AGEING and LONG-TERM CARE

National Policies in the Asia-Pacific
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AGEING and LONG-TERM CARE

National Policies in the Asia-Pacific

Edited by
David R. Phillips & Alfred C.M. Chan
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Preface

This book is the result of a three-year collaboration under the Asian Development Research Forum’s (ADRF) Ageing Research Network. It represents the collaborative efforts of researchers in gerontology in five countries in the Asia–Pacific region, the first stage of a continuing review of national policies on ageing and older persons in the region. The ADRF is a network of researchers based primarily in the Asia–Pacific region and Canada and was established under the auspices of Canada’s International Development Research Centre (IDRC) in 1997. A number of meetings have been hosted since 1997 to focus on the various sub-groups’ interests, held in Hong Kong, Seoul, Kuala Lumpur, Singapore, the Philippines and Thailand. From 2002 to 2005, the Thailand Research Fund (TRF) is managing the ADRF with major funding support from the IDRC. We wish to warmly acknowledge the IDRC’s help and support in all these ventures for the ADRF and the TRF’s continuing management of the Forum. The ADRF brings together researchers, policy-makers, research managers, government organizations and NGOs in the region, to focus on interconnected, interdisciplinary research areas of policy relevance to the region and its constituent member states. The forum’s overall aim is “to increase the impact of development research in Asia through collaboration, policy innovation and balancing the social, economic and environmental imperatives”. Three principal areas of interest have evolved: economic and financial governance, conflict resolution, and the socio-economic and political impacts of ageing. More details may be seen on the ADRF’s website <www.adrf.org>.

As editors, we owe a great deal to the promptness of the contributors to this volume and to other members of the ADRF
Ageing Research Network, whose country studies will appear in future publications. In the wider context, we particularly wish to acknowledge the wisdom of Dr Randy Spence, then Regional Director of IDRC in its Singapore office, who founded the ADRF. The Forum’s development has continued under the guidance of his successor, Dr Stephen McGurk. Many IDRC staff have been involved and we would like particularly to thank Tan Say-Yin and Martin Bazelwych of the IDRC Singapore Office who have given invaluable input to the administration of the ADRF. Elsewhere, Professor Chia Siow Yue, Director of the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies (ISEAS), deserves special mention for her support of the meeting of the ADRF in June 2001, when the plans for the book were finalized, and for her support for its publication by ISEAS in Singapore. The previous Chair of the ADRF, Professor Sieh Mei-ling of the University of Malaya and her successor as Chair, Dr Vicharn Panich, Special Adviser to the Thailand Research Fund (TRF), have been very supportive of the Forum as a whole and of the Ageing Research Network in particular. Many other people have contributed to the appearance of this volume, including our colleagues in the Asia–Pacific Institute of Ageing Studies, Lingnan University, especially Fanny Fung, Luk Kit-ling and Helen Lau.

In terms of content, this book was written by members of the ADRF’s Ageing Research Network, which is coordinated from the Asia–Pacific Institute of Ageing Studies in Lingnan University, Hong Kong. It focuses on five case-study countries, which feature alphabetically in the contents: Hong Kong, Korea, Malaysia, Singapore and Thailand. These countries have a considerable range in population sizes (from Thailand’s 63 million to Singapore’s 4 million in 2001) and also in geographical area. Nevertheless, they share certain regional and cultural features, especially their philosophies of family support and the value of older persons in society. They are also all facing the similar phenomenon of demographic ageing (whereby populations age gradually, mainly from falling fertility rates and longer expectation of life). The ageing of populations poses challenges to governments, families and societies the world over. This is especially so in certain countries of the Asia–Pacific region, as
Asia has over half of the world’s people aged 65 and above (Population Reference Bureau 2001). Many of these people live in countries in the Asia–Pacific area of the Asian region. The book therefore focuses on fundamental questions related to the development, or non-development, of coherent national policies on ageing and the long-term care for older persons. These questions and the major issues to be addressed in the book are outlined in Chapter 1.

As editors, we would also like to give a few notes on the terminology used in the book. First, we refer to the five case studies as “countries”, although strictly speaking this applies to only four, as Hong Kong since July 1997 has been a Special Administrative Region (SAR) of the People’s Republic of China. Singapore, too, is more generally referred to as a city–state, although it is an independent sovereign entity. Second, we generally refer to “older persons”, “senior citizens” or “elderly people”, which are today more accepted appropriate terms than “the elderly”. We tend to use “the elderly “ only when it refers to population segments such as cohorts aged (say) 65 and over, or to legislation or specific titled services in the countries in question.

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APIAS: <www.LN.edu.hk/apias>
Asian Development Research Forum: <www.adrf.org>
Thailand Research Fund: <www.trf.or.th>