



6 December 2007



Second Regional Intergovernmental Conference on Ageing in
Latin America and the Caribbean: towards a society for all ages and
rights-based social protection

Brasilia, 4-6 December 2007

BRASILIA DECLARATION

We, the representatives of the countries gathered in Brasilia, Brazil, from 4 to 6 December 2007 at the Second Regional Intergovernmental Conference on Ageing in Latin America and the Caribbean: towards a society for all ages and rights-based social protection,

With the purpose of identifying the future priorities for application of the Regional Strategy for the Implementation in Latin America and the Caribbean of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, responding to the opportunities and challenges posed by the ageing of the population in the coming decades and promoting a society for all ages,

Underscoring the responsibility of Governments, subject to their legal frameworks, to promote and provide basic social and health-care services and facilitate access to them, bearing in mind the specific needs of older persons and the agreements assumed in this document,

With the firm determination to adopt measures at all levels –local, national, subregional and regional- in the Regional Strategy's three priority areas: older persons and development; promotion of health and well-being into old age, and creation of enabling and supportive environments,

Recognizing that ageing is one of humanity's greatest achievements, that in Latin America and the Caribbean the population has been ageing unevenly and that the process is more advanced in some countries than in others, as a result of which the challenges for the State in terms of finding appropriate responses to the changes in the age structure of the population are different,

Bearing in mind that a demographic transformation of such dimensions has far-reaching repercussions on society and public policy and that ageing increases the demand for the effective exercise of human rights and fundamental freedoms at all ages,

Highlighting the fact that in order to confront the challenges of ageing, some countries have pressed ahead with the creation and implementation of legislation, policies, programmes, plans and services to improve the living conditions of older persons and that, in comparison with the year 2003, there are new public-policy niches and more interventions in this matter, although situations and achievements still vary considerably from one country, or one subregion, to another,

Underscoring the fact that States have, for some years, been becoming increasingly concerned about the rights of older persons and that this has translated into the creation of legal protection frameworks, although gaps persist in the implementation of such rights and many older persons still lack access to social-security, health or social-service benefits,

Emphasizing that population ageing must not be treated as a matter of relevance only to the current generations of older persons and that it is fundamental to advance towards the construction of more inclusive, cohesive and democratic societies which abhor all forms of discrimination, including age-based discrimination, and to strengthen mechanisms that promote solidarity between generations,

Bearing in mind that ageing can generate disabilities and dependency, which call for comprehensive care services,

Recognizing that the United Nations and its specialized agencies have placed special emphasis on this issue and have stressed the need to expand the coverage and quality of social protection systems in order to protect persons against age-associated risks; and that entitlement to human rights signifies that the subject effectively belongs to the society, since it implies that all citizens, men and women alike, are included in the development dynamic and can enjoy the well-being that it promotes,

Recognizing also the systematic work carried out by the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, through the Latin American and Caribbean Demographic Centre–Population Division of the Commission in support of countries in the region that seek to incorporate ageing into their development agendas and to promote opportunities for strengthening technical skills, research and technical assistance to Governments, and expressing appreciation for the support provided by the United Nations Population Fund, the Pan American Health Organization, the International Labour Organization and the Inter-American Development Bank as well as the Ibero-American Intergovernmental Network for Technical Cooperation and the Ibero-American Social Security Organization,

Taking note of the San Salvador Declaration, which was adopted by the First Ladies, Spouses and Representatives of Heads of State and Government of the Americas at the fourteenth conference on the issue “Building a society for all ages”,

Having considered the Report on the Application of the Regional Strategy for the Implementation in Latin America and the Caribbean of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, prepared by the secretariat of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean,¹

1. *Reaffirm* our commitment to spare no effort to promote and protect the human rights and fundamental freedoms of all older persons, to work to eradicate all forms of discrimination and violence and to create networks for the protection of older persons with a view to the effective exercise of their rights;
2. *Promote* dialogue and strategic alliances between Governments, the United Nations system, international and South-South cooperation, civil society –with special emphasis on organizations of older persons– and the private sector, to create awareness of changes in the population structure, especially in terms of the rate of demographic ageing and the economic, health, social and cultural implications;
3. *Underscore* the importance of examining thoroughly and comprehensively the effects of migration on the ageing dynamic of the communities of origin, transit and destination of migrants, with special attention to the impact of migration flows on the migrants themselves, their families, community and society, as well as on the economic and social development of countries;

¹ (LC/L.2749(CRE.2/3)).

