

ASIA-PACIFIC SOCIAL PROTECTION WEEK 2026

Empowered Lives, Resilient Futures

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SESSION 9

The Silver Surge: Preparing for Aging and Long-Term Care

MODERATOR



Emiko Masaki
Principal Health Specialist
Human and Social Development Sector Office
Sectors Department 3
Asian Development Bank

Emiko Masaki has nearly 20 years of experience in program development, implementation, policy advisory, and regional cooperation in health and social sectors in Asia. Her work spans a broad range of issues, with a focus on enhancing the efficiency, effectiveness, accountability, and sustainability of public financing for health and social services. Emiko has engaged in global, regional, and national initiatives, fostering knowledge exchange and cross-country collaboration on health financing and universal health coverage. She leads ADB's engagement on nutrition, healthy ageing and long-term care from the Human and Social Development Sector Office. Before joining ADB, Emiko served as a Senior Economist at the World Bank where she was engaged in lending operations and analytical work including health taxes across multiple regions in Africa, Asia and the Pacific. Emiko holds a Ph.D. and master's degree in the field of health economics and demography from the University of California, Berkeley.



Francesco Tornieri
Principal Social Development Specialist
Human and Social Development Sector Office
Sectors Department 3
Asian Development Bank

Francesco Tornieri specializes in social development, gender equality, social inclusion, and care systems, with particular attention to intersecting disadvantages related to age, disability, social identity, and sexual orientation and gender identity. His recent work has focused increasingly on ageing and long-term care. In South Asia, he led the preparation of care and long-term care

diagnostics, including the Bangladesh Long-Term Care Diagnostic, linking analytical work with policy dialogue and operational recommendations. In the Pacific, he leads the implementation of the Integrated Aged Care Project in Tonga and the design of ADB's first investment project in Niue, promoting ageing in place, caregiver support, workforce development, and inclusive and sustainable care systems. Before joining ADB, Francesco worked in the World Bank's Africa Region on gender equality and social inclusion and managed the Gender and Law Program in Sub-Saharan Africa.

SPEAKERS and PANELIST



Professor Soonman Kwon
Health Economics and Policy
School of Public Health
Seoul National University

Soonman Kwon is Professor and Former Dean of the School of Public Health, Seoul National University (SNU) and has worked over 30 years on UHC, health finance and systems, and ageing and long-term care in Korea and LMICs. He is the founding director of the WHO Collaborating Centre for Health System and Financing and was the Chief of the Health Sector Group in the Asian Development Bank (ADB). He was the president of the Korea Health Industry Development Institute (KHIDI), which is a R&D agency under the Ministry of Health and Welfare.

He served as president of leading academic associations in Korea, including Health Economic Association, Society of Health Policy and Management, Society of Gerontology, and the Association of Schools of Public Health. He is an associate editor (Asia Region Editor) of Health Policy (Elsevier) and International Journal of Health Economics and Management (Springer). He received PhD from the Wharton School, University of Pennsylvania (1993) and taught at the School of Public Policy, University of Southern California. He has held visiting positions at the universities, including Harvard, LSE, Toronto, Tokyo, Peking, Bremen. He received the Excellence in Education Award of Seoul National University in 2020.



Nargis Khanam
Additional Secretary
Ministry of Social Welfare
Government of Bangladesh

With responsibility for budget, social security programmes, and evaluation. She is a key member of the team implementing the Family Card, the Government's flagship household support programme.

A career civil servant with nearly three decades of experience in development planning, budgeting, and aid management, she has served in the Economic Relations Division, the Planning Commission, and the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare. She previously served as Director General of the Department of Social Services. She holds a Master's in Development Management from the University of Birmingham and Bachelor's and Master's degrees in Economics from the University of Dhaka.

Her responsibilities cover the Government's major social security allowances, including the Old Age Allowance, the Allowance for Widowed, Deserted and Destitute Women, and allowances for persons with disabilities and marginalised communities. This includes efforts to improve targeting and strengthen support for poor and vulnerable households.



Fakafanua Paunga
CEO, Ministry of Internal Affairs
Government of Tonga

Akanesi.F. Polotu Paunga is a distinguished leader in gender equality, social development, and public sector governance. Appointed as CEO in 2024, she provides strategic leadership across a diverse portfolio that includes women and gender equality, youth development, social protection, community development, sport and active recreation, and overseas employment. In this role, she is responsible for guiding the Ministry's contribution to Tonga's national development priorities, strengthening social inclusion, reducing inequalities, and improving the wellbeing of communities throughout the Kingdom.

With a career spanning more than three decades in public service, Mrs. Paunga has been at the forefront of advancing gender equality and women's empowerment in Tonga. Prior to her appointment as CEO, she held senior leadership roles within the Ministry, including Deputy Chief Executive Officer responsible for Women Affairs and Gender Equality, where she championed policy reform, gender mainstreaming, and partnerships supporting equitable and inclusive development.

Mrs. Paunga has represented Tonga at numerous regional and international forums and has worked closely with governments, civil society, development partners, and multilateral organizations to strengthen evidence-based policymaking and sustainable development outcomes. A lifelong advocate for equality and social progress, Mrs. Paunga is widely respected for her commitment to empowering communities, advancing opportunities for women and girls, and promoting inclusive development across Tonga and the Pacific region.



Thuy Bich Tran
Country Director
HelpAge Viet Nam

Thuy Bich Tran is the country director of HelpAge International in Vietnam and executive director of VIOBA – a social enterprise that promote active aging. She holds a master's degree of development management by Asian Institute of Management. She has more than 30 years working in the development area and of those 25 years working in aging. She is one of the founders of the government promoting community based comprehensive and scalable model in Viet Nam, so called Intergenerational Self-Help Club (ISHC), which promotes healthy and active aging in the country. Thuy is recognized as one of the Healthy Ageing 50 - Leaders transforming the world to be a better place to grow older - a UN Decade of Healthy Ageing initiative.

