

The 3rd ASEM Forum on the Human Rights of Older Persons:

Present and Future

Ageing In Place

July 11–12, 2023, Seoul, Republic of Korea

Introduction

Rapid ageing is one of the key characteristics that define many societies in the world today. Over the next three decades, the world's population of people aged 60 years or older will double, reaching 2.1 billion, and those aged 80 years or older will triple in number, to reach 426 million by 2050 (WHO 2022). Global life expectancy at birth reached 72.8 years in 2019, and by 2050 it is projected to reach 77.2 years worldwide (UNDESA 2022).

Within this general trend of global ageing, it is important to note that it is the developing countries that will face population ageing at the fastest speed. For instance, more than half of the projected increase in global population up to 2050 will be concentrated in just eight countries: the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Egypt, Ethiopia, India, Nigeria, Pakistan, the Philippines and the United Republic of Tanzania (UNDESA 2022). Countries of sub-Saharan Africa are expected to continue growing through 2100 and to contribute more than half of the global population increase anticipated through 2050 (UNDESA 2022) – some 80 per cent of the world's population over 60 years will be living in low or middle-income countries in 2050 (WHO 2022). Given the sheer scale at which population ageing is advancing in the developing world, together with a lack of financial resources and infrastructure, population ageing can have more serious ramifications in these societies. While extended longevity is a sign of progress in medical technology and public health, it is also posing many social challenges: humanity has never experienced a demographic reality where older persons take up such a large proportion of the total population.

In this context, the ASEM Global Ageing Center (AGAC) has the mission to promote a human rights-based approach to population ageing among ASEM partners and beyond. One of AGAC's main activities is to organize the annual ASEM Forum on the Human Rights of Older Persons: Present and Future on a theme deemed to be important and relevant to the goal of ensuring a dignified life for older persons. The Forum aims to create a platform to discuss and explore ways to enhance the rights of older persons among various stakeholders, from scholars, policy makers and civil society activists to international organizations.

The 2023 ASEM Forum is to be held on the theme of 'Ageing in Place'. Ageing in Place refers to 'remaining living in the community, with some level of independence, rather than in residential care' (Davey et al. 2004, 133). This has become both a popular and an

important topic for human rights communities and policy makers, as it is seen as enabling older people to maintain their independence and autonomy while being connected to social support/services. Particularly, Ageing in Place is perceived as an alternative to ageing in facilities (e.g. residential care homes), which have proven to be not only costly but resented by older people themselves. Much research has shown that in later life older people desire to stay in their own homes and communities, where they feel most safe, comfortable and connected to family and friends.

However, the way in which Ageing in Place is interpreted and practiced can differ from one country to another, as each country has different resources and cultural values. For instance, in some countries elder care is heavily reliant on (female) family members or young female migrants who provide domestic care services. To the extent that family-based elder care can burden family members (particularly female ones), and reliance on migrant care providers cannot be a permanent solution, a move away from family-based care needs to be pursued. By contrast, in countries where institutionalized elderly care has become predominant, like in the Republic of Korea (hereafter 'Korea') and many European countries, there are attempts to move towards 'de-institutionalization'.

Despite the divergent trends found in different countries, Ageing in Place appears to present an alternative both to 'care in facilities' and 'family care', as it can allow older persons to live in their homes and communities independently as long as possible while reducing burdens on family members and public finances. Against this background, there is also a growing consensus that Ageing in Place is not merely about attachment to a particular home but also about preserving a space where older people continue to integrate into places and renegotiate meanings and identity in the face of social, political, cultural and personal change. This highlights the importance of neighbors and communities, not merely the home itself, as critical factors for older people to feel safe and belong to a community. This also means that Ageing in Place requires that alongside housing, questions of transportation, recreational opportunities, and amenities that facilitate physical activity, social interaction, cultural engagement and ongoing education must also be thought about (Wahl & Weisman 2003). Ageing in Place thus calls for the creation of homes, both physically and culturally.

AGAC is taking this year's Forum as an opportunity to pay close attention to issues around Ageing in Place, and its linked issue, 'Dying with Dignity' – inasmuch as Ageing in Place means living in one's own home and community until or as close as possible to the end of life, it is inevitably linked to the question of Dying with Dignity.

The Forum aims to

- 1) introduce and discuss key debates and issues relating to Ageing in Place, including Dying with Dignity (or 'Well-Dying', the more commonly used term in Korea), looking at how this notion has been understood and practiced in different countries in Asia and Europe;

- 2) discuss and share interesting experiments and policies that have been implemented by governments and international civil society groups to assist Ageing in Place; and
- 3) explore what additional efforts can and should be made to realize Ageing in Place in accordance with the principles of the human rights of older persons.

