

News

Established in 1974, JPPF is the world's first supra-partisan parliamentary group on population and development.

In an age when global solidarity is needed to address various challenges, JPPF is expected to play an increasingly important role as a parliamentary caucus with a long history and tradition of leading Japan's diplomacy in the international community.

In every issue of JPPF Newsletter, we will carry "News" on activities and initiatives related to population and development issues.

News:

○ *Legislative and Policy Reviews: The Impact of COVID-19 Pandemic on Ageing*

[Editorial responsibility: JPPF secretariat]

Legislative and Policy Reviews: The Impact of COVID-19 Pandemic on Ageing

The Asian Forum of Parliamentarians on Population and Development (AFPPD; chaired by Hon. Keizo Takemi, Executive Director of JPPF) temporarily transferred its secretariat last year to the Asian Population and Development Association (APDA; the secretariat of JPPF) and relaunched its activities around its three pillars of "active ageing", "gender equality and women's empowerment", and "investing in youth." As part of their activities, AFPPD and APDA commissioned experts in 2020 to examine laws and policies in four countries in the Asia-Pacific region (Australia, Kazakhstan, Thailand and Vietnam) against COVID-19, with a particular focus on the elderly population who are considered most vulnerable.



The findings of these studies were reported at the Online Seminar on the Impact of COVID-19 Pandemic on Ageing, hosted by AFPPD on 17 December 2020. Based on the report, Hon. Prof. Keizo Takemi, Chair of AFPPD, emphasized the urgent need for the ageing Asian region to develop global governance for supporting vaccination rollout and protecting citizens across national boundaries. He also affirmed continued efforts to ensure that AFPPD effectively functions as a platform for parliamentary activities to promote active ageing.

These studies and online seminar were conducted with support from the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) Asia and the Pacific Regional Office (APRO) and in cooperation with the International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF). A summary of these reports is provided in this issue. The full text is available from APDA and AFPPD websites.

【COVID-19 Legal and Policy Frameworks Affecting Older Persons: Australia】 (Abstract)

- Approved financial support for the aged care industry during COVID-19 totaling approximately \$1.5 billion, which includes health workforce retention bonuses, quarantine stipends for workers who need to quarantine due to potential exposure, expansion of the health workforce, and grief and trauma counseling for residents of aged care facilities and their families who have experienced a COVID-19 outbreak.
- A high proportion of aged care workers in Australia are immigrants, so the government made possible the emergency extension of visas for several categories of visa holders, especially those in the medical and aged care professions.
- Some of the specific policies adopted during COVID-19 to protect older persons include: special provisions for telehealth access, improved access to personal protective equipment (PPE) for aged care facilities, and information for older persons on protecting themselves from COVID-19 in light of their unique vulnerabilities.



Infographic (Japanese): https://www.apda.jp/pdf/p06_jinkou_kaihatu/infographicaustralia_2020_jp.pdf

Full report (Japanese): https://www.apda.jp/pdf/p06_jinkou_kaihatu/reviewaustralia_2020_jp.pdf

Infographic (English): https://www.apda.jp/pdf/p06_jinkou_kaihatu/infographicaustralia_2020_en.pdf

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Japan Parliamentarians Federation for Population (JFPF)

Established 1 April, 1974

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【COVID-19 Legal and Policy Frameworks Affecting Older Persons: Thailand】 (Abstract)

- A group of around 1 million village health volunteers, managed by the Ministry of Public Health, have been a primary information source for many households on COVID-19 prevention, how to recognize symptoms, and have also handed out masks and hand sanitizer.
- Around 65% of older persons in Thailand either live with or near one of their children, and only 9% live alone. Thus, the guidelines for caring for older people were issued, tailored to older persons living at home.
- People aged 60 and over make up about one-third of the workforce in Thailand, and around 60% of them run their own micro-businesses. For those individuals covered by Social Security Fund payments, the stimulus packages ensure they will receive 50% of their prior salary (up to 15,000 baht per month) if they are temporarily laid off.
- The stimulus packages also included 6 months of 5,000-baht payments to informal workers who lost their work due to COVID-19, but who would not be covered by the Social Security Fund payments. Thailand is estimated to have over 21 million people working in the informal economy, which amounts to over 50% of its workforce. Many older persons in Thailand depend on their income from work, with up to 50% of those aged 60-69 and up to 19% of those aged 70-79 still working.



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【COVID-19 Legal and Policy Frameworks Affecting Older Persons: Kazakhstan】 (Abstract)

- Various sanitary and epidemiological measures were introduced to protect the population from COVID-19. Since March 2020, the movement of persons over 65 years old has been prohibited in areas or facilities where restrictive measures have been introduced, including the quarantine. The organization of medical care was developed, including for people from risk groups (the elderly and people with chronic diseases).
- The call centers to inform the population and mobile teams to provide assistance at home were created. The remote dynamic monitoring of patients with chronic diseases and the elderly (over 60 years old) was also organized.
- Various organizations and networks have played a major role in supporting the elderly. Under the leadership of the President, volunteers and trade unions provided necessary food to the elderly, searched and delivered medicines, provided hospital support, and provided charity events.



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【COVID-19 Legal and Policy Frameworks Affecting Older Persons: Vietnam】 (Abstract)

- Invested about \$3 billion to approve legislation to help people and businesses affected by COVID-19 and provide additional three months (\$ 30 / month) for vulnerable people, including the elderly.
- The Ministry of Health establish medical teams for their rapid responses to COVID-19 and support protection in some key, needed regions. The Ministry also issued a set of hospital safety standards for epidemic control that all hospital must implement, as well as regulations and guidelines for older persons at the grassroots health institution so that older person can receive medicine for treatment for 2-3 months in advance.
- Until recently, the implementation of telehealthcare was slow. When the outbreak of COVID-19 occurred, there was a great pressure on its realization. Only 5 months later, from April to September 2020, more than 1,100 health facilities from the central level to the district and commune levels were teleconnected for consultation, treatment guidance, and surgery.
- Until now, the implementation of telemedicine has not progressed much, but the COVID-19 has put great pressure on its realization. As a result, five months later, from April to September 2020, more than 1,100 health facilities from the central level to the district and commune (village) levels were remotely connected for consultation, treatment guidance and surgery.



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