



United Nations

Department of
Economic and
Social Affairs



ESCAP
Economic and Social Commission
for Asia and the Pacific

Joint Expert Group Meeting on Older Persons and Intergenerational Solidarity

10-11 October 2023, Meeting Room-H
United Nations Conference Centre, Bangkok

Concept Note

Purpose of the Meeting

In its [resolution 77/190](#), the General Assembly called upon all States to promote and ensure the full realization of all human rights and fundamental freedoms for older persons, bearing in mind the crucial importance of intergenerational solidarity for social development.

Further, the Commission for Social Development, in its resolution [E/RES/2023/15](#), recognized the successful conclusion of the fourth review and appraisal of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing (MIPAA), a quinquennial Member State-led bottom-up and participatory processes, which stressed that intergenerational solidarity is a fundamental prerequisite for social cohesion and public welfare, and that it contributes to sustainable development and to equity between and among present and future generations.

The expert group meeting will provide input to the upcoming report of the Secretary-General entitled “Follow-up to the International Year of Older Persons: Second World Assembly on Ageing”, which will offer the analytical backdrop for the deliberations of the third committee of the General Assembly on related social, humanitarian and cultural issues. The meeting will contribute to the work of the General Assembly by providing concrete, evidence-based recommendations on policies aimed at strengthening solidarity through equity and reciprocity across present and future generations.

[Link to the Asia-Pacific region:](#)

Population ageing is a global and regional megatrend.¹ There are currently 630 million older persons (60 years or older) residing in Asia and the Pacific alone, representing 60 per cent of the world’s older population.² Compared to other regions, the Asia-Pacific region is ageing much faster, and many countries in the region are expected to become “old” before they become “rich”.³ Given the speed of demographic change, countries in the region have less time to adapt and implement policies to address the challenges and benefit from the opportunities of population ageing.

¹ <https://desapublications.un.org/publications/report-un-economist-network-un-75th-anniversary-shaping-trends-our-time>

² UN DESA (2022) “World Population Prospects 2022: Summary of Results” Available at: <https://www.un.org/development/desa/pd/>

³ ESCAP (2022) Available at: <https://www.unescap.org/news/recognize-reality-rapidly-ageing-asia-pacific-region-and-revitalize-role-older-persons-society>

The outcome document⁴ adopted at the [Asia-Pacific Intergovernmental Meeting](#) on the fourth review and appraisal of MIPAA showed that Governments in the region understood that “ageing” is not only about older persons and life at older ages. Rather, there is a growing recognition of the links between the life-course perspective and intergenerational solidarity.

While progress has been achieved on many fronts and despite efforts by Governments, misconceptions and stereotypes about older persons remain widespread, and the promotion and protection of the human rights of older persons remain a challenge in the region. Moreover, providing social protection, affordable and universal access to health care, including long-term care and support services, as well as the integration of health and social care remain distant goals for several countries.

Against this backdrop, an expert group meeting held in the region will contribute insight about intergenerational solidarity in Asia and the Pacific, in particular about how it is built and reinforced by the legal and policy arrangements present in the region. Also, the meeting will provide an opportunity to share knowledge about good practices and challenges, identify particular areas of concern, and suggest ways to move forward in terms of policies, partnerships and action.

Background

The 2021 report of the Secretary-General entitled “[Our Common Agenda](#)” calls for renewing solidarity⁵, which must include a “profound deepening of solidarity between generations.”⁶ In the context of progressive population ageing and the gradual extension of human longevity, strengthened solidarity between generations requires a better understanding of how intergenerational solidarity is operationalized at the policy level. The principle of intergenerational equity, which recognizes responsibilities of current generations towards future generations, has deep roots in diverse cultural and religious traditions and is reflected in the Charter of the United Nations.⁷

Intergenerational solidarity is central to sustainability. In the [2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#), Member States declared that they “are determined to protect the planet from degradation, including through sustainable consumption and production, sustainably managing its natural resources and taking urgent action on climate change, so that it can support the needs of the present and future generations.” At the mid-point review of the 2030 Agenda, the Secretary-General’s 2023 report on progress⁸ concludes that there has been a “limited focus on a lifecourse and intergenerational approach” across socio-economic systems that could be used to help older persons recover from past deprivations. The pledge contained in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development that “no one will be left behind” cannot be realized without attention to the well-being of older persons.

The Political Declaration adopted at the Second World Assembly on Ageing in 2002 recognized that solidarity between generations at all levels – in families, communities and

⁴ [ESCAP/MIPAA/IGM.3/2022/3/Add.1](#)

⁵ General Assembly [resolution 57/213](#) defines “solidarity” as “as a fundamental value, by virtue of which global challenges must be managed in a way that distributes costs and burdens fairly, in accordance with basic principles of equity and social justice, and ensures that those who suffer or benefit the least receive help from those who benefit the most;”

⁶ UN Secretary-General, [Common Agenda Report English.pdf \(un.org\)](#) (2021).

⁷ https://www.un.org/en/content/common-agenda-report/assets/pdf/Common_Agenda_Report_English.pdf

⁸ <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/report/2023/The-Sustainable-Development-Goals-Report-2023.pdf>

nations – is fundamental for the achievement of a society for all ages.⁹ The Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing (MIPAA) reflects on external factors impacting intergenerational solidarity, including urbanization, migration, the nuclearization of families, population ageing, and digital and social exclusion. It notes that “one of the principles in the Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development and Programme of Action adopted at the World Summit for Social Development is the creation of a framework by Governments to fulfil their responsibility for present and future generations by ensuring equity across the generations.”¹⁰

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

Objective of the Meeting

Discussions at the expert group meeting will be based on a common understanding of intergenerational solidarity as defined in MIPAA and in Our Common Agenda. Participants will discuss good practices, lessons learned and gaps in policymaking, focusing on an intergenerational approach. The objectives of the meeting are to:

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

Methodology

The meeting will be held over two days and will consist of presentations based on short papers and related discussions. Experts are asked to provide a paper, make a short presentation, participate in group discussions and give their expert opinion and policy recommendations on issues related to intergenerational solidarity. They are also invited to provide specific examples of good practices on topics under discussion and to offer detailed recommendations for the further development of policies, programmes and strategies for enhancing various aspects of intergenerational solidarity. Participants will be invited to contribute to the elaboration of recommendations related to the issues identified in the meeting.

⁹ [political-declaration-en.pdf \(un.org\)](#)

¹⁰ Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, II A paragraph 17. [political-declaration-en.pdf \(un.org\)](#)

Output

A report summarizing the deliberations and presenting the recommendations of the meeting will be prepared and made publicly available. The report will serve as input to the upcoming report of the Secretary-General on ageing, which offers the analytical backdrop to the deliberations of the third committee of the General Assembly on social, humanitarian and cultural issues.

Organization of the meeting

Date and venue

The Programme on Ageing within the Division for Inclusive Social Development of the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA), together with the Social Development Division of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UN ESCAP), will jointly organize the expert group meeting on 10-11 October 2023.

The meeting will be held in person in Meeting Room-H of the United Nations Conference Centre in Bangkok and online via Zoom.

Participants

The meeting will bring together experts from national Governments, civil society, academia and the United Nations system. Participation will be by invitation only, with participants coming primarily from Asia and the Pacific.

Language

The working language of the meeting will be English.