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**International Council on Social Welfare**

September 2021

## **Working Together for a Better ICSW**



***Professor Antonio López Peláez,  
Executive Director of ICSW and Professor of Social Work  
and Social Services at the National Distance Education  
University (UNED) (Spain)***

Dear fellow ICSW members, friends, and interested readers,

The global pandemic of COVID19 has provoked a collapse and a redefinition of our welfare policies. And it has come in the wake of the greatest economic crisis since the financial crash of 1929. The macroeconomic environment characterized by austerity policies has not been able to deal effectively with the health, economic and also mental health crisis caused by COVID19 and global confinement.

For organizations working in the field of social welfare, it is not just a matter of returning to investment levels prior to the economic crisis that began in 2007. Citizens' demands have changed (immersed in an aging process, in a continuous technological transformation, and in a mobilization dynamic that demands resources

to meet new needs), social services systems are facing a reduction in resources and an aging of the average age of professionals, and competition for scarce resources is generated among various population groups.

Our welfare system is not neutral, not all groups are equally protected. And social welfare professionals, particularly in health, social services and education sectors, have also suffered greatly from the consequences of the pandemic.

In this context, we at ICSW are working to contribute to strengthening social policies. In this newsletter, we publish a brief summary of some of the papers presented at the ICSW Online conference "Addressing food insecurity in Africa: strategies for ensuring child-sensitive social protection" (9 September 2021). I would like to thank all the participants, and recommend all our readers to take a few minutes of their time to watch the lectures, which are available on our website.

In this newsletter, we also have some contributions from our colleagues in the South East Asia and Pacific Region.

Many thanks to our colleagues for collaborating in our project of a Newsletter open to all ICSW regions.

**Take care and stay healthy!**

**Strengthening Social Solidarity and Global Connectedness**



**Morning Session organised by Ministry of Social Development and Human Security**

Venue: The Department of Social Development and Welfare Operations Centre, Department of Social Development and Welfare, Pomprab, Bangkok.

**09.00 - 09.30 hrs.** Opening ceremony and keynote address by Mrs. Patcharee Arayakul, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Social Development and Human Security

**09.30- 10.00 hrs.** Keynote address  
 “Ubuntu: I am Because We are – Strengthening Social Solidarity and Global Connectedness.”  
 by an UN representative

**10.00 – 12.00 hrs.** Panel discussion  
 “Strengthening Social Solidarity & GlobalConnectedness”

**Afternoon Session**  
 organised by the network of 11 social work organisations

Presentation of social work practices on  
 “Ubuntu: I am Because We are – Strengthening Social Solidarity and Global Connectedness.”

Organised by Thai Association of Social Work and Social Welfare Education in collaboration with Thai Health Promotion Foundation (ThaiHealth)

**17 March 2021**  
 Organised by the International Association of Schools of Social Work (IASSW) (New York)  
 2 A.M. (Thailand Time, GMT-7)

**Theme**  
 “International Social Work in a Post Covid-19 World”

**1. Prof. Lena Dominelli** Chair  
**2. Prof. Tan Ngho Tion** Co-Chair

**New York :** Lynne Heal, SW Advocacy at UN  
**Geneva :** Prof. Annamaria Campanini President IASSW  
**Bangkok :** Prof. Rapeepan Kumhom & Dr.Puchong Senanuch  
**Nairobi :** Jongman Kgomotso

Join Zoom Meeting  
 Meeting ID: 910 0822 6986  
 Passcode: WQW9593

Schedule for world social work day  
 most available from today onwards

Register for the Social Day

World Social Work Day 2021 for Asia and the Pacific, on March 16, 2021 in Bangkok, Thailand.

The theme “Strengthening Social Solidarity & Global Connectedness” is very important, particularly in the current situation of the epidemic crisis of COVID-19 that all sectors must work together to get through the crisis.

The concrete international cooperation in the field of Social Welfare and Social Work is very significant. Taking back into the past, in 1928 or 93 years ago, there was a meeting took place in Paris among the Schools of Social Work, Social Welfare Organizations, and Social Work, Social Welfare Organizations, and Social Workers from many countries. The outcome of the meeting resulting in the formulation of 3 major international organizations, namely, International Association of Schools of Social Work (IASSW), International Council on Social Welfare (ICSW), and International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW).

The World Social Work Day is a collaborative effort among practitioners in the field of social work. In 1938, IFSW and the United Nations Representatives in New Year, led by Mr. Jack A. Kamaiko proposed a project to bring social workers of the area into the UN Headquarters in New York. This was the beginning of an annual celebration, the Social Work Day at the United Nations. The first World Social Work Day was celebrated in March, 2007, and each year on the third Tuesday in March after that. In addition, the World Social Day is also being held at the United Nations in Geneva for Europe region and in UN Bangkok for Asia and the Pacific.

Mr. Chinchai Cheecharoen, Regional President of International Council on Social Welfare of South East Asia and the Pacific (ICSW-SEAP) representing the ICSW President to celebrate the

Collaboration requires synergies and common goal, therefore IFSW, ICSW and IASSW have jointly organized the first World Joint Conference

2010 in Hong Kong and defined Global Agenda for Social Work and Social Development. The theme of WSWD and Social Work Day at the United Nations was set for every two years according to the goals of the Global Agenda as follows:

2013 – 2014: Promoting Social and Economic Equality

2015 – 2016: Promoting the Dignity and Worth of Peoples

2017 – 2018: Promoting the Community and Environment Sustainability

2019 – 2020: Promoting the Importance of Human Relationships

As for Thailand, I appreciate the support of the World Social Work Day event at the UN-Bangkok for Asia and the Pacific region, given annually by the Ministry of Social Welfare and Human Security together with other social welfare organizations in Thailand and the 3 main bodies (IASSW, ICSW, and IFSW).

