UNESCAP

UPDATE PAPER

Secretary-General
Terry Wang

Director-General
Jordan Baker

Delegate Experience
Nastasja Vásquez
Ximena Faz

Global Partnerships
Pierce Jau Hunter
Natalia Carrillo

Under-Secretaries-General
Nachiketh Anand
Alina Castillo
Seonghyun Chang
Naina Dhawan
Ximena Faz
Kellie Fernandez
Grace Harb
Adiva Ara Khan
Anshul Magal
Analucia Tello
Sofia Velasco
Renata Venzor

Dear Delegates,

I am so incredibly excited to welcome you to the United Nations Economic and Social Commission of Asia and the Pacific. My name is Emma Desai, and I will be serving as your assistant director for session one! This will be my first year staffing at NHSMUN, but my fourth year attending. I had the pleasure of attending NHSMUN for three out of the four years of my high school career, participating in the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD), the Social Humanitarian and Cultural Committee (SOCHUM), and the Legal Committee. If you have any questions about Model UN or NHSMUN, please do not hesitate to ask!

I was born and raised in Somerset, New Jersey but currently reside in Washington, DC. I am a freshman at American University (AU) studying International Affairs with concentrations in the Global Economy and the Middle East and a minor in International Business. Besides my academics, at AU I am involved in the competitive bhangra team (American Bhangra Crew) and write for the Pericles Institute, our undergraduate International Affairs think tank. After graduation, I plan to take an extra year to acquire a master's in international Economic Relations and eventually work in the public sector for a federal government agency. Aside from school, I am a huge fan of comedy tv shows like *New Girl* and *The Office* and dramas like *Gossip Girl* and *Gilmore Girls*. My favorite movies are *10 Things I Hate About You* and *Crazy Rich Asians*. Besides TV and movies, I am a huge coffee lover (addict) and even set up a coffee bar in my dorm room!

Being involved in Model UN for the past five years now has given me a whirlwind of experiences, all leading me to my love of politics and international affairs. From being a delegate, I learned valuable skills like how to work with new people, communicate with people even with language and cultural barriers, and overall gain confidence in my ability to publicly speak and form opinions. As you embark on your NHSMUN journey, I encourage you to participate in both moderated and unmoderated debate to ensure that you take away as much from your experience as possible. Model UN has given me the key to my future success socially and academically.

I look forward to meeting you all and discussing our very important and relevant topics. I can't wait to see all the innovative solutions that you all come up with and am honored to be a witness to the growth that I am sure you will all experience across the course of the conference. Going forward, please feel free to contact me with any questions about the topics, conference logistics, or Model UN in general, and I will be happy to help. I can't wait to meet you all soon!

Best,

Emma Desai

United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific Assistant Director

Session I

nhsmun.unescap@imuna.org

Secretary-General
Terry Wang

Director-General
Jordan Baker

Delegate Experience
Nastasja Vásquez
Ximena Faz

Global Partnerships
Pierce Jau Hunter
Natalia Carrillo

Under-Secretaries-General
Nachiketh Anand
Alina Castillo
Seonghyun Chang
Naina Dhawan
Ximena Faz
Kellie Fernandez
Grace Harb
Adiva Ara Khan
Anshul Magal
Analucia Tello
Sofia Velasco
Renata Venzor

Dear Delegates,

Welcome to NHSMUN 2025 and the UNESCAP (United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific) committee! My name is Wyatt Christian, and I will be your Assistant Director for session II. I am so excited to finally be able to meet all of you after months of hard work and preparation, and I hope that you find the topics we have prepared for this year's committee as fascinating as they are important.

First and foremost, I would like to introduce myself. I am originally from Stroudsburg, Pennsylvania, and I am currently attending George Washington University in Washington, D.C. where I am majoring in Political Science. I am a first-year student, and this is my first time helping with NHSMUN, although I have been doing Model UN for some years now. I began my MUN career in high school and have continued that passion into college where I compete for GWU's traveling MUN team. I have also worked at Model UN conferences before, both in high school and while at GWU. While it is almost certainly too late to join now, I will advertise GWU's high school conference WAMUNC, which I will be vice chairing a committee for, to anyone who plans on doing MUN next year. I am hoping that NHSMUN is a new and exciting experience for all of us and that we are all able to learn something this upcoming week.

Surprisingly I do have hobbies outside of Model UN! Firstly, I love reading, whether it be history, social sciences, or fantasy and historical fiction. I love to be in nature by going on hikes or hunting back home in the Pocono Mountains. I also listen to tons of different types of music, although country music is where my heart lies, if you have any unique artist recommendations I would love to hear them.

Our topics for this conference are "Responding to Demographic Changes in Asia and the Pacific" and "Protecting Informal Workers in Asia and the Pacific." While demographic change is happening everywhere, especially low fertility rates in nations such as South Korea, Japan, China, and Singapore are creating crises in these countries that could devastate their economies and societies if left unchecked. The exploitation of informal workers is also a critical point in the wider discussion of the economic growth of the Asia-Pacific. While many of these countries are rapidly growing their economies, much of this growth does not necessarily trickle down to these informal sectors.

I know that we will all have an amazing conference, and I am so excited to meet all of you and hear what unique and innovative solutions you have to the topics at hand. Best of luck, and please reach out if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Wyatt Christian

United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific Assistant Director

Session II

nhsmun.unescap@imuna.org

TOPIC A:
RESPONDING TO DEMOGRAPHIC CHANGES IN ASIA

Introduction

The Asia Pacific region is facing a fast change in their demographic. According to the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP), in 2024, there were 721 million people in the Asia Pacific region aged 60 years or older.[1] This means one in every seven people is an older person. The aging population is expected to increase. By 2050, one in every four people will be an older person. The change in population brings many changes to the region. An aging population is the result of advancements in healthcare and socioeconomic development.[2] The advancement of medical technology and access worldwide has made life expectancies longer. Many easily preventable diseases in developing countries have been replaced with chronic illnesses. People live longer and the rapidly developing East Asia region means a much larger elderly population. On the surface, this may seem like a good thing. Yet, it also creates new challenges.

The changes in the demographics in Asia and the Pacific are creating big social and economic challenges. These include higher demand for long-term healthcare and an aging workforce. Younger people are required to take care of an increasing number of elderly people. Additionally, there are economic hardships. The government needs more money to fund social programs. More elderly people rely on these social programs which increases their costs. Besides the economic challenges, older people are also more vulnerable to the impact of natural disasters. This is becoming an even bigger challenge since climate change is increasing the risk for many natural disasters. Many older people have health problems and mobility issues, so they struggle to prepare and recover from natural disasters. Hence, they are amongst the most vulnerable populations in disasters. This is exacerbated in Asia and the Pacific, since the region is prone to disasters. As disasters increase, keeping them safe is becoming more challenging.

On the other hand, many new advancements have been made as a response to these challenges. The development of new technologies and Artificial Intelligence (AI) have improved the lives of many older people. The tools can offer support in many areas, alleviating the financial burden. For example, technology has been used to monitor health and assist caregivers. AI can also improve disaster response, making sure older people get the help they need quickly. By using these tools, governments and communities can do more to protect older people in everyday life and during emergencies.

The Effects of Recent Natural Disasters on Older People in Asia and the Pacific

Natural disasters kill approximately 40,000 to 50,000 people per year.[3] Globally they pose risks for everyone. They can lead to morbidity, injuries, and physical damages. In some cases, they increase the risk of post-disaster public health problems. Additionally, natural disasters often cause multiple deaths. The Asia Pacific region remains the most disaster-prone region in the world.[4] Since 1970, over two million people have lost their lives to natural disasters. Yet, as climate change increases, so do the risks of more extreme events, including natural disasters.[5] Asia and the Pacific is no exception. For instance, in 2024 South-East Asia, nearly 100 percent of the population is at risk of floods and the Pacific Island countries face rising seas and stronger cyclones that erode coastlines, threaten biodiversity, and force communities to relocate.[6] Moreover, in the past year China experienced the highest number of

1 Armida Alisjahbana, "Asia-Pacific Regional Conference on Population Ageing: Reframing Aging," *ESCAP*, September 11, 2024, https://unescap.org/speeches/asia-pacific-regional-conference-population-ageing-reframing-aging.
2 Alisjahbana, "Asia-Pacific Regional Conference on Population Ageing: Reframing Aging,"
3 Hannah Ritchie et. al, "Natural Disasters," Our World in Data, December 7, 2022, https://ourworldindata.org/natural-disasters.
4 "Asia and the Pacific," OCHA, accessed February 3, 2025, https://www.unocha.org/asia-and-pacific.
5 Ritchie et. al, "Natural Disasters."
6 "Resilience Rising: Targeting Transformative Disaster Risk Reduction in Asia-Pacific Subregions," ESCAP, accessed February 3, 2025, https://www.unescap.org/blog/resilience-rising-targeting-transformative-disaster-risk-reduction-asia-pacific-subregions.

