
ECLAC

Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean

Regional Intergovernmental Conference on Ageing:

Towards a Regional Strategy for the Implementation in Latin America
and the Caribbean of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing

Santiago, Chile, 19-21 November 2003

**REGIONAL STRATEGY FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION IN LATIN AMERICA
AND THE CARIBBEAN OF THE MADRID INTERNATIONAL
PLAN OF ACTION ON AGEING**

The Latin American and Caribbean countries participating in the Regional Intergovernmental Conference on Ageing: Towards a Regional Strategy for the Implementation in Latin America and the Caribbean of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, held in Santiago, Chile, from 19 to 21 November 2003,

Considering that:

I. GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS:

1. The adoption of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing and of the Political Declaration on 12 April 2002 was a landmark event in the treatment of the issue of population ageing throughout the world.
2. The context of the demographic transition under way in Latin America and the Caribbean reveals that the region[’s population] is gradually but inexorably ageing. This is a generalized process, in which all the countries are advancing towards the “greying” of their societies. Nevertheless, the situation varies from one country to another: some countries are at an advanced stage of population ageing, while others are at the opposite extreme, at an incipient stage of the process. Therefore, although their medium- and long-term challenges may be similar, their short-term priorities may differ.
3. The process of population ageing is the result of a steady decline in fertility rates, inward and outward migration for some countries and an increase in life expectancies. These phenomena reflect societies’ increased ability to avert early death and to enable couples to freely determine the number of children they wish to have. From this perspective, ageing constitutes a success story in terms of public health and the exercise of rights.
4. The fact that the population structure is growing older poses challenges that are made more complex by traits of the process itself and by the situation in the region. First, the population is ageing at a more rapid pace, and will continue to do so in the future, than the rates recorded in the past by today’s developed countries. Second, this is taking place in a context of high poverty rates, a high and rising rate of labour force participation in the informal market, persistent and acute social inequity, a low level of institutional development and limited social security coverage. In addition, greater difficulties may arise in the future if the children of the younger cohorts, who will be the ones providing support for the older generations, are not able to secure enough resources to compensate for the fact that their family networks are smaller and if the State does not provide support for the services that are now furnished, especially by women, within the family.

5. Nevertheless, the increased investment in the human capital of new generations made possible by the decline in fertility rates permits the creation of conditions for the maintenance of family support. At the same time, the decrease in fertility rates has created a window of opportunity owing to the lower rate of demographic dependency and the resulting reduction in the burden placed on the working-age population by boys, girls, adolescents and older persons.
6. The ageing process clearly displays a number of gender-, ethnically- and racially-based inequities that have an impact on the quality of life and inclusion of older persons. In general, these groups occupy an unsatisfactory position in the labour market (lower wages and more precarious contractual conditions). Women, in addition, owing to breaks in economic participation associated with childbearing and their greater longevity, are in a more disadvantageous position vis-à-vis social security systems. Consequently, the goal of gender, ethnic and racial equity is a fundamental policy condition and entails the elimination of all forms of discrimination.
7. The general goal of this regional strategy is to define priorities for the implementation of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, which is based on the United Nations Principles for Older Persons (independence, participation, care, self-fulfilment and dignity) and is set within the framework of the commitments made in the Millennium Declaration.
8. It also sets forth general guidelines that underlie the proposed goals, objectives and actions, including the following:
 - (a) Active ageing —understood as the process of optimizing opportunities for health, participation and security in order to enhance quality of life as persons age— fosters people's self-esteem and dignity and the full exercise of all their human rights and fundamental freedoms.
 - (b) The central role of older persons in the achievement of their own economic well-being calls for their full integration into the labour market and access to continuing education and training opportunities that enable them to narrow generation and gender gaps.
 - (c) One of the hallmarks of older persons as a group is their heterogeneity, owing to differences of age, gender, socio-economic level, ethnic identity, migratory or displaced status and urban or rural residence, among others.
 - (d) A life-cycle approach and a long-term prospective vision must be adopted in order to understand ageing as a process which spans each individual's entire life and which, in consequence, makes it necessary to consider the effects during old age of actions carried out at earlier stages.
 - (e) Intergenerational solidarity is a fundamental value in guiding measures targeting older persons. The aim is to move forward in building an attitude of respect, support, encouragement and exchange among generations.