The 2021 World Social Work Day's theme is "Ubuntu: I am Because We are – Strengthening Social Solidarity & Global Connectedness". This is the first theme of the 2020 to 2030 Global Agenda for Social Work and Social Development. This concept suggests that the cooperation of people in the community will help achieve common goals and hope to see that everyone can obtain happiness, equality, without quarreling and competing, but place an importance of humanism, being a giver, being partners in order to an utopia society.

In order to support such a concept, ICSW has played an important role in driving forward for the Summit meeting on Social Development and placed an importance on the Sustainable Development Goals, including special emphasis

on building a Social Protection Floor by ICSW together with IFSW and IASSW. And in 2014, the Melbourne Declaration on Social Protection was issued. It is imperative to focusing on migration issue, fragile or vulnerable groups and the poor, especially in Africa Continent, developing the capacity of organizations and workers of social welfare organizations through various training processes. In particular with the SEAP region, it is important to cooperate with the ASEAN in implementation of the ASEAN Declaration on Strengthening Social Protection. The propelling of the ASEAN Training Center on Social Work and Social Welfare, collaboration between the public sector and private sectors in the ASEAN GO-NGO Forum on Social Welfare and Development, the developing of capacity of NGOs and engaging more cooperation in the future with countries in the Pacific.

Finally, in order to focus on Strengthening Social Solidarity and Global Connectedness, it is imperative that all sectors must look at the benefit for all public, must join hands to help society with a common goal in order to achieve lasting collective impact in the future.

### **Perspectives on Strengthening Regional and National Social Work and Social Welfare Institutions**

Mr. Chinchai Cheechoen, Regional President ICSW-SEAP and Vice Chair of Thailand social Work Professions Council attended the 10<sup>th</sup> ASEAN social Work Consortium (ASWC) Conference-an online platform, hosted by the Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam on 21-22 September 2021 at 09: - 12:00 hrs. He participated as one of the panel

speakers and presented the following:

**Introduction:** ASEAN has so many well-written and comprehensive regional commitments as evident in the ASEAN Community Vision, Blueprints, Declarations, and MOUs but delivery of these regional commitments often fall short of expectation and the main challenge lies with translating these commitments into concrete actions due to a lack of lead shepherd countries, lack of implementation, lack of empowerment, and lack of financial resources.

**ASEAN Member States,** likewise, are obliged by constitutions, legislations, regulations, as well as international agreements, but progress of implementation of these commitments is hindered by a lack of leadership. Work in the field of social work and social welfare is therefore seen as “not proactive”.

**The main reasons hindering success of implementation** include a lack of institutions to mobilise the efforts, lack of empowerment of institutions, lack of technical know-how, lack of understanding and support from the government, administration and practitioners, and lack of budget.

**Key social work and social welfare institutions:** 1. SW Knowledge--Schools of Social Work; 2. SW practices--GOs NGOs/CSOs; 3. Practitioners--Social Workers/other practitioners; 4. Supporters-- UN Agencies (UNICEF, etc.) and Social service Workforce Alliance; 5. Mechanisms for National and Regional Collaborations--IASSW, ICSW, IFSW, ASEAN (SOMSWD, ATCSW, Ha Noi Declaration on Strengthening Social Work and its draft RPA, GO-NGO Forum on Social Welfare and Development, AOSWADA, ASWC, ACSC/APF, ASEAN CSR Network)

### Take-Away Points:

**1. National social work and social welfare institutions:** Advancement of social work in ASEAN Member States is at different pace and in different stages of development. Some AMS do not have social work education, some do not require social workers to have a professional degree in social work, and some lack coordination mechanisms as stipulated in the Ha Noi Declaration and ASWC Work Plan;

**2. Regional social work and social welfare institutions:** Establishment of close collaborations between ASEAN and ICSW in hosting the annually observed ASEAN GO-NGO Forum on Social Welfare and Development; invitation of IFSW, ICSW, and IASSW to an ASWC Conference; and encouraging message that the forthcoming 17<sup>th</sup> SOMSWD and other related meetings including the 16<sup>th</sup> GO-NGO Forum, under the chairmanship of Thailand, will be conducted under the Theme: “Strengthening Partnerships towards the Betterment of ASEAN”, during which recommendations on capacity-building of institutions will be put forward;

**3. Strengthening regional and national social work and social welfare institutions:** ASEAN does not have to start from scratch but we need to expedite our tasks is to ramp up the implementation of the existing commitments, boost empowerment and investment, establish collaborations with volunteers, expand areas of collaborations with ASEAN Plus Three and Plus Six Countries, seek support from the ASEAN Foundation or establish a new Fund, enhance cross-sectoral and cross-pillar collaborations by initiating joint projects, and explore cooperation with UN agencies in implementing SDGs. With the adoption of this holistic approach and with the

support from the ASEAN Secretariat as the central mechanism in playing the catalyst role alongside relevant institutions, partnership engagements will be ensured and hold the key to realise the **Collective Impact**.

