



Talking Points
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Agenda item 3: "Leaving no one behind: advancing a society for all ages in Asia and the Pacific"
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Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates,

It is an honor to speak on behalf of the g7+ at this 82nd Session of ESCAP. Leaving no one behind" has been a goal that forms the foundation of the g7+ group; whose members have experienced decades of conflict, and instability that reshape the demographics of nations in ways that can last for generations. Our member countries including those in Asia Pacific such as Afghanistan, Timor-Leste, Solomon Islands and Papua New Guinea have lived those impacts and I would like to begin by citing few of them:

First, conflicts drive mass displacement where people are forced to flee their homes, becoming internally displaced or refugees abroad. This empties rural and conflict-affected areas while placing immense pressure on cities and neighboring countries, accelerating unplanned urbanization and deepening inequality. For Example, around 10 million people have been forcibly displaced due to instability and decades of wars in Afghanistan.

Second, conflict produces a severe loss of human capital. Skilled professionals are often among those who leave first, creating a lasting brain drain that weakens institutions and slows recovery long after peace returns.

Third, it creates deep demographic imbalances. Populations often become disproportionately young and unemployed. Timor-Leste is one of the youngest populations demographically, for example.

Fourth, the impact of conflict and instability is not only physical—it is psychological, and this is where the long-term demographic effects deepen. It contributes to mental health crises, and chronic stress that further results in erosion of trust and cohesion. These psychological wounds are often transmitted across generations, shaping the life of children born during or after conflict.

Building a society for all ages demands context-sensitive approach and that is where I would like to conclude by offering 4 policy solutions that are critical for countries such as those in the g7+ group:

First: Sustained Peace and stability remain a cornerstone for the noble cause of leaving no one behind. Therefore, ending conflict through reconciliation, psychological healing and restoration of social trust are essential to ensure wellbeing and development.

Second: In conflict affected countries including those in the g7+, community and extended family networks remain the backbone of support, helping to sustain and distribute wellbeing in the absence of strong formal systems. These networks range from caring for vulnerable individuals to providing financial assistance across households through interest-free loans, remittances, and other informal support mechanisms. These systems should be recognized in national policies and international financial regulations including through measures that facilitate and reduce the cost of remittance flows

Third: Demographic shifts, particularly the growth of youth populations in countries such as those in the g7+, present immense potential that must be fully realized. This requires strategic investment in quality education, strengthened health systems, skills development, and employment creation. Such investments are essential to harness this demographic dividend and should be seen as a form of long-term insurance for inclusive development and for ensuring that no one is left behind.

Fourth and Final:

Self-reliance as a guiding vision should inform policy-making both within the region and beyond. Lessons from across Asia demonstrate that self-reliance—particularly in food production through rural and agricultural development—serves as a precondition for economic diversification, sustainable development, and shared prosperity. Strengthening these foundations is therefore essential for long-term stability and development for all.

I thank you for your attention.