

## **1<sup>st</sup> Forum on Human Rights of Older Persons: Present and Future**

### ***"Protection of Human Rights of Older Persons in Emergency Situations"***

**26-27<sup>th</sup> October 2021, Seoul, Republic of Korea**

#### **Introduction/Overview**

While accelerating population ageing is a global phenomenon that most societies are currently facing, the occurrence and duration of emergencies have increased in the past years – for instance, between 2005 and 2017 the number of crises receiving an international response grew from 16 to 30, and their average duration rose from 4 to 7 years. These two phenomena raise the question as to how the increasing frequency and length of emergency situations impact on older persons. It is well known that one's socio-economic positionings and identities such as age, sex, economic and health status influence, if not determine, one's access to resources and services related to mitigation, adaptation and relief in emergency situations. It is not difficult to imagine that older persons are particularly at risk of exclusion and tend to bear the brunt in emergency situations, whether in a health crisis, a humanitarian crisis caused by war and conflicts, or in natural disasters. In fact, many reports show that discrimination against older persons and elder abuse have been on the rise in 'normal' situations. Emergencies exacerbate the existing forms of elder discrimination and abuse. This is most vividly shown during the COVID-19 pandemic, one of the major global health crises in recent years, where most victims are older persons – according to the World Health Organization, 95% of the total deaths caused by COVID-19 in Europe were people aged above 60 and over 50% of deaths were of people aged over 80. Furthermore, older persons are not only overlooked in emergency relief systems, which aggravates their vulnerabilities, but their positive contributions during emergency crises are often unacknowledged. Older persons will inevitably and increasingly be exposed to higher risks unless the *status quo* is challenged, as rapid population ageing proceeds and natural and man-made disasters occur more frequently.

Against this backdrop, the ASEM Global Ageing Center (AGAC) organizes its first forum on **Human Rights of Older Persons: Present and Future** on the theme of '*Protection of Human Rights of Older Persons in Emergency Situations*'. While the issue of older persons in emergency situations has been brought into the light more pressingly by the COVID-19 pandemic, the AGAC takes this as an opportunity to reassess how older persons are the first group to be victimized and the last one to be considered in general emergency crisis responses, and to explore various ways to move forward. The AGAC aims, through this Forum, to bring together various stakeholders, from international organizations, national government officials and academic researchers to civil society groups (activists) to discuss 1) how older persons are discriminated against, neglected and prejudiced in a magnified form in emergency situations, particularly their age intersecting with social identities such as sex and socio-economic locations, 2) what regional, national and global endeavors have been

made to resolve these problems and 3) what additional efforts should be made at all levels and sectors to protect the human rights of older persons including the adoption of a UN Convention on the Human Rights of Older Persons.

### Sessional Topics for Discussion

The Forum consists of three sessions and one special session as follows:

<b>Session 1:</b> Older Persons in Health Crises
<b>Session 2:</b> Older Persons in Humanitarian Crises
<b>Session 3:</b> Older Persons in Climate Change/Natural Disasters
<b>Special Session:</b> WHO Global Report on Ageism, Older Persons in Emergencies and Ageism

Each session is led by a moderator, and consists of four to five presentations (20-25 minutes each) and Q&A discussions.

### Timetable

	<b>Day 1 (October 26)</b>	<b>Day 2 (October 27)</b>
<b>Morning</b>	<b>Registration (09:30-10:30)</b>	<b>Registration (09:30-10:00)</b>
	<b>Opening Ceremony &amp; Keynote Speech (10:30-12:00)</b>	<b>Session 2 (10:00-12:00)</b>
	<b>Lunch (12:00-14:00)</b>	<b>Lunch (12:00-14:00)</b>
<b>Afternoon</b>	<b>Session 1 (14:00-16:00)</b>	<b>Session 3 (14:00-16:00)</b>
	<b>ASEM Civil Society Talk Concert (16:30-18:30)</b>	<b>Special Session (16:30-18:00)</b>
		<b>Closing (18:15-18:45)</b>