### The Asia and the Pacific Sustainable Development Goals Progress Report 2021

#### The Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP)

This report analyses progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Asia and the Pacific and its five subregions as well as the availability of data. It assesses gaps which must be closed to achieve the goals by 2030. This assessment is designed to ensure the region's actions remain on target and shortcomings are addressed as they arise. It is a resource for all stakeholders involved in prioritization, planning, implementation and follow-up of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific.

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY** In 2020, at the dawn of the Decade of Action to deliver the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), how was Asia and the Pacific faring? And how is the COVID-19 pandemic impacting progress towards the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific? The Asia-Pacific Sustainable Development Goal Progress Report 2021 is the fifth in a series of flagship reports of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP). It provides evidence of current progress towards the 17 SDGs and anticipated progress towards the 169 targets in

the Asia-Pacific region and its five sub-regions (Parts I and II). Based on the evidence provided from across the United Nations Development System, the 2021 report assesses how the COVID-19 pandemic might impact regional progress towards the SDGs (Part III). It also provides, for the first time, a step-by-step guide for countries looking to replicate the progress assessment using the newly developed "National SDG Tracker" tool developed by ESCAP in line with the commitment of the United Nations to support countries with follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda.

Highlights of SDGs progress in Asia and the Pacific

- The Asia-Pacific region is not on track to achieve any of the 17 SDGs by 2030. On its current trajectory, the region may achieve less than 10 per cent of the SDG targets. There is therefore an added urgency to ensure that responses to the pandemic in the region and at the national level accelerate progress toward the 2030 Agenda.

- In some areas there is a foundation for achieving the goals. The most promising are goals for good health and well-being (Goal 3) and industry, innovation and infrastructure (Goal 9) where the region has progressed the most. The region has also made some progress on goals for no poverty (Goal 1), zero hunger (Goal 2), quality education (Goal 4), xii ASIA AND THE PACIFIC SDG PROGRESS REPORT 2021 reduced inequalities (Goal 10) and partnership for the goals (Goal 17), albeit too slow to achieve success by 2030.

- At the same time the region is regressing on critical goals of climate action (Goal 13) and life below water (Goal 14). But overall, progress has been very slow or stagnant for half of the goals.

- The five Asia-Pacific sub-regions are also not on

track to achieve the 17 SDGs. However, some sub-regions are well positioned to achieve a few of the goals.

For example, East and North East Asia is on track to eradicate poverty (Goal 1) and provide clean water and sanitation for all (Goal 6) while South-East Asia is on track to promote sustainable industry and innovation (Goal 9). However, none of the sub-regions are on track on environment-related goals, and four sub-regions are regressing on climate action (Goal 13) and life below water (Goal 14).

■ **Strong economic growth in the Asia-Pacific sub-regions is dependent on intensive use of natural resources, resulting in a heavy material footprint that is affecting the achievement of Goal 12 on responsible consumption and production.** All sub-regions, except for South and South-West Asia, are regressing on the material footprint target. And similarly, apart from the Pacific, there is regression in all sub-regions on the target of reducing greenhouse gas emissions, and most sub-regions are showing slow progress or are regressing on environment-related goals.

■ **More data are becoming available as countries prioritize SDG monitoring.** Nearly half of all the SDG indicators now have enough data for tracking progress toward the goals in the Asia Pacific region. Potential impact of COVID-19 in achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

■ **Health:** The maternal mortality ratio could increase in 14 Asia-Pacific countries that already have a high burden of maternal deaths, from the projected 2020 baseline of 184 per 100,000 live births to 214 or 263 per 100,000 live births for the best- and the worst-case scenarios, respectively.

Deaths of under-5 children in the region could increase by more than half a million over a six-month period in the worst-case scenario.

■ **Social protection and basic services:** There are 640 million multidimensionally poor people in Asia and the Pacific. The pandemic could potentially double this number by pushing an additional 636 million vulnerable people to multidimensional poverty. Also, monetary poverty could impact 71 million more children in the region by the end of 2020. At least 850 million students in the Asia-Pacific region were affected and had lost almost half of the academic year by September 2020.

■ **Jobs, small and medium-sized enterprises and informal sector workers:** Unemployment increased by 15 million in the region in 2020. Compared to 2019, workers in the region lost 7.1 per cent of their labour income in 2020, more than \$1.0 trillion. In April 2020, lockdown measures impacted some 829 million informal workers in the Asia-Pacific region.

■ **Fiscal and financial stimulus:** Nearly half of the Asia-Pacific countries with data experienced negative economic growth worse than the projected -4.4 per cent global growth in 2020. Yet between March and September 2020, Asia Pacific developing countries announced an estimated \$1.8 trillion, or 6.7 per cent of their gross domestic product, for COVID-19 health response and relief measures for households and firms, roughly half of the share spent by the world's developing economies on average.

■ **Social cohesion and community resilience:** At least 70 per cent of mental health services for older persons were disrupted between June and August 2020. Over the period from mid-March to

the end of May 2020 the Asia-Pacific region saw arise in countries closing their borders without exceptions for people seeking asylum (reaching 63 per cent of countries with data).

■ **Environment:** Among the recovery measures approved by 13 countries in the region, 11 countries had very little or almost no consideration of the environmental dimension. xiii This is a missed opportunity to build back better. Big cities in the Asia-Pacific region produced 154 to 280 tons more medical waste per day than before the pandemic.