Natural Disaster in Nepal
Credit: Gita Dhoj Karki

floods ever recorded.[7] 84 million people were affected by the floods. There were 836 deaths, over 3.3 million people were relocated, and 50,000 houses were fully damaged due to the natural disasters.[8]

Natural disasters disproportionally affect vulnerable populations, such as older people.[9] They are more likely to suffer from psychological and physical effects because of experiencing a natural disaster. Psychologically, older people may experience higher levels of anxiety, stress, and trauma, especially if they lose their homes or loved ones. Older people tend to experience negative mental, psychiatric, or psychological outcomes in the aftermath of disasters.[10] They face significant social change and disruption to their daily routines. They are more likely to become widowed, live alone, and lose family members and breadwinners.[11] These circumstances often harm the self-esteem and dignity of older people, commonly

causing feelings of guilt if they are economically dependent. As a result, they become more prone to isolation and mental and psychological problems.[12] This includes Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). PTSD is the most significant type of psychiatric morbidity in older people after disasters such as earthquake and tsunami.[13] As well, older adults are two times more likely to experience PTSD symptoms than younger adults. Also, older people may live on their own which makes it harder for them to get help and support during natural disasters. This is especially concerning, because older people are excluded and neglected in humanitarian crises. Ageist stereotypes lead to social exclusion and neglect of elderly. This prevents them from accessing relief, social, or healthcare services.[14]

On the other hand, older people have more physical health vulnerabilities in natural disasters. They often have preexisting

7   ANKORA, "China Records Highest Number of Floods in 2024, Impacting Millions," January 8, 2025, https://www.aa.com.tr/en/asia-pacific/china-records-highest-number-of-floods-in-2024-impacting-millions/3445010.
8   ANKORA, "China Records Highest Number of Floods in 2024, Impacting Millions."
9   "Insights From DANA Floods: Older People as Key Actors in Fostering Resilience Against Climate Disasters," AGE, accessed February 2, 2025, https://www.age-platform.eu/insights-from-dana-floods-older-people-as-key-actors-in-fostering-resilience-against-climate-disasters/.
10   Eamin Z Heanoy and Norman R. Brown, "Impact of Natural Disasters on Mental Health: Evidence and Implications," *Healthcare* 12, no. 18 (September 10, 2024), https://doi.org/10.3390/healthcare12181812.
11   Sarah Al Omari et. al, "Health and Well-being of Older Populations Affected by Humanitarian Crises in Low- and Middle-income Countries: A Scoping Review of Peer-reviewed Literature," *Conflict and Health* 18, no. 1 (December 4, 2024), https://doi.org/10.1186/s13031-024-00626-0.
12   Sarah Al Omari et. al, "Health and Well-being of Older Populations Affected."
13   Joseph Balikuddembe et. al,"Impact of Climate-induced Floods and Typhoons on Geriatric Disabling Health Among Older Chinese and Filipinos: A Cross-country Systematic Review," *BMC Geriatrics* 24, no. 1 (April 5, 2024), https://doi.org/10.1186/s12877-024-04855-z.
14   Sarah Al Omari et. al, "Health and Well-being of Older Populations Affected."

physical conditions, including disabilities, cognitive decline, limited social networks, and socio-economic changes. These conditions can limit mobility and constraining them from perceiving and responding to emergency warnings.[15] Hence, posing an immediate threat to their wellbeing. Also, they are more vulnerable to the physical risks of natural disasters. They are more at risk of injuries, illnesses, or death because of potential chronic health problems or weaker immune systems. For example, in China and the Philippines, floods and typhoons are very frequent and they are some of the deadliest natural disasters. In said countries, people aged 60 or older, are at the highest risk of experiencing a wide range of disabling health conditions they induce compared to younger age groups.[16] A recent example is Super Typhoon Yagi, Asia's most powerful storm in 2024. The typhoon left dozens of dead across Southeast Asia, affecting people in China, Vietnam, Thailand, Myanmar and Laos.[17] Specifically in Vietnam, Typhoon Yago affected over 3.6 million people. As a result, the recovery of the Typhoon cost USD 68.9 million.[18] Despite the extensive damage, the Joint Response Plan (JRP) for Typhoon Yagi only received USD 3.1 million, less than 5 percent of the total cost.[19] The JRP was created by the Intersector Coordination Group, the Vietnamese government, and other organizations to identify key priorities for a more effective response by UN agencies, NGOs, and the Vietnam Red Cross.[20] The JRP focuses on meeting the needs of vulnerable groups like older people. One aspect of the JRP is the Shelter Sector response which ensures that the acute needs of older people and other extremely vulnerable populations are met. The interventions of this plan include providing access to safe evacuation centers, enhancing preparedness, and providing safe housing.[21]

Moreover, the long-term consequences of the typhoon's destruction created significant obstacles for everyone, but especially for older people. Even as the storm weakened, it led to long periods of rainfall. This caused landslides and floods. This caused severe damage to the infrastructure, including the public transportation systems. The Vietnam Railway Corporation reported damage to railways of USD 5.4 million and over 40 spots suffered damage.[22] Many older people rely heavily on public transport to access the services they need like groceries, healthcare, and emergency services.[23] With tracks being blocked and railways being damaged, older people have had more difficulty in not only evacuating but reaching the facilities necessary for their needs. Additionally, the agriculture sector suffered the most from Typhoon Yagi. As a result, grocery prices increased from 10 percent to 100 percent during and after the typhoon.[24] This makes life even more difficult for older people since many are on fixed or limited incomes. If older people can't access affordable foods, malnutrition could become a serious issue.

Another example is the vulnerability of Japan's older population to earthquakes. Japan is prone to violent natural disasters, such as earthquakes, tsunamis, and typhoons.[25] So, the country has used technology and implemented several strategies to prepare for any of these events. However, the aging population in the country remains a challenge. This was demonstrated in the earthquake that affected the Noto Peninsula on December 31st, 2024.[26] For instance, it became clear that older people need more help and support during evacuation procedures. They are also more vulnerable to the harsh conditions of an evacuation center, which led to several

15   Joseph Balikuddembe et. al,"Impact of Climate-induced Floods and Typhoons on Geriatric Disabling Health."
16   Joseph Balikuddembe et. al,"Impact of Climate-induced Floods and Typhoons on Geriatric Disabling Health."
17   Kathleen Magramo, "Typhoon Yagi: Asia's most powerful storm submerges parts of Vietnam and Thailand," *CNN*, September 13, 2024, https://edition.cnn.com/2024/09/13/asia/typhoon-yagi-most-powerful-storm-photos-intl-hnk/index.html.
18   Magramo, "Typhoon Yagi: Asia's most powerful storm submerges parts of Vietnam and Thailand."
19   United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. *Viet Nam: Typhoon Yagi and Floods - Situation Update No. 5.* (Hanoi: United Nations in Viet Nam, Resident Coordinator Office, October 2024), https://www.unocha.org/attachments/a5416b44-496c-4f94-aa99-77441b28706b/Situation%20Report%20Number%205%20-%20Typhoon%20Yagi%20%28Dated%2023%20October%202024%29.pdf .
20   *Viet Nam: Typhoon Yagi and Floods - Situation Update No. 5,* 2-9.
21   United Nations Viet Nam, *Joint Response Plan Typhoon Yago and Floods,* (Hanoi: UNOCHA, 2024), https://vietnam.un.org/en/279852-joint-response-plan-typhoon-yagi-and-floods-viet-nam.
22   Vu Nguyen Hanh, "Impact of Typhoon Yagi on Vietnam: Economic Damage and Recovery Efforts," *Asia Briefing,* September 18, 2024, https://www.vietnam-briefing.com/news/impact-of-typhoon-yagi-on-vietnam-economic-damage-and-recovery-efforts.html/.
23   Nguyen, "Impact of Typhoon Yagi on Vietnam: Economic Damage and Recovery Efforts."
24   Nguyen, "Impact of Typhoon Yagi on Vietnam: Economic Damage and Recovery Efforts."
25   Maxime Polleri, "Japan's Aging Population Will Increase Disaster Vulnerability," *The Diplomat,* January 22, 2024, https://thediplomat.com/2024/01/japans-aging-population-will-increase-disaster-vulnerability/.
26   Polleri, "Japan's Aging Population Will Increase Disaster Vulnerability."

deaths in Noto. Additionally, the post-disaster recovery is affected by the isolation of many people. Since the older citizens in Japan often live alone, they are less likely to ask for help in the aftermath of a disaster.[27] Therefore, the earthquake in the Noto Peninsula showed that the systems in place to prepare and overcome disasters in Japan, still have a major gap regarding the care and assistance of older people.

As a response to their increased vulnerability to natural disasters, older people are taking strategies to prepare. For instance, in Bangladesh older people are staying at home during disasters. They are also taking loans and rebuilding in case their homes suffer damage.[28] However, most older people are still not considered to participate in climate action. So, most solutions don't consider their points of view and don't provide inclusive ideas. Therefore, delegates in UNESCAP must consider the vulnerabilities older people are facing, including those exacerbated by natural disasters. It is imperative to come together to create solutions to help older people be prepared for a natural disaster and ensure they can access the proper resources to help them overcome any consequences from it. This is particularly important in the region of Asia and the Pacific, since natural disasters are becoming more prominent, making older people face more risks.

