/data/themes/mortality-and-global-health-estimates/ghe-leading-causes-of-death> (accessed 16 August 2022).

FIGURE 6 Major causes of deaths by age in selected Asia-Pacific countries, 2019



Source: WHO 2020. Global Health Estimates 2019: Deaths by Cause, Age, Sex, by Country and by Region, 2000-2019. Geneva. <https://www.who.int/data/gho/data/themes/mortality-and-global-health-estimates/ghe-leading-causes-of-death> (accessed 16 August 2022).

Despite general trends observed at the regional and subregional levels, significant differences in the leading causes of death by age can be observed at the country level (figure 6). Focusing on older persons, although NCDs dominate, they appear slightly less important, for example, in Afghanistan and India compared to Fiji and the Russian Federation. Relatively speaking, deaths of older persons from injuries are generally highest in Afghanistan, and deaths from communicable/infectious diseases are highest in India. The case of India illustrates the challenges faced by many low- and middle-income countries in the region affected by the “double burden of disease”, namely communicable diseases and NCDs (Vasooontara and others, 2016). In these countries, infectious diseases – such as dengue, diarrhoeal diseases, hepatitis, HIV/AIDS, influenza, measles, malaria and tuberculosis – remain an ever-present threat (for a discussion about the effects of COVID-19 on older persons, see ESCAP, 2022c). People in vulnerable situations, among them older persons, remain at a particularly high risk of dying

from communicable diseases. Moreover, with more people moving to urban areas which are often densely populated, the risk of infectious disease transmission increases. The projected growth in the number of older persons, along with the rapid rise in the prevalence of lifestyle-related risk factors, will contribute to a further increase in NCDs among older persons in Asia and the Pacific (Vasooontara and others, 2016). At the same time, communicable diseases remain a real danger for many people, in particular the poor, among them many older persons, who lack access to safe water, sanitation, hygiene, shelter and food.

Although the region has achieved progress in terms of improving people’s health and well-being, more needs to be done to prevent and effectively manage NCDs and promote universal health coverage. This is particularly important for older persons, as the prevalence of such diseases is high among older persons and their treatment occurs mainly among older persons.



Two older persons in Samoa engage enthusiastically during a community outreach workshop. Photo: UN Women/Ellie van Baaren

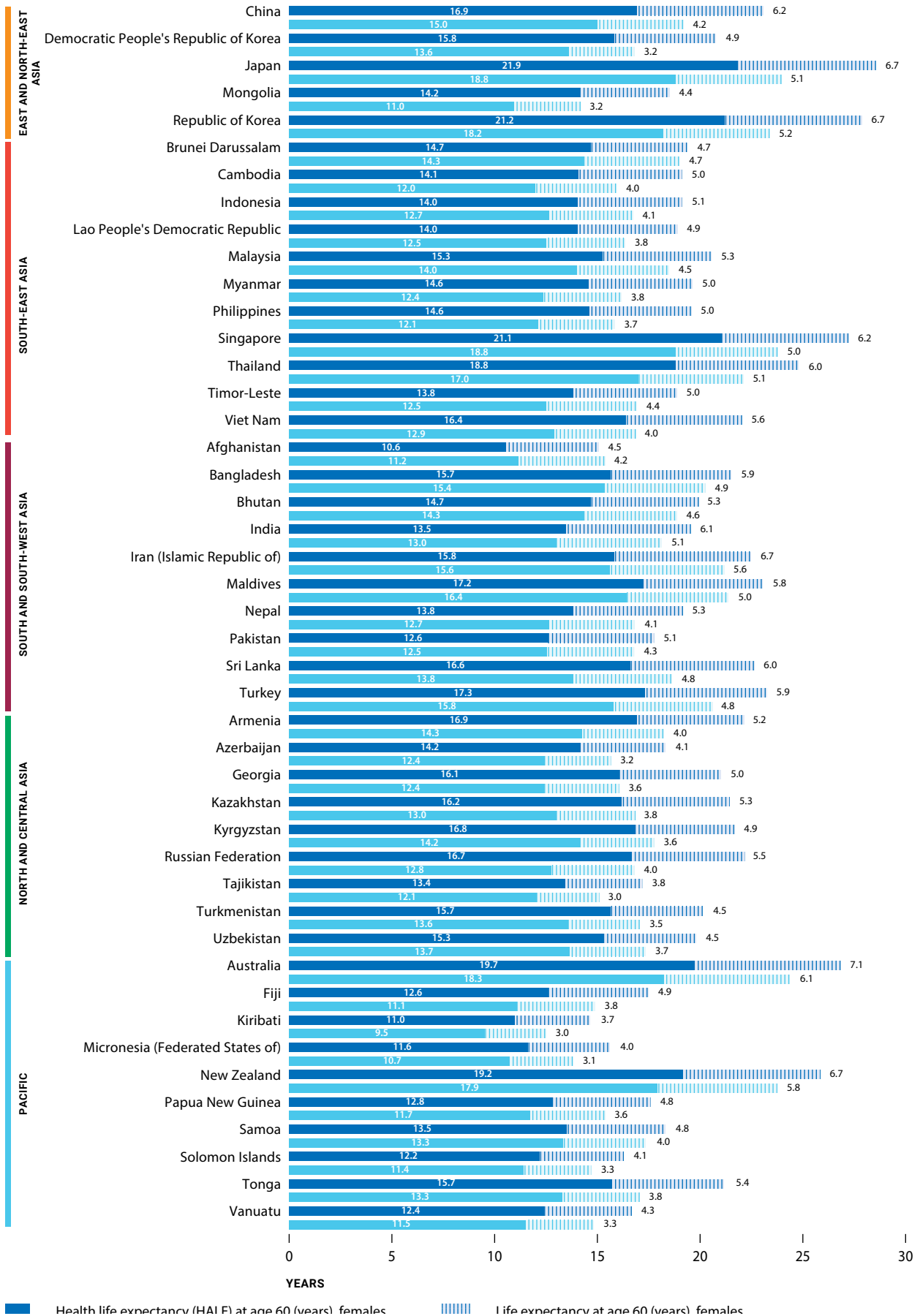
Comparing life expectancy to healthy life expectancy at age 60⁹ illustrates the interplay of health and longevity in old age (figure 7). In many countries of the region and in recent years, life expectancy at age 60 has increased faster than healthy life expectancy at age 60, and older women are spending more years living with disabilities than older men. In 2019, women at age 60 were expected to spend six or more years in less than full health due to disease and/or injury in the following countries in the region: Australia, Bangladesh, China, India, Islamic Republic of Iran, Japan, Maldives, New Zealand, the Republic of Korea, the Russian Federation, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Türkiye and Viet Nam. Although they tend to live longer than men, women generally experience higher levels of morbidity.

Moreover, compared to men, women, especially those in developing countries, enter old age with the accumulation of a lifetime of gender-based

disadvantages. Over the life course, they typically have fewer opportunities for education, lack social protection, including access to health services, and lack access to land ownership and income. They are often economically dependent on their spouses or other male household members. In old age, they frequently continue to perform unpaid care work in the home, including by caring for their typically older spouses as well as for their grandchildren. As women generally outlive men and their spouses are often older, they experience widowhood at higher rates than men. When their spouses pass away, they are vulnerable to discrimination, financial hardship and isolation. These experiences affect their social and economic situation in later life and increase their risk of living in poverty, ill-health and isolation. The rising number of older persons with impairments, in particular older women, has increased the demand for health and long-term care, including specialized care for older women; many countries in the region are not yet prepared to meet this demand.

9 Healthy life expectancy is defined as the “average number of years in full health a person (usually at age 60) can expect to live based on current rates of ill-health and mortality.” See: [https://www.who.int/data/gho/data/themes/topics/indicator-groups/indicator-group-details/GHO/healthy-life-expectancy-\(hale\)](https://www.who.int/data/gho/data/themes/topics/indicator-groups/indicator-group-details/GHO/healthy-life-expectancy-(hale)).

FIGURE 7 Life expectancy and healthy life expectancy at age 60, by sex, in Asia and the Pacific, by subregion and country, 2019



Sources: ESCAP calculations based on World Population Prospects: The 2019 Revision (see figure 1) and WHO, Global Health Observatory data repository. Available at: <http://apps.who.int/gho/data/?theme=main> (accessed on 12 March 2022).



Caregiver assisting an older person in a wheelchair. Photo: Freepik/Lifestylememory

Older persons with disabilities

Currently, it is estimated that 15 per cent of the population worldwide, or some 1 billion individuals, live with one or more disabilities (WHO, 2021a). It is estimated that Asia and the Pacific is home to more than 700 million persons with disabilities (ESCAP, 2022d). At the global level, more than 46 per cent of older persons – those aged 60 years or over – have disabilities and more than 250 million older persons experience moderate to severe disabilities (UN DESA, 2022a). The prevalence of disability varies by country in the region. Underreporting also occurs, and countries use different definitions and measurements of disability. Looking ahead, the projected increase in the number and share of older persons worldwide, and particularly in Asia and the Pacific, and the higher risk of a disability in older persons will lead to further increases in the population affected by a disability. Older persons with disabilities, given compounding vulnerabilities, face significant barriers to full and effective participation in society (ESCAP, 2022e). A recent study by the United States Census Bureau analysed the situation of older persons with a disability in selected Asian countries. Drawing on survey data, they reported on the share of older persons affected by sensory impairment, ambulatory disability and cognitive difficulties. Disability related to vision and mobility appeared to be the most common form of disability, and the share of women being affected by these impairments was greater than that of men. They also noted that in 2020, of the 59 million people

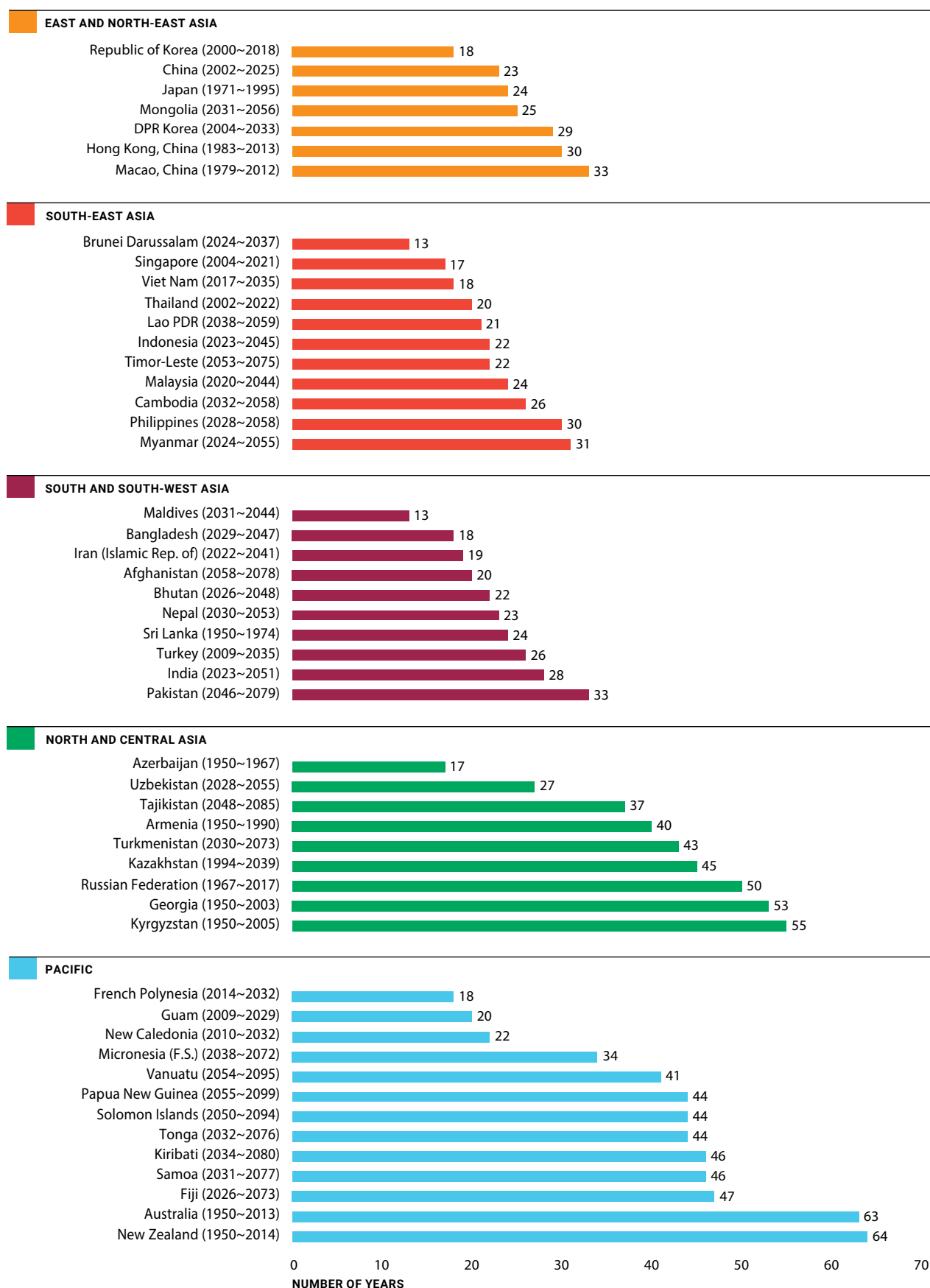
with dementia globally, 29 million were residing in Asia. The increase in NCDs might cause an upward trend in the incidence and prevalence of disabilities among older persons. Because the share and number of older persons in Asia and the Pacific is increasing, the number of older persons with disabilities in the region is also expected to rise (He and others, 2022).

Speed of population ageing

Owing to the significant decline in fertility over a relatively short period of time, as described earlier, countries in Asia and the Pacific are ageing very rapidly. Whereas in countries in more developed regions it has taken about a century for the share of the older population (aged 65 years or older) to increase from 7 to 14 per cent, or transition from an “ageing” to an “aged” society, it will take many countries/areas in the region less than 30 years (figure 8).

As shown below, it took Singapore and the Republic of Korea 17 and 18 years, respectively, to transition from an “ageing” to an “aged” society, while it took Australia and New Zealand more than 60 years. Given the speed of population ageing in the region, Governments will have less time to prepare for the impacts of population ageing. Many low- and middle-income countries are concerned that these rapid demographic shifts will lower potential gross domestic product growth rates and will hamper development. Thus, they might be growing old before getting rich.

FIGURE 8 Speed of population ageing in Asia and the Pacific, by subregion and country/area, 1950–2100: number of years required or expected for the percentage of the population aged 65 years or older to rise continuously from 7 to 14 per cent



Source: ESCAP calculations based on United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (2022). World Population Prospects 2022, Online Edition.

Note: data available from 1950 onwards.

Oldest old

The number of persons aged 80 years or over (oldest old) in the region is projected to increase at a faster rate than the total number of older persons. Between 1990 and 2050, the number of oldest old will grow more than 10 times, from 24 million to 287 million (table 6). Currently, 87 million oldest old live in Asia and the Pacific, of which 58 per cent reside in East and North-East Asia alone. By 2050, the proportion of oldest old in East and North-East Asia will be almost twice as large as that of Asia and the Pacific as a whole, while the proportion of oldest old in the Pacific will be the second highest in the region.

Currently, over 10 million persons aged 80 years or older reside in each of China, India and Japan (table 7). By 2050, the numbers for Bangladesh, China, India and Türkiye are projected to quadruple, and the numbers for Indonesia, the Republic of Korea, Thailand and Viet Nam are projected to triple.

Currently, the oldest old account for more than 4 per cent of the total population in Australia; Japan; Hong Kong, China; and the Republic of Korea (table 8); in Japan, one in ten people are aged 80 years or older. By 2050, the oldest old are projected to account for more than 10 per cent, or one in ten people, in 7 countries/areas of the region, and in Japan; Hong Kong, China; and the Republic of Korea they will most likely represent 15 per cent or more of the total population.

Many of the countries that comprise the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) are undergoing population ageing at a particularly fast rate. Given this context, ASEAN has made notable progress in developing evidence-based policies, strategies and guidelines, as well as implementing capacity-building initiatives on active ageing (box 1).

TABLE 6 Number and proportion of people aged 80 years or over in Asia and the Pacific and by subregion, 1950, 1990, 2022, 2030 and 2050

ESCAP and subregion		1950	1990	2022	2030	2050
		Number (thousands) and proportion (percentage)				
ESCAP	Number	7.4	24.0	87.5	120.2	287.0
	Proportion	0.5	0.7	1.9	2.5	5.5
East and North-East Asia	Number	3.9	11.3	50.5	69.9	162.0
	Proportion	0.6	0.8	3.1	4.3	10.8
South-East Asia	Number	0.4	2.6	8.7	11.9	30.7
	Proportion	0.2	0.6	1.3	1.6	3.9
South and South-West Asia	Number	2.2	6.3	20.5	30.0	78.6
	Proportion	0.4	0.5	1.0	1.3	3.1
North and Central Asia	Number	0.8	3.3	6.3	6.4	11.9
	Proportion	0.6	1.6	2.6	2.6	4.7
Pacific	Number	0.1	0.5	1.4	2.0	3.6
	Proportion	1.0	1.7	3.1	4.1	6.3

Source: United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (2022). World Population Prospects 2022, Online Edition.

TABLE 7 Top 10 countries with the highest number of the population aged 80 years or older in Asia and the Pacific, 1950, 2022 and 2050

Rank	1950		2022		2050	
	Country	Number (thousands)	Country	Number (thousands)	Country	Number (thousands)
1.	China	3.32	China	34.2	China	135.3
2.	India	1.24	India	14.7	India	55.9
3.	Russian Federation	0.53	Japan	13.0	Japan	16.2
4.	Japan	0.47	Russian Federation	5.4	Russian Federation	9.1
5.	Pakistan	0.37	Indonesia	2.7	Indonesia	8.9
6.	Sri Lanka	0.19	Thailand	2.5	Thailand	8.7
7.	Türkiye	0.14	Republic of Korea	2.2	Republic of Korea	7.3
8.	Bangladesh	0.12	Viet Nam	1.6	Bangladesh	6.7
9.	Australia	0.10	Bangladesh	1.5	Türkiye	5.5
10.	Iran (Islamic Republic of)	0.08	Türkiye	1.3	Viet Nam	5.4

Source: United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (2022). World Population Prospects 2022, Online Edition.

BOX 1 Population ageing in ASEAN

ASEAN Member States (Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Viet Nam) are among the fastest ageing countries in Asia and the Pacific. In 2022, about 109 million persons aged 60 years or over are living in ASEAN, representing 12 per cent of the total population and one sixth of all older persons in Asia and the Pacific. Most older persons in ASEAN are in Indonesia, Thailand and Viet Nam. ASEAN countries have experienced a significant decline in the total fertility rate from 1950 to 2022, with a fall from 5.8 to 2.1 children per woman, or replacement level. At the same time, life expectancy has increased, leading to rapid population ageing. ASEAN countries have recognized the importance of population ageing for their future economic and social development and adopted the Kuala Lumpur Declaration on Population Ageing in 2015 to foster concrete actions towards the empowerment of older persons.¹ In 2019, ASEAN Member States launched the ASEAN Center for Active Ageing, based in Bangkok, Thailand. The Center serves as a knowledge centre on active ageing and innovation; supports the development of evidence-based policies, strategies and guidelines; and implements capacity-building on active ageing. The Center collaborates with international and regional partners.²

Year	ASEAN				ESCAP region			
	Population 60+		Life expectancy at age 60, both sexes (years)	Total fertility (children per woman)	Population 60+		Life expectancy at age 60, both sexes (years)	Total fertility (children per woman)
	Thousands	Percentage			Thousands	Percentage		
1950	7.7	4.7	13.8	5.8	99.9	6.8	12.6	5.4
1990	28.8	6.6	17.2	3.3	260.3	7.9	17.4	3.2
2022	109.5	12.1	18.6	2.1	672.4	14.3	19.9	1.9
2050	173.1	22.0	21.8	1.9	1 340.2	25.9	23.9	1.8

Source: United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (2022). World Population Prospects 2022, Online Edition.

1 For the Kuala Lumpur Declaration on Ageing see: <https://asean.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Kuala-Lumpur-Declaration-on-Ageing-Empowering-Older-Persons-in-ASEANAdopted.pdf> (accessed 28 July 2022).

2 For more information on the ASEAN Center for Active Ageing and Innovation, see: <http://acai.dms.go.th/> (accessed 31 July 2022).

TABLE 8 Top 10 countries/areas with the highest percentage of the population aged 80 years or older in Asia and the Pacific, 1950, 2022 and 2050

Rank	1950		2022		2050	
	Country/area	Percentage	Country/area	Percentage	Country/area	Percentage
1.	Nauru	2.4	Japan	10.5	Hong Kong, China	17.7
2.	Sri Lanka	2.3	Hong Kong, China	5.4	Republic of Korea	15.9
3.	Palau	2.3	Australia	4.3	Japan	15.6
4.	Georgia	1.7	Republic of Korea	4.3	Singapore	13.5
5.	Australia	1.2	New Zealand	4.0	Thailand	12.9
6.	New Zealand	1.2	Russian Federation	3.7	Macao, China	11.0
7.	Azerbaijan	1.2	Thailand	3.5	China	10.3
8.	Marshall Islands	1.2	Niue	3.4	Northern Mariana Islands	9.9
9.	Armenia	1.1	Georgia	3.4	New Zealand	9.5
10.	Kiribati	1.1	Armenia	3.0	French Polynesia	8.7

Source: United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (2022). World Population Prospects 2022, Online Edition.

Older persons, youth and the working-age population

As countries go through the demographic transition, population age structures shift. The increase in the proportions of older persons has been accompanied by declines in the proportions of young people (figure 9).

The median age of the population in Asia and the Pacific, or the age above and below which the population is equally divided, is projected to increase by 20 years between 1950 and 2050, going from 32.1 years in 2022 to 40.3 years in 2050 (table 9). Given the female advantage in survival, the median age is generally higher for women compared to men. Currently, it is highest in East and North-East Asia at 39.3 years, followed by North and Central Asia (34.6 years), the Pacific (32.4 years), South-East Asia (30.1 years) and South and South-West Asia (27.0 years). At the country level, it is the highest in Japan (48.7 years), followed by Hong Kong, China (45.4 years) and the Republic of Korea (43.9 years). By 2050, the median age is projected to be above 36 years in all subregions of Asia and the Pacific, with 51.0 years reached in East and North-East Asia.

As countries go through the demographic transition and as fertility rates fall further, the share of the working age population initially increases and then declines. With fewer young dependent people to support, a country has a window of opportunity,

often referred to as the demographic dividend, for rapid socioeconomic development if the right policies are put in place and investments made. Investments in child health, education and gender equality are critical additional steps that contribute to enhanced family planning and socioeconomic development to harness the demographic dividend.

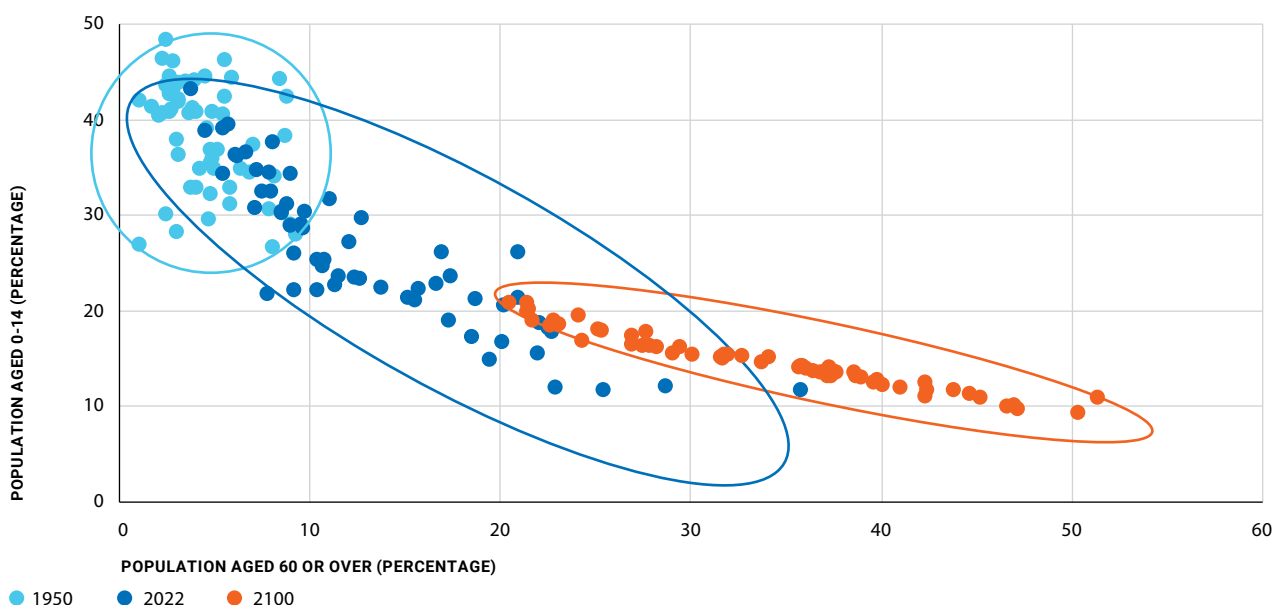
TABLE 9 Distribution of the population by broad age group and median age in Asia and the Pacific, 1950, 1990, 2022, 2030 and 2050

Year	Age group (percentage of total population)			Median age (years)
	0–14	15–59	60+	
1950	36.4	56.8	6.8	20.9
1990	33.2	58.9	7.9	22.4
2022	22.7	63.0	14.3	32.1
2030	19.8	62.1	18.1	34.9
2050	17.1	57.0	25.9	40.3

Source: United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (2022). World Population Prospects 2022, Online Edition.

Although many countries in the region have already benefitted from the demographic dividend, there are still others which are currently experiencing it, such as Bangladesh, India, Malaysia, Papua New Guinea, Pakistan, the Philippines and Timor-Leste,

FIGURE 9 Distribution of young and old age cohorts over time in Asia and the Pacific, by country, 1950, 2022 and 2050



Source: United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (2022). World Population Prospects 2022, Online Edition.

as their populations become increasingly concentrated in the working ages. For these countries, it is important to examine conditions and policies that affect the size of the dividend and convert the transitory age distribution benefit into a long-term boost for rates of economic growth. In other countries, such as China, Islamic Republic of Iran, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Viet Nam, the working-age population is growing slowly or in decline and the old-age population is growing rapidly. For these countries, there are concerns about slow economic growth or economic decline due to a large dependent old-age population or low saving rates.

Using the National Transfer Account (NTA) framework, some countries in the region have worked on an accounting of the production and consumption of economic resources over the life course, often supported by UNFPA (box 2). This sheds light on how each country relies on government programmes, family systems, and financial markets

to achieve the final distribution of these economic resources. NTAs provide a unique and invaluable framework for investigating how changes in the population age structure influence national development, economic security, generational equity, gender equality, public finances and many other important public policy issues.¹⁰

It is conventional to define old-age dependency as the number of older persons in relation to the number of the population of working age. This is only a very rough approximation of reality. At both younger and older ages, the proportion of those available for work can and does change over time, with lengthened schooling and issues affecting withdrawal of older workers from the labour force. For simplicity, adhering to particular cut-off ages for the working population will show that, as countries go through the demographic transition and fertility declines further, the share of the working age population will also eventually decline. Often, the ratio of the older population to

BOX 2 Support to countries on National Transfer Accounts

The UNFPA Asia-Pacific Regional Office has provided support to countries in the region over the past decades on capacity development and policy guidance using NTA evidence.

Maldives

In 2019, UNFPA supported the Maldives Bureau of Statistics to develop the country's NTA for the first time using the 2016 Household Income and Expenditure Survey. The Maldives Bureau of Statistics presented the analysis to the cabinet including the president in 2020, and the revised NTA (based on the 2019 survey) was presented to the Minister of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure in 2021. The revised NTA is a component of the SDG Financing Project of Maldives and informs the Integrated National Financing Strategy, especially the Social Sector Financing Strategy. The findings have been used in various forums especially in the context of increasing population and health and pension expenses, and for developing a social protection system.

Islamic Republic of Iran

With rapidly declining fertility and mortality, the country is facing an age structural transition, resulting in a youth bulge, rapid population ageing, and changes in population consumption and production patterns. UNFPA has supported technical capacity-building, constructing NTAs and National Time Transfer Accounts for the country. Data and research results have been disseminated for broader audiences, including policymakers, through policy briefs, and generation of a demographic dividend roadmap to advocate for more inclusive programmes to harness the benefits of the demographic dividend. As a result of this work, the Government is considering the relevance of the country's changing age structure in the development of revised population policies and programmes.

10 For more information, see: UN Population Division, 2013. National Transfer Accounts Manual: Measuring and Analyzing the Generational Economy. See also: <https://www.ntaccounts.org/web/nta/show/>

those of working age is used as a proxy to describe old-age dependency. The notion of old-age dependency assumes that economic activity ceases at age 60 (or 65, depending on the definition), and that older persons need economic support from others. However, the concept of old age is changing (box 3); moreover, older persons often continue to be economically active and provide economic and financial support to their families beyond these ages. As described later, much of this support, in particular by older women, is unpaid.

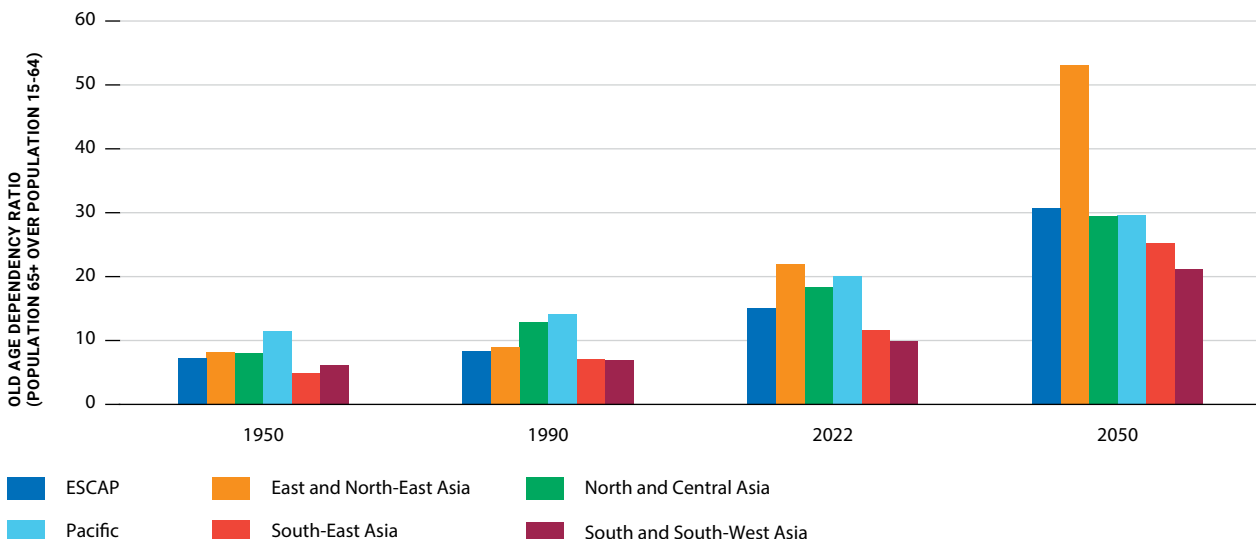
In this context, analysing old age dependency ratios for subregions in Asia and the Pacific merely serves as a description of the relationship between different age groups. As shown in figure 10, the share of the older population versus the working age population has grown continuously since the 1950s. By 2050, it is projected that there will be 30 older persons per 100 persons of working age (15–64) in the region and 53 per 100 in East and North-East Asia, where the highest dependency ratio among subregions in Asia and the Pacific will be found.

BOX 3 The concept of old age is changing

The concept of old age has changed over time. As countries have gone through the demographic transition, with declines in fertility and increases in life expectancy, the number and share of the older population has grown. Furthermore, the number of older persons aged 80 years or over has started to grow more rapidly than other segments of the older population. Population ageing has become a reality and a dynamic concept. Alternative measures of ageing have been proposed, such as those based on remaining life expectancy (for instance, prospective age) instead of the number of years of life left, or functional ability, to define healthy ageing.^{a, b} Policies and programmes have taken a life-cycle approach, in which sequential events and developmental steps throughout a person’s life are recognized as factors influencing the situation of older persons (UNFPA, 2020). In 2020, Governments adopted the United Nations Decade of Healthy Ageing (United Nations, 2020a), which stresses “the important role of public health policies and programmes in enabling the rapidly growing number of older persons to remain in good health and maintain their many vital contributions to the well-being of their families, communities and societies.”

a For more information on the definition of healthy ageing, see: www.who.int/news-room/questions-and-answers/item/healthy-ageing-and-functional-ability.
 b For alternative measures of ageing, see: Sanderson, W.C., Scherbov, S., *Prospective Longevity: A New Vision of Population Ageing*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press 2019 and Sanderson, W.C., Scherbov, S., 2020, “Choosing between the UN’s alternative views of population ageing” *PLoS ONE* 15 (7): eo233602. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0233602>.

FIGURE 10 Old age dependency ratios in Asia and the Pacific and by subregion, 1950, 1990, 2022 and 2050



Source: United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (2022). *World Population Prospects 2022*, Online Edition.

