

# Regional initiatives on social welfare, health and labour

*By the ASEAN Secretariat*

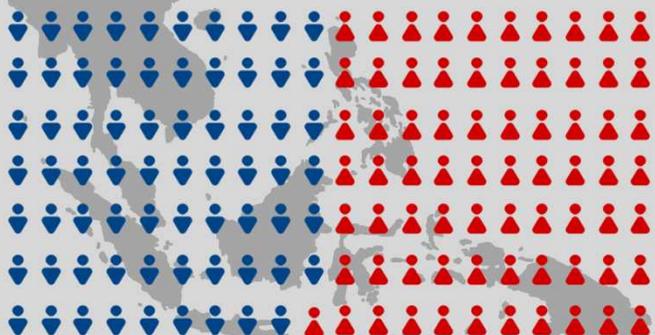
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*23rd ASEAN & Japan High-Level Officials Meeting on Caring Societies (HLOM)  
28-30 October 2025  
Chiba Prefecture, Japan*



## 74 million people in ASEAN are 60 years old or over

By 2050, ASEAN's total population would reach 792 million



49% male

51% female

Life Expectancy

 78.7 years

 73 years

The proportion of the population aged **60 years and over** is expected to double, while the proportion of the population **aged 80 years** over is expected to triple or more

**Older women** exceed **older men** in number and proportion of the population

Life expectancy has been steadily increasing and is expected to continue to rise

Proportion of the elderly individuals increasing from **5.3% in 2000 to 7.5% in 2022.**

The **old-age dependency ratio** in ASEAN increased from **10.4 in 2000 to 13.5 in 2022.**

**Population ageing is a mega global trend.**

*It is the result of the **demographic transition** – the trend **towards longer lives and smaller families** – that is taking place even in countries with relatively youthful populations.*

UN DESA, World Social Report, 2023

Source: Profiles of Ageing 2015, UNDESA  
2020 Older Persons in ASEAN in Number,  
UNESCAP, 2021



## Old Age Poverty and Active Ageing in ASEAN: Trends and Opportunities (2023)



The **poverty headcount ratio** at National Poverty Lines varies **between 5% to 20%** of the population.

If **climate change** continues to worsen, 2.5 million people will be pushed into poverty by 2030.



In general, **older persons in ASEAN** have been living marginally **above the poverty line** and remain **vulnerable to falling into poverty**.

In most ASEAN Member States, **older women experience higher incidence of poverty** than older men, and they also face more severe conditions.



More **older people live in rural areas**, typically **residing with their family**, particularly their adult children, however, they usually live with family **members who are also impoverished**.



**Poverty** is the primary factor **driving older people** in ASEAN to remain in the **labour force**. Many of them **work in agriculture**. **Older women** are typically employed in **informal and unstable jobs** and consequently have **less access to pensions**.

Older Persons are **more vulnerable in emergencies and crisis**

Older persons who are poor **suffer from various disability** preventing them from being active yet having **limited access to care services**.

### Prevalence of selected and non-communicable diseases

Among individuals aged 55 years and older, the most common ailments were:

  
age-related hearing loss  
**58.3%**

  
oral health problems  
**55.1%**

  
blindness  
**33.9%**

  
nutritional deficiencies  
**21.2%**

  
cardiovascular diseases  
**23.2%**



# ASEAN frameworks that promote active ageing, and the rights and welfare of older persons

Brunei Darussalam  
Declaration on  
Strengthening  
Family  
Institutions:  
Caring for the  
Elderly

2010



2012

The ASEAN Human  
Rights Declaration

The ASEAN  
Declaration on  
Strengthening  
Social Protection



2013



2015

The Regional  
Framework and  
Action Plan to  
Implement the  
ASEAN  
Declaration on  
Strengthening  
Social Protection

Kuala Lumpur  
Declaration on  
Ageing:  
Empowering Older  
Persons in ASEAN



2015



2016

ASEAN Plus Three  
Statement on  
Active Ageing

Regional Plan of  
Action to  
Implement the  
Kuala Lumpur  
Declaration on  
Ageing:  
Empowering Older  
Persons in ASEAN

