

Population Aging, Older Women and Development Finance

May 28, 2025 | 1:00 PM-3:00 PM



18th AARP UNDESA Briefing Series: **Population Aging, Older Women and Development** **Financing**

May 28, 2025

1:15 to 2:45 PM

Delegates Dining Room, UN Headquarters, New York, NY

This year, AARP and the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) Programme on Ageing will host the 18th annual Briefing Series on Global Aging entitled **Population Aging, Older Women and Development Financing**. The event will focus on the global financial architecture response to the global megatrend of population aging, including increasing longevity, increasing numbers and increasing proportions of older persons. By 2050, a stunning 80 percent of the world's older persons will reside in low- and middle-income countries. These are countries that are likely to grow old before they grow rich. Topics will include social protection and labor force participation as drivers of social and sustainable development.

Solutions for Development Finance

The year 2025 offers chances to improve global financial systems for development: in addition to meetings on the Sustainable Development Goals, this year the United Nations will host the Fourth Conference on Financing for Development, the first since 2015, and the Second World Summit for Social Development, the first since 1995. The stakes for action are high: these convenings are opportunities to introduce an aging lens to global development finance norms that will shape the coming decades.

Countries are seeking solutions around international development cooperation, systemic issues of safety nets, technology and data. This briefing will explore some of the cutting-edge recommendations offered by the UN Secretary-General's latest report on intergenerational solidarity, policy recommendations for social protection and labor markets,¹ the ILO's resources for economic engines like universal social protection (Sustainable Development Goal Target 1.3);² and labor force utilization, beyond unemployment.³

Older Women

Older women are at the heart of development financing advances for older persons because they are the backbone of economies whether they are formally employed, family caregivers or working informally. Throughout their lives, women face challenges to pension contributions such as lower labor force participation, the gender pay gap, interrupted employment patterns due to caregiving, and part-time, precarious and informal work.⁴ If older women receive them at all, social protection mechanisms are often inadequate, with less coverage and lower income for older women than men.⁵

¹ UNDESA, Follow-up to the International Year of Older Persons: Second World Assembly on Ageing, Report of the Secretary-General, July 2024, <https://docs.un.org/en/A/79/157>

² ILO, Universal Social Protection Research Brief, February 2025, 01_WSSD_Research_brief_RGB_ENG_web_1.pdf

³ ILO, The jobs gap: Measuring labour underutilisation beyond unemployment, February 2024, wcms_912319.pdf

⁴ A/76/157: Report of the Independent Expert on the Human Rights of Older Persons, Human rights of older women: the intersection between ageing and gender, <https://www.undocs.org/Home/Mobile?FinalSymbol=A%2F76%2F157&Language=E&DeviceType=Desktop&LangRequested=False>

⁵ <https://www.helpage.org/blog/social-protection-for-older-women/>

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This year marks the 30th anniversary of the Beijing World Conference on Women. AARP led events for thousands of older women at the conference 1995.⁶ There, they discussed the effects of economic restructuring, describing the harsh impact of structural adjustment programs. They argued for global action to overcome old-age impoverishment, including new approaches to employment.⁷ Thirty years later, population aging has accelerated, and these concerns remain.

Development finance architecture should recognize the specific contributions and risks faced by older women, particularly in the context of global population aging. Through innovative partnerships, AARP has been highlighting older persons' contributions to social development, economic development and sustainable development.

Outcome

We will invite UN leadership, multilateral development banks, civil society and others to address the demographic shift toward older populations in developing countries. This year's Briefing Series on Global Aging presents an opportunity for dialogue and positive engagement in development financing and social development negotiations to ensure the inclusion of older persons, including older women. In the lead-up to the global Conference and Summit, our goal is that attendees come away with a better understanding of how growing proportions and numbers of older persons, along with extended longevity, are relevant to allocating resources for social, economic and sustainable development.

⁶ The NGO Forum on Women Beijing 95 Final Report, 1995, P. 38. https://archivio.women.it/wp-content/uploads/sites/5/2023/05/forum_95_final_report_web_OCR.pdf

⁷ https://archivio.women.it/wp-content/uploads/sites/5/2023/05/forum_95_final_report_web_OCR.pdf

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EVENT AGENDA

MAY 28, 2025

- 1:00 pm** Seated Lunch Networking
- 1:30 pm** **Opening Comments**
Debra Whitman, Executive Vice President and Chief Public Policy Officer, AARP
- 1:35 pm** **Welcome from DESA**
Bjørge Sandkjær, Assistant Secretary-General, UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs
- 1:40 pm** **Welcome from AARP**
Myechia Minter-Jordan, Chief Executive Officer, AARP
- 1:50 pm** **Keynote Address**
Irene Arias Hofman, Chief Executive Officer, IDB Lab, Inter-American Development Bank
- 2:00 pm** **Moderated Discussion on Social Protection and Work**
H.E. Suela Janina, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Albania to the UN, UN Women Executive Board Bureau Member

Cynthia Samuel-Olonjuwon, ILO Special Representative to the UN and Director, Office for the United Nations

Pat Tomlinson, President & Chief Executive Officer, Mercer

Moderator: *Bethany Brown, Global Advocacy Director, AARP International*
- 2:40 pm** **Closing Remarks**
Lina Walker, Senior Vice President, Global Thought Leadership, AARP
- 2:45 pm** **Event Ends**