COVID-19 and older persons

As of July 2022, 175 million people in Asia and the Pacific had been infected with the virus responsible for COVID-19, which led to 1.7 million additional deaths. These figures, respectively, represent around 31 and 27 per cent of the officially recorded global totals (WHO, 2022a). At the global level, life expectancy at birth fell almost two years from 72.8 years in 2019 to 71.0 years in 2021, due mostly to the impact of COVID-19. The effects of the pandemic on life expectancy have varied across regions and countries. In North and Central Asia, for example, life expectancy at birth fell by 3.5 years between 2019 and 2021 (UN DESA, 2022b).

Older persons generally face higher risks of serious illness and have higher case fatality rates than people of younger ages (UN DESA, 2022b). Based on the latest data from World Population Prospects 2022, older persons at age 60 in Asia and the Pacific lost 1.5 years in life expectancy between 2019 and 2021, due mostly to COVID-19. The effect was strongest in South and South-West Asia and North and Central Asia (figure 11). Depending on the situation in countries, these general trends might vary within subregions.

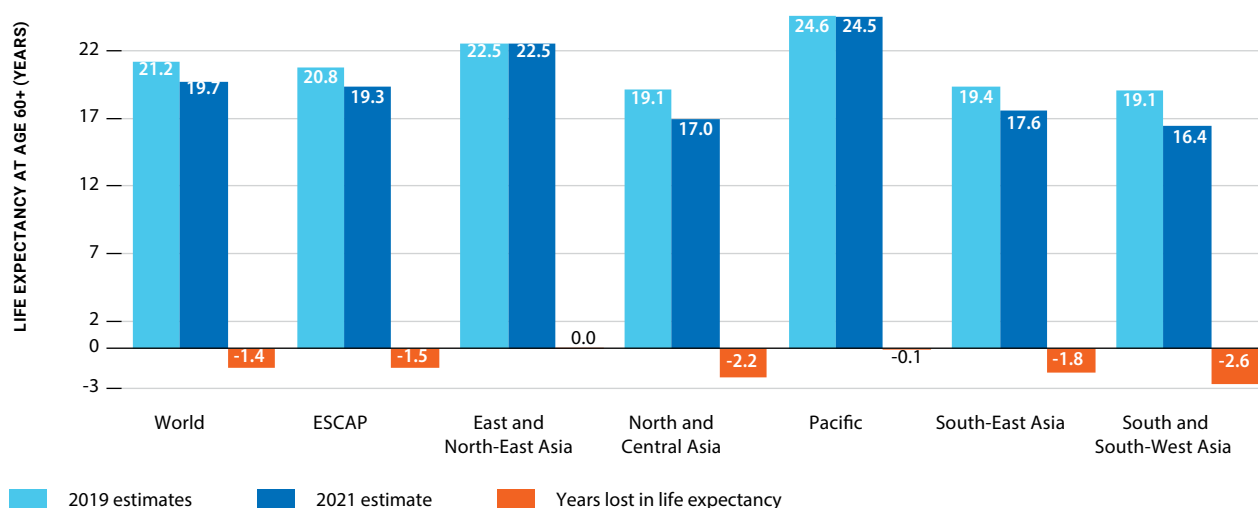
In May 2020, the Secretary-General of the United Nations issued a policy brief identifying the various impacts of COVID-19 on older persons (United Nations, 2020b). Largely because of the presence of underlying health conditions, the rate of COVID-

19-related deaths was significantly higher among older persons than among the population as a whole. Moreover, environmental and societal factors and their variations across countries and regions – such as the presence of robust old-age social protection systems, the capacity of the health system to treat and protect the most vulnerable, living arrangements and the existence of measures, including technology, to overcome isolation – contributed to differing impacts of the pandemic on older persons' mortality. More recent global case data (United Nations, 2021) indicate that older persons comprised only 14 per cent of positive cases worldwide but 80 per cent of COVID-19-related deaths.

Although timely age- and sex-disaggregated regional data on COVID-19 mortality and morbidity are lacking, some national research done in Asia and the Pacific during the early stages of the pandemic revealed a heightened mortality risk for older populations (ESCAP, 2022c). For example, by April 2020, 77 per cent of those who had died in mainland China were aged 65 years or older (Deng and others, 2021) and, in India, three quarters of the deaths that occurred between March and May 2020 were among those aged 50 years or older (Gupta and others, 2021).

In general, countries in Asia and the Pacific have reported lower COVID-19-related death rates in long-term care facilities compared to global trends. In part, this can be explained by the region's experience with

FIGURE 11 Estimates in life expectancy at age 60, and estimated years lost in life expectancy at age 60 due to COVID-19, 2019 and 2021 in the world, Asia and the Pacific and by subregion



Source: United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (2022). World Population Prospects 2022, Online Edition.

pandemics in recent years. Moreover, older persons in Asia and the Pacific are less likely to live in long-term care facilities compared to the United States of America and European countries; this has reduced their risk of infection from co-residents and caregivers in such facilities (He and others, 2022; UN DESA, 2001).

Older persons' use of health services during the pandemic has also declined, as studies in the Republic of Korea and Türkiye, among others, have found. Older persons have been more likely to postpone hospital treatment and avoid using health-care services, including as outpatients. These delays and postponements will affect the health and well-being of older persons in the future (ESCAP, 2022c).

Countries in the region have introduced different measures to limit the movement of people. Some of these measures have focused on older persons, such as those in the Russian Federation, where residential care facilities switched to a closed regime in order to prevent the spread of COVID-19, and staff self-isolated with residents for two-week shifts. In Türkiye, a partial curfew was declared for older citizens aged 65 years or over.

Older persons who have spent time in quarantine or have been locked down with family members or caregivers have faced higher risks of violence, abuse and neglect (United Nations, 2020b). Studies have shown that older men in the region have tended to bear the physical health burden of COVID-19, while women have tended to bear its mental health burden, as well as increased unpaid work and care burdens at home (ESCAP, 2022c).

In addition to the direct effects, movement restrictions and lockdowns have had significant social, physical and mental health impacts on older persons. The fear of becoming infected with COVID-19 and of dying from it, potentially reinforced by government-mandated quarantines, social distancing orders and online misinformation, has led to depression, anxiety and distress among older persons. Social isolation measures have resulted in loneliness. Fundamental to the negative impact of social isolation has been the loss of social support, particularly for those living alone.

Access to information and communications technology (ICT) has been crucial for mitigating the negative social effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.

In the Russian Federation, for example, a network of volunteers was established under the "Digital Volunteer" programme in Saint Petersburg which helped older persons to gain digital skills during the pandemic. However, owing to the "grey" and gender digital divides, not all older persons have had access to ICTs. Existing digital inequalities have been further exacerbated for some during the pandemic.

Nevertheless, older persons' strength and resilience, coupled with a strong sense of the importance of volunteering and social engagement, have not only helped older persons in need, they have also reduced distress and improved quality of life. Throughout the pandemic, older persons have been caregivers and provided social and economic support to family and friends.

Levels of preparedness for the COVID-19 pandemic have varied across the region. Vaccination efforts have often reflected pre-existing national differences in economic wealth and health system readiness. Older persons have frequently been prioritized for vaccines and boosters (Australia; Azerbaijan; Bangladesh; Bhutan; India; Japan; Kazakhstan; Macao, China; Malaysia; Mongolia; the Philippines; the Republic of Korea; Singapore; and Türkiye). However, most older persons have been denied a voice in the collective response to the pandemic (ESCAP, 2022c).

Increased economic inequalities prior to the pandemic have been compounded by the financial impact of COVID-19 on persons in vulnerable situations. Consequently, many older persons across the region, who already lacked adequate social insurance or assistance, have been forced to continue to work, find more work if underemployed, find work if unemployed or rely on their families for survival.

Some national data suggest that COVID-19 has significantly affected the economic security of older persons. A survey carried out in Thailand, for example, showed that 55 per cent of women and 57 per cent of men aged 60 years or older reported having a lower income as a result of COVID-19-related public health responses. A considerable proportion of persons aged 80 years or over reported having a "steady" or unchanged level of income during the pandemic.¹¹ In their responses to the voluntary national survey, Cambodia and the Philippines reported that older persons in their countries were consuming less food during the pandemic.

11 For more information on the survey, see: UNFPA, *COVID-19 and Older Persons: Evidence from the Survey in Thailand* (Bangkok, 2020).

In light of the economic hardships endured by older persons, many Governments in the region have responded by offering direct cash transfers, employment incentives, up-skilling and re-skilling incentives, food packages, pension supplements, medical leave and ways of offsetting the cost of utilities (electricity, water and the Internet) and rent. For example, Australia, Bangladesh, Cambodia, Malaysia, Mongolia, the Philippines, Thailand and Türkiye all reported having provided a combination of cash allowances, food and medical provisions.

Asia and the Pacific compared to other world regions

Given the drastic declines in fertility and increases in life expectancy in recent decades in Asia and the Pacific, population ageing has been particularly rapid in the region. The total fertility rate has already fallen below replacement level in the region and currently stands at 1.9 compared to 2.3 children per woman for the world average. Life expectancy at birth and at age 60 is also slightly higher in Asia and the Pacific than the global figure, although the respective values in Asia and the Pacific were lower compared to the world average in 1950. As a result, the proportion of persons aged 60 years or older relative to the total population stands at 14.3 in Asia and the Pacific compared to 13.9 per cent for the world. By 2050, the difference in the proportion of older persons is projected to have increased (table 10).

Moreover, in light of the sheer number of people living in the region, what happens to older persons there will shape trends at the global level. For example, in 2022, 60 per cent of all older persons in

the world reside in Asia and the Pacific. By 2050, that number is projected to increase to 63 per cent. Put differently, one in seven people in the world will be an older person from Asia and the Pacific. Countries from the region currently account for 5 out of 10 countries in the world with the largest number of older persons. Ranked by size of the older population in 2022, are: China, India, the United States, Japan, the Russian Federation, Brazil, Indonesia, Germany, Italy and France. By 2050, 7 out of 10 countries on this list will be from Asia and the Pacific, with Bangladesh and Pakistan joining China, India, Indonesia, Japan and the Russian Federation.

Countries/areas from the region will also account for a growing number of countries in the world where the share of older persons exceeds 14 per cent of the total population, often denoted as the benchmark for an “aged society”. In 2022, 21 countries in Asia and the Pacific surpassed the mark. By 2050, that number will have more than doubled to 45 countries/areas, or 40 per cent of all countries in the world. In four countries/areas of the region, the share of older persons will exceed 40 per cent: Hong Kong, China; the Republic of Korea; Japan; and Singapore. Additionally, in 10 countries/areas beyond the region the share of older persons will also surpass the 40 per cent threshold.

Europe¹² is the most advanced region in the world regarding population ageing, and 31.6 per cent of its population is projected to be aged 60 years or older in 2050, compared to 25.9 per cent in Asia and the Pacific. However, the projected share of older persons in East and North-East Asia will surpass Europe and reach 39.2 per cent by 2050.

TABLE 10 Demographic indicators, Asia and the Pacific compared to the world, 1950, 1990, 2022, 2030 and 2050

Year	Percentage of people 60 years or over		Percentage of people 80 years or over		Median age (years)		Total fertility rate		Life expectancy at birth (years)		Life expectancy at age 60 (years)	
	Asia-Pacific	World	Asia-Pacific	World	Asia-Pacific	World	Asia-Pacific	World	Asia-Pacific	World	Asia-Pacific	World
1950	6.8	8.0	0.5	0.6	20.9	22.2	5.4	4.9	42.9	46.5	12.6	14.1
1990	7.9	9.1	0.7	1.0	22.4	23.0	3.2	3.3	64.1	64.0	17.4	18.1
2022	14.3	13.9	1.9	2.0	32.1	30.2	1.9	2.3	73.0	71.7	20.8	20.2
2030	18.1	16.6	2.5	2.5	34.9	32.1	1.9	2.3	76.3	74.6	19.9	22.2
2050	25.9	22.0	5.5	4.7	40.3	35.9	1.8	2.1	79.5	77.2	22.0	23.8

Source: United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (2022). World Population Prospects 2022, Online Edition.

12 As defined by the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe.



An intergenerational ethnic minority group of women in traditional clothes work together on the rice fields in Mucangchai, Yenbai, Viet Nam. Photo: Shutterstock/Louis Nguyen

Population ageing is an irreversible trend; its scope and pace in Asia and the Pacific is globally unprecedented. The region is home to both rising economic and political powers, and countries remaining among the group of those that are least developed. Some countries in the region are leading technological transformations that are affecting many other countries in the world, while large parts of the region's population continue to experience

high levels of wealth and income inequality and inequality of opportunity. People in the region are highly vulnerable to climate change and natural disasters, which are on the rise and becoming more intense and unpredictable in the region. It is in this context that the following chapters of this report assess the situation of older persons in Asia and the Pacific and present recommendations on how to address related challenges and opportunities.

Chapter 2

Older persons and development





Nepali older woman dressed in traditional garments. Photo: UN Women/Kabita Thapa

Older persons are beneficiaries of development, and contribute to it. In this context, the first priority direction of the Madrid Plan of Action discusses interlinkages between the two. It calls for providing older persons with opportunities to continue contributing to society; offering income-generating work; providing opportunities for accessing knowledge, education and training; eradicating poverty among older persons, in particular older women and persons with disabilities; and supporting intergenerational solidarity to build societies for all ages.

The topic of older persons and development is also addressed in the 2030 Agenda and the United Nations Decade of Healthy Ageing (annex 2). For example, SDG 8 covers issues related to work and the ageing labour force, and SDG 1 focuses on eradicating poverty, which also concerns older persons. The United Nations Decade of Healthy Ageing action area on changing how people think, feel and act towards age and ageing, refers to, among others, combatting ageism. This is of concern, for example, when older persons face age discrimination in the labour market. Recognizing some of these synergies, the following sections provide an overview of the situation of older persons based on the survey responses, summaries of stakeholder consultations and meeting deliberations.

Institutional arrangements

As population ageing features more prominently on national agendas, governments have recognized the importance of establishing or strengthening existing government bodies, coordination mechanisms or national committees that oversee policies and programmes on older persons (table 11). Often such committees operate on the basis of a whole-of-government approach, such as in Bangladesh or Japan, which helps to coordinate work between different government entities. Also, in some countries, participation is at the ministerial level, such as in Japan, Mongolia or Türkiye, or the committee is chaired by the head of Government (as in Cambodia or Thailand) or a Minister (such as in Malaysia), which elevates the work of the coordinating body. Some countries explicitly invite non-governmental organizations to participate in these committees, such as in Bangladesh or Mongolia, to follow a whole-of-society approach in developing and implementing policies on older persons. In the case of Australia, a stand-alone Council of Elders, comprised of senior Australians of diverse skills, expertise and background, is being established to provide advice to the Government about aged care reform and ageing in general.

TABLE 11 Government institutions and national committees on ageing in Asia and the Pacific, 2022

Country/area	National coordinating body	Established	Functions
Armenia	Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (within the Ministry, there is a Division for the Elderly)	n/a	Coordinates work on issues related to older persons Makes proposals for policy development Oversees the protection of the rights and interests of older persons
Australia	Ministry for Health and Aged Care and Ministry for Senior Citizens and Aged Care Services	1921	Responsible for national health, well-being and medical research Responsible for the delivery of aged care services, aged care sector regulations and senior Australians
	Council of Elders	2021 onwards (currently being established)	Provides advice to the Government about aged care reform and ageing in general; the focus will be on aged care quality and safety; the needs of senior Australians and their families and careers; and the rights and dignity of senior Australians
Bangladesh	National Committee on Elderly Affairs	2017	Discusses and implements issues related to older persons Consists of government officials from different ministries, academia and civil society organizations
Bhutan	Elderly Care Programme (as part of the Ministry of Health) Ministry of Health is the national coordination body (there is no specific committee)	2012	Aligns health systems to the needs of older persons Supports capacity-building for caregivers Promotes healthy ageing and improves its measurement and monitoring Supports the development of age-friendly environments Develops sustainable and equitable systems for providing long-term care
Cambodia	Cambodian National Committee for the Elderly	2011	Develops national policies to improve the welfare of older persons Organizes the Elderly Day of the Kingdom of Cambodia on 1 October every year Coordinates work with other ministries, institutions and subnational authorities as well as civil society organizations Supports the Older People Association Raises the national budget for supporting the work of the Committee Consists of representatives of 15 Ministries and institutions (Prime Minister is Honorary Chairman and the Minister of the Ministry of Social Affairs, Veterans and Youth Rehabilitation is the Chairperson)
China	National Committee on Ageing	1999	Coordinates the national work on ageing Consists of representatives from central and state departments and people's groups Studies and develops strategies, plans and policies concerning older persons Coordinates work between different government entities and promotes international cooperation on population ageing
India	National Council for Senior Citizens National Programme of Health Care of Elderly Ministry of Health and Family Welfare	2012 2010–11	Advises the central and state governments on issues related to older persons with a focus on policies, programmes and legislative measures Engages in awareness raising and community mobilization Promotes physical and financial security, health and independent and productive living
Japan	Committee on Ageing Society	1995	Coordinates measured outlines in the Basic Act on Measures for the Ageing Society among different government agencies Prepares and implements the country's plan for an ageing society (ministerial level)
Kazakhstan	Ministry of Labour and Social Protection	1991	Develops state policy on labour, employment and social protection, and engages in norm-setting
Kyrgyzstan	Ministry of Labour, Social Security and Migration	1992	Develops and implements national policy on social security, labour and migration (ministerial level)
Macao, China	Inter-departmental Steering Group on Mechanisms for the Protection of Older Persons	2016	Coordinates and advances policies on older persons Monitors implementation of policies Chaired by the Secretary for Social Affairs and Culture
Malaysia	National Advisory and Consultative Council for Older Persons	1996	Oversees the implementation and policy status of Malaysia's National Policy for Older Persons and its Plan of Action Chaired by the Minister of Women, Family and Community Development and consisting of representatives of different ministries Seven subcommittees under the Council have been set up: health; social and recreational issues; housing and the environment; employment; economy; research and development and education and spirituality
Maldives	National Committee on Healthy Ageing and Rights of Elderly	2019	Monitors and provides guidance to implement the National Elderly Action Plan

Country/area	National coordinating body	Established	Functions
Mongolia	National Committee on Population Issues	2017	Headed by the Deputy Minister for Labour and Social Protection Composed of high-ranking officials from government (ministerial level), international organizations and civil society organizations
Philippines	National Commission of Senior Citizens	2019	Formulates, implements and monitors laws on older persons Conducts information, education and communication campaigns Represents the Philippines at the international level
Republic of Korea	Presidential Committee on Ageing Society and Population Policy	2005	Analyses mid- to long-term demographic trends and socioeconomic developments and establishes policy goals and implementation plans
Russian Federation	Ministry of Labour and Social Protection	2012	Develops state policy and norm-setting on population, social protection and social services
Singapore	Ministerial Committee on Ageing	2007	Provides whole-of-government leadership on ageing
Tajikistan	Ministry of Health and Social Protection	N/A	Develops and plans new policies
Thailand	National Older Persons Commission	2003	Implements and monitors policies on older persons Chaired by the Prime Minister
Türkiye	General Directorate of Services for Persons with Disabilities and the Elderly (affiliated with the Ministry of Family and Social Services)	2011	Coordinates strategies and national policies regarding persons with disabilities and older persons (ministerial level)

Source: ESCAP 2021/2022, Voluntary national survey on the implementation of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing in Asia and the Pacific responses. Available at: <https://www.population-trends-asiapacific.org/mipaa/voluntary-national-survey-response>

Recent legislation on older persons

Since the third review and appraisal of the Madrid Plan of Action in Asia and the Pacific, in 2017, more countries have adopted or revised policies and action plans on older persons. Some countries are currently developing new policies, plans and programmes. Although COVID-19 seems to have affected the adoption and implementation of some of the plans, considerable progress in different areas throughout the region has occurred. Annex 3 provides an overview of recent legislation, policies and programmes that have been adopted, revised or are due for adoption. In reviewing the policies, it is noticeable that there has been an emphasis on health and healthy ageing, care, social protection and gender.

Establishing and implementing policies and programmes on older persons is important, but action plans and monitoring frameworks are equally relevant to ensure transparency, accountability and overall success in implementation. Across the region, several countries reported that monitoring and evaluation mechanisms were in place. In India, Malaysia and Singapore, external non-government partners, including older people's associations (OPAs), monitor national policies and action plans

for older persons. In Kyrgyzstan and the Philippines, indicators are used to monitor and evaluate action plans, while in Singapore, additional surveys and in-depth interviews with older persons are being conducted to find out if citizens see evidence of policies being implemented, remaining relevant and meeting the needs of older persons.

Active participation of older persons in society

An important element of realizing the ambition of the Madrid Plan of Action to build a society for all ages is the active participation of older persons. This involves recognition of their social, cultural, economic and political contributions, as well as ensuring their participation in decision-making processes at all levels.

Measures to promote participation in politics and decision-making

In the Asia-Pacific region, the majority of countries have some policies, legislation or laws that encourage the active participation of older persons in the decision-making process. To this effect, 20 of the 22 survey-responding ESACP members reported measures to promote the active participation

of older persons. For some, formulating laws, regulations, rules and policies on issues related to older persons must incorporate the views of older persons or OPAs, as in China, where article 68 of the Law of the People's Republic of China on the Protection of the Rights and Interest of the Elderly stipulates this point. Others noted regular and well-coordinated mechanisms, allowing older persons to systematically participate in ageing-related decision-making processes at all levels. However, the extent of the involvement of older persons varies. Some countries remarked on the need to strengthen the role of older women in society and increase the number of older women in leadership roles. Furthermore, countries called for changing the perceptions on ageing among both younger and older generations.

There are numerous good practices in the region that foster the participation of older persons in decision-making processes. For instance, the Government of Australia has emphasized involving older persons both in policy design and the implementation of the aged care system reform. Its Council of Elders was established under the 2021–2022 budget and aims to ensure older Australians

have a voice in policymaking and the opportunity to share their advice and insights (box 4). The Government of Mongolia involves older persons in the policymaking processes across government institutions. Older persons are invited as senior advisors or as members of working groups when policies are drafted.

Some of the countries responding to the survey reported on mechanisms that support the bottom-up approach to ageing-related decision-making processes. For example, Councils of Older Persons operate at the local level in Türkiye. The Councils provide a platform for older persons to discuss their needs with regard to health, intergenerational relations, the environment, and sustainable and accessible cities, as well as culture and art. In Cambodia, the National Ageing Policy 2017–2030 promotes the participation of older persons in community development efforts and policy engagement, and in the Philippines, Republic Act No. 7432 mandates the establishment of Offices of Senior Citizens in cities and municipalities to ensure the implementation of local-level policies and programmes for older persons.

BOX 4 **The Council of Elders, Australia**

The Council of Elders was established in 2021 in order to provide a direct voice to government from older persons. The Council consists of 14 members, including academics, advocates, activists, specialists and researchers. It was formed on the recommendation of the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety to provide a formal platform from which members can advise the Government. The Council of Elders consults older persons on a wide range of matters related to aged care quality and safety, and the needs of older persons and their families and carers. Some of the priorities, which the Council looks at are:

- Creating an equitable, accessible and high-quality aged care system
- Supporting older persons to age well
- Tackling elder abuse, adequate housing, homelessness and supporting functional capacity at all stages of life

The Council of Elders serves a two-year term and meets six times per year, or more frequently as required.

Source: <https://www.australianageingagenda.com.au/executive/council-of-elders-determined-to-make-a-difference/>

Community-based organizations for older persons, or OPAs, play an important role in ensuring greater participation of older persons in policy and decision-making processes and improving their living conditions. Through advocacy and active participation, these organizations influence decision-making at all levels of government. Organizations that represent older persons are active in many ESCAP member States (table 12).

The Royal Society of Senior Citizens of Bhutan is involved in various discussions, decision-making processes and monitoring activities that affect older persons at the national and local levels (box 5). In Türkiye, the Ageing Vision Document highlights

effective participation of older persons and their organizations as critical in the design, financing, presentation and evaluation of policies, programmes and services. In Cambodia, OPAs are involved in the monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of the National Ageing Policy (2017–2030). In Viet Nam, a network of over 1,500 intergenerational self-help clubs, established by HelpAge and local partners, is active at the community level. The clubs are not only helping their members financially, they also contribute to them leading healthier, happier and more productive lives.¹³ In India, Gramin Vikas Vigyan Samiti (GRAVIS), a non-profit civil society organization working towards improving livelihoods of marginalized groups in the Thar

TABLE 12 Older people's associations in selected Asia-Pacific countries

Country	Name of organization
Bangladesh	Older Citizen's Monitoring Group
Bhutan	Royal Society for Senior Citizens
Cambodia, China, Indonesia, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka	Older People's Associations — (For China, there are also: China Old Science and Technology Association; China Senior Citizens Sports Association and special interest groups working on older persons' issues, such as the China Foundation for the Development of Ageing, the Chinese Society of Geriatrics, and the China Association of Universities for the Elderly)
Cook Islands	The Sixty Plus Group
India	Self-help Groups
Iran (Islamic Republic of)	Elderly's Centers of the Municipalities and Farzanegan Foundation, with offices in provinces
Lao People's Democratic Republic	Older people's group
Malaysia	National Council of Senior Citizens' Organizations, Malaysia, with senior citizen associations
Mongolia	Mongolian Association for Elderly People
Myanmar	Older People's Self-help Group
Nepal	Senior Citizens Clubs
Philippines	Older People's Organisation
Republic of Korea	Older People's Community
Thailand	Elderly/Senior Citizens Club
Türkiye	Councils of Older Persons (at the local levels)
Viet Nam	Intergenerational Self-help Club

Source: <https://www.refworld.org/pdfid/55c9e6664.pdf>, accessed 19 July 2022 and ESCAP 2021/2022, Voluntary national survey on the implementation of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing in Asia and the Pacific responses. Available at: <https://www.population-trends-asiapacific.org/mipaa/voluntary-national-survey-response>

Note: Macao, China; Japan; Kazakhstan indicated that numerous organizations exist, but they did not name them.

BOX 5 Representation of older persons in decision-making processes, Bhutan

The Royal Society of Senior Citizens of Bhutan, the country's only civil society organization for older persons, is often engaged by government agencies to participate in various discussions, decision-making processes and monitoring activities which may affect older persons. At the local level, village older persons are always represented in community planning and programming efforts. The engagement of older persons was also ensured in the development of the 12th Five-Year Plan (2018–2023) by the Gross Happiness Commission of the Royal Government of Bhutan.

Source: ESCAP Survey response, Bhutan, 2021.

13 Viet Nam did not submit a survey. This information is based on: <https://www.un.org/en/desa/viet-nam%E2%80%99s-self-help-clubs> and <https://helpagevietnam.org/hoat-dong/cau-lac-bo-lien-the-he-tu-giup-nhau/>

Desert and other regions of India, helps organize older persons in Village Older People's Associations to gain greater attention regarding their well-being in local communities.

According to the survey responses, in 20 of 22 countries, OPAs receive financial, technical and policy support from the Government, however, to differing degrees. For instance, in Australia, the Government provides funding to OPAs, which in many cases become implementing partners for policies and programmes that benefit older persons. In Maldives, the Government provides technical support and platforms to raise awareness on older persons' issues.

Helping older persons to stay physically active

Facilitating people to engage in physical activity contributes to maintaining their quality of life, health and physical function, with benefits over the life course. Various measures to facilitate the participation of older persons in physical activity were reported by 17 countries. Often, such activities target the entire population, but they also have a significantly positive affect on older persons. For example, Australia's National Preventative Health Strategy of 2021 aims, among others, to increase support for people's activity levels and healthy lifestyles to prevent chronic diseases. Specific initiatives and programmes targeting older persons include awareness raising efforts, and fitness and sports events. In Singapore, Health and Wellness Active-Ageing Programmes encourage regular participation of older persons across different health domains (box 6). In Malaysia, the Government has set up Senior Citizen Activity Centres (Pusat Aktiviti Warga Emas) to encourage active ageing. As of June 2022, 51,000 older persons had participated in 153 centres nationwide. In addition, Malaysia has collected information related to the physical activity of older persons through its Population and Housing Census of 2020. Kazakhstan is currently opening and operating "Active Longevity Centers" for older persons throughout the country. The centres generally offer training in computer literacy, the use of smartphones and English language. In addition, they offer legal and psychological consultations, and instruction in folk art, free of charge, as well as opportunities for playing games and exercising. In China, a number of plans and laws emphasize the importance of physical activity for older persons and propose measures to make public sports facilities age friendly.

BOX 6 Health and Wellness Active-Ageing Programmes, Singapore

The objective of the health and wellness active-ageing programmes is to get older persons to take charge of their own health by participating in various programmes and activities to ensure a continued high quality of life as long as possible. The programmes offer persons aged 50 years or over opportunities to take part in activities that support their physical, mental and social welfare. It focuses on three areas:

- Going to health screening
- Participating in physical activities to maintain health and fitness
- Engaging in networks and social activities

Source: ESCAP Survey response, Singapore, 2022.

Volunteerism and intergenerational exchange

Volunteerism among older persons is beneficial to them and other members of society. Often, volunteer activities provide training opportunities, social participation and inclusion, and strengthen intergenerational solidarity. Many countries reported on volunteer initiatives with older persons or that target them as recipients. The Singapore Silver Volunteer Fund, for example, aims to provide funding support for the creation of diverse volunteering opportunities for older persons and build capacities to strengthen volunteer management and training.

Almost all member States report that they offer opportunities for intergenerational contact and exchange. For example, in Kazakhstan, the Ministry of Information and Social Development has established the Roadmap for the Development of Volunteering for 2021–2023, which includes the implementation of the Silver Volunteering project to involve older persons in project activities. In Türkiye, the Government has initiated programmes that foster volunteering among younger and older persons for intergenerational exchange, such as the Intergenerational Solidarity, Meeting of Generations, While You Were Small, We Grow and Ageing Youth with Youth projects (box 7). Malaysia initiated intergenerational programmes for older persons, children and youth in 2018.

BOX 7 Volunteering activities supporting intergenerational ties, China, India and Türkiye

India

INTERGENERATIONAL WALKATHONS ON INTERNATIONAL DAY OF OLDER PERSONS (1 OCTOBER)

Across India, the Government, the private sector and civil society organizations come together to organize intergenerational walkathons involving young people and old persons to encourage exchanges of idea, intergenerational bonding and exercise. The walkathons have a theme and generally encourage caring and giving respect to older persons.

Source: ESCAP Survey response, India, 2022.

Türkiye

INTERGENERATIONAL SOLIDARITY PROJECT

This is a social responsibility project, which is carried out by the University of Ankara's Ageing Studies Application and Research Center. The project aims to foster closer intergenerational ties through visits involving older persons and youth, conferences, programmes at residential homes and various activities that support the exchange of information and experience among generations.

AGEING YOUNG WITH THE YOUTH PROJECT

This is being carried out by the Mersin Alzheimer's Association and brings together older persons who are isolated from society due to the COVID-19 pandemic, university students and volunteers. The project aims to create a stronger society by ensuring intergenerational communication.

WHILE YOU WERE SMALL, WE GROW PROJECT

For this, high school students and older persons at the 3rd Age University came together in 2018 in an exchange of games among younger and older persons representing their generations. The project resulted in the "Intergenerational Game Festival" on World Game Day.

China

SILVER AGE ACTION

Since 2003, the National Committee on Ageing has implemented this project to support retired senior professionals from more developed regions of the country in the Eastern provinces to provide consulting services and assistance to less developed regions in the Western provinces on issues related to health, industry, agriculture, education, science, technology, culture and archaeology.

SILVER AGE LECTURE PROGRAMME

The Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Finance have jointly implemented this programme to recruit outstanding retired educators and researchers to give lectures at educational facilities in rural areas.

Source: ESCAP Survey response, China, 2022.

MEETING OF GENERATIONS PROJECT

This was initiated by the Ministry of Family and Social Services in 2017 and ran until 2019. A continuation of the project is outlined in the Turkish 2020–2030 Ageing Vision to support communication and intergenerational solidarity. Some of the actions determined to ensure the full and active participation of older persons in social life and to increase intergenerational solidarity are:

- Supporting communication and intergenerational solidarity between older persons and their children and grandchildren
- Encouraging programmes for transferring the experiences of older persons to future generations
- Carrying out studies to help eliminate the loneliness of older persons

Source: Republic of Turkey, Ministry of Family and Social Services (2021).

The programmes are implemented at the state level and allow older persons to engage with younger people in conversations about the importance of social connectedness. They also allow older professionals to share knowledge, ideas and expertise. The Russian Federation has initiated the “Silver Volunteerism” programme that aims to strengthen intergenerational ties.