■ **Statistical operations:** Although a few NSOs in the Asia-Pacific region commenced or resumed face-to-face data collection in July compared with May 2020, most had not resumed face-to-face data collection by October 2020. There is a need to ensure that responses to the pandemic in the region and at the national level accelerate progress toward the 2030 Agenda.

### Latest virus surge compounds Southeast Asia's economic uncertainty

By Zachary Frye, Freelance Journalist and Writer

*The region's poor and working classes are bearing the brunt of economic fallout from the latest wave of COVID-19. Long-term social protection schemes could help reduce impacts moving forward.*

A surge in COVID-19 cases across much of Southeast Asia has put the brakes on the region's emerging economic recovery. Since the latest wave of infections hit in mid-April, many ASEAN nations have seen a significant increase in case

numbers and deaths.



Thailand saw their total number of confirmed cases jump from under 14,000 in late January to over 135,000 by late May.

Cambodia also saw an April surge, leading to a three-week lockdown in the capital Phnom Penh that left many struggling to access necessities like food.

The Philippines and Indonesia were the hardest hit in the region, each tallying over 1,700,000 cases since the beginning of 2020, leading to significant strains on their healthcare systems.

At least 3.4 million Filipinos remain out of work as the most recent virus surge led to an extended lockdown in much of the capital and surrounding provinces. Parts of the country have been in various states of lockdown since March 2020—one of the longest lockdown periods in the world—although the latest restrictions in Manila were eased on May 14.

Though the jobless rate in the Philippines fell from a high of 17.6% percent in April 2020 to 7.1% in March 2021, the country's economic outlook is still among the bleakest in the region, especially for the working classes. Its unemployment recovery rate remains the worst among emerging economies in Asia, leaving many with reduced or

non-existent income opportunities.

For some families in Manila, the economic disruptions are leading to dire circumstances.

“Sometimes at night we don’t have anything to eat, we can only wait for the next day,” local resident and mother of nine Mona Liza Vito told *CNN Philippines* in a recent interview.

According to a government survey released in April, an estimated 6 out of 10 Filipinos experienced some form of food insecurity in the later part of last year.



*COVID-19: Philippines. Photo: Asian Development Bank shared under a Creative Commons (BY-NC-ND) license*

### **Virus surge cripples emerging economic recovery in Southeast Asia**

Before the latest surge in COVID-19 cases, ASEAN economies were generally benefiting from reduced lockdown measures: the six biggest economies in the region all saw a sustained increase in GDP from 2020 lows by the third quarter of last year.

The Philippines remains the slowest in the region to recover as its economy continued to shrink in the first quarter of 2021.

Others are also navigating prolonged uncertainties. Following a 6.1% economic contraction in 2020, Thailand now faces reduced consumer confidence and consumption as it contends with its most severe virus wave.

Prior to Thailand’s “third wave”, some were expecting a recovery to pre-pandemic economic output by 2022. But economic growth forecasts in Thailand have been subsequently reduced by at least .3% over the course of the year, with some estimates claiming 100 million baht (approx. US\$30 million) per month in potential losses.

In Cambodia, meanwhile, the Asian Development Bank expects positive economic growth throughout 2021, but warns that an uneven recovery will continue putting outside economic pressure on many households.

A World Bank report released in April claims that China and Vietnam are the only countries in Asia on track for rapid economic recovery, meaning much of the region’s poor will continue facing significant levels of economic uncertainty.

At the time of the report’s release, the World Bank’s vice president for East Asia and the Pacific said that the economic shock caused by the COVID-19 pandemic “has stalled poverty reduction and increased inequality.”

Data from the report indicated that 2020 was the first year in decades in which poverty stopped declining in the Asia-Pacific region. The report also claimed that some 32 million people across Asia who were on track to escape poverty in 2020 were unable to due to impacts of the virus.



### Charities are helping bridge the gap left by inadequate government relief programs

Due to the increase in cases, some governments are implementing further spending programs aimed at alleviating economic pain among the poor. The Philippines' House of Representatives passed a bill that would implement a third installment of virus relief payments while Thailand's cabinet recently approved a 700-billion-baht (US\$22.4 billion) loan aimed at revitalizing the economy.

In early May, the Thai government announced an extension of its handout scheme aimed at supporting 32.9 million Thais with an extra 2,000 baht (approx. US\$60). The government also approved budget to continue a co-payment scheme for many Thais that pays for half of general purchases up to 150 baht (US\$5) per day and an e-voucher plan aimed at middle-income earners.

Budget concerns coupled with government inefficiencies, however, continue to hamper the programs' effectiveness. Thailand's government debt sits at 58.6% of GDP, just under the 60% threshold ceiling that some fiscal experts say is the limit for budgets to remain sustainable.

For the Philippines, previous payment schemes known as Bayanihan 1 and 2 have supported at least 18 million low-income Filipinos with payments of 8,000 pesos (US\$166) per month, yet many are still struggling to pay for basic necessities.

Filling in the gaps, charities across the region are helping bring much-needed food and basic supplies to some of Southeast Asia's poorest communities.

In Thailand, a charity called Bangkok Community Help is organizing handouts of food and necessities in the capital's low-income Khlong Toey neighborhood, which was hit with a cluster of virus cases earlier in May.