Technology and Population Aging in Asia and the Pacific

The advancements in technology and the increased use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) have changed many aspects of daily life. For instance, there has been a huge shift in the use of AI and technology in both the healthcare and labor industry. The changes in said industries have radically impacted the lives of many older people. As people age, they face health, cognitive, and mobility challenges. This impacts older people's finances, well-being, and overall quality of life. As well, working at an advanced age or finding a job remain challenges for older people. However, AI tools and technologies are being used to improve the lives of older people in these areas. Technology can be used to improve the healthcare system and increase its accessibility. AI can help maintain social and mental well-being, while also lowering the stress on family members and the healthcare system. For example, CarePredict, an AI digital health company produced a wearable device that learns the daily patterns of the wearers and alerts caregivers of changes that may indicate falls or health problems.[29] This Florida based company, has been working alongside the non-profit organization, Vista Prairie, which twelve senior citizen homes to develop a more up to date version of their system.[30] Real-time monitoring is especially helpful for older people living alone, ensuring their safety.

Technologies like virtual reality (VR) are being used to help older people with their daily activities.[31] For example, Neurons VR refers to a collection of VR therapies developed by researchers at the Allen Institute for Cell Science.[32] They help older people engage in physical activity and revisit memories or familiar places with new versions being developed today.[33] Neurons VR also offers group activities to improve the lives of residents in long-term facilities. Another example is the company XRHealth, established by an Air Force veteran pilot.[34] XRHealth utilizes VR technologies to provide telerehabilitation for older people, especially those with Parkinson's disease.[35] Parkinson's disease is a movement disorder of the brain that worsens over time making transportation and mobility difficult.[36] VR exercises at home

27 Polleri, "Japan's Aging Population Will Increase Disaster Vulnerability."
28 "Ageing With Resilience: Inclusive Climate Action for Older People in Bangladesh," HelpAge International, accessed February 4, 2025, https://www.helpage.org/news/ageing-with-resilience-inclusive-climate-action-for-older-people-in-bangladesh/.
29 Kenji Kushida, *Japan's Aging Society as a Technological Opportunity,* Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, October 2024, https://carnegieendowment.org/research/2024/10/japans-aging-society-as-a-technological-opportunity?lang=en.
30 "Vista Prairie Partners with CAREPREDICT to Improve Resident Outcomes," Subhashree, September 17, 2024, https://www.carepredict.com/press-releases/vista-prairie-partners-with-carepredict-to-improve-resident-outcomes/.
31 "Virtual Reality," ARIIA, accessed January 2, 2025, https://www.ariia.org.au/knowledge-implementation-hub/technology-in-aged-care/types-technology-aged-care/virtual-reality.
32 "Virtual Reality Therapy for Aged Care," NeuronsVR, accessed January 2, 2025, https://neuronsvr.com/.
33 NeuronsVR,"Virtual Reality Therapy for Aged Care."
34 "How virtual reality is helping parkinson's patients in rehabilitation," XR Health, accessed January 2, 2025, https://www.xr.health/virtual-reality-for-rehabilitation-in-parkinsons-disease/.
35 XR Health, "How virtual reality is helping Parkinson's patients in rehabilitation."
36 "Parkinson's Disease," Mayo Clinic, accessed January 2, 2025, https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/parkinsons-disease/symptoms-causes/syc-20376055.

help maintain treatment, while reducing the risk of falls and injuries.[37] This platform helps improve coordination, balance, and strength in a safe environment.[38]

Moreover, these new technologies may also lessen the burden on healthcare providers and give some level of autonomy back to older individuals. For example, a study was conducted using a digital therapeutic self-management system, intended to encourage compliance with hypertensive medications. Hypertensive medication is used to treat hypertension, which is otherwise known as high blood pressure. Blood pressure is the pressure of blood in the arteries, which are vessels that carry blood from the heart around the body.[39] If blood pressure is higher than recommended and left untreated, the risks of cardiovascular diseases like heart attacks and strokes increase over time.[40] Medications that help bring blood pressure back to normal are especially useful for old people, as more than half of the older population suffer from high blood pressure, with numbers steadily increasing.[41] This is because as we age, arteries naturally stiffen making us more prone to hypertension and injuries. The MEDSReM system was developed by researchers at the University of Arizona and the University of Illinois to help older people take their blood pressure medications as prescribed.[42] This system helps older people by educating them on high blood pressure and medications, supporting decision-making, reminding them to take their medications, and tracking their blood pressure.[43] Results of this study in which old people used the MEDSReM

system, showed 91 percent adherence with the use of the system compared to the initial 72.5 percent without the use of the system.[44] This highlights the promising potential of digital therapeutic systems in older adults open to using digital technologies and implementing them into their care.

On the other hand, the advances in technology have drastically changed the labor industry. The labor industry covers how jobs are created, managed and organized.[45] Technology has a promising future concerning transforming the nature of work for various demographics in different fields from agriculture and manufacturing to all industries.[46] The impact of many industries on older people is greater than on other groups. Older people working demanding jobs can face physical challenges from years of manual labor and struggle in retirement if savings are low. While less physical jobs may have more financial benefits, they use new technologies which older people still face challenges with adapting to.[47] Technology can offer psychological and physical support for older people, whether they live alone, with family, in residential communities, or in long-term care facilities.[48] Singapore, for example, has made strides in its use of technology in establishing elder-friendly cities. They have developed senior-friendly commuter infrastructures like pedestrian crossings with enhanced inclusivity features.[49] Over 1,000 pedestrian crossings in Singapore have the Green Man Plus feature, giving older people and those with disabilities up to 13 extra seconds to cross, depending on the crossing length.[50] Outreach and

37   XR Health, "How virtual reality is helping Parkinson's patients in rehabilitation."
38   XR Health, "How virtual reality is helping Parkinson's patients in rehabilitation."
39   NHS Inform, "High blood pressure (hypertension)."
40   NHS Inform, "High blood pressure (hypertension)."
41   Heng-Yu Pan, "Blood pressure targets, medication consideration and special concerns in elderly hypertension part I: General principles and special considerations," *Journal of the Formosan Medical Association,* (September 2024): https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jfma.2024.09.023.
42   Bulbul Ahmed, Ahmed A. Rahman, Sujin Lee, and Rajeev Malhtra, "The Implications of Aging on Vascular Health," *International Journal of Molecular Sciences 25,* no. 20: 11188 (October 2024): https://doi.org/10.3390/ijms252011188.
43   Stacy Al-Saleh, et al., "Translation of a Successful Behavioral Intervention to a Digital Therapeutic Self-Management System for Older Adults," *Sage Journals*, Volume 32, Issue 2, (April 2024): 5-13. https://doi.org/10.1177/10648046211066409.
44   Stacy Al-Saleh, et al., "Translation of a Successful Behavioral Intervention to a Digital Therapeutic Self-Management System for Older Adults."
45   Kenji Kushida, *Japan's Aging Society as a Technological Opportunity* (Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, October 2024), https://carnegieendowment.org/research/2024/10/japans-aging-society-as-a-technological-opportunity?lang=en.
46   Kenji Kushida, *Japan's Aging Society as a Technological Opportunity.*
47   Eleanor Butler, "Resisting retirement? Why some people want to keep working," *Euronews,* December 29, 2024, https://www.euronews.com/business/2024/12/29/resisting-retirement-why-some-people-want-to-keep-working.
48   Mariagrazia Costanzo et. al, "New technologies and assistive robotics for elderly: A review on psychological variables," *Archives of Gerontology and Geriatric Plus,* Volume 1, Issue 4, (December 2024): 1-4. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.aggp.2024.100056.
49   Chin Soo Fang, "Singapore's transport infrastructure gets more features to support people with disabilities," *The Strait Times,* September 16, 2024, https://www.straitstimes.com/singapore/singapore-s-transport-infrastructure-gets-more-features-to-support-people-with-disabilities.
50   Fang, "Singapore's transport infrastructure gets more features to support people with disabilities."

public emergency systems were also implemented to ensure the safety of the aging population.[51] These systems help reduce isolation and loneliness, by keeping them connected to their communities. They promote physical and mental well-being including educational workshops, health screenings, and assistance with navigating technology. Greater access to public transportation improves the independence and mobility of older people. It allows them to attend and access medical appointments, and social activities and run errands without relying on others. Accessible and affordable transportation can reduce the financial burden and provide a safer alternative to driving, especially for older people with vision and mobility problems.

Technologies such as home care robots, smart home apps, telemedicine, wearable monitoring devices, and assistive technologies are often labeled with Digital Healthcare and Digital Therapy.[52] This label indicates appropriate tools that allow patients and vulnerable populations with specific needs to acquire necessary coping strategies to improve their quality of life.[53] These devices help older people with specific needs like chronic illnesses and difficult managing reminders and medications. Helping them learn to use technology, digital healthcare, and digital therapy devices improves their quality of life and returns a sense of autonomy for older people. A Thai company called Computer Telephony Asia recently introduced an updated AI-powered robot called Home AI Assistance, which targets the psychological effects of the challenges that come because of the increasing aging population. Its creators noted that it may ease loneliness, stress, and anxiety among

older individuals while aiding in their medical treatment.[54] This robot serves to remind them to take their medications. It also helps to relieve stress by playing soothing music.[55] It essentially substitutes a caretaker, with features like vital signs and live patient data collections, a callback system that notifies relatives or medical personnel, and real-time monitoring via smart devices.

