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and the Rights of Older Persons
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REPORT OF THE CARIBBEAN CONFERENCE ON AGEING, ELDER ABUSE AND THE RIGHTS OF OLDER PERSONS

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A. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Population ageing will substantially change Caribbean societies. With the number of older persons set to double over the next twenty years there must be an increased priority and increased funding, given to policies for older persons. There is a need to plan, and manage, the costs of providing pensions, health and social care services. At the same time, societies can no longer afford to ignore the contribution that older people can make to economic, civic, community and family life. Older persons should have the opportunity to participate in all sectors of society on the basis of equality and rights and free from discriminatory attitudes and behaviours.
2. All Caribbean States should take specific measures to protect and fulfil the rights of older persons. Governments should ensure an adequate standard of living for older persons, promotion of their physical and mental health, and protection from cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment. Beyond their intrinsic value, human rights provide normative standards which can provide a framework for guiding the public policy response to population ageing. Caribbean governments are urged to study the new Inter-American Convention on Protecting the Human Rights of Older Persons and consider signing and ratifying it.
3. Legislation is fundamental to the protection and fulfilment of the rights of older persons in areas such as: social security; equality of access to health care; regulation and monitoring of social care services particularly long-stay institutions; preventing elder abuse; and regulation of the pension and insurance industry.
4. Older people should be included in all aspects of disaster risk management: mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery. They should be consulted on their needs in disaster and emergency situations, registered for assistance, and encouraged to take leadership roles in their communities. Emergency health providers must provide continuity of care and medication to older persons with chronic health needs.
5. Following natural disasters and other humanitarian emergencies, there should be legal protection for older persons, advice centres, and information to raise awareness of entitlements. There must be equal access for older persons to food, shelter, medical care and other services.
6. There is an urgent need to improve pension provision for older persons to ensure, first, that all older persons have a pension income and, second, that the minimum pension income provides an adequate standard of living (for example at or above the national poverty line). To achieve this, governments will need to examine how to increase the levels of funding for non-contributory pensions. Efforts should also be made to expand and ensure the sustainability of contributory social security systems. Barriers to the continued employment of older persons such as compulsory retirement ages and inflexible working arrangements should be reconsidered.
7. There is a need to put in place policies to address the financial abuse of older persons. Social service providers, private sector organisations, older persons and their families all need to be sensitized to warning signs of abuse and older persons need to be provided with information about the risks and how they can protect themselves. Pension providers and banks should consider how they interact with older persons and take measures to minimize the risk of third parties expropriating their income or assets. In some circumstances, reverse mortgage arrangements can be a useful arrangement for asset rich, cash poor older persons, but they need to be stringently regulated.
8. In the Caribbean, the ageing of the population and the growing prevalence of non-communicable diseases (NCDs) are increasingly interlinked. The early prevention of these diseases is central to healthy ageing.

9. The costs, based on current projections, both in terms of health care and loss of productivity are unsustainable. There is need for cost-effective public health policy interventions; and for comprehensive programs of prevention and control. There is need for improvement in chronic care, especially for treatment in primary care to promote healthy living from an early age. Universal health coverage is the principal characteristic of high performing chronic care systems.

10. Health services need to plan for the care and treatment of increasing numbers of older persons. Public expenditure on health care should be gradually increased to meet the needs of ageing populations and ensure equality of access to services. Services also need to be reshaped to meet the needs of older persons with greater focus on geriatric medicine, the training of health care professionals to better respond to the needs of older persons and the design of age-friendly health centres. Palliative care should also be a priority.

11. Social care services should be provided to older persons on the basis of need, to enable them to continue living with independence and autonomy. Such services should include home help services, home nursing care, day care centres and activity centres. The coverage and quality of social care services for older persons must be improved. There must also be greater monitoring of the quality of services and training for caregivers.

12. There will likely be an increase in the number of older persons living in residential and nursing homes. There should be strong legislation governing the licensing, monitoring and inspection of homes. Homes which do not provide an acceptable standard of care should face sanctions, for example warnings; the suspension of new admissions until problems are resolved; suspension or cancellation of registration; and ultimately legal proceedings against those that violate the law.

13. Consideration should also be given to the establishment of appropriate monitoring mechanisms to facilitate the reporting of abuse in homes for the elderly.

14. Governments should strengthen legislation to deal with elder abuse. Legislation should establish mechanisms to identify cases of abuse or suspected abuse and provide government agencies with the authority to intervene in cases of serious abuse. There should be training and guidelines for health care workers, social workers, care workers or caregivers to help them to recognize and screen for abuse, and protocols for referrals and reporting. Inter-agency cooperation is vital both to identify and prevent abuse. In suspected cases of abuse, case managers should be assigned to help victims obtain the support that they need to achieve redress.

15. Isolation and loneliness are major problems for older persons. Older people should be supported to remain living in their own homes close to family and friends. There should be support for home adaptations to enable independent living and accessible transport to facilitate continued community engagement.

16. Older persons should have access to social, educational, cultural and sporting programmes designed specifically to afford the elderly every opportunity to fully enjoy their senior years.

B. ATTENDANCE AND ORGANIZATION OF WORK

1. Place and date of the meeting

17. The Caribbean Conference on ageing, elder abuse and the rights of older persons was held from 30 November to 1 December 2015 at the Fort Young Hotel, Roseau, Dominica.

2. Attendance

18. The conference was attended by representatives of eight Member States of ECLAC: Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Dominica, Grenada, Jamaica, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia and Trinidad and Tobago; and one associate member country of ECLAC, Martinique. Also represented were the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Organization of American States (OAS), the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Secretariat, the Caribbean Public Health Agency (CARPHA), the University of the West Indies (UWI), HelpAge International and numerous other non-governmental organizations.

3. Documentation

19. The study “Ageing in the Caribbean and the Human Rights of Older Persons” prepared by ECLAC subregional headquarters for the Caribbean served as the main background document for the meeting.

4. Agenda

1. Opening of the meeting
2. Presentation on ageing in the Caribbean and the human rights of older persons
3. Presentation on elder abuse
4. Thematic panel discussions:
 - Panel 1: Perspectives on the rights of older persons
 - Panel 2: Economic security for older persons
 - Panel 3: Age-friendly health care and non-communicable diseases
 - Panel 4: Improving social care provision
 - Panel 5: Protecting older persons in the family and the community
 - Panel 6: Older persons in social, cultural and political life
5. Presentation on Ma Pampo and the centenarians of Dominica
6. Presentation of the conclusions of the conference
7. Closing ceremony

C. SUMMARY OF PROCEEDINGS

1. Opening of meeting

20. The opening session of the conference was chaired by a representative of the conference hosts, the Dominica Council of Ageing (DCOA). She introduced the representatives of the three other organizing partners who also delivered welcome remarks: the Director of the Association for the Promotion and Integration of Older Persons of Martinique (AMDOR); the Director of the Economic

Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) subregional headquarters for the Caribbean; and the Acting Minister of Social Services, Family and Gender Affairs of Dominica.

21. The Director of the Association for the Promotion and Integration of Older Persons of Martinique (AMDOR) expressed his pleasure that the conference had come to fruition, even after Dominica had recently suffered tremendous damage from Tropical Storm Erika. He welcomed all participants to the conference informing them that following the Conferences on Abuse of Older Persons organized by AMDOR in Guadeloupe in 2013 and Martinique in 2010, this third Conference on Ageing, Elder Abuse and the Rights of Older Persons was being organized in collaboration with the Dominica Council on Ageing (DCOA), the Ministry of Social Services, Family and Gender Affairs of Dominica and the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC). He stated that the conference presented an opportunity to share experiences and knowledge as well as find common policy solutions to prevent abuse of older persons. He hoped that the participants would be enriched by the exchanges over the two days of the conference, that they would establish new collaborative links, and that this could lead to the establishment of a Caribbean observatory on abuse of older persons.