Since the latest virus surge, the organization has given out daily care packages and donated over 41,000 hot meals in May alone.

In the Philippines, meanwhile, a local woman in Quezon City set up small stall in mid-April which she dubbed the Maginhawa Community Pantry, with a sign that read "give what you can, take what you need."

The pantry quickly became popular on social media. Inspired by the woman's resolve, Filipinos began sending donations from across the country and established over 400 copycat stalls.



*Health workers in Indonesia during the COVID-19 pandemic. Photo: ILO in Asia and the Pacific shared under a Creative Commons (BY-NC-ND) license*

### The case is growing for increased funding towards social safety nets

According to Anne Booth, an economist with SOAS University of London, the economic fallout of COVID-19 in Asia could have continuing consequences for poverty in the region.

She claims that although much of the increase in poverty has been centered in urban areas, the virus has exposed clear weaknesses in social services across the region that will impact the poor everywhere moving forward.

Economic protection programs have helped blunt increases in poverty in ASEAN countries, yet many citizens are still struggling to make ends meet. In Thailand, despite three phases of stimulus packages worth over US\$63 billion in total, 1.5 million Thais fell into poverty in 2020—an increase of over 40%.

Although governments need to consider budgets when outlining spending priorities, the case for increased social protection in the region is strong, especially as fragile economies start moving towards recovery.

For UNESCAP, an arm of the United Nations focused on the Asia-Pacific region, universal protection floors implemented on a permanent basis in Southeast Asia could help governments build resilience to future social and economic shocks such as those stemming from pandemics.

UNESCAP also argues that the increases public spending necessary to achieve these goals are significant but affordable over the long term and that sustained programs would help meet protection gaps that often affect the most vulnerable.

As vaccination drives across the region are set to get started in earnest in the second half of 2021, governments are in a position to start looking forward to more stable economic conditions. With a focus on long-term protection schemes, leaders could further mitigate economic fallout from future crises.



## Commemorating the International Day of Older Persons – 1 October

By MOHAMMED HASSAN KHAN, Member National Council of Older Persons (NCOP), Honorary Executive Director of Asia Pacific Forum on Families International. (APFAM INT)

### Theme 2021 : Pandemics: Do They Change How We Address Age and Ageing?

#### The Centrality of the Family in the Wellbeing of the Elders.

##### 1. Preamble

This year in commemorating the IDOP, the focus is on the impact the Pandemic on the seniors and ageing population.

IN REMEMBRANCE – This presentation is dedicated to the memory of those senior members of the families and communities social service workforce who have lost their lives to COVID-19, and had to depart without the due family respect and farewell. Also, prayers should be offered to those who continue to work, despite the risks they face, to ensure the safety and well-being of those most in need during the pandemic and its aftermath.

In Fiji, many families have lost their beloved elders to Covid. They were the traditional family gate keepers of unity, culture and heritage. This

Pandemic has revealed and changed the living styles of people across the world.

Particularly, more senior citizens became victims of the Pandemic and needed more care from their families and society. This situation has alarmed us and to hopefully set healthy standards for older persons in the future.

The purpose of this day is to raise awareness about the issues affecting older persons. It also provides an opportunity to take steps for their respect and dignity.

Older persons are caretakers and custodians of culture and traditions. They are the living human libraries of the communities and nations and because of their death many libraries have been lost. As it is said : "When an old person dies a library is lost."

### **Seniors and the Family**

**In social and economic terms, the in-family care is the most cost effective program of age care and the total wellbeing of the elders.**

Families are the most secure place for the elderly as this support is vital in healthy, secure and productive ageing and living in old age.

Official demographic figures indicate that there are about 100,000 older persons in Fiji (this is inclusive of all those over the official retirement age of 55 years.) In the recent parliamentary session it was stated that, there are 180 residents in the three Government Golden Age Homes in Suva, Labasa and Lautoka. It was also stated that there are about 62 seniors in the facilities owned and operated by Civil society organizations.

The rest of the seniors or the older persons are either living in their families, or on their own. These include those who are staying in villages.

At the family level, there is now a "sandwich generation" that is, family members in their sixties are taking care of themselves and their elderly parents, grandparents and relatives in their eighties. These are all based on the religious and moral obligations of caring for one's parents and elders in old age. The extended family system, as depicted in the villages (communal living styles in Fiji and the Pacific Island countries, is ideal in old age but there are times, because of too large families and the many mouths to feed, the elderly are neglected and deprived of special meals required for their medical conditions.

In Fiji, there are about 20,000 older persons on the regular, Government Social Welfare Assistance Scheme. In the last two years the international door agencies have contributed substantially to this scheme. The faith based organizations and many voluntary social service groups provide periodic and regular cash and kind assistance to families who care for the older persons.

The other reality in Fiji and the Pacific is that large numbers of the younger generation who are leaving their traditional village homes for greener economical pastures in the urban areas and more so for overseas on sporting and employment contracts. There are also the remittances by children of the elders who are now residing overseas for their wellbeing and health care by the family members who are still in Fiji.

In the 1988 The HelpAge Centre of the Fiji Council of Social Services, initiated the In-Family and In-community Care Training of the older persons.

From 1988 to 2013, over 50,000 family members throughout Fiji were trained in caring for the elders within their own homes and villages. This was part of worldwide family care program for the older person program by the HelpAge International.

