

Foreword

Population ageing can be seen as one of the most outstanding achievements of humanity.

I am a Japanese person born in the year 1952. The demographic statistics of Japan from my birth year to the present are indicative of the substantial trends in population ageing.

According to statistics from the Government of Japan, the fertility rate in 1952 was as high as 2.98 per woman. This means that more than two million babies were born in Japan as my contemporaries. The under-five mortality rate of the same year was high at 79 per 1,000 live births, with a male life expectancy of 61.9 years.

By 2017, a mere 65 years from my birth year, the fertility rate in Japan had dropped by half to 1.43 per woman, which translates into only about 0.94 million births. Moreover, the under-five mortality rate had fallen drastically to as low as 2.6 per 1,000 live births, and the average male life expectancy had increased to 81.1 years. As a result of this demographic transition, the proportion of the people of 60 years of age or older was as high as 34% as of 1 October 2017.

Japan is an extreme example of population ageing, a trend that is also occurring worldwide. This demographic trend is a consequence of improvements in public health and progress achieved in medical science, a field in which humanity has taken great strides especially over the last one hundred years. Until a couple of centuries ago, we lost approximately one in four babies before their fifth birthdays. Population ageing has resulted in fundamental changes to our social system.

The international community has identified population ageing as a critical issue and, as a result, has taken several actions to cope with this social change. The Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing was adopted in 2002 at the Second World Assembly on Ageing and called for ‘changes in attitudes, policies and practices’ to fulfil ‘the enormous potential of ageing’.

Statistics show that Asia has the most notable and rapid pace of population ageing, both in terms of the numbers of older people and the older population’s share of

the total population. This is also projected to become the case for ASEAN Member States. In 2015, the Heads of State/Government of ASEAN Member States adopted the Kuala Lumpur Declaration on Ageing: Empowering Older Persons in ASEAN, recognising that ‘the promotion of health, active and productive ageing’ is ‘key to the well-being of older persons as valuable members of the family, community and society’.

As an international think tank mandated to provide policy recommendations for ASEAN Member States on issues of economic integration, narrowing development gaps, and sustainable development, the Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia (ERIA) has a responsibility to assist ASEAN Member States in fulfilling this declaration.

But ERIA’s mandate is not limited to the three objectives stated above – economic integration, narrowing development gaps, and sustainable development. Due to the rapid change of society as a result of the advancement of Information and Communication Technology (ICT), it is important to promote re-skilling education for the existing workforce, particularly for older people, to allow them to catch up and upgrade their skills. Healthy ageing – through the capacity development of older people – is of key importance for the improvement of productivity in the era of population ageing. ERIA is a unique organisation that carries out research not only in the field of economics, but also in agricultural and environmental science, and population ageing is another area of research. We would like to integrate the outcome of our studies on population ageing with industrial policies designed for the era of digitalisation.

In 2017, ERIA received a contribution from the Government of Japan to promote research and come up with policy recommendations on population ageing and long-term care. This contribution was provided as one of the action items in the context of the Asia Health and Wellbeing Initiative (AHWIN) launched by the Government of Japan in 2016. Taking the concept of AHWIN into account, and making full use of ERIA’s capacity and network in ASEAN Member States, ERIA launched a number of activities to improve policymaking and thereby contribute to healthy, active, and productive ageing.

To this end, ERIA decided to conduct longitudinal studies targeting older people in ASEAN Member States in collaboration with our partner organisations. The Longitudinal Study of Ageing and Health in the Philippines (LSAHP) is one of

them and this report is the product of the baseline survey of LSAHP. It provides a comprehensive look at the realities faced by older people in the Philippines: from health status to healthcare utilisation, economic wellbeing, and care for the elderly. All information is indispensable for policymaking on healthy and active ageing.

This project is designed to become a ‘longitudinal’ study, though at this stage it reports only the initial results of the baseline survey. The next stage of the project, which will be implemented in 2020, is crucial, since it will reveal the true results of the longitudinal data – this will allow us to analyse the factors contributing to the improvement of health expectancy.

We owe the achievements of this project to the dedicated work and firm leadership of Dr. Grace T. Cruz, Chairperson of Demographic Research and Development Foundation, Inc. and a professor of the University of the Philippines Population Institute. I also wish to praise the staff of DRDF for their outstanding work on the project from fieldwork to data processing. I heard that some of the field interviewers became emotional during the interviews when they learned about the realities the elderly people face on a daily basis. That is an unexpected effect of this project, but I hope such experiences will contribute to an awareness of the issues related to population ageing in the country, and lead to the encouragement of community-based approaches as well as policymaking, which will benefit the older population.

Furthermore, I would like to express my gratitude to the members of the LSHP Advisory Committee of this study for the valuable advice they provided. This study is an ongoing project, and your continued and further support would be greatly appreciated.

We must not forget the support of Filipino mothers, fathers, grandmothers, and grandfathers who were randomly selected as respondents for this study. The remarkable 94% response rate shows that Filipinos understand the importance of social surveys. In our study, we also interviewed the children and caregivers of the selected respondents. Their kind cooperation enabled us to perform a more comprehensive analysis of the realities of older people. Dear mums, dads, families, caregivers, and related people, without your continued cooperation, this study would not have been possible. Thank you, and we look forward to seeing you again at the time of the next survey in 2020.

