

Item 3. Strategies for strengthening regional cooperation on social protection in Asia and the Pacific

Thank you Chair. What comes to my mind as a Consultant involved with ageing issues since last 35 years and as an advocate for the rights of older people representing my NGO Development, Welfare and Research Foundation is that focusing on micro level is significant than looking at plans from a macro perspective only. Many livelihood opportunities to secure older persons were planned at different country levels especially during the pandemic time but sharing of experiences on what works successfully across a country region and nations is limited. For instance there are individual examples of certain ageing groups been given opportunities to start small scale business or facilitating their absorption in income generating activities or in sound financial investment schemes along with the possibility of expanding, up scaling these as life time social protection, but what can undermine or encourage these initiatives needs sharing of intra and inter regional experiences for bringing in marketing linkages, for securing older persons economically through their life span, and making ageing populations self-sufficient, independent and autonomous. This missing link in the Region needs to be addressed by generating more inter country research and publications.

There is greater emphasis on bringing attention to programs put in place but what is really needed is reviewing mechanisms that are working for their assessment in terms of long term impacts, the universal or specific intentional reach out, thus bringing in endeavours to strengthen social protection from a holistic perspective. The region can definitely gain by sharing national & regional experiences notwithstanding cultural, economic and political context for planning and delivery of social protection

initiatives but the strategies being adopted at present are limited to local level or national awareness. How they can be shared as good practices urgently requires academic & research community to work together and these combined efforts need to be encouraged by governments, civil society organizations across the board. UN agencies can certainly facilitate bringing in expert groups, senior citizens associations representing voices of ageing populations, government and other agencies interested in ageing issues to work together at research level, provide critical review of existent programs and contribute towards policy & program development on ensuring robust social protection in countries and the region. THANK YOU.