Another important factor is that the traditional marriage systems are fast being replaced by other forms of relationships and „family structures“ and these will continue to grow. Those of us who are known as the baby boomers generation are today’s senior citizens who survived many challenges and have set the technological and digital era for the generation of our children. We still hold on to the view that there is a need to bring back respect and glory to the most important institution recognized by all faiths, the institution of marriage and family.

Older people used to lead active and independent lives and enjoy relatively good health in the villages when young people were there to help them. However, due to rapid internal and external migration and urban housing policies; the dramatic ageing of the population presents both a challenge and an opportunity.

The challenge is to meet greatly increased demands for services at the very time when the traditional solution of institutional care is very high and is being questioned and the new services which are designed to rehabilitate older people, or to enable them to maintain independence and continue their involvement in community life, are still in a fledgling state.

Not only is the number and proportion of older people in the community an indication of the need for change, but the demographic character of this population must also be taken into account.

The proportion of the aged population now is better educated and knows their rights and needs.

Rural Older people have similar needs and expectations to those of other older people, in the urban areas, religious, cultural and dietary needs may require additional provisions.

Dignity and security for older people encompasses the rights of older citizens to live a life style of their choices, with reasonable accesses to whatever assistance is necessary to make this possible. It means having access to an adequate income and being free of the threat of eviction. It also means peace of mind, providing that if, or when, physical and mental powers decline, remaining capacities and individuality will be available.

Personal security- that is; not being threatened by violence, burglary, or intrusion by others- is important to everyone, but especially for people who are frail or who live alone.

The dignity of older people is linked to community perceptions of the ageing process. Old age is often seen as being synonymous with uselessness, illness or dependency, and this can lead to a patronizing approach and a lack of concern about the rights of older people.

Dignity and respect require that older people be able to make decisions and exercise choices in matters of importance to them. To do this, they need access to information about a wide range of issues. Including financial management and community services. Lack of information leads to lack of control and, inevitably, to dependence on others.

The rights of the older persons and dignity also depend on having access to the resources necessary

to maintain an acceptable standard of living. For older people, access to services, and a reliable source of income are particularly important.

### **Older women**

Globally, and in Fiji, older women in all their diversity are contributing unrecognised yet critical support to their families, communities and economies through their paid and unpaid work. Without their contribution, households would lose out on economic and social opportunities, communities would be less cohesive, and society would struggle to function fully. Older people, especially older women, are integral to the national economy and yet they are not recognised for their work; older women are a hidden workforce.

Older women have a human right to live in dignity and to achieve their own aspirations – this includes the fulfillment of their economic rights alongside recognition of and support for the paid and unpaid work they do. While older women's unpaid care and other work is a positive force that underpins the economy and development, many older women's experience of work is unrelenting, physically and emotionally challenging, and underpaid or unremunerated.

The problem is not the act of work itself, but that the conditions needed to support women to achieve their economic rights in older age are rarely in place, particularly in low and middle income countries.

Through qualitative research in the State of the Older persons, in urban and rural settings we could have gained a deeper understanding of what is driving older persons ambitions and what is stopping them from accessing the type and amount of work they would prefer to do.

### **Issues of Concern**

There appears to be systemic gender and aged - based inequalities which has accumulated over the years that needs to be addressed.

There the issue of ageism and a lack of public awareness are leaving older persons in many contexts facing high exposure to discrimination, exclusion, poverty and health inequalities.

The unpaid care work of all women is often not included in economic measures and policy planning, despite the inability of economies to function without it.

Older people are also often excluded from measures and analysis of paid work.

The seniors are of the view that it's important to ensure the financial security of the elderly as older people's poverty will transfer to the whole family.

**Faith Based Organizations** are the key organizations in the financial, social and spiritual wellbeing of the seniors and are the ones who matter to the older persons. In Fiji, seniors find great solace in being involved in volunteering in faith based organizations as spirituality is the core to life and living which has been an on going activity for all religious organizations as volunteers are involved in administrative and propagation work.

The current generation of seniors have brought about the fact that Education is not only a matter of teaching sciences and literary arts but it is the place to acquire moral, ethical and civic values and responsibility and attaining a lifelong learning and living. This is the greatest legacy for the next generation and challenge for continuity.

The decision to reduce the FNPF pensions in 2012, has contributed to a widespread hardship and poverty amongst those who were affected, that is those who have pensions below \$1000 per month. This needs to be addressed by the National Council of Older persons (NCOP).

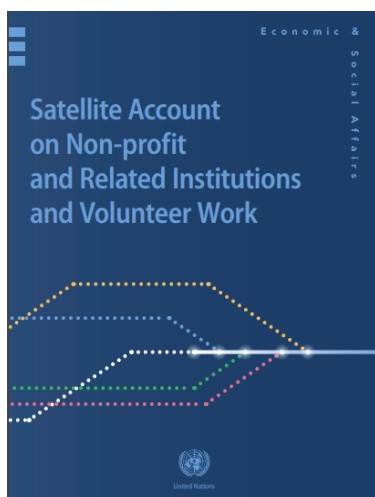
The NCOP also needs to urgently address the so called “dumping” of older persons and also establish an official strategy on Government Social responsibility on Older persons.

There is also an urgent need to address the issue of the impact of the Pandemic on the older persons and why the seniors preferred to die at home rather than seek medical services facilities.