While technology provides many benefits, it remains costly and has privacy concerns, as well as its susceptibility to hacking.[56] As a result, countries should heed caution when utilizing AI and technology to solve challenges such as this due to their potential to threaten human rights, embed bias, and contribute to climate degradation.[57] While AI can help with climate action, it can also harm it. AI supports renewable energy, but also promotes fossil fuel exploration and encourages consumerism via targeted ads, resulting in more climate change.[58] AI can spread inaccurate information about the climate which makes it harder to address the issue.[59] If AI is not designed inclusively, it can embed bias. AI models trained on biased data can ignore the needs of vulnerable groups minimizing the effectiveness of solutions.[60] This can increase struggles in areas that are climate-sensitive and increase division in society, especially in natural disaster response and the management of resources.[61]

Governments have acknowledged these potential threats and have made calls publicly for the implementation of oversight and AI regulation systems.[62] The risks associated with these technologies are becoming clear and could worsen the harm already faced by marginalized groups. However, if used and monitored properly, technology and AI can help address

51 "We examine how innovation in technology is helping an ageing society in Singapore," *Tech Collective*, November 29, 2024, https://techcollectivesea.com/2024/11/29/innovation-technology-ageing-society-singapore/.
52 Costanzo et. al, "New technologies and assistive robotics for elderly: A review on psychological variables."
53 Costanzo et. al, "New technologies and assistive robotics for elderly: A review on psychological variables."
54 "Thailand revolutionises elderly healthcare with 'Home AI Assistance,'" *The Nation,* September 23, 2024, https://www.nationthailand.com/business/tech/40041726.
55 NHS Inform, "High blood pressure (hypertension)."
56 "Ethics of Artificial Intelligence," United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, accessed December 24, 2024, https://www.unesco.org/en/artificial-intelligence/recommendation-ethics?hub=32618.
57 United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, "Ethics of Artificial Intelligence."
58 United Nations Industrial Development Organization, *Artificial Intelligence for Climate Action in Developing Countries: Opportunities, Challenges and Risks* (Bonn: United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, 2024), https://unfccc.int/ttclear/misc_/StaticFiles/gnwoerk_static/AI4climateaction/28da5d97d7824d16b7f68a225c0e3493/a4553e8f70f74be3bc37c929b73d9974.pdf.
59 United Nations Industrial Development Organization, *Artificial Intelligence for Climate Action in Developing Countries: Opportunities, Challenges and Risks.*
60 United Nations Industrial Development Organization, *Artificial Intelligence for Climate Action in Developing Countries: Opportunities, Challenges and Risks.*
61 United Nations Industrial Development Organization, *Artificial Intelligence for Climate Action in Developing Countries: Opportunities, Challenges and Risks.*
62 Matt Sheehan, "China's Views on AI Safety Are Changing—Quickly," *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace,* August 27, 2024, https://carnegieendowment.org/research/2024/08/china-artificial-intelligence-ai-safety-regulation?lang=en.

issues related to demographic changes in Asia and the Pacific. Countries are working on solutions by involving young people in innovation competitions with rewards and opportunities to network. Competitions like the Healthy Aging Prize for Asian Innovation (HAPI), started by the Economic Research Institute for Association of Southeast Asian Nations and East Africa and the Japan Center for International Exchange are important examples.[63] They encourage creativity and ongoing improvement. These competitions also tackle global challenges, inspire future generations, and promote teamwork among people from different backgrounds. The most recent HAPI competition saw innovations that utilized technology to help older people stay safe, engaged, healthy, and active in their homes.[64] They did this by designing initiatives like nursing stations that assisted residents in navigating telehealth options. Countries must implement strategies that foster engagement and collaboration with other countries, as well as citizens. Overall, technology offers both challenges and solutions for the aging population in Asia and the Pacific. If used properly and inclusively, technology can make a big difference in improving the health and protection of older people.

Conclusion

The aging population in Asia and the Pacific faces special challenges that are being addressed through a combination of community-driven efforts and innovative technology. Examples like VR systems created to help older people relive positive experiences and home robots providing companionship reveal how technology is transforming the way we care for the older population. Also, community-based initiatives like youth programs that monitor the health of older people in the neighborhood showcase the importance of collaboration between generations in addressing the issue of population aging. These strategies improve the quality of life for older people and reveal the value of using both technology and connection to develop meaningful solutions.

At the same time, natural disasters present large risks to older individuals, as seen in the case of the 68-year-old woman who tragically lost her life in a landslide following Typhoon Yagi. Events like Typhoon Yagi, which caused widespread damage and led to a drastic increase in grocery prices, further emphasize the economic vulnerability of older individuals. These natural disasters threaten the safety and well-being of older people and exacerbate existing issues like limited mobility and poverty. Efforts like the Green Man Plus feature in Singapore, which allows people with disabilities and older people extra time to cross the street, illustrate how small but thoughtful innovations can make a big difference in improving accessibility and safety for older people.

These examples show the complex link between natural disasters and population aging in the Asia and Pacific region. They highlight the need for more investment in technologies, natural disaster preparedness, and support systems focused on older people. If this issue is not addressed soon, the demographic changes in Asia and the Pacific could lead to long term issues. High burdens from the cost of social programs and retirement funds could bankrupt countries. Countries like Japan are seeing its economy stagnate and changes need to be made to avoid a crisis. Elderly individuals also lack a lot of support that they need. Any positive progress made towards making life safer and easier for elderly individuals would go a long way. By using versatile solutions, organizations, governments, and communities can help ensure the older population in the Asia and Pacific region lives healthier, safer, and more fulfilling lives despite challenges.
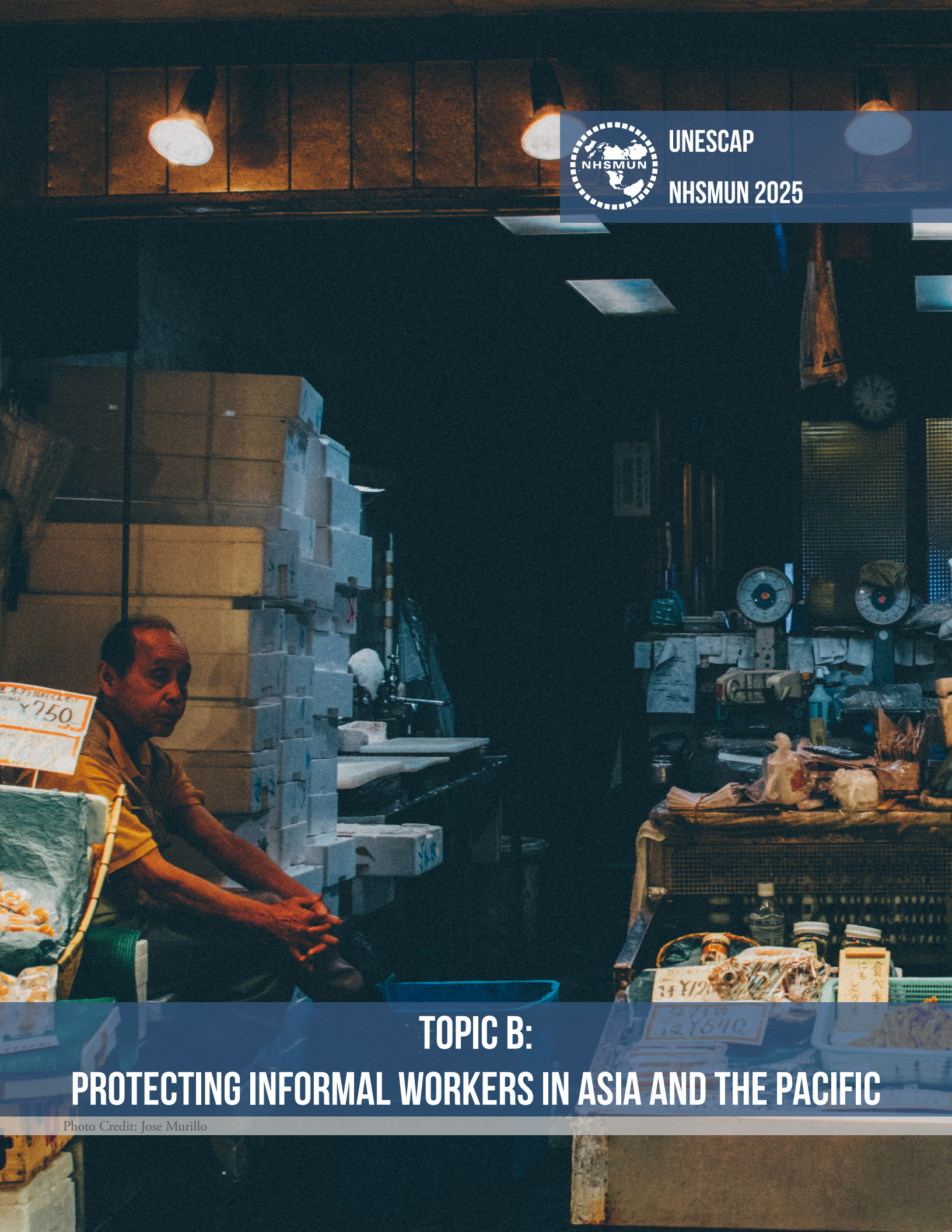
---

63 Japan Center for International Exchange, "Winners of 2024 Healthy Aging Prize for Asian Innovation Announced," news release, October 1, 2024, https://jcie.org/programs/healthy-aging/healthy-and-active-aging-in-asia/winners-of-2024-healthy-prize-for-asian-innovation-announced/.
64 Japan Center for International Exchange, "Winners of 2024 Healthy Aging Prize for Asian Innovation Announced."