22. He informed the meeting that after the adoption of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing in 2002, a number of Caribbean countries began to work on issues related to elder abuse such as awareness-raising projects and conferences to bring together professionals working with older persons to share best practices. He highlighted some of the work of AMDOR, a partner of the Federation 3977 of France, stating that the organization was actively engaged in the community with the support of the General Council of Martinique and the Regional Health Agency. He also commended DCOA for organizing training workshops on elder abuse and suggested that this was a model for other Caribbean countries to follow. He concluded that, by building on the work that had already been done and with commitment to the cause, the subregion could protect and fulfil the rights of older persons.

23. Remarks were also given by the Director of the ECLAC subregional headquarters for the Caribbean. She expressed her pleasure at being in Dominica for the conference and stated that ECLAC stood in solidarity with the people of Dominica as they set about the task of rebuilding after Tropical Storm Erika. She described DCOA and AMDOR as trailblazers in defence of the interests of older persons in the Caribbean and thanked them for allowing ECLAC to join with them in convening this important meeting.

24. She emphasized ECLAC's commitment to raising awareness on the challenges that arise from the ageing of Caribbean populations, which is compounded by emigration of younger adults. She went on to highlight issues of economic security like inadequate pension coverage; the impact of deteriorating health; the increasing number of persons affected by lifestyle related NCDs and disability; all necessitating the need for greater investment in public health and social care services; and the psycho-social aspects of ageing such as isolation and loneliness. She stated that these challenges would demand nothing less than a transformation in the way that older persons are viewed and the shaping of a more productive role for older persons in society.

25. The Director stated that Caribbean countries must plan more effectively to meet the needs of older persons and to protect their rights and wellbeing. Legislation and regulations as well as mechanisms for their enforcement are essential to protect older persons from abuse and comprehensive social care services are needed to ensure that older persons are able to maintain their independence and participate fully in society. Governments, civil society organizations, communities, and older persons themselves will need to work collectively to find solutions. She asserted that all stakeholders have a vital role to play in shaping the response to population ageing, advancing the rights of older persons, and creating societies fit for older persons. The Director concluded that it was her hope that this conference would provide renewed impetus to tackle these issues in the years ahead.

26. The Acting Minister for Social Services, Family and Gender Affairs of Dominica extended a warm welcome to all participants and to the regional partners, AMDOR and ECLAC, to the conference. She stated that her Ministry fully supported any initiative aimed at safeguarding the rights and privileges of older persons. She stated that older persons had given their time and service in different aspects of national development and had therefore earned the right to respect and consideration and should enjoy the benefits of a peaceful and dignified retirement.

27. She stated that while the phenomenon of elder abuse was not new, the perception of this abuse as a social problem was. In Dominica, advances had been made in addressing the issue through a number of government initiatives. Some of them are the “Yes We Care” programme, which provides care for over 150 elderly persons within their own homes as well as home renovations; the Centenarian Programme, which provides a monthly stipend of EC\$ 500 towards the care of centenarians; and subventions to institutions that house the elderly.

28. The Minister highlighted the conference theme ‘Building the Framework for a Regional Response’ and expressed her hope that the outcome would be a unified approach to issues affecting older persons and ideas that could guide policy decisions. She ended by recognizing the sterling contribution of DCOA and commended ECLAC and AMDOR for their work in their respective territories.

2. Presentation on ageing in the Caribbean and the human rights of older persons

29. The Population Affairs Officer of ECLAC presented the study “Ageing in the Caribbean and the human rights of older persons.” He reported on the current situation in the Caribbean with respect to the ageing of the population. He described the changing population structure characterized by an increasing rate of growth of the elderly population, a decreasing number of younger persons due to falling fertility, and increased longevity due to improved public health. The overall result is a society which will age rapidly, particularly over the next 20 years. He also discussed States’ obligations to respect, protect, and fulfil the human rights of older persons including the right to work, the right to social security, the right to an adequate standard of living for self and family, the right to enjoy the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health, and the right to take part in cultural life and to enjoy the benefits of scientific progress. The Population Affairs Officer noted that ageing and human rights are intrinsically connected and that the rights-based approach provides a framework for addressing population ageing as well as being an important end in its own right. He also discussed some of the multiple international treaties, laws, and agreements that have addressed the rights of older persons to varying degrees and the new Inter-American Convention on Protecting the Rights of Older Persons which is an important contribution to clarifying states’ obligations with regard to the rights of older persons.

30. The Population Affairs Officer examined the implications of ageing for economic and social development in the Caribbean subregion. He observed that the changing population structure would demand increased public (and private) funding of pensions. He also observed that non-contributory pensions are underfunded and in most cases only provide for a standard of living well below the national poverty line. Furthermore, healthcare costs are expected to increase as the population ages. He also discussed how health services need to be adapted to better meet the needs of older persons. The quality and coverage of social care services have to be improved and mechanisms for monitoring and regulation must be strengthened. Attention should also be paid to the issues of isolation and loneliness among older persons. The Population Affairs Officer described how national councils and associations of retired persons have important roles to play in encouraging social participation. He also discussed the health and welfare benefits of education, cultural, and sporting activities.

31. He then proposed some actions to address ageing and the rights of older persons. There should be more detailed planning for future pension and health care costs. Social protection should address the risks associated with old age including loss of income, ill health, disability, loss of independence, and isolation.

Since these are risks faced by all, the costs of population ageing should be borne by all. Policies for healthy and active ageing are crucial both to constrain the growing epidemic of NCDs and to encourage physical, social and psychological wellbeing in old age. In addition, there should be greater recognition of the potential contribution that older persons can make to society; an end to discriminatory attitudes, behaviours and abuse; and consultation and debate around all of these issues with the participation of people of all ages.

3. Presentation on elder abuse

32. A representative of Federation 3977 against the Abuse of Older Persons and Persons with Disabilities presented on the Federation's work against abuse. She discussed the experience of the organization in dealing with elder abuse in France. She indicated that Federation 3977 is a non-profit organization with 90 per cent state subsidy, with offices and external partners around France. She described the organization's operation, which includes operating a national phone number for reporting mistreatment of elderly people and disabled adults, providing a range of support for victims of abuse, collecting and disseminating data on mistreatment of older persons and working to prevent abuse. She emphasized that the elderly and disabled whom they serve are treated as active participants, not powerless victims. She also provided details about the structure of Federation 3977 which has a mixture of employees and volunteers, and discussed the types of skills that these people have including social, medical, legal, and psychological expertise.

33. She disclosed that most of the calls that Federation 3977 received were related to psychological mistreatment of the elderly and the disabled. Other calls were related to neglect, physical mistreatment, and financial abuse. She also disclosed that risk factors for abuse included aggression, financial dependence, difficult family relations, and institutional dysfunction. She further disclosed that the typical victim is a woman aged between 75 and 90 years old who lives at home, with the family most often responsible for the abuse. The person reporting the abuse is most often a female family member.

34. Federation 3977 expressed its hope that its wealth of field based experience and data collection would help decision makers in their policymaking, help professionals to provide support to vulnerable persons, and help the entire population achieve a better understanding of abuse and how it can be prevented.

35. The Public Relations Officer of DCOA delivered a short vote of thanks. He urged participants to read the background document for the conference and highlighted its importance in setting the stage for the conference. He lauded the contributions of Federation 3977 in sharing their practical experiences and knowledge. He advised that older persons are "mobile libraries" and encouraged participants to utilize their knowledge.

Discussion

Federation 3977 and support for victims of abuse

Discussions with Federation 3977 revealed the following:

36. After each call, Federation 3977 creates a case file. The day after receiving a call, the file is transferred to the appropriate party who then continues the support process for the victim. After that however, support for the victim may take from seven days to two years depending on the response time of the party responsible for the particular case.