Lastly, I would like to reaffirm that population ageing is a mark of the success of humanity. I believe the improvement of health expectancy is the most important target to take advantage of this opportunity. I hope the rich information in this report will be fully utilised by all stakeholders – governments, international organisations, academia, civil organisations, the private sector, etc. – for the fulfilment of our ultimate goal: healthy, active, and productive ageing.

Thank you.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "H. Nishimura". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "H" and a long, sweeping underline.

Professor Hidetoshi Nishimura
President, Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia



Republic of the Philippines

National Economic and Development Authority

Message

The National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) extends its warmest congratulations to the Demographic Research and Development Foundation, Inc. (DRDF) and the Economic Research Institute for the ASEAN and East Asia (ERIA) for successfully conducting the 2018 baseline survey of the Longitudinal Study of Ageing and Health in the Philippines (LSAHP). This ground-breaking study sets the stage for the very first longitudinal study on ageing in the Philippines. It is a rich source of information, which will advance the goals of active and healthy ageing in the country.

LSAHP provides details on the various aspects of ageing as experienced by older people and their immediate kin. This wide range of data – collected from about 6,000 older people nationwide, their children, and caregivers – include information on living conditions, socio-economic status, levels and sources of income, family structures, social networks, and access to government services like social pension. All these are relevant to the monitoring of the Philippine Sustainable Development Goal (SDGs) commitments for older people.

We are confident that the findings of this longitudinal study will help guide future policies, plans, and programmes so that no older Filipino is left behind. In doing so, we remain steadfast in our vision of an inclusive and sustainable development, ensuring a 'matatag, maginhawa, at panatag na buhay para sa lahat'.

Ernesto M. Pernia
Socioeconomic Planning Secretary



Republic of the Philippines
Department of Health
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

Message

Congratulations to the Demographic Research and Development Foundation, Inc. (DRDF) and the Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia (ERIA) for undertaking the 2018 Longitudinal Study of Ageing and Health in the Philippines (LSAHP). The LSAHP provides comprehensive and much-needed information on the current health status of older Filipinos as measured through multiple indicators of health including physical, functional, mental, dental, and other dimensions.

The data from LSAHP will be a big boost to the Department of Health's goal of pushing for active and healthy ageing in the Philippines as it will provide information not just on the physical aspects of disease but on a comprehensive list of indicators that can provide a more holistic picture of the status of health of older Filipinos today. Findings from the LSAHP will better inform policies and programmes that will be crafted by the Department of Health to promote active and healthy ageing. The study is also the first to obtain data on long-term care in the country, a topic that will likely become more prominent in the future when more Filipinos live to advanced old age. The LSAHP findings shed light not only on the current health status of senior citizens but also identify the gaps in their access to and use of healthcare services and health insurance.

We look forward to using the LSAHP study findings to better understand the health-related issues that affect the older sector of our population. This first project report, Ageing and Health in the Philippines, along with the future panel data to be collected on the same sample in successive rounds of the LSAHP will provide the types of evidence on ageing and health that will put our country on par with other countries in the region that conduct longitudinal studies on ageing and, by so doing, obtain a more comprehensive and more nuanced view of health issues with advancing age.

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Francisco T. Duque III, MD Msc
Health Secretary

Message

Aging is a natural and inevitable occurrence in human lives which entails increase in the vulnerabilities of those affected. Therefore, governments are expected to ensure that their decision-making and policies are geared towards the promotion of improving the well-being of the elderly members of society. In the Philippines, a rapid increase in the growth of the aging population has been observed, making it necessary to further enhance the support on their basic human rights. On this note, our government must be more conscious to the needs of our older Filipinos.

Coincidentally, the present administration has recently passed Republic Act No. 11350, creating the National Commission of Senior Citizens (NCSC) – a body that will spearhead the functions on formulating plans and policies, and implementing programs and services for our older Filipinos. The Department of Social Welfare and Development has been continuously advocating the importance of improving the well-being of our citizens and even with the creation of the NCSC, the DSWD will lend its hands to the Commission and other agencies and organizations catering to our elders. The common objective is to promote, respect, protect, and fulfill the rights and welfare of the older Filipinos and lift them up from poverty.

The release of the 2018 Longitudinal Study of Aging and Health in the Philippines (LSAHP) is opportune as it is a significant source of information for our government and policy-makers. The LSAHP gives us the latest profile on our older Filipinos especially in the aspects of their health status and well-being. The results and findings of LSAHP shall serve as a valuable reference and benchmark towards developing the most appropriate and responsive services and interventions for the older population.

Improving the quality of life and achieving active aging of the older population is a government commitment. A commitment that must be delivered and which may be measured by a future LSAHP to attest that indeed, the government is making progress in its efforts to truly improve the quality of life of the older Filipinos.

Warmest congratulations to the team who conducted this study led by Professor Grace T. Cruz, Chairperson of the Demographic Research and Development Foundation, Inc., (DRDF) and a professor of the University of the Philippines–Population Institute (UPPI). Well-deserved congratulations is also extended to the Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia (ERIA) for the funding support on the study.

May your team continue these efforts to support the attainment of a ‘maagap at mapagkalingang serbisyo’ for our older Filipinos.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'RJB', is written over a horizontal line. The signature is stylized and cursive.

Rolando Joselito D. Bautista
Secretary

Department of Social Welfare and Development