

# **Older persons and human rights in Latin America and the Caribbean**

**Verónica Montes-de-Oca<sup>1</sup>, Mariana Paredes<sup>2</sup>,  
Vicente Rodríguez<sup>3</sup> and Sagrario Garay<sup>4</sup>**

**Abstract.** The Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing (MIPAA), drafted at the Second World Assembly on Ageing (SWAA) in 2002, gave rise to a debate on older people in three spheres: political, social and scientific. At the Assembly, governments reflected on ageing and the construction of old age in developing countries and the characteristics of population groups aged 60 and over; this process was expanded at successive intergovernmental meetings in the region. Civil society organizations (CSO) have also been outlining by their position on ageing at international, national and subnational levels. In term, scientists have contributed an increasing production of research and sources of information that have resignified their role in the design of public policies. This triad of dimensions and actions has moved in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) since 2002, from an assistance focus, without a clear budgetary, educational or political adjustment, towards a human rights perspective that seeks to put older people at the centre of the actions through their participation in the design, management and supervision of policies. This article analyses the changes and/or permanence in the positions expressed in the programmatic documents drafted at governmental meetings and civil society's regional meetings, as well as two general documents in LAC: the Montevideo Consensus (2013) and the Inter-American Convention for the Protection of the Rights of Older Persons (2015).

**Keywords:** human rights, ageing, policies, civil society organizations (CSO), Latin America.

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<sup>1</sup> Instituto de Investigaciones Sociales. Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, México. Presidenta de la Asociación Latinoamericana de Población (ALAP). Corresponding author. (vmoiis@gmail.com)

<sup>2</sup> Centro Interdisciplinario de Envejecimiento. Universidad de la República, Uruguay. Coordinadora de la Red de Derechos de la ALAP.

<sup>3</sup> Instituto de Economía, Geografía y Demografía. Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, España. Miembro de la ALAP.

<sup>4</sup> Facultad de Trabajo Social y Desarrollo Humano. Universidad Autónoma de Nuevo León, México. Secretaria General de la ALAP.

## **Introduction**

After the Second World War, when the United Nations emerged, the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC, thereafter CEPAL in Spanish) was set up in 1948 to promote discussion on population and development (Villa & Rivadeneira, 2000). Technical advice in demographic matters and training of human resources, as government support activities, were among its main functions. In the 1980s, when the First World Assembly on Ageing (FWAA) (United Nations, 1983) was held, discussions focused on the problems and needs that affected older persons as individuals and demographic ageing in developed countries. Although there was a dominant vision from the biomedical perspective, population ageing was placed on the international public agenda (Rovira, 2016). Demographic analysis and projections were announcing that the world population would increase 3.7 times in a century from 1950, while the population aged 60 years and over would rise tenfold, and that of 80 years and over twenty-six-fold (Kalache, 2013). This process also affected developing countries and especially the LAC ones, due to demographic transition.

In LAC, the region's pioneering demographers indicated the first tendencies towards population ageing as an expression of the transition from high mortality and fertility rates to decreasing levels. Few understood that an effect of the so-called "demographic explosion" was population ageing, but some countries would experience it early as a result of dissimilar demographic trends (Chackiel, 2000). In 1970 Latin America reported a proportion of 6% of people aged 60 and over, which rose to 7.4 in 1995 and 9.4 in 2010. At the start of the 21st century, there were LAC countries with an incipient, moderate, but also advanced demographic transition, such as Argentina, Cuba and Uruguay, so the population ageing issue gained greater legitimacy on the regional and governmental agenda. In general, population ageing is linked to the 'demographic dividend' and to the countries' economic conditions to influence in health care and social security (Saad, 2011). In 2002 the Second World Assembly on Ageing (SWAA) (United Nations, 2002) was held, which placed emphasis on the demographic transformation in developing countries, the need for a social perspective, the active ageing as promoted by the World Health Organization (WHO), and on having a positive image of ageing (Rovira, 2016). Above all, the inclusion of ageing in the Population and Development agenda was addressed for the first time. The notion of dignity in ageing was the focal point from which the human rights approach would emerge in the following decades. This change in the treatment of ageing has been highly significant for the region. This meeting led to the MIPAA (United Nations, 2002).

