HELPAGE STATEMENT

HelpAge celebrates the achievements of the Sendai Framework and its implementation plan. In the last six years we have witnessed every country in the region developing a guiding document on Disaster Risk Reduction; in most, if not all, cases with a purposefully inclusive approach. In these years we have also witnessed how vulnerable older people tend to be disproportionately affected.

Older people have the right to be protected, but also have the right to be engaged. Population ageing is one of the defining factors of this century. Currently there are in Asia Pacific over 600 million people over the age of 60, and by 2050 there will be over 1.3 billion. Given this huge demographic transition, it is imperative that we all in the development and humanitarian field abandon the criteria that older people are categorically defined as vulnerable. Life has shown us that older people are a resource not only to their families but also to their communities and countries, frequently providing wisdom, experience, and leadership, not only in Disaster preparedness but in all circumstances. COVID-19 showed us how important were older people in their communities in China, in Vietnam, in India, and in almost every country of the region. They and their organisations provided information, supported the vulnerable, collaborated with Health services, promoted preventive measures, and in many cases delivered social and homecare to the more vulnerable, even during the harsh lockdown periods.

Climate change is ahead of us and adaptation to extreme weather events require that each country and each community designs solutions fit to their circumstances, with the participation of all.

We welcome that the new Asia Pacific Action Plan 2021-2024 clearly includes older people, and all generations, as actively engaged in this monumental quest.

Thank you