37. Staff of Federation 3977 do not work at weekends. Weekend and after hours callers are encouraged to reach out to law enforcement agencies in cases of emergency or call back during work hours for non-emergency matters.

38. In France, the majority of Alzheimer's patients live with family members. Unfortunately, family members are often unable or unwilling to properly support them. Therefore, Federation 3977 also focuses on education programmes on elder abuse.

Centres for the aged in the Caribbean subregion

39. It was suggested that centres for the aged should be established where older persons could meet, discuss issues of interest to them, and participate in physical, cultural or sporting activities. There should also be a centre for the early detection of dementia.

4. Thematic panel discussions

Panel 1: Perspectives on the rights of older persons

40. Panel 1 analysed the human rights of older persons from international and national perspectives. It discussed the new Inter-American Convention on Protecting the Human Rights of Older Persons and also considered how national legislation contributes to the protection and fulfilment of the rights of older persons. The rights of older persons in disaster and emergency situations were also discussed.

41. The Officer of the Department of Social Inclusion, Organization of American States (OAS) presented on the topic "Developments in the area of the human rights of older persons." He informed the meeting of the recently approved Inter-American Convention on Protecting the Human Rights of Older Persons. The convention recognizes that all existing human rights and fundamental freedoms must apply to older persons so that they may be fully included and integrated participants in society. The Officer noted that while the governments of Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Costa Rica, and Uruguay had signed the convention, none had ratified it. He noted too that no Caribbean country had signed the convention. To promote the new Convention, the OAS has therefore embarked on an awareness-raising campaign and is having meetings with governments, civil societies, the private sector, and communities at large. He explained that the convention identified 27 different protected rights for older persons encompassing issues like equality, safety, long-term care, social security, autonomy, education, and culture. In addition to signing on to the Convention, the Officer recommended that Member States adopt appropriate legislation, produce and disseminate information, create and/or strengthen support services, establish or strengthen mechanisms to help prevent abuse, and develop training programmes for government officials and the wider community to deal with issues related to ageing.

42. He outlined specific strategies that Caribbean policymakers would need to adopt in preparation for the demographic shift. He stated that institutional and structural changes would be necessary and that governments would need to formulate and/or strengthen inclusive policies and use disaggregated data for better monitoring and reporting. He pointed out that these efforts would have financial implications, so countries must work together to find cost effective and innovative solutions to reduce the financial burden on governments. Partnerships with international organizations like ECLAC, CARPHA, and PAHO as well as civil society and other organizations were crucial. He proposed that regional workshops be held to continue to raise awareness on the issue of the rights of older persons and to lend support to the new convention.

43. The Deputy Director of the National Assistance Board of Barbados made a presentation entitled "National legislation on ageing and the rights of older persons." In his presentation, he gave an overview of the National Assistance Board's mission to maintain the dignity of elderly persons by providing an innovative range of accessible social support and recreational services to enhance their quality of life within their communities. He described the programmes and services that the Board offers to older persons, including senior citizens' homes, elderly day care centres, home health care services, seniors' recreational activities programmes, homeless shelters, and bereavement services.

44. He explained that the National Policy on Ageing in Barbados, passed in 2013, focuses on areas such as financial and economic security for older persons, health care, the physical and built environments, legislation, research, and institutional arrangements for the implementation of ageing policies. The policy mandates that the social service agency responsible for elder affairs develop a structured and coordinated approach to eliminating all forms of elder abuse. The Deputy Director outlined a proposal to create a national protocol for the prevention, reporting, investigation, and management of elder abuse. He also recommended that services for victims and perpetrators of elder abuse like counselling, rehabilitation, alternative accommodation and support services be provided.

45. He acknowledged that legislation was one of Barbados' weakest points as the bureaucratic and administrative procedures are slow moving. He revealed that in 2014 a Committee comprising representatives from various ministries and public and community organizations was established to monitor the implementation of the Plan of Action of the National Policy on Ageing. The Committee's main purpose was to review the gaps in existing legislation to specifically address elder abuse.

46. There was a presentation on "The rights of older persons in disaster and emergency situations" by the Regional Representative of HelpAge International who focussed on the positive role that older people can play in planning for and mitigating the impacts of disasters. He emphasized that older people's rights, needs, and capabilities must be recognized in all disaster risk reduction and emergency programmes to ensure their participation. Older persons must have full and equal access to relief services in the immediate aftermath of disasters and in the period of recovery. Older people face increased risks in disaster situations due to poor housing, lack of income security, isolation, deteriorating or limited physical ability, decreased strength, and health issues such as chronic diseases and mental health problems. These factors must be taken into consideration when planning for the needs of older persons in times of disaster. He reminded the meeting that older people could contribute to preparedness and mitigation as they may have knowledge and previous experience of disaster situations.

47. He explained that the human rights of older persons needed to be protected during and after disasters and emergency situations. He recommended that policymakers ensure the safety and security of older persons by enabling access to relevant goods and services, including food, water, sanitation, shelter, housing, clothing, and health care. He also recommended that older people be consulted in order to determine their priority needs and to ensure they are registered by local government offices for assistance. Health providers should also be trained so they are able to provide appropriate care in response to older persons chronic health needs.

Discussion

Capacity building

48. It was emphasized that older persons are able to learn new skills and contribute to all aspects of society. Therefore greater emphasis should be placed on active learning, education and training opportunities for older persons.

49. Participants were informed that the Department of Human Development and Education of the OAS had embarked on an initiative called "Virtual Educa" which is an online learning and training model focused on education, innovation, competitiveness, and development. Plans are being put in place to extend these courses to older persons and the wider community.

Older persons and disasters

50. Dominica needs to develop and implement disaster mitigation policies for older persons. In the recent aftermath of Tropical Storm Erika in August and September 2015, there were no mechanisms in place to get aid to older persons.

51. Barbados' National Policy on Ageing does not look exclusively at incorporating the older population into disaster risk reduction strategies. However there are mechanisms in place to evacuate older persons in the event of a disaster.

52. According to a University of the West Indies study on elderly women in post disaster situations, elderly women do not conceive of themselves simply as 'a vulnerable group' in need of protection and want to be actively involved in preparations and mitigation activities. Unfortunately, they are often excluded due to the prejudices and preconceptions of others.

53. Climate more adversely affects the older population compared with the young. Older persons are less able to cope with the extreme weather conditions which have brought on the increases in droughts, heat waves, and infectious and mosquito borne diseases. For example, a large percentage of persons killed by the Chikungunya virus in the Caribbean were older people.

Human and financial resources

The meeting agreed on the following:

54. Financial and human resources should be devoted to ageing as it is a prominent issue for the Caribbean subregion.

55. In Barbados, there are many organizations caring for older persons that rely on volunteers. Awareness-raising campaigns, and utilizing radio and television, play an important role in informing older persons about the services that are available and also promotes volunteering. Many volunteers are secondary and tertiary school students who donate their time as part of school projects and retirees who also volunteer their time and services.

56. Older people should be regarded as assets to their community. In addition to unpaid work, there should be opportunities for older persons to contribute to their communities and receive compensation.

Legislation and policies

57. The meeting agreed that there was a need for national legislation to address ageing related issues in areas including pensions, the labour market, social care services and elder abuse. Furthermore, Caribbean countries should sign and ratify the new Inter-American Convention on Protecting the Human Rights of Older Persons.

Including younger persons

The meeting highlighted the following:

58. Awareness campaigns related to the elderly and ageing should also specifically target young people. Barbados, for example, uses a programme where children and church youth groups visit elderly homes and interact with older people.

59. In Dominica, policies for older persons have sought to eliminate the generation gap and make society more elderly friendly. For example, there was a programme where the elderly shared their skills with young people in arts and crafts and in return the younger people were able to share their skills in information and technology.

