**Parallel Session 1.1**

**Subtheme: *Social Welfare Systems, Social Protection, and Fiscal Sustainability***

**Session Duration:** 90–120 minutes
**Leads:** Dr. Taninee Sahakitrungruang & Wipaporn Natalie Songtaweesin (Chulalongkorn University)

**🌏 Session Objective:**

This session explores innovative models, emerging challenges, and policy solutions to strengthen social welfare systems across diverse demographic contexts. (To explore how countries can design resilient and equitable social welfare systems that adapt to demographic changes, aging populations, and fiscal pressures—while leveraging innovation, intergenerational approaches, and global cooperation.)

**Key Issue:**

• Aging and welfare pressures

• Life-course investments

• Equity and inclusion

• Innovative financing

• Digital and AI solutions

**🕰️ Session Flow**

| **Time** | **Format** | **Description** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 0–5 min | **Welcome & Opening Remarks** | Co-leads briefly introduce the session focus and objectives |
| 5–20 min | **Opening Keynote** **Dr. Anshu Banerjee**, WHO | Framing address on life-course social protection, demographic transitions, and global policy innovations |
| 20–70 min | **Panelist Presentations (8–10 min each)** | Individual talks from 5 speakers – see details below |
| 70–100 min | **Moderated Panel Discussion** | Moderated conversation tying together macroeconomic policy, local innovation, and fiscal equity |
| 100–115 min | **Audience Q&A** | Interactive session with questions from the floor and online |
| 115–120 min | **Closing Reflections** | Key messages and synthesis by session co-lead |

**🧩 Speaker Contributions & Panel Discussion**

**🔹 1. Rintaro Mori – *Mayor of Takarazuka City, Japan***

**Topic:** *Municipal Innovation and Community-Level Social Protection in Aging Societies*

* Highlights Japan’s proactive strategies in caregiving, intergenerational support, and local social investment
* Shares on-the-ground insights into aligning city budgets and services with aging population needs
* Demonstrates the critical role of **local leadership** in operationalizing national policies

**🔹 2. Aiko Kikkawa – *Senior Economist, ADB***

**Topic:** *Aging Well in Asia: Financial Preparedness and Regional Insights*

* Presents highlights from ADB’s flagship publication “Aging Well in Asia”
* Focuses on the financial security of older adults using detailed microdata across eight Asian countries, examining preparedness, vulnerabilities, and gaps in protection
* Shares initial preview findings from an ongoing regional study developing an Old Age Financial Preparedness Index, conducted with local scholars
* Contributes a regional economic and data-driven perspective on how to design fiscally sustainable and socially inclusive welfare systems for an aging population

**🔹 3. Dr. Veerathai Santiprabhob – *Chairman, TDRI***

**Topic:** *Macroeconomic Policy for Social Protection: Long-Term Fiscal Vision*

* Provides a Thai perspective on fiscal sustainability, debt, and long-term investment in welfare systems
* Explores the trade-offs and priorities in national budget planning amidst demographic transitions
* Highlights the role of economic think tanks in shaping inclusive, evidence-based policies

**🔹 4. Andrew Reilly – *Pension Analyst, OECD (could also be keynote)***

**Topic:** *Rethinking Pensions and Social Protection in Aging Economies*

* Discusses design innovations in public pension systems and intergenerational equity
* Shares OECD insights on sustaining retirement systems in high-income and middle-income countries
* Introduces **tools to assess pension adequacy, coverage, and fiscal resilience**

**🔹 5. Sarah Shahyar – *Chief of Social Policy, UNICEF***

**Topic:** *Protecting Children and Families in Times of Economic Stress*

* Advocates for prioritizing **child-sensitive social protection** amid fiscal constraints
* Highlights global evidence linking early investments to long-term societal benefits
* Emphasizes inclusive systems, especially for marginalized and vulnerable families

**🧭 Panel Discussion Themes**

* How can countries build **resilient social protection** that is inclusive, affordable, and politically sustainable?
* What’s the role of **fiscal policy and economic forecasting** in shaping these systems?
* How do **local governments**, **international agencies**, and **macro economists** coordinate for equity?
* What innovations (e.g. **digital tools**, **targeting**, **universal schemes**) are promising?
* How can we avoid leaving children, the elderly, and informal workers behind?