Social and cultural recognition

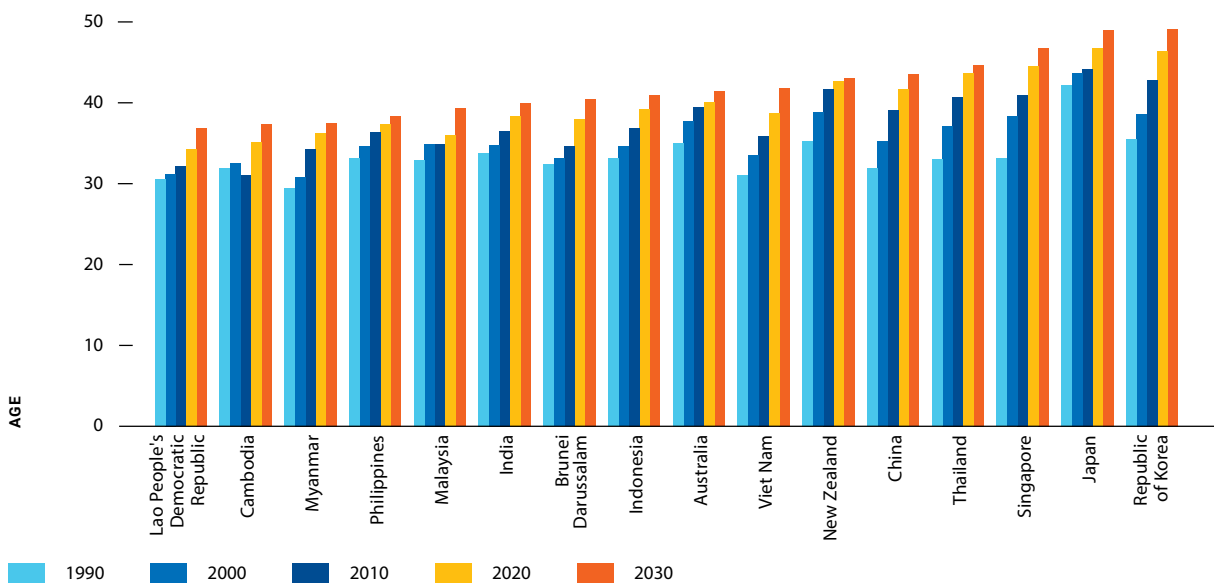
Countries responding to the survey reported implementing measures to enhance social and cultural recognition of older persons. Activities include campaigns, programmes and training programmes. For example, in Singapore, the Government partners with the movement Families for Life to organize the annual Celebrating Our Grands campaign to promote family values and intergenerational solidarity. Kazakhstan offers training for media representatives, which aims to combat negative stereotypes, prejudice and discrimination, and to establish a new culture and positive attitude to ageing. The National Committee on Ageing in China organizes a month of respect for older persons nationwide and works with localities to promote policies on health management and the integration of health and social care for older persons. During this month, there are also activities

on protecting the rights and interests of older persons and increasing their knowledge concerning protection against fraud.

Work and the ageing labour force

An important factor of ensuring active participation of older persons in society and development is through their continued involvement in the paid labour force. The labour force in Asia and the Pacific has been getting older, with a steady increase in the median age of workers in all countries (figure 12). As discussed in chapter 1, the pace of ageing is expected to accelerate significantly until 2030 in almost all countries in the region and will affect the median age of people in the labour force further. This not only adds increased pressure on pension systems, it challenges the provision of employment opportunities for all, especially for older persons who want to work. These impacts are exacerbated by the difference in labour force participation between women and men. Action in these areas can benefit the achievement of the SDGs, including its goal to promote full and productive employment and decent work for all (SDG 8) (annex 4). In addition, the right measures could turn the ageing workforce into a silver dividend and support a silver economy.

FIGURE 12 Median age of the labour force (years) in selected Asia-Pacific countries, 1990, 2000, 2010, 2020 and 2030



Source: ILO (2018). Preparing for the future of work. National policy responses in ASEAN+6 (accessed 29 July 2022).
 Additional source: https://www.ilo.org/asia/media-centre/news/WCMS_818956/lang--en/index.htm (accessed 15 August 2022).

Formal and informal work

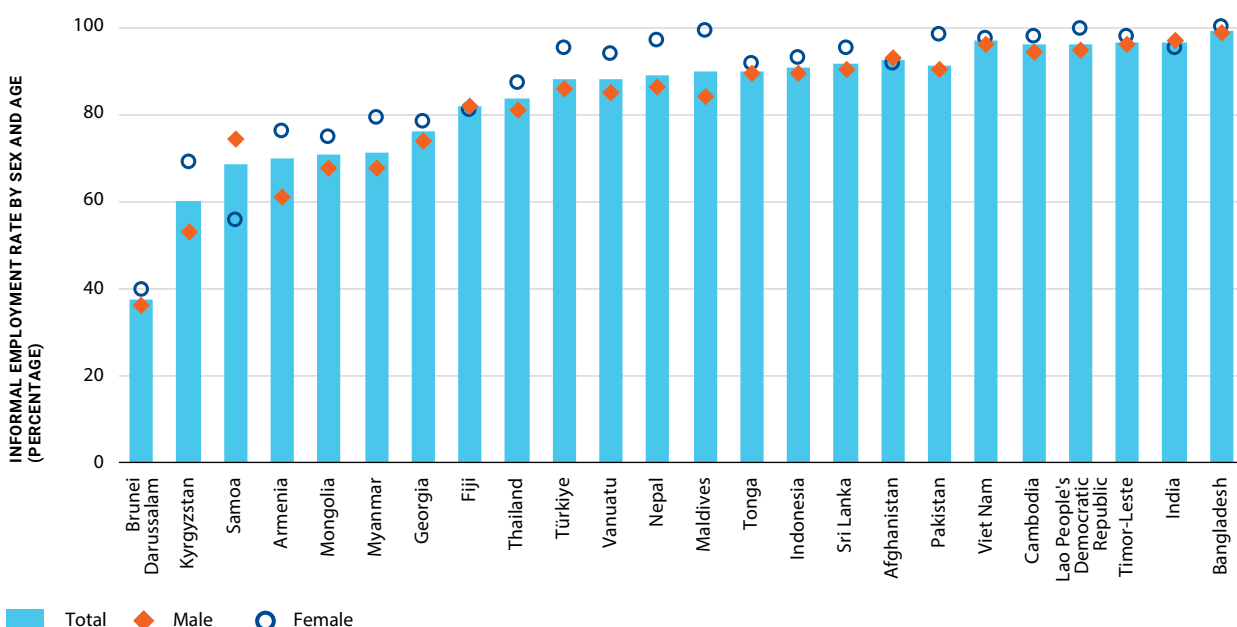
Household and employment survey data show that many older persons in Asia and the Pacific are still in employment, but mostly in the informal sector (figure 13). Therein, the share of older women is often greater than the share of older men. Jobs in the informal sector, however, do not provide social protection, leaving older persons vulnerable and dependent on families and societies (ESCAP, 2022f).

A total of 20 of the 22 countries responding to the survey have been supporting the participation of older persons in income-generating work. They have recognized the importance of providing skills training for older persons and addressing discriminatory attitudes towards older persons working in both the formal and informal sectors. Significant achievements in this regard, for example, have been realized in Australia, Malaysia, Mongolia, the Philippines and the Republic of Korea (box 8). Initiatives such as job-matching efforts, advisory services and employment programmes were reported. For example, in Malaysia, the Government has implemented a range of programmes and operated platforms such as the Virtual Hiring Seniors Workshop, Job Matching Centre, Media Platform and Malaysian Creative Capacity Development Enhancement Programme.

According to survey responses, 16 countries reported provision of incentives for longer working life opportunities and more flexible retirement choices. Some countries reported on broader strategies that aim to facilitate access of older persons to employment, regardless of age. For instance, the Russian Federation promotes the employment of older persons within its current Strategy of Actions for Senior citizens until 2025. Tajikistan’s National Development Strategy for the period to 2030 calls for flexible employment arrangements for older persons. Other countries favour initiatives that aim at better utilizing the work experience of older persons as well as supporting employers to retain or rehire them.

Some 19 of the countries responding to the survey recognized the benefits of increased work experience with age in the labour market. In certain cases, this is embedded in the national ageing policy, whereas in others increased work experience is translated into higher pensions or salaries. Moreover, 17 of the countries responding to the survey have implemented measures to better utilize older persons’ work experience. Examples highlighted are job fairs, job matching centres or specific programmes, such as in China, where the ‘Silver Age Action’ initiative recognizes the skills and knowledge of older persons and targets retirees to

FIGURE 13 Employment of the population aged 65 years or over in the informal sector of the economy as a percentage of total non-agricultural employment, selected Asia-Pacific countries, by sex, latest available year



Source: ILO (2022). “Informal employment rate by age and sex.” ILOSTAT database, <https://ilostat.ilo.org/data> (accessed 15 August 2022).

carry out assistance. Also in China, communities are encouraged to establish “information banks” of retired experts who wish to volunteer and provide vocational training and guidance to younger professionals. Similarly, a programme for the development of senior professional services was reported by Mongolia, and Thailand noted developing a “Brain Bank Volunteer System”, a registration system of older professionals who wish to volunteer and share their expertise in different areas of work.

Age discrimination in the workplace still occurs in many countries in Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP, 2022g). Only a few countries, such as Azerbaijan and the Philippines, reported on legislation regulating the preferences, needs and rights of older persons in the labour market. For instance, in the Philippines, the Anti-Age Discrimination Act of 2016 aims to ensure equality in employment opportunities and in treatment in the workplace by promoting the employment of individuals based on their competencies, regardless of age. Furthermore, it prohibits acts of age discrimination in employment for all older persons (Commission on Human Rights of the Philippines, 2021) (box 8).

Another key challenge is the lack of women participating in the formal labour market; this makes them more vulnerable to income insecurity and poverty in old age. The majority of older persons who work do so in the informal sector due to, for instance, age-based barriers. Some countries reported measures to close the gender pay gap, as described below. However, in order to address this challenge, income security policies should take into account the position and rights of women in the labour market.

The future of work

In Asia and the Pacific, nearly all countries have a set statutory retirement age (table 13) for those who are covered by a pension scheme (see figure 14 for coverage of contributory pensions), which ranges from 55 through 65 years. Some countries have increased the statutory retirement ages over time. The retirement age in Malaysia, for example, was raised from 58 to 60 in 2012. Since 2019, the general retirement age in Indonesia has been 57 years; this will gradually increase by one year every three years to 65 by the year 2050. However, it should

BOX 8 Support for the participation of older persons in income-generating work, Philippines

Government assistance concerning the employment of older persons

Older persons who have the capacity and desire to work, or be re-employed, are provided information and job-matching services. Moreover, financial support is offered to companies that employ older persons, while the government assists in designing and implementing training programmes that provide skills and welfare or livelihood support to older persons.

Anti-Age Discrimination in Employment Law

This law of 2016 prohibits employers to decline employment applications based on age; to discriminate against persons in terms of compensation, conditions or privileges of employment based on age; to deny promotion or opportunity for training because of age; to lay off employees or workers because of age; and to impose early retirement on the basis of age.

Dole Integrated Livelihood Programme and Emergency Employment Programme

These programmes seek to contribute to poverty reduction and reduce the vulnerability to risks of the working poor, and vulnerable and marginalized workers, including older persons, either through emergency employment, or the promotion of entrepreneurship and community enterprises.

Republic Act 7432

This act provides any qualified senior citizen, as determined by the Office for Senior Citizen Affairs, opportunities to render his/her services to the community in a number of areas including consultancy services, teaching or training, and lectures and aid in fields like agriculture, health, environmental protectionism and tourism. The Office of Senior Citizen Affairs may award or grant benefits or privileges to older persons.

Source: ESCAP Survey response, Philippines, 2021.

also be taken into consideration that, because of low coverage of contributory pensions in many countries, the statutory retirement age does not apply to many men and even more so women in the region.

Japan is also raising the retirement age for civil servants and putting in place re-employment policies. In Singapore, the retirement age of 62 is set to be increased to 65, with a previous re-employment option rising from 67 to 70 by 2030 (ESCAP, 2022f). However, gaps in the retirement age for women and men remain in a number of countries. For example, in Türkiye and various countries in North and Central Asia the retirement age for women ranges from being 2 to 5 years lower than that of men. Gender differences in the statutory retirement age affect the volume of pension savings for women vis-à-vis men. The majority of reporting countries indicated that they were attempting to close the pension pay gap.

Older persons that remain in the workforce after retirement are often able to maintain income security, as well as physical and mental health (Dannefer, 2003). Working longer can translate into working life opportunities with more flexibility regarding working hours, part time and full-time work, length of annual leave, career flexibility and higher salaries or pensions. Of the 22 countries responding to the survey, 18 promote longer working lives by encouraging employers to offer (re)employment to older employees. For example, in order to promote the employment of older persons, the Republic of Korea’s Older Worker Development Institute implements various initiatives such as the Senior Internship, and the Age-Friendly Enterprises programmes (box 9). Japan subsidises companies that raise the mandatory retirement age to 65 or older or take measures for securing employment until age 66 or older. In Australia, the Work Bonus programme and the Pension Income Test programme provide incentives for pensioners to work by allowing them to keep more of their pension when they have income from work. Kazakhstan offers short-term training on in-demand professions and the basics of entrepreneurship to pre-retirement persons under the State Programme for the Development of Productive Employment and Mass Entrepreneurship 2017–2021.

TABLE 13 Statutory retirement age for selected Asia-Pacific countries/areas, by gender, 2018–2021

Subregion and country	Statutory retirement age	
	Male	Female
East and North-East Asia		
China ^a	60	55
Hong Kong, China ^p	60+	60+
Japan	not below 60	not below 60
Macao, China	-	-
Republic of Korea	60	60
Mongolia ^j	60	55
South-East Asia		
Cambodia ^g	60	60
Malaysia	60	60
Philippines ^k	65	65
Singapore	62	62
Thailand ^l	60	60
South and South-West Asia		
Bangladesh ^{a, b, c}	59+	59+
Bhutan ^{d, e, f}	56+	56+
India ⁿ	60	60
Maldives ⁱ	65	65
Türkiye ^m	60	58
North and Central Asia		
Armenia	65	63
Azerbaijan ^q	65	62
Kazakhstan ^h	63	60
Kyrgyzstan	63	58
Russian Federation ^s	60	55
Tajikistan ^r	63	58
Pacific		
Australia ^t	-	-

Source: ESCAP 2021/2022, Voluntary national survey on the implementation of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing in Asia and the Pacific responses. Available at: <https://www.population-trends-asiapacific.org/mipaa/voluntary-national-survey-response> and data from the World Social Protection Database (2020–2022), ILO.

Note: a 59 for government officers; b 60 for freedom fighters; c 65 for teachers and justices; d 60 for specialists and executives; e 58 for management and professionals; f 56 for support and supervisory services; g 60 for civil servants; h with a gradual increase for women to age 63 by 2027; i 55 for early retirement; j also earlier, given special provisions if the person has contributed to a pension system; k 55 for members of the armed forces, the coast guard, the national police, the Bureau of Fire Protection, and the Bureau of Jail Management; l 60 for the public sector and no age set for the private sector; m for new entrants into the pension system between September 1999 and October 2008; n government employees and private sector might set their own retirement age; o 50 for women in blue collar employment; there are additional guidelines for specific employment groups; p 60 for civilian officers and 55/57 for disciplined services officers appointed to the civil service on or after 1 June 2000 but before 1 June 2015 (or 65 for civilian officers and 60 for disciplined services officers, regardless of their ranks, for those who have opted to extend their service) and 65 for civilian officers and 60 for disciplined services officers, regardless of their ranks, appointed to the civil service on or after 1 June 2015; q retirement age for women will increase gradually by 0.5 years until it reaches 65; r for men, 63 with at least 25 years of covered employment and for women, 58 with at least 20 years of covered employment; s in 2018, the Government approved a bill to gradually increase the retirement age for men to 65, starting from 2019 until 2028; t while there is no statutory retirement age in Australia, there is a qualification age for the Age Pension. From 1 July 2017 this started to increase (from 65 years) by six months, every two years, reaching 67 years by 1 July 2023.



Two women selling rice and food at a local market in the old city; they sit on the crowded streets and offer their food in Hoi An, Viet Nam. Photo: Shutterstock/Jazzmany

BOX 9 Longer working life opportunities and more flexible retirement, Republic of Korea

In the Republic of Korea, various initiatives are implemented by the Korea Older Worker Development Institute, which is affiliated with the Ministry of Health and Welfare and is the central public organization concerning employment of older persons in the country. Its mission is to realize an active ageing society by means of promoting employment of older persons, among others, through specific programmes such as:

Senior Internship programme

This is implemented by the government and aims to encourage companies to keep their employees aged 60 years or over by supplementing their wages. Wage supplements are agreed for the first three months and beyond for, among others, manufacturing, service and office jobs. The programme helps promote the employment and re-employment of older persons.

The COVID-19 pandemic has caused many workers to stop working or receive lower salaries, along with declines in income (ESCAP, 2022f). It has, at the same time, accelerated developments related to the new and the gig-economy, including remote and hybrid working. In this regard, post-COVID measures to stimulate the economy should include provisions that enable older persons to access employment and livelihood opportunities and consider the impacts the new economy, as well as remote working, have on older persons.

The Age-Friendly Enterprises programme

This provides financial support to companies that hire certain numbers of people aged 60 years or over in eligible occupational categories where they can work competitively. The programme aims to support building companies that can raise their competitiveness through the accumulated insights of older persons.

Source: ESCAP Survey response, Republic of Korea, 2021.

Access to knowledge, education and training

A key objective of the Madrid Plan of Action is to achieve equality of opportunity for continuing education, training and retraining, vocational guidance and placement services, as well as utilizing fully the potential expertise of persons of all ages, while recognizing the benefits of increased experience with age. Some 20 of the 22 countries responding to the survey reported initiatives that support the access to knowledge, education and training. However, access to knowledge in rural areas and access to education and training by older women were reported as lacking (ESCAP, 2022g).

According to the survey responses, 16 countries provide work-related training and learning opportunities for older persons. For example, in Türkiye various training programmes are implemented, including vocational training courses, on-the-job training and entrepreneurship training programmes. In Japan, the Organization for Employment of Older Persons, Persons with Disabilities and Job Seekers established the Human Resource Development Centre on Productivity Improvement, which has 87 centres nationwide

and has implemented productivity improvement training that supports older persons with career guidance. In Cambodia, the National Ageing Policy makes provisions for older persons to remain in productive employment for as long as they are willing and able to do so. In 2018, the Government established the National Elderly Care Centre, which provides work-related training and learning initiatives for older persons.

In addition to work-related efforts, 16 of the countries responding to the survey reported pursuing initiatives that follow a life-course approach and involve life-long learning opportunities. Cambodia, for example, has adopted a National Lifelong-learning Policy (box 10). Kazakhstan and the Russian Federation have legislation which mainstreams the concept of lifelong learning into other policies. In Kazakhstan, Malaysia, the Russian Federation, Singapore and Türkiye, for example, educational opportunities for older persons are offered in the context of Silver Universities or Universities of the Third Age.

A total of 18 of 22 countries reported measures that promote digital literacy. The majority of these initiatives involve national programmes aimed at strengthening digital skills of the entire population.

BOX 10 National Lifelong-learning Policy, Cambodia

This policy was adopted in 2019 to maximize human resource development and enable national development in a sustainable manner. Its strategies, action plans, monitoring and evaluation, and implementing principles act as supporting mechanisms for developing skills in Cambodia and responding to individual and social needs and market demands. The policy aims to provide all citizens with access to various types of education and to support them in utilizing the knowledge they gain to improve job prospects and quality of life.

The policy lists two main challenges: firstly, high drop-out rates and poor education quality, and secondly, limited productivity, which concerns all sorts of enterprises and institutions and is linked to a low level of education among female workers. To address these challenges, the policy calls for sector-wide and participatory collaboration. It includes a measure dedicated to fostering collaboration with the private sector, development partners and civil society organizations to provide lifelong-learning opportunities. Incentives are provided to private sector partners that support participation in lifelong learning. The policy promotes building networks with local service providers for developing lifelong-learning curricula as well as collaboration with civil society to develop lifelong-learning programmes.

Source: ESCAP Survey response, Cambodia, 2021.

Australia, India, Maldives, the Republic of Korea, Singapore and Türkiye have projects targeting older persons. In Singapore, the programme Seniors Go Digital is designed to assist older persons in their digital journeys and includes, among others, a learning programme aimed at strengthening digital skills (box 11). India promotes digital literacy among older persons through various platforms such as electronic media, pamphlets, care homes and social media, and the focus is on protecting older persons from electronic fraud. In Türkiye, within the framework of the Digital Spring Project, technology rooms have been established in nursing homes.

BOX 11 Seniors Go Digital programme, Singapore

This programme was launched during the COVID-19 pandemic in May 2020 to help older persons embrace digitalization and lead more engaged, informed and fulfilling lives. The programme offers one-on-one help and small group learning sessions at digital community hubs and mobilizes Digital Ambassadors to help older persons use smartphones and gain access to government digital services. Low-income older persons can benefit from a Mobile Access for Seniors scheme offering smartphones and data plans. Furthermore, e-Payment Learning Journeys are offered to educate older persons in using e-payments, while Supermarket Learning Journeys help guide them in using commercial apps to make online purchases.

Source: www.opengovasia.com/singapore-senior-citizens-go-digital-during-pandemic

Eradication of poverty

Between 1990 and 2015, socioeconomic achievements in Asia and the Pacific helped move over 80 per cent of the region's extreme poor (defined as living on less than \$1.90 per day) out of poverty. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, progress was such that the percentage of the total population in the region living in extreme poverty fell from approximately 30.0 per cent in 2000–2004 to about 10.0 per cent in 2010–2013 (ESCAP, 2018a). By 2018, the Asia-Pacific figure for extreme poverty was 5.2 per cent. The incidence was highest in South

and South-West Asia (10.2 per cent), followed by the Pacific (7.6 per cent), South-East Asia (3.5 per cent), North and Central Asia (1.9 per cent) and East and North-East Asia (0.3 per cent) (ESCAP, 2022h). Despite earlier reductions in poverty, ESCAP estimates that an additional 89 million people in the region have been pushed below the extreme poverty line by the socioeconomic disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic (ESCAP, 2021a), and that many of these are older persons. Older women, who even before the pandemic faced serious risks of having not enough income to survive, have been particularly affected. Moreover, old-age poverty is often more prevalent in rural areas. All measures that address poverty among older persons contribute to achieving SDG 1, on ending poverty in all its forms everywhere (annex 4). Table 14 provides an overview of different measures to eradicate poverty implemented by countries/areas in the region.

TABLE 14 Measures undertaken by Governments to eradicate poverty among older persons in selected Asia-Pacific countries/areas

	Financial assistance	Programmes	Legislation	Targeted policy
Australia	x	x		
Armenia	x			
Azerbaijan	x	x		
Bangladesh	x	x		
Cambodia		x		
China	x	x	x	x
India	x		x	
Japan	x	x		
Macau, China	x	x	x	
Malaysia	x	x		
Maldives	x			
Mongolia	x	x	x	
Kazakhstan	x		x	
Philippines	x	x		x
Republic of Korea	x			
Russian Federation	x	x		x
Singapore	x	x		
Tajikistan	x			
Thailand	x			x
Türkiye	x		x	

Source: ESCAP 2021/2022, Voluntary National survey on the implementation of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing in Asia and the Pacific responses. Available at: <https://www.population-trends-asiapacific.org/mipaa/voluntary-national-survey-response> and consultation on 4 April 2022.

Note: Bhutan does not have a specific measure to eradicate poverty of older persons, but the Government aims to reduce poverty for all ages through its five-year plan on poverty reduction.

Income security and social protection

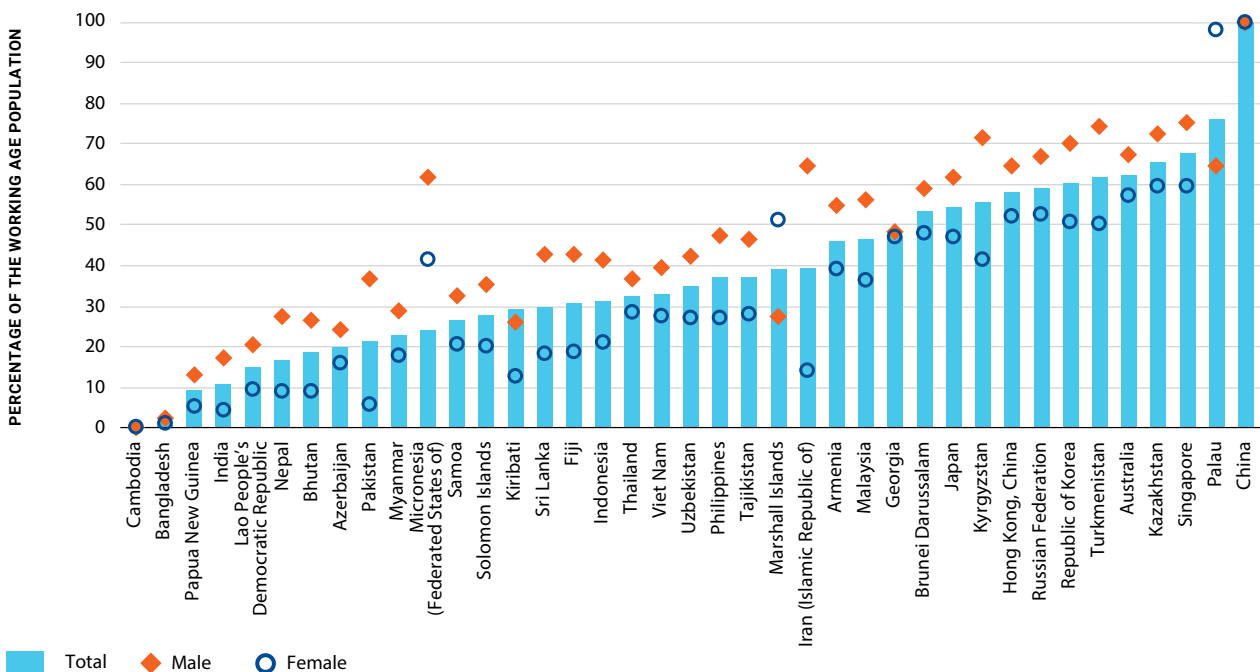
Social protection is crucial for providing income security throughout the life cycle and ensuring no one is left behind, particularly in crisis situations. SDG target 1.3 calls for countries to “implement nationally appropriate social protection systems and measures for all, including floors, and by 2030 achieve substantial coverage of the poor and the vulnerable”. The importance of social protection for sustainable development is, for example, also reflected in target 3.8 on universal health coverage, including financial risk protection, target 5.4 in the context of unpaid care and domestic work of women, target 8.5 on productive employment and decent work for all and equal pay for work of equal value and target 10.4 on wage and social protection policies (ESCAP, 2021b). A comprehensive model of social protection includes a system of state benefits, social payments, measures to promote employment and financial independence in accordance with the degree of necessity, and tax benefits at all stages of life.

According to survey responses, 21 of 22 countries aim to provide the protection necessary to assure minimum living standards for older persons. Countries reported several programmes to enable all workers to acquire basic social protection/social security, including, where applicable, pensions, disability insurance and health benefits. Some

Governments implement laws or regulations on social protection and social security, including comprehensive pension schemes. However, although coverage of old-age pensions in the region has been increasing over the last two decades, it still remains low (figure 14). In low-income countries, limited coverage of contributory pension schemes is connected to the high incidence of informal employment, which has left workers, particularly women, vulnerable to income insecurity and old-age poverty.

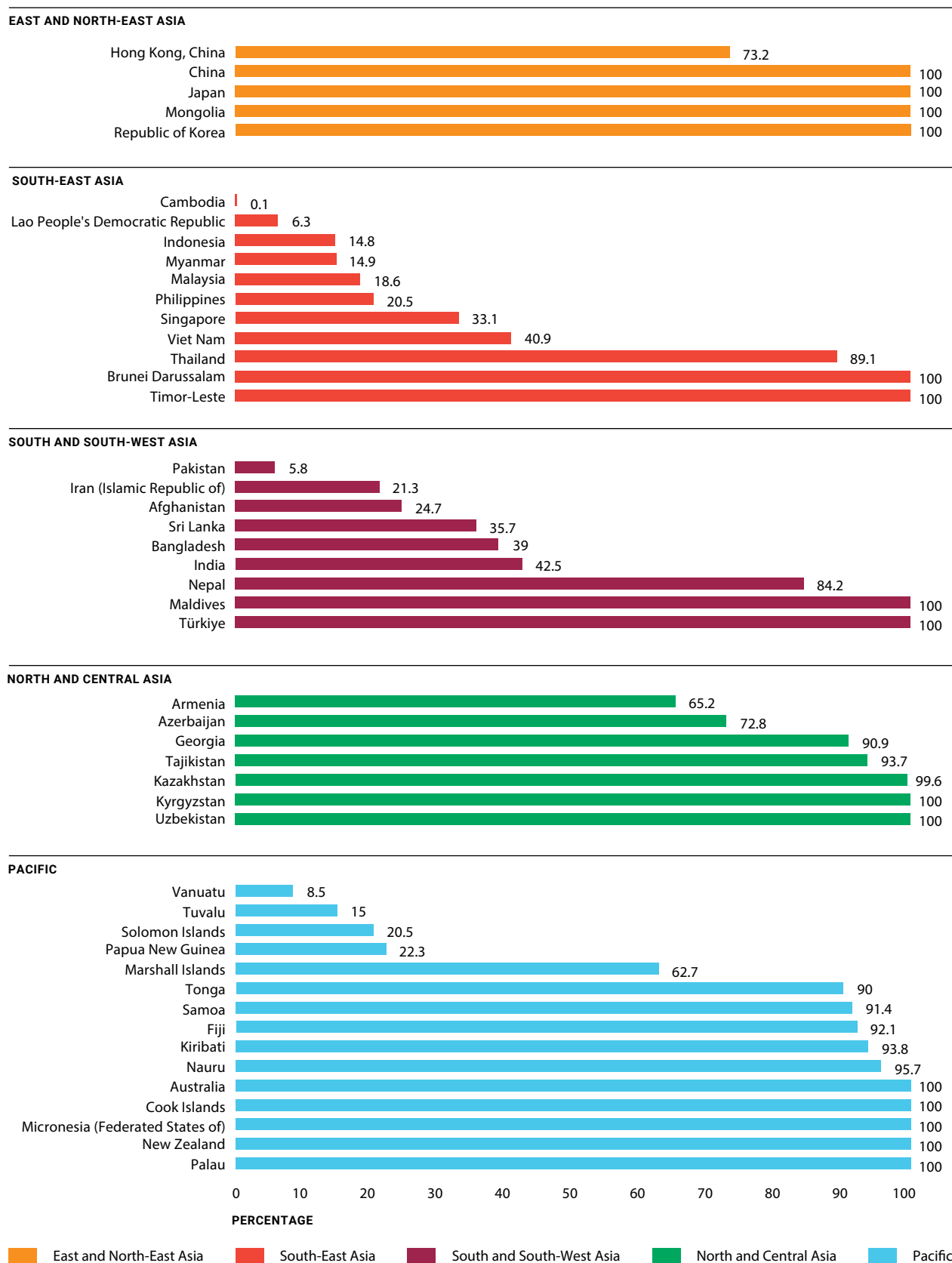
Some pension schemes cover both formal and informal employees based on different criteria including not only retirement age, but also length of services, insurance contribution and occupation types. Some national pension schemes, as well as employee provident funds, are, based on a voluntary basis, open for investment from formal and informal workers, self-employed workers and foreign workers. Examples of provision of additional support to vulnerable persons are provided by some countries. For instance, in India, the National Pension Scheme is open to all citizens, and anyone can invest under the scheme to achieve better returns during old age. The Royal Insurance Corporation Bhutan Limited and Bhutan Insurance manage the private provident and life annuity schemes, which cover the employees of private companies and civil society organizations.

FIGURE 14 Legal coverage of contributory pensions, percentage of the working-age population (15–64 years), 2020 or latest available year



Source: ILO (2022). World Social Protection Database (accessed 14 July 2022).

FIGURE 15 Proportion of older persons receiving a pension: ratio of persons above statutory pensionable age receiving an old-age pension (including contributory and non-contributory) to persons above statutory retirement age, by Asia-Pacific country/area, latest available year



Source: ILO (2022). Social Security Inquiry Database (accessed 15 August 2022).

A total of 18 of the 22 countries responding to the survey pay particular attention to socially and economically disadvantaged groups through non-contributory pension provisions, also called social pensions. Social pensions support older persons who are not entitled to retirement pensions and do not have social security. For example, in the Philippines, the Social Pension for Indigent Senior Citizens provides additional Government assistance. In India, the Government has been implementing a special pension scheme to support widows and disabled older persons. The scheme's Self Help Groups and its Senior Citizen Employment Exchange Portal aim to ensure financial security for

older persons in India. An overview of social pension schemes available in the region, and as reported in the survey, is provided in table 15.

