# Population Ageing in the Caribbean
## *Issues and Implications*

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"Within 10 years, for the first time in human history, there will be more people aged 65 and over in the world than children under 5".

Richard Blewitt, Chief Executive of HelpAge International.

**Older people are going places**

**we're by their side**

# Demographics

**Global**

- A July 22 report estimates 506 million people worldwide were aged 65 and over in mid-2008.

- By 2040, that number will become 1.3 billion.

- Seventy-six percent of these persons will be living in developing countries.

- In just over 30 years, the proportion of older people will double to become 14% of the total world population.

# Demographics cont'd

**Caribbean**

- The Caribbean has one of the fastest-growing older populations in the developing world.

- In 2000, 10% of the population in several Caribbean countries was over sixty (60) years old.

- It is expected  by 2010, 10% of most of the populations in the region will be 60 years and over with the exception of Haiti, Belize, Dominican Republic and Guyana. (UN, 2006)

# Factors Contributing to An Expanding Ageing Population

1) Declining birth rates

2) Increased life expectancy due to improved health standards

3) High rates of out-migration by young adults

4) Significant rates of inward migration of returning residents of retirement age.

# Demographic Transition: Critical Issues Affecting Older People in the Caribbean

- Chronic poverty – especially among women – due to a lifetime of poverty.

- As income through work declines with age, more older people face hunger and destitution.

-This is aggravated with increases in the cost of living and declining family support.

- Lack of economic security and livelihoods

- Chronic illness and limited access to health care and medication

- Poor housing

- Social isolation, and lack of social integration and participation

- Neglect and abuse.

**We live in an ageing world**

**don't let it be an ageist world**

# Age Helps – Older Persons as Resources

# Contributions of Older People

- Family stability
- Provide shelter and financial assistance to adult children and grand children

(Population census in the Caribbean show that in some cases, 60% and more of OP are heads of households).

- Many older persons perform role of care givers, providing emotional, material and social support, where parents are absent due to death, abandonment, migration or incarceration.

# The Way Forward

- Policies on Ageing

- Focal Point on Ageing

- Clearly Articulated Plans and Programmes

# The Way Forward

- Need for Appropriate Policy Responses
  - social protection measures, particularly social pension.
  - support for productive capacities of older people with an emphasis on livelihood development.
  - recognition that older people are a heterogeneous group, and not just passive beneficiaries of welfare support.

# Focal Point

- Clearly defined organisational framework to deliver programmes and services to older people.

- Best practices exist:

- Trinidad and Tobago

- Jamaica

- Belize

- Grenada

# Plans and Programmes

- INCOME SECURITY

- LIVELIHOOD DEVELOPMENT

- HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

- minimum standards of care

- IMPROVED LIVING CONDITIONS

- SUPPORT IN EMERGENCIES

# Social Protection

- Large number of older persons do not qualify for pensions because they worked in the informal sector.

-  Universal social pensions will help to achieve the first target of the Millennium Development Goal and MIPAA by reducing by half the number of older people living in poverty.

**With a little support**

**older people make a big difference**

# Access To Health and Social Care Services

- Geriatric Care
- Diagnostic and laboratory services
- Affordable Drugs
- Home care
- Community Care Services



When you give to older people they give back

# Livelihoods



**Teach older people new skills**

**and they regain their dignity**

- Programmes for Older People need to have a development focus with data gathering, and monitoring and evidence frameworks as key elements.

- Intergenerational

- Demonstrate strong collaboration between government, NGOs and Communities

- Rights Based: leading to a CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF OLDER PEOPLE

# Thank You