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# Implementation of the San José Charter in the Caribbean

Review of the current status of implementation of the Madrid Plan of Action and San José Charter and recommendations from the Caribbean Preparatory Meeting, 1-2 June 2017, Trinidad and Tobago

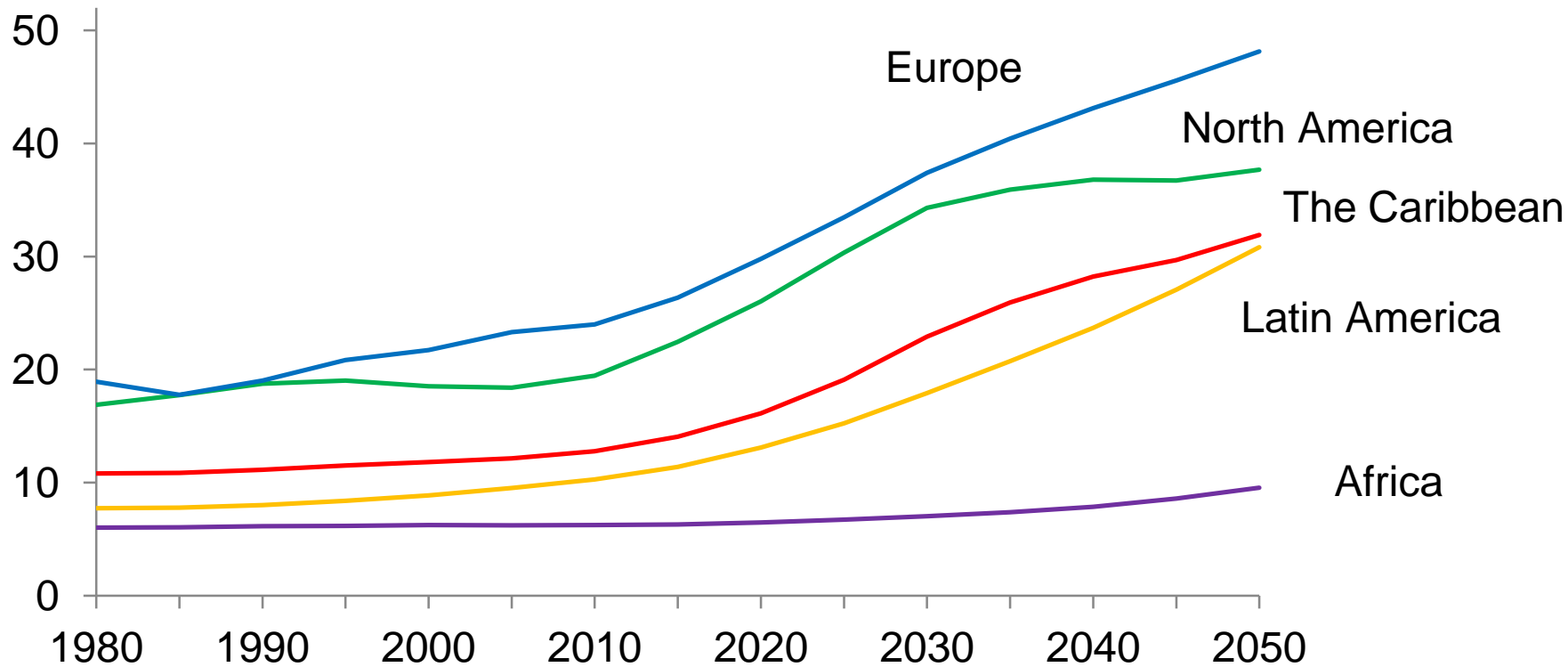
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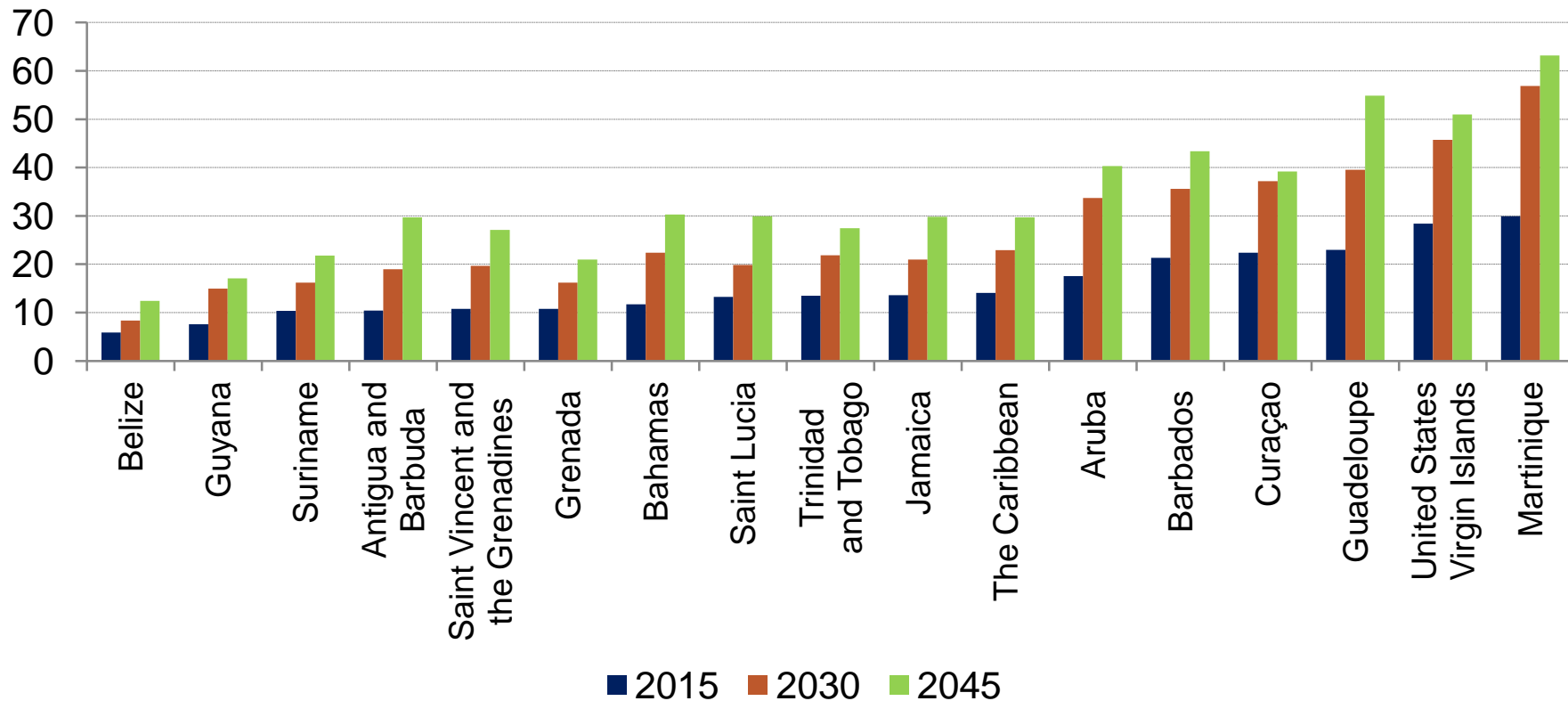
FOURTH REGIONAL INTERGOVERNMENTAL CONFERENCE ON AGEING AND THE  
RIGHTS OF OLDER PERSONS