Attempts to close the gender pay gap, as also noted above, and the pension pay gap between female and male pensioners were reported by some countries. Out of the 22 survey responses, 11 countries indicated that the special situation of older women in work is accounted for in work-related policies or in gender equality plans. For instance, in the Philippines the Gender Equality and Women Empowerment Plan 2019–2025 calls for attention to older women in its strategic priority goal. And, in China, the Outline for the Development of Chinese

TABLE 15 Social pension programme/scheme in selected Asia-Pacific countries, latest available year

Subregion and country	Scheme	Eligibility	Amount	Number of beneficiaries	
				Total	Year
East and North-East Asia					
Mongolia	Social welfare Pension	Means-tested	MNT 188,000 (USD 62.2) / month	3,595 3,595 3,855	2018 2019 2020
Republic of Korea	Basic Pension	Means-tested	KRW 269,000 (USD 207) / month	5,660,000	2020
South-East Asia					
Malaysia	Elderly Assistance Scheme	Means-tested	MYR 500 (USD 120) / month	120,496	2018
Philippines	Social Pension for Indigent Senior Citizens	Means-tested	PHP 500 (USD 10)/month	3,266,029 3,835,066	2020 2021
Singapore	Silver Support Scheme	Means-tested	SGD 180-900 (USD 135-675)/quarter	1 in 3 Singaporean aged 65+ ^a	2021
Thailand	Old Age Allowance Scheme		THB 600 (USD 16.5) / month (age 60-69) THB 700 (USD 19.2) / month (age 70-79) THB 800 (USD 22.0) / month (age 80-89)	9,090,000	2019
South and South-West Asia					
Bangladesh	Old Age Allowance	Means-tested	BDT 500 (USD 6) / month	3,150,000	2018
India	Old Age Pension Scheme	Means-tested	IDR 200 (USD 3) / month	20,595,274	2018
Maldives	Old Age Basic Pension	Pensions-tested	MVR 5,000 (USD 325) / month	16,172	2018
Türkiye	Old Age Pension	Means-tested	TRY 126 (USD 43)	797,426	2021
North and Central Asia					
Azerbaijan	Social Allowance	Pensions-tested	AZN 240 (USD 141)/month	1,228,800	2021
Kazakhstan	State Basic Pension	Pensions-tested	KZT 11, 182 (USD 40) / month	1,964, 500	2018
Kyrgyzstan	Old-Age Social Assistance Allowance	Pensions-tested	KGS 1000-7000 (USD 15-105) / month	1,576	2021
Pacific					
Australia	Age Pension	Means-tested	Maximum fortnight rate for each member of the couple; AUD 729.30 (USD 540), for single; AUD 967.50 (USD 716)/fortnight	2.6 million	2021

Source: ESCAP 2021/2022, Voluntary national survey on the implementation of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing in Asia and the Pacific responses. Available at: <https://www.population-trends-asiapacific.org/mipaa/voluntary-national-survey-response>

a In 2021, the Singapore's resident population above 65 years old was 639,000. Therefore, one in three is about 213,000. See: <https://www.msf.gov.sg/research-and-data/Research-and-Statistics/Pages/Singapore-Demographic-Resident-Population-Above-65.aspx>

Women (2021–2030) emphasizes the need to promote equal employment and eliminate gender discrimination in employment. Other initiatives were reported by India, where the Constitution lays down the principles regarding equal pay for men and women, and the Equal Remuneration Act provides equal pay for equal work for men and women. In 2019, the Code of Wages moved away from the binary sexual classification of men and women and recognized the need for equal pay for equal work for all genders. Various measures were also reported by Japan (box 12).

BOX 12 Measures to close the gender pay and pension gaps, Japan

In Japan the gender pay and pension gaps have been addressed by a number of efforts, among others, by revising the fixed division of roles between men and women, as well as the differences in the ratio of management positions and years of service. The revised Law for the Promotion of Women's Activities raises awareness and promotes the recruitment of women. The Japanese government has, moreover, increased the mandatory coverage of Employees' Pension Insurance, with the aim to increase the pension benefits of female part-time workers.

Source: ESCAP Survey response, Japan, 2022.

Intergenerational solidarity and transfers

A majority of Governments reported offering opportunities for intergenerational contact and exchange. In some cases, countries reported on initiatives aimed at strengthening solidarity between generations through volunteering or other specific programmes. In Malaysia, for example, the Government has set up Time Bank Volunteering Schemes that allocate time credits for the hours that participants spend providing services to older persons, which could later be redeemed for goods and services traded through the time bank or provided through participating vendors. In Kazakhstan, the Ministry of Information and Social Development has developed a Road Map for the Development of Volunteering for 2021–2023,



Porter carrying heavy vegetables on back at bazaar in Hyderabad, India. Photo: Pexels/Sharan Pagadala

which includes the implementation of the Silver Volunteering project to involve older and younger persons collaborating in volunteering activities.

Other initiatives reported by Malaysia, include the Intergenerational Programme for Older persons, Children and Youth, which has been rolled out on an annual basis since 2018. The programme aims to reduce intergenerational gaps, as well as raise awareness among older persons, children and youth of addressing the needs of doing community activities together. In addition, the Republic of Korea reported educational activities that strengthen intergenerational ties and are implemented by means of community clubs, where older persons function as community service counsellors, providing education to youth. In Singapore, the Government has co-located senior care and childcare centres in neighbourhoods and has introduced a “proximity housing grant”, to promote intergenerational cohesion. According to the 2019–2025 Action Plan to Improve the Quality of Life of Older People in Kyrgyzstan, the country's Government has implemented a mentoring programme in companies and institutions to foster learning between older and younger persons.

Chapter 3

Older persons, health and well-being





Older man playing chess in Sydney, Australia. Photo: Unsplash/Zoe Holling

The second priority direction of the Madrid Plan of Action discusses good health as an individual asset and as an important component for economic growth and development of societies. Initiatives that meet the comprehensive health and long-term care needs of older persons in a rapidly ageing population are critical. The priority direction focuses on health promotion and well-being throughout life; universal and equal access to health-care services; training of care providers and health professionals; and mental health needs of older persons and older persons with disabilities.

The topic of older persons, health and well-being is also addressed in the 2030 Agenda and the United Nations Decade of Healthy Ageing (annex 2). For example, SDG 3 on good health and well-being focuses on ensuring healthy lives and promoting well-being for all at all ages. This includes universal and equal access to health-care services, mental health concerns and issues related to older persons with disabilities. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being, not merely the absence of disease and infirmity. The United Nations Decade of Healthy Ageing action areas on (a) delivering person-centred integrated care and primary health services responsive to older persons and (b) providing access to long-term care for older persons are closely related to the Madrid Plan of Action. Recognizing some of these synergies, the

following sections provide an overview of ongoing efforts with regard to the health and well-being of older persons in Asia and the Pacific, based on survey responses, summaries of stakeholder consultations and meeting deliberations.

Measures promoting health and well-being throughout life

According to the survey responses, 18 of 22 countries in Asia and the Pacific, in particular those in East and North-East Asia, and South and South-east Asia, have established measures to promote healthy and active ageing of older persons. Countries reported on expanded access to health care and initiatives towards the empowerment of older persons to enjoy their rights and live with dignity. Moreover, they reported that awareness around healthy ageing had increased since the third review and appraisal of the Madrid Plan of Action, in 2017. However, gaps between policies and implementation remain and have further been deepened by the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition, coverage, accessibility and affordability of certain policies directed to older persons continue to pose a challenge to promoting their health and well-being in the region (ESCAP, 2022f). In this regard, further attention to the life-cycle approach to healthy ageing is needed to ensure longer and healthier lives.

The health and well-being of older persons are determined by a complex interplay of factors that are strongly related to circumstances across the life course, including political, economic, social and environmental conditions (OECD, 2020). In Asia and the Pacific, several good practices that promote the health and well-being of older persons throughout life were reported, including the promotion of healthy ageing through awareness raising, increasing psychosocial support – such as rehabilitation, palliative and end-of-life care – and overall policy progress. Countries also reported that the health and well-being of some groups of older persons, particularly older women and older persons in urban areas, had deteriorated over time.

The COVID-19 pandemic has added additional challenges, threatening the livelihoods of older persons and causing isolation, negative physical and mental health outcomes, and limited access to health care among older persons (ESCAP, 2022f).

National health strategies and plans exist in almost all countries which responded to the ESCAP survey. Many policies and programmes target the general population and are integrated into high-level health or ageing policies and plans, and often reflect action on NCDs (table 16). Most initiatives concern the treatment rather than the prevention and promotion of the health and well-being of older persons.

TABLE 16 Examples of policies or programmes to promote health and well-being throughout life and with a focus on older persons

Country/area	Policy or programme
Armenia	Programme of improving the care services provided to older persons and introducing and developing community-based services
	Strategy for the Development of a Health Care System of the Republic of Armenia, 2021–2025
Australia	National Women's Health Strategy 2020–2030 and the National Men's Health Strategy 2020–2030 take a life-course approach
Azerbaijan	Strategy and Action Plan for Combating NCDs 2015–2020
Bangladesh	National Health Policy
Bhutan	National Strategy for Healthy Ageing
Cambodia	National Ageing Policy and other policies
China	Law of the People's Republic of China on Basic Medical Health and Health Promotion (2019)
	Health China 2030 Planning Outline
	National Medium- and Long-term Plan for Actively Coping with Population Ageing (2019)
	Opinions on the Implementation of Health China Action (2019)
India	National Programme for the Health Care of the Elderly
Japan	Health Japan 21 (second term)
Kazakhstan	Healthy Nation – a roadmap to improve gerontological service for 2021–2030
Macau, China	Health-care systems and prevention providing free access for older persons and establishing department of geriatrics
Malaysia	National Health Policy for Older Persons and Plan of Action on Healthcare Services for Older Persons
Maldives	National Elderly Policy; action plan and nationwide campaign on healthy ageing
Mongolia	National Programme on Healthy Ageing and Elderly Health (2014–2017, 2018–2020)
	Health Policy and Vision-2050 Long-Term Development Policy
	The National Program for the Development and Protection of the Elderly (2019 onwards)
	Law on the Elderly
Philippines	Legislation and Long-term Care Programme for Senior Citizens
Republic of Korea	National Health Screening Program
Russian Federation	Strategy of Actions for Senior Citizens until 2025, priority area on the improvement of the system of health protection of older persons as well as development of a geriatric service
Singapore	Action Plan for Successful Ageing; includes health and wellness active-ageing programmes, functional screening (project silver screen), and workplace health programme among others
	Action Plan for Successful Ageing
	National Seniors' Health Programme
Tajikistan	National Health Strategy 2021–2030 (NHS 2030)
Thailand	The Action Plan for the Elderly 2023–2027 developed in line with the United Nations Decade of Healthy Ageing
Türkiye	Turkey Healthy Ageing Action Plan and Implementation Program 2015–2020 aimed to improve health care of older persons by means of easy and free access to essential health-care services.
	Turkey Healthy Ageing Action Plan and Implementation Program 2021–2026
	Completion of Türkiye Aging and Health Survey
	Proposal to set up an International Council on Ageing and regional welfare seminars on elderly welfare held

Source: ESCAP 2021/2022, Voluntary national survey on the implementation of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing in Asia and the Pacific responses. Available at: <https://www.population-trends-asiapacific.org/mipaa/voluntary-national-survey-response>

For example, China's 2019 Law on Basic Medical Health and Health Promotion (box 13), and Tajikistan's National Health Strategy 2021–2030 focus on developing health and social protection systems for all, including older persons.

BOX 13 Basic Medical Health and Health Promotion, China

In 2019, China enacted the Law on Basic Medical Health and Health Promotion for the purpose of ensuring citizens' enjoyment of basic medical and health-care services and promoting Healthy China. Article 25 stipulates that the State develops health care for older persons and that the Government, at different levels, incorporates health management and common disease prevention for them into basic public health service programmes. Article 28 addresses mental health needs of the population and, among others, calls for enhanced mental health services for minors, persons with disabilities and older persons. Article 36 calls on medical and health-care institutions to provide medical and health-care services throughout the life course, including specialized services for older persons and through nursing homes. Article 74 focuses on nutrition of the population and calls, among others, for the establishment of improvement projects for minors and older persons. Article 76 calls for the development of a long-term care insurance scheme and that the State promotes long-term nursing care and guaranteed work; it also encourages the development of long-term nursing insurance.

Source: ESCAP Survey response, China, 2022.

In Cambodia, the Government has developed various policies to promote health and well-being throughout life, including active and healthy ageing (box 14). Australia also pursues a life-course approach to ageing in its 2020–2030 National Women's Health Strategy and its National Men's Health Strategy.

Some countries reported on dedicated strategies and health policies supporting the well-being of older persons, these include, among others, Mongolia's National Programme on Healthy Ageing and Elderly Health, the Philippines' Healthy and Productive Ageing Programme and Singapore's Action Plan for Successful Ageing. Moreover, Bhutan is drafting its National Strategy for Healthy Ageing, while Türkiye is following up on its Healthy Ageing Action Plan and Implementation Programme (box 15).

BOX 14 A life-course approach to promote the health and well-being of older persons, Cambodia

In Cambodia, the Government has developed policies to promote health and well-being throughout life, by including active and healthy ageing in the National Social Protection Policy Framework (2016–2025), the National Ageing Policy (2017–2030) and the National Multi-Sectoral Action Plan for the Prevention and Control of NCDs (2018–2027). The government aims at reducing the exposure to NCD risk factors by accelerating alcohol control. In addition, the National Strategy for Food Security and Nutrition 2019–2030 has been adopted with the aim of improving physical, social and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food in order to encourage healthy and productive lives.

Source: ESCAP Survey response, Cambodia, 2021.

BOX 15 Healthy Ageing Action Plan and Implementation Programme, Türkiye

The Ministry of Health issued the Turkey Healthy Ageing Action Plan and Implementation Programme 2015–2020 in order to improve the health and well-being of older persons by means of easy and free access to essential health-care services that include preventive, promotive, curative and rehabilitative aspects, as well as affordable and quality essential medicines and vaccines. Continuation of the programme has been formulated in its follow-up action plan 2021–2026. Issues related to the health and well-being of older persons are mainstreamed into various national policy frameworks, including the Ministry of Health Strategic Plan (2019–2023), the Vision Document on Ageing 2030, the New Economic Programme (2019–2021) and the Annual Presidential Programme.

In 2021, Türkiye launched the Disease Management Platform, aimed at ensuring early diagnosis of chronic diseases and treatment including periodic follow-up, control of symptoms and signs of diseases.

Source: ESCAP Survey Response, Türkiye, 2021.



Older woman receives temperature check for COVID-19 in Beijing, China. Photo: Unsplash/Kian Zhang

During the COVID-19 pandemic, OPAs and civil society organizations in many countries have played an important role in the provision of health services to older persons, the promotion of healthy lifestyles and supporting the well-being of older persons. In Japan, for example, community organizations have encouraged young people to teach older persons how to use digital devices. Furthermore, associations and local governments have sponsored the purchase of devices for use by older persons to stay connected. The Government of Singapore has partnered with associations to support the health and well-being of older persons during the pandemic (box 16).

Good practices on health screening programmes and health education of older persons were reported by several countries. For example, Bhutan has a special health screening day for older persons. In Singapore, a self-care programme, led by volunteer trainers, has been piloted. The programme aims to inform older persons about the ageing process, including the identification of risks and the importance of health.

In order to respond to the existing challenges in promoting the health and well-being of older persons, whole-of-government and whole-of-society approaches to health are needed throughout the life course. In this regard, the engagement of OPAs and community-based approaches for health education and empowerment, as well as addressing the care needs of vulnerable groups, are critical. Moreover, universal health coverage and access to income security are vital for ensuring health and

well-being in old age. In addition to these measures, the concept of self-care should be incorporated into ageing policies, including social and health related efforts. Promoting self-care across the life cycle not only contributes to health and well-being in old age, it can also reduce the burden that ageing poses on health-care systems.

BOX 16 Supporting the health and well-being of older persons during the COVID-19 pandemic, Singapore

The Government of Singapore partnered with civil society organizations to provide food to older persons during lockdowns. Moreover, the Agency for Integrated Care's outreach unit, the Silver Generation Office, modified its outreach strategy to ensure that older persons continued to remain engaged and supported in the community during the pandemic. A targeted outreach approach was applied to engage vulnerable older persons through face-to-face visits or video calls and support seniors by running errands and delivering meals, as well as connect those with urgent needs to relevant care services. In 2021, the office partnered with the People's Association to support national vaccination efforts, by encouraging older persons to get vaccinated through the provision of information and facilitating the booking of appointments, as well as offering transport to vaccination sites.

Source: ESCAP Survey response, Singapore, 2022.



Scenes of health-care workers during the COVID-19 pandemic at Thailand Bamrasradura Infectious Disease Institute.
Photo: UN Women/Pathumporn Thongking

Ageing and health-care systems

Addressing the health needs of the rapidly ageing population in Asia and the Pacific requires tackling the changing needs of older persons. It includes providing affordable access to appropriate and quality services, ensuring health system readiness, and responding to the needs, preferences and rights of older persons. In this regard, investing in integrated and person-centred service delivery, is vital. Moreover, garnering support through engendering health financing, developing a health workforce with the right skills, and ensuring integrated health and non-health services, including social care services, are all important (OECD, 2020). In addition, there is a need to address the limited palliative and end-of-life care in many countries, along with gaps in compassionate support and enabling people to die with dignity.

Integrating health and social care

Integrating health and social care can support improved health and social care outcomes for older persons. A growing recognition of the need to adapt to a more holistic approach to health-care provision was reported by countries in Asia and the Pacific. A total of 20 out of 22 countries reported on

measures to develop mechanisms for coordinating health and social care services for older persons. In some countries, these measures are a part of national strategic planning frameworks, such as in Cambodia, where social care is integrated in both the National Health Care Policy and the Strategy for Older Persons. In other cases, integrating health and social care is addressed at the institutional level, such as, among others, in India, the Russian Federation and Singapore (box 17). In Japan, municipalities are required to coordinate home medical care, long-term care and social care. In addition, various social protection programmes that aim to integrate health and social care were reported. For instance, Tajikistan's programme on social protection of older persons until 2030 focuses on both health and social security efforts.

Health-care coverage

Improvements in universal access to health care have been documented in Asia-Pacific countries (figure 16). About 65 per cent of the population in Asia and the Pacific is currently able to access free or subsidised health-care services (WHO, 2022b). The universal health-care service coverage index, measured through SDG indicator 3.8.1, summarizes existing indicators of health service coverage and shows that, despite progress, disparities between countries regarding health-care coverage remain.

BOX 17 Integrating health and social care, Singapore

In Singapore, the Agency for Integrated Care plays an important role in coordinating and supporting efforts in integrating care, working with the Ministry of Health and partners. To ensure adequate and efficient coordination of different services, the Agency implements several initiatives:

The Community Network for Seniors

The Network strives to build communities of care, by strengthening connections with community partners, including government and non-government agencies to improve care coordination and integration at the local level.

TOUCH-HOLD-HELP Framework

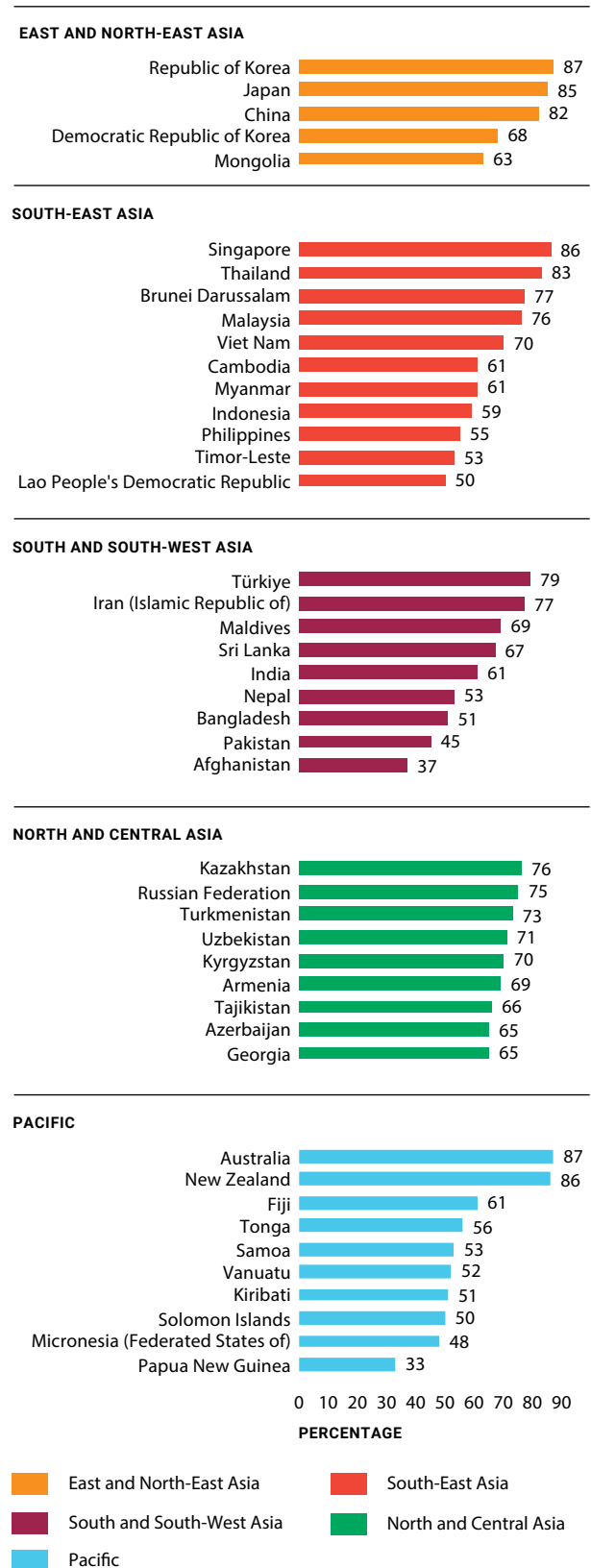
This framework operates on the basis of TOUCH, HOLD and HELP steps. As a first step, volunteers from the Silver Generation Office reach out to older persons to identify their needs (TOUCH). Secondly, older persons with needs are referred to the various care providers in order to receive the support and HELP required. As for older persons with no immediate needs, community partners continue to keep a lookout for them (HOLD). For older persons who feel lonely, befriending services are available, such as eldercare centres, to provide emotional and social support.

Eldercare Center Service Model

The Ministry of Health rolled out the Eldercare Center Model in May 2021 to provide services with regard to active ageing, befriending and information, and referral to care services for older persons. In addition, the needs of older persons are to be assessed regularly, to ensure if any new social or care needs are required.

Source: ESCAP Survey response, Singapore, 2022.

FIGURE 16 Universal health-care coverage index for selected Asia-Pacific countries, latest available year



Source: United Nations Statistics Division (2022). Global SDG Indicators Data Platform <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/dataportal> (accessed 30 July 2022). Note: The UHC service coverage index summarizes existing indicators of health service coverage. The index reports on a scale of 0 (no coverage) to 100 (full coverage).

In order to address lack in health-care coverage, countries in the region reported on having put in place measures to improve access (table 17). Some have made provisions for universal health-care coverage through legislation and policies. Others (for example, Singapore) have offered such services for a charge, anchored in the philosophy of individual responsibility and affordable health care for all.

Importantly, when assessing the availability and access of these services, financing has to be considered, as well as the fact that often people have to make out-of-pocket expenditures (figure 17). In many countries in the region, public health-care expenditures are low, leading to high out-of-pocket spending. As health-care expenditures in general increase with age, countries where out-of-pocket expenditures are high, are particularly challenged when they are already considered “ageing”, “aged” or “super-aged” societies.

Some countries are subsidizing health care for people in need and without financial means as well as offering special programmes for older persons (box 18).

BOX 18 Programmes to eliminate social and economic inequalities in access to health care, Australia

In Australia, Concession Cards are available for older persons with lower incomes to ensure equitable and affordable access to health care. These are, for instance, Pensioner Concession Cards, Health Care Cards, Low Income Health Cards and Commonwealth Seniors Health Cards. The Australian Government has, moreover, developed the National Drug Strategy (2017–2026), which recognizes older persons as one of the priority populations as a result of difficulties with pain and medication management, isolation, poor health, significant life events and loss of independent living.

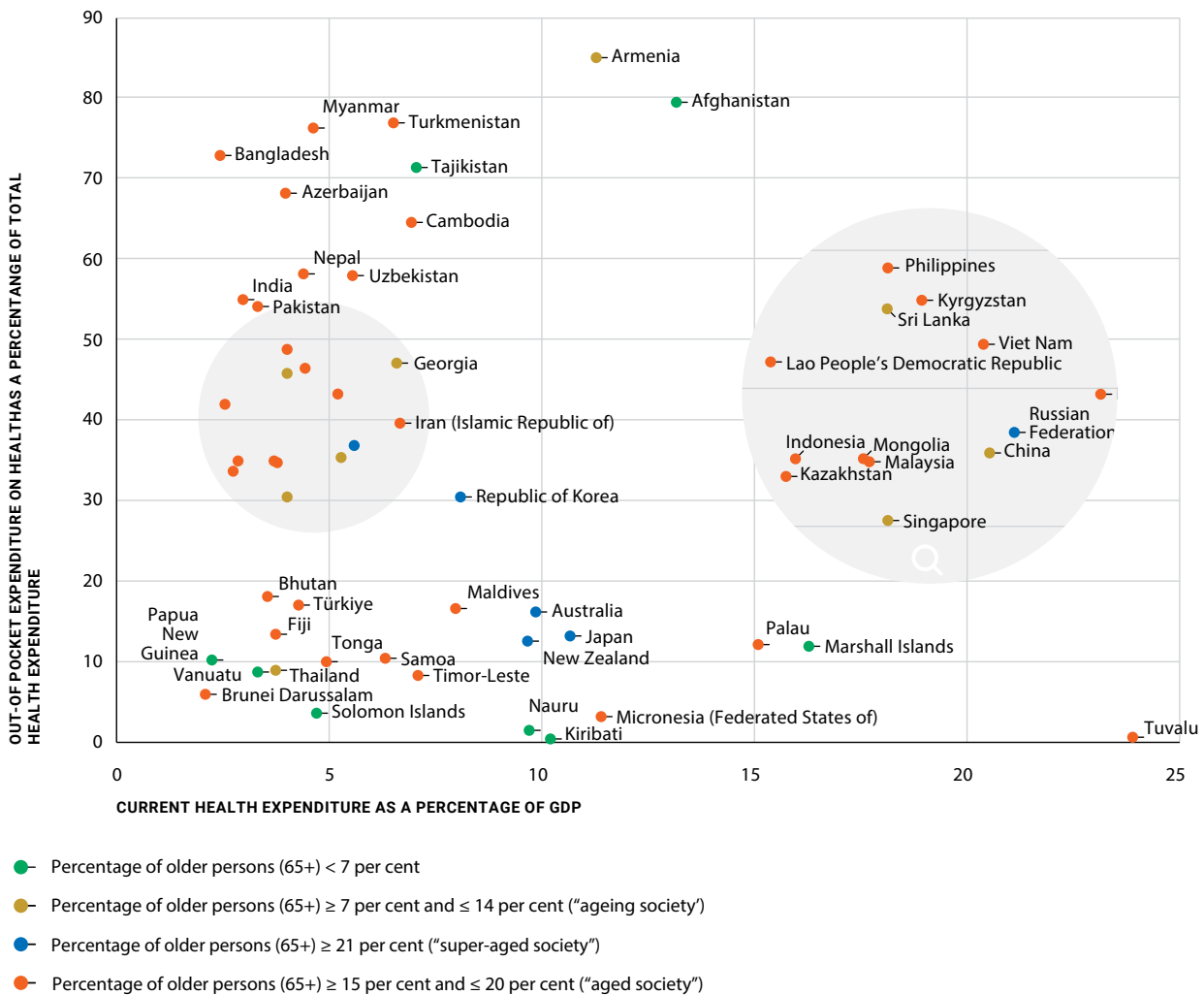
Source: ESCAP Survey response, Australia, 2022.

TABLE 17 Measures related to universal and equal access to health-care services for older persons in selected Asia-Pacific countries/areas

Country/area	Policies/ plans and strategies	Legislation	Institutional	Universal health coverage/ insurance	Financial assistance	Programmes
Armenia		x				
Australia			x	x	x	x
Azerbaijan			x	x		
Bangladesh		x				x
Bhutan	x					
Cambodia	x					
China	x			x		x
India				x		x
Japan	x	x		x		
Kazakhstan		x				
Kyrgyzstan	x					
Macau, China		x		x		x
Malaysia	x		x	x	x	x
Maldives				x		
Mongolia	x			x		x
Philippines		x		x		x
Republic of Korea	x	x	x	x	x	x
Russian Federation				x		
Singapore				x	x	
Tajikistan	x					
Thailand				x		
Türkiye				x		

Source: ESCAP 2021/2022, Voluntary national survey on the implementation of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing in Asia and the Pacific responses. Available at: <https://www.population-trends-asiapacific.org/mipaa/voluntary-national-survey-response>

FIGURE 17 Out-of-pocket health expenditures and public health expenditures, latest available year



Source: World Bank, Data. Available at: <https://data.worldbank.org/> (accessed 8 August 2022).

Many survey responses indicated that lack of data often prevented the design of evidence-based policies to provide access to health care for marginalized groups. For older persons in rural and remote areas, access was noted as particularly limited. For example, in Mongolia, despite the provision of special measures to strengthen primary health services for older persons, given the concentration of efforts in the capital, limited progress was reported in rural areas.

Several examples of community-based care approaches were reported by countries. For example, Armenia is developing an initiative to introduce community-based services during 2021–2023. Bhutan’s Government has piloted community-based actions to reduce harmful use of alcohol at all ages. Other Governments have applied a community-based care approach to the provision of long-term care, as described below.

While many countries reported on the challenging impacts on health-care systems caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, good practices to support older persons during the pandemic were also mentioned. In Kyrgyzstan, for example, it was noted that the involvement of civil society and volunteers had supported the delivery of medications as well as the distribution of vaccines to older persons. Moreover, it was reported that in Bhutan, the Government had established a hotline for older persons to enable access to care. In this regard, the COVID-19 pandemic has offered an opportunity to build on the lessons learned and understand the effects on older persons, in particular older women and older persons with disabilities, including the risks that they face in accessing social protection and health services.

Long-term care for older persons

Over the past years, countries in Asia and the Pacific have developed or expanded their long-term care systems (ADB, 2021); however, existing services are fragmented and in need of strong coordination. The establishment of sustainable long-term care is critical for enabling older persons and their families to receive the care and support that is consistent with their basic rights, fundamental freedoms and human dignity. Providing older persons with access to long-term care when they need it is one of the core four action areas of the United Nations Decade of Healthy Ageing (annex 2). Guidance to establish comprehensive, person-centred, and integrated approaches to capture the various needs of older persons has been developed by WHO; other useful resources are the WHO guidelines on Integrated Care for Older Persons Model (WHO, 2019) and the WHO Framework for countries to achieve an integrated continuum of long-term care (WHO, 2021b).

A total of 20 of the 22 countries responding to the survey highlighted some form of long-term care effort or were planning to implement long-term care for older persons (table 18).

TABLE 18 Long-term care services for older persons provided or envisaged among selected Asia-Pacific countries/areas

Implementing	Planning/piloting
Australia	Armenia
Azerbaijan	Bangladesh
Bangladesh	Bhutan
Cambodia	Maldives
China	Mongolia
India	Russian Federation
Japan	Tajikistan
Kazakhstan	Kyrgyzstan (not yet)
Macau, China	
Malaysia	
Philippines	
Republic of Korea	
Singapore	
Thailand	
Türkiye	

Source: ESCAP 2021/2022, Voluntary national survey on the implementation of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing in Asia and the Pacific responses. Available at: <https://www.population-trends-asiapacific.org/mipaa/voluntary-national-survey-response>

Countries differ regarding the status of establishing long-term care services. Some are in the early stages of setting up long-term care homes (box 19), whereas others are very advanced and are not only establishing homes through national and subnational mandates but reflecting on long-term care in a holistic manner to provide a variety of care services, including ageing-in-place options (for more on housing options, see chapter 4).

BOX 19 Long-term care, Maldives

The Ministry of Gender, Family and Social Services of Maldives has initiated the establishment of homes for older persons in two regions of the island nation. Work on establishing a residential home for older persons, along with a day care facility is currently underway in the southern region of Maldives. The day care facility is partially funded by the Asian Development Bank and the residential facility is funded by the Government. The aim of the day care component is to ease the caregiver burden, which is mostly on women. The planned opening of the home is in 2023.

Source: ESCAP Survey response, Maldives, 2022.

Measures to increase the quality of long-term care services to older persons include enhancing integrated approaches that support health promotion and health prevention as a part of social protection, and providing community-based care (for example, box 20).

A total of 20 of 22 countries reported efforts to coordinate social, long-term care and health services, including in-home, residential and community services. Various measures, including institutional reforms, legislation, studies, programmes and plans, are being implemented. For instance, in Türkiye, the Directorate of Services for Persons with Disabilities and the Elderly is affiliated with the Ministry of Social Policy and coordinates the relevant strategies and national policies, including on long-term care, across different public institutions, local governments, civil society organizations and the private sector. In Mongolia, long-term care has been added to the “law on health” in 2020, and legislation on social welfare includes measures related to long-term care.

BOX 20 Long-term care for older persons, Australia

In Australia, efforts are ongoing to address issues at the interface of health and aged care systems along six work priorities:

- Allied health and specialist services
- Coordination care
- Transfer between residential aged care to hospital
- Preventative care
- Service delivery
- Information and decision-making

The Australian aged-care system applies a community-based approach and offers a continuum of long-term care for older persons within three categories of service: firstly, government home support; secondly, home care packages, and; thirdly, residential care.

Source: ESCAP Survey response, Australia, 2022.

