

**Chair, Distinguished Colleagues from ECLAC,
National Focal Points, Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Good morning.

It is a pleasure to join you today for this important briefing
as we prepare for the **fifth review and appraisal of the**

Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing

(MIPAA). Let me begin by commending the Economic

Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean

(ECLAC) for the development of this comprehensive

guide, which will be instrumental in supporting Member

States in this critical reporting process.

Aging as a Development Reality

The Caribbean is aging **rapidly and unevenly**. This

demographic transition, driven by declining fertility and

increasing life expectancy, requires us to rethink how we design policies, allocate resources, and support populations across the life course.

From a UNFPA perspective, **population ageing is not just a trend—it is a defining reality that shapes many areas of development**, from our labour markets and health systems to gender equality, care responsibilities, and even migration and the strength of our workforce.

Importantly, this connects directly to Outcome 4 of UNFPA's Strategic Plan for 2026–2029. It commits to ensuring that **'By 2029, adaptation to demographic change has strengthened the resilience of societies for current and future generations, while upholding individual rights and choices'**.

This is particularly important for the Caribbean, where these demographic changes are happening quickly and are already having a real social and economic impact.

For this reason, aging should **not be framed through narratives of pressure or burden, but through the lens of demographic resilience**. What matters is not only that populations are aging, but whether countries are prepared to anticipate, understand, and respond to these changes in ways that are sustainable, equitable, and grounded in rights.

A Rights-Based Approach

At its core, this is about **building societies that can adapt to change while protecting people's rights and reducing inequalities.** For UNFPA, this means taking a life-course approach—recognizing that aging with dignity starts long before old age, through access to health services, education, decent work, and the ability for people to make choices throughout their lives.

We also recognise that older persons are not all the same. Some, especially older women, persons with disabilities, and those in underserved communities, face greater challenges and need more targeted support.

Ultimately, it is about fairness across generations—ensuring people are supported at every stage of life and that no one is left behind.

The Care Economy and Gender Dimensions

A key dimension in aging across the Caribbean is the care economy. As the need for care grows, the burden still falls mostly on women and girls. We must change this—by recognising care as an economic activity, by reducing, and sharing unpaid care work, and by investing in stronger, more inclusive care systems that support caregivers.

Addressing this is essential if we are to build resilient societies that can truly adapt to demographic change.

Data, Evidence, and Demographic Intelligence

The preparation of voluntary national reports presents a key opportunity to strengthen not only data systems, but demographic intelligence, the ability to translate population data into forward-looking insights for policy and planning.

This includes strengthening disaggregated data systems, but also building national capacity for projections, foresight, and policy-relevant analysis that can inform decisions across sectors.

UNFPA stands ready to support countries in strengthening data and using population insights to better plan for the future. This is essential, because real resilience comes from anticipating change—not simply reacting to it. This also requires a stronger focus on the implications of aging for the sustainability of public

policies. Countries will need to better understand future demand, fiscal pressures, and the cost of inaction in areas such as health systems, long-term care, and social protection.

This is not about reducing ageing to a financial issue, but about ensuring that rights can be sustained through viable and forward-looking policy choices.

Partnerships and Inclusive Processes

We welcome the focus on inclusive, whole-of-society approaches. National efforts must bring together different sectors, civil society, and the voices of older persons, so that real experiences shape the response. This way, the process goes beyond reporting and leads to meaningful

change. Because investing in care systems is not optional—it is central to inclusive growth, gender equality, and building resilient societies.

UNFPA's Commitment

In closing, I want to reaffirm UNFPA's commitment to supporting Member States by providing technical expertise, strengthening data and analysis, and promoting policies that respond to demographic change while protecting rights.

We will continue working closely with ECLAC and our partners to help countries not only report on progress, but also take meaningful action.

Adapting to population aging is not only a necessity, but it is an opportunity to build a place where people can age with dignity, remain active and engaged, and where rights and choices are protected at every stage of life.

UNFPA stands ready to support countries in this shared effort, with evidence, partnerships, and a strong commitment to demographic resilience.

I thank you.