**This article was published in full in the FIJI TIMES—Opinion page 12 of 1 October 2021**

### Recommendation: Handbook of National Accounting

“Satellite Account on Non-profit and Related Institutions and Volunteer Work”



The third sector is important for participating in

solving social problems and social development. ICSW plays an important role in promoting the works of NGOs/CSOs.

Considering the role of NGOs/CSOs

NGOs/CSOs do not look at the only outcome of the performance, whether it is proactive or defensive work, but they rather value the work that is beneficial to the country's economy as social economy. In this regard, the United Nations has worked with various agencies and points out the importance of the third sector, cited from the documentation in the Handbook of National Accounting “Satellite Account on Non-Profit and Related Institutions and Volunteer Work”. With this newsletter, I would like to recommend some contents from the mentioned documents, such as Acknowledgement, Why a satellite account for non-profit institutions, related institutions and volunteer work is needed?, and Overview of the

Handbook for which sincerely hope that the government of many countries will see the importance and cooperate with all sectors to implement in this region of South East Asia and the Pacific (SEAP). Thailand has done some studies on Non-Profit Institutions Satellite Account of Thailand 2006-2008 and found that the NPIs contribution to GDP including the values of volunteer work increases in an average of 1.6 percent per year.

### Acknowledgements

The present Handbook of National Accounting: Satellite Account on Non-profit and Related Institutions and Volunteer Work was intended initially as an update of the Handbook on Non-profit Institutions in the System of National Accounts, released by the United Nations in 2003. However, since the System of National Accounts

2008 recommends only separate identification of non-profit institutions and is silent on separately identifying related institutions and direct volunteer work, the framework recommended in the Handbook takes a broader approach, while still adhering to the methodological concepts of the System of National Accounts. The Handbook also incorporates recommendations contained in other international economic accounting standards, such as the International Standard Industrial Classification of All Economic Activities and the International Labour Organization Manual on the Measurement of Volunteer Work, accounts of country experiences in implementing the Handbook on Non-profit Institutions in the System of National Accounts and recent discussions in statistical and policy circles about the need to go beyond gross domestic product and assess trends in human well-being. Throughout the development of the Handbook, guidance was provided by a consultative group of experts, which reviewed various drafts and included an expert review in 2016. Their contributions and commitment are much appreciated. Feedback was also received from participants at meetings and conferences, and the Handbook benefited greatly from comments and suggestions made by national statistics offices, central banks, regional commissions, academic associations and international organizations, as well as the Inter-Secretariat Working Group on National Accounts, during the global consultation from July to August 2017. The Handbook is the fruit of close collaboration between the Johns Hopkins Center for Civil Society Studies and the Economic Statistics Branch of the Statistics Division of the United Nations. Particular mention should be made of the contributions by Lester M. Salamon, S. Wojciech Sokolowski and Megan Haddock of the Johns Hopkins Center for Civil Society Studies, and Herman Smith of the

Statistics Division. The Handbook was prepared under the overall responsibility of Ivo Havinga of the Statistics Division.

Why a satellite account for non-profit institutions, related institutions and volunteer work is needed?

1.20. The rationale for the separate identification in a satellite account of the three categories of entities identified above is similar to that outlined in the 2003 Handbook and reconfirmed in the 2008 SNA (chap. 23). TSE sector entities all exhibit a combination of underlying features that differentiate them from other entities in the respective institutional sectors to which they are allocated under the SNA. Those features include their private character, their primary focus on social or public purposes and their adherence to the principle of involvement based on free will. They find expression in shared tangible characteristics that, when coupled with the policy Introduction 5 relevance such TSE sector entities have attained, make their separate identification in basic economic statistics increasingly important. 1.21. The TSE sector constitutes a significant and growing economic force throughout the world. Recent research has demonstrated, for example, that the NPI component of the sector alone accounts for 8 to 12 per cent of non-agricultural employment in many developed countries and even larger shares of formal employment in many developing regions (Salamon and others, 1999 and 2004). Data collected by statistics offices that to date have assembled NPI satellite accounts following the 2003 Handbook guidelines also reveal that NPIs account, on average, for 3.5 per cent of gross domestic product. In high-income countries such as Belgium, Canada or the United States, that contribution exceeds 5 per cent, which would make this collection of entities, if they were an industry, one of the larger contributors to gross domestic product.

In certain fields, such as health and social services, NPIs frequently account for 40 or 50 per cent of total value added (Salamon and others, 2013). Adding the related institutions expands the figure significantly (Salamon and Sokolowski, 2016b)

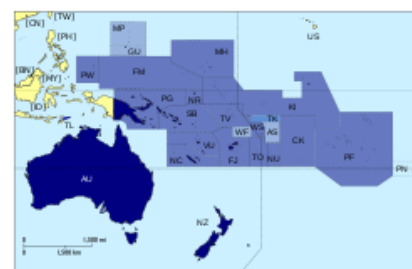
### Overview of the Handbook

Overview of the Handbook 1.26, the discussion in the Handbook falls into six chapters, supplemented by two annexes. 1.27. After this introductory chapter, chapter 2 describes the three components of the TSE sector targeted for inclusion in the satellite account, noting how they are defined in the SNA and providing further detail on their allocation to subsectors in the institutional sectors of the SNA. 1.28. Chapter 3 sets out detailed operational features and accompanying decision rules that can be used to differentiate in-scope NPIs, related institutions (including cooperatives, mutual societies and social enterprises) and volunteer work from the other institutional units and household activities in the various SNA institutional sectors. The features and decision rules not only build on those identified for NPIs in the 2003 Handbook and the recommendation in the 2008 SNA to subdivide the corporations and general government sectors into NPI and non-NPI components, but also embrace related institutions and volunteer work. 1.29. Chapter 4 identifies the key variables on which data are needed for the inscope components of the resulting TSE sector satellite account. The standard SNA variables on sources and uses of revenue are included, along with a set of refinements and additions that can maximize the clarity and utility of the resulting satellite accounts. In each case, guidance for assembling the data elements is included. 1.30. Chapter 5

