



INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION ON AGEING
Global Connections



Plenary Panel – “Social Protection and Security”

Abstract

Since 1919, the International Labour Organization (ILO) has maintained a system of international labour standards aimed at promoting opportunities for women and men to obtain decent and productive work, in conditions of freedom, equity, security, and dignity. Intrinsic to these standards is adequate social protection as a basic human right.

Social protection is widely considered to be instrumental in promoting human welfare on a broad scale, and similarly considered indispensable for facilitating fair growth, social stability and economic performance.

Today, only 20 per cent of the world’s population has adequate social security coverage, and more than half do not have any coverage at all. Citizens globally face dangers in the workplace; a challenge which is augmented by poor or non-existent pension and health insurance coverage.

The current ageing of the world’s population brings with it many new difficulties for security and pension design. The Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations forecasts that the proportion of people aged 60 or older will increase to 21% by 2050, and that the growth of the number of pension beneficiaries is outpacing the growth of the working population. This is ultimately creating an unsustainable economic environment where fewer young people are available to support a growing elderly population. This phenomenon is further intensified by slow economic growth.

Building an efficient and sustainable pension system presents a difficult challenge and many factors have to be taken into account by stakeholders in order to address this challenge. Such factors include the state of the economy, differences related to culture and gender, the structure of the labor force, population ageing, and the political situation.

Raising the retirement age is neither an effective solution nor applicable in many countries so the task at hand is to define a new sustainable pension system. It is only through doing this that the world will be prepared for the demographic reality of 2050.