A community-based care model is used in Japan, where municipalities are required to implement “home medical care and long-term care coordination promotion projects” in an effort to build a system of home medical care and long-term care in an integrated manner and through multidisciplinary cooperation. In Thailand, a similar approach has been taken (box 21).

Access to long-term care was reported as difficult for poor and homeless older persons, especially in remote areas (ESCAP, 2022i). The provision of long-term care to older persons has been particularly challenging during the COVID-19 pandemic. The application of technologies can help strengthen the efficiency, scope and quality of care services under these circumstances. In Australia, for example, telehealth has provided the opportunity for caregivers to have consultations via phone or video calls during the COVID-pandemic. This practice has also helped reach people in remote areas.

Financing is a fundamental component of any long-term care system and is key to determining who will be covered, what they will be covered for and who must pay out of pocket (ADB, 2021; ESCAP, 2018b). Several countries noted that their (health) insurance schemes covered, fully or in part, long-term care costs, others indicated clearly that such costs were not covered. In some countries, long-term care was

BOX 21 Community-based services with a focus on health and well-being of older persons, Thailand

Long-term care

This programme was initiated in 2017 and aims to improve the quality of life of bedridden and homebound older persons through home-based care and support. The programme also aims to offer coordinated care, with assessment, case management and the provision of home visits by home caregivers for 2-8 hours a week, depending on the need and availability of care support. The programme is managed by local governments, with support of the district health system, and was developed based on a pilot project that started in 2016. It places a strong emphasis on the concept of ageing in place by, among others, prioritizing:

- Community-based care
- Development of a continuum of care
- Mobilization of community caregivers
- Allocation of funds for long-term care
- Local governance
- Multisectoral coordination

Source: ADB, 2020.

Bueng Yitho Medical and Rehabilitation Centre, Pathum Thani Province, Thailand

This day-care centre provides services and care for older persons who cannot look after themselves anymore and do not have access to caregivers. Moreover, the centre offers care to older persons whose family members have to go to work and cannot look after them during the day. The centre also provides a range of other services to people of all ages, such as rehabilitation and treatment in Thai and Chinese traditional medicine clinics. The centre is successful because it uses local resources and skills, as well as support from the national level and international donors, to provide localized services.

Source: ESCAP Survey response, Thailand, 2022.

equated with health care which might not fully cover all aspects of long-term care, so it might be underfunded. In Japan, a Long-Term Care Insurance System provides benefits to older persons aged 65 years or over. In Singapore, the Government has introduced CareShield Life, a new compulsory long-term care scheme that aims to help offspring fund

the care of their older parents. There are also efforts to develop strategies for the provision of government-supported universal long-term care in, for example, Indonesia, Mongolia, the Philippines, Thailand, Tonga and Viet Nam (ESCAP, 2022f).

In view of the need for more specialized health and long-term care services, 21 of the countries responding to the survey have provided some type of geriatric and specifically gerontological training programmes, both for health professionals and paraprofessionals. For instance, in Kyrgyzstan, courses on gerontology and geriatrics were launched in 2012. In 2021, a programme and curriculum for residency trainings for geriatrics was approved, and 630 students were trained in health and social gerontology. In Türkiye, trainings on geriatric patients' evaluation in home health-care services are provided on an *ad hoc* basis. As part of India's National Programme of Healthcare for Elderly (2010–2011), training of geriatric specialists took place. This involves training of medical officers, nurses, community-based workers and primary care workers. About nine medical colleges have been recognized as regional geriatric centres with dedicated geriatric units and training of health professionals. Azerbaijan established the Baku City Gerontology Centre in May 2020. The Centre works on developing measures for prevention, diagnosis, treatment and rehabilitation of certain age-related diseases that can lead to disability. Since 2017, the Nursing College of Macao, China has been offering a certificate programme in applied gerontology to provide medical practitioners gerontological knowledge and experience.

Health and technology

ICTs are improving the ways in which older persons receive care, access health-related information, and, in some circumstances, fundamentally reshaping health-care systems for long-term sustainable development. Several countries reported on the use of technology in health care. Often general health information has been made accessible through specific online portals for older persons to improve health literacy. Patient management systems provide online access to personal health-related information that can be shared between older persons, caregivers and medical professionals (for instance, MyHealth Record in Australia; Amart Hospital e-Health YOEUNG Programme in Preah Ang Duong Hospital in Cambodia; Electronic Health Sharing System in Macao, China; Health Hub in Singapore; and e-Pulse Personal Health

Record System in Türkiye). In some countries, through such mediums, older persons can make medical appointments and receive care, such as through "Internet hospitals" in China or mobile diagnostics which were recently introduced in Mongolia. They also allow older persons to self-manage their chronic diseases in partnership with primary care providers, such as through the Future Primary Care Programme in Singapore. Furthermore, countries reported on educating and training health-care professionals in digital health skills, such as in Australia and Bhutan. Japan reported on developing care robots that, due to a shortage of caregivers, assist older persons and persons with disabilities at home or in nursing homes. They help feed older persons and exercise with them, keep them company and provide basic health-care services, by, for example, administering medication or helping bed-ridden persons to change body positions.

United Nations Decade of Healthy Ageing (2021–2030)

The United Nations Decade of Healthy Ageing was adopted by United Nations Member States in 2020. The Decade is a global collaboration, aligned with the last ten years of the 2030 Agenda. The Decade is intended to bring together governments, civil society, international agencies, professionals, academia, the media, and the private sector to improve the lives of older persons, their families, and the communities in which they live. The Decade has four focus areas: (1) age-friendly environments; (2) combatting ageism; (3) integrated care; and (4) long-term care (WHO, n.d.).¹⁴ The Decade complements the Madrid Plan of Action and the 2030 Agenda.

In order to explore the synergies between the Decade and the Madrid Plan of Action, one of the questions in the ESCAP survey focused on any activities countries were undertaking to implement the Decade. Interestingly, 15 countries reported that they were already implementing policies, action plans or programmes focusing on different elements of the Decade. Two countries responded that they had not integrated the action areas into their policies and programmes, four countries did not respond, and one country indicated that they were celebrating the Decade and initiating many activities in this regard. Thus, it appears that member States are already supporting and following up on the Decade as part of their existing strategies and activities related to active and healthy ageing.

14 WHO (no date). "UN Decade of Healthy Ageing". Available at: www.who.int/initiatives/decade-of-healthy-ageing, accessed 23 August 2022.



Scenes of health-care workers during the COVID-19 pandemic at Thailand Bamrasnaradura Infectious Disease Institute.
Photo: UN Women/Pathumporn Thongking

Mental and neurological health services

Globally, 20 per cent of adults aged 60 years or over suffer from mental or neurological disorders (WHO, 2017a).¹⁵ Older persons may experience stressors related to ongoing loss of capacity and decline in functional ability. In addition, older persons are more likely to experience events such as bereavement or a drop in socioeconomic status, for instance as a result of transitioning into retirement. All these stressors can result in isolation, loneliness or psychological distress, which may require long-term care (WHO, 2017b). The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated pre-existing mental health challenges due to social isolation and lack of access to mental health support, pointing to the need for greater attention to the mental health of older persons during the post-pandemic recovery period (ESCAP, 2022f).

Compared to the 2017 Asia-Pacific regional review and appraisal, provisions for mental and neurological health services were reported by a growing number of countries in the region (table 19). According to the survey responses, 20 of 22

countries have measures to enhance mental health services for older persons related to dementia and other psychological disabilities. However, looking at mental health services specifically, dedicated ageing-related mental health services remain insufficient. In most cases, mental health initiatives with a focus on older persons are a part of general health strategies, programmes or frameworks. In Malaysia, a number of initiatives have been adopted to enhance mental health services for older persons, including a National Mental Health Strategic Plan (2020–2025), as well as training and mental health screening. In Tajikistan, the National Health Strategy 2021–2030 aims to achieve the highest attainable state of health, which represents complete physical, mental and social well-being.

Neurological health services

Worldwide, around 55 million people have dementia, with over 60 per cent living in low- and middle-income countries. This number is projected to rise to 78 million in 2030 and 139 million in 2050. In Asia and the Pacific, the number of people with dementia is projected to increase from 23 million in 2015 to almost

15 World Health Organization (2017). Mental health of older adults. <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/mental-health-of-older-adults> (accessed 30 July 2022).

TABLE 19 Measures to enhance mental and neurological health services for older persons related to dementia or other mental health issues reported by selected Asia-Pacific countries/areas

Country/area	Measure
Australia	Dementia Behavioral Management Advisory Service
	Severe behavioural response teams and specialists' dementia care programme
	National Dementia Support programme
Azerbaijan	The Mental Health Center is coordinating and central point for diagnosis
	Clinical protocols and guidelines are being developed for the protection and promotion of mental health of older persons
	Training in working with dementia patients is offered for professionals working in this area
Bangladesh	Mental Health Act 2018
Bhutan	Mental Health Strategic Action Plan 2020–2030
Cambodia	Measures for the general population
China	Embedded in Health China Action – Health Promotion Action for the Elderly
	Notice for the implementation of the psychological care project for elderly, 2019
	Notice on exploring of special services for the prevention and treatment of depression, 2020
Japan	Medical Center for Dementia Diseases
Macau, China	National Dementia Strategy 2016
Malaysia	National Mental Health Strategic Plan (2020–2025)
	Training on mental health
	Mental health screening
	Dementia action plan (2021–2030)
	Clinical practice guideline related to dementia
Maldives	Free mental health-care provision by Center for Mental Health at one hospital
Mongolia	Training for specialists
	Insurance services according to diagnosis
	Private nursing homes
Philippines	National Mental Health Program includes support to older persons
	Mental Health Act
Republic of Korea	National Responsibility for Dementia Care (2017)
	Dementia Management Act (2020)
	A national system for dementia care is being established
Singapore	Community Mental Health Masterplan (2012) aims to improve access to early identification and diagnosis; supporting primary care in mental health/dementia care management; enhancing community support for persons with dementia/mental health conditions
Tajikistan	National Health Strategy 2021–2030 includes measures on mental well-being
Thailand	The long-term care system also covers dementia and other psychosocial disabilities
Türkiye	Examinations, analysis and medical interventions and treatments
	National Preventive Mechanism
	Human Rights and Equality Institution visits hospitals, nursing homes and elderly care

Source: ESCAP 2021/2022, Voluntary national survey on the implementation of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing in Asia and the Pacific responses. Available at: <https://www.population-trends-asiapacific.org/mipaa/voluntary-national-survey-response>.

71 million by 2050. As such, by 2050, more than half of the people with dementia worldwide are expected to live in the region; this will require strategic efforts to address dementia. Moreover, 75 per cent of people with dementia are not diagnosed (Alzheimer's Disease International, 2014). Thus, the numbers might be much higher especially in some low- and middle-income countries, where stigma, lack of awareness and lack of medical services are major barriers to diagnosis (Gauthier and others, 2021).

Some countries reported on recent initiatives aimed at addressing dementia. For example, the Republic of Korea has developed a national dementia care system (box 22). Malaysia has adopted a dementia action plan (2021–2030) and clinical practice guidelines related to dementia. These provide evidence-based recommendations on the management of dementia regarding risk factors, assessment and diagnosis, treatment and referral, and follow-up.

BOX 22 National Dementia Care System, Republic of Korea

In 2008, the Republic of Korea announced a “war against dementia”. Under the Dementia Management Act, the Government is required to produce a comprehensive dementia plan every five years, with 2021 marking the year of the fourth national dementia plan. Currently a comprehensive national system for dementia care is being established. Community Dementia Reassurance Centres have been introduced in all cities and districts nationwide. In these centres, diagnostic services and consultations are provided to residents and dementia patients, along with personalized management services and activities to improve cognitive function. Financial support for medical costs has been expanded and increasing numbers of facilities and hospitals are being involved as service providers.

Source: ESCAP Survey response, Republic of Korea, 2021.

In order to enhance the mental well-being of older persons, more attention to mental and neurological health care in policies is needed, including with regard to health promotion, prevention and risk reduction efforts that apply a life-cycle approach. Data collection on the mental and neurological health aspects of older persons, as well as assessing the lessons learned during the COVID-19 pandemic, can inform evidence-based policies. Investing in the availability of facilities and capacities to address the mental health issues of older persons is needed. Moreover, education and awareness raising on how to maintain good mental health can help prevention of mental health challenges in old age. In addition, information and guidance on how to identify mental health related symptoms among older persons should be offered.

Support to older persons with disabilities

Incidence of impairment and disability increases with age (see chapter 1). Thus, older persons, in particular older women, are often also persons with disabilities. The effects of impairment and disability are exacerbated by negative stereotypes, discrimination and abuse. The Madrid Plan of Action calls on Governments and stakeholders to promote the full participation of older persons with disabilities. In the region, member States adopted the Incheon Strategy to “Make the Right Real” for Persons with Disabilities in Asia and the Pacific (also known as the Incheon Strategy) in 2012. The Strategy provides the first set of 10 regionally agreed disability-specific development goals, 27 targets and 62 indicators, enabling the region to track progress towards improving the quality of life, and the fulfilment of the rights of the region's 690 million persons with disabilities, most of whom live in poverty.

Key challenges faced by older persons with disabilities concern health-related issues, the need for long-term care, the higher risk of mental health challenges, compromised mobility or limited ability to interact, as well as challenges related to access to employment.

All countries responding to the survey reported measures to support older persons with disabilities, such as through the provision of rehabilitation services, appropriate care and the provision of assistive devices and social transfers, including disability allowances. Mostly, countries reported on general policies and laws that include measures



An older Indonesian woman with leprosy stitches clothes, Makassar, South Sulawesi, Indonesia.
Photo: UNESCAP/Masyudi Firmansyah

on disability. Examples of recent initiatives are Bhutan's draft National Strategy for Healthy Ageing (2021–2026), which addresses gender and disability, and Cambodia's National Ageing Policy (2017–2030) and National Disability Strategic Plan (2019–2023), which contain strategies to support older persons with disabilities, in particular with regard to long-term care needs.

Comprehensive measures that explicitly address the concerns of older persons with disabilities have been put in place in only some countries. For example, in the Philippines, several measures aim to support the functional capacity of older persons with disabilities and recognize their rights (box 23). In Singapore, issues related to disability are addressed by legislation, policies and an action plan. The participation of older persons and persons with disabilities is promoted through universal design, and funding is available to older persons for ensuring disability-friendly house renovations. In Australia, the Disability Support for Older Australians of 2021 provides support to vulnerable older persons with a disability who are not eligible for the National Disability Insurance Scheme. The programme recognizes a number of special need groups under the Aged Care Act of 1997.

BOX 23 Measures protecting older persons with disabilities, Philippines

In the Philippines, a number of laws aim to support the functional capacity of older persons with disabilities and recognize that they have the same rights to take their place in society as other older persons. This is, among others, addressed by the accessibility law, which provides the minimum requirements and standards to make buildings, facilities and utilities for public use accessible to persons with disabilities, including older persons. Moreover, the Act Expanding the Benefits and Privileges of Persons with Disability, enables access to medicines, transport and recreational facilities.

Sources: The Philippines, Republic Act No. 344 and Republic Act No. 10754.

Chapter 4

Ensuring enabling and supportive environments





An older Pakistani woman during a community dialogue hosted by the United Nations in Mithi, Tharaparkar.
Photo: UN Women Asia and the Pacific

The third priority direction of the Madrid Plan of Action discusses framework conditions that are needed to create inclusive, cohesive societies for persons of all ages. These cover, but are not limited to, participatory, transparent and accountable political frameworks; recognition of the universal, indivisible, interdependent and interrelated nature of all human rights; age-friendly physical and social environments, including age-friendly cities and support to caregivers; aspects related to climate change and emergencies; public recognition of older persons; issues related to ageing with dignity and risks of neglect, abuse and violence against older persons; and information, innovation and communication which affect older persons' lives.

Many of these aspects of an enabling and supportive environment are relevant for achieving the commitments made in the 2030 Agenda and the United Nations Decade of Healthy Ageing (annex 2). For example, SDG 11 on sustainable cities and communities addresses issues related to age-friendly cities and safe, affordable, accessible and sustainable transport systems. SDG 5 on gender equality focuses on neglect, abuse and violence directed at women, including older women, and the value of unpaid care, mostly undertaken by women, and which often benefits older persons. The United Nations Decade of Healthy Ageing action area on changing how people think, feel and act towards age and ageing, refers to combatting ageism, which is also a concern of the Madrid Plan of Action. Recognizing some of these synergies,

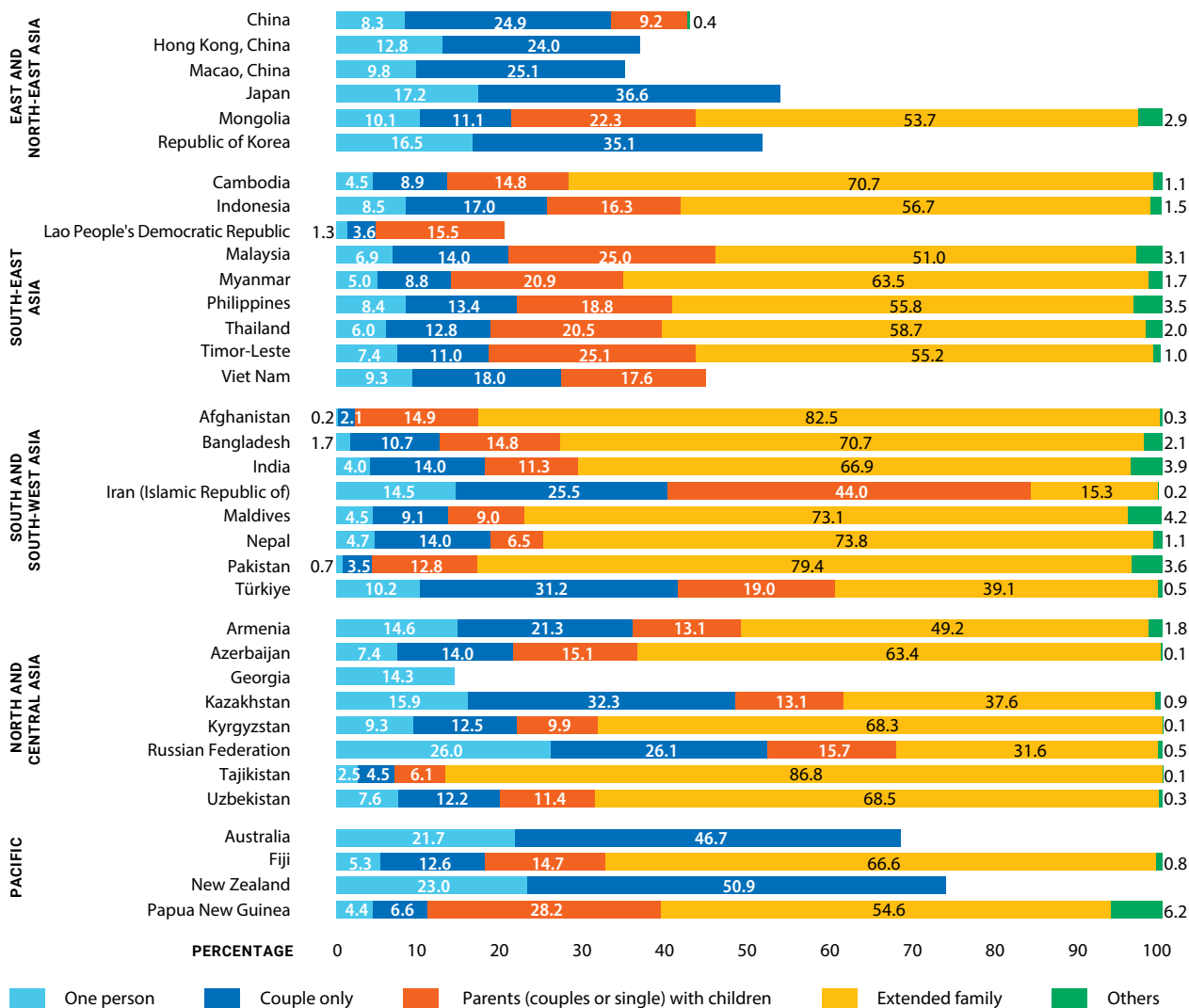
the following sections provide an overview of the enabling and supportive environment in Asia and the Pacific based on the survey responses, summaries of stakeholder consultations and meeting deliberations.

Housing, living environment and living arrangements

Traditionally, older persons in Asia and the Pacific have lived with other family members. Although this still holds true in most countries, urbanization, shrinking family sizes and increased migration are resulting in more older persons, especially older women, living alone. This is particularly the case in more developed countries like Australia and New Zealand, where about one fifth of the population aged 60 years or over resides alone (figure 18).

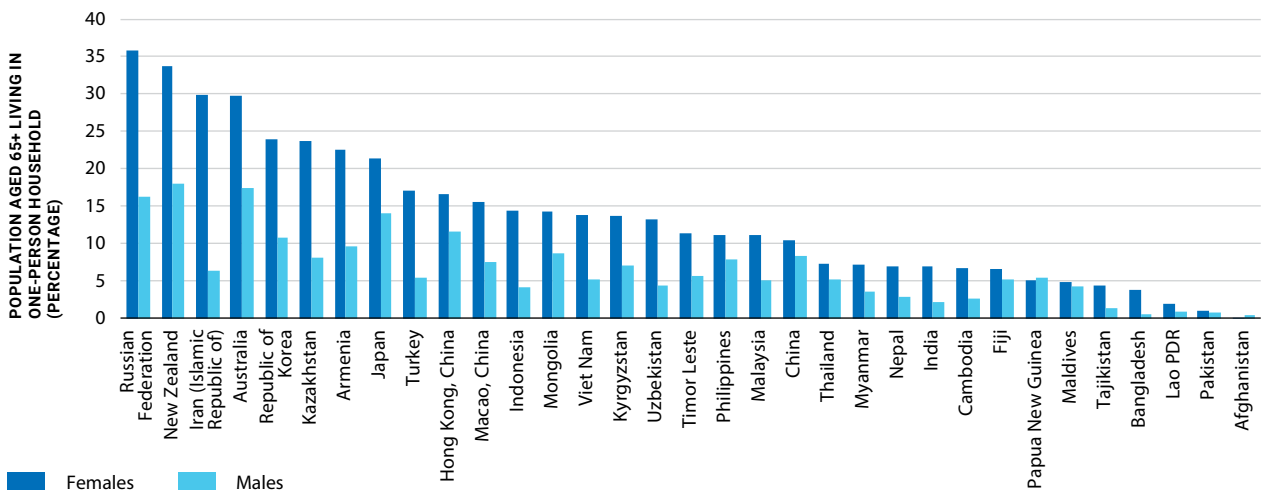
Although older persons in Asia and the Pacific in general live with their families, older women are more likely than older men to live alone (figure 19). However, there are significant differences between countries in Asia and the Pacific, with 20 per cent or more of older women in Armenia, Australia, Islamic Republic of Iran, Japan, Kazakhstan, New Zealand, the Republic of Korea and the Russian Federation residing in one-person households, and less than 5 per cent of older women in Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Maldives, Pakistan, and Tajikistan living alone.

FIGURE 18 Living arrangements of older persons aged 60 years or over, in selected Asia-Pacific countries/areas, latest available year



Source: United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (2019). Database on the Households and Living Arrangements of Older Persons 2019, <https://population.un.org/LivingArrangements/index.html#!/countries/840> (accessed 15 July 2022).

FIGURE 19 Persons aged 65 years or over, living alone in Asia and the Pacific, by sex, latest available year



Source: United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (2019). Database on the Households and Living Arrangements of Older Persons 2019. <https://www.un.org/development/desa/pd/data/living-arrangements-older-persons> (accessed 13 August 2022).

The Madrid Plan of Action encourages Governments to promote “ageing in place”; this stresses the need for independence and self-sufficient living conditions for older persons without having to move in old age. Furthermore, the ageing-in-place concept, requires age- and disability-friendly housing designs and public infrastructure, as well as affordable accommodation and transport.

While it is preferable for older persons to age where they are (ageing in place) instead of uprooting them, it will be important to provide access to goods and services, including long-term care, to all, including older persons. According to the survey responses, 15 of 22 countries promote ageing in place in some form or another. Türkiye, for example, has done so, such as through the establishment of care facilities, including day-care centres for older persons. Furthermore, it has introduced a home carers’ allowance to support informal care at home. Cambodia and Malaysia have also prioritized ageing in place and are developing age-friendly housing options for older persons.

Overall, poverty-related challenges, and housing and environmental design for independent living are still not considered a priority by many Governments in the region. While policies on ageing are present in most countries, limited awareness about the concept of age- and disability-friendly housing and infrastructure was reported. Where support for older persons is provided in terms of affordable housing, public infrastructure and transport, it is generally

considered insufficient and uneven across and within countries. At the same time, smaller family sizes and weakening of intergenerational bonding and community networks add to the increased risk of isolation. The latter is further affected by ongoing urbanization trends, discussed below.

Annex 5 provides an overview of measures undertaken by some countries in Asia and the Pacific to create age-friendly housing and living environments. Measures focus on financial assistance, national housing policies and plans, or planning guidelines.

For instance, in Singapore, government housing and public spaces are designed in accordance with age-friendly design, including fall prevention measures (box 24). In Malaysia, the Government has adopted guidelines on private housing that promote ageing in place. Moreover, the Government is working towards a framework, policy and guidelines for developing dedicated housing for older persons, including retirement villages.

Financial and housing assistance programmes that address the housing needs of older persons were reported by some countries. For example, the Mongolian Government provides emergency cash benefits, as well as annual housing and heating financial assistance. In Tajikistan, the creation of favourable living conditions for older persons is a priority in its programme on social protection for older persons, which runs until 2030.

BOX 24 Age-friendly housing, living environments and living arrangements, Singapore

In Singapore, the Government aims to transform the country into an age-friendly city, where citizens can age in place gracefully and confidently. The Enhancement for Active Seniors programme was introduced in 2012 to provide subsidies to make existing apartments more age friendly. In 2013, multigenerational flats were introduced to support families to cohabitate for mutual care and support. To increase age-friendly and affordable public housing options, various priority schemes are in place to enable families to live near each other. The 2-Room Flexi scheme was introduced in 2015; this provides older persons with a flexible choice of lease length and fittings. The Government has also launched a pilot programme, which introduced Community Care Apartments in 2021. The programme aims to provide older persons with a new public housing assisted living option that integrates age-friendly design features with care services and facilitates community building through social programmes and communal spaces. Lastly, the Government is rolling out the Smart Enabled Home Initiative, that aims to provide digital infrastructure to support the adoption of smart home solutions, such as monitoring systems for older persons, and smart distribution boards that, among others, help residents monitor their energy consumption and thereby contribute to sustainable living.

Source: ESCAP Survey response, Singapore, 2022.



Older man in a wheelchair engages in art therapy during recovery from a leg operation. Photo: Freepik/ Lifestylememory

Some countries, for instance Bangladesh and Bhutan, address the needs of older persons in their national housing strategies. In Bangladesh, the Government is implementing regulations that aim to improve housing and living conditions for older persons. In Bhutan, a comprehensive set of policies that focus on the provision of shelters and homes for the homeless has been developed; these homes are equipped for community and family-based long-term care.

Urban planning

Urbanization in the Asia-Pacific region affects the living conditions and the situation of older persons in various ways. With young people moving to cities, older persons are at an increased risk of isolation. If older persons themselves move to cities, they may find it difficult to be integrated into the urban environment and face challenging work conditions as well as lack of access to services, including health services.

Rapid urbanization, alongside a growing ageing population in the region, calls for urban planning that considers the well-being and participation of older persons, while, at the same time, considering criteria for sustainable cities and communities. These include, among others, ensuring access to safe and

affordable housing, and upgrading slum settlements, as well as investing in public transport, creating green public spaces, and improving urban planning and management in a way that is both participatory and inclusive (United Nations, 2015). The WHO concept of age-friendly cities builds on a whole-of-society approach and proposes eight interconnected domains¹⁶ that can help identify and address barriers to supporting the needs, preferences and inclusion of older persons in urban environments. These eight domains overlap and interact. For instance, respect and social inclusion are reflected in the accessibility of the buildings and spaces and in the range of opportunities for social participation that cities offer to older persons. Social participation, in turn, influences social inclusion, as well as access to information. Moreover, without transport or adequate means to allow people to connect, other services that support older persons are inaccessible (WHO, 2007).

While the majority of ESCAP member States reported on measures that consider the well-being and participation of older persons in urban environments in one way or another, data on age-friendly cities and/or communities are limited. However, some examples aimed at improving the living environment for older persons in urban settings through an “age-friendly city” approach were reported.

¹⁶ The eight WHO Age-friendly City domains are: transportation; housing; social participation; respect and social inclusion; civic participation and employment; communication and information; community support and health services; and outdoor spaces and buildings.

As highlighted above, the Government of Singapore aims to transform the country into an age-friendly city where Singaporeans can age in place with dignity. For this purpose, the Code on Accessibility in the Built Environment was updated in 2019 in order to improve accessibility and the universal design of public spaces. The Code considers the needs of older persons and applies to all new buildings and existing buildings that go through renovation. The age-friendly city approach is also applied in Malaysia (box 25), while in Türkiye, the 2010–2023 National Smart Cities Strategy calls for the active inclusion of older persons and persons with disabilities in social and economic life. One of the strategic goals of the vision Liveable and Sustainable Cities Adding Value to Life of Türkiye, is to provide accessible urban services to specific groups including persons with disabilities, older persons and special needs groups with limited mobility.

BOX 25 Age-friendly city pilot project, Taiping, Perak, Malaysia

In Malaysia, the Government launched its Age-friendly city pilot project in Taiping, Perak in 2020. The project is implemented in collaboration with WHO and the United Nations Development Programme and based on the WHO standards for age-friendly cities. The 2-year project aims to stimulate and guide local action to make urban settings and services more age-friendly through establishing a network of stakeholders in focus areas, sharing knowledge and capacity-building of government to practice participatory planning. The project further aims to include not only ageing, but also gender and disability perspectives into local development. In addition, universal design for accessibility, transport and public buildings are regulated with a view to accommodating older persons and persons with disabilities. The physical planning guidelines apply to public spaces as well as products.

Source: ESCAP Survey response, Malaysia, 2022.

According to the survey responses, 17 of 22 countries also focus on improving accessibility to public transport for older persons. In the majority of cases, these measures concern free or reduced fares, such as in Mongolia, where older persons can use public transport free of charge in the capital and in local communities, regardless of their place of residence.

In Cambodia and Kazakhstan, older persons pay a reduced fare when using public transport. And in Bangladesh, India, the Philippines and Thailand, for example, older persons are given priority seating on buses and trains.

In Singapore, the Land Transport Authority has included older persons in the development of measures to improve the public transport system. It has also introduced Passion Silver Concession Cards that offer reduced fares and other benefits for people aged 60 years or over, using public transport. In Türkiye, the Government is implementing the National Intelligent Transportation Systems Strategy, which includes adaptations to the infrastructure and regulation of the public transport system to provide more effective and safe services for older persons, children and persons with disabilities. In this context, the Accessibility of Passenger Transport Services in Türkiye project has been carried out to improve the mobility of, among others, older persons. In addition, free or discounted transport services are available nationwide. In 2018, Cambodia's Government expanded bus transport, with support from China and Japan, and priority given to accessibility and affordability for older persons. Macao, China follows different approaches to improve accessibility and affordability for older persons on public transportation (box 26).

BOX 26 Improving accessibility and affordability to public transport for older persons, Macao, China

Macao, China uses a combination of initiatives to improve the accessibility and affordability of public transport for older persons. The Chon Fai Rehabilitation Shuttle Bus Service programme provides pickup and drop-off services for wheelchair users on two dedicated bus routes which also run through areas with medical facilities, recreational venues, residential buildings and government offices. The Concessionary Fare Scheme for Senior Citizens allows older persons to apply for a pass that offers them free rides on public buses. Moreover, since 2011, the Government has worked with bus companies to replace old-model buses with low-floor buses accessible to wheelchair users and persons with mobility impairments.

Source: ESCAP Survey response, Macao, China, 2022.

The provision of basic accessible and affordable services, including transport and housing, are important to older persons, especially those with disabilities, and, overall, help ensure that no one is left behind. Accessible and age-friendly communities and environments, among others, help older persons with disabilities maintain their functional ability, which, in turn, supports well-being in later life and can instil greater independence. Safety issues must also be taken into consideration. Moreover, attention should be paid to the availability of local financial resources to accommodate ageing populations, as well as uneven distribution of services between capital cities, secondary and tertiary cities, and smaller towns.

Rural development

As a consequence of urbanization in the Asia-Pacific region, older persons in rural areas are often left with reduced family support, which is considered a significant challenge (ESCAP, 2022g). In addition, lower population density in rural areas affects the development of infrastructure; this can result in decreased access to services and activities, challenging older persons who, in turn, may face greater risk of social isolation, reduced mobility, lack of support, health-care deficits and poorer socioeconomic conditions (UNECE, 2017). Moreover, there is often already a gap in service provision between capital cities and secondary and tertiary

cities which should be addressed. Older women in rural areas are particularly vulnerable economically, especially when their role is restricted to non-remunerated work to support the family, and they are frequently dependent on others for support and survival (United Nations, 2003).

