

Messages from the Regions

Jack Kupferman, Wednesday, 14 July, 9:00 AM - 10:30 AM EDT

My name is Jack Kupferman, President of Gray Panthers and representing the Stakeholder Group on Ageing.

This week, we've heard about the devastating effect of Covid 19. 8 out of 10 covid deaths have been of older persons. Covid-19 is a widow maker, leaving older widows without access to land, health, and social protection. What do we know about the impact of neglect in care homes and of isolation in older age due to lockdowns?

We don't know enough about how regions have responded due to poor age disaggregated data and lack of voice of older people. However, we do know ageing is our common future. SDGs cannot be achieved without implementation of smart policies to improve the quality of life of older persons – the world's fastest growing population group.

In every region, there is inadequate age-disaggregated data on older persons. Each member state should collect and carefully utilize age-disaggregated data covering all ages especially regarding older persons. Healthcare services, including long-term care; social protection measures; nutrition needs are all inadequate. Ageist employment policies and gender-based inequities abound for older persons. Despite mounting evidence of elder abuse in lockdown very little action is taken to address elder abuse, violence and neglect.

In the Asia-Pacific region, we note that older persons have been prioritized on paper, but not in implementation. In Latin America becoming older does not lead to positive change, but to invisibility and marginalization. In Africa, lack of age disaggregated data ensures that needs assessments and policy is age blind. In the ECE, the scale of death has not resulted in assurance of change to address the disparate death toll amongst older men and violence toward older women. This is true especially in the long term care sector.

We call on all regions and all age groups to

- participate actively in the UN Statistical Commission's Titchfield Group on ageing;
- put in place now social protection programs as well as accessible and affordable health care for all;

- assure that the voices and presence of older women and men as a core principle to build transformatively forward;
- support a Convention of the Rights of Older Persons.

Thank you