TOPIC B:
PROTECTING INFORMAL WORKERS IN ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

Introduction

Rights for informal workers in Asia and the Pacific remain a big issue. Over 1.3 billion informal workers live in this region.[1] This makes up 66 percent of the workforce. As an informal worker, many of them work in places that are not overseen by the government. This means that employers do not need to follow most labor laws in their country. Many informal workers keep facing rights violations and job loss. The Asia Pacific region is heavily affected because of the large number of domestic workers and street vendors.[2] Most countries in this region are also developing economies. That means most jobs are still transitioning from informal and agricultural jobs to more industrial jobs. As a result, most informal workers are working these jobs because these are the most common ones where they live. These factors make it difficult for governments to easily address the abuses in informal work. The government can only oversee so many jobs and professions. If most jobs are still in ones that the government cannot directly oversee, then it's much more difficult to increase regulation through more laws.

Recently, the Asia-Pacific forum has started talks about changes in informal work. These talks have led to more teamwork between governments and workers. The goal is to help workers move to formal jobs. As the economy grows, more jobs are beginning to open in manufacturing. Yet, workers still need to learn how to work in these new jobs, and how to apply for them. New industrial jobs mean more complexity and the need to retrain workers to fill these roles. Forum members also said new laws must consider today's challenges, like climate change.[3] The forum plans to lead talks at the 2025 International Labour Conference. They stressed the need to break down barriers to formal jobs. They also discussed using digital tools to fix problems in specific sectors. The forum also called for better enforcement of current laws to protect workers. They also pushed for shared goals among countries in the region.[4] With most of the world's informal workers in Asia and the Pacific, cooperation and quick solutions are needed.

The informal sector supports many families but also creates problems. It has barriers to sustainable practices and better worker rights.[5] Solutions must balance improving workers' lives and connecting informal and formal economies. As the Asia-Pacific region continues to grow, delegates will need to consider the impacts of climate change on workers. Changing climates and more devastating natural disasters could make the local economy riskier. Working conditions for informal workers also need to be improved as climate change makes conditions more difficult for workers. Labor rights and advocacy movements will also play a big role in how informal workers view their relationships with their employers. These factors only play a small role in the overall labor situation in the region. Global economics also plays a role as companies shift production of goods to lesser developed countries in the Asia Pacific region. There are also cultural differences that define the work culture of the region. What may seem to be common sense regulations in western industrialized countries may be completely foreign to a developing economy. Delegates will need to consider all these factors and create long lasting solutions.

1 International Labor Organization, "Asia-Pacific forum drives efforts to formalize informal economy, addresses climate impact on vulnerable workers," *International Labor Organization*, December 11, 2024, https://www.ilo.org/resource/news/asia-pacific-forum-drives-efforts-formalize-informal-economy-addresses.
2 International Labor Organization, "Asia-Pacific forum drives efforts to formalize informal economy, addresses climate impact on vulnerable workers."
3 International Labor Organization, "Asia-Pacific forum drives efforts to formalize informal economy, addresses climate impact on vulnerable workers."
4 "Sixth Asia-Pacific Directors General Forum for South-South and Triangular Cooperation," Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), accessed January 15, 2025, https://www.unescap.org/events/2024/sixth-asia-pacific-directors-general-forum-south-south-and-triangular-cooperation.
5 International Labor Organization, "Asia-Pacific forum drives efforts to formalize informal economy, addresses climate impact on vulnerable workers."

Climate Change and Informal Work

Climate change has remained a pressing issue around the world as temperatures continue to rise and typical weather patterns are disrupted. Since 1901, the average surface temperature has risen at a rate of 0.17 degrees Fahrenheit per decade, leading 2023 to be the warmest year on record.[6] The Asia-Pacific region is vast, containing land covered in mountains and islands surrounded by water. The diverse nature of these lands paired with issues like rising sea levels, the climate crisis has thickened. Heat stress, flooding, and other environmental threats have put workers' mental and physical well-being at risk.[7] Workers have been subjected to their crops and agriculture needed for business growth being ruined, causing workers income and therefore mental health to decrease. This has further led to workers losing their homes and shelter, proving detrimental to their physical well-being in the long term.[8] The change in climate has also affected agriculture in many states which, in-turn, has caused food insecurity numbers to arise. This issue is exacerbated by the lack of strong social protection systems and poverty cycles. Furthermore, there has been little progress made on SDGs in the Asia-Pacific region which has caused setbacks in the progression of laws even more. In particular, the Nationally Determined Contributions in Asia-Pacific region is likely not going to meet the target to limit global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius and achieve net-zero emissions by 2050 which interferes with the progress of SDG 13.[9] SDG 13 calls for urgent action to combat climate change. The region is also highly dependent on coal and fossil fuels with coal accounting for 48 percent and oil accounting for 23 percent of the region's total energy supply. CO2 emissions in the region have also increased by 30 percent from 2000 to 2022 and are projected to continue increasing.[10] One of the main barriers that the region is facing in transitioning entirely to a low-carbon economy is that it will lead to a loss in jobs.[11] With over 32 million workers, both informal and formal, depending on the fossil fuel sector to maintain their economic stability,

6   "Climate Change Indicators: U.S. and Global Temperature," EPA, accessed January 1, 2025, https://www.epa.gov/climate-indicators/climate-change-indicators-us-and-global-temperature.

7   "From climate crises to climate justice: Securing a Just Transition for Asia-Pacific's workers and communities," International Trade Union Confederation-Asia Pacific, accessed December 19, 2024, https://www.ituc-ap.org/resources/from-climate-crisis-to-climate-justice-securing-a-just-transition-for-asia-pacifics-workers-and-communities?.

8   International Trade Union Confederation-Asia Pacific, "From climate crises to climate justice: Securing a Just Transition for Asia-Pacific's workers and communities."

9   International Trade Union Confederation-Asia Pacific, "From climate crises to climate justice: Securing a Just Transition for Asia-Pacific's workers and communities."

10   World Energy Employment 2022, "Executive Summary."

11   World Energy Employment 2022, "Executive Summary."

The Vaigai river during monsoon season in Southern India

Credit: Sundaram Perumal

these changes can perpetuate cycles of economic hardship.[12]

As this issue affects more and more workers around the world, experts are beginning to observe its unique effects on vulnerable populations. One of the most notable populations is informal workers. Satchit Balsari, an associate progressor in Emergency Medicine at Harvard Medical School, has been conducting an in-depth study on the effects of local health and environmental crises on informal workers in India for the last two decades.[13] He revealed the results of this study in an interview with Keith Forman, associate of the Harvard Advanced Leadership Institute. Balsari speaks about the salt pan workers of the Little Rann of Kutch in Dubai. These workers were affected by a weather phenomenon that flooded Dubai. The rain had wiped out the salt that had been raked for six months and cultivated for the salt pans, which were also demolished by the flood. This caused a loss of labor for over fifteen thousand families, leaving these families in up to $4,000 in debt each.[14] Due to the lack of social protections such as social security or government assistance afforded to informal workers, these families had to absorb this financial burden. This caused larger issues like displacement of their homes and overall livelihoods. Balsari explained that this climate disaster, paired with the lack of social protections perpetuated the everyday struggles of informal workers in Asia. In addition to the short-term effects of climate change, workers in the region have also faced loss of wages due to the rising temperatures. When it is too hot to work, many businesses shut down or lose a significant amount of their consumers which causes a significant loss in income.[15] Balsari explains that many workers live paycheck-to-paycheck and lose out on a meal every day that they are unable to work.

The Self Employed Women's Association (SEWA) in India launched the world's first heat insurance product in 1984.[16] The product was launched with the goal of decreasing the impact of health problems brought about by heatwaves to informal workers.[17] The product helped generate awareness about the danger of heat waves and gave an affordable alternative to traditional insurance for the first time.[18] Working with the Climate Resilience Center and Climate Resilience for All, they have developed a product that can pay daily wage earners with a certain heat threshold. However, there have proven to be many gaps in this initiative. These include not establishing an exact temperature for the heat threshold, the duration of the heat exposure, and the types of work that qualify for this payment. Gaps like this exist in the broader law of many of the countries in the Asia-Pacific region and are specifications that need to be rectified for climate change and worker security to be attainable in the region.[19] Balsari also introduces recent issues relating to the Monsoon season in India. Monsoon season in India typically runs during the summer months and signifies a change in the wind patterns causing extreme amounts of heavy rains. He explains that extreme rains, that typically occur during the summer months, have been sporadic throughout the year for the past two years.[20] These rains have had significant negative effects on agriculture and have inversely led to increased farmer suicide rates.[21] With farmers in India working around the clock, and often owning small amounts of land to provide for their families, these rain showers become detrimental to the progression of their crop cycles.[22] The burden of being unable to adequately provide for their families or themselves has led to suicide or self-harm which often goes unnoticed. There exists protective equipment to help prevent the farmers'