- (f) The incorporation of the issue of ageing into the development process as a whole and into public policies, with the attendant reallocation of resources among the generations, is one of the adjustments that need to be made in order to address the problems encountered by demographically older societies. In these societies, a new social covenant is required in which the whole of society takes part with a view to achieving the eradication of poverty and a better quality of life for older persons in the region.

II. OLDER PERSONS AND DEVELOPMENT

9. Development involves not only a country's ability to produce a larger amount of goods and services at high levels of productivity, but also the availability and equitable access to those resources for all its inhabitants and the creation of conditions for personal self-fulfilment within a context of security and dignity.
10. Old age represents the continuation of a series of achievements and the maturation of a person's life experience, and older persons' participation in development contributes an interrelationship with their fellow citizens which is enriching for all concerned.
11. A fundamental component of older persons' quality of life is their economic security, defined as the capacity to independently have and use an adequate quantity of economic resources on a sustained basis so that they can live with dignity and achieve quality of life in old age.
12. Conditions with respect to economic security in many of the Latin American and Caribbean countries are insufficient and inequitable, especially for women, rural inhabitants and ethnic and racial groups.
13. Many older persons would like to continue working or pursuing projects that would enable them to generate income, remain active or seek personal fulfilment. In most cases, however, they lack access to credit and to the training needed to engage in such activities.
14. Older persons carry out different kinds of activities that redound to their own and the community's benefit through their participation in organizations composed exclusively of older adults or intergenerational organizations and, in general, they generate positive changes in terms of their living conditions and their empowerment as a social group.
15. Many older persons in the region do not have access to opportunities for continuing education, even though they are the group with the lowest level of schooling and a high rate of illiteracy, especially among women.

The following overall goal is therefore established:

A. Protection of the human rights of older persons and creation of conditions of economic security, social participation and education that promote the satisfaction of older persons' basic needs and their full inclusion in society and development.

In order to achieve this overall goal, the following specific objectives are set, along with the corresponding recommendations for action:

16. Objective 1: Promote the human rights of older persons

Recommendations for action:

- (a) Explicitly incorporate the rights of older persons at the level of policy, legislation and regulations.
- (b) Formulate and propose specific legislation to define and protect these rights in accordance with international standards and the instruments accepted by the States.
- (c) Create oversight mechanisms through the relevant national agencies.

17. Objective 2: Promotion of access, under conditions of equality, to decent employment, continuing training and credit for individual or community undertakings

Recommendations for action:

- (a) Apply the provisions of International Labour Organization recommendation No. 162 referring to the promotion of policies of equality of opportunity and treatment for workers of all ages.
- (b) Conduct campaigns directed at interlocutors in the public and private labour markets in order to raise awareness and promote the productive potential of older persons.
- (c) Generate incentives for the participation of older persons in paid and unpaid (volunteer) work.
- (d) Offer programmes to develop the labour and other skills of older persons at the individual and organizational levels, such as literacy training, vocational training and instruction in the use of information technologies, to help them remain in the labour market and to generate and strengthen income-producing activities and projects.
- (e) Promote access to credit opportunities for older persons in order to help them embark upon undertakings of their own.
- (f) Foster a solidarity-based economic model in rural, marginal and indigenous areas.
- (g) Promote the formation of non-governmental organizations devoted to the socio-economic development of the older adult population in vulnerable areas.

18. Objective 3: Promotion and facilitation of the inclusion of older persons in the formal-sector workforce

Recommendations for action:

- (a) Foster the creation of jobs with shorter working hours that are more in keeping with labour-market demand.
- (b) Promote all methods and standards that tend to make it possible for older persons to continue in the workforce and to re-enter the labour market, even after they have become retirees or pensioners.
- (c) Design measures and guidelines for protecting older persons from occupational health and safety risks.

19. Objective 4: Expansion and improvement of the coverage of both contributory and non-contributory pension schemes

Recommendations for action:

- (a) Expand the coverage and amount of non-contributory pensions in a gradual and sustainable manner, using targeting criteria which ensure the inclusion of older persons who are in more vulnerable positions.
- (b) Include the problems of the older population in comprehensive poverty reduction strategies.
- (c) Establish mechanisms for cooperation among the State, civil society and older persons' organizations in order to uphold the rights of older persons.