Session Topics for Discussion

The Forum will take place over four sessions, including a special session with the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP). The Civil Society Talk Concert, a regular feature of the Forum, aims to create an opportunity to hear voices from the grassroots: activists and practitioners of INGOs will share experiences and lessons learned through their work, and explore ways to expand the application of these lessons to wider (policy) areas. The first three sessions will be led by a moderator and consist of four to five presentations (20-25 minutes each) followed by a question and answer session. The special session with UNESCAP will start with a presentation from a key author of UNESCAP’s ‘Asia-Pacific Report on Population Ageing 2022’, and then be followed by comments from three discussants.

The sessions are as follows:

<p>Session 1</p> <p>Ageing in Place: Debates and (Policy) Responses</p>
<p>Session 2 <u>Civil Society Talk Concert</u></p> <p>Ageing in Place, Best Practices and Experiments in Civil Society</p>
<p>Session 3</p> <p>Dying with Dignity: Debates and (Policy) Responses</p>
<p><u>Special Session with UNESCAP</u></p> <p>Ageing, the Rights of Older Persons, and International Development in Asia</p>

Session 1: Ageing in Place: Debates and (Policy) Responses

In Session 1, academic researchers and experts in the fields of gerontology, elder law and sociology will address issues relating to Ageing in Place. This session is particularly interested in exploring how Ageing in Place is understood and implemented in practice in a selected number of ASEM partners such as Sweden, Australia, Singapore and Korea. Prof. Titti Mattsson from Lund University, Sweden; Dr. Yong-ik Kim, Chairperson of Dolbom-Mirae Foundation, Korea; Dr. Edgar Liu from the University of New South Wales, Australia; and Prof. Sabrina Luk Ching Yuen, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore, will

discuss issues relating to Ageing in Place in Sweden, Korea, Australia and Singapore respectively. Session 1 will be chaired by Prof. So-Jung Park of Washington University in St. Louis, USA.

Session 2: Civil Society Talk Concert: Ageing in Place, Best Practices and Experiments in Civil Society

The Civil Society Talk Concert will provide an opportunity to hear voices from the grassroots: while the presenters of other sessions are government officials and academic researchers, the Civil Society Talk Concert invites as speakers practitioners from civil society groups engaged with activities at the grassroots level. This Session is particularly interested to learn what attempts and experiments have been made and conducted to realize Ageing in Place, and what implications these have for the human rights of older persons. Session 2 will be addressed by five speakers: Dr. Alberto Infante, Secretary of HelpAge Spain; Ms. Janevit Wisojongkram, Deputy-Director of the Foundation for Older Persons' Development, Thailand; Mr. Mark Harrington, National Manager of Age Friendly Ireland; Dr. Ngai Ming Yip, Board Director of Habitat for Humanity Hong Kong; and Dr Jong-Hee Kim, Representative of Gangwon Medical Welfare Social Cooperative, Korea. Ms. Young-Sook Cho, Ambassador for Gender Equality, Korea Women's Associations United, will chair Session 2.

Session 3: Dying with Dignity: Debates and (Policy) Responses

In Session 3, as an extension of Ageing in Place, issues of Dying with Dignity ('Well-Dying') will be discussed. Scholars and researchers in the fields of human rights law, bioethics and sociology will discuss the debates around Dying with Dignity, including the tension between the right to life and the right to die, its implications from a human rights law perspective, how to secure a dignified life and death in palliative care and what issues are at stake in ensuring dignified death. These issues will be discussed with reference to European countries such as the Netherlands, Switzerland, Belgium, Germany and the UK, as well as India, Japan and Korea, where euthanasia has become an increasingly important public debate among policy makers. Speakers in Session 3 include Dr. Derya Nur Kayacan, Lecturer at the Turkish-German University, Türkiye; Dr. Angelika Reichstein, Lecturer at the University of East Anglia, UK; Prof. Sufiya Ahmed, Bhimrao Ambedkar University, India; Prof. Atsushi Asai, Tohoku University, Japan; and Prof. Yi-Jong Suh, Seoul National University, Korea. Session 3 will be chaired by Prof. Younsuck Koh, Ulsan University/Asan Medical Center, Korea.