12 "Executive Summary," World Energy Employment 2022, accessed January 1, 2025, https://www.iea.org/reports/world-energy-employment-2022/executive-summary ; "From climate crises to climate justice: Securing a Just Transition for Asia-Pacific's workers and communities," International Trade Union Confederation-Asia Pacific, accessed December 19, 2024, https://www.ituc-ap.org/resources/from-climate-crisis-to-climate-justice-securing-a-just-transition-for-asia-pacifics-workers-and-communities?
13 Forman, "Resilience in Action: Empowering India's Informal Workers Through Crisis and Adaptation."
14 Forman, "Resilience in Action: Empowering India's Informal Workers Through Crisis and Adaptation."
15 Forman, "Resilience in Action: Empowering India's Informal Workers Through Crisis and Adaptation."
16 IndustriALL, "SEWA India provides members with heat wave insurance", *IndustriALL*, July 16, 2024, https://www.industriall-union.org/sewa-india-provides-members-with-heat-wave-insurance.
17 IndustriALL, "SEWA India provides members with heat wave insurance."
18 IndustriALL, "SEWA India provides members with heat wave insurance."
19 Keith Forman, "Resilience in Action: Empowering India's Informal Workers Through Crisis and Adaptation," *Harvard Advanced Leadership Initiative Social Impact Review*, November 26, 2024, https://www.sir.advancedleadership.harvard.edu/articles/resilience-action-empowering-indias-informal-workers-through-crisis-adaptation.
20 Forman, "Resilience in Action: Empowering India's Informal Workers Through Crisis and Adaptation."
21 Forman, "Resilience in Action: Empowering India's Informal Workers Through Crisis and Adaptation."
22 Forman, "Resilience in Action: Empowering India's Informal Workers Through Crisis and Adaptation."

crops from getting damaged from the water. However, these materials are typically high in cost and don't reach the people who need it most.[23]

Climate change greatly affects informal work in Asia and the Pacific. High temperatures, weak laws, and limited resources aggravates the problem.[24] Countries closer to the equator in the region face the biggest challenges. Seasonal monsoons and wet seasons will only become more severe as the globe warms. With agriculture still such a big industry in the region, it will only get worse for farmers. To address this, leaders should create climate initiatives that support workers. Solutions need to focus on making life and costs easier for farmers so that climate change doesn't ruin their work. These efforts should also align with sustainable development goals.

Labor Rights and Advocacy Movements

Informal workers are excluded from labor laws altogether and the laws that exist limit the protections that are afforded to them and contain loopholes.[25] One of the main barriers that informal workers face is their lack of ability to form workers unions.[26] Workers unions help create a fairer economy and benefit many demographic groups. They encourage healthy wage practices and help reduce major gaps in gender and race.[27] This barrier has caused human rights violations to go unnoticed and, in the past, has decreased the amount of awareness that has surrounded these issues. Workers also face issues like being excluded from social protection laws which makes them scared to assemble or protest for their rights.[28] Labor law provides legal frameworks for workplace rights, providing stronger protections for workers to go by.

This includes the right to form unions and bargain for better wages and benefits. These laws are specific to work-related issues and give workers an opportunity to improve their workplace conditions and experiences. On the other hand, human rights laws are broad principles, often inflicted upon a region or whole country that allow for public participation, assembly, and awareness. Human rights laws don't specifically intersect with labor and work like labor laws do. The issue with this is that many governments treat human rights laws as a replacement to labor laws. While human rights laws are important to the social advocacy of the issue, they do not represent the direct pathways that workers can take to their employers to establish better working conditions and protection. These two types of law must work together to adequately protect workers. Currently, all informal workers don't have the ability to unionize, however due to the lack of labor laws, workers don't have proper civic spaces and don't have access to civil society organizations.[29] This emphasizes the need for labor laws to be created for each country and human rights law to be valued to the same effect.

The lack of social security is a big problem in Thailand. Article 40 of Thailand's Social Security Fund (SSF 40) allows self-employed and informal workers to join the system by making regular payments.[30] This provision, introduced in 1990, gives workers access to benefits even if they aren't in traditional jobs.[31] A recent brief examined the benefits and issues with SSF 40. Benefits include income support during sickness or injury and financial security in old age. Many workers said the program was easy to use because it offered multiple ways to register, both online and in person. Despite its advantages, SSF 40 has problems. About 96 percent of self-employed workers in Thailand are still uninsured.[32] Since the program

23 Forman, "Resilience in Action: Empowering India's Informal Workers Through Crisis and Adaptation."
24 International Trade Union Confederation-Asia Pacific, "From climate crises to climate justice: Securing a Just Transition for Asia-Pacific's workers and communities."
25 Allison Corkery, "Labour Rights are Human Rights! Beyond the Slogan for Workers in Informal Employment", *Women in Informal Employment: Globalizing and Organizing,* December 9, 2024, https://www.wiego.org/blog/labour-rights-are-human-rights-beyond-the-slogan-for-workers-in-informal-employment/
26 Corkery, "Labour Rights are Human Rights! Beyond the Slogan for Workers in Informal Employment."
27 Joyce B. Robinson, "The Importance of Labor Unions," APWU, last modified August 26, 2024, https://apwu.org/news/magazine/importance-labor-unions.
28 Corkery, "Labour Rights are Human Rights! Beyond the Slogan for Workers in Informal Employment."
29 Corkery, "Labour Rights are Human Rights! Beyond the Slogan for Workers in Informal Employment."
30 Acclime, "Social Security in Thailand: Explained."
31 "Social Security in Thailand: Explained," Acclime, accessed January 1, 2025, https://thailand.acclime.com/guides/social-security-explained/
32 Acclime, "Social Security in Thailand: Explained."

is voluntary, many workers don't know it exists and don't sign up. The government has improved registration options, like opening an online portal, but it hasn't run awareness campaigns to inform workers about the program.[33] Respondents also reported issues with transparency, such as no access to their financial history and delays in claiming benefits. The brief suggested changes like providing annual financial updates and speeding up the benefit process. These suggestions show the importance of worker advocacy and their involvement in solutions.

Beyond Thailand, many Asia-Pacific countries lack social security systems, even for formal workers. Barriers include cultural, social, and financial constraints. In Afghanistan and Uzbekistan, traditions of family reliance reduce the need for formal protections. This means most family members try to provide support to each other. Family members will also live near each other which makes providing mutual assistance much easier. Cultural norms in these countries also discourage women from working, making many women hesitant to engage with government programs.[34] More culturally conservative countries also prohibit women from engaging in errands outside of the house. However, it is not always about making

sure people have access to social services. In Cambodia, the National Social Security Fund faces funding shortages, requiring workers to pay fees to enroll. Without proper support from the government, the Fund needs to charge the people it serves. This runs counter-intuitive to the original purpose of the Security Fund. These extra costs discourage informal workers from joining. These barriers highlight the need for programs like SSF 40 across the region. Expanding such programs can help protect informal workers and reduce inequality.

While Asia-Pacific economies began to modernize and industrialize, something must be done for the informal jobs that are lost to technology. For many labor activists, a just transition is a major issue that is often overlooked in growing economies. A just transition is where the government implements solutions to help informal workers continue to have work while learning new skills for new jobs. This serves as a social safety net for workers who need time to learn new skills. Solutions exist like in the Philippines where public works projects have been very effective. Public works projects have been a major employer of many informal workers looking to get better pay and more protections.[35] This has been very
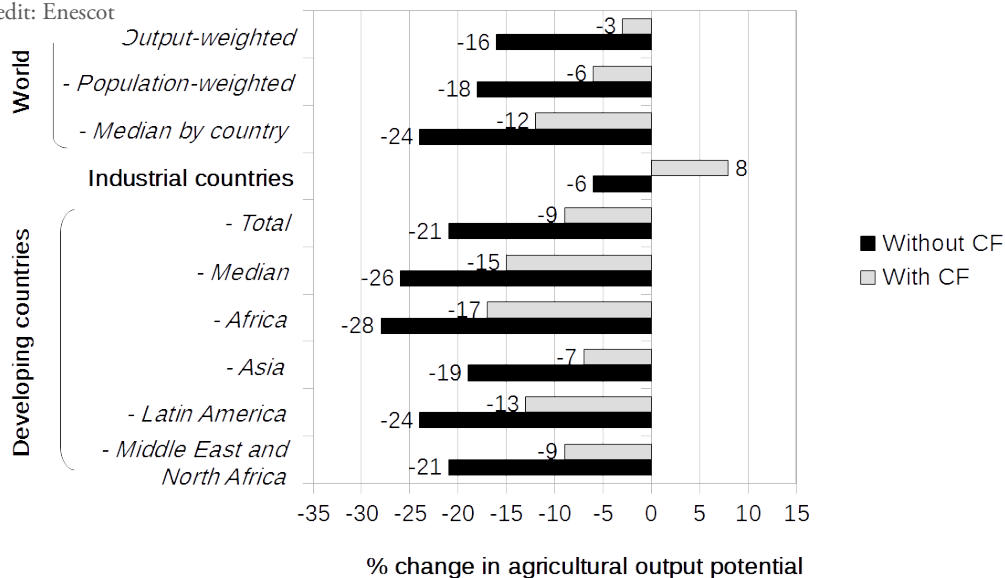
---

33 Wichaya Komin et al, "'I Want to be Protected': Experiences and Perspectives of Informal Workers on Social Security in Thailand," *Women in Informal Employment Globalizing and Organizing,* no. 31 (February 2024): 1 https://www.wiego.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/wiego-policy-brief-n31-bangkok.pdf
34 International Social Security Association, "Social security reforms in Arab countries in the Middle East."
35 United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, "The Right Policies Can Protect the Workers of Asia and

Expected effect of climate change on agricultural productivity with and without carbon fertilization (CF)

Credit: Enescot

% change in agricultural output potential

effective since informal workers do not need a lot of training for these jobs. Most of them are construction and other simple labor jobs. This provides a strong pathway for informal workers to get the labor protections they need while getting job security.[36] These jobs also help developing economies expand their infrastructure and economy. In India, just transitions are being advocated for many waste pickers and sorters.[37] For many jobs like waste picking and deconstruction, a just transition to a higher skilled job is essential. This is because many of these manual labor jobs don't have many transferable skills. For some of these jobs, the solution is to turn them into a public utility and have the government take over on managing these roles. For other jobs, the government will need to help workers find temporary jobs where they can learn skills. Education can also be subsidized for these workers.[38] Trade schools will need to be funded to help accommodate the increase in students from informal jobs.