60. Forums on ageing should include the younger generation. They should also target men and find ways to engage them more actively in their communities because in some ways men are more vulnerable than women, for example older men are more likely to live alone with a scant support system.

Panel 2: Economic security for older persons

61. Panel 2 analysed how the economic security of older persons could be enhanced through improving pension provision and policies that support older persons in employment. It also considered the issue of financial abuse of older persons: the expropriation of income or assets of older persons by family members or other persons.

62. The Director of Social Services and Community Development of Saint Kitts and Nevis presented on the topic of ‘Social protection for older persons.’ She stated that in Saint Kitts and Nevis, older persons have a high rate of poverty and are vulnerable to economic, social, political, legal, and other risks like inadequate pension coverage, illness and disability, particularly chronic diseases, inadequate housing, lack of social care, and social exclusion. She explained the causes of these vulnerabilities and some of the challenges to providing the necessary support for older persons. These include poor early personal and financial planning, the gap between leaving the workforce and eligibility for social security pensions, and misinformation or misunderstandings concerning social security entitlements. She also highlighted the variable quality of service delivery by healthcare practitioners, the cost of healthcare, the absence of a national health insurance plan, lack of social consciousness regarding special concessions for seniors, and the absence of policies and legislation for older persons.

63. She noted that Saint Kitts and Nevis was making efforts to plan for the changing age structure. At the policy level, the government had made a purposeful move from “senior policy” to “ageing policy”. The new policy language would focus on all issues related to ageing, not just on seniors. She discussed the steps taken by Saint Kitts and Nevis in their reconceptualization of ageing as well as the country’s social protection framework, disaster risk management and economic management. She also discussed the programmes and services that were available in Saint Kitts and Nevis. Health services include primary health and nutrition services; educational services consisting of skills training and continuing education; social services including food vouchers, funeral assistance, local and overseas medical assistance, the home care programme and residential care services. She also discussed the challenges to social programmes highlighting the problem of the decline of the youth population necessary to sustain the non-contributory pension programme, the erosion of family support, absence of early retirement planning, discrimination based on age, and the absence of legal frameworks to protect seniors from financial, physical, emotional, and sexual abuse.

64. In his presentation on protecting older persons from financial abuse and exploitation, an Attorney-At-Law of Horus Chambers in Dominica highlighted the vulnerabilities of the elderly. He suggested using the term “elderly citizens” instead of “older persons” or “the elderly” as a way to reconceptualize ageing. His presentation focused on the vulnerabilities that the elderly face in terms of income and assets. He noted that the most vulnerable older citizens lack financial and family support and are treated differently. He indicated that older citizens are targets of fraud and cited many examples. In order to minimize the risk of being defrauded, he advised that older persons document everything related to their finances and ensure that agreements and contracts are clear and explicit. Trusted family and friends should also be involved to help monitor interactions with contractors. He suggested too that the elderly remain active and engaged in society. Persons put themselves at risk by giving away control of their assets through power of attorney. He reminded participants that power of attorney is only valid when given by a person of sound mind and warned about fraudulent power of attorney. The speaker also advised professionals such as lawyers, bankers, doctors, and others to perform due diligence and help detect and avoid fraud against the elderly. He emphasized preventative protection measures for the elderly as actions to recover assets are very difficult, time consuming, and often the persons affected are not aware of their options.

65. The Attorney-At-Law suggested that ageing should be viewed as an opportunity not a burden. He concluded with the recommendation that an Elderly Citizen’s Charter be created for the region. This

charter would deal with issues related to the elderly including health, welfare, regulations, legislation, and physical protection. He further recommended the establishment of a specialized police unit exclusively dedicated to dealing with “acts against the elderly”, which would fall under the direct control of the Attorney General. He suggested too that training be made available to family and caregivers.

66. Participants also heard from the Project Leader of SEMAVIL (Société d'Économie Mixte d'Aménagement de la Ville du Lamentin), Martinique on the use of reverse mortgages as a way in which older persons can generate an income. He briefly explained the financial security that reverse mortgages could offer to property owning older persons saying that the elderly would benefit from increased purchasing power and the ability to afford services that previously they may have been unable to afford, without fear of losing their home.

Discussion

Living trusts, wills, and power of attorney

67. Meeting participants were advised that living trusts were a relatively safe way for the assets of older persons to be protected and used in their interests although wills could be prone to fraud and contestation.

Policies on care of older persons

68. The meeting discussed the possibility of establishing a policy or law that would force persons to care for their elderly parents. Participants discussed whether this would be appropriate in the case of a person that felt that they had not been well cared for by the parent in the past, and so whether this person should now be held liable for the elderly parent's care.

69. The meeting also addressed whether older persons should make demands on their government. It was agreed that, regardless of family circumstance, older persons were a numerous and powerful block. They should approach government about changing policy to better suit their needs.

Panel 3: Age-friendly health care and non-communicable diseases

70. Panel 3 addressed the growing problem of NCDs increasingly associated with ageing and the efforts of Caribbean governments to meet this challenge were discussed. It was agreed that this challenge will demand an increasing investment in public health care services. Public investment is also needed to address the inequality of access to health care services.

71. The presentation entitled “Treatment and prevention of non-communicable diseases” was delivered by the Executive Director of CARPHA. He described NCDs as one of the major development challenges in the Caribbean subregion, and noted that older populations were at higher risk than the rest of the population. He explained that “4X4” referred to the four NCDs – cardiovascular disease, cancer, diabetes, and chronic respiratory disease – that are largely due to four risk factors: tobacco, harmful use of alcohol, unhealthy diet and lack of physical activity. These “4X4”, he said, are responsible for 80 per cent of the NCDs that occur in older persons. He explained that in addition to the “4X4”, obesity and mental ill-health presented serious challenges for the Caribbean. The Executive Director stated that NCDs were driving unhealthy ageing and suggested that action on NCDs should fall into two main categories: firstly upstream prevention and health promotion measures, and secondly the strengthening of health services for chronic care.

72. He discussed steps to ensure healthy ageing. The 90:90:90 Drive, for example, sought to ensure that 90 per cent of people knew their blood pressure; 90 per cent of those persons were on treatment; and 90 per cent of those persons had their blood pressure under control. Getting blood pressure under better control would reduce the risk of expensive complications like heart attacks, strokes, renal failure, blindness, amputations, and dementia. He also described ten characteristics of high performing chronic

care systems. Of these, he highlighted the importance of universal coverage and equitable treatment as well as the value of prevention over cure and the need for coherent, well planned and managed health care systems. He underscored the need for collaborative efforts in order to achieve healthy ageing societies.

73. The National Epidemiologist and Director of the Health Information Unit in the Ministry of Health and Environment, Dominica spoke on age-friendly services and equitable access to health care. He highlighted the Caribbean as the region with the fastest growing older population in the developing world. He stated that legal and policy frameworks should treat the health of older persons as a right and referenced a number of legal and policy frameworks that sought to address this including the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing and the World Health Organization (WHO) Active Ageing Policy.

74. He lamented the low priority status afforded to the health of older persons and noted the need for systematic and systemic change. The National Epidemiologist discussed the importance of equitable access to healthcare noting that people of lower social strata normally experienced lower life expectancy and worse health. He also highlighted the importance of age-friendly primary healthcare and stated that there were three key areas on which focus should be placed: information, education, communication, and training; healthcare management systems; and the physical environment of the primary healthcare centre. He added that addressing healthcare financing is equally important and that different means of financing healthcare must be considered given rising healthcare costs. He recommended that the health of older persons be treated as a human right and should include access to primary, secondary, tertiary, and long term care. He proposed the use of a self-assessment tool to track progress. He also proposed collaborations among ministries of health, and other national, regional and international organizations.