20. Objective 5: Creation of suitable conditions for older persons' full involvement in society as a means of promoting their empowerment as a social group and strengthening the exercise of active citizenship

Recommendations for action:

- (a) Ratify, in the appropriate cases, make known, promote and disseminate the international instruments for older adults that are in force and fulfil, in accordance with conditions in each country, the commitments made in this respect at the various global summits.
- (b) Incorporate older persons in the design and monitoring of policies that affect them through their participation as voting members in consultative or advisory councils in institutions responsible for older persons' affairs at the national level.
- (c) Promote financial and technical support for older persons' organizations to facilitate their operation and self-management, especially with a view to meeting—together with local governments—the needs of older persons living in poverty.
- (d) Incorporate the interests and expectations of older persons into the services offered by non-governmental organizations, private enterprise and Governments.
- (e) Support the preparation of studies that quantify the contribution of older persons to their families, communities and society at large.

21. **Objective 6: Promotion of equality of opportunity and access to lifelong education**

Recommendations for action:

- (a) Foster equality of opportunity to facilitate access to literacy training for older persons so that they may achieve greater social autonomy.
- (b) Develop incentives and flexible systems for enabling older persons to complete their basic and secondary education.
- (c) Promote older persons' role in transmitting local culture and history to new generations, thus helping to preserve the traditions and cultural roots of local communities.
- (d) Foster access for older persons to programmes of higher education.
- (e) Create and foster activities for retired older persons, whose occupational and professional experience may serve as effective and useful support for groups in younger generations.

III. FOSTERING HEALTH AND WELL-BEING DURING OLD AGE

- 22. Health in old age is a result of the manner in which people have lived throughout their lifetimes. Conditions and practices in childhood and adulthood with regard to general health care, sexual and reproductive health, nutrition, physical and recreational activity and other factors have a strong influence on the healthfulness of older persons.
- 23. Older persons in the region face different health problems whose course is determined by their social status, gender and ethnic identity and by inequity in terms of timely access to quality health-care services.
- 24. The promotion of health is one of the strategies that has the greatest impact on the health status of the population. However, fewer than 2% of the countries set wellness targets for the population aged 60 and over. Given the increase in life expectancy, one of the main challenges facing the region's Governments is to develop a community health approach that promotes active ageing. A number of instructive experiences with community health promotion for older persons have been identified in Latin America and the Caribbean, but the fact that most of them have not been evaluated or systematized has prevented them from being used to full advantage.
- 25. The prevalence of chronic illness and disabilities among older persons could be reduced through the promotion of health and the prevention of disease, which would result in significant savings for health-care systems and an improvement in older persons' quality of life.
- 25bis. The HIV/AIDS epidemic is posing a great burden on families, caregivers and health systems.

26. Health-care services for older persons are fragmented and do not offer comprehensive care. The service network is not coordinated in a manner suitable to their needs, which means that new users find themselves entering a system designed to address the acute problems of younger users rather than those of older persons.
27. Many countries of the region lack sensitized personnel trained to care for older persons. Despite the fact that all older adults have the right to be treated by health-care personnel who have been trained to deal with the problems most commonly suffered by the elderly, a significant percentage of such personnel lack training in public health and ageing, gerontology and geriatrics. This problem is worsened in a number of countries, particularly in the Caribbean, by the selective emigration of health-care professionals, especially nurses, to developed countries.
28. Family care is crucial for older family members with some kind of disability. It is usually undertaken by a single caregiver, who is usually a woman and sometimes even another older person. This represents an excessive burden which is almost always compounded by other responsibilities. It is therefore necessary to acknowledge the role that women have played in providing services and care and to devise ways of helping to ensure that such activities are also the responsibility of men.
29. The development and enforcement of regulations governing the operation of long-stay institutions is limited. Nor is there suitable enforcement of the human rights of older persons living in such institutions or monitoring of States' compliance with the international obligations they have assumed with regard to the treatment and care of such persons.
30. Research and the monitoring of the health status of older persons are limited. At present, none of the region's existing oversight systems has the capacity to analyse the nature and magnitude of the threats posed by malnutrition, falls, arthropathy or dementia as people grow older. There is no research on risk factors or on changing harmful behaviours among people aged 60 or over.

