

Fifth Regional Intergovernmental Conference
on Ageing and the Rights of Older Persons
in Latin America and the Caribbean

Santiago, 13–15 December 2022

SANTIAGO DECLARATION

HUMAN RIGHTS AND PARTICIPATION OF OLDER PERSONS: TOWARDS AN INCLUSIVE AND RESILIENT CARE SOCIETY

The representatives of the countries gathered in Santiago from 13 to 15 December 2022 at the Fifth Regional Intergovernmental Conference on Ageing and the Rights of Older Persons in Latin America and the Caribbean,

1. *Reaffirm* the commitment of the region's governments to promote, protect and respect the human rights, dignity and fundamental freedoms of all older persons, without discrimination or violence of any kind, and reassert the responsibility of States to pursue the measures and actions necessary to ensure healthy ageing with dignity and rights, with the greatest possible quality of life and full enjoyment of rights;
2. *Also reaffirm* the strategic role and continued relevance of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, 2002, 20 years after its adoption, and of related regional instruments, such as the Regional Strategy for the Implementation in Latin America and the Caribbean of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing (2003), the Brasilia Declaration (2007), the San José Charter on the Rights of Older Persons in Latin America and the Caribbean (2012), the Montevideo Consensus on Population and Development (2013), the Inter-American Convention on Protecting the Human Rights of Older Persons (2015), and the Asunción Declaration (2017), as appropriate, which, together with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and in the framework of the United Nations Decade of Healthy Ageing (2021–2030), advance efforts to build a society for all ages and lay the foundation for the implementation of policies that help to improve the living conditions and the exercise of human rights of older persons;



UNITED NATIONS



3. *Highlight* the vital role of the Regional Intergovernmental Conference on Ageing and the Rights of Older Persons in Latin America and the Caribbean as an intergovernmental forum that facilitates the voluntary systematic review and appraisal of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing and the situation of older persons and their human rights at the regional level, which in turn helps to fulfil other regional and international commitments on the matter;

4. *Urge* governments to actively participate in the fourth global review and appraisal of the implementation of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, which will take place in 2023 in the framework of the sixty-first session of the United Nations Commission for Social Development, as this is a vital and appropriate opportunity to identify progress and remaining challenges in the implementation of the Madrid Plan of Action in the region;

5. *Recognize* that access to justice is an essential human right and the fundamental instrument for guaranteeing that older persons are able to exercise and effectively defend their rights;

6. *Reiterate* that the San José Charter on the Rights of Older Persons in Latin America and the Caribbean continues to offer an enabling regional framework for public policymaking to improve the quality of life of older persons, that complements the work of other mechanisms at the regional and international levels, and that helps to strengthen protection of the human rights and dignity of older persons;

7. *Emphasize* the diverse and key contributions of older persons to the functioning of our societies and call for adoption of effective measures to combat age-based discrimination and for the elimination of the difficulties and obstacles that remain in the regional context and which undermine older persons' participation in political, social, economic and cultural life as well as their human rights;

8. *Call upon* governments to mainstream the issue of ageing in their development policies, plans and programmes, to implement specific policies for older persons with a rights-based, gender, intersectional, intercultural and life-cycle approach, and to promote their autonomy and independence, as well as intergenerational solidarity, bearing in mind the alarming levels of poverty and vulnerability, by enabling a safe and healthy environment and the highest attainable standard of health and well-being among older persons in the region, in particular older women, Indigenous Peoples, Afrodescendants, migrants, LGBTQI persons and persons with disabilities, and to promote national care policies that ensure the population's well-being and equal opportunities;

9. *Also call upon* States to recognize and take action with regard to the age digital divide, which was brought to the fore and exacerbated by the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, and note that the Economic and Social Council, on 8 June 2021, adopted resolution 2021/10 entitled "Socially just transition towards sustainable development: the role of digital technologies on social development and well-being of all", which recognizes that the pandemic exacerbated inequalities and urges Member States, in collaboration with other stakeholders, to promote digital inclusion by ensuring that the benefits of new technologies are available to all;