75. The representative of the Mona Ageing and Wellness Centre of the University of the West Indies, in her presentation on ‘The role of primary health care professionals in detecting abuse and neglect,’ discussed the case of primary health care in Jamaica. She noted that elder health and wellbeing were increasingly important as the population aged. She suggested that ageing and the demographic shift should be approached from a Caribbean perspective. She explained that elder abuse and neglect included acts of commission and omission and that acts of abuse were underreported and therefore difficult to quantify. She stated that risk factors for elder abuse could be categorized into older persons’ characteristics, caregivers’ characteristics, laws and governance, institutions, and societal factors.

76. She discussed a study carried out in Jamaica in 2012, on primary health care (PHC) encounters. According to the study, PHC facilities scored well on most aspects of satisfaction. Specifically, they scored high on respectful treatment and privacy. High scores in these areas suggest that PHC facilities are conducive to reporting elder abuse. Thus, she identified PHC facilities and medical professionals as well placed to identify and report elder abuse. However, she indicated that heavy patient loads and inadequate time to really get to know the patient presented challenges.

77. She stated that research, public education campaigns, training and education for PHC workers were useful tools in addressing elder abuse. She proposed that training for PHC workers include a gerontology component and that screenings for abuse be incorporated into routine examinations. She also suggested that support be provided to caregivers to ease the burden on them.

Discussion

Advocating for older persons

The meeting discussions concluded the following:

78. Countries and territories in the Caribbean region must advocate for the needs and safety of older persons particularly as it relates to the health professions and elder abuse. Older persons also need to advocate for themselves.

79. There are few statistics on elder abuse. Elder abuse is often perceived as a family issue and victims do not want, or feel empowered, to accuse their abusers. As such, few cases are reported and even fewer are solved. Despite this, the fight against elder abuse should continue and perpetrators should be actively pursued and prosecuted.

Panel 4: Improving social care provision

80. Panel 4 addressed the provision of social care services such as home care services, home nursing care, day care, activity centres, and long-stay institutions. It considered national experiences and best practices in the management of social care services as well as how to improve the quality of services and prevent neglect or abuse by caregivers. It also considered the role of the government in the monitoring, inspection, and regulation of both public and privately provided services, and the importance of a legislative framework.

81. The Manager of the Comfort Bay Senior Citizens Home, Saint Lucia stated that social care had the potential to address vulnerabilities of older persons, improve their quality of life, help maintain their dignity, and allow them to lead their lives with independence and autonomy. She described the lack of policies for older persons in Saint Lucia citing the national policy for older persons, which was drafted in 2003 and revised in 2006, but was still to be ratified. She described a number of programmes related to caring for older persons in Saint Lucia: community health aides reached older persons who were shut-in; Home Help cared for older persons in their own homes; social activities helped home residents and older persons in the community socialize together; and partnerships with businesses, groups, churches, schools, NGOs and other groups provided services and care for older persons.

82. She discussed issues including financial abuse, lack of family support, lack of elderly-friendly infrastructure such as sidewalks, bus shelters, ramps and handrails. Also, there were an inadequate number of residential and nursing homes for older persons. The Manager made a number of recommendations. Specifically, she suggested that social workers intervene when they suspect financial abuse. She also recommended that the allowance to older persons be increased along with the number of residential and nursing homes and day care facilities. She further recommended that the Saint Lucia National Policy for Older Persons should be ratified and that legislation be implemented outlining family responsibilities for their older family members. Finally, she recommended that Saint Lucia's Home Help scheme should be fully established with better training for caregivers.

83. The Managing Director of Premium Home and Residential Care Services, Dominica presented on "Risk factors for elder abuse in the context of residential and non-residential care, and identification of elder abuse." She stated that care of older persons, particularly those who suffer from mental decline, is sometimes viewed as a burden on the family, who often provide care but lack training, support and funds. Where older persons are placed in care facilities, regulatory oversight is also lacking. Furthermore, formal training for caregivers is severely inadequate. This situation contributes to making older persons vulnerable to multiple forms of abuse including physical, sexual, psychological, emotional and financial. Further forms of abuse can include over or under-medication, inappropriate use of restraints or confinement, and neglect. She highlighted that older persons often exhibit signs of abuse like fear of a particular person, depression or withdrawal, worry or anxiety for no obvious reason, rigid posture, and reluctance or hesitation to speak openly. The older person may also defer to the caregiver and allow that person to speak on his/her behalf.

84. She shared her own experiences in the care of older persons with the meeting and presented two main recommendations. Firstly she recommended that legislation, regulations, and codes of practice be established to govern and police the running of care residences. She stated the importance of having an enforcement structure in place that would allow for reporting abuse, policing facilities, enforcing laws, and bringing perpetrators to justice. Secondly, she emphasized the critical need for continual training. She

cautioned the meeting that some symptoms of mental decline could be similar to the signs of abuse. Therefore, training is particularly important and special care must be taken to properly assess the situation.

85. The Director of the Division of Ageing, Ministry of the People and Social Development, Trinidad and Tobago, presented on “Monitoring and inspection of social care services, legislation, enforcement, and raising quality.” She examined issues related to formalized legislation and policy in Trinidad and Tobago. In addition to a toll free hotline number and an information centre, the country had established a continuum of health and support services for older persons including programmes and services such as the senior activity centres, meals on wheels, and free access to transportation. The Division of Ageing also engages in research and outreach to build relationships with the rural and more isolated communities in order to better ascertain and meet their needs.

86. She explained that the Division had been successful in using free and low cost initiatives and suggested that the less expensive initiatives played an important role in garnering support for more substantive and costly programmes and services. She also argued that collaboration between government agencies and non-governmental organizations was vital.

87. The Director discussed the importance of the contextual relevance of elder care. She explained, for example, that at the senior centres, older persons choose their own topics of discussion and lead the discussions themselves. The result is that each senior centre engages in topics and issues that may hold unique relevance and salience to its particular community. She also discussed the idea of urban centres, and the expansion of opportunities for participation in community life. She disclosed that Trinidad and Tobago had legislation that specifically dealt with the elderly called the Homes for Older Persons Act. She also explained the role of the new inspectorate and how it will ensure that legislation on homes for the elderly is enforced.

Discussion

National policy on ageing

88. The meeting agreed that national policies on ageing are a priority and should be created in all countries and territories.

Minimum standards, licenses, and training

Meeting participants discussed the following:

89. In Saint Lucia and many other Member States there are no special standards and licences required for persons who wish to run a residential or nursing home for older persons. Moreover, these homes are not systematically monitored.

90. Employing trained staff and ensuring continual training for staff in homes is crucial. However, the owners of these homes have different responsibilities from care staff and consequently need not have the same training and skills.

91. Regulations, including training requirements for residential homes and elder care facilities do not exist in all countries. The meeting further discussed the steps taken by the management of residential homes to protect older persons. Participants also discussed collaborations with educational partners to offer courses and training to staff and to offer these educational packages to other persons involved in elder care.

92. Home health care should be placed under a specific ministry in Saint Lucia and other Member States to ensure its sustainability.

93. The most important aspect of running a residential care facility for the elderly is the level of care given to clients, which is dependent on the level and frequency of training for staff.

Legislation dedicated to older persons

Meeting participants also discussed the following:

94. While there is some oversight of residential and nursing homes, formal legislation is piecemeal and enforcement is inadequate. Enforceable legislation is needed. Steps need to be taken urgently to resolve what is becoming a major issue in the subregion.

95. Although Dominica does not have legislation dedicated to older persons, they are covered under most existing legislation such as The Maintenance Act. In Dominica, there is some supervision of residential homes. Also, homes that receive government funding are visited, inspected, and must submit reports to the government. DCOA also makes unannounced visits to homes.

96. Trinidad and Tobago intends to introduce omnibus legislation to ensure that the elderly are protected everywhere including in private homes, elder care residences, and in the community.

