

# Status Report

on the implementation of the San Jose  
Charter on the Rights of Older persons and  
the Madrid International Plan of Action on  
Ageing

# Situation

- Older persons total 341,070 representing 12.6 per cent of the population
- The cohort 60 years and older the fastest growing demographic segment
- largest growth in over 80 sub-population (20.8%)
- Increase in chronic diseases
- improved overall health status

Mrs. Violet Mosse-Brown, 117 yrs old



## Jamaica continues

- to hold to the principle that the 60 years and older cohort is an important contributor to the social, economic, cultural and political landscape.
- to explore ways to further support the older person and to create a more enabling environment to improve quality of life.

# Policy environment

- The programmes and initiatives for the senior citizen are governed by the 1997 National Policy for Senior Citizens.

# Institutional Framework

- The Ministry of Labour and Social Security (MLSS) is the government organization with responsibility to effectively manage social protection programmes for the elderly and to monitor the implementation of the San Jose Charter on the Rights of Older Persons in Latin America and the Caribbean and the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing

- Major achievement in progress of the implementation of the San Jose Charter on the Rights of Older Persons and MIPAA
- ***revision of the National Policy for Senior Citizens, currently in progress.***
  - Disabilities Act, 2014

# Disabilities Act, 2014

- Protection from discrimination
  - application/employment on account of disability, housing etc.
- Access to education and training
- Political office and public life
- Mandates alterations to public and commercial premises to be “readily accessible”
- National Building Code
- Public passenger vehicles



# Equality and non-discrimination

- *No Constitutional/Legislative guarantee of equality and protection from discrimination explicitly for older persons.*
- *The Charter of Fundamental Rights and Freedoms outlined in the Charter of Fundamental Rights and Freedoms (Constitutional Amendment) Act, 2011 affords protection of the right to equality before the law; the right to equitable and humane treatment by any public authority in the exercise of any function; the right to freedom from discrimination on the ground of (i) being male or female; (ii) race, place of origin, social class, colour, religion or political opinions.*

# Equality and non discrimination

- *The Jamaica Survey of Living Conditions (JSLC) and the Economic and Social Survey of Jamaica (ESSJ) produce information on the situation of older persons in Jamaica. Information about discrimination against older persons is not gathered in a targeted way*

# Equality and non discrimination

## Employment

- *The MLSS administers the country's labour laws which though not specifically targeting older persons, includes provisions for the right to work of all citizens.*
- *36.5% of older persons desire to work, the majority being males.*
- *revised policy will promote work at the local level to incorporate older persons who choose to contribute to the labour force as well as those with business interests.*

# Access to goods and services

- *51% of elderly reside in rural areas with good access to goods and services; however this is challenged by high transportation costs. The government provides concessionary rates on bus fares in the Kingston Metropolitan Area. A revised policy will promote the exploration of public/private partnerships.*

# Social protection

- *A **National Social Protection Strategy (2014)** has been developed and a multiagency NSPC formed within the Planning Institute of Jamaica*
- *1/3 of the older persons population receive a pension.*
- *National Insurance Scheme (NIS)*
- *Programme of Advancement through Health and Education (PATH)*

# Healthcare

- *Abolition of user fees at public health facilities*
- *unrestricted access to basic health services including primary and secondary healthcare, emergency outpatient treatment, surgical operations and medications.*
- *80% describing it as good, and 83.9% seeing a health professional in the last year.*
- *Jamaica Drugs for the Elderly Programme (JADEP) and the National Health Fund (NHF)*
- *72% of older persons have a chronic illness.*

# Decision making, autonomy

- *The Charter of Fundamental Rights and Freedoms (Constitutional Amendment) Act, 2011 secures for all citizens the right to choose which can only be removed from an individual by the courts. Studies report a high level (93%) of functional independence. **72% of older persons own their own homes and the vast majority live at home in their communities.** The revised policy will further strengthen these areas.*

# Financial services

- *Bank fees and charges remain costly to older persons who are more comfortable with face to face teller transactions as opposed to ATM or online banking which are more affordable options but are risky for older persons. This is an area for strengthening of legislation and advocacy.*



## Age-based benefits

- *The National Insurance Scheme (1966) Special Anniversary Pension*
- *Programmmme of Advancement through Health and Education (PATH) rehabilitation grants are provided to persons 18 – 65 years*

# Neglect, violence and abuse

## Research

- *The Jamaica Survey of Living Conditions conducted by the Planning Institute of Jamaica provides information on the situation of older persons in Jamaica. There is currently no specific study focusing on abuse and neglect of older persons.*
- *Eldemire-Shearer et al (2012) Older Persons in Jamaica*

# Neglect, violence and abuse

- *All forms of violence are experienced by older persons. As with the global trend, incidents may be under-reported*
- *cases reported occur in the home of older persons, in their communities and in private nursing homes. Most perpetrators are persons with whom the older person is familiar including caregivers and family members.*
- *No data on subgroups affected or at greater risk*

# Neglect, violence and abuse

*There is no specific legislation for the protection of older person from violence and abuse. All citizens are protected from violence and abuse under:*

- *The Offences against the Person Act*
- *The Sexual Offences Act, 2009*
- *The Domestic Violence Act*
- *The Disabilities Act, 2014*

# Neglect, violence and abuse

- *no specific legislation protecting older persons from financial/inheritance abuse.*
- *Law Reform (Fraudulent Transactions) (Special Provisions) Act, 2013 protects all citizens against fraudulent financial activities involving among other things, theft, forgery and scamming.*
- *provisions made under Forgery Act and Larceny Act support the protection of older persons.*

# National Policy for Senior Citizens

- In order to strengthen the implementation of the San Jose Charter on the Rights of Older Persons and the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, the National Policy is being revised with a view to operationalizing the tenets and principles embodied in these and other regional and international instruments

# National Policy for Senior Citizens

## Broad Thematic Areas

- Social Engagement and Participation
- Social Protection, Income Security and Employment
- Health and Wellness
- Physical Environments, Protection and safety
- Family Integration and Intergenerational Transfers
- Governance and Capacity-building

# Issues, Implications

- Elder Abuse
- Increase in population of older persons
- Opportunities for investments
- Public/private partnerships
- Preparation for retirement



# Thank you

## Sources

- Jamaica Survey of Living Conditions (JSLC) 2012, Ageing Module
- Eldemire-Shearer et al (2012) *Older Persons in Jamaica*