The CSO Forum, held days before the SWAA, was a pioneer in giving social actors a voice, but it also triggered a link with LAC scientists, government institutions and companies<sup>5</sup>. This decade marked the beginning of a historic stage in the construction of a common agenda on ageing and the situation of older persons. One of the key aspects was the well-known demographic projections that warned that many LAC countries would move towards high

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<sup>5</sup> This Forum, predecessor of the CSOs meetings in LAC, aimed to encourage the participation of civil society in the debate on ageing, sharing their experiences as social structures of older people organized (Foro Mundial ONG sobre Envejecimiento, 2002).

percentages of 60 and over people, from having 12 per cent in 2017 to 25 per cent in 2050 (United Nations, 2017). Fertility rates would keep on dropping in the region, with 15 countries under the replacement level in 2017, while falling mortality would increase the longevity of older people, a life expectancy of 81.3 years being calculated by 2050 (United Nations, 2017). CEPAL, through its Population Division, the Latin American Demographic Centre (CELADE), began organizing two types of strategic meetings in 2003, with experts and with governments, to produce reflections and evidence with the region's data censuses, surveys and statistics. Emphasis was placed on quantitative and qualitative methodologies. Meetings also searched for reflecting on three central issues for older people in the region: 1) the economic situation of older persons and development, 2) health and well-being, and 3) social support networks and favourable social and physical environments (Huenschuan, 2013; CEPAL, 2017a). In this process, specialists comment on the importance of observing changes in concepts, in their definitions, in what topics and how they are included and what role is assigned to the State and to civil society (Rovira, 2016). The following pages analyse, as the general objective, the main guidelines presented in government and civil society documents in LAC. Part of this context of social progress lies in the Montevideo Consensus, especially in chapter C on Ageing, Social Protection and Socioeconomic Challenges, as well as the Inter-American Convention for the Protection of the Rights of Older Persons. Both documents express the countries' position on human rights of population and in the special case of older persons.

### **Government and CSO debates on ageing in LAC**

As mentioned before, the SWAA (United Nations, 2002) put the issue of ageing and old age on the international agenda. The dominant arguments grounded on demographic evidence: the increased life expectancy and the decline in fertility rates around the world are leading to an increasing proportion of older people. Although this process has taken place in socioeconomic contexts that differ from one region of the world to another, and in different stages of development of the welfare states, it has specific characteristics in LAC: the ageing process occurs in different ways in the region's countries, how fast it occurs, the differences in economic development can mark deep inequalities in situation of older persons, or the differences in the regional, national and subnational political frameworks built to protect older people's rights (Huenschuan, 2013; United Nations, 2002).

