

HELPAge INTERNATIONAL PRESS RELEASE: **Embargoed: 00:01AM GMT 11 March 2015**

PEG: Third UN World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction Sendai, Japan 14 – 18 March 2015, launch of the first Disaster Risk and Age Index

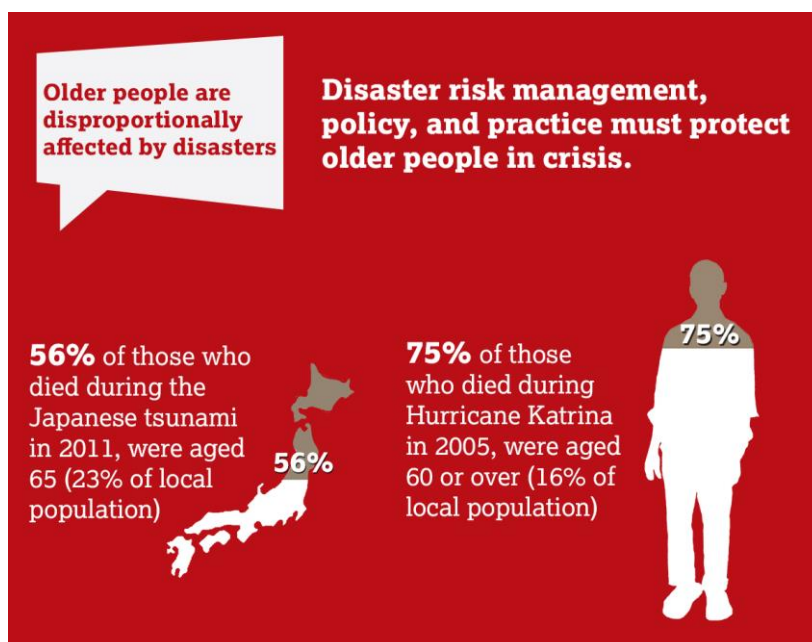
This week, HelpAge International is launching the first Disaster Risk and Age Index, ranking 190 countries across the world on the disaster risk faced by older people, at the Third UN World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction in Sendai.

"The Disaster Risk and Age Index captures the collision of two trends: ageing populations and the acceleration of risk in a world which is increasingly exposed to natural and technological hazards," said Margareta Wahlström, Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for Disaster Risk Reduction.

Overall, those in Somalia, Central African Republic and Afghanistan face the highest risk, due in part to ongoing conflict coupled with the lack of service provision for older men and women.

A poor result in the vulnerability domain reveals that in the Central African Republic, there are only 0.5 doctors per 10,000 people, no pension coverage, low life expectancy at 60 and high numbers of older displaced people.¹

Older people are exposed to the lowest risk from disasters in Malta and Finland.



In the Japanese Tsunami of 2011, 56% of those who died were aged 65 and over, despite this age group comprising just 23% of the population. Similarly of those who died in Hurricane Katrina in the US in 2005, 75% were aged 60 or over, but only 16% of the local population were aged 60 or over.

The report has an in-depth focus on the South and East Asia area, as this is the region demonstrating

some of the highest disaster and climate change related risks coupled with the fastest ageing populations. For example in Vietnam, there will be a 61.4% increase in the proportion of older people aged 60+, between 2010 and 2030.

¹ Disaster Risk and Age Index, HelpAge International, London 2015 pg.10

Already, 66% of the world's over 60s live in less developed regions and by 2050 this is projected to rise to 79%. The world's population of older people is expected to rise to 2.02 billion by 2050.²

"It is a sign of resilience that there will be this many older people in the world by 2050. But it is the unprecedented rate at which populations are ageing, alongside the increasing frequency of disasters, that presents policy makers with a challenge," said Toby Porter, Chief Executive for HelpAge International.

"We need to collect data disaggregated by sex, age and disability to demonstrate the impact of disasters on older people. This will help us to develop appropriate strategies in order to save lives," said Porter.

A study carried out in 2013 by HelpAge International, *Disasters and diversity: a study of humanitarian financing*, found that only 1% of funded projects in 2012 targeted older people.

When older people are considered in disaster risk reduction efforts, often the responses are inadequate and ill-informed as older people are not engaged or consulted.

"Older people are often seen as passive recipients of aid rather than active participants in disaster risk reduction activities," said Godfred Paul, Senior Regional Programme Manager for HelpAge International, East Asia Pacific. *"They often get overlooked."*

Older people can be real champions for disaster risk reduction at the local level. In 2012, following training on disaster risk reduction, older people in Pakistan noticed the colour of the local river changing and contacted disaster management authorities of the early warning sign. The imminent flooding was confirmed and the community began diverting the water with digging equipment. Because of their actions, 50% less water reached the villages when the flooding occurred.

