



## **GLOBAL AGING 2013: Driving Economic Growth**

March 26, 2013

### **Overview of the day**

On March 26th, 2013, HelpAge USA and Pfizer Inc. brought together 40 experts from across disciplines and around the world to discuss the promise that better health, engaged communities, technology and research hold for global aging, economic growth, and development. Innovations in public health, sanitation, and infrastructure have greatly extended the lifespan. Extended longevity is an opportunity for individuals at every age when they are in good health and living in environments shaped for this new aging demographic. Seizing the opportunities associated with shifting demographics requires a whole-of-society approach involving policymakers, civil society, academics, and the private sector.

*GLOBAL AGING 2013: Driving Economic Growth* convened a cross-section of key opinion leaders who engaged in high-level panel discussions, which gave way to rich group discussions, smaller expert-led breakout sessions, and a keynote presentation by Dr. Linda Fried, Dean of the Mailman School of Public Health at Columbia University. Participant discussions catalyzed new ways of thinking about advancing policy dialogues and decisions, and introduced a new audience to a wide range of issues faced by older people in the developing world. *GLOBAL AGING 2013* was an important step toward creating sustainable thought leadership through multi-disciplinary conversations and a “cross-pollination” of ideas.

### **Opening remarks and morning panel: *Global Aging: Exploring the Opportunities***

Chris Gray, Pfizer’s Senior Director of Global Institutions delivered opening remarks. Chris explained how Pfizer is committed to help facilitate discussions aimed at multi-sector approaches to challenges and opportunities presented by aging populations. In addition to roundtable discussions, Pfizer is creating a community through its “Get Old” social media platform to engage the public in a discussion about the challenges and opportunities around aging. Chris introduced Marilyn Grist, Executive Director of HelpAge USA, who welcomed participants. She thanked Pfizer and highlighted Chris Gray in particular for being a passionate advocate for older people throughout the world.

Kathy Calvin, President and CEO of the United Nations Foundation, kicked off the first panel discussion by explaining she came to realize the importance of addressing aging policies the way most people do – inevitably. The morning panel included Kathy Greenlee, Assistant Secretary of Aging, US Dept of Health and Human Services; Dr. Jacob Gayle, Vice President, Medtronic Philanthropy; Dr. Jose Miguel Guzman, Chief, Population and Development, UNFPA and Dr. Patricia Mechael, Executive Director, mHealth Alliance.

As a starting point, Dr. Guzman provided some context from the HelpAge/UNFPA Report, "Ageing in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century," the most comprehensive overview of global aging to date. Electronic copies may be downloaded at [www.helpageusa.org](http://www.helpageusa.org). Figures included in the report laid the groundwork for the discussion. For example, there will be 1.2 billion older people in the world by 2050, and eighty percent of those will be poor and living in developing countries. Dr. Guzman proposed that in order to create better policies and systems to be responsive to this demographic shift, governments need to create new institutions and obtain better data. Additionally, he noted the important market implications of aging populations, and the need for better partnerships between governments and the private sector.

Ms. Greenlee mainly addressed policies aimed at aging in the US, particularly efforts by the current administration, and the commitment of the HHS Secretary and the US President to this issue. She highlighted the recent reorganization within HHS to create the Administration for Community Living, which merged aging and disability components together. This new agency has become a multicultural entity, both in the traditional sense of diversity, and in the aspect of a diversity of life that spans the cultures of disability and aging. It is focused on the intersection of the two distinct fields of study and aspects of life. While aging and disabilities are different, they also have with common issues and aspirations. The new agency is incorporating disability culture and aging culture and making room for both. This action has been noticed by the European Union which is interested in learning the steps the U.S. has taken to bridge these two populations together.

She noted the importance of public health initiatives in developing countries, explaining that developments around the world impact the US through globalization. In discussing attitudes toward aging more broadly, she expressed her disapproval of the negative term 'silver tsunami', noting that a growing population of older people are not going to "drown" everyone else. She noted that initiatives such as Pfizer's "Get Old" campaign represent the perfect foil to this doom-and-gloom perspective on aging. Ms. Greenlee also highlighted improved research as a necessary step to designing successful policies to address aging.