2021

ASEAN  
Comprehensive  
Care Economy



## Kuala Lumpur Declaration on Ageing: Empowering Older Persons in ASEAN

*Adopted by the 27<sup>th</sup>  
ASEAN Summit in 2015*



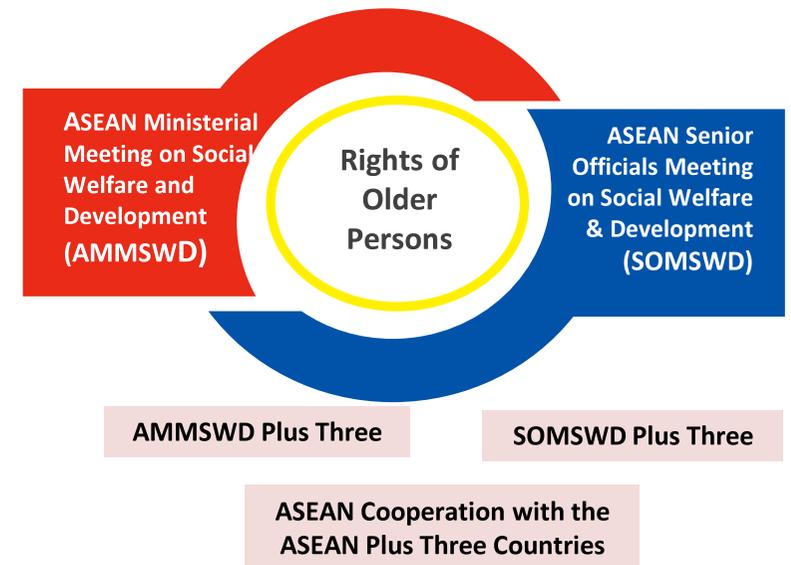
## Regional Plan of Action on Implementing the Kuala Lumpur Declaration on Ageing: Empowering Older Persons in ASEAN

*Noted by the 38<sup>th</sup> and 39<sup>th</sup>  
ASEAN Summit in 2021*

### 10 commitments under Regional Plan of Action

- Promote shared responsibilities in supporting care givers
- Promote intergenerational solidarity
- Promote rights-based/needs-based and life-cycle approach, and eliminate all forms of maltreatment base on old age
- Mainstream ageing into public policies and national development plans, programmes
- Promote the development of human capital
- Development of reliable, evidence-based, gender-disaggregated data on ageing
- Strengthen capacity of all stakeholders and improve delivery services at all levels
- Encourage development of older people's associations or other form of networking
- Promote age-friendly communities/cities
- Build and strengthen networking and partnership within and among AMS, and with other partners

ASEAN mechanisms are actively engaged to ensure the enjoyment of rights of Older Persons



# ASEAN Health Cooperation Initiatives on Healthy and Active Ageing

## APHDA GOALS for 2021-2025

### A. VISION

*A Healthy, Caring and Sustainable ASEAN Community*

### B. MISSION

*To ensure a healthy, caring and sustainable ASEAN Community by promoting healthy lifestyle, responding to all hazards and emerging threats, strengthening health system and access to care, and ensuring food safety.*

ASEAN Health Cluster	APHDA Goals for 2021-2025
ASEAN Health Clusters 1 on Promoting Healthy Lifestyle	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To achieve health potential of ASEAN Community through promoting healthy lifestyle.</li> <li>2. <b>To ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages.</b></li> </ol>
ASEAN Health Clusters 2 on Responding to All Hazards and Emerging Threats	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To promote resilient health system in response to communicable diseases, emerging infectious diseases, neglected tropical diseases and zoonotic diseases;</li> <li>2. To enhance regional preparedness and response to public health emergencies and ensure effective disaster health management in the region.</li> <li>3. To prepare and respond to environmental health threats and other hazards, including the health impacts of climate change in the region.</li> </ol>
ASEAN Health Clusters 3 on Strengthening Health System and Access to Care	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To provide the ASEAN Community with universal access to safe, affordable, quality, holistic health care and essential medical supplies, including traditional and complementary medicines; and</li> <li>2. To advance health care deliveries by adapting towards innovation and digital health technology.</li> <li>3. To promote health care delivery to vulnerable population, such as among others, women, children and migrant workers</li> </ol>
ASEAN Health Cluster 4 on Ensuring Food Safety	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To promote access to safe food.</li> <li>2. To strengthen food safety risk analysis in ASEAN.</li> </ol>