HelpAge International is urging governments, NGOs and civil society organisations to sign up to Charter 14, a 14 point declaration pledging to include older people in disaster risk reduction efforts.

HelpAge International will present the Disaster Risk and Age Index at the Third World Conference on Disaster Risk in Sendai on the IGNITE stage on 17 March.

You can follow the events of the week with [#WCDRR](#).

-ENDS-

Notes to editors:

1. Download the Disaster Risk and Age Index here, along with photos, infographics and background on HelpAge International
<https://helpage.box.com/s/tvysbv0xtp6178ay07xzo9whh1bh0j10>

2. Available for interview:

In London: Toby Porter, Chief Executive, HelpAge International

² Global AgeWatch Index 2014 Insight Report, HelpAge International, London, 2014

Clare Harris, HelpAge International, DRR and Resilience Advisor

In Sendai: Clodagh Byrne, HelpAge International, DRR and Resilience Advisor

Godfred Paul, HelpAge International, East Asia Pacific, Senior Regional Programme Manager

3. Events at Sendai

The Third UN World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction will be held in Japan, Sendai City, Miyagi Prefecture on **14-18 March**.

14 March – HelpAge staff will visit the Ibasho Café – World Bank side event

<http://www.ibasho.org/web/projects/ibasho-cafe>

15 March – 10:30-11:45 JST HelpAge will exhibit materials on interaction stand

16 March – 12:00-13:30 JST Working session 21 – Communities Addressing Local Risk, Exhibition Hall One

17 March – 11:45 JST Launch of Disaster Risk and Age Index on IGNITE stage

– 10-13:00 JST High Level Ministerial Session on Inclusivity, Exhibition Hall One

18 March – 13:00-15:00 JST World Bank session with older people from Japan and Philippines

Disaster Resilience in an Ageing world: How to make policies and programmes inclusive of older people

This publication aims to promote age-inclusive resilience-building among practitioners and policy-makers. It gives a comprehensive overview of how resilience-building programmes should be designed and implemented to ensure the inclusion of older people. It also highlights the benefits of including and empowering older people through DRR and resilience-building activities.

<http://www.unisdr.org/2014/iddr/documents/DisasterResilienceAgeingWorld.pdf>

Global AgeWatch Index Insight Report 2014

<http://www.helpage.org/global-agewatch/>

4. Disaster Risk and Age Index Methodology

The methodology used to develop the Disaster Risk and Age Index is based primarily on the INFORM 2015 Disaster Risk Index developed by the European Commission in collaboration with the Inter-Agency Standing Committee Task Team for Preparedness and Resilience.

The INFORM 2015 index balances two major forces: hazard and exposure, and vulnerability and lack of coping capacity.

Out of 53 indicators in INFORM 2015, 51 indicators were kept and two were dropped as irrelevant (children underweight and under-five mortality rate). Eleven of 51 indicators were altered – either by re-estimating, drawing from a different data source, or substituted by a similar indicator.

More on this can be found in the methodology section in the report

5. Disasters and diversity: a study of humanitarian financing for older people and children under five

London, HelpAge International, 2013.

<http://www.helpage.org/resources/publications/?adv=0&ssearch=&filter=f.yeard&type=®ion=&topic=&language=&page=11>

6. Charter 14

Charter 14 calls for an inclusive approach whereby DRR responds to older people:

In need: older people have specific requirements which must be understood and responded to

Invisible: older people's vulnerabilities and capacities are overlooked, collection of data by age and sex is essential

Invaluable: older people have years of knowledge, skills and wisdom which must be acknowledged

Fourteen standards have been developed, in a staged approach signatories are required to commit and sign up to one of the targets to begin with. Charter 14 has been developed through consultations with governments, NGOs, DRR and ageing experts as well as older men and women. <http://www.unisdr.org/2014/iddr/documents/Charter14.pdf>

HelpAge International helps older people claim their rights, challenge discrimination and overcome poverty, so they can lead dignified, secure, active and healthy lives www.helpage.org

Media contacts:

In Sendai:

Jane Scobie, Director of Advocacy and Communications at HelpAge International,

 +44 (0) 7713 070 306

 jscobie@helpage.org

In London:

Sarah Gillam, Media Relations Manager at HelpAge International

 +44 (0) 20 7148 7623.

 +44 (0) 7713 567 624

 sarah.gillam@helpage.org

 sarah.gillam.hai

Beth Howgate, Media Relations Officer at HelpAge International

 +44 (0) 20 7148 7606

 beth.howgate@helpage.org

 beth.howgate.hai