ASUNCIÓN, PARAGUAY, 27-30 JUNE 2017

# Dependency rates by region (65+/(15-64))



# Dependency rates by country (65+/(15-64))





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# 1. Legal and policy frameworks

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- New national policies on ageing adopted;
- Previous policies and plans reviewed;
- Some original policies have become outdated;
- Other policies on ageing are still in draft status.

**Further efforts are needed to ensure that all countries and territories have up-to-date national policies on ageing and that, where necessary, legislation is enacted to implement these policies. Policies should have regard to recent developments in the global and regional human rights systems, particularly the Inter-American Convention on Protecting the Human Rights of Older Persons.**



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## 2. Institutional framework

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- Primary responsibility for coordinating the implementation of policies and plans on ageing rests with ministries of social development (or similar);
- Specific bodies have also been established, for example committees, commissions, councils;
- And specific sections/divisions within Ministries.

**There should be a specific body within government, adequately resourced, responsible for policies for older persons; advocating for their rights; mainstreaming the concerns of older persons across government; and coordinating and reporting on the implementation of international agreements.**



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## 3. Awareness-raising, data and research

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- Awareness raising activities, in particular on specific international days;
- Awards ceremonies; recognition of nonagenarians and centenarians.

**Existing laws and policies for older persons should be disseminated across the public and private sectors, particularly to those providing public services to older persons, including health and social care professionals, public transport providers, law enforcement officials, and among older persons themselves. There is a need for more data, and research, to identify challenges faced by older persons and to inform policy development.**



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## 4. Care

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- Access extended to a range of health care services for older persons although demand often outstrips supply;
- There is some preferential access to care and medication, especially for those with non-communicable diseases; progress in addressing the situation of older persons living with HIV/AIDS and in supporting older persons with physical and/or mental disabilities ;
- Most Caribbean countries have a government run scheme to provide home care services to frail older persons to enable them to continue living independently in their own homes;
- Efforts to improve regulation and monitoring of long stay institutions.



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## 4. *Care continued*

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**Promote the right to health: preventive care, treatment, rehabilitation and palliative care; programmes for the prevention, care, treatment and management of non-communicable diseases (NCDs), including Alzheimer's and other forms of dementia; promotion of healthy ageing throughout the lifespan in order to reduce the burden of NCDs on the population, the economy and health systems;**

**Development of gerontological and geriatric care;**

**Pay attention to older persons living in rural, remote, and deprived areas;**

**Further efforts are required to improve the reach, and the quality, of care services provided in the home or in long-stay settings;**

**Home adaption programmes.**





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## 5. Autonomy and Independence

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- There have been few laws or programmes designed specifically to strengthen the autonomy and independence of older persons.