Only a few countries of those which responded to the survey reported measures to improve the living conditions, services and infrastructure in rural and remote areas with ageing populations. In this regard, the Government of India financially assists mobile medical clinics to facilitate easier access to address the health concerns of older persons in remote areas. In Cambodia, the Government addresses challenges, such as isolation and marginalization of older persons in both rural/remote and urban areas, through working with civil society organizations and subnational governments to replicate and strengthen the role of OPAs in supporting older persons. The Philippines deals with the situation of poor older persons in rural areas through programmes intended to help alleviate poverty experienced in marginalized sectors, such as agriculture and fishery, where many older persons work. In China, efforts are under way to strengthen the construction of institutions and facilities that serve older persons in rural areas. In Australia, investments to combat loneliness and social isolation of older persons in remote areas are made through its Seniors Connected Programme (box 27).

BOX 27 Seniors Connected Programme (2019–2023), Australia

This programme seeks to address loneliness and social isolation experienced by older persons aged 55 years or over (or indigenous people aged 50 years or over) living in the community through:

FriendLine

With an aim to expand the existing national phone support service, FriendLine offers older persons an opportunity to call and have free, anonymous, friendly conversations with a volunteer over the phone.

Village Hubs

These provide members with an informal peer support network to help them age well in their community as long as they want. The Village Hubs concept applies the WHO definition of active ageing by enabling people to realize their potential for physical, social and mental well-being. Village Hubs have been established across the country and provide a range of member-led social activities, such as walking groups, social events and talks by guest speakers.

Source: ESCAP Survey response, Australia, 2022.

Local governments play an important role in addressing the needs, preferences and rights of older persons in many parts of Asia and the Pacific. The Department of Social Welfare and local government units in the Philippines, for example, provide various social protection services for older persons and their families using a community-based approach. Communities in poor municipalities identify challenges to reduce poverty, take decisions on how to address them and control financial resources to resolve the issues being faced. Through this approach, capacity of both State (including local governments) and civil society stakeholders is built to serve local communities. There is also a community-based rehabilitation programme that delivers services to older persons with disabilities. China relies on villagers' self-government organizations and neighbourhood mutual aid societies to provide assistance to older persons in rural areas.

Migration and the reintegration of older migrants

Migration to and from Asia and the Pacific is another megatrend in the region. The age structure of the immigrant population is similar to the global migration stock, with the majority of immigrants being of working age and many working in the care economy. Given population ageing, these immigrants are instrumental in strengthening the workforce in the region (ESCAP, 2020). At the same time, with 108 million persons from the region currently living outside it, older returning migrants might face challenges upon their return, including access to pensions, social services or re-entering the labour force. To address these challenges, a few ESCAP member States, such as Bangladesh, India, Nepal, the Philippines and Sri Lanka have implemented measures aimed at facilitating the reintegration of older migrants in the community. For instance, the Government of Bangladesh operates various programmes to facilitate return migrants for reintegration into their community (box 28). The Government of India provides shelter, nutrition and health care to support reintegration of older return migrants. In the Philippines, the Government supports packages of interventions and mechanisms that are developed and implemented by social partners to facilitate the productive return of migrants.

BOX 28 Reintegration Programmes for Migrants, Bangladesh

Bangladesh has a number of programmes in place which support the reintegration of migrants, including older migrants returning home.

Probashi Kkalyan Bank

The state-owned bank was established to provide financial services to non-resident Bangladeshis. Among different services, it offers collateral free loans to migrant workers returning home. It also offers investment packages so migrants overseas can invest more easily in their home country to benefit themselves upon their return.

Cash Payment Scheme for Returnee Female Migrants and Loan Programme for Returnees

Based on a needs-assessment, the Government offers financial assistance to female migrants returning home. It also offers loans with relatively low interest rates to migrant workers returning to Bangladesh.

Source: ESCAP Survey response, Bangladesh, 2021.

Climate change and emergency situations

The Asia-Pacific region is highly vulnerable to climate change and other emergency situations due to its dependence on natural resources and agricultural sectors, densely populated coastal areas, weak institutions, lack of social protection and high poverty levels. Climate-induced weather events are becoming more frequent, intense and unpredictable (ESCAP, 2021c; ADB, 2012). Climate change affects health and care systems, urban development and housing, rural areas and livelihoods; it also affects population groups in differing ways.

Climate change and older persons

Climate change disproportionately affects persons in vulnerable situations, including older persons, due to medical preconditions, challenges related to health care, mobility limitations, lack of access to essential services, including ICTs, vulnerability



Two men helping an older woman to get through floodwaters in Arun Amarin, Bangkok. Photo: iStock/gdagys

to disease and lack of capacity to deal with natural disasters (ESCAP, 2022j; WHO, 2015; UNDP, 2017). Older persons with disabilities are at particular risk of the effects of climate change due to reduced mobility and often facing barriers to accessing information and resources that can help adapt to climate change (CAN and BOND, 2021). The effects of climate-related harms, such as increasing vector-borne diseases, heat stress and the increasing frequency and intensity of sudden- and slow-onset disasters, can affect the physical, mental health and well-being of older persons. Examples of recent climate-related events that have affected older persons have occurred, for instance, in Australia, where older persons were disproportionately affected by the country's 2020 wildfires and episodes of flooding, and in Kyrgyzstan, where climate-related mudslides have been affecting the livelihoods and vulnerability of people in areas with significant proportions of older persons.

While older persons are negatively affected by climate change, they also contribute to climate change as a consumer group. Although the impacts of an ageing population on greenhouse gas emissions are still unclear (ESCAP, 2022j), consumption patterns of older persons need to be

considered. Older persons are, at the same time, assets in contributing to climate activism as a result of their experience, knowledge, availability of time and ability to support solutions (OHCHR, 2021).

From the ESCAP survey, only 12 of 22 countries reported on climate change mitigation and adaptation measures that consider the role of older persons. For example, in Bangladesh specific measures related to older persons and climate change have been rolled out (box 29). In Mongolia, older persons have participated in several initiatives to reduce the effects of climate change when the National Emergency Management Agency, the Central and Local Emergency Management Agencies and the Fire Brigades have carried out annual landscaping and planting trees and shrubs activities, but there have only been a few opportunities to support them economically. In Australia, the Council on Ageing supports the investment in community health and organizations to work at grass root levels in communities to roll out energy efficiency schemes. In India, Gramin Vikas Vigyan Samiti (GRAVIS) has been organizing intergenerational groups of women to learn more about climate change and find ways to address its impact in rural communities (ESCAP, 2022j).

BOX 29 Measures related to older persons and climate change, National Policy for Older Persons, Bangladesh

The second Bangladesh National Policy for Older Persons contains specific measures related to older persons and climate change, including:

- Identifying the adverse effect of climate change on older persons and mitigating them.
- Considering the attributes and circumstances of older persons in all the programmes of climate change and ensuring their participation.
- Initiating the utilization of older persons' knowledge and experience in climate change.

Source: ESCAP Survey response, Bangladesh, 2021.

Overall, relatively limited ageing-related efforts were reported by countries in the context of climate change mitigation and adaptation. Hence, to address these challenges and to contribute to achieving the commitments made in the 2030 Agenda, the Paris Climate Agreement and the subsequent Conferences of Parties, increased awareness and attention should be directed to the intersection of population ageing and climate change, as well as its consequences for the region. Governments should define comprehensive policy responses that reduce the contribution of older persons to greenhouse gas emissions, protect older persons from climate impacts, and harness the potential of older persons in climate action (ESCAP, 2022j).

Emergency situations¹⁷

On-going challenges like food insecurity, poverty, droughts and other humanitarian emergencies pose threats to the well-being of older persons. Older persons, and older persons with disabilities, are most at risk in emergencies such as natural disasters – including climate related disasters – and other humanitarian crises due to the prevalence of chronic illness, mobility issues and/or cognitive impairment in later life (HelpAge International, 2020). At the same time, older persons can greatly contribute to disaster risk reduction (DRR) initiatives due to their “knowledge, skills, and wisdom, which

are invaluable assets to reduce disaster risk and they should be included in the design of policies, plans and mechanisms”, as stated in the 2015 Sendai Framework on Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR, 2015). They also contribute to the reestablishment and reconstruction of communities following emergencies. It is, therefore, essential to ensure they have equal access to food, shelter, medical care and other services during and after emergencies, as well as recognize their agency in supporting rebuilding efforts. In addition, consideration should be given to which groups of older persons are likely to be left behind in emergency situations.

In India, the Government emphasises that older persons are considered a vulnerable population in the National Policy on Disaster Management, as well as its implementation plan. In Japan, the National Disaster Risk Reduction Strategy considers older persons in all aspects, from the basic principle of DRR, at drills, during preparedness efforts, evacuations, and during the recovery and restoration phase. The Disaster Management Act of Bhutan states that special care of older persons shall be taken during rescue, response and relief operations. Australia has a specific initiative directly targeting older persons in emergency situations (box 30).

BOX 30 The Local Disaster Preparedness Program for Older Persons, Queensland, Australia

This aims to ensure that:

- Older persons can access relevant disaster preparedness information.
- Older persons have opportunities to participate in disaster preparedness, planning and volunteering.
- Awareness of the need to develop evacuation and disaster preparedness plans for their clients is raised among organizations that support older persons.

Source: ESCAP Survey response, Australia, 2022.

17 This topic is also covered under priority direction I of the Madrid Plan of Action.

Only a handful of countries in the region reported on contributions of older persons in addressing emergency situations. For instance, in Cambodia, the National Action Plan for Disaster Risk Reduction 2019–2023 ensures the participation of vulnerable groups, including older persons, in the national forum for DRR. Also, in the Philippines, the Rehabilitation and Recovery Planning Guide of the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Mitigation Council provides for a participatory approach to ensure that the needs and perspectives of all are reflected. Older persons are among those consulted in community planning activities. Despite these examples, dedicated comprehensive policies on DRR strategies that both address the needs of older persons and also give them voice when drafting these policies are largely missing.

Support to caregivers of older persons

The growing long-term care needs of ageing populations across the region requires arrangements and approaches to better support both formal and informal caregivers. The Madrid Plan of Action calls for the provision of a continuum of care and services for older persons and support to caregivers. It recognizes that the provision of care is mostly done by the family or community and points out that informal care has a complementary character and does not replace professional care. It therefore calls for support to caregivers who are often themselves older persons, in particular older women or migrant workers. Migrant workers often face the risk of not being properly remunerated, while they are frequently not covered by social protection schemes. Invariably, their benefits are not portable and their qualifications, skills and experiences are not transferable. The increased demand for caregivers, many of them from other countries within the region, requires greater government oversight.¹⁸ Frequently, care is provided to multiple care recipients, such as spouses, parents, grandchildren or other family members. Older persons who provide care face greater challenges due to health and mobility issues, disabilities, and limited access to information, services and financial resources. For instance, care partners of people with dementia are at higher risk of mental health impacts. Hence, informal caregivers need support, training, social protection and consideration of their interests. Investment in the care economy is

vital for meeting the SDGs in education and health. In this relation, the ILO 5R Framework for Decent Care introduces several policy recommendations and measures from a human rights and gender perspective (ILO, 2018):

- Recognizing, reducing and redistributing unpaid care work
- Promoting equality and decent work among care workers
- Representing, social dialogue and collective bargaining for care workers

A total of 18 of the 22 countries responding to the survey reported on providing some form of support to formal and informal caregivers of older persons. The quality of care and services is largely determined by the availability of care personnel, and, while over half of the respondents reported on providing some form of training for caregivers, only a few have established accreditation systems. For example, in Australia, the Aged Care Advocacy Programme sets out a number of guiding principles to help strengthen the quality of care. The programme provides advocacy support, education and information to older persons who receive government funded residential or home support aged care services. To ensure sufficient and qualified caregivers in Singapore, the Ministry of Health and the Agency for Integrated Care helps providers with recruitment, branding of the sector and salary enhancements through specific schemes. Training and capacity-building assistance is also available that caters to needs of health-care professionals. In Malaysia, specific training programmes are provided through a national training system. After completing the training, a skills certificate for elderly care, consisting of three levels of qualifications, is issued. The Government of Macao, China, offers training courses for caregivers and nurses with a focus on in-home elderly care, supervisory skills workshops for nurses in old-age homes, and cognitive stimulation therapy for frontline staff.

Socioeconomic changes in Asia and the Pacific affect the roles of family and the community in providing care to older persons. The number of multigenerational households is decreasing, which affects intergenerational solidarity and support to older persons, particularly in rural areas (ESCAP, 2022i). Despite these developments, the role of the family, in providing care remains important, including

18 For an in-depth discussion of the situation of domestic workers, including migrants workers providing care to others, see: Asia-Pacific Migration Report 2020, https://www.unescap.org/sites/default/d8files/knowledge-products/AP_Migration_R_2020.pdf



Volunteer assists older woman with support during the COVID-19 pandemic in Bangladesh. Photo: UN Women/Fahad Abdullah Kaizer

older persons acting as care partners. However, only a few countries provide financial support to family caregivers. For example, in Singapore, eligible individuals, regardless of age, can apply for support measures. In Australia, financial programmes, such as the Carer Payment Initiative, provide income support payment to families or individuals who provide full-time care to older persons. Similarly, the Carer Allowance is a supplement for individuals giving additional daily care to persons with disabilities, those with a medical condition or older persons. In the Republic of Korea, the Special Cash Benefits of Long-term Care Insurance supports persons that are challenged in accessing long-term care facilities. Cash benefits are offered when standard at-home care is provided by a caregiver, such as a family member. In Türkiye, a home care allowance is also available, alongside home care support services. The allowance is a monthly financial benefit for family members who provide care to a person with disability and/or an older person. Day care services are available for older persons with dementia, especially Alzheimer's disease, with the aim of increasing their quality of life and providing relief for family caregivers.

Public recognition and ageing with dignity

Despite the respect older persons traditionally receive in many Asia-Pacific countries, ageism is on the rise in the region, as well as globally (ESCAP, 2022h). Ageism is defined by WHO as the stereotypes, prejudice

and discrimination directed toward others or oneself based on age. It occurs in various contexts, such as the labour market, health-care settings, the financial service sector, family contexts, institutional settings and the media. Ageism negatively affects health and well-being and can reduce life expectancy (WHO, 2021c). Its complexity and intersectionality calls for a comprehensive and multisectoral policy response at all levels of society (UNECE, 2021).

While principles of equality and human rights are in some countries regulated by the constitution, some countries (annex 6), reported on specific anti-age discrimination laws and laws to prevent and punish elder abuse. However, such laws and policies often focus on the broader family, rather than specifically on older persons. Monitoring and reporting mechanisms are in place in a few countries. For instance, Türkiye has its National Preventive Mechanism, and government institutions that monitor care centres, hospitals and nursing homes to ensure that older persons' rights and liberties are respected. In the Republic of Korea, the National Human Rights Commission takes individual complaints on cases of age-based discrimination. Moreover, it carries out investigations and makes policy recommendations to the Government to address human rights violations or discrimination (ESCAP, 2022i). There are also some examples of practical initiatives, such as helplines, shelters and educational campaigns.

In the survey, 18 of the 22 countries responding reported on measures aimed at enhancing the public recognition of older persons regarding their authority, autonomy, self-determination, wisdom, productivity and contributions to society. In order to raise awareness, many countries observe the International Day of Older Persons on 1 October, World Elder Abuse Day on 15 June and other national commemorative days. Award ceremonies honouring older persons or specific campaigns are common in many countries. For instance, in Singapore, the Government partners with the Families for Life movement to organize the annual Celebrating our Grands campaign, which promotes family values and intergenerational bonding. Moreover, the I Feel Young campaign, which was launched as a part of the Action Plan for Successful Ageing, aims to promote positive messages about ageing by featuring inspiring stories of how older persons age actively and contribute to society. In Kazakhstan, a training programme for journalists aims to help combat negative stereotypes, prejudice and discrimination by fostering appropriate coverage in the media.

To address the challenges related to rising prevalence of ageism in Asia and the Pacific there is need for awareness-raising and education campaigns to change the narrow view of older persons from those requiring care to recognizing them as agents of development (ESCAP, 2022c). In order to combat ageism, WHO has identified a number of good practices in its Global Report on Ageism (WHO, 2021c) (box 31).

BOX 31 WHO good practices to combat ageism

In addition to measures such as targeted policies and legislation, educational and intergenerational interventions, and awareness raising, specific strategic actions to combat ageism recommended by WHO are:

- Investing in evidence-based strategies to prevent and respond to ageism
- Improving data and research to gain a better understanding of ageism and how to reduce it
- Building a movement to change the narrative around age and ageing

Source: WHO, 2021.

Neglect, abuse and violence

Important factors in developing age-friendly environments are the promotion of social inclusion and the adoption of adequate measures to prevent abuse, violence and discrimination against older persons. According to WHO, elder abuse is a single or repeated act, or lack of appropriate action, occurring within any relationship where there is an expectation of trust, which causes harm or distress to an older person. This type of violence constitutes as violation of human rights and includes:

- Physical, sexual, psychological and emotional abuse
- Financial and material abuse; abandonment and neglect
- Serious loss of dignity and respect

Prevalence of abuse, neglect and violence is expected to rise with population ageing. Importantly, there is underreporting and limited awareness and understanding of the issue, as well as a lack of funding and data (WHO, 2022). ESCAP survey responses by countries indicate that progress in addressing this issue varies in the region (annex 6). Countries also reported that the COVID-19 pandemic had caused higher rates of neglect, abuse and violence against older persons, including elder abuse in health-care settings, as well as scamming and financial abuse of older persons as a result of the increase in digital communication (ESCAP, 2022i). This was, among others, confirmed by inquiries made in the Republic of Korea (box 32).

BOX 32 Inquiries regarding neglect, abuse and violence of older persons in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, Republic of Korea

In the Republic of Korea, a fact-finding inquiry on care facilities during the COVID-19 pandemic was conducted between July and December 2021 and revealed that 466 out of 3,844 centres implemented isolation measures of entire age-cohorts, which led to negative stereotyping against older persons. Older persons' care facilities had a reputation of being COVID-19 hotspots where verbal abuse by care workers increased during the pandemic. The legal system in the Republic of Korea enables reporting of elder abuse; however, efforts to address the issue are hindered by insufficient education, human resource capacity and awareness raising.

Source: ESCAP Survey response, Republic of Korea, 2021.

In overall terms, only a few countries reported on specific frameworks aimed at combatting elder abuse, for instance the National Plan to Respond to the Abuse of Older Australians (2019–2023) (box 33). Similarly, examples of legislation and legal instruments that exclusively protect older persons from neglect, violence and abuse are limited. One example to address this is in Singapore, where the Penal Code and the Vulnerable Adults Act includes legal levers to tackle neglect, abuse and violence against older persons. The Penal Code was amended in 2019 to strengthen the protection of vulnerable victims, such as persons who are unable to protect themselves from harm due to physical or mental challenges, for instance caused by dementia. China also has legislation that addresses neglect, abuse and violence in various forms, and includes penalties of different kinds for perpetrators (annex 6). In Malaysia, legislation enables older persons to seek legal assistance and legal aid.

Some countries reported on having put in place services for victims of neglect, abuse and violence against older persons, including trainings (annex 6). For instance, in Singapore, the Adult Protective Service protects vulnerable adults from abuse, neglect and self-neglect. Moreover, Family Violence Specialist Centers provide support to victims of elder abuse through casework, counselling and referrals to specialized treatment. The Mongolian Association for Elderly People, in cooperation with the International Legal Development Organization, is implementing a training and qualification project for trainers and consultants to discuss the problems faced by older victims of domestic violence, to identify ways and means to address them and to provide legal advice to victims.

Challenges related to the limited awareness and availability of data on neglect, abuse and violence against older persons persist. Moreover, cases of elder abuse in rural and remote areas are highlighted as a specific challenge. WHO has identified a number of priorities to prevent and respond to elder abuse for Governments as well as other stakeholders (WHO, 2022b):

- Combating ageism
- Generating more and better data on prevalence and on risk and protective factors
- Developing and scaling up cost-effective solutions
- Making an investment case for addressing the issue
- Raising funds to tackle the issue

BOX 33 Neglect, abuse and violence against older persons, Australia

Recent research in Australia reveals that elder abuse accounts for about 15 per cent of all reported abuse cases. The perpetrators are often family members, mostly adult children or friends, neighbours or acquaintances. Older persons with poor physical or psychological health and higher levels of social isolation are more likely to experience elder abuse. As many as two thirds of older persons experiencing neglect, abuse and violence do not seek professional help and cases often remain unreported. Furthermore, 30 per cent of reported cases occur in institutional settings, calling for increased attention to persons with cognitive impairment and persons living in residential care. Older indigenous persons are at greater risk of neglect, abuse and violence.

Given the increasing prevalence of neglect, abuse and violence against older persons, in 2019, the National Plan to Respond to the Abuse of Older Australians 2019–2023 was launched. The plan identifies five commonly-recognized forms of abuse of older persons: physical abuse; sexual abuse; psychological abuse or emotional abuse; financial abuse; and neglect. Moreover, there are five priority areas:

- 1 Enhancing the understanding of neglect, abuse and violence against older persons
- 2 Building community awareness
- 3 Continuing to strengthen service responses
- 4 Planning for future decision-making
- 5 Strengthening safeguards for vulnerable older adults

Between 2020 and 2022, the Australian Government allocated AUD 258,000 for the Older Persons Advocacy Network to support training for health professionals. In addition, an online learning package for health providers was launched in July 2021 to strengthen the identification and prevention of elder abuse. Furthermore, a Ready to Listen training programme exists, with the aim to build the skills and capacity of residential aged care service providers to better respond to and prevent sexual assault in residential aged care.

Sources: Council of Attorneys-General, 2019; ESCAP, 2022i; ESCAP Survey response, Australia, 2022.

Information, innovation and technology

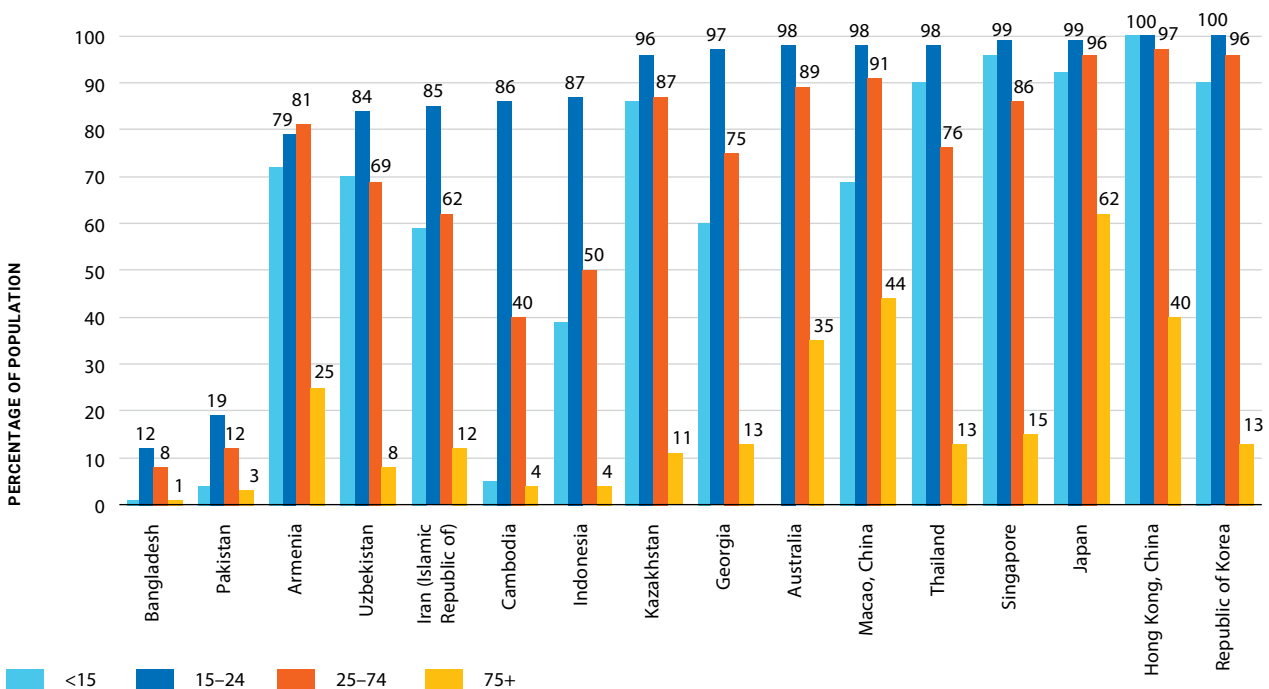
Asia and the Pacific is a driving force of ICT development and adoption. Yet, the region is also the most digitally divided in the world, and there are disparities across age (the “grey digital divide”) (figure 20) and gender that result in older women being particularly affected. Most recently, the COVID-19 pandemic has demonstrated how ICTs can help manage and fight the pandemic as well as support and connect people digitally. However, those who are excluded from digital transformations, including older persons, are at increased risk of being left behind during crises (ESCAP, 2021d).

Where they exist and where they are accessible and affordable, ICTs provide an opportunity to enhance cost-efficient service delivery for older persons and reduce inequalities in access to services, including health care, financial services and public services. In this regard, a human rights perspective on ensuring access to services is critical in bridging the digital divide. A total of 17 of the 22 countries responding to the survey promote digital inclusion and equity among older persons through various programmes and initiatives. In addition to initiatives that address digital literacy among older persons as described in chapter 2, mechanisms that improve

the availability and accessibility of information dedicated specifically to older persons are in place in a few countries, while in other cases, mechanisms include persons of all ages. For example, in India, the Government TV channel offers dedicated airtime for older persons. Through Activity Centers for Older Persons in Malaysia, older persons can access the Internet. Malaysia also provides digital technology training for older persons as a part of its Smart City Initiative. Moreover, the Medicine Service by Post helps patients living in rural and remote areas obtain medication.

ICT applications can also support, for example, the storing and managing of information, such as health records, and provide telemedicine, teleconsultations and overall health, lifestyle and educational information. ICTs are included in assistive, adaptive and rehabilitative devices, such as smart home technologies, that can support older persons in different situations and circumstances. Importantly, these devices need to follow a universal design principle that maximizes access, including for older persons. In Australia, for example, telehealth communications and monitoring technologies provide access to health care and integration of care for older persons who are not able to travel or who live in rural or remote areas. Through its “e-Mongolia”

FIGURE 20 Access to the Internet of the population by broad age groups (<15; 15–24; 25–74; 75+) in selected Asia-Pacific countries/areas, latest available year



Source: ITU (2022). ITU, Digital Development Dashboard. <https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Statistics/Dashboards/Pages/Digital-Development.aspx> (accessed 19 August 2022).



Older couple in their living room use laptop to video call with doctor about medical information. Photo: Freepik/tirazhardt

plan, Mongolia aims to digitalize the services of the labour and social protection sector and provide these to older persons online in a transparent and efficient way.

Importantly, the privacy of older persons must be protected. Older persons, in particular older women, are vulnerable to identity theft and online scams. Under the Malaysia Smart City Framework several strategies and initiatives are being developed to include older persons in smart city development and to establish digital technological learning programmes to ensure that older persons can use such technologies safely.

Moreover, some Governments reported on developing age-friendly technology and products. For example, in the Republic of Korea, the Government is operating an Age-Friendly Industry Support Center to aid the research and development of age-friendly technologies (box 34).

In order to benefit from information, innovation and technological developments and to strengthen the promotion of digital inclusion and equity among older persons, the coming years provide an opportunity for Asia and the Pacific to build on its successes with regard to population ageing and rapid digital transformation, learn from the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic and promote the inclusion of older persons in the digital world (ESCAP, 2021d). This can be achieved by investing in research and developing policies and action plans to achieve digital equity for all ages. Moreover, accessible, affordable and reliable Internet connectivity for persons of all ages must be a priority. Expanding digital infrastructure, related geographical coverage and digital inclusion of older persons through targeted policies and programmes will improve access, enable greater participation, empower older persons, and enhance their ability to live independently (ESCAP, 2021d).

BOX 34 Age-friendly information, innovation and technology, Republic of Korea

In the Republic of Korea, the Government is operating an Age-Friendly Industry Support Center to aid the research and development of age-friendly technologies and provide consultations on diversification and quality enhancements for age-friendly products. The centre also introduces a ranking and classification of outstanding products and provides financial support to companies. Furthermore, as a part of the senior community centre programme, classes on digitalization are provided by the metropolitan government.

Source: ESCAP Survey response, Republic of Korea, 2021.

Chapter 5

Data and research



The Madrid Plan of Action calls for comprehensive, diversified and specialized research on population ageing, including age- and gender-sensitive data collection and analysis which provides the evidence for effective policies.

Statistics on ageing and older persons have not been given sufficient priority in the past. As a result, data are not systematically produced, analysed, and disseminated by national Governments. When launching the United Nations Decade of Healthy Ageing (2021–2030), WHO observed that “three quarters of the world’s countries have limited or no data on healthy ageing or on older age groups.” The lack of data and analysis contributes to the invisibility and exclusion of older persons (WHO, 2020).

At the global level, some progress has been made to advance data collection. The Titchfield City Group on Ageing-Related Statistics and Age-Disaggregated Data,¹⁹ was endorsed by the United Nations Statistical Commission during its 49th session, in 2018, to support the 2030 Agenda by identifying data gaps and developing international guidance and methods for producing data related to ageing and disaggregated by age across the life course. That work is carried out in collaboration with United Nations bodies, national statistical offices and other organizations concerned with aspects of ageing-related and age-disaggregated statistics. Reports and guidance on the topic by the Group are forthcoming.

At the regional level in Asia and the Pacific, 13 of 22 countries responding to the survey reported that a lack of age-disaggregated data is a concern for the Government. Some 5 countries indicated that it is of no concern, and 4 countries did not respond. Cambodia, for example, expressed concern that lack of data affected the setting up of a social protection system. Türkiye reported on the need for both longitudinal and cross-sectional studies on ageing. It also noted the need to conduct studies on physical and mental health, as well as income and social support. Bhutan pointed out that data and research on older persons in the following areas was needed: (a) access to health and social services; (b) situation assessment; (c) stigma and discrimination; and (d) social economic situations. Thailand raised the importance of capacity-building assistance to

increase the availability of timely, relevant and high-quality data at the provincial level, disaggregated by income, gender, age, race, migratory status and other criteria. Cambodia underscored the need for data on older persons in the informal economy and on older persons and abuse, neglect and violence. Also, age- and sex disaggregated population data were needed at the subnational levels.

Some recent progress has been made to advance data collection. For example, Bangladesh has built a database on older persons who receive old age allowances. The Government has been advocating for prioritizing data collection on age, sex and disability in the next census. In Bhutan, the National Statistical Bureau has developed an interactive platform to collect age-disaggregated data on various social, economic and health areas for every district of the country. The Statistics Authority of the Philippines has been advocating for collecting age-disaggregated data in censuses, national surveys and other statistical systems. In Australia, the Government has expressed commitment to expanding and enhancing ageing-related data collection and research. The Australian Bureau of Statistics has collected age-disaggregated data by five or ten-year age groups, disaggregated to 105 years and over by individual year, while labour force data have been reported up to 85 years and over. A number of countries have also conducted stand-alone national surveys on population ageing and older persons, as summarized in annex 7. In addition, there are labour force and household surveys, demographic and health surveys or multiple indicator cluster surveys, but they generally do not present data disaggregated by age for older persons.

Interestingly, only 4 of the 22 countries responding to the survey acknowledged knowing about the Titchfield City Group or being active in the group. Thailand, one of the countries following the endeavours of the group indicated that the group’s work would benefit from discussions with a wider spectrum of stakeholders.

Overall, countries acknowledged the importance of timely, high-quality and age- and sex disaggregated data at national and subnational levels, and noted that capacity-building on data collection, analysis and dissemination was needed.

19 For more information on the group, see: <https://gss.civilservice.gov.uk/user-facing-pages/ageing-statistics/#scoping-meeting>

Chapter 6

Conclusions and recommendations



South Asian older woman sitting in a rural area. Photo: Unsplash/Yogendra Singh

Conclusions

Population ageing affects all the world's countries, but its scope and pace in Asia and the Pacific is globally unprecedented, including the sheer number of older persons who reside in the region. At the same time, the region is markedly diverse. It is home to rising economic and geopolitical powerhouses and some of the world's least developed countries. While some countries in the region are at the leading edge of technological changes, with global ramifications, significant divides exist and large segments of the region's population continue to experience inequalities of wealth, income and opportunity. Moreover, people in the region live in areas highly vulnerable to climate change and to increasingly frequent, intense and unpredictable natural disasters, affecting health and care systems, livelihoods, urban development and housing, and rural areas. Although population ageing is a human success story, the result of improved public health and medical advancements and overall social and economic development, it also presents challenges that are exacerbated when it occurs rapidly and affects such large numbers of people.

Given these circumstances, it is a matter of considerable urgency that policymakers, civil society, academia, the private sector, and other stakeholders review current levels and trends in population ageing and the overall situation of older persons and take appropriate policy action. The fourth review and appraisal of the Madrid Plan of Action in Asia and the Pacific provided an ideal opportunity to take stock and share good practices and lessons learned, in order to strengthen existing policies, develop new policies and programmes, and mainstream the subject of population ageing into other policy areas.

