



13 October – Did you know that nearly two thirds of the victims of the Japanese tsunami in 2011 were aged 60 or above? Or that the average decedent associated with Hurricane Sandy was 60 years old?

Elderly people are one of the most vulnerable groups in our society, and especially when it comes to natural disasters. And while already ten per cent of today's world's population is over the age of 60, it is estimated that by 2030, there will be [more elderly persons than youngsters under ten](#)

Additionally, the lives of the elderly in rural areas largely depend on the seasons. The availability of these natural resources becomes however increasingly scarce and older persons need to make a great effort to adapt to these negative impacts caused by climate change.

But as we are entering times of extreme weather changes, floods and storms; experts remind

us that the elderly not only need protection – they are protection.

“It is important to recognize that older persons have strengths that can serve the community at large”, says UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon. “Their years of experience can help in reducing risks posed by disasters. We should involve them in disaster risk management as well as related planning and decision-making processes.”

That’s why this year’s celebration of the [International Day for Disaster Risk Reduction](#) (IDDR) wants to recognize the role of older men and women in fostering resilience. Our society needs conscious disaster planning aimed at addressing older persons’ vulnerabilities while optimizing their contributions to our collective wellbeing.

“Older persons can meaningfully enrich our critical global discussions on addressing climate change and achieving sustainable development.”