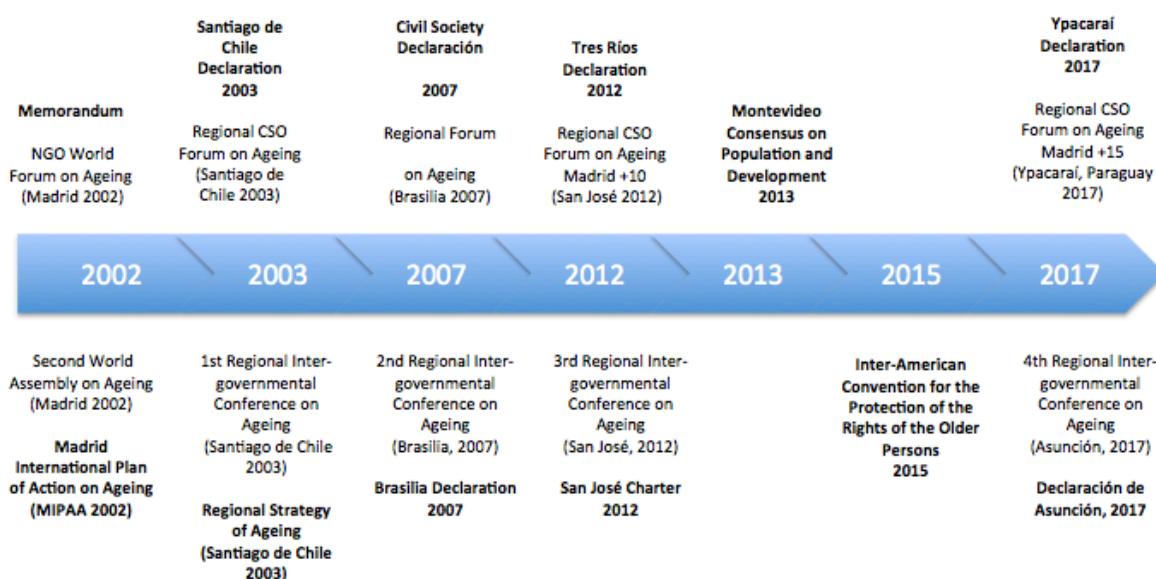
Since 2003, successive regional and intergovernmental meetings were organized to systematize action on public policy in the region. Results are reflected in several declarations: Regional Strategy for the Implementation in Latin America and the Caribbean of the MIPAA, Santiago de Chile (Chile), 2003; Brasilia (Brazil), 2007; San José (Costa Rica), 2012 and Asunción (Paraguay), 2017. In a complementary manner, Civil Society Organizations<sup>6</sup> of older

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<sup>6</sup> The participation of Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) in the LAC Regional Conferences has its antecedent in the regional Conference organized by the United Nations Organization in Cairo in 1994. 179 government representatives and 1,254 non-governmental organizations attended this meeting, which emphasized the importance of individual rights, the incorporation of the gender dimension, the reproductive health as a fundamental axis to be considered in population policies and the importance of NGO participation in regional conferences (Peláez, n/d). Although this conference was not exclusive for the elderly, the participation of NGO there then set up.

persons have held meetings in Latin American countries to yield several declarations: Santiago de Chile, 2003; Brasilia, 2007; Tres Ríos (Costa Rica), 2012; and Ypacaraí (Paraguay), 2017. Just as important are the meetings of the Montevideo Consensus on Population and Development (MCPD) (2013) and the Organization of American States (OEA in Spanish) on the Inter-American Convention for the Protection of the Rights of the older persons (IACPHROP) are important (2015) (Figure 1).

**Figure 1. International and/or regional meetings and documents relevant to ageing in LAC region, 2002-2017**



Source: prepared by authors analysing United Nations (2002); CEPAL (2013); OEA (2015); CEPAL (2004); CEPAL-UNFPA (2011); CEPAL (2012); CEPAL (2017); Civil Society Declaration, Santiago 2003; Brasilia Declaration 2007; Tres Ríos Declaration, Costa Rica 2012; Ypacaraí Declaration 2017.

The 2002 MIPAA focused on the following priority issues: the economic situation of older persons and development; their health and well-being; and the physical and favourable environments in which the older population lives (CEPAL, 2004; Paredes et al., 2010). The United Nations introduced a change on policies towards older persons, through the Montevideo Consensus, 2013, – not only aimed at older persons but at the different population groups, paying special attention to the indigenous and Afro-descendant peoples of LAC. The Caribbean have a special issue in the region for the rapid ageing, migration, disasters and welfare policies (Quashie et al., 2018). The other is the Organization of American States (OAS), which in June 2015 approved a binding instrument on human rights in the region, the Inter-American Convention on Protecting the Human Rights of Older Persons. This document, a point of reference for the world, represented a substantive shift in the understanding of political actions for the old age, because it recognized the older persons as subjects of rights and generated an instrument through which these rights must be recognized and protected by the States that ratify this commitment. To date five LAC countries (Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Costa Rica and Uruguay) have ratified it. Finally, the Fourth Regional

Intergovernmental Conference on Ageing and the Rights of Older Persons, 2017, has ratified this change in its Asunción Declaration.

There now follows a review of the different positions discussed in the declarations of the intergovernmental and CSO meetings on population ageing, as well as in the Montevideo Consensus