### ASEAN Health Cluster

**AHC 1:**  
Promoting Healthy Lifestyle

**APHDA Health Priorities (HP)**

HP 6: Promotion of healthy and active ageing





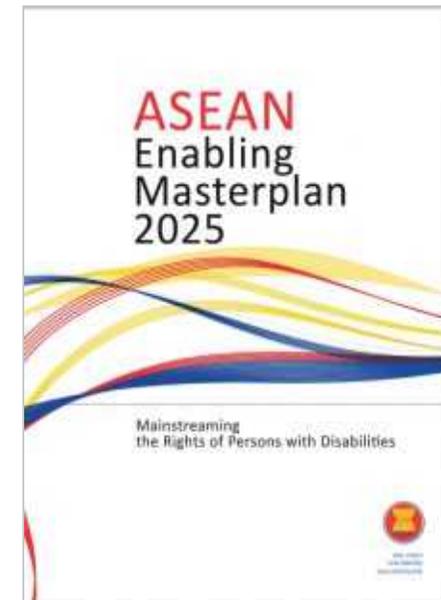
## ASEAN Enabling Masterplan 2025: Mainstreaming the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

**Adopted at the 33<sup>rd</sup> ASEAN Summit in 2018**, building on the Bali Declaration on the Enhancement of the Role and Participation of Persons with Disabilities in ASEAN Community (2011) and the Mobilisation Framework of the ASEAN Decade of Persons with Disabilities (2011-2020)

**Advances** the systematic mainstreaming of disability-inclusive perspectives in ASEAN's work by institutionalising a **programmatic approach** aligning key action points under the three ASEAN Community blueprints and leadership of ASEAN Sectoral Bodies.

**Aims** to achieve equality and high quality of life of persons with disabilities, their family members, personal assistants and caregivers, where applicable.

**Output level results** identified through 76 **Key action points** - for implementation across three ASEAN Community Pillars: APSC (24); AEC (25); and ASCC (27).



## ASEAN Comprehensive Framework on Care Economy

▪ **Adopted at the 38<sup>th</sup> and 39<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Summits** - guides ASEAN's development of the care economy in response to complex crises and challenges, to further sustainable development and protect different segments of populations and sectors in the region.

- Promoting Healthy Ageing and Leveraging Opportunities in Ageing Societies in Southeast Asia
- Enhancing the Role of the Care Economy in Building a Disaster Resilient ASEAN
- Accelerating Technology Innovations and Digital Transformation of the Care Economy in ASEAN
- Building Stronger and Resilient Families as the foundation of the Care Economy
- Enhancing Social Protection/Leaving No One Behind
- Resilience and Care for the Environment

## ASEAN Declaration on Strengthening the Care Economy and Fostering Resilience Towards the Post-2025 ASEAN Community

- Acknowledging the essential role that care work plays in fostering inclusive growth, social stability, and the resilience of communities through a whole-of-government approach.
- With ongoing development of the **Guidance Note on Strengthening the Care Economy and Fostering Resilience Towards the post-2025 ASEAN Community** led by Lao PDR.



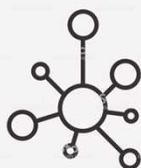
## ASEAN Center for Active Ageing and Innovation ACAI Commitments to actions

**November 2019** - Launching during 35<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Summit via International Academic Seminar



ASEAN Leaders recognize the need to work together to prepare well for ageing societies: economic and social shifts; public health system challenges

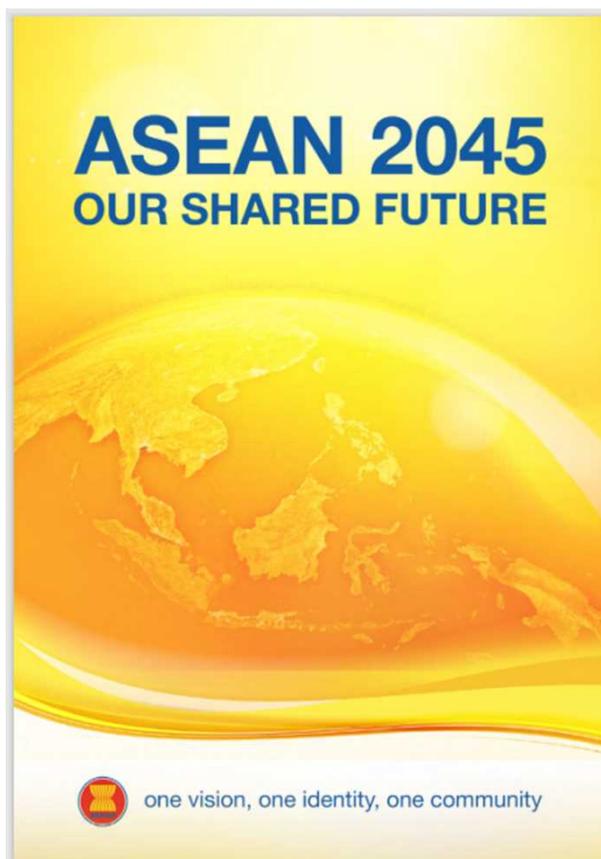
ACAI is envisaged to be multisectoral platform to facilitate integration of ageing and innovation strategies