Elderly care programmes

97. The meeting concluded that more males should be involved in providing home care. The demand exists and this area remains largely unexplored.

Participants acknowledged the following:

98. Caregivers are often overlooked as potential abusers of older persons. This issue should be given more prominence in the discussion of elder abuse. Older persons in their private homes should also be protected against abuse.

99. Trinidad and Tobago has a Geriatric Adolescent Partnership Programme (GAPP) that pairs up older persons and adolescents for various activities.

Technology and elder abuse

100. Concern was voiced that technology, specifically electronic transactions, may make defrauding the elderly easier than is the case when transactions are conducted in person directly with banking staff. Therefore, banks need to take steps to protect older persons from online fraud.

Panel 5: Protecting older persons in the family and the community

101. Panel 5 considered issues related to the welfare of older persons in the family and the community, including neglect, abandonment, and abuse of older persons. It also addressed the role of legislation, regulations, and programmes in tackling abuse. Further, this panel considered the roles of different agencies in caring for an ageing population and the importance of multi-agency and public-private cooperation.

102. The Project Leader of SEMAVIL (the Société d'Économie Mixte d'Aménagement de la Ville du Lamentin) from Martinique presented on "Residential and extended care services" and revealed that Martinique had the oldest population in the Caribbean subregion. He revealed that the population of older persons had tripled in the last four decades. He then introduced the development company SEMAVIL, which was 85 per cent publicly owned and engaged in urban planning, social housing, social services and innovation. He explained that, in 2014, SEMAVIL had been mandated to make proposals in response to the ageing of the population and the associated pressures on public finances. He further explained that SEMAVIL's strategy to address the ageing population was based on three pillars: housing improvement, reverse mortgages that would provide older people with an income, and research and development. He

added that the company aimed to reduce the risks associated with loss of income and social isolation through connectivity, education, communication and social ties, and income security. He further added that protecting older persons requires creating an adequate environment for a long lasting autonomy including financing mechanisms, reducing the cost of care; strengthening social ties and community support; developing a social and sharing economy that includes elders; and reducing the need for out-of-pocket health expenditures.

103. He extolled the value of a “sharing economy” where inter-disciplinary and international cooperation was commonplace. He highlighted the need to enhance structural partnerships and networks in order to benefit from economies of scale and achieve a global Caribbean production system and framework. He stated that the sharing economy is based on engagement of individuals, transmission of knowledge, and empowerment. A change in mindset is crucial to include the elderly as active participants and decision makers in issues relating to them.

104. The Project Leader said that SEMAVIL’s strategy included combined primary field research, participatory research, development tools, training programmes, and information dissemination using collaborative research methods. Therefore, the company expected to develop a territorial model, optimize services to individuals in their community, control costs for more competitive services, and enrich knowledge and skills for “better ageing.”

105. The Office Manager of the General Council of Martinique presented on ‘The problem of abuse of older persons in Martinique.’ She noted the commonality of the problem of abuse and stated that a society is judged by the way in which it treats its older persons. She expressed her expectation that cases of elder abuse would increase due to the changing population structure. She stated that elder abuse was a taboo subject and therefore often concealed. She lamented that older persons often face assaults to their dignity including indiscretions, negligence, degrading treatment, breach of trust, financial pressure, abusive commercial canvassing, verbal abuse, and physical abuse. She referred to elder abuse as a “new” phenomenon since the first reports of elder abuse were published only in the early 2000s. However, since 2005, the General Council of Martinique has made elder abuse a major axis of its policy for older persons. To this end, a call centre – Allo Maltraitance Martinique (Hello Abuse Martinique) – which is managed by AMDOR; was established in an effort to prevent and protect against abuse of older persons.

106. She described the many forms of elder abuse including physical, psychological, financial, neglect, negligence, isolation, and deprivation of personal choice and decision-making, and added that abuse can come at the hands of professionals at institutions and family members at home. She explained that there were numerous risk factors, which may be individual, family or sociocultural. She explained too that the elderly suffer from erosion of ties between generations, unemployment, lack of resources, care by untrained personnel, and loss of support as children emigrate overseas. She explained that efforts to prevent abuse included raising awareness and educating the public about elder abuse as well as providing training and support for caregivers in institutions and within the family. She highlighted the importance of helping potential and actual abusers by providing them support. She also discussed examples of the support that is afforded to caregivers and the procedures and processes in Martinique to help prevent and treat cases of elder abuse.

Discussions

107. The meeting discussed the importance of safety and security and the importance of developing strategies that would help support community activism, increase the understanding of older persons and support their participation in society. The meeting also agreed that older people should be supported so that they can remain in their own homes and have adequate incomes, for example through social pensions and supporting them in income generating activities.

Reverse mortgage security and flexibility

108. In addressing concerns about the security that reverse mortgages can provide, it was explained to the meeting that this particular reverse mortgage fund and programme focuses on social redistribution. Further, the fund comprises multiple persons over whom the risk is spread thereby minimising the risk to each individual and affording older persons a level of flexibility. For example, the reverse mortgage agreement includes a provision where, in the event of early death, home ownership can be transferred to another party. On the other hand, older persons who outlive the contracted terms of the reverse mortgage agreement will continue to live in their home.

Martinique as a department of France

109. Discussion focused on the differences between Martinique, an overseas department of France, and the independent English speaking islands in the subregion.

110. The meeting discussed at some length, the many subventions available to Martiniquans to assist the aged. Meeting participants debated whether Martinique's status as an overseas department made it easier for the country to deal with its ageing population. It was suggested that money alone was not the answer to dealing with the ageing population. With innovative ideas and hard work Member States could also take steps to deal with their ageing populations.

111. It was acknowledged that compared with the independent Member States, French citizens typically pay higher taxes. Therefore, it should be expected that Martinique would benefit from more public services and programmes. The meeting agreed that the public services and programmes are not "free" but have been paid in advance by the community.

Non-financial ways to support the ageing population

112. Meeting participants examined the many ways to support the Caribbean subregion's ageing population. They agreed that society should seek out ways to deal with the issue of ageing that do not require extensive financial resources. They agreed that enforceable legislation is fundamental to protecting the elderly. They concluded that while financial resources are helpful, innovation is also important.

113. Participants suggested the establishment of a working group to deal with issues related to ageing. The meeting highlighted the need for community-wide education plans that include the youth in particular, as they will be the ones implementing the plans to care for older persons. The meeting also highlighted the need for public support in creating and sustaining enforceable legislation to protect older persons. They underscored the importance of close relationships and networks to support older persons.

Panel 6: Older persons in social, cultural and political life

114. Panel 6 examined the roles of governmental and non-governmental organizations in encouraging older persons to remain socially active and to avoid isolation and loneliness. It also examined the constraints that could prevent older persons from participating fully in community life. The panel considered the importance of groups representing the interests of older persons and their role as advocates for the rights of older persons. It also looked at governments' engagement with organizations of older persons.

115. The representative of the Ministry of Health of Dominica presented on "Addressing isolation and loneliness: overcoming barriers to full and equal participation by older persons in economic, social and cultural and life." His main aim was to understand the issues of social and physical isolation and loneliness. He described Dominica as the "centenarian capital", described the support programmes for older persons, and examined the ways in which older persons were affected differently from the general

population during and after the passage of Tropical Storm Erika. He highlighted the need to consider policy changes and to shift resources in order to better care for Dominica's older persons.

116. He differentiated isolation and loneliness by defining the former as objective and the latter as subjective. Specifically, he stated that unlike isolation, loneliness was characterized by a desire or need to socialise. Furthermore, social and physical isolation were strong predictors of loneliness. He explained that while all persons were vulnerable to isolation and loneliness, those who were widowed, from lower socioeconomic status, very old, and had sensory impairments were most vulnerable. He stated that loneliness was less prevalent in the more community oriented rural areas. He explained that the mental and physical health impacts of loneliness were detrimental to the elderly and could lead to depression, dementia, sleep disturbances, heart disease, hypertension, and a weakened immune system.