The following overall goal is therefore established:

- B. Older persons should have access to comprehensive health-care services which are suited to their needs and which guarantee a better quality of life in old age and the preservation of their autonomy and ability to function.**

In order to achieve this overall goal, the following specific objectives are set, along with the corresponding recommendations for action:

31. **Objective 1: Promotion of universal coverage for older persons to health-care services through the inclusion of ageing as an essential component of national legislation and policies on health**

Recommendations for action:

- (a) Define and apply appropriate standards to promote equitable access for all older persons to necessary and adequate health care in accordance with international human rights instruments ratified by the States of the region and international standards approved by international agencies.
- (b) Develop a health system that emphasizes the promotion of health, the prevention of disease and the provision of equitable care with dignity for older adults.
- (c) Set standards concerning the right to receive services and the provision of essential medications, assistive devices and comprehensive rehabilitation services especially adapted to enhance the autonomy of older persons who have disabilities.
- (d) Seek to improve the provision of health-care services to older persons who are poor, belong to indigenous groups or live in rural areas, taking such measures as may be necessary to guarantee them non-discriminatory access while taking their cultural patterns into account, both under the law and in national public health policies.
- (e) Incorporate the health of older adults in the essential functions of public health as approved by the health ministers of the region and the Pan American Health Organization.
- (f) Formulate policies that define the types of care needed by older persons and mechanisms for providing access to them.
- (g) Train and sensitize all health-care workers in the implementation of the changes needed to eliminate barriers to older persons' access to health-care services.

32. Objective 2: Establishment of comprehensive health-care services that meet the needs of older adults by strengthening and refocusing existing services and creating new ones where necessary

Recommendations for action:

- (a) Implement a comprehensive health plan, and progressively endowing it with the necessary human and financial resources, which will coordinate health-care services for older adults at the local, regional and national levels.
- (b) Apply a basic plan for the distribution of equipment, medications, prostheses and orthoses, products and technologies that help older persons to function, participate and be independent.
- (c) Develop programmes in the area of mental health, within the context of primary care, with emphasis on promotion, prevention and early diagnosis, which include community-based rehabilitation programmes.
- (d) Establish appropriate mechanisms for collaboration among the different public and private institutions that provide health-care services to older persons.
- (e) Encourage policies and programmes targeting the female population to include specific topics for older adults, in particular in the field of sexual and reproductive health, using an approach based on the promotion of health and ongoing follow-up.

33. Objective 3: Promotion of healthy personal behaviours and environments through legislation, policies, programmes and measures at the national and community levels

Recommendations for action:

- (a) Conduct nationwide and local campaigns to combat risk factors and promote healthy lifestyles, including physical activity and a balanced diet, as well as health practices — particularly sexual and reproductive health practices— conducive to a better quality of life during old age.
- (b) Develop adequate mechanisms for making information on healthful habits accessible.
- (c) Promote the inclusion of the issue of ageing in formal and informal education programmes from a life-cycle perspective.
- (d) Generate multisectoral collaboration at the local level for the implementation of health promotion activities for older persons.
- (e) Promote mechanisms for participation by older persons in the establishment of community health goals.

34. Objective 4: Creation of legal frameworks and suitable mechanisms for the protection of the rights of older persons who use long-term care services

Recommendations for action:

- (a) Implement legal provisions for the opening and operation of residential centres for older persons and for the oversight of the living conditions, human rights and fundamental freedoms of residents in such centres.
- (b) Strengthen governmental and institutional capacity to establish, disseminate and enforce the rules and standards that should govern establishments that offer long-term care for older persons, especially those with disabilities, in order to protect such persons' rights and dignity and to prevent their violation. .
- (c) Train the personnel in charge of compliance with those standards and with all international instruments ratified by the States and supervise their performance.
- (d) Prepare and regularly update a registry of establishments offering long-term care and set up oversight mechanisms involving various State institutions, as appropriate..
- (e) Develop close multisectoral collaboration in order to educate providers and users of these services about the quality of care and the human rights, freedoms and optimum living conditions for their well-being, together with the establishment and dissemination of effective complaint mechanisms that are readily accessible to users and their family members.
- (f) Foster the creation of support networks for family caregivers in order to make it feasible for older persons to continue living at home while at the same time, preventing the physical and mental exhaustion of the caregiver.
- (g) Foster the creation of community-based options for the provision of long-term care for older persons.