Ms. Calvin suggested an asset-based approach rather than a deficit-based approach to evaluating the impacts of aging populations in order to more accurately frame the important role that older people can and do play in economic development. Participants agreed that efforts must be made to portray and substantiate a more positive view of aging and older populations.

Perhaps the biggest challenge, according to Dr. Gayle, is the difficulty many people have in imagining themselves as "old." One way to help overcome that hurdle is to better capture the qualitative experiences of aging in quantitative measures. Another way to address the challenges we face is to engage in more public/private partnerships (PPPs) and to leverage the power of corporate philanthropy. PPPs across sectors are necessary to address, for instance, the rise of non-communicable diseases in developing countries, which disproportionately impacts older populations and drive 75% of health care costs worldwide. He cautioned not to forget the importance of families in caring for the growing populations, noting that 80% of long term care is provided by families.

From Dr. Mechael's perspective, the promise of global technology as a tool to help combat global health and aging issues is critical. Sixty-one percent of people 60 and older have access to a mobile phone worldwide. Mobile technologies have the potential to save millions and perhaps even billions of dollars by keeping people more productive for longer,

in addition to providing cost savings from early detection and prevention of health challenges. The demand for these types of services is increasing, and policies and programs must keep up with this need. Dr. Michael noted that empowering people is one of the biggest focus areas in which mobile technology can play a role; older people can be empowered through access to information and a platform for communication.

Several participants asked the panel broader questions about the future of aging policy:

- What are the needs of older people?
- How should the Millennium Development Goals address global aging?
- Where are social efforts to educate people so that they might picture their older selves?
- Where does intergenerational solidarity come into play?
- How does one empower family support?
- Will we need a completely different aging framework going forward?

These questions are complex. However, one clear answer is that governments expect to be a driving force in policy-based approaches to aging opportunities and challenges, and data is necessary to support their decision-making. The economical, political and cultural influence of an aging population must be harnessed in shaping the solutions and a new demographic framework.

### **Lunchtime keynote by Dr. Linda Fried**

Dr. Fried, Dean of the Mailman School of Public Health at Columbia University, began her keynote address by lauding the world's remarkable achievement of adding 30 years to life expectancy in just over a century: a remarkable achievement at a rapid clip relative to human history. But the relative value of a longer lifespan is sometimes contingent on the health of any individual and the older population as a whole. Highlighting the work of the John A. Hartford Foundation, Dr. Fried argued that aging and health policies need to be long-term. If society were to invest in creating health and well-being for the elderly, the outcomes are beneficial to all ages; if society invests for the old and the young, those in the middle would benefit as well.

Dr. Fried maintained society is at a critical moment in history; one where conversations about aging are moving to the forefront of the global stage. "How do we make the world a better place to grow old in?" She asked. In order to build a successful aging society now, Dr. Fried called for improved prevention, care, geriatric knowledge, and new roles and institutions that can harness the social capital of a healthy older population on behalf of our collective future. After all, she reminded, older people are one of the world's only growing natural resources!

### **Afternoon panel: *Aging and Economic Development***

Dr. Fried moderated the second panel of the day, entitled "*Aging and Economic Development*." Jeffrey James, Caribbean Regional Director, HelpAge International; Ladan Manteghi, Executive Director, Global Social Enterprise Initiative at Georgetown University, and Dr. Prakash Tyagi, Executive Director, GRAVIS India (the Center of People's Science for Rural Development) all served as panelists.

Ms. Manteghi began the conversation by noting that the economic engines of developed and developing markets can be fueled by addressing the social needs beyond what the government is able and willing to offer. Solutions can be found indigenously with local and

frequently older entrepreneurs creating them, but they might need access to capital to bring those solutions to market or to scale. Furthermore, society must reinvent the way it looks at life stages, such as creating multiple “mini retirements” by working 10 years, “retiring” for 2-3 years to re-tool, re-educate, and then re-enter the workforce. This shift must also occur across many sectors, including employment and education.

Mr. James maintained that a current dilemma for some governments in developing countries, for example in the Caribbean, is that policymakers are failing to acknowledge the rapid aging of their populations. Rather than treating them as invisible or as economic burdens, governments must recognize that all people, regardless of age, can contribute to their economies and create new opportunities for growth. At a policy level, Mr. James noted that groups like HelpAge are advocating for comprehensive solutions.