provides an updated and expanded version of the International Classification of Non-profit Organizations (ICNPO) that was introduced in the 2003 Handbook. This expanded system, called the International Classification of Non-profit and Third Sector Organizations (ICNP/TSO), covers the activities of all institutional units potentially falling within the TSE sector. 1.31.

Chapter 6 goes beyond existing SNA economic measures of output to explore ways of assessing the broader outcomes of TSE activity, with particular emphasis on their link to the people-centred, inclusive Sustainable Development Goals. 1.32. Annex I contains suggested formats for presenting and disseminating TSE sector satellite account data. 1.33. Annex II provides a brief description of the SNA framework for non-specialists who wish to understand the TSE sector and broader TSE sector satellite account data but may not be familiar with the specialized technical terminology used in the SNA.

### Pacific Islands Forum



The **Pacific Islands Forum (PIF)** is an inter-governmental organization that aims to enhance cooperation between countries and territories of the Pacific Ocean, including formation of a trade bloc and regional peacekeeping operations. It was



founded in 1971 as the **South Pacific Forum (SPF)**, and changed its name in 1999 to "Pacific Islands Forum", so as to be more inclusive of the Forum's Oceania-spanning membership of both north and south Pacific island countries, including Australia. It is a United Nations General Assembly observer.

The mission of the Pacific Islands Forum is "to work in support of Forum member governments, to enhance the economic and social well-being of the people of the South Pacific by fostering cooperation between governments and between international agencies, and by representing the interests of Forum members in ways agreed by the Forum". Its decisions are implemented by the *Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat* (PIFS), which grew out of the *South Pacific Bureau for Economic Co-operation* (SPEC). As well as its role in harmonising regional positions on various political and policy issues, the Forum Secretariat has technical programmes in economic development, transport and trade. The Pacific Islands Forum Secretary General is the permanent Chairman of the Council of Regional Organisations in the Pacific (CROP).

Australia and New Zealand are generally larger and wealthier than the other countries that make up the rest of the Forum, with Australia's population being around twice that of the other members combined and its economy is more than five times larger. They are significant aid donors and big markets for exports from the other island countries. Military and police forces as well as civilian personnel of Forum states, chiefly Australia and New Zealand, have recently been part of regional peacekeeping and stabilization operations in other states, notably in Solomon Islands (2003–) and Nauru (2004–2009), under Forum auspices. Such regional efforts are

mandated by the Biketawa Declaration, which was adopted at the 31st Summit of Pacific Islands Forum Leaders, held at Kiribati in October 2000. The 50th meeting of the Forum took place in Tuvalu in August 2019. In February 2021, Palau announced that it would be leaving the Pacific Island Forum after a dispute regarding Henry Puna's election as the Forum's secretary-general. The Marshall Islands, Kiribati, Nauru, and the Federated States of Micronesia also decided to leave the Forum after Palau's decision.

The larger Pacific Community functions mainly to promote international development by providing technical and scientific advice and funding development projects, and does not consider security issues or function as a trade bloc.

### More Activity at ICSW - Save the Date!

#### ICSW Online Conference

**"New issues in social protection in the post-COVID19 era"**

**Wed~Fri, 3~5 November, 2021  
9:00am ~ 16:00am (KST, Korea time)**

ICSW in cooperation with BITC, UNESCO, Oxfam and KNCSW

The conjunction of the COVID19 pandemic and technological advance—named as the Fourth Industrial Revolution—calls for new measures

against abrupt disconnections from the former way of life and accelerates an introduction of an entirely new way of life in every aspect of our society. Social distancing to prevent the virus from spreading has led to the necessity for a remote or non-face-to-face provision of services and thus promoted the use of technologies in the area of social services such as public health and social welfare. This situation, which is interlinked with the paradigm shift from institution-based care to individual and personalized one, demands a change in the service delivery system.

World Bank estimates that COVID19 could push an additional 119 million people into extreme poverty (measured using the international poverty line of \$1.90/day) in 2020 and that this number could rise to 124 million under the COVID19-downside scenario. ILO data reveals that 305 million jobs are expected to be lost worldwide in the second quarter of 2020 and that 1.6 billion workers in the informal economy—the most vulnerable in the labor market—stand in immediate danger of having their livelihoods destroyed by lockdown measures.

Amid an increased emphasis on the necessity of a new type of service provision and universal social protection system, the pandemic does not call for a magnification of governments' role only. Not only a government but also market and civil society, which are the three pillars holding up society, are responsible for taking actions in response to a great change in the post-COVID19 era.

In this vein, this conference, "New issues in social protection in the post-COVID19 era", organized by ICSW, and KNCSW, will provide an opportunity to discuss roles and tasks of government, market and civil society regarding new issues in the post-COVID19 era.

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**Contributions to the newsletter are  
welcome!**