35. Objective 5: Promotion of the development of human resources through the design and implementation of a national gerontology and geriatrics training plan for existing and future health-care providers at all levels of care, with emphasis on primary health care

Recommendations for action:

- (a) Propose that the basic tools of gerontology and geriatrics be incorporated into university education in the field of health.
- (b) Promote the development of specialization programmes in geriatrics in schools of medicine.
- (c) Promote the involvement of existing health-care professionals in specialized training in gerontology and geriatrics..
- (d) Formulate regional and national initiatives for the establishment of practical geriatrics training models.
- (e) Incorporate the concept of ageing as a part of the life cycle and the particular features of care for this population group into primary health-care services.

36. Objective 6: Development and utilization of instruments for improving the understanding of the health status of older persons and monitoring changes in this regard

Recommendations for action:

- (a) Establish mechanisms for the systematic compilation of the available information on persons aged 60 and over which is more fully disaggregated by sex and by ethnic and racial group, to include the following data: sociodemographic features, mortality, morbidity, risk factors for disease and disability, nutritional status, functional capacity, access to and utilization of services, including the use of medications and devices (such as crutches and wheelchairs), personal expenditure on health, barriers to access and discriminatory practices.
- (b) Develop specific five-yearly regional and national health targets to be appraised by means of an oversight system that includes at least the basic indicators needed to monitor them.
- (c) Promote the establishment of an agenda for research on health and ageing and the search for resources for its implementation.
- (d) Develop trained human resources for research on health and ageing, especially in the areas of epidemiology, biology, the demography of ageing and bioethics.
- (e) Promote the inclusion of ageing issues on national research agendas.

IV. CREATION OF AN ENABLING AND SUPPORTIVE ENVIRONMENT

37. The creation of suitable political, economic, physical, social and cultural conditions for older persons is essential for social development and the exercise of rights, duties and freedoms during old age.
38. Within the region, the conditions that its societies offer to persons at this stage of life exhibit serious shortcomings in terms of both the physical environment and the social, political, economic and cultural setting which detract from the ability of older persons to achieve meaningful changes in their living conditions.
39. Although most older persons own the dwellings they inhabit, these dwellings do not meet their needs in terms of liveability, safety and accessibility. The challenge of providing safe and suitable housing for older persons involves recognizing, on the one hand, the diversity of older persons' needs and preferences—including the option and the right to “grow old at home”— and, on the other, conditions of frailty that require care and special living arrangements.
40. Some public spaces are not equipped to accommodate older persons. which discourages their use. In order for older persons to become integrated and exercise their citizenship, especially in urban areas, public areas are needed that display physical and spatial traits which provide a safe and accessible environment. In addition, a new generation of public space design and transport facilities are needed that will enable older persons to exercise their right to move around autonomously and safely so that they can have access not only to social and recreational opportunities, but also to social services and, moreover, will be able to exercise their civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights.
41. Age discrimination is manifested in various ways, including the lack of an express recognition of older persons as passive objects of violence and abuse in some legislation. There is also a tendency to present a stereotypical image of old age that is one of passivity, illness, deterioration, social burdens or a state of being cut off from society which, in general, the media maintain and perpetuate.
42. Informal social support networks are part of the social capital assets accumulated by older persons in the course of their lives and are therefore important factors for their well-being. Older men are highly vulnerable to the risk that their support networks will be lost or will shrink after their retirement. In the case of women, the main difficulties are associated with access to and availability of formal support networks, especially social security.

The following overall goal is therefore established:

C. Older persons will enjoy physical, social and cultural environments that enhance their development and are conducive to the exercise of rights and duties during old age

In order to achieve this overall goal, the following specific objectives are set, along with the corresponding recommendations for action:

43. Objective 1: Adaptation of the physical environment to the characteristics and needs of older persons to enable them to live independently in their old age

Recommendations for action:

- (a) Promote initiatives that permit older adults to gain access to financing for the purchase of a dwelling or adapt their own housing to their new needs in terms of liveability and safety.
- (b) Introduce into national housing construction standards the needs of older persons in relation to accessibility, safety and the provision of public services.
- (c) Adapt public means of transport to the needs of older persons and ensure the enforcement, where applicable, of legal provisions on accessibility, preferential treatment (via designated seats) and discounted fares.
- (d) Introduce, in urban policies, the creation and outfitting of age-friendly, safe public spaces while guaranteeing, through the removal of architectural barriers, their accessibility for older persons.
- (e) Reduce the risk of traffic accidents among older persons through pedestrian and driver education, adequate signalling on public roads and the use of suitable vehicles for transporting passengers.

