



Shared Prosperity Dignified Life



**Leaving No One Behind at the Regional Level:  
Adopting an Age-Sensitive Lens to Policy Making  
Event Report for Side Event at CSocD 61 – February 13, 2023, 8:30-9:30, EST**

The share of older persons (65 years and above) in the world's population is expected to rise from 10 per cent in 2022 to 16 per cent in 2050. This reflects the significant achievements of human development, such as improved health, greater longevity, and lower mortality. It compels countries to take steps to ensure that public programmes and policies are age-sensitive and responsive. Developing specific ageing policies and programmes is a critical first step. Mainstreaming ageing in policies on health, poverty eradication, education, labour, risk reduction and disaster management, transportation, among others is also important. In this pursuit, the side-event brought together experts to speak to the challenges and opportunities in developing ageing policies and mainstreaming the topic into other policies in their respective regions.

**Dr. Srinivas Tata**, Director of Social Development Division, ESCAP, moderated the panel discussion. He thanked the member States and all stakeholders for their support in the regional review process of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing (MIPAA), which discussed achievements, lessons learned, emerging issues and gaps in policy implementation on ageing. He commented on the fact that although the regions represented are diverse, the similarities they share in terms of ageing challenges and opportunities are remarkable and the topic was high on the agenda of Member States.

**Professor Shereen Hussein**, Professor of Health and Social Care Policy, London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine, highlighted the fast pace of ageing in the Arab States' region, noting the heterogeneous experience across countries. She focused on long-term care (LTC) markets in the region, which are underdeveloped and require expansion. Professor Hussein presented two case studies from Egypt and Saudi Arabia to ground the discussion and offer concrete evidence for how developing LTC markets can benefit all concerned stakeholders. She also spoke about the importance of mainstreaming ageing by creating an ecosystem that empowers older persons, ensuring they have access to educational, employment, and other opportunities.

**Dr. Mary Ann Tsao**, Chairperson, Tsao Foundation, Singapore, identified several challenges in the Asia-Pacific region including LTC, digital transformation, social protection, and lack of data. She focused on the important role of civil society in responding to these challenges and offering action at the community level. Dr. Tsao stressed on facilitating more meaningful participation of civil society, which is often best placed to see what is really working and what is not on the ground. She also mentioned that countries can learn a lot from each other and stand to gain from genuine multi-stakeholder collaboration. Finally, Dr. Tsao advocated for a stronger focus on inter-generational dialogue.

**Professor Veronica Montes-de-Oca**, Researcher of the Social Research Institute, National Autonomous University of Mexico, mentioned that the Latin American region is also characterized by heterogeneity. She highlighted the following challenges that the region faces: social protection (with acute poverty and discrimination), low capacity of health professionals in geriatrics, and legal rights not being adequately recognized. She spoke about several good practices from the region, which were primarily rooted in the involvement of civil society and the application of a human rights lens. Professor Montes-de-Oca also urged for the adoption of an intersectional, interdisciplinary, and intergenerational approach as well as enhanced coordination between academia, civil society, and government.

**Mr. Martin Amberger**, Vice-Chair of the UNECE Standing Working Group on Ageing, shared data to show that Europe is one of the oldest regions of the world. He also explored the implications of the COVID-19 pandemic, which put older persons at greater risk of isolation, discrimination, and abuse. Mr. Amberger mentioned that the contributions of older individuals to the economy and society are not sufficiently appreciated with a negative image of older persons still existing, despite progress being made to address this. Regarding MIPAA, he concluded that it is still very much relevant but perhaps needs an update to remain on policymakers' agendas.

**Dr. Sara Salman**, Population Affairs Officer, ESCWA, spoke to the functions carried out by all regional Commissions, including conducting MIPAA regional reviews, building region specific knowledge products, providing advisory services and capacity building for member States, fostering collaboration, and supporting UN age-related agendas such as the 2030 Agenda, ICPD, and the UN Decade of Healthy Ageing. Dr. Salman shared specific ESCWA support for Arab states such as the development of ageing strategies and older persons' laws as well as a policy toolkit on mainstreaming ageing into policymaking.

**Ms. Pamela Villalobos**, Senior Social Affairs Officer, ECLAC, shared the experience with National Transfer Accounts (NTA) in Latin America, which are designed to provide a coherent accounting framework of inter-generational economic flows. She spoke about the recurrent ageing bulletin produced by ECLAC as well as a regional monitoring platform they have developed for the Montevideo Consensus on Population and Development.

**Ms. Lisa Warth**, Senior Social Affairs Officer and Chief, Population Unit, ECE, shared information on the standing working group on ageing in Europe, which was convened in 2008 and consists of national focal points from member States as well as other stakeholders including NGOs, academia, and international organizations as observers. She also spoke about the guidelines for mainstreaming ageing produced by ECE in addition to mainstreaming ageing workshops for civil servants they held in collaboration with UNFPA.

**Dr. Sabine Henning**, Chief, Sustainable Demographic Transition Section, ESCAP, spoke to work done with member States in Asia and the Pacific to assess the situation of older persons, and support them in drafting national decrees, laws, policies, action plans and monitoring frameworks. Dr. Henning concluded by sharing the work done by ESCAP to address data gaps through a dashboard on publicly available data by country and an interactive policy dashboard. Moreover, ESCAP had developed an e-learning course on designing inclusive policies on population ageing using a bottom-up approach and several instructional videos.