Driven by principles of:

- ASEAN focus, link to all three pillars
- Comprehensive, community-based approach
- Active multi-sectoral engagement
- International collaboration with partners

## ASEAN Community Vision 2045



### ASEAN Political-Security Community:

- **Promote the mainstreaming of human rights** across the three pillars of the ASEAN Community to ensure the peoples of ASEAN live with **dignity, in peace, harmony and prosperity**.with a focus on the elderly, among others

### ASEAN Economic Community

- **Advancing inclusive, innovative, and competitive business environment** to strengthen **MSMEs integration**
- **Enhance the participation of vulnerable and marginalised communities** in regional economic integration
- Ensure preparedness for **future megatrends**, including **demographic shifts** which require **precise and fit-for-purpose policy responses**

### ASEAN Connectivity

- **Support the adoption of existing and emerging technologies by all people and businesses**, with the focus on MSMEs, women, youth, and persons with disabilities to enhance competitiveness and productivity



## ASCC Strategic Plan Post-2025 Strategic Measures

Enhance meaningful and **inclusive access, participation and engagement of people in vulnerable situations** in the development and implementation, monitoring and evaluation, as well as decision-making process

Promote **adaptive social protection** to strengthen family's resilience and well-being throughout their **life cycle**, including through the work of **social workers and the wider social service workforce**.

Accelerate initiatives towards building **age-friendly societies and mainstreaming population ageing issues** into national policies and development plans & programmes

Strengthen mechanisms and institutional capacity to enhance inclusive and equitable **access to social protection**

Enhance the effectiveness of the implementation of **universal health coverage**, ensuring the availability of **service and care** for mental health, **healthy and active ageing, health service** for people in **vulnerable situations**

Leverage the growth opportunities of the **care economy** in the ASEAN

Advance ASEAN-wide and ASEAN-ready **training and employment efforts**

Institutionalise coherence and coordination on **strengthening regional and national data** disaggregated **by sex, age, and disability**, and establish a reliable **regional database**



## Regional initiatives on Empowerment of Older Persons

1

The **Senior Officials Meeting on Social Welfare and Development Work Plan 2021-2025 and Its Results Framework** has identified **Older Persons** as one of the key priority areas

2

Conducted the **Regional Conference on Promoting Decent Work for Older Persons for an Inclusive Society in ASEAN+3: Strengthening a More Resilient and Inclusive Society** on 28-29 June 2021 [SOMSWD Work Plan 2021-2025]

3

Convening of the **5<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Network of Experts on Inclusive Entrepreneurship for ASEAN** in 2021 with a theme, *“Inclusive Business Empowerment of the Elderly in an Ageing Society”*.

4

Under the ASEAN-Japan Cooperation, the **ASEAN and Japan High Level Officials Meeting on Caring Societies** is held annually with the active participation of SOMSWD, together with SOMHD and SLOM.

5

Conducted the **Study on Old Age Poverty and Active Ageing; Trends and Opportunities in ASEAN** led by SOMSWD and the ASEAN Secretariat in 2023

6

Establishment of **ASEAN-WIDE Research Network on Ageing**

## ASEAN Plus Three Cooperation

- ASEAN Plus Three Cooperation Work Plan 2023-2027
- Plan of Action to Implement the ASEAN-China Strategic Partnership for Peace and Prosperity (2021-2025)
- Revised Implementation Plan of the Vision Statement on ASEAN-Japan Friendship of Cooperation
- Shared Vision, Shared Identity, Shared Future
- ASEAN-Republic Korea Plan of Action to Implement the Joint Vision Statement for Peace, Prosperity and Partnership (2021-2025)

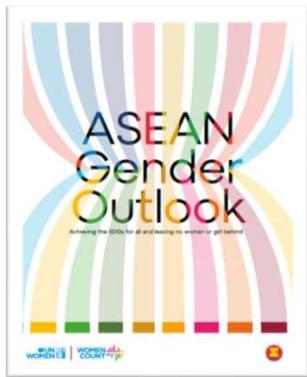




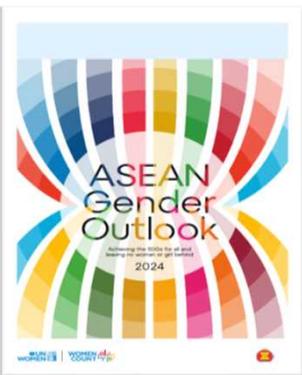
<https://data.aseanstats.org/>

## Data-driven ASEAN Initiatives on Ageing

Under SOMSWD, establishment of ASEAN-WIDE Research Networking on Ageing(ARNA)