44. Objective 2: Increased availability, sustainability and suitability of social support systems for older persons

Recommendations for action:

- (a) Foster the creation and improvement of social and community services infrastructure at the local level.
- (b) Encourage incentives to support families who provide care for older persons.
- (c) Sensitize people, especially men, to the importance of creating and maintaining networks of family members, friends or communities during their lives so that they will be able to enjoy their support and company in their old age.
- (d) Promote activities during people's working years that will serve as support for them during their transition to retirement in order to lessen its negative effects.
- (e) Support the creation and strengthening of local self-managing organizations formed by older persons and other stakeholders.
- (f) Ensure gender equity in access to the social protection system and other sources of formal support.
- (g) Facilitate mechanisms to coordinate formal and informal support systems.

45. Objective 3: Elimination of all forms of discrimination and mistreatment against older persons

Recommendations for action:

- (a) Seek to ensure that advertising does not include discriminatory images of older persons and ageing.
- (b) Foster, within the family, in education and in the media, values such as tolerance and respect for diversity based on age differences or on any other social condition such as gender, ethnic identity or other characteristics.
- (c) Foster social action, cultural, civic and other programmes in which a “society for all ages” is a society marked by intergenerational integration and collaboration on the basis of knowledge and understanding of the characteristics of each stage of life.
- (d) Create awareness-raising programmes concerning the various stages of human beings’ lives, especially old age, in order to build intergenerational relationships based on complementarity and mutual support.
- (e) Combat violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation of older persons by establishing laws and regulations that penalize all forms of physical, psychological, emotional and economic abuse, in accordance with constitutional and general human rights provisions.
- (f) Facilitate access to legal and psychosocial assistance for the reporting and punishment of abuse and mistreatment of older persons.
- (g) Promote the inclusion, in governmental human rights bodies, of a specific chapter on the human rights of older persons.

46. Objective 4: Promotion of a positive image of old age

Recommendations for action:

- (a) Sensitize the communications and advertising media so that they will project a positive image of old age.

V. IMPLEMENTATION AND FOLLOW-UP OF THE REGIONAL STRATEGY

47. The responsibility of the signatory Governments is of crucial importance in implementing these agreements and following up on developments in the situation of older persons in the region.

The following overall goal is therefore established:

- D. Each country of the region is encouraged to promote the actions necessary for the full implementation of this strategy and to establish mechanisms for its application, follow-up, evaluation and review, in accordance with their particular circumstances.**

In order to achieve this overall goal, the following specific objectives are set, along with the corresponding recommendations for action:

- 48. Objective 1: Incorporation of the issue of ageing into all spheres of public policy in order to adjust State actions to reflect demographic changes and the aim of building a society for all ages**

Recommendations for action:

- (a) Integrate the issue of population ageing into national development plans and in the planning of measures to be taken by ministries of finance, planning, social development, health, education, housing, transport, labour, tourism and communication, as well as in programmes affording social security coverage.
- (b) Establish or strengthen, where they already exist, focal points on ageing within the appropriate national ministries.
- (c) Promote the creation of focal points, where they do not already exist, on ageing within multilateral organizations and the inclusion of the issue in the work they carry out in the region.
- (d) Integrate the issue of ageing into the responsibilities of government administrations at all levels in order to meet the challenges inherent in the heterogeneity of older persons and their circumstances.
- (e) Act on an ongoing and coordinated basis at all levels by promoting strategic alliances between the State, civil society and older persons' organizations, and even engaging the private sector in the implementation of the strategy, while bearing in mind that the primary responsibility falls on national Governments.
- (f) Work to ensure the budgetary support needed to implement the measures envisaged in policies and programmes for older persons.

