

Plenary Statement Stakeholder Group for Older People

Mr Godfred Paul, three minute statement

Ladies and Gentleman, thank you for giving the floor to the Stakeholder Group for Older People. Today, for the first time, older people have been officially included and recognised by member states as a key stakeholder group at the Global Platform for DRR. Older people globally thank you for this and hope this inclusive outlook towards older people will continue.

...But why is our inclusion so important? It is for older people's rights, and also for the greater effectiveness of DRR strategies and actions more broadly.

We live in an ageing world exposed to increasing disaster risk. Today, about 12% of the world's population is aged 60 and over (928 million people). In just four years' time, the number of older people will surpass 1 billion. By 2030, there will be nearly as many people aged 60 and over as children under 16. These major demographic shifts are not just of concern for high-income countries; two-thirds of the world's older people live in low- and middle-income countries, where disasters are more likely to occur. By 2050, it is estimated that 80% of the world's older people will live in low- and middle-income countries

The most rapid ageing is happening in countries most at risk to the impacts of disaster and climate change. If we as a global community wish to achieve the ambitions of the Sendai framework and beyond, we must consider the changing character of the global population as well as the risks.

Older people are disproportionately impacted by disaster, to an alarming level – *we are the face of your human loss data*. 74% of the deaths related to Hurricane Katrina in the US were people aged 60 or over, while only making up 16 per cent of the population. During Typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines in 2013, over 55% of those who died were older people, despite them making up only 8 per cent of the local population. In the Nepal Earthquake in 2015, nearly 65% of those who died were older people, though they composed just 8% of the population.

Older people's right to safety and life are no different to anyone else in society. It is not acceptable for the high incidents of older people's death in disasters to continue to be reviewed as an inevitable norm – not when there is so much that can be done about it.

However, the capacity and resourcefulness of older people, which is readily available in all countries, is often forgotten or ignored. Older people have lived life and have years of experience, they will have been in many other stakeholder groups represented here over their life. This wealth of knowledge, experience, insight and hindsight are invaluable in understanding and responding to disaster risk as we look to the future. Older people's social capacity is key to bringing communities together and learning across the generation to create fully inclusive DRR strategies.

There is a clear certainty though that if all goes well, all of you in this room, all member state representatives and all stakeholder group members will one day be sitting in the older people's stakeholder group. Everyone here today will experience the greatest impacts of climate change and increased disaster risk post 2050, not as you are today, but as an older person. We in this room are ageing, as is the world around us.

The stakeholder Group on Ageing asks member states and UNISDR

- To set up an inclusivity monitoring framework and committee to ensure the inclusion of older women and men, persons with disability and other at risk groups in the targets for

ongoing monitoring of the effective implementation of the Sendai framework. Ensure progress is for all, not just the few.

- Age, gender and disability disaggregated data sets in pre crisis situation, on disaster loss and those benefiting from DRR actions must be non-negotiable to ensure the real impacts of disasters are no longer hidden but recorded and actions taken based on the evidence.
- Work with this stakeholder group and HelpAge international to support you for meaningful inclusion of older women and men and persons with disabilities in your DRR policies, planning, operations and monitoring. We are here to support. Let us work together.

Thank you on behalf of older people globally for this opportunity to address this distinguished gathering today.