10. *Reaffirm*, in the context of the recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, which had an unprecedented economic and social impact on older persons, affected their physical and mental health and exposed the digital divide they face, our commitment to ensuring that public policy responses are based on promotion of and respect for the human rights and dignity of older persons, reflecting the vision and commitments arising from several international and regional instruments and agreements, as well as the contributions of older persons, by fostering social participation and inclusion of their voices and understanding their needs and perspectives;

11. *Also reaffirm* our commitment to the development of universal, comprehensive, sustainable and resilient social protection systems that allow guaranteed access, without discrimination, to quality health, housing and basic services, including, in particular, access to and use of information and communications technology, comprehensive care policies, programmes and systems with an intersectional and intercultural perspective that respect, protect and fulfil the rights of those who receive and provide paid and unpaid care, taking into account global care chains, and that ensure co-responsibility between the State, the market, families and communities and between persons, which are essential for a transformative recovery in the region;

12. *Call upon* governments to continue to advance recovery plans with affirmative actions to achieve substantive equality that foster comprehensive care systems, decent work, lifelong learning and comprehensive health and the full and effective participation of older persons, in particular older women, in policies and actions for a transformative recovery with gender equality and an intercultural perspective aimed at the sustainability of life and for the transition to a care society;

13. *Call for* the implementation of policies and programmes for the prevention, care, preventive, curative, palliative and specialized care and treatment or management of diseases, with particular focus on non-communicable diseases, including all forms of dementia, and for the promotion of healthy ageing, in order to improve quality of life and reduce the burden of non-communicable diseases on the population, the economy, health services and health systems, including the sexual and reproductive health of older persons;

14. *Underscore* the efforts made by governments and civil society, including older persons' organizations and the private sector, to promote and increase cooperation and integration and to raise awareness about issues related to ageing and older persons' human rights, and recognize that there remain enormous challenges —especially in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic— to achieving the empowerment of older persons and their full and effective enjoyment of human rights;

15. *Highlight* that old age is a time in life involving full experience of the biopsychosocial dimension, which must be supported through an intersectional, intercultural, gender and rights-based approach, for which it is necessary to create healthy, accessible and enabling environments, so that people may age in an appropriate setting in which they can perform their activities and develop their capacities, leaving no one behind;

16. *Call upon* governments to take specific measures and intensify existing measures to combat discrimination, abuse, isolation, abandonment and the many forms of violence towards older persons, affording particular attention to those in situations of greatest risk and social vulnerability and violence based on gender, dependence, disability, identity, or other grounds, and to provide comprehensive health services, care, social protection and access to food, housing, employment and justice, among other human rights;

17. *Urge* the governments of the region to consider the situation and interests of older persons, including also the territory, community, ethnicity, race, gender, disability, generational, intersectional and intercultural perspectives, in the formulation and implementation of national policies, plans programmes and projects for the full implementation of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the San José Charter on the Rights of Older Persons in Latin America and the Caribbean, the Montevideo Consensus on Population and Development and the commitments of the of the Regional Gender Agenda, in particular the Montevideo Strategy for Implementation of the Regional Gender Agenda within the Sustainable Development Framework by 2030;

18. *Highlight* the importance of actions that benefit older persons and help to achieve the purposes of the Inter-American Convention on Protecting the Human Rights of Older Persons, as appropriate, and signal that its States parties reaffirm their commitment to its further divulgation and to advancing with the ratification procedures that will enable the establishment of its follow-up mechanism;

19. *Call upon* States to strengthen the capacity of national institutions that govern matters relating to old age, ageing and older persons, endowing them with the powers, functions and resources necessary to contribute to ensuring the full exercise of all human rights of older persons, as well as to strengthen administrative records, to facilitate the collection of data, the preparation of statistics and the management of qualitative information, disaggregated by sex, age and relevant factors, according to their specificities and national context, in order to improve the evaluation and monitoring of the situation of this population group and to strengthen the formulation of policies sensitive to their needs;

20. *Also call upon* all States and the international community to intensify cooperation for full implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, and to mobilize the necessary resources to that end, in accordance with national plans and strategies to improve the well-being of older persons;