117. He suggested that supporting older persons in their homes for as long as possible and avoiding physical, social, and psychological isolation would help to prevent loneliness. When people are affected by loneliness, steps to address it can include: therapy; participation in befriending programmes, social and family functions, community and civic life; and provision of transport services. He suggested that community buildings and churches may be a good place to host social events. He also advised that loneliness might warrant a visit to a mental health specialist.

118. The President of the Grenada Association of Retired Persons (GARP) presented on "Advocacy, representation and participation in decision-making." She noted that ageing had serious implications for business and stated the importance of having the right perspective and approach to ageing. She also stressed the importance of dignity in old age. The President explained that early lifestyle and habits influenced quality of life in old age. Therefore preparation for retirement and old age should start as early as primary school. She stated that despite proposals to form a regional association of retired persons, no concrete moves had yet been made to this end. However, the associations from Trinidad and Tobago, Barbados, and Grenada had collaborated with each other and had a system of mutual recognition of membership across the three countries. She highlighted the power that older persons had as a group as well as the benefits the associations provide to members like discounts on vehicles, cumulative points on groceries, and free public transportation.

119. She stated that older persons have many strengths, areas of expertise, and are repositories of information. She then explained that GARP's mission is to facilitate the wellbeing of older persons through advocacy, services and resources. The large number of seniors potentially gave them enormous power to advocate for themselves. The Trinidad and Tobago Association of Retired Persons (TTARP) for example, with its membership of 38,000, played a major role in the political process and influenced voting and budget policies. The membership of GARP is small but growing. It offers classes in salsa dancing, yoga, information technology skills, and cellular phone skills, lectures, trips to Cuba, Martinique, and Trinidad and Tobago for various purposes, and preventative healthcare. In terms of resources, she stated that GARP would like to see organisations like theirs prioritized by government. The President of GARP concluded with the assertion that associations such as hers can be a great resource for older persons.

120. The Executive Director of the National Council for Senior Citizens, Jamaica made a presentation on "Programmes to facilitate active ageing and social participation." She described ageing as both an opportunity and a challenge both economically and socially. She asserted that older persons must be included in all aspects of national development. She provided a detailed description of the Council, established in 1976 by the Government of Jamaica as a unit within the Ministry of Labour and Social Security. The ageing of the population affects everyone and she stated that the Government of Jamaica was taking a range of actions to enhance the quality of life of older persons. She also mentioned that Jamaica had regulation in place to govern and guide elderly homes and that there was an oversight council with a government representative member.

121. The Council seeks to ensure that older persons' basic human needs are met, that they are protected from abuse and violence, and that they are treated as a resource and not a burden. The Council works with the government to create programmes that provide mental, physical, spiritual, cultural, and social stimulation in an effort to promote healthy and active ageing and reduce isolation and loneliness. There are health fairs, games, physical exercise classes and competitions as well as income generating opportunities to maintain financial independence like agriculture, animal rearing, handicrafts, and access to grants. There are also intergenerational educational exchange activities where older and younger persons teach each other, and classes on topics like retirement planning. To combat isolation, groups and day activity centres are spread out geographically to allow for island-wide access to programmes and activities, which are often planned and executed by the older persons themselves. She also described the many ways in which older persons participate in political life; the many benefits that Jamaica has to offer its older persons including discounts on transportation, medications, and other basic needs; and the role of volunteers in fulfilling the work of the Council.

Discussion

Dependency ratio

122. It was suggested that the dependency ratio could be misleading as an indicator of the effect of ageing on a country's economy because many persons aged over 60 and 65 are employed and therefore are actively involved in and contribute to the economy.

Terminology

The meeting discussed the following:

123. Some persons deny being a "senior citizen" and do not regard themselves as a member of this group. Therefore, they do not participate in the programmes and activities that are available to them.

124. Contrary to the United Nations decision to replace "senior citizen" with "older person", some preferred the term "senior citizen" as it seemed the most uplifting of the three phrases.

Planning for retirement

The meeting agreed on the following:

125. Active retirement planning is important. Youth and young adults should be targeted in awareness and educational programmes on financial responsibility and retirement planning. Retirement organizations should seek to recruit people while they are still working.

126. Creative and innovative methods to support individuals in achieving financial stability and sustainability must be examined as should ways to incentivize working people to contribute to their own retirement. Support should also be provided to families to enable them to care for elderly relatives, for example through flexible working arrangements. In addition, emotional and psychological planning and adapting to a different lifestyle are important, yet often overlooked, aspects of retirement planning.

Environment and lifestyle

Participants concluded the following:

127. The environment may pose some problems for the elderly. For example noise and smoke from burning are problematic yet are rarely discussed. The quality of social interactions is also important and older persons need to spend time with people who make them happy. Older persons should strive to be independent for as long as possible. They should take responsibility for ensuring that they understand their pension and other entitlements and not assume that others will take care of them.

5. Ma Pampo and the centenarians of Dominica

128. The Special Advisor to the Dean and Chancellor of Ross University School of Medicine, Dominica, examined the country's higher than average centenarian population. He explained that Dominica had over 20 centenarians, which taking into account the population of Dominica was a high percentage, higher than most western countries and similar to the extreme longevity seen in Okinawa and Sardinia. He stated that one particularly well-known centenarian, Ma Pampo, was believed to have been the oldest person in the world at 126 years of age in 2001. However, she was never recognized as such because she lacked the officially accepted documentation to prove her age. He noted that migration was not a significant factor in explaining the prevalence of centenarians, that the centenarians were spread all over the island, and that no two were directly related. He proceeded by describing the methodology of his study of Dominica's centenarians.

129. Based on his detailed research, he presented ten general characteristics of the centenarians: women were more likely to live to 100 years than men; all male centenarians were married; all of the women had children and most had multiple children; all but one centenarian had physical jobs like farming; many of them had the habit of taking an alcohol drink ("ti-ponche") before the main meal in keeping with a common tradition in Dominica; smoking was uncommon; no one was obese; women had outgoing personalities and were active and engaged in their community; none were bedridden or suffered fractured limbs; and none suffered from the NCDs. He also provided summary advice that may help promote longevity: an active, athletic lifestyle that consisted of lifelong cardiovascular fitness, low body mass index (BMI); a diet high in proteins like fish as opposed to bacon, fibre, fresh fruits, root vegetables and low in sugar and salt; a high quality environment without air and water pollution; a low stress, low population density environment with no overcrowding; access to forests, rivers and marine resources; and low rates of tobacco use.

Discussion

130. Discussion focussed on how to reach 100 years of age. The meeting discussed, in some detail, the lifestyle choices that contribute to longevity.

6. Presentation of the conclusions of the conference

131. The conclusions and recommendations of the conference (reproduced above), which were distilled from the information presented and the rich discussions which had taken place, were presented by the Director of the ECLAC subregional headquarters for the Caribbean. She also took the opportunity to thank the Dominica Council on Ageing in collaboration with the Ministry for Social Services, Family and Gender Affairs for hosting the conference and for the support of Association for the Promotion and Integration of Older Persons (AMDOR) of Martinique. Finally, she urged all the organizations represented at the conference to work together to ensure that Caribbean countries and territories are prepared for the ageing of their populations, and that they strengthen protection for older persons against elder abuse and other human rights abuses.

7. Closing ceremony

132. Closing remarks were delivered by the former Deputy Director of AMDOR. She expressed her satisfaction at seeing Caribbean countries coming together to discuss abuse of older persons and the disabled. She explained that abuse was not always intentional and that factors like exhaustion and family conflict could inadvertently lead to abusive behaviour. She then stated AMDOR's goal to eliminate elder abuse.