As delegates work through finding solutions to increase the rights for informal workers, they are encouraged to assess them on a state-to-state level. It is very important for them to address the different rights violations considering that labor law and human rights law must work together for comprehensive change to be made. Additionally, there is room for the government to play a big role in protecting informal workers. This comes in the form of both increased regulation and skills training. Without the government, it will be very difficult for informal workers to find the support they need. Humanitarian and support organizations can only do so much. However, it is the government that can make sure businesses and employers follow regulations and protect labor rights. Lastly, a just transition is especially important for informal workers. As economies modernize and new investments come into the Asia-Pacific region, the job market will change. Higher skilled jobs will be available while manual informal jobs start to decrease. Training and more resources need to be provided to informal workers.[39] While it may be expensive in the short term, governments can see significant increases in their economy by supporting workers. Doing so will serve as a long-term investment in the future economic strength of the country.

Conclusion

The issue of rights for informal workers in Asia and the Pacific is complex. It ties to global problems like climate change and social advocacy.[40] Although the focus is on the region, global issues play a big role. Climate change, for example, affects jobs worldwide and is hard to solve alone. Many countries in the Asia-Pacific region lack resources, so delegates must use them wisely.[41] They should also work together internationally and empower workers to raise awareness and push for action.

Climate change has a big impact on informal workers, especially in this region. Agriculture, a key sector, has been hit hard by rising carbon emissions.[42] Many Asia-Pacific member states have seen drops in crop production, leading to income loss and lower quality of life.[43] Social protections for informal workers are still missing in many Asia-Pacific countries. Countries like Thailand and Cambodia have social security funds that help some workers, but these programs have gaps.[44] This leaves workers affected by climate change vulnerable to poor living conditions, therefore they need to keep improving. Long term solutions are also needed. By planning for the future, Asia-Pacific countries can prevent any issues as informal jobs decrease. A just transition for informal

the Pacific," ESCAP, accessed January 25, 2025, https://www.unescap.org/op-ed/right-policies-can-protect-workers-asia-and-pacific.
36   United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, "The Right Policies Can Protect the Workers of Asia and the Pacific,"
37   Nalini Shekar and Geetanjali Sharma, "A Just Transition for Asia's Waste Pickers," Thediplomat.com (The Diplomat, November 1, 2024), https://thediplomat.com/2024/11/a-just-transition-for-asias-waste-pickers/.
38   Shekar and Sharma, "A Just Transition for Asia's Waste Pickers,"
39   Shekar and Sharma, "A Just Transition for Asia's Waste Pickers,"
40   International Trade Union Confederation-Asia Pacific, "From climate crises to climate justice: Securing a Just Transition for Asia-Pacific's workers and communities." ; Acclime, "Social Security in Thailand: Explained."
41   Corkery, "Labour Rights are Human Rights! Beyond the Slogan for Workers in Informal Employment."
42   Environmental Protection Agency, "Climate Change Indicators," US EPA, accessed February 10, 2025, https://www.epa.gov/climate-indicators.
43   Forman, "Resilience in Action: Empowering India's Informal Workers Through Crisis and Adaptation."
44   Acclime, "Social Security in Thailand: Explained" ; International Labor Organization, "Assessment of the Cambodian National Social Security Fund's health insurance schemes."

workers is needed to help prevent social unrest and protests. That way, people will continue to be employed and support their families.

Most Asia-Pacific countries also lack the infrastructure, leadership, and funding to support informal workers. This has worsened inequality across the region. Case studies from countries like India, Thailand, Cambodia, and Afghanistan show where these systems fail. They also highlight the value of stronger protections for informal workers. Climate change and human rights are complex but urgent issues. They will shape the future of Asia-Pacific economies, societies, and overall well-being. These problems need immediate attention and action. However, some progress has been made. The Philippines has shown that governments can become a temporary employer as it helps informal workers find better jobs. Support systems for these workers exist. The only barrier to them is the short-term cost of funding these solutions. Governments, international organizations, and leaders must work together to protect informal workers from global issues. Cooperation between nations is key to building stronger economies and addressing these crises at their roots. Countries must commit to funding programs, supporting informal workers with social security and investing in sustainable solutions.

Works Cited

Topic A

UN Sources

Alisjahbana, Armida. "Asia-Pacific Regional Conference on Population Ageing: Reframing Aging." *ESCAP*. September 11, 2024. https://unescap.org/speeches/asia-pacific-regional-conference-population-ageing-reframing-aging.

UNESCAP. "Resilience Rising: Targeting Transformative Disaster Risk Reduction in Asia-Pacific Subregions." Accessed February 3, 2025. https://www.unescap.org/blog/resilience-rising-targeting-transformative-disaster-risk-reduction-asia-pacific-subregions.

OCHA. "Asia and the Pacific." Accessed February 3, 2025. https://www.unocha.org/asia-and-pacific.

The Office of the United Nations Resident Coordinator in Viet Nam. *Viet Nam: Typhoon Yagi and Floods - Situation Update No. 5 (as of 23 October 2024)*. Hanoi: The Office of the United Nations Resident Coordinator in Viet Nam, October 2024. https://reliefweb.int/report/viet-nam/viet-nam-typhoon-yagi-and-floods-situation-update-no-5-23-october-2024.

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. "Ethics of Artificial Intelligence." Accessed December 24, 2024. https://www.unesco.org/en/artificial-intelligence/recommendation-ethics?hub=32618.

United Nations Industrial Development Organization. *Artificial Intelligence for Climate Action in Developing Countries: Opportunities, Challenges and Risks*. Bonn: United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, 2024. https://unfccc.int/ttclear/misc_/StaticFiles/gnwoerk_static/AI4climateaction/28da5d97d7824d16b7f68a225c0e3493/a4553e8f70f74be3bc37c929b73d9974.pdf.

United Nations Viet Nam. *Joint Response Plan Typhoon Yago and Floods*. Hanoi: UNOCHA, 2024. https://vietnam.un.org/en/279852-joint-response-plan-typhoon-yagi-and-floods-viet-nam.

World Food Programme. "WFP flies critical supplies and personnel to earthquake hit Vanuatu." News release, December 21, 2024. https://www.wfp.org/news/wfp-flies-critical-supplies-and-personnel-earthquake-hit-vanuatu

Non-UN Sources

AGE. "Insights From DANA Floods: Older People as Key Actors in Fostering Resilience Against Climate Disasters." Accessed February 2, 2025. https://www.age-platform.eu/insights-from-dana-floods-older-people-as-key-actors-in-fostering-resilience-against-climate-disasters/.

Ahmed, Bulbul, Ahmed A. Rahman, Sujin Lee, and Rajeev Malhotra. "The Implications of Aging on Vascular Health." *International Journal of Molecular Sciences* 25, no. 20: 11188 (October 2024): https://doi.org/10.3390/ijms252011188.

Al Omari, Sarah, Stephen J. McCall, Layal Hneiny, and Abla Mehio Sibai. "Health and Well-being of Older Populations Affected by Humanitarian Crises in Low- and Middle-income Countries: A Scoping Review of Peer-reviewed Literature." *Conflict and Health* 18, no. 1 (December 4, 2024). https://doi.org/10.1186/s13031-024-00626-0.

Al-Saleh, Stacy, Jeannie K. Lee, Wendy A. Rogers, and Kathleen C. Insel. "Translation of a Successful Behavioral Intervention to a Digital Therapeutic Self-Management System for Older Adults." *Sage Journals* Volume 32, Issue 2 (April 2024): 5-13. https://doi.org/10.1177/10648046211066409.

ANKORA. "China Records Highest Number of Floods in 2024, Impacting Millions." January 8, 2025. https://www.aa.com.tr/en/asia-pacific/china-records-highest-number-of-floods-in-2024-impacting-millions/3445010.

ARIIA. "Virtual Reality." Accessed January 2, 2025. https://www.ariia.org.au/knowledge-implementation-hub/technology-in-aged-care/types-technology-aged-care/virtual-reality.

Balikuddembe, Joseph Kimuli, Yafang Zheng, Don Eliseo Lucero Prisno, and Robert Stodden. "Impact of Climate-induced

Floods and Typhoons on Geriatric Disabling Health Among Older Chinese and Filipinos: A Cross-country Systematic Review." *BMC Geriatrics* 24, no. 1 (April 5, 2024). https://doi.org/10.1186/s12877-024-04855-z.

Butler, Eleanor. "Resisting retirement? Why some people want to keep working." *euronews*. December 29, 2024. https://www.euronews.com/business/2024/12/29/resisting-retirement-why-some-people-want-to-keep-working.