21. *Strongly urge* States to refrain from promulgating and applying any unilateral economic, financial or trade measures not in accordance with international law and the Charter of the United Nations, that impede the full achievement of economic and social development, particularly in developing countries;

22. *Encourage* member States to continue to contribute to the work of the Open-ended Working Group on Ageing, in particular by presenting measures to enhance the promotion and protection of the human rights and dignity of older persons, such as best practices, lessons learned and proposed content for a multilateral legal instrument, as appropriate, pursuant to General Assembly resolution 76/138 of 16 December 2021, with a view to strengthening the international regime for protection of older persons;

23. *Call upon* the governments of the region, as a complement to national development efforts, to continue promoting and deepening South-South and triangular cooperation initiatives, bearing in mind that these efforts complement but do not substitute North-South cooperation, and to share good practices in relation to the promotion and protection of the human rights and dignity of older persons;

24. *Request* the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean to strengthen and step up activities relating to ageing and the rights of older persons in all its programmes and subsidiary bodies, and particularly in the context of the Regional Conference on Population and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean, the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean and the Regional Conference on Social Development in Latin America and the Caribbean, to help the governments of Latin America and the Caribbean to adopt actions and measures that ensure the full enjoyment of all human rights, fundamental freedoms and the dignity of older persons, with the participation of civil society;

25. *Recognize* the crucial role of civil society organizations, the private sector and academia in the implementation, follow-up, evaluation and dissemination of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing and thank them for their attendance and participation at the Fifth Regional Intergovernmental Conference on Ageing and the Rights of Older Persons in Latin America and the Caribbean;

26. *Call upon* governments to create the conditions for civil society organizations for older persons in Latin America and the Caribbean to participate in the design, implementation and assessment of public policies to guarantee the human rights of older persons, and to do so more actively;

27. *Welcome* the report of Latin America and the Caribbean for the fourth review and appraisal of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, 2002, entitled *Ageing in Latin America and the Caribbean: inclusion and rights of older persons*;¹

28. *Take note* of the recommendations arising from the Expert Group Meeting “The Ageing Caribbean: 20 Years of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing”, held online on 19 October 2022;

29. *Call upon* States to include and promote the full participation of older persons, as one of the groups most vulnerable to disasters, in the design, adoption and implementation of plans and strategies for the management and mitigation of the global climate crisis and related adverse weather conditions and other hazards, which affect not only their health but also their physical and social environment, and recommend that in the context of disasters in particular, attention should be paid to older persons and to the implementation of targeted measures to assist them in risk assessment, preparedness, prevention, response, reconstruction and participation in education and training programmes, and the collection of disaggregated data statistics and quantitative and qualitative information;

30. *Request* the Chair to report, with the support of the technical secretariat, on the activities carried out as part of this Regional Intergovernmental Conference on Ageing and the Rights of Older Persons in Latin America and the Caribbean and in relation to regional implementation of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, at the fifth meeting of the Presiding Officers of the Regional Conference on Population and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean, to be held in 2023 and at the fifth session of the Regional Conference on Population and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean, to be held in 2024;

31. *Request* the United Nations Population Fund, the Pan American Health Organization and the other relevant United Nations agencies, funds and programmes, as well as competent national bodies, to continue taking action, making contributions and mobilizing the necessary funds, as appropriate, for implementation and follow-up of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing in the region;

32. *Thank* the Government and people of Chile for hosting the Fifth Regional Intergovernmental Conference on Ageing and the Rights of Older Persons in Latin America and the Caribbean;

33. *Also thank* the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, as technical secretariat, for its support in the organization of the Fifth Regional Intergovernmental Conference on Ageing and the Rights of Older Persons in Latin America and the Caribbean, and the Latin American and Caribbean Demographic Centre (CELADE)-Population Division of ECLAC for preparing the regional report and the corresponding documentation;

34. *Further thank* the United Nations Population Fund for the support provided to the Chair and the technical secretariat with the activities related to organization of the Fifth Regional Intergovernmental Conference on Ageing and the Rights of Older Persons in Latin America and the Caribbean.

¹ LC/CRE.5/3.