The assessment of the situation of older persons in Asia and the Pacific reveals that, since 2017, progress has been made. Countries have reported on a wide range of good practices, policies and programmes across the Madrid Plan of Action priority directions, with particular progress having been made in regard to the first priority direction on older persons and development. Countries have also prioritized and achieved progress in terms of improving people's health and well-being, with an emphasis on health and healthy ageing, care, social protection and gender.

Among the main challenges reported have been the development and implementation of legislation focusing on older persons as well as misconceptions and stereotypes about population ageing and older persons, followed by lack of data at the national and subnational levels and lack of human resources dedicated to population ageing. Moreover, the promotion and protection of the human rights of older persons remains a challenge. Providing social protection, affordable and universal access to health care, including long-term care, and the integration of health and social care remain distant goals for several countries. Finally, the COVID-19 pandemic has affected the situation of older persons and their families significantly and had an impact on the adoption and implementation of plans and programmes. At the same time, good practices have emerged from the pandemic. It has offered a learning opportunity to improve measures on ageing and older persons and implement lessons learned going forward.

Older persons and development

Overall, progress was reported regarding the priority issues of the first Madrid Plan of Action direction on older persons and development; however, in order to achieve a society for all ages and the commitments made in the 2030 Agenda, comprehensive and integrated policy frameworks that address and mainstream population ageing into national development strategies and plans are required. Most ESCAP member States support the participation of older persons in income-generating work by providing policy and technical support. At the same time, challenges such as work in the informal sector with poor conditions, age-discrimination, stigma and abuse, and gender inequality persist.

Almost all governments offer opportunities for participation of older persons in society, including through OPAs, and intergenerational contact and exchange. Nevertheless, many older persons, especially women and those in rural areas, still lack access to opportunities to participate more in development processes, including through lifelong-learning initiatives and digital training platforms. The promotion of digital literacy among older persons has become more urgent as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. The engagement of



Older man with beard wearing traditional green headwear in Afghanistan. Photo: UN Photo/John Isaac

older persons can be further facilitated through institutional structures, for instance councils establishing stakeholder engagement platforms or consultations that ensure attention to the preferences, needs and rights of older persons at all levels of government.

A range of measures to ensure income security and social protection, reduce poverty and prepare for ageing labour forces were reported as part of the ESCAP survey; however, a high percentage of older persons is still working in the informal sector and poverty among older persons has increased, among others, as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Therefore, implementing comprehensive social protection schemes, continued investments in offering equal access to decent work for older persons and preparing for ageing labour markets are critical. Moreover, post-COVID measures to stimulate the economy should include provisions that enhance digital inclusion and consider the impacts the new economy, as well as remote working, have on older persons.

Older persons, health and well-being

Healthy and active ageing of older persons is promoted across the region, including through national health strategies or dedicated health policies for older persons. However, gaps between policies and implementation remain and have been further exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. In

addition, coverage, accessibility, and affordability of certain policies directed at older persons continue to pose a challenge to their health and well-being. Moreover, increased efforts are needed to prevent and effectively manage NCDs. The double burden of disease is real and particularly affects low- and middle-income countries.

Several good practices that promote the health and well-being of older persons throughout life were reported by ESCAP member States; yet countries underscored that the health and well-being of some groups of older persons in the region, particularly older women and older persons in urban areas, had deteriorated over time.

Some progress towards achieving universal health coverage for older persons has occurred in the region, as reported by ESCAP member States. Nonetheless, such coverage varies between and within countries, calling for a need to promote universal health coverage. Also, challenges remain in relation to the access and consideration of the specific needs of women in the context of health care and health insurance, which calls for equity-focused and gender-responsive approaches. Furthermore, while provisions for mental health and neurological services were reported by a growing number of countries in Asia and the Pacific, specific ageing-related mental health services remain limited. A similar situation applies to persons with disabilities and measures to support them.

Overall, the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the United Nations Decade of Healthy Ageing offers an opportunity to continue to invest in the foundations of future health systems and expand provisions for age-specific-care needs in the region (annex 2).

Ensuring enabling and supportive environments

Countries reported a wide range of initiatives regarding progress in implementing the Madrid Plan of Action commitments to ensure enabling and supportive environments. However, a significant need to translate policies into concrete action remains, in particular concerning the human rights of older persons.

In the area of housing and the living environment, good practices exist across the region. At the same time, the support provided with regard to affordable

housing, public infrastructure, and transport is uneven across and within countries. In this context, more comprehensive approaches and applying the age-friendly city approach could help mitigate the challenges associated with the twin-trends of rapid population ageing and urbanization in the region.

While it was noted that a degree of progress in terms of social protection and labour market policies that benefit older persons had been made, significant gaps remain, especially with regard to older persons in informal work, older women and those who are migrants. In addition to training and capacity building, there is a need for more workers to ensure an adequate health and care workforce.

The intersection of population ageing, climate change and emergencies, including disasters and armed conflict, along with their consequences, were also noted as important concerns. Some countries have started to include older persons in DRR strategies, but their role in climate activism has gone mostly unnoticed. Hence, to better prepare for the consequences in the region and to contribute to achieving the commitments made in the 2030 Agenda, the Paris Climate Agreement and in the subsequent Conferences of Parties, increased awareness and attention should be directed to population ageing in the context of climate change and DRR, as well as vice versa.

The rising occurrence of ageism in Asia and the Pacific is a further concern, as is the limited progress in addressing neglect, abuse and violence against older persons, along with a lack of awareness and data in these domains. Many countries have laws, policies and programmes that focus on domestic violence, but without a focus on the specific needs of older persons. COVID-19 has exacerbated the vulnerability of older persons to ageism in the region.

Asia and the Pacific has made much progress in connecting the region through ICTs. However, approximately half of its population lacks Internet access, and women and older persons are among the least likely to be digitally connected. The COVID-19 pandemic has demonstrated that digital equity for all ages is more important than ever. The next years provide an opportunity for the region to build on its successes with regard to population ageing and rapid digital transformation, learn from the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic and promote the inclusion of older persons in the digital world.

BOX 35 ESCAP tools to support the design of policies on population ageing**Dashboard of policies on population ageing**

ESCAP has created a dashboard of existing policies on ageing, action plans and, in some cases, sectoral policies that relate to population ageing at: <https://www.population-trends-asiapacific.org/>

The dashboard also provides information on initiatives carried out by countries and stakeholders in relation to the three priority directions of the Madrid Plan of Action, as well as with regard to emerging issues and data and research. For each country in Asia and the Pacific, and if available, the dashboard displays: (a) a list of policies, with links to the original documents, and (b) factsheets, with key statistical indicators on population ageing and the situation of older persons. Good practices in addressing the challenges and opportunities of population ageing are also highlighted.

The dashboard draws on survey responses of countries, supplemented by additional research available through publicly accessible domains.

Population ageing data hub

ESCAP has compiled statistical information on the situation of older persons based on publicly available datasets. The data are displayed in country data sheets with illustrative graphs.

Through an interactive database, users can compare indicators of specific countries to those of other countries and the subregion they are in as a whole.

The data hub on population ageing complements the ESCAP Population Data Sheet, which is published annually and presents the latest demographic information for all countries in Asia and the Pacific. The Data Sheet is available in hard copy and as an interactive dashboard at: <https://www.population-trends-asiapacific.org/population-data>.

Developing policies on ageing using a bottom-up approach: manual and training course

ESCAP has published a working paper on population ageing policies using a bottom-up approach. The paper highlights elements of policies on population ageing, and discusses the process of drafting and finalizing a policy document. The paper also provides good practice examples from the Asia-Pacific region.

The paper's annex includes a checklist for policymakers on what should be considered in the policymaking process. The working paper can be accessed through the ESCAP website at: https://www.unescap.org/sites/default/d8files/knowledge-products/SDD_working_paper_key_elements_ageing_20211222.pdf.

A training course, based on the working paper, is currently under preparation to be available through the ESCAP e-learning portal.

Videos on population ageing

ESCAP has published papers and is developing training courses on different aspects of population ageing. One of the papers highlights elements of policies on population ageing and provides an overview of good practices from the Asia-Pacific region. The paper's annex includes a checklist for policymakers on what should be considered in the policymaking process. The papers and training modules are posted on: <https://www.population-trends-asiapacific.org/population-ageing>.

Recommendations

In order to accelerate the implementation of the Madrid Plan of Action, the following recommendations – drawn from the outcome document of the intergovernmental meeting (ESCAP/MIPAA/IGM.3/2022/3/Add.1), the stakeholder consultations, the deliberations at the intergovernmental meeting and input provided during the Expert Group Meeting – are put forward:

Older persons and development

ACTIVE PARTICIPATION OF OLDER PERSONS IN SOCIETY

- Develop, strengthen and implement comprehensive and integrated policy frameworks that address and mainstream population ageing into national development strategies and plans, adopting a human rights-based, people-centred and life-course approach, in line with the Madrid Plan of Action and the 2030 Agenda; mobilize all necessary resources and support in that regard (for further information, see box 35).
- Mainstream gender and disability perspectives into policies promoting societies for all ages, taking into account the different needs and situations of all individuals over the life course; while a focus on the needs of older women is critical, the situation of older men also deserves attention.
- Support the formation and strengthening of OPAs and civil society organizations, in recognition of the diversity of older persons, to provide effective community mechanisms for including the voices of older persons on the ground and in policymaking.
- Translate national level policies to the subnational level and ensure that, for implementing such policies, funding is available; in this regard, explore possibilities of working with the private sector.

Work and the ageing labour force

- Promote the right to work of older persons by providing access to full and productive employment and decent work under healthy, flexible and age-friendly conditions.
- Include provisions that enable older persons to access employment and livelihood opportunities and consider the impacts the new and gig-economy and remote work have on older persons, especially in the context of life post-COVID.

- Combat abuse, neglect, all forms of discrimination, inequalities and ageism directed at older persons in the workforce and elsewhere.
- Prepare older persons for retirement to prevent them from experiencing depression, isolation and loneliness.

Access to knowledge, education and training

- Ensure lifelong learning through training, retraining and skills development, for as long as people want and are able to participate, in particular among older persons in informal work and in rural areas.
- Create and provide training opportunities in digital skills and technology and support equal and affordable access to technology for older persons that is disability inclusive.

Reduction of poverty

- Ensure financial security in old age and mainstream ageing issues into poverty-reduction measures, women's empowerment strategies and national development plans.
- Enhance international cooperation to support national efforts to eradicate poverty among older persons, especially those who are at high risk of being left behind, including older women, and older persons with disabilities, living alone or in rural areas.
- Expand the overall coverage of and access to sustainable social protection systems and pension schemes, including but not limited to social pensions, non-contributory pensions and disability benefits to also support informal workers and migrants.

Intergenerational solidarity and transfers

- Promote policies and national action plans that prepare for and respond to population ageing throughout the life course and strengthen intergenerational solidarity.
- Encourage intergenerational volunteering opportunities and sharing of experiences and learning at all levels, including at the community level.

Older persons, health and well-being

Measures promoting health and well-being throughout life

- Accelerate efforts towards the achievement of universal health coverage so that all older persons, without discrimination, enjoy their right to the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health.
- Ensure access to affordable and quality health care and invest in a life-cycle approach to foster and strengthen active and healthy ageing among all age groups.
- Encourage and facilitate physical activity, healthy nutrition and preventive health interventions, and strengthen health literacy, mental health and well-being, social participation and intergenerational ties.
- Raise awareness of the health and well-being of older persons and apply community-based and inclusive approaches to health-care provision, that consider the needs, preferences and rights of older persons, with particular attention to women, older persons with disabilities and vulnerable older persons.
- Incorporate the concept of self-care into ageing policies, including into social and health related efforts. Promote self-care across the life cycle to contribute to health and well-being in old age and reduce the burden that ageing poses on health-care systems.

Ageing and health-care systems

- Provide and enhance access of older persons to primary health care, without discrimination.
- Ensure affordable access to appropriate and quality health services, as well as health system readiness and responsiveness, given the needs, preferences and rights of older persons.
- Invest in integrated and person-centred service delivery, including through integrating social and health-care services at all policy levels and develop a health workforce with the right skills.
- Invest in palliative and end-of-life care services, including by addressing gaps in compassionate support and enabling people to die with dignity.
- Strengthen data collection to enable evidence-based policy design on the health and long-term care needs of older persons.

- Ensure that the health sector collaborates with other sectors, such as housing, transport and the built environment.
- Learn from the experiences of COVID-19, and ensure that, despite global health crises, all, including older persons, continue to have access to health services.
- Ensure that older persons have unhindered, timely, fair and equitable access to safe diagnostics, therapeutics, medicines, vaccines, and essential health technologies and their components, as well as health equipment.

Long-term care

- Develop and implement high-quality, integrated and flexible long-term care systems with public, private and community providers that foster a community-based and ageing-in place approach, and include comprehensive mental health services.
- Promote long-term care as a positive social and economic care and employment strategy, while recognizing the contributions and enhancing the capacity of formal and informal caregivers and volunteers, including family members.

Mental and neurological health services

- Ensure effective intervention strategies to address the rising prevalence of mental health and neurodegenerative diseases among older persons.
- Train and build the capacity of people active in the mental health field, including by learning to diagnose, raising awareness, addressing stigma and promoting self-care throughout the life course.
- Develop plans addressing dementia, including Alzheimer's disease, that consider public awareness and improving the quality of health care, social care and long-term care support for people living with Alzheimer's disease and other forms of dementia, and their families.
- Apply the approach of life-long health promotion especially with regard to NCDs and mental health.
- Build older persons' mental health resilience in the family and community settings.

Support to older persons with disabilities

- Address the concerns of older persons with disabilities, as well as mainstream ageing into disability-related measures and vice-versa.
- Ensure that infrastructure and services are accessible to older persons with disabilities.
- Include older persons with disabilities in community preparedness for DRR.

Ensuring enabling and supportive environments

Housing, living environment and living arrangements

- Promote and protect the right of older persons to adequate housing, ageing in place and intergenerational housing options.
- Strengthen equitable and affordable access to sustainable basic physical and social infrastructure for all, without discrimination, and ensure that these services are responsive to the needs, preferences and rights of older persons.
- Give greater priority to poverty-related challenges, and universal and green design, as well as independent living of older persons, and develop age- and disability-friendly housing, transport and infrastructure, and financial assistance programmes.
- Ensure that new homes have accessibility features throughout the home and that public parks and spaces are accessible and age-friendly.
- Improve the living conditions and infrastructure of older persons in rural and remote areas.
- Enhance social policies, institutional capacities and technical skills of government and non-governmental organizations, including OPAs and civil society organizations, to provide adequate community services for older persons.
- Invest in and promote local-level policies and programmes that ensure enabling and supportive environments, adopting, among others, the WHO Age-friendly Cities and Communities approach, and include the active engagement of OPAs.
- Strengthen data collection, analysis and dissemination regarding age-friendly communities, and encourage local and regional authorities to carry out analysis to better understand areas of concern, challenges and opportunities.
- Ensure the security and safety of older persons living alone by monitoring their living situation through regular visits by volunteers, community representatives and the police.
- Recognize older persons as a resource and encourage self-care practices that support independent living.

Climate change and emergencies

- Direct greater attention, including through research, to the intersection of population ageing and climate change, and its consequences for the region.
- Reduce the contribution of older persons to greenhouse gas emissions, and protect them from climate impacts, while harnessing their potential in climate action.
- Protect older persons from all manner of emergencies, including disasters, armed conflict and climate change, by means of respecting and promoting their human rights, and meaningfully engaging them and their organizations in the preparation, response and recovery stages of emergencies.
- Recognize older persons as invaluable sources of wisdom, knowledge and skills in climate mitigation and adaptation; give them a voice and encourage intergenerational exchange when addressing climate change.

Support to caregivers of older persons

- Ensure that caregivers have social protection and that their work is adequately remunerated, following appropriate standards; for foreign caregivers, ensure that their rights are protected, their work is recognized as decent work and their benefits are portable.
- Promote skill and competency development and continuous training of health and social care workers in geriatric and home-based care, and ensure that their qualifications are standardized and transferrable.
- Encourage more medical professionals to be trained in gerontology and geriatric science.
- Strengthen intergenerational relations, accreditation systems, quality standards and monitoring mechanisms, as well as support and invest in innovations and advanced technologies to obtain and maintain the highest standard of services and care for older persons.
- Advocate for the quantification of the caregiving contribution of older persons to the economy in national accounts, including recognition of unpaid care for family members, in particular by women, and ensure that research on national accounts informs policymaking.

- Respond to the changing care needs in the region by developing new approaches and policies for a continuum of care, as well as strengthen home-based services and integrate care into the local community.
- Promote strategies to support women who are long-term caregivers so they can perform their roles while maintaining their livelihoods and not being deprived of opportunities for development into old age.

Public recognition and ageing with dignity

- Address the challenges related to rising prevalence of ageism in Asia and the Pacific by communicating a positive image of ageing and older persons, as well as adopting the WHO good practices on combating ageism.
- Promote educational and intergenerational interventions on age discrimination and ageism, improve data and research to gain a better understanding of the topic and how to reduce it, and build a movement to raise awareness and change the narrative around age and ageing.
- Combat violence, neglect, abuse and ill-treatment against all older persons by: stronger legislation, multi-sectoral cooperation and public-private partnerships, with engagement of older persons; awareness raising, including through the media; enhanced data collection and analysis on elder abuse, disaggregated by sex, age, care need level and other characteristics; more effective monitoring and reporting; and increasing the scope and variety of preventive and protective measures, and care-services, including mental health care.

Information, innovation and technology

- Ensure new technologies, especially ICTs, are affordable, reliable and accessible to persons of all ages and with disabilities²⁰ and promote literacy, numeracy, technological skills, training and retraining, as well as ensuring that the rights to privacy are respected.
- Promote multi-stakeholder partnerships for multidisciplinary and intergenerational research on ageing, and harness scientific expertise and research and development capacity through use of technology and building the evidence base.
- Raise awareness for learning of and adapting to new technical standards and the widespread use of ICTs covering all aspects of the built environment.

Data, research, cooperation and follow-up

- Support the collection, analysis and dissemination of age- and sex-disaggregated data, without age-caps.
- Invest in capacity-building on data collection, analysis and dissemination.
- Engage, on a regular basis, with other member States, as well as other stakeholders, on the topic of population ageing; ensure regular sharing of good practices, experiences, and lessons learned, including from unsuccessful attempts.
- Ensure that the topic of ageing is elevated on the agendas of regional and subregional organizations, such as ASEAN, SAARC and APEC, and that countries and stakeholders collaborate in identifying priority areas. Use the United Nations high-level political forum to report on the situation of older persons across all SDGs on a regular basis.

20 Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) provide guidance on how to make websites accessible to persons with a wide range of disabilities, including visual, auditory, physical, speech, cognitive, language, learning, and neurological disabilities.

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Day 1 of the Asia-Pacific Intergovernmental Meeting on the Fourth Review and Appraisal of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing. Photo: ESCAP Photo/Suwat Chanchareonsuk

Annex 1. Outcome document of the Asia-Pacific Intergovernmental Meeting on the Fourth Review and Appraisal of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing (29 June – 1 July 2022)

Accelerating Implementation of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, 2002, to Build a Sustainable Society for All Ages in Asia and the Pacific

1. *We, the representatives of members and associate members of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific assembled at the Asia-Pacific Intergovernmental Meeting on the Fourth Review and Appraisal of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, held in Bangkok and online from 29 June to 1 July 2022,*
2. *Recalling* General Assembly resolution 57/167 of 18 December 2002 on the follow-up to the Second World Assembly on Ageing, in which the Assembly endorsed the Political Declaration and the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, 2002,¹
3. *Recalling also* subsequent General Assembly resolutions on the followup to the Second World Assembly on Ageing, in particular resolution 76/138 of 16 December 2021, in which the Assembly noted that the fourth review and appraisal of the Madrid Plan of Action would take place at the sixty-first session of the Commission for Social Development, in 2023,

¹ *Report of the Second World Assembly on Ageing, Madrid, 8–12 April 2002* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.02.IV.4), chap. I, resolution 1, annexes I and II.

4. *Recalling further* that, in the Madrid Plan of Action, the systematic review of its implementation by Member States was requested as being essential for its success in improving the quality of life of older persons, and that the Economic and Social Council, in its resolution 2003/14 of 21 July 2003, invited Governments, the United Nations system and civil society, including organizations of older persons, to participate in a bottom-up approach to the review and appraisal of the Madrid Plan of Action,

5. *Bearing in mind* that the Commission for Social Development, in its resolution 42/1 of 13 February 2004, decided to undertake the review and appraisal of the Madrid Plan of Action every five years,² and that the Economic and Social Council, in its resolution 2020/8 of 18 June 2020, endorsed the timeline for carrying out the fourth review and appraisal of the Madrid Plan of Action at the global level in 2023, and invited Member States to identify actions they had taken since the third review and appraisal exercise, with the aim of presenting that information to the regional commissions during 2022, and recognizing that, with the fourth review and appraisal exercise, the Second World Assembly on Ageing approaches its 20-year anniversary,

6. *Noting* that the Economic and Social Council, also in its resolution 2020/8 of 18 June 2020, requested the regional commissions to continue to facilitate the review and appraisal exercise at the regional level, inter alia, by providing assistance to Member States, upon request and within existing resources, in the organization of their national review and appraisal exercises and by providing an analysis of the main findings, identifying key priority action areas and good practices and suggesting policy responses by 2022,

7. *Recalling* that the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, in its decision 74/26 of 16 May 2018, endorsed the report of the Asia-Pacific Intergovernmental Meeting on the Third Review and Appraisal of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, in which member States expressed resolve to intensify efforts with a view to strengthening the full and effective participation by, and opportunities for, older persons in economic, social, cultural and political life in the Asia-Pacific region through a set of recommendations,³

8. *Recalling also* the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development,⁴ and stressing the need to ensure that issues of relevance to older persons are taken into account in its implementation in order to ensure that no one is left behind, including older persons,

9. *Recalling further* the World Health Assembly resolutions on ageing, specifically resolution 58.16 of 25 May 2005 on strengthening active and healthy ageing,⁵ in which the Assembly stressed the important role of public health policies and programmes in the context of population ageing,

10. *Recalling* the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development,⁶ which highlighted the importance of policies to respond to issues related to quality of life, health care and social security of older persons, paying special attention to the needs of older women, where appropriate,

11. *Welcoming* the proclamation of the United Nations Decade of Healthy Ageing (2021–2030) in General Assembly resolution 75/131 of 14 December 2020, and recognizing the synergies between the Madrid Plan of Action and the United Nations Decade of Healthy Ageing,

12. *Acknowledging* that population ageing is an irreversible global trend that will lead to profound economic and social changes, and recognizing the unprecedented pace of the demographic transition towards ageing and aged societies in the Asia-Pacific region, while also recognizing the essential contribution that older persons continue to make to the functioning of societies and towards the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development,

2 See *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2004, Supplement No. 6 (E/2004/26)*, chap. I, sect. E.

3 ESCAP/74/20, annex II, para. 18.

4 General Assembly resolution 70/1 of 25 September 2015.

5 See World Health Organization, document WHA58/2005/REC/1.

6 *Report of the International Conference on Population and Development, Cairo, 5– 13 September 1994* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.95.XIII.18), chap. I, resolution 1, annex.

13. *Recognizing* that the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic has had a disproportionately heavy impact on older persons, in particular older women, and that responses to the COVID-19 pandemic need to respect their dignity, promote and protect their human rights and take into account all forms of violence, discrimination, stigmatization, exclusion, inequalities, as well as neglect, social isolation and loneliness,
14. *Welcoming* the progress achieved by the members and associate members of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific in the implementation of the Madrid Plan of Action since 2002, and welcoming also the establishment of national coordinating bodies on population ageing and the designation of focal points on ageing in accordance with national procedures,
15. *Welcoming with appreciation* the role of civil society, including organizations of older persons, academia, research foundations, faith-based organizations, community-based organizations, including caregivers, and the private sector, in supporting older persons and Governments in Asia and the Pacific on issues related to ageing, including in efforts to help build capacity on ageing issues,
16. *Recognizing* that there are numerous existing and newly emerging issues affecting older persons that make it necessary to accelerate the implementation of the Madrid Plan of Action in the region,
17. *Taking note* of the background documents prepared for the fourth review and appraisal in Asia and the Pacific, in particular the note by the secretariat entitled "Population ageing, the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, 2002, and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific: synergies, indicators and data",⁷
18. *Reaffirm* the Political Declaration and the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, 2002;
19. *Also reaffirm* Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific decision 74/26 of 16 May 2018, in which the Commission endorsed the report of the Asia-Pacific Intergovernmental Meeting on the Third Review and Appraisal of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing;
20. *Recommend* that members and associate members:
- (a) Promote and protect the human rights of all older persons, giving priority to addressing gaps and mainstreaming the rights of older persons in legal and policy frameworks, as appropriate;
 - (b) Ensure coordinated multisectoral responses and the mainstreaming of ageing issues into national development policies and programmes, as appropriate;
 - (c) Increase national awareness, capacity and resources to prepare for and respond to the multisectoral implications of population ageing;
 - (d) Develop an inclusive, adaptive and rights-based approach to social protection systems, paying particular attention to older persons and their vulnerability to poverty and social exclusion;
 - (e) Accord priority to mainstreaming the perspective of older women into national responses;
 - (f) Optimize and invest in the use of digital technologies and innovative means and mechanisms to address the various challenges and opportunities of population ageing;
21. *Also recommend* that the following be done to accelerate the implementation of the Madrid Plan of Action in Asia and the Pacific and to realize a sustainable world for all ages through collaborative and multilateral partnerships:

7 ESCAP/MIPAA/IGM.3/2022/2.

Older persons and development

- (a) To develop, strengthen and implement comprehensive and integrated policy frameworks that address and mainstream population ageing into national development strategies and plans, adopting a human rights-based and people-centred approach, in line with the Madrid Plan of Action and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and to mobilize all necessary resources and support in that regard;
- (b) To mainstream a gender and disability perspective into policies promoting societies for all ages, where applicable, taking into account the different needs and situations of all individuals over the life course, and to establish or strengthen programmes, policies and services that focus on gender equality and the empowerment of all women;
- (c) To support the formation and strengthening of older persons' associations and civil society organizations to provide an effective community mechanism for strengthening the voices of older persons, and to promote the creation of age-friendly agencies, local communities and workplaces;

Work, the labour force, poverty and social protection

- (d) To promote the right to work of older persons by providing them access to full and productive employment and decent work under healthy, flexible and age-friendly conditions, ensuring life-long learning through training, retraining and skills development, for as long as they want and are able, and to combat abuse, neglect, all forms of discrimination, inequalities and ageism directed at older persons in the workforce;
- (e) To eradicate poverty among older persons, in particular older women and older persons with disabilities, by mainstreaming ageing issues into poverty eradication measures, women's empowerment strategies and national development plans, and to enhance international cooperation to support national efforts to eradicate poverty;
- (f) To provide and strengthen adequate and inclusive national social protection systems for workers that provide universal old-age income security through pensions, as appropriate;
- (g) To expand, in accordance with domestic legislation and policies, the coverage of and access to sustainable pension schemes, including but not limited to strategies such as social pensions, non-contributory pension systems and a disability benefit system, and increasing their benefits, with a view to ensuring income security in old age, including for older women and older persons with disabilities;

Life-course perspective on population ageing and intergenerational solidarity

- (h) To promote policies and national action plans to prepare for and respond to population ageing throughout the life course, to strengthen intergenerational solidarity to build societies for all ages, to raise public awareness on the rights, issues and challenges of old age and ageing, and to recognize the contributions that older persons make to their families, local communities and nations;

Emergency situations

(i) To protect older persons from all manner of emergencies, including disasters, armed conflict and climate change, and, when taking action to address these challenges, respect, promote and consider older persons' human rights, have older persons and their organizations meaningfully participate in the preparedness, response and recovery stages of emergencies, including through emergency preparedness and post-conflict rehabilitation and recovery plans and responses, while ensuring that emergency plans and responses are not discriminatory and do not include ageist stereotypes and biases, and recognize that older persons can play a positive role in climate action by sharing experiences in disaster risk reduction and management, postconflict recovery, climate mitigation and adaptation;

Health and well-being into old age

(j) To accelerate efforts towards the achievement of universal health coverage so that all older persons, without discrimination, enjoy their right to the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health by having access to affordable and quality health care, and to ensure that the use of such services does not expose older persons and their families to financial hardship;

(k) To promote a regional response mechanism that is peoplecentred, with full respect for a multidimensional, coordinated, inclusive and innovative approach, based on unity, solidarity and multilateral cooperation, and to ensure that older and ageing persons in all member States, in particular in developing and the least developed countries, have unhindered, timely, fair and equitable access to safe diagnostics, therapeutics, medicines, vaccines and essential health technologies and their components, as well as health equipment;

(l) To foster and strengthen active and healthy ageing among all age groups in Asia and the Pacific by investing in strategies and activities that focus on the life course, for example by encouraging and facilitating physical activity, healthy nutrition and preventive health interventions and by strengthening mental health and well-being, social participation and intergenerational ties;

(m) To develop and implement high-quality, integrated and longterm care systems with public, private and community providers, and to further promote long-term care as a positive social and economic care and employment strategy, while recognizing the contributions and enhancing the capacity of formal and informal caregivers and volunteers, including family members;

(n) To take as a basis the lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic and its effects on older persons, in particular older women and older persons with disabilities, including the risks that they face in accessing social protection and health services to ensure that health-care decisions respect older persons' dignity and promote and protect their human rights, including the right to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health, and to ensure the availability of safe, quality, efficacious, effective, accessible and affordable health-care services;

(o) To support Member States to promote an enhanced response to future pandemics based on experience gained and the lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic and other public health emergencies of international concern, including by building, strengthening and maintaining the capacities required under the International Health Regulations (2005)⁸ and by supporting the ongoing efforts in the World Health Assembly to consider the benefits of developing a World Health Organization convention, agreement or other international instrument on pandemic prevention, preparedness and response, while addressing all external and internal obstacles to socioeconomic development that impeded effective response to, and treatment of, pandemics and the need for all countries to have unhindered access to related medicines, vaccines and essential health products;

Enabling and supportive environments

- (p) To promote and protect the right to adequate housing for older persons, ageing in place and intergenerational housing options, to strengthen equitable and affordable access to sustainable basic physical and social infrastructure for all, without discrimination, and to ensure that these services are responsive to the rights and needs of older persons, integrated and interoperable to support their efficient delivery to ageing populations;
- (q) To strengthen social policies that promote the development of community services for older persons, with a special focus on the specific rights of older women and older persons with disabilities, as well as to strengthen the institutional capacities and technical skills of government and non-government institutions, including older persons' associations and civil society organizations, to support the engagement of older persons as active agents of change in their own lives and the lives of their families and local communities;
- (r) To promote literacy, numeracy and technological skills, as well as training and retraining, for older persons and the ageing work force, in particular as many societies transition from ageing to aged societies, and to ensure that the benefits of new technologies, especially information and communications technologies, are available to all, including older women and older persons with disabilities, and that the right to privacy is respected;
- (s) To promote strategies to support women who take on the role of long-term caregivers of older persons to perform their roles while maintaining their livelihoods and not depriving them of opportunities for development into old age;

Discrimination, neglect, abuse, violence, ageism and public image

- (t) To combat violence against and neglect, abuse and ill-treatment of older persons, in particular older women, by designing and implementing prevention strategies and stronger laws, and to protect victims;
- (u) To combat any form of age discrimination, to take effective measures against ageism, and to promote and support initiatives to advance a positive public image of older persons and their contributions to communities and societies;

Data and research

- (v) To enhance the capacity of members and associate members of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific to more effectively collect and analyse granular age-disaggregated data, statistics and qualitative information disaggregated also, when necessary, by other relevant factors, including sex and disability, in accordance with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development;
- (w) To encourage the harnessing of scientific research and expertise through the realization of technology, and to build the evidence base by promoting multi-stakeholder partnerships for multidisciplinary and intergenerational research on ageing;
- (x) To advocate for the quantifying of the caregiving contribution of older persons to the economy in national accounts, including recognition of unpaid care for family members, in particular women, and to ensure that research on national accounts informs policymaking;

(y) To promote skills and competencies development and continuous training of health and social care workers in geriatric skills and of home-based caregivers of older persons on skills on caregiving and gerontological skills, supporting/investing innovations and advanced technologies to obtain and maintain the highest standard of services and care for older persons;

Implementation and follow-up

(z) To assess the situation of older persons on a regular basis through inclusive and participatory consultations with relevant stakeholders and social development partners, and, in this regard, to use the Sustainable Development Goals-based monitoring framework contained in the note by the secretariat entitled "Population ageing, the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, 2002, and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific: synergies, indicators and data",⁹ as appropriate; to encourage member States to address the situation of older persons in the voluntary national reviews presented at the high-level political forum on sustainable development; and to use the assessment as a starting point for developing effective policies that create national policy ownership and build consensus;

(aa) For Governments that have not done so, to designate focal points for handling the follow-up on multisectoral national plans of action on ageing, to strengthen existing networks of national focal points on ageing, and to provide information on the focal points for inclusion in the already existing list of focal points maintained by the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific;

(bb) To involve older persons and their organizations in a meaningful and participatory way in law-making and policymaking processes, to recognize them as development actors, including in the follow-up and review of the Madrid Plan of Action, and to ensure that their needs, interests and agency are taken into account in policies, programmes and laws that affect them;

Request to the Executive Secretary of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

(cc) To strengthen the role of the Commission in supporting its members and associate members in implementing the Madrid Plan of Action in the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, including through the periodic midterm assessments of progress made in that regard;

(dd) To raise public awareness on ageing in partnership with stakeholder organizations, and to continue to facilitate the sharing of experiences and good practices on ageing;

(ee) To build the capacities of members and associate members of the Commission, upon their request, to gather, synthesize and analyse age-disaggregated data, statistics and qualitative information, disaggregated also, when necessary, by other relevant factors, including sex and disability, in order to develop evidence-based national policies on ageing;

(ff) To support members and associate members of the Commission, upon request, in formulating forward-looking policies and actions to prepare for and adjust to the social and economic implications of ageing, as well as to mainstream ageing into policies, plans and programmes, as appropriate;

(gg) To utilize the resources of the United Nations system and all other relevant stakeholders at the regional level, including the Asia-Pacific regional informal network of focal points on ageing, to support member States in the review and appraisal of the Madrid Plan of Action and any national follow-up, as appropriate;

(hh) To submit the report on the Meeting, the present outcome document and the pre-session documents prepared for the Asia-Pacific Intergovernmental Meeting on the Fourth Review and Appraisal of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing,¹⁰ through the Secretary-General, to the Commission for Social Development at its sixty-first session, to be held in 2023, for the fourth global review and appraisal of the Madrid Plan of Action, and to also submit the report on the Meeting and the present outcome document to the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific at its seventy-ninth session, for information and consideration.

