

Second Annual International Symposium on Ageing and Old-age in the Asia-Pacific

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Title: **Asia-Pacific and global population aging**

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### **Abstract**

This paper reviews crucial emerging issues relating to aging in the Asia-Pacific region, placing these as far as possible in the context of global experience. First, demographic aging in the Asia-Pacific region has been rapid across most countries but can we generalize? How does the region fare in a global context? The paper will focus on fertility rates, life expectancies and evolutions over the past few decades, looking forward to mid-century and the range of regional experience. Second, what major social and service issues are raised by population aging in the region? Selected themes considered will be:

1. Older persons, health and environmental challenges. Experience indicates that older persons are often disproportionately affected by, for example, environment and climate factors. Regional evidence is somewhat scanty but we can draw on experiences of other regions. Four main causes of climate stress can be excess heat, low temperatures, atmospheric pollution and natural events. The importance of local environments, housing, services and topography, and relations to QoL will be considered, and age friendliness is now a major WHO focus globally.
2. Social and family changes are many and widespread in the region. Frequently discussed are declines in family support and filial piety: what are the implications (positive and negative) for older persons?
3. Elderly poverty and other forms of socio-economic inequality are growing and pervasive challenges in many countries of the region.
4. Other issues include the impact of population aging on the need for quality end of life care, hospices and service, and community support and community based services to avoid unnecessary institutionalization.

Overall, the paper attempts to raise challenging questions directed to the diverse challenges of ageing.