Special Session with UNESCAP: Ageing, Rights of Older Persons and International Development in Asia

The Special Session will address global ageing, particularly ageing in the context of the Asia-Pacific region and ASEAN. In the face of rapid population ageing in developing countries and the Asia-Pacific region (see above), many efforts have been made to address

it at the regional level. UNESCAP has engaged actively in the issue of population ageing, and has published a number of important reports, including 'Asia-Pacific Report on Population Ageing 2022' and 'Climate Change and Population Ageing in the Asia-Pacific Region: Status, Challenges and Opportunities'. However, there is still a lack of awareness and preparedness, not only in developing countries themselves but in the international development community as a whole. Furthermore, while human rights are embraced by the international development community as a key principle in developing and evaluating their projects, projects for older populations that adopt a human rights perspective remain few and far between. In this context, AGAC aims to create a platform to discuss the connections between ageing, the rights of older persons, and international development in Asia. Mr. Marco Roncarati, Social Affairs Officer of UNESCAP, a principal contributor to the 'Asia-Pacific Report on Population Ageing 2022', will make a presentation on key aspects of the Report; this will be followed by comments from three discussants: Mr. Eduardo Klien, East Asia/Pacific Regional Director, HelpAge International; Prof. Giang Thanh Long, National Economics University, Vietnam and a member of AGAC Global Advisory Group; and Prof. Yong-Ho Chon, Incheon National University, Korea. The Special Session will be moderated by Dr. Hae-Yung Song, General Secretary, ASEM Global Ageing Center.

Program and Participants (as of June 22, 2023.)

	Tuesday, July 11 th	Wednesday, July 12 th
Morning	Registration (9:30-10:30)	
	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Opening/Welcoming Remarks</u> Eun-hee Chi (Executive Director, AGAC) Doo-hwan Song (Chairperson, National Human Rights Commission) Maria Castillo Fernandez (Ambassador of EU to the ROK)</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Congratulatory Remarks</u> Sang-hee Kim (National Assembly, Foreign Affairs & Unification)</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Keynote Speeches</u> Bev James – in person (Public Policy and Research Ltd. New Zealand) Srinivas Tata – pre-recorded (UNESCAP)</p>	
Lunch	Lunch (11:30-13:00)	Registration (12:00-13:00)
noon	<p style="text-align: center;">Session 1 <u>Ageing in Place: Debates and (Policy) Responses</u> Moderator: So-Jung Park – in person (University of Washington in St.Louis) Speakers:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">① Titti Mattsson – online (Lund University, Sweden) ② Yong-ik Kim – in person (Dolbom-Mirae Foundation, ROK) ③ Edgar Liu – online (University of New South Wales, Australia) ④ Sabrina Luk Ching Yuen – online (Nanyang Technological University, Singapore)</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Session 3 (13:00-15:30) <u>Dying with Dignity: Debates and (Policy) Responses</u> Moderator: Younsuck Koh – in person (Ulsan University, ROK) Speakers:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">① Derya Nur Kayacan – online (Turkish-German University, Türkiye) ② Sufiya Ahmed – online (Bhimrao Ambedkar University, India) ③ Angelika Reichstein – online (University of East Anglia, UK) ④ Atsushi Asia (Tohoku University, Japan) ⑤ Yi-Jong Suh – in person (Seoul National University, ROK)</p>
	Coffee Break (15:30-16:00)	Coffee Break (15:30-16:00)
	<p style="text-align: center;">Session 2 Civil Society Talk Concert (16:00-18:00) <u>Ageing in Place: Best Practices and Experiments in Civil Society</u> Moderator: Young-Sook Cho – in person (Ambassador for Gender Equality, ROK) Speakers:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">① Alberto Infante – online (HelpAge Spain) ② Janevit Wisongsongkram – online (Foundation For Older Persons' Development, Thailand) *③ Mark Harrington – online (Age Friendly Ireland) ④ Ngai Ming Yip – in person (Habitat for Humanity Hong Kong) ⑤ Jong-Hee Kim – in person (Gangwon medical welfare social cooperative, ROK)</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Special Session with UNESCAP (16:00-18:00) <u>Ageing, Rights of Older Persons and International Development in Asia</u> Moderator: Hae-Yung Song (AGAC) – in person Discussants:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">① Marco Roncarati – online (UNESCAP) ② Giang Thanh Long – in person (National Economics University, Vietnam) ③ Yong-Ho Chon – in person (Incheon National University, ROK) ④ Eduardo Klien – online (HelpAge International, Thailand)</p>
	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Closing</u> (18:00-18:30) Hye Kyung Lee (Chairperson, AGAC)</p>	