133. She lauded the collaboration of AMDOR, DCOA, and ECLAC in organizing the conference and suggested that they could further collaborate to:

- Train volunteers and care professionals in the psychology and needs of older persons in order to support healthy ageing.
- Detect the conditions and reasons that precipitate abuse.
- Uncover the effects of unemployment and natural disasters on the security of older persons.
- Establish an observatory of elder abuse for the Caribbean.
- Examine legislation to identify where it could be adapted to better suit the ageing population.
- Use 15 June, World Elder Abuse Awareness Day, to promote strategies, guides and recommendations to address elder abuse and carry out other awareness raising.
- Elaborate a common charter for the wellbeing of the elderly.
- Continue to fight for the elderly. She suggested that the conference reconvene in two or three years in Trinidad and Tobago with all Caribbean countries present. The conference should focus on clinical studies of abuse, how to treat and prevent it, and the development of policies to address it.

134. Finally, she thanked everyone at the conference including the organizers, donors, and participants then announced that the First Caribbean Conference on Seniors and Tourism would take place in Dominica, in June or July 2016.

135. Final closing remarks were delivered by the President of DCOA. She expressed sincere thanks to everyone for helping ensure a successful conference. She especially thanked those with whom DCOA had partnered and asked that they continue to work together to advance the recommendations made at the conference. The President expressed her hope that the Working Group would be realized and that the countries and organisations of the Caribbean subregion would continue to collaborate in an effort to solve the problems related to ageing and elder abuse. She commended the manner in which the disparate groups came together at the conference. The president of DCOA thanked everyone for helping to organize the meeting, and for participating in it, adding that she looked forward to continuing the close relationships in the future. She especially thanked AMDOR, ECLAC, and the Government of Dominica for helping make the conference a success.

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St. Joseph Senior Citizens, Dominica

- Vinna Royer, Member.

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Grenada Association of Retired Persons

- Carol Vazquez*, President. E-mail: GARP.grenada@gmail.com

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- Dianne Telemaque, Member.

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Annex II**PROGRAMME****Day 1**

0800 hrs – 0900 hrs	Registration
0900 hrs – 0930 hrs	<p>Official Opening Chairperson: Ophelia Olivacce-Marie, Dominica Council of Ageing (DCOA)</p> <p>National Anthem; Invocation; and Welcome Statements by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Frantz Remy, Director, Association for the Promotion and Integration of Older Persons of Martinique (AMDOR) • Diane Quarless, Director, Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) Subregional headquarters for the Caribbean • Justina Charles, Ag. Minister for Social Services, Family and Gender Affairs, Dominica
0930 hrs – 1000 hrs	<p>Presentation on Ageing in the Caribbean and the Rights of Older Persons</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Francis Jones, Statistics and Social Development Unit, ECLAC subregional headquarters for the Caribbean
1000 hrs – 1030 hrs	<p>Presentation on Elder Abuse</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Caroline Lemoine, Federation 3977 against the Abuse of Older Persons and Persons with Disabilities, France
1030 hrs – 1100 hrs	<i>Coffee Break</i>
1100 hrs – 1145 hrs	<p>Panel 1: Perspectives on the Rights of Older Persons Moderator: Senator Winston Garraway, Minister of State in the Ministry of Youth, Sport and Ecclesiastic Affairs of Grenada</p> <p>Developments in the area of the human rights of older persons</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adam Siegel, Department of Social Inclusion, Organisation of American States <p>National legislation on ageing and the rights of older persons</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Andrew Browne, Deputy Director, National Assistance Board, Barbados <p>The rights of older persons in disaster and emergency situations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jeffrey James, Regional Representative, HelpAge International
1145 hrs – 1230 hrs	Discussion
1230 hrs – 1330 hrs	<i>Lunch</i>
1330 hrs – 1415 hrs	Panel 2: Economic Security for Older Persons

Moderator: Collin Bully, Dominica Council on Ageing

Social protection for older persons

- Azilla Clarke, Director of the Department of Social Services and Community Development, St Kitts and Nevis

Protecting older persons from financial abuse and exploitation

- Tiyani Behanzin, Attorney-At-Law, Dominica

1415 hrs – 1500 hrs

Discussion

1500 hrs – 1530 hrs

Coffee Break

1530 hrs – 1615 hrs

Panel 3: Age-friendly Health Care and Non-Communicable Diseases

Moderator: Adora Toussaint, Health Educator, Ministry of Health and Environment, Dominica

Treatment and prevention of non-communicable diseases

- James Hospedales, Executive Director, Caribbean Public Health Agency (CARPHA)

Age-friendly services and equitable access to health care

- Paul Ricketts, National Epidemiologist and Director, Health Information Unit, Ministry of Health and Environment, Dominica

The role of primary health care professionals in detecting abuse and neglect

- Douladel Willie-Tyndale, Mona Ageing and Wellness Centre, Faculty of Medical Sciences, University of the West Indies, Jamaica

1615 hrs – 1700 hrs

Discussion

1700 hrs

Reception

Day 2

Summary Day 1

0900 hrs – 0945 hrs

Panel 4: Improving Social Care Provision

Moderator: Anya Thomas, Senior Project Officer, Sustainable Development CARICOM Secretariat

Social care provision for older persons

- Gertrude Gustave, Manager, Comfort Bay Senior Citizens' Home, Saint Lucia

Risk factors for elder abuse in the context of residential and non-residential care; and identification of elder abuse.

- Marie-Therese Junkerre, Managing Director, Premium Home and Residential Care Services, Dominica

Monitoring and inspection of social care services; legislation; enforcement;

	and raising quality
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jennifer Rouse, Director of the Division of Ageing, Ministry of the People & Social Development, Trinidad & Tobago
0945 hrs – 1030 hrs	Discussion
1030 hrs – 1100 hrs	<i>Coffee Break</i>
1100 hrs – 1145 hrs	<p>Panel 5: Protecting Older Persons in the Family and the Community Moderator: Richard Blewitt, UN Resident Coordinator and UNDP Resident Representative, Trinidad and Tobago</p> <p>Residential and extended care services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emmanuel Joseph, Semavil <p>The problem of abuse of older persons in Martinique</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marie Antoinette Coma, Conseil Général of Martinique <p>Policies to address elder abuse, multi-agency cooperation to identify and prevent abuse; legislation on elder abuse</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Samantha Marshall, Minister, Ministry of Social Transformation and Human Resource Development, Antigua and Barbuda
1145 hrs – 1230 hrs	Discussion
1230 hrs – 1330 hrs	<i>Lunch</i>
1330 hrs – 1430 hrs	<p>Panel 6: Older persons in Social, Cultural and Political Life Moderator: Jeffrey James, HelpAge International</p> <p>Addressing isolation and loneliness; overcoming barriers to full and equal participation by older persons in economic, social and cultural life</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Griffin Benjamin, Psychiatrist, Dominica <p>Advocacy, representation and participation in decision-making</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carol Vasquez, President, Grenada Association of Retired Persons <p>Programmes to facilitate active ageing and social participation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Angella Toyloy, Executive Director, National Council for Senior Citizens, Jamaica
1430 hrs – 1500 hrs	Discussion
1500 hrs – 1530 hrs	<i>Coffee Break</i>
1530hrs – 1600 hrs	<p>Ma Pampo and the Centenarians of Dominica</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A presentation by Gerald Grell, Special Advisor to the Dean & Chancellor, Ross University School of Medicine, Dominica
1600 hrs – 1700 hrs	<p>Presentation of the conclusions of the conference</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diane Quarless , ECLAC

1700 hrs

Closing Ceremony

Chairperson Zetma Toussaint, President, DCOA Inc.

Statements by:

- Paulette Kneur, former Deputy Director, AMDOR