4. *Propose* that preventive and health-care measures be adopted to improve access by older persons with disabilities to treatment, care, rehabilitation and support services;
5. *Take into account* the effects of HIV/AIDS on older persons, both in terms of access to prevention, treatment, care and support services and in terms of their valuable contribution in caring for family members suffering from the disease, as well as the role they play as promoters in creating a positive environment, free from any stigma and discrimination against persons with HIV/AIDS;
6. *Support* actively the incorporation of the gender perspective in all policies and programmes that take into account the needs and experiences of older persons;
7. *Reaffirm our commitment* to mainstream the issue of ageing and treat it as a priority in all spheres of public policy and programmes and to allocate and take steps to secure human, material and financial resources for achieving the appropriate monitoring and evaluation of the measures put into practice, distinguishing between urban and rural areas and recognizing the intergenerational, gender, race and ethnic perspective in policies and programmes designed for the sectors of the population that are the most vulnerable, whether because of their economic and social status or as a result of humanitarian emergency situations, such as natural disasters or forced displacements;
8. *Recognize* the need to strengthen national and international capacities as well as international and South-South cooperation to address the problems of population ageing in the different spheres of human endeavour and public policy;
9. *Propose* that studies and research be undertaken to facilitate informed decision-making on the issue of ageing and the preparation of demographic and socio-economic profiles of populations of older persons which enable us to identify gaps in the implementation of human rights and ways of ensuring their full enjoyment and the full and effective participation of older persons in development;
10. *Resolve* to do all in our power to expand and improve the coverage of pensions, whether contributory or non-contributory, and to adopt measures to incorporate greater solidarity into our social protection systems;
11. *Promote* dignified work, as defined by the International Labour Organization, for all older persons, taking steps to secure and allocate loan support, training and marketing programmes that are conducive to a dignified and productive old age;
12. *Recognize* the need to promote equitable access to timely and quality comprehensive health-care services, including, subject to the public policies of each country, access to basic long-term medications for older persons;
13. *Propose* that legal frameworks and monitoring mechanisms be created to protect the human rights and fundamental freedoms of older persons, whether they live in long-stay facilities or in their own homes, and to facilitate the formulation and enforcement of laws and programmes for the prevention of abuse, abandonment, neglect, ill-treatment and violence against older persons;
14. *Propose* humane practices in order to care for and understand older persons holistically, with absolute respect for their human rights and fundamental freedoms, mobilizing national resources to ensure that such care is provided in the context of a meaningful and solidarity-based human relationship;
15. *Recommend* that terminally ill older persons be given palliative care to alleviate their suffering, while support is given to their families, and that professionals demonstrate sufficient sensitivity and competence to perceive such suffering, which calls for palliative measures to control physical and psychosocial symptoms as well as spiritual assistance;

16. *Promote* the implementation of initiatives to improve the accessibility of public areas, adapt housing to the needs of multigenerational and older-single-person households and facilitate ageing in the home with measures to support families, in particular women, in caregiving tasks;
17. *Request* the Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean to adopt timely measures to intensify the activities carried out by the United Nations at the regional level in the area of ageing; request also the Commission to provide technical assistance in terms of information, research and training relating to the issue of ageing and public policies in order to foster and strengthen the efforts made by countries in this respect; and invite the Commission to examine the progress made by countries of the region in applying the Regional Strategy for the Implementation in Latin America and the Caribbean of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing and present its findings to the ECLAC sessional Ad Hoc Committee on Population and Development;
18. *Promote* access to continuing education and life-long learning at all levels;
19. *Encourage* the creation of degree programmes at baccalaureate and master's levels in regional universities in social gerontology and management of geriatric care services, to encourage young adults to build relevant careers in their countries and reduce the exodus of health professionals from the region;
20. *Urge* academic centres, scientific societies and networks for cooperation in population, ageing and development to conduct detailed, diversified and expert studies on the issue, and to organize work and discussion meetings to strengthen the research and training agenda relating to ageing, and set up and support centres for study, research and human resource training in this field;
21. *Recommend* that older persons be included in the processes of preparation, implementation and monitoring of policies;
22. *Request* that older persons be included in activities and conferences scheduled by the United Nations for the next five year-period;
23. *Request* international cooperation agencies to take older persons into account in their policies and projects as part of their measures to assist countries in implementing the commitments set out in the Regional Strategy;
24. *Recommend* that account be taken of older persons in the efforts under way to achieve the internationally agreed development goals, including those adopted in the Millennium Declaration;
25. *Agree to request* the member countries of the United Nations Human Rights Council to consider the possibility of appointing a special rapporteur responsible for the promotion and protection of the human rights of older persons;
26. *Pledge* to make the necessary consultations with our Governments to promote the drafting of a convention on the rights of older persons within the framework of the United Nations;
27. *Invite* persons from all countries and social sectors to individually and collectively join our commitment with a shared vision of equality and the exercise of rights in old age;
28. *Agree* that this Brasilia Declaration constitutes the contribution of Latin America and the Caribbean to the forty-sixth session of the Commission for Social Development of the United Nations Economic and Social Council, which will be held in February 2008;

29. *Express* our gratitude to the Government of Brazil for hosting the second Regional Intergovernmental Conference on Ageing in Latin America and the Caribbean.