Dr. Tyagi pointed out that life expectancy in India has doubled in the last sixty years, and there are now 100 million people (and growing) over the age of 60. Dr. Tyagi highlighted the need to improve focus on *healthy* longevity, and the need to improve the capacity of the older generation and to strengthen coordination and access for older people to government services.

The whole group discussed how older people are critical to educating younger generations. Skills can be lost without a multigenerational approach to aging policies and both formal and informal education. All generations can benefit. Dr. Fried echoed this need, calling for an education system that is responsive to the varying goals of different populations (i.e. learning for learning’s sake, or re-training for evolving workplaces). Dr. Tyagi underscored the desire among some older people to learn basic technology skills as one area of focus. Again, the group highlighted the critical need for improved data and research in order for any of these strategies to be implemented successfully.

### **Breakout sessions**

Aging is not a topic in-and-of itself, but rather something that touches every discipline and profession. Everyone can add new dimensions to the discussion that others have not considered.

In breakout groups of 6-10 people, participants brainstormed together about how aging and development by focusing on the following questions:

1. How can the intersection of technology and mobility create better health, and stronger economies?
2. What concrete actions can make communities more age-friendly to drive economic growth?
3. What have we identified that needs to be changed, and who needs to be at the table? Governments? Non-governmental organizations? Companies and markets?

### **Final discussion and closing:**

In the final discussion of the afternoon, Bethany Brown, Policy Director, HelpAge USA, asked participants to report out from the breakout sessions and suggest more ideas to be explored through research and conversation. Several themes from the day reemerged and validated earlier discussions:

- Society needs to de-stigmatize and re-imagine getting older. The concept and definition of retirement as we know are undergoing change, at least in countries where older people have the luxury to choose whether or not to keep working.

Opportunities for employment should and must continue, which will require open minds and non-discrimination throughout society.

- There is a need for improved research and data for this growing population in order to create policies based on sound empirical evidence. Issues of intergenerational support, rural-to-urban migration, and health care delivery systems all require further study. Even where data exists there is a lack of expertise in properly interpreting and applying it to new policies and programs.
- There is a need to quantify the qualitative experiences and contributions of older people, and to involve them in designing the future landscape (e.g. Do they want to live near their children or near their neighbors; How does someone see him/herself living out his/her life?). We should be asking people what their aspirations are for growing older. One suggestion was to launch a campaign about what aging means (e.g. "What does aging mean to you? What will your life be like at 75/80/85? What do you envision for them as they go through the aging process?"). No community can be "age-friendly" without the input of older people.
- The conversation must be extended to include creative economists who can frame the opportunities outside of the more US-centric examples of Medicare and Social Security. We need experts from the finance sector to consider solutions that can truly affect the levers of change.

### **The beginning, not the end:**

Following Global Aging 2013, HelpAge and Pfizer will continue to work with participants and partners to advance this growing movement in their own professional circles. Together, we will identify opportunities for awareness-raising and contribute to planning for potential future exchanges. This exchange can help create shared ownership of the issues older people face across disciplines by amplifying their messages and focusing on concrete actions that will help everyone grow up and get old in a way that reaps the benefits of the longevity dividend.

### ***An Introduction to HelpAge:***

*HelpAge helps older people claim their rights, challenge discrimination and overcome poverty, so that they can lead dignified, secure, active and healthy lives. We do this by advocating for policy change and through implementing practical projects on the ground. We address the issues that affect older people worldwide.*

### ***An Introduction to Get Old:***

*Get Old is a social media-based initiative established by Pfizer to catalyze and support a dialogue that can help people embrace the age they're in and look forward to what's to come at every age. They want to inspire and activate people of all ages to reconsider what it means to get old in terms of a better quality of life, adding years to their lives and confronting the biggest and most important health challenges and opportunities facing them and society as a whole.*

*Pfizer is creating a community at [GetOld.com](http://www.GetOld.com) that encourages people to share how they feel about getting old. Join the conversation at [www.GetOld.com](http://www.GetOld.com)!*