[https://data.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/documents/Publications/ASEAN/ASEAN%20Gender%20Outlook\\_final.pdf](https://data.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/documents/Publications/ASEAN/ASEAN%20Gender%20Outlook_final.pdf)



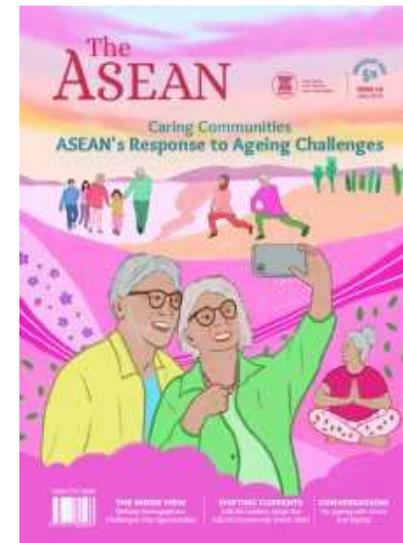
<https://acwc.asean.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/ASEAN-Gender-Outlook.pdf>

Indicator	Myanmar	Brunei Darussalam	Cambodia	Indonesia	Laos	Malaysia	Philippines	Singapore	Thailand	Timor-Leste	Vietnam	ASEAN
Number of older persons (65+)	100	200	300	400	500	600	700	800	900	1000	1100	1200
Number of older persons (60+)	100	200	300	400	500	600	700	800	900	1000	1100	1200
Number of older persons (55+)	100	200	300	400	500	600	700	800	900	1000	1100	1200
Number of older persons (50+)	100	200	300	400	500	600	700	800	900	1000	1100	1200
Number of older persons (45+)	100	200	300	400	500	600	700	800	900	1000	1100	1200
Number of older persons (40+)	100	200	300	400	500	600	700	800	900	1000	1100	1200
Number of older persons (35+)	100	200	300	400	500	600	700	800	900	1000	1100	1200
Number of older persons (30+)	100	200	300	400	500	600	700	800	900	1000	1100	1200
Number of older persons (25+)	100	200	300	400	500	600	700	800	900	1000	1100	1200
Number of older persons (20+)	100	200	300	400	500	600	700	800	900	1000	1100	1200
Number of older persons (15+)	100	200	300	400	500	600	700	800	900	1000	1100	1200
Number of older persons (10+)	100	200	300	400	500	600	700	800	900	1000	1100	1200
Number of older persons (5+)	100	200	300	400	500	600	700	800	900	1000	1100	1200
Number of older persons (0-4)	100	200	300	400	500	600	700	800	900	1000	1100	1200

[https://www.unescap.org/sites/default/d8files/knowledge-products/Final\\_AgeingSheet\\_Web.pdf](https://www.unescap.org/sites/default/d8files/knowledge-products/Final_AgeingSheet_Web.pdf)



<https://asean.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/Old-Age-Poverty-and-Active-Ageing-in-ASEAN-Trends-and-Opportunities-250724.pdf>



<https://asean.org/serial/the-asean-active-ageing-and-dignified-care/>

## Post-2025

Through ACAI: Development of a revised and robust **ASEAN Active Ageing Index (AAAI)** tailored to AMS to assess monitor and evaluate active ageing progress across AMS.



## Malaysia's Priorities on Active Ageing as Chair of ASEAN in 2025

### *"Inclusivity and Sustainability"*

Accelerating the implementation of the **Regional Plan of Action on Implementing the Kuala Lumpur Declaration on Ageing: Empowering Older Persons in ASEAN** through:

- Convened the **ASEAN+ROK Conference on Care and Support for Older Persons**, 30 June – 2 July 2025 in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia with outcome key recommendations, including ***supporting innovation and knowledge-driven transformations and cross-sectoral cooperation on data sharing and evidence-building on ageing***
- Activation of the **ASEAN-WIDE Research Network on Ageing**
- **End-Term Reviews of relevant sectoral bodies work plan for 2026-2030** and setting key priorities on empowering older persons in ASEAN across sectors, including health, social welfare, labour, for the **next five-year work plans** in alignment with **ASEAN Community Vision 2045 and Its Strategic Plans** which embed agenda on ageing in the next 20 years development agenda of ASEAN.





[www.asean.org](http://www.asean.org)