



INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION ON AGEING
Global Connections



Plenary Panel – “Women and Ageing”

Abstract

Men and women experience old age differently. While it is true that the ageing process creates new opportunities and challenges for both genders, women throughout the world are generally less likely to have access to the opportunities of ageing and generally more likely to be disproportionately affected by the challenges. Ageism is, of course, experienced by both men and women, but the cumulative impact of life-long gender discrimination combined with the emergence of ageism in older age represents an acutely dangerous intersection. This is intuitive when one considers the fact that women today still have less access to health and education, and a lower earning capacity than their male counterparts.

As such, the needs of older women require specific attention. Best practice policies must be debated, researched, and implemented in order to address the facts that women throughout the world are more likely to provide care for elder, disabled family members, more likely to experience abuse, and more likely to remain widowed than men.

While developed, resource-rich countries are slowly closing these gaps with better gender equality programs implemented for the current and future generations, these do little to address the problems faced by the current generation of older women. There also still exists the fundamental issue about how to address these issues in developing nations where basic needs are still a concern for much of the population. This perfectly positions India to be the host of a plenary panel on this issue. India's current rate of economic development places the country in a transition phase between developing and developed. Despite the fact that there has been a large increase in the numbers of educated, middle class citizens within the country, a vast amount of people still suffer from abject poverty. Moving into the future, India will need to find a way to address the challenges faced by older women amongst both these groups.

Participants of this plenary panel will contribute their expertise to this topic and shed valuable insight into the issues outlined above so as to create a robust dialogue to inform policy development, research priorities, and the eventual creation of a world where both older men and women can contribute within society to their maximum capacity.