- 49. Objective 2: Procurement of technical assistance, through cooperation between countries and support from international agencies, for the design of policies and programmes on ageing**

Recommendations for action:

- (a) Request international institutions working in the area of ageing through the Inter-Agency Group on Ageing, consisting of ECLAC, the United Nations Population Fund, the Pan American Health Organization, the Inter-American Development Bank, the International Labour Organization, the United Nations Programme on Ageing and the World Bank, to coordinate their activities in order to respond better to the countries' requests for technical assistance in preparing national policies and programmes directed at older persons.

- (b) Convene groups of experts and older persons' organizations in each country in order to identify and debate ageing-related priorities and how they can be addressed in line with each country's particular circumstances.
- (c) Request technical assistance from ECLAC and other members of the Inter-Agency Group to support the countries in the preparation of their own plans of action.
- (d) Promote suitable formulas for collaboration in the follow-up to the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing with intergovernmental, international and civil society networks involved in the field of ageing in the region, such as RIICOTEC, CARICOM and all others that work in this sphere, in order to achieve a satisfactory degree of complementarity in their efforts.

50. Objective 3: Design and implementation of a system of specific indicators to serve as a frame of reference for the follow-up and evaluation of the situation of older persons at the national and regional levels

Recommendations for action:

- (a) Collect all available information from censuses and other sources of data on the situation of older persons in the individual countries and in the region and analyse and disseminate this information, disaggregated by age, gender, ethnic identity and race.
- (b) Devise ways to obtain information that can be used to monitor the key indicators of the strategy's results, including the incorporation into household surveys and other national surveys of special modules referring to the quality of life of older persons, in order to appraise the progress made towards each of the objectives.
- (c) Establish a system for monitoring the situation of older persons in the framework of oversight systems developed in other summits or national programmes.
- (d) Request international agencies to provide the technical and financial support needed in order to design and apply instruments that will make it possible to ascertain the situation of older adults.

51. Objective 4: Pursuit and promotion of research on the main aspects of ageing at both the country and regional levels

Recommendations for action:

- (a) Promote the formulation of a research agenda that covers the main issues relating to older persons in the countries and in the region.
- (b) Implement strategies to raise financing for this research.
- (c) Encourage cooperation among the different specialized international agencies and organizations, universities and academia in order to approach the research in a coherent manner.

52. **Objective 5: Request ECLAC and other relevant organizations to promote contacts with all countries of the region and to present them with a formal offer of support from the Inter-Agency Group for the development of the necessary mechanisms for the suitable implementation of the commitments emanating from this Conference.**

VI. EVALUATION AND REVIEW

53. Paragraph 114 of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing states that the success of the Plan will require sustained action at all levels (Governments, civil society, the private sector and other stakeholders) in order to respond to the needs of a demographically changing society.
54. This regional strategy offers a framework for each country's adoption of the measures that are best adapted to its situation.
55. ECLAC, as a regional commission of the United Nations, is in an ideal position to set up links with the countries, the national authorities responsible for older persons' affairs, specialized agencies of the United Nations system and other international agencies in order to coordinate the follow-up process.
56. The Regional Intergovernmental Conference on Ageing was held and this strategy for the implementation of the Madrid Plan of Action was formulated at the request of the States members of ECLAC in resolution 590(XXIX) as adopted at the twentieth session of ECLAC, held in Brasilia in May 2002, and proposed by the Committee on Population and Development. Within this context, the Committee on Population and Development constitutes the most suitable intergovernmental organ.

The countries participating in the Conference therefore agree to:

57. Define, within six months after the end of the present Conference and in accordance with their particular circumstances, the specific targets to be met under each of the objectives contained in the strategy, together with mechanisms for the follow-up of the policies and programmes they implement. The progress made in this direction will be presented at the meeting of the ad hoc Committee on Population and Development to be held within the framework of the thirtieth session of ECLAC in Puerto Rico in May 2004.
58. Request the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, in collaboration with the other members of the Inter-Agency Group on Ageing, to continue to act as technical secretariat and to compile information on the targets set by each of the countries and their follow-up.

59. To review the results obtained with respect to the targets set at the national level on the occasion of the meeting of the ad hoc Committee on Population and Development to be held within the framework of the thirty-first session of ECLAC in 2006.
60. Invite ECLAC to continue to publish its information bulletin on ageing as a means of disseminating and reporting on the actions undertaken in each country.