**More needs to be done to guarantee the right to equal recognition before the law, legal capacity, to implement regimes for supported decision-making for older persons with mental disabilities, and the right to participate in all decision-making affecting their lives.**



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## 6. Adequate standard of living and social protection

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- Many older persons do not have an adequate independent income;
- Depending on the country, between a quarter and three-quarters of persons over statutory retirement age receive a social security pension;
- In most cases, non-contributory pensions provide incomes inferior to national poverty lines.

**Measures should be adopted to establish a social protection floor, including through non-contributory pension schemes, in order to reach those who have worked, or continue to work in the informal sector or as caregivers, with particular attention to older women and older migrants.**



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## 7. The right to work and access to an inclusive labour market

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- Retirement ages are being increased in some countries;
- Some steps taken to support re-entry to the labour market, for example opportunities for part time employment in the public sector; career guidance; and retirement planning.

**Measures should be taken to enable older persons to continue to work beyond the statutory retirement age if they wish to do so, with the adoption of flexible working hours and flexible retirement arrangements. Information should be disseminated on retirement and retirement planning, including the importance of remaining physically and socially active.**



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## 8. Equality and non-discrimination based on age

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- There is some formal legal protection against ageism;
- However practices such as advertising jobs for certain age ranges are relatively common;
- It is difficult to seek redress.

**Age should be one of the proscribed grounds for discrimination in legal, policy and administrative frameworks. Special attention should be given to discriminatory practices against older persons in the labour market; in relation to their access to, ownership, and control of land, property, possessions and natural resources; and access to bank loans, mortgages and other forms of financial services.**



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## 9. Accessibility, infrastructure and housing

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- Progress in implementing measures to improve transportation e.g. concessionary or free travel, and specialised transport services;
- Progress in adapting public buildings and spaces is hindered by out of date legislation and inadequate enforcement;
- Progress in providing support for housing adapted to older persons.

**More needs to be done to create accessible environments in rural areas and to ensure that older persons enjoy adequate housing and are given high priority in the assignment of housing or land, particularly in situations of disasters, emergencies or evictions.**



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# 10. Participation and contribution

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- Adoption of participatory mechanisms to ensure the participation of older persons e.g. National Committees, Commissions and Councils, and events such as 'Senior Citizen's parliaments.'

**Existing mechanisms should be strengthened to facilitate the full inclusion, integration and participation of older persons in all phases of government decision-making on issues that have an impact on their lives.**



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# 11. Neglect, Violence and Abuse

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- Received increasing attention in the Caribbean;
- Development of integrated systems to address reported cases of elder abuse;
- Development of training;
- Establishment of protective mechanisms, such as shelters;
- Awareness raising measures.

**There is a need to further raise awareness of all forms of financial, physical, sexual and psychological abuse, violence, abandonment, and neglect. There should be legal and policy frameworks to prevent, investigate, punish and eradicate abuse, abandonment, negligence, and all forms of violence against older persons as well as practices that infantilise older persons or that jeopardize their safety and integrity.**



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## 12. Access to justice

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- The current mechanisms to investigate and resolve complaints regarding compliance with laws for older persons and rights violations are inadequate.

**Measures should be implemented that will improve older persons' access to justice through legal aid and counselling, alternative dispute settlement mechanisms and mediation processes. Efforts should be made to raise awareness of the rights of older persons throughout the justice and law enforcement systems as well as among older persons themselves.**





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# 13. Emergency and disaster risk management

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- Several good practices have been implemented by Caribbean States, for example in Trinidad and Tobago, the National Policy on Ageing includes a specific section on disaster preparedness;
- It addresses the actions, personnel and amenities necessary for a coordinated response to the needs of older persons in disaster and emergency situations, with particular attention to those with dementia and infirmity;
- Biannual evacuation drills at residential and nursing homes.

**Promote the inclusion and effective participation of older persons in the design, adoption and implementation of disaster management and mitigation plans and strategies.**



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# 14. Education, training, lifelong learning and capacity-building

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- Older persons should enjoy the right to education and continuous learning but only a few countries have developed lifelong learning programmes for older persons;
- In Barbados, the Unique Helping Hands Senior School was opened in 2012. The School serves retired and independent persons aged 50 and over. It offers programmes in areas such as information technology, arts and craft, music and foreign languages.

**More needs to be done to promote access to lifelong learning.**



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# Main Conclusions

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**Caribbean Member States remain committed to strengthening laws, policies and programmes for older persons, for example in health and social care; social protection; the inclusion of older persons in disaster risk management plans and awareness raising on topics such as elder abuse. These areas will continue to be important.**

**Less attention has been paid to the wider spectrum of human rights, for example: safeguards for free and informed consent for medical treatment; decision-making; legal capacity; access to justice and rights to work and culture. More attentions also needs to be paid to older persons experiencing multiple discrimination.**

**The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development provides a framework which also potentially broadens the approach to ageing and the rights of older persons, as part of the wider commitment to realise human rights for all.**



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