10 ESCAP/MIPAA/IGM.3/2022/1, ESCAP/MIPAA/IGM.3/2022/2, ESCAP/MIPAA/IGM.3/2022/INF/1 and ESCAP/MIPAA/IGM.3/2022/INF/2.



Day 3 of the Asia-Pacific Intergovernmental Meeting on the Fourth Review and Appraisal of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing. Photo: ESCAP Photo/Caio Perim

Annex 2: Synergies between the Priority Directions of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing and the Action Areas of the United Nations Decade of Healthy Ageing

Synergies between Priority Direction I and the United Nations Decade of Healthy Ageing MIPAA I: Older persons and development	Decade of Healthy Ageing
Issue 2: Work and the ageing labour force	UN Decade Action Area 1 Change how we think, feel and act towards age and ageing
Issue 4: Access to knowledge, education and training	
Issue 5: Intergenerational solidarity	
Issue 6: Eradication of poverty	
Issue 1: Action participation in society and development	UN Decade Action Area 2 Ensure that communities foster the abilities of older persons
Issue 3: Rural development, migration and urbanization	
Issue 4: Access to knowledge, education and training	
Issue 7: Income security, social protection/social security and poverty prevention	
Issue 2: Work and the ageing labour force	UN Decade Action Area 3 Deliver person centred integrated care and primary health services responsive to older persons
Issue 3: Rural development, migration and urbanization	
Issue 6: Poverty reduction	
Issue 7: Income security, social protection/social security and poverty prevention	
Issue 1: Action participation in society and development	UN Decade Action Area 4 Provide access to long-term care
Issue 2: Work and the ageing labour force	
Issue 4: Access to knowledge, education and training	
Issue 5: Intergenerational solidarity	
Issues 6: Poverty reduction	

Source: Oosterhof, 2022

Synergies between MIPAA Priority Direction II and the United Nations Decade of Healthy Ageing MIPAA II: Older persons, health and well-being	Decade of Healthy Ageing
Issue 5: Mental health needs of older persons	UN Decade Action Area 1 Change how we think, feel and act towards age and ageing
Issue 6: Older persons and disabilities	
Issue 2: Universal and equal access to health-care services	UN Decade Action Area 2 Ensure that communities foster the abilities of older persons
Issue 4: Training of care providers and health professionals	
Issue 5: Mental health needs of older persons	
Issue 1: Health promotion and well-being throughout life	UN Decade Action Area 3 Deliver person centred integrated care and primary health services responsive to older persons
Issue 2: Universal and equal access to health-care services	
Issue 3: Older persons and HIV/AIDS	
Issue 4: Training of care providers and health professionals	
Issue 5: Mental health needs of older persons	
Issues 6: Older persons and disabilities	
Issue 1: Health promotion and well-being throughout life	UN Decade Action Area 4 Provide access to long-term care
Issue 2: Universal and equal access to health-care services	
Issue 4: Training of care providers and health professionals	
Issue 5: Mental health needs of older persons	
Issues 6: Older persons and disabilities	

Source: Oosterhof, 2022

Synergies between MIPAA Priority Direction III and the United Nations Decade of Healthy Ageing MIPAA III: Ensuring and enabling supportive environments	Decade of Healthy Ageing
Issue 3: Neglect, abuse and violence	UN Decade Action Area 1 Change how we think, feel and act towards age and ageing
Issue 4: Images of ageing	
Issue 1: Housing and living environment	UN Decade Action Area 2 Ensure that communities foster the abilities of older persons
Issue 2: Care and support for caregivers	
Issue 3: Neglect, abuse and violence	
Issue 1: Housing and the living environment	UN Decade Action Area 3 Deliver person centred integrated care and primary health services responsive to older persons
Issue 2: Care and support for caregivers	
Issue 3: Neglect, abuse and violence	
Issue 1: Housing and the living environment	UN Decade Action Area 4 Provide access to long-term care
Issue 2: Care and support for caregivers	
Issue 3: Neglect, abuse and violence	

Source: Oosterhof, 2022.



Day 2 of the Asia-Pacific Intergovernmental Meeting on the Fourth Review and Appraisal of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing. Photo: ESCAP Photo/Louise Lavaud

Annex 3. Legislation, policy or programme adopted, revised or due for adoption on ageing for selected countries/areas in Asia and the Pacific, 2017–2022

Country/area	Name of legislation, policy or programme	Year	Focus	Status
Armenia	Protocol Decision “On approving the strategy for overcoming the consequences of ageing and social protection of the elderly and the action plan for the implementation of the strategy 2017–2021”	2017	Provides goals and specific measures to provide social protection of older persons	Adopted
	Protocol Decision “On approving the programme for the improvement of the care services provided to the elderly and introducing and developing the community-based services and the plan schedule of measures ensuring the implementation for 2021–2023”	2021	Provides care services for older persons	Adopted
Australia	National Plan to Respond to Abuse of Older Australians (Elder Abuse) 2019–2023	2019	<p>Sets out a framework for ongoing cooperation, action and monitoring against five priority areas for action by all government units</p> <p>Focuses on: enhancing understanding; improving community awareness and access to education; strengthening service responses; planning for future decision-making; and strengthening safeguards for vulnerable older adults.</p>	Adopted
Bhutan	National Strategy for Healthy Ageing, including an Action Plan (2021–2026)	2022	Lays out overall strategy for healthy ageing	Due for adoption

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Country/area	Name of legislation, policy or programme	Year	Focus	Status
Cambodia	National Ageing Policy (2017–2030)	2017	Focuses on: (a) eliminating age-based discrimination; (b) ensuring gender equality for older women; and (c) promoting intergenerational relations	Adopted
	National Action Plan 2018–2020	2017	Translates the National Ageing Policy into concrete actions to be implemented by ministries and agencies tasked with developing a monitoring tool for the implementation of the policy and action	Adopted
	Strategic Plan on Sectorial Development of Social Affairs, Veterans, and Youth Rehabilitation 2019–2023	2019	Identifies strategies to ensure social welfare harmony, reduce vulnerabilities and respond to the needs of all people, in particular the poor, the vulnerable, persons with disabilities, orphans, and older persons.	Adopted
	National Strategic Development Plan 2019–2023	2019 (?)	Refers to, among others: gender equality; and Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities;	Adopted
China	13th Five-Year Plan for the Development of National Ageing and the Construction of the Elderly System (2016–2020)	2017	Sets out methods, principles, and goals for promoting the well-being of older persons	Adopted
	Action Plan for the Development of Intelligent Healthy Aging Industry (2017–2020)	2017	Provides guidance on the establishment of a healthy ageing industry system, covering a life cycle approach, developing intelligent healthy ageing service brands, and establishing home care and elderly services that are of high quality and work efficiently	Adopted
	Law of the People’s Republic of China on the Protection of Women’s Rights and Interests	2018 (revised)	Prohibits the abuse and abandonment of sick and disabled women, including older women	Adopted
	Law of the People’s Republic of China on the Protection of the Rights and Interests of the Elderly in 1996, with amendments in 2018	2018	Focuses on protecting the rights and interests of older persons and promoting the Chinese virtue of respecting and caring for older persons	Adopted
	National Medium and Long-term Plan for Actively Coping with Population Ageing (2022–2050)	2019	Represents the guiding document that addresses challenges and opportunities of population ageing for the mid- to long-term (among others, social development, human capital and technical support)	Due for adoption in 2022
	Opinions on Promoting the Development of Senior Care Services	2019	Focuses on expanding and managing senior care services, including the promotion of building senior care services and increasing employment opportunities in this sector	Issued
	Opinions on the Implementation of Health China Action	2019	Requires the family, society, and the government to support health promotion of older persons and identifies 23 specific tasks and interventions	Issued
	National Occupational Skills Standard for Elderly Care Workers	2019	Provides occupational profiles, basic requirements, and work requirements for care workers looking after older persons	Issued
	Notice on Strengthening the Training and Standardized Management of Medical Caregivers	2019	Sets out guidelines for medical caregivers to be trained to be familiar with physiological, nutritional, psychological, medical and life care needs of older persons	Issued
	Implementation Plan on Effectively Solving the Difficulties of Using Smart Technology for the Elderly	2020	Sets out goals and measures to support older persons, among others, to use technology for travel, health care, recreation and business	Issued
	Opinions on Strengthening the Work of the Elderly in the New Era	2021	Puts forward policy options on older persons active in the workforce and on how to serve older persons through health care, social participation and age-friendly societies	Issued
	Outline of the 14th Five-Year Plan of the National Economic and Social Development and Vision 2035	2021	Proposes to strengthen health services of older persons and promote the integration of medical care and recreation	Prepared
14th Five-Year Plan for the Protection and Development of Persons with Disabilities	2021	Addresses various issues to fully integrate persons with disabilities, including older persons, into society and sets out goals for, among others, health care, rehabilitation, living arrangements and livelihood protection	Adopted	
Japan	Act on Revision of the National Pension Act, Employees’ Pension Insurance Act	2020	Strengthens financial security of older persons	Adopted

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Country/area	Name of legislation, policy or programme	Year	Focus	Status
Kazakhstan	State program for the development of productive employment and mass entrepreneurship for 2017–2021 “Yenbek”	2018	Promotes productive employment and engaging citizens in entrepreneurship, including pre-retirement persons	Adopted
	Active Longevity Action Plan	2021	Includes measures to maximize the labour force participation of older persons through monitoring available jobs	Adopted
	Action Plan for Implementation of the State Program on Education and Science for 2021–2025	2021	Provides short-term courses for persons of pre-retirement and retirement age, envisaged under the government-approved Lifelong Learning Concept	Adopted
Kyrgyzstan	Roadmap for the Improvement of Gerontological Services in the Republic of Kyrgyzstan	2021	Provides geriatric and gerontological planning and training for health and social care providers	Adopted
	Action Plan to Improve the Quality of Life of Elderly Citizens, 2019–2025	2019	Covers mainly: equality and non-discrimination towards older persons; prophylaxis and strengthening health and improving access to health services; well-being at all stages of life cycle and poverty reduction; and access to public and municipal services	Adopted
Lao, People’s Democratic Republic *	Decree on Older Persons	2021	Addresses different aspects of the situation of older persons	Adopted
Macao, China	Development Goals of Women of Macao	2018	Sets out gender mainstreaming goals for policies and action plans that address issues of concern to older women	Adopted
	Legal Regime for Protection of the Rights and Interests of the Elderly	2018	Promotes the principles of independence, active participation, entitlement to care and protection from the family and the community, self-fulfilment, and dignity of older persons	Adopted
Malaysia	Bill on Older Persons	2023	Content, approach and scope to be determined (study on this is currently being carried out by the University of Malaysia)	Due for adoption
	National Plan of Action for Older Persons 2022–2030 (revised from 2011–2020)	2022	Aims to consider the key findings of study on facilities and services to meet the future needs of older persons in 2030 by assessing the effectiveness of the National Plan of Action for Older Persons, 2011–2020	Due for adoption
	Lifelong Learning Work Plan for Older Persons	2022	Aims to introduce a lifelong, high-quality, well-coordinated and harmonized lifelong learning system for the benefit of older persons	Due for adoption
	Ministry of Health Strategic Plan, 2021–2025	2021	Lays out initiatives to enhance health-care awareness for older persons	Adopted
	Private Aged Healthcare Facilities Services Act	2018	Sets minimum standards for services, facilities and personnel providing care in private aged care centres	Adopted
	Physical Planning Guidelines for Senior Citizens	2018	Provides user-friendly guidelines for living facilities for older persons	Adopted in three states (out of 11)
Maldives	National Elderly Policy	2017	Address the socioeconomic challenges faced by older persons, and promotes ways to ensure their protection, participation, and contribution as responsible members within families and communities while enjoying a high quality of life	Adopted
Mongolia	Establishment of the National Committee on Population	2017	See table 11	Established
	Law on the Elderly	2017	Provides the legal base to promote social protection for older persons and improve their social and economic participation in society	Adopted

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Country/area	Name of legislation, policy or programme	Year	Focus	Status
Philippines	Act on National Commission of Senior Citizens	2019	See table 11	Adopted
	Philippines Plan of Action for Senior Citizens 2019–2022	2019	Provides a monitoring framework to ensure that adopted programmes, services, and activities for promotion and protection of older persons are continuously implemented	Adopted
	Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Plan (2019–2025)	2019	Addresses, among many other topics, issues related to older women's empowerment	Adopted
	Philippine Population Management Programme Directional Plan for 2017–2022	2017	Focuses on inclusive development through the provision of interventions for the well-being of special population groups including older persons (for example, it addresses the second demographic dividend)	Adopted
	Anti-Elder Abuse Bill	N/A	Aims to protect senior citizens from violence and addresses all forms of violence, abuse, neglect, exploitation and coercion	Due for adoption (final reading)
Russian Federation	Strategy of Actions for Senior Citizens until 2025 (and two action plans 2016–2020 and 2021–2025)	2019	Improves the health system for older persons; develops geriatric services, including training of professions and specializes; provides financial support to older persons and promotes their employment; provides access to information and educational resources for older persons; supports access to social services for older persons; and supports research in the field of gerontology and geriatrics and in the prevention of non-infectious diseases	Adopted
Singapore	Vulnerable Adults Act	2018	Empowers the Adult Protective Service, under the Ministry of Social and Family Development, to intervene when a vulnerable adult is assessed as facing a high safety risk	Adopted
	Revised Action Plan on Ageing	N/A		Currently being developed
Thailand	Action Plan for the Elderly, Phase 3 (2023–2037)	2023	Consists of an immediate action on older persons for 2023–2027 and a 15-year action plan (2023–2037)	Adopted
	National Agenda on Ageing Society	2018	Contains objectives to: systematically drive measures under the National Agenda on Ageing Society; integrate work on older persons throughout the country at the policy level, departments and areas; and systematically monitor and evaluate the performance of older persons according to the Agenda's measures	Adopted
Türkiye	2020–2030 Ageing Vision Document	2019	Prepared by the Ministry of Family and Social Services to guide policies programmes and services on ageing over the next 10 years A five-year Action Plan is currently being development and is planned to be adopted in 2022	Adopted
	Türkiye Healthy Ageing Action Plan and Implementation Programme 2021–2026	N/A	Follows the Action and Implementation Programme 2015–2020 and provides accessible, effective and appropriate health-care services for individuals and the community	Prepared

Source: ESCAP 2021/2022, Voluntary national survey on the implementation of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing in Asia and the Pacific responses. Available at: <https://www.population-trends-asiapacific.org/mipaa/voluntary-national-survey-response>

Note: * Lao People's Democratic Republic did not submit a survey.

Annex 4. Synergies between the Priority Directions of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing and the SDGs of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

Older persons and development	Advancing health and well-being into old age	Ensuring enabling and supportive environments
<p>Issue 1: Active participation in society and development</p>  <p>Target 1.4, 4.6, 5.4, 5.5, 5.a, 5.b, 9.3, 10.2, 16.7</p>	<p>Issue 1: Health promotion and well-being throughout life</p>  <p>Target All, 2.1, 2.2, 5.2, 5.3, 5.4</p>	<p>Issue 1: Housing and the living environment</p>  <p>Target 9.1, 11.1</p>
<p>Issue 2: Work and the ageing labour force</p>  <p>Target 8.3, 8.5, 8.8, 16.b</p>	<p>Issue 2: Universal and equal access to health-care services</p>  <p>Target 3.8</p>	<p>Issue 2: Care and support for caregivers</p>  <p>Target 5.4</p>
<p>Issue 3: Rural development, migration and urbanization</p>  <p>Target 2.3, 2.4, 10.7, 10.c, 11.2, 11.7</p>	<p>Issue 3: Older persons and HIV/AIDS</p>  <p>Target 3.3, 5.4</p>	<p>Issue 3: Neglect, abuse and violence</p>  <p>Target 5.1, 5.2</p>
<p>Issue 4: Access to knowledge, education and training</p>  <p>Target 4.6, 4.a</p>	<p>Issue 4: Training of care providers and health professionals</p>  <p>Target 5.4</p>	<p>Issue 4: Images of ageing</p> 
<p>Issue 5: Intergenerational solidarity</p>  <p>Target 10.3, 12.3, 12.5, 12.8</p>	<p>Issue 5: Mental health needs of older persons</p> 	<p>Implementation and follow-up</p> 
<p>Issue 6: Eradication of poverty</p>  <p>Target All</p>	<p>Issue 6: Older persons and disabilities</p>  <p>Target 11.2, 11.7, All</p>	
<p>Issue 7: Income security, social protection /social security and poverty prevention</p>  <p>Target 1.2, 1.3, 8.3, 8.5, 10.4, 1.b</p>	 <p>Asia-Pacific Intergovernmental Meeting on the Fourth Review and Appraisal of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing 29 June to 1 July 2022 BANGKOK</p>	
<p>Issue 8: Emergency situations</p>  <p>Target 11.5</p>		

Source: ESCAP 2021, Statistical indicators relevant to population ageing and age-disaggregated data in Asia and the Pacific, Social Development Policy Paper 2021/03. https://www.unescap.org/sites/default/d8files/knowledge-products/SDD_policy_paper_2021_03_Stat_indicators_20211124.pdf

Annex 5. Measures undertaken with regard to the housing and living environment of older persons and their families in selected countries/areas in Asia and the Pacific

	National (housing) policies and plans	Legislation	Planning guidelines/ guidelines for universal design	Financial assistance	(Housing) Programmes	Age-friendly cities approach	Ageing-in-place approach
Australia			x		x	x	x
Armenia					x	x	
Azerbaijan					x	x	x
Bangladesh	x		x				x
Bhutan	x		x				
Cambodia	x				x	x	x
China		x	x				x
Kazakhstan		x	x			x	x
Macau, China	x		x				x
Malaysia			x			x	x
Maldives							x
Mongolia		x	x	x	x	x	x
Philippines		x	x		x		x
Republic of Korea					x	x	
Singapore			x			x	x
Tajikistan					x		
Thailand	x		x		x	x	x
Türkiye		x	x		x	x	x

Source: ESCAP 2021/2022, Voluntary national survey on the implementation of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing in Asia and the Pacific responses. Available at: <https://www.population-trends-asiapacific.org/mipaa/voluntary-national-survey-response>

Annex 6: Laws, provisions and measures in selected countries in Asia and the Pacific that address elder abuse, neglect and violence

	Laws, provisions	Measures to address elder abuse, neglect and violence
Australia	<p>National Plan to Respond to the Abuse of Older Australians (Elder Abuse) 2019–2023</p> <p>Age Discrimination Act, 2004 makes it unlawful to discriminate against someone on the grounds of age</p> <p>Disability Discrimination Act, 1992 focuses on eliminating discrimination against persons with disabilities and on promoting community acceptance of the principle that persons with disabilities have the same fundamental rights as everyone else</p> <p>Social Security Act, 1991, provides an income support safety net for people over pension age</p> <p>Australian Human Rights Commission Act, 1986, promotes age-friendly workplaces</p> <p>Sex Discrimination Act, 1987, prohibits discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation, gender identity or intersex status</p> <p>Racial Discrimination Act, 1975</p> <p>Aged Care Act, 1997, to approved providers of residential aged care to have responsibility to ensure the health, safety and wellbeing of care recipients</p>	<p>Training to health professionals offered on elder abuse</p> <p>Government funds advocacy campaigns to support greater choice and quality safeguards for senior Australians</p> <p>Victims asked to report to the Australian Human Rights Commission</p>
Azerbaijan	<p>Rules for In-Home Social Assistance (Mobile Assistance), 2013 under Social Services Law, 2011</p>	<p>Awareness-raising activities with a focus on welfare of the family</p> <p>Commissioner for Human Rights (Ombudsman) works on promoting and protecting the rights of older persons (including the establishment of a hotline to the Ombudsman)</p> <p>Rehabilitation centres for victims of domestic violence have been established</p>
Bangladesh	<p>Parental Care Act, 2013</p>	
Bhutan	<p>Constitution prohibits neglect, abuse and violence against any person, regardless of age</p>	<p>No specific systems in place, but an integrated primary health-care approach exists, with trained health workers providing mental health first aid to victims</p>
Cambodia	<p>Ministry of Women Affairs and Ministry of Interior have developed, among others, action plans, guidelines, legal frameworks and capacity building programmes regarding abuse and violence</p>	<p>Commune Committee for Women and Children monitors the prevention and mitigation of, among others, domestic violence cases, abuses and trafficking</p> <p>Ministry of Women Affairs provides counselling service for victims</p> <p>Sub-national mechanism (Multi-Sectoral Working Group on Response to Gender-based Violence) and the Consultative Committee on Women and Children established to promote the protection of and provide response service to victims.</p>
China	<p>Article 49 of the Constitution prohibits the abuse of older persons, women and children</p> <p>Article 261 of the Criminal Law stipulates certain punishment for people who refuse to support a person who is old, sick or otherwise incapable of living independently, and people are required to support older persons</p> <p>Criminal Law stipulates certain punishment for elder abuse</p> <p>Law on the Protection of the Rights and Interests of Elderly / Law on Protection of the Rights and Interests of Women stipulates punishment for elder abuse</p> <p>Law Against Domestic Violence stipulates special protection given to, among others, minors, older persons and persons with disabilities</p>	<p>Article 7 of the Law Against Domestic Violence stipulates to include prevention measures into training of government officials, including those working on statistics</p> <p>Article 9 of the Law Against Domestic Violence provides Guidance on Sheltering and Providing Relief to Victims of Domestic Violence issued by the Ministry of Civil Affairs</p>

	Laws, provisions	Measures to address elder abuse, neglect and violence
India	Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens Act, 2007 provides for maintenance by children, wards, relatives or others who benefit from the property/income of older persons; it also provides for penal provisions for neglect and abandonment National Policy on Older Persons, 1999	National level helpline for older persons (toll free) launched to address issues of abuse, neglect and emotional support
Kazakhstan	Law on the Prevention of Domestic Violence, 2009 Standards for the provision of special social services to victims of domestic violence, 2019	Neighbourhood police inspectors make daily rounds of administrative areas, collecting necessary information about facts of domestic violence, including against older persons, and take appropriate measures to respond 33 Crisis Centers (as of 2022) provide special services to victims of domestic violence Training held for journalists to combat negative stereotypes, prejudice, discrimination; and to create positive attitudes to ageing, overcoming ageism, and ensuring appropriate media coverage
Kyrgyzstan	Law of the Kyrgyz Republic on Protection and Defense from Family Violence, 2017 Order of the Ministry of International Affairs on Approval of the Instruction on the Organization and Improvement of the Activities of the Policy of the Kyrgyz Republic on Protection and Protection from Family Violence, 2020 Law on Protection and Defense from Domestic Violence, Bishkek City Hall, 2019	Bishkek City Hall, the Center for Assistance to Women with Children Victims of Domestic Violence was established in 2021
Macao, China	Law on Preventing and Combatting Domestic Violence Legal Regime for Protection of the Rights and Interests of the Elderly (to safeguard their rights and interests)	Training offered to frontline workers
Malaysia	A law to protect older persons (forthcoming) Most written laws are age-neutral	Legal assistance laws exist (such as Legal Aid Act 1971); these include provision of mediation services Talian Kasih 15999 helpline provides 24-hour assistance (including legal assistance) to older persons Public awareness campaigns exist to share knowledge regarding neglect, abuse and violence Victims of Domestic Violence Among Older Persons multi-stakeholder platform
Maldives	Domestic Violence Act, Family Law, and Social Protection Act cover the area related to abuse and neglect for older persons	1421 Hotline of the Ministry of Gender and Family and Social Services receives reports on cases relating to abuse, violence and neglect of older persons A nation-wide campaign, Ranveyla, launched by the Ministry of Gender, Family, and Social Services targets the well-being of older persons by, among others, providing interactive sessions that inform caregivers about protective measures and the reporting of any form of elder abuse
Mongolia		The Government (Mongolian Association for Elderly People), in collaboration with the International Development Law Organization, is working on a training and qualification project for trainers and consultants that addresses the problems faced by older persons who have been victims of domestic violence A sub-project in cooperation between the Mongolian Association for Elderly People and the International Legal Development Organization to provide legal advice to older persons who are victims of domestic violence, and to prepare a specialized "Advisory Team" to provide advocacy services
Philippines	Anti-Elder Abuse Act (forthcoming) Republic Act 970 (Magna Carta of Women of 2009) contains text on protection of women, including older women Republic Act 10911 (Anti-Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 2016)	Reporting System and Prevention Programme for Elder Abuse Cases (community-based project) The Housing Programme offers group/foster homes for neglected, abused, homeless older persons and persons with disabilities

ANNEXES AND REFERENCES

	Laws, provisions	Measures to address elder abuse, neglect and violence
Republic of Korea	The Welfare for Senior Citizens Act Act on Prohibition of Age Discrimination in Employment and Elderly Employment Promotion	Central Facility for the Protection of Elderly conducts studies or implements programmes on the protection of older persons' rights and violence prevention and the introduction of education The Government has established Elder Protection Agencies, designated mandatory reporters for elder abuse, and conducts human rights education campaigns
Russian Federation	Issues concerning the prevention and suppression of domestic violence, including against older persons, belong to a range of complex issues and are regulated, among others, by the norms of the Criminal Code	As of 2021, Government agencies implement measures to prevent violence against older persons as part of the plan of action for the period 2021–2025 of the second stage of the Strategy of Action for Older Persons until 2025 Agencies conduct awareness-raising aimed at fostering respect for older persons, promoting family values and preserving the traditions of intergenerational continuity
Singapore	Penal Code and Vulnerable Adults Act	Adult Protective Service (under the Ministry of Social and Family Development) was established in 2015 to protect vulnerable adults from abuse, neglect or self-neglect The Home Team Community Assistance and Referral Scheme was expanded in 2021 to include referrals for family violence next of kin
Thailand	Elderly Act, 2003 and amended 2010, stipulate the protection of the rights of older persons Fourth National Human Rights Plan (2019–2022)	Department of Women's Affairs and Family Development, Ministry of Social Development and Human Security launched a campaign to end violence against children, women and family members, including older persons, and supported similar campaigns at the provincial level The Department also distributed information on family rights and related laws, appointed a taskforce to help prevent domestic violence, and developed a online counselling system for families and citizens
Türkiye	Article 10 of the Constitution, including its amendment of 2010 on, among others, children, older persons, persons with disabilities and equality before the law without any discrimination based on various grounds Law of the Human Rights and Equality Institution comprises articles that address discrimination and promote principles of equality Final Declaration of the Forum on the Rights of Older Persons, 2021 (organized by the aforementioned Institution) has a number of articles on the right to age with dignity	The Human Rights and Equality Institution of Türkiye (HREI) is responsible for visits to, among others, nursing homes and prisons to ensure that the needs of people, including older persons, there are met,

Source: ESCAP 2021/2022, Voluntary national survey on the implementation of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing in Asia and the Pacific responses. Available at: <https://www.population-trends-asiapacific.org/mipaa/voluntary-national-survey-response>

Annex 7. Countries in Asia and the Pacific that have available national-level data sets on population ageing (as of April 2022)

Country	Name of survey	Latest year
Australia	Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers (SDAC)	2018
	The Household, Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia (HILDA)	N/A
	The Australian Longitudinal Survey on Women's Health (ALSWH)	2021
	Ten to Men: The Australian Longitudinal Study on Male Health	2021
Bangladesh	Survey on Population Ageing in Bangladesh*	2014
Bhutan	Baseline Survey for the Royal Society for Senior Citizens	2013
	Understanding the situation of elderly citizens in Bhutan (study)	2016
Cambodia	Survey of the Elderly in Cambodia	2004
	Analysis Report on the Ageing Population based on the 2019 Population census	2019
China	China Sample Survey on the Living Conditions of the Elderly in Urban and Rural Areas (since 2000 every 5 years)	2021
	China Health and Retirement Longitudinal Study (Wave 4)	2018
India	Study on Global Ageing and Adult Health (SAGE)*	2014
	Longitudinal Ageing Study in India (LASI), Wave 1 (biennial)	2016-2021
	Kerala Ageing Survey 2nd set	2019
Indonesia	Indonesia Family Life Survey	
Japan	Overview of the 16th Longitudinal Survey of Middle-aged and Elderly Persons (Continuing Survey on the Lives of Middle-Aged and Elderly People)	2016
	Japanese Study of Ageing and Retirement	2013
	National Survey of the Japanese Elderly (NJSE) Japanese Ageing and Health Dynamics (JAHEAD)	2017
Kazakhstan	Determination of social well-being of elderly citizens in Kazakhstan	2017
	Generations and Gender	2018
	We are Kazakhstan – Population Situation Analysis of the Republic of Kazakhstan	2019
	Study of quality of life, social well-being and social conditions of older people in Kazakhstan	2019
	Assessment of the Socio-Economic Situation and Needs of the Elderly in Kazakhstan	2020
Malaysia	National Health and Morbidity Survey (NHMS) 2018: Elderly Health Survey	2018
	National Household Indicators Survey (NHIS)	2021
	Malaysian Population and Family Survey (since 1974)	2021 (forthcoming)
	National Registry System under the e-WEN (pilot project started in 2019)	2019
	The Labor Force Survey (LFS)	2020
	Malaysia Ageing and Retirement Survey (MARS)	2019-2025
	AGELESS	2018-2019
Macau, China	Malaysian Elder Longitudinal Research (MELoR)	2019
	Optimisation of recreation centres and day centres for older persons	N/A
	Special Study on the Preparation of Macao Residents for Old Age Life and Their Lifelong Development	N/A
	Study on Introducing Reverse Mortgage Scheme	N/A
	Trends and Challenges of Population Ageing Report - 2011 Population Census	2011
	The "Database of older persons living alone and households composed of two elderly persons who are service users"	2018
	Research on Living Condition and Long Term Care Service Demands of Older Persons of Macao SAR	2010 and 2020
	Standardised assessment and central referral mechanism (assesses the needs of older persons for long-term care services based on collected data of applicants)	N/A
Maldives	Nationwide Assessment of the situation of elderly population (the survey report is planned to be submitted by February 2022)	NA
	Household Income and Expenditure Survey	2019
Mongolia	A thematic survey on the elderly conducted based on the 2020 Population and Housing Census	N/A
Philippines	Longitudinal Study of Ageing and Health in the Philippines	2018
	Demographic Vulnerability Tool	2021(?)
Republic of Korea	National Survey on Senior Citizens	2020
	Statistics of Persons aged 65 or over	2020
	Korean Longitudinal Study of Aging (KLoSA)	2018
Russian Federation	Sample Survey of Household Budgets	N/A
Singapore	Rosstat sample of federal statistical observation on the use of information technology and information and telecommunication networks by population aged 15-72 years old (since 2013)	
	National Population Health Survey (annually, and older persons up to 79 years old are included)	2021
	Panel on Health and Ageing of Singaporean Elderly (PHASE)	2009-2015
	Transitions in Health, Employment, Social Engagement and Intergenerational Transfers in Singapore (SIGNS)	2016-2017
	Biennial Individual Giving Study (IGS) with the 2018 version focusing on SilverV Study	2018
Thailand	National Survey on Senior Citizens (published in 2013)	2011
	Survey of Older People in Thailand (since 1994)	2021
	Situation of the Thai Elderly (study by the National Older Persons Committee)	2020
Türkiye	Health, Ageing and Retirement in Thailand (since 2014, conducted every two years)	
	Türkiye Ageing and Health Survey (in preparation, expected completion: 2022)	

Source: ESCAP 2021/2022, Voluntary national survey on the implementation of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing in Asia and the Pacific responses. Available at: <https://www.population-trends-asiapacific.org/mipaa/voluntary-national-survey-response>

Note: Many of the countries listed above also indicated that they have regular censuses and surveys on different topics that disaggregate the data by age and sex.

The report is available at:

<https://www.unescap.org/kp/2022/asia-pacific-report-population-ageing-2022-trends-policies-and-good-practices-regarding>

