

Expert Group Meeting: “Measuring population ageing: Bridging Research and Policy”, Bangkok, Thailand, 25–26 February 2019

Session 7: Case studies: SDG1: Reduce poverty and increase social protection for older persons

Chair: *IIASA*

1. Presentation: tbd (10-15 minutes)
Dilitiana M. Baleinabuli, Principal Welfare Officer, Ministry of Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation, Suva
2. Presentation: Ageing tbd (10-15 minutes)
Dr. Razak Gyasi, APHRC, Kenya
3. Presentation: Population ageing and the need for social protection in Asia and the Pacific (10-15 minutes)
Vanessa Steinmayer, UN ESCAP
4. Presentation: tbd (10-15 minutes)
Philip O’Keefe, World Bank, East Asia and Pacific Region

Population ageing is a well-established global demographic trend, with major socio-economic consequences. The long-term shift of the share of the population from the younger to the older ages is driven mainly by the declining levels of fertility, and also by the increases of life expectancy that are taking place almost everywhere. There is considerable international diversity in the onset and speed of population ageing, which, according to United Nations data, is most advanced in Japan and countries in Europe, followed by Northern America. Asia and the Pacific, Latin America and the Caribbean and Oceania are projected to follow similar trends over the next few decades. Even in most of African countries, whose populations are still relatively young, the absolute number of older persons is growing rapidly, and is leading to long-term shifts in the age-structure.

Traditionally, the United Nations and most researchers have used measures and indicators that are mostly or entirely based on people’s chronological age, which provides a simple, clear and easily replicable way to measure and track various indicators of ageing. At the same time, there has been increasing recognition that the health status, type and level of activity, productivity, and other socio-economic characteristics of older persons have changed significantly over the last century, and even over the last several decades. This has led to the development of alternative concepts and measures of ageing, which provide different outlooks on the levels and trends of ageing, and a more nuanced appreciation of what ageing means in different contexts. At the frontline is the Characteristics Approach to the measurement of population ageing developed at IIASA.

These changes and the various approaches to understanding and measuring ageing, have important implications for the design and implementation of national development policies and programs, and for the follow-up and review of internationally agreed development goals that are related to or

are affected by population ageing. Specifically, the different ways of measuring ageing affect the assessments of the evolution of the number of older persons, their living conditions, their contributions to the societies where they live and their needs for social protection. They have significant implications for labour markets, life-long education and health, and the interactions and mutual support of older persons with the younger generations.

Recognizing the diverse stages and characteristics of ageing in various regions of the world, as well as the recent developments and innovations in measurement, the Population Division the Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA), the International Institute for Applied System Analysis (IIASA), and Chulalongkorn University, in collaboration with the Social Development Division of the Economic Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), are organizing an international expert group meeting on “***Measuring Population Ageing: Bridging Research and Policy***”, to be held in Bangkok, Thailand, from 25 to 26 February 2019.

This expert meeting will seek to take stock of different concepts and methodologies, and their applicability to and usefulness for various policy analyses and purposes. It will bring together experts to discuss key questions related to the measurement of population ageing, including discussion of traditional and new concepts and methods, and to assess their scope and limitations to support national policy design and implementation, as well as the regional and global review of progress in the achievement of internationally agreed development goals, as noted above. Experts from governmental and international organizations, from research institutions as well as civil society organizations will be invited to discuss the applicability of various measures of ageing in different contexts.

This session discusses the challenges associated with old age poverty and existing antipoverty policies, programs, and practices that address a wide range of dimensions of poverty taking into consideration the possible impact of new measures of population ageing discussed at the conference.

The call to achieve Goal 1 ‘End poverty in all its forms everywhere’ of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development clearly recognizes that poverty is more than the lack of income and resources to ensure a sustainable livelihood. SDG Goal 1 emphasizes the need to enhance social security and social protection for all, including older women and older men. Central in this regard are social support systems for older persons that reduce inequalities in income, provide access to education, decent work as well as health care across the life-cycle. Further, social protection systems need to be implemented to help alleviate the suffering of disaster-prone countries and provide support in the face of great economic risks. These systems will help strengthen responses by afflicted populations to unexpected economic losses during disasters and will eventually help to end extreme poverty in the most impoverished areas.

According to the UN, poverty is a major threat to the well-being of older persons. In many countries, social protection systems are failing to guarantee adequate income security throughout the life-cycle. It is therefore important to take into consideration new concepts of ageing

measurements when reviewing the efficiency and effectiveness of present approaches to poverty alleviation in old age to achieve the core goal of the 2030 sustainable development agenda 'to leave no one behind'.

Suggested key questions to be discussed are the following:

- How are different measures of measuring population ageing affect poverty measurements in old age and thus the development of poverty reduction strategies targeting directly and indirectly older persons?
- What are the challenges of portraying older persons living in poverty for the design and implementation of efficient and inclusive poverty alleviation policies and programs?
- Will new measurements of ageing and old age affect poverty trends among older persons and the capacity of countries to guarantee and provide income security to the ageing population?
- How efficient are currently existing mechanisms to identify and define the beneficiaries of pension system and social protection programs?
- Women generally outlive men and are more likely to live alone. Because of the discriminations accumulated throughout their life time (access to education, labour market, etc), older women face a much greater risk of failing into poverty. The pension coverage is still lower among women and the pension benefits provided are lower than those provided to men. What are the existing mechanisms to address the feminization of poverty during the old age?
- How to build inclusive poverty alleviation policies, programs, and practices that account for the heterogeneity of the older persons (women, informal sector, migrant workers, etc.)?
- As populations age, public discourse ranges from concerns about the fiscal sustainability of pensions and health systems to optimism about potential opportunities for healthier and more productive aging.

Please note that all speakers are requested to adhere to the 10-minute time limit to allow for discussion after the session.

Should you have additional questions, please contact either Ms. Stefanie Andruchowitz (andrucho@iiasa.ac.it) or Ms. Karoline Schmid (schmidk@un.org)