Costanzo, Mariagrazia, Rossana Smeriglio, and Santo Di Nuovo. "New technologies and assistive robotics for elderly: A review on psychological variables." *Archives of Gerontology and Geriatric Plus* Volume 1, Issue 4 (December 2024): 1-4. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.aggp.2024.100056.

Environmental Protection Agency. "Climate Change and the Health of Older Adults." Accessed January 2, 2025. https://www.epa.gov/climateimpacts/climate-change-and-health-older-adults.

Fang, Chin Soo. "Singapore's transport infrastructure gets more features to support people with disabilities." *The Strait Times*. September 16, 2024. *https://www.straitstimes.com/singapore/singapore-s-transport-infrastructure-gets-more-features-to-support-people-with-disabilities.*

Heanoy, Eamin Z., and Norman R. Brown. "Impact of Natural Disasters on Mental Health: Evidence and Implications." *Healthcare* 12, no. 18 (September 10, 2024). https://doi.org/10.3390/healthcare12181812.

HelpAge International. "Ageing With Resilience: Inclusive Climate Action for Older People in Bangladesh," Accessed February 4, 2025. https://www.helpage.org/news/ageing-with-resilience-inclusive-climate-action-for-older-people-in-bangladesh/.

Japan Center for International Exchange. "Winners of 2024 Healthy Aging Prize for Asian Innovation Announced." news release, October 1, 2024. https://jcie.org/programs/healthy-aging/healthy-and-active-aging-in-asia/winners-of-2024-healthy-aging-prize-for-asian-innovation-announced/.

Kushida, Kenji. Japan's Aging Society as a Technological Opportunity. Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, October 2024. https://carnegieendowment.org/research/2024/10/japans-aging-society-as-a-technological-opportunity?lang=en.

Magramo, Kathleen. "Typhoon Yagi: Asia's most powerful storm submerges parts of Vietnam and Thailand." CNN, September 13, 2024. https://edition.cnn.com/2024/09/13/asia/typhoon-yagi-most-powerful-storm-photos-intl-hnk/index.html.

Mayo Clinic. "Parkinson's Disease." Accessed January 2, 2025. https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/parkinsons-disease/symptoms-causes/syc-20376055.

Ministry of Climate Change, Environment and Energy. *Maldives' First Biennial Transparency Report To The UNFCCC Under The Paris Agreement.* Male': Ministry of Climate Change, Environment and Energy, November 2024. https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/MDV-BTR%201-Nov2024.pdf.

NeuronsVR."Virtual Reality Therapy for Aged Care." Accessed January 2, 2024. https://neuronsvr.com/.

Nguyen Hanh, Vu. "Impact of Typhoon Yagi on Vietnam: Economic Damage and Recovery Efforts." *Vietnam Briefing.* September 18, 2024. https://www.vietnam-briefing.com/news/impact-of-typhoon-yagi-on-vietnam-economic-damage-and-recovery-efforts.html/.

NHS inform. "High blood pressure (hypertension)." Accessed January 2, 2025. https://www.nhsinform.scot/illnesses-and-conditions/cardiovascular-disease/risk-factors-for-cardiovascular-disease/high-blood-pressure-hypertension/. Polleri, Maxime. "Japan's Aging Population Will Increase Disaster Vulnerability." *The Diplomat*, January 22, 2024. https://thediplomat.com/2024/01/japans-aging-population-will-increase-disaster-vulnerability/.

Pan, Heng-Yu. "Blood pressure targets, medication consideration and special concerns in elderly hypertension part I: General principles and special considerations." *Journal of the Formosan Medical Association,* (September 2024): https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jfma.2024.09.023.

Reuters. "At least eight killed as super typhoon struck Philippines." *Reuters*. November 18, 2024. https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/least-eight-killed-super-typhoon-struck-philippines-2024-11-18/.

Ritchie, Hannah, Pablo Rosado, and Max Roser. "Natural Disasters." *Our World in Data.* December 7, 2022. https://ourworldindata.org/natural-disasters.

Sheehan, Matt. "China's Views on AI Safety Are Changing—Quickly." Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. August 27, 2024. https://carnegieendowment.org/research/2024/08/china-artificial-intelligence-ai-safety-regulation?lang=en.

Subhashree. "Vista Prairie Partners with CAREPREDICT to Improve Resident Outcomes." News release, September 17, 2024. https://www.carepredict.com/press-releases/vista-prairie-partners-with-carepredict-to-improve-resident-outcomes/.

Tech Collective. "We examine how innovation in technology is helping an ageing society in Singapore." Tech Collective. November 29, 2024. https://techcollectivesea.com/2024/11/29/innovation-technology-ageing-society-singapore/.

The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies. "Millions affected as Super Typhoon Yagi hits Vietnam." News release, September 13, 2024. https://www.ifrc.org/press-release/millions-affected-super-typhoon-yagi-hits-vietnam.

The Nation. "Thailand revolutionises elderly healthcare with 'Home AI Assistance.'" September 23, 2024. https://www.nationthailand.com/business/tech/40041726.

The Royal Society. "13. How Does Climate Change Affect the Strength and Frequency of Floods, Droughts, Hurricanes, and Tornadoes?" Accessed January 2, 2025. https://royalsociety.org/news-resources/projects/climate-change-evidence-causes/question-13/.

XR health. "How virtual reality is helping Parkinson's patients in rehabilitation." Accessed January 2, 2025, https://www.xr.health/virtual-reality-for-rehabilitation-in-parkinsons-disease/.

Topic B

UN Sources

Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP). "Sixth Asia-Pacific Directors General Forum for South-South and Triangular Cooperation." Accessed January 15, 2025. https://www.unescap.org/events/2024/sixth-asia-pacific-directors-general-forum-south-south-and-triangular-cooperation.

https://www.ilo.org/publications/assessment-cambodian-national-social-security-funds-health-insurance.

International Labor Organization. "Asia-Pacific forum drives efforts to formalize informal economy, addresses climate impact on vulnerable workers." International Labor Organization. December 11, 2024. https://www.ilo.org/resource/news/asia-pacific-forum-drives-efforts-formalize-informal-ec

International Labor Organization. "Assessment of the Cambodian National Social Security Fund's health insurance schemes,." *International Labor Organization.* March 19, 2024.

United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific. "The Right Policies Can Protect the Workers of Asia and the Pacific." ESCAP. Accessed January 25, 2025. https://www.unescap.org/op-ed/right-policies-can-protect-workers-asia-and-pacific.

Non-UN Sources

Acclime. "Social Security in Thailand: Explained." Accessed January 1, 2025. https://thailand.acclime.com/guides/social-security-explained/.

Corkery, Allison. "Labour Rights are Human Rights! Beyond the Slogan for Workers in Informal Employment." Women in Informal Employment: Globalizing and Organizing. December 9, 2024. https://www.wiego.org/blog/labour-rights-are-human-rights-beyond-the-slogan-for-workers-in-informal-employment/

Environmental Protection Agency. "Climate Change Indicators." US EPA. Accessed February 10, 2025. https://www.epa.gov/climate-indicators.

Forman, Keith. "Resilience in Action: Empowering India's Informal Workers Through Crisis and Adaptation." Harvard Advanced Leadership Initiative Social Impact Review. November 26, 2024. https://www.sir.advancedleadership.harvard.edu/articles/resilience-action-empowering-indias-informal-workers-through-crisis-adaptation

IndustriALL. "SEWA India provides members with heat wave insurance." IndustriALL. July 16, 2024. https://www.industriall-union.org/sewa-india-provides-members-with-heat-wave-insurance.

International Social Security Association. "Social security reforms in Arab countries in the Middle East." *International Social Security Association*. October 29, 2024. https://www.issa.int/analysis/social-security-reforms-arab-countries-middle-east

International Trade Union Confederation-Asia Pacific. "From climate crises to climate justice: Securing a Just Transition for Asia-Pacific's workers and communities." Accessed December 19, 2024. https://www.ituc-ap.org/resources/from-climate-crisis-to-climate-justice-securing-a-just-transition-for-asia-pacifics-workers-and-communities?

Komin, Wichaya et al. "'I Want to be Protected': Experiences and Perspectives of Informal Workers on Social Security in Thailand." Women in Informal Employment Globalizing and Organizing, no. 31 (February 2024): 1-12. https://www.wiego.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/wiego-policy-brief-n31-bangkok.pdf

Robinson, B. Joyce. "The Importance of Labor Unions." APWU. Last modified August 26, 2024. https://apwu.org/news/magazine/importance-labor-unions

Shekar, Nalini, and Geetanjali Sharma. "A Just Transition for Asia's Waste Pickers." Thediplomat.com. The Diplomat, November 1, 2024. https://thediplomat.com/2024/11/a-just-transition-for-asias-waste-pickers/.

World Energy Employment 2022. "Executive Summary." Accessed January 1, 2025. https://www.iea.org/reports/world-energy-employment-2022/executive-summary

The National High School Model United Nations Conference (NHSMUN) is a project of IMUNA, a non-profit organization formally associated with the United Nations Department of Global Communications (UNDGC). IMUNA is dedicated to promoting global issues education through simulation.

Written by Alina Castillo, Emma Desai, and Breanna Thompson
Edited by Jordan Baker, Alina Castillo, Ana Margarita Gil, Christian Hernandez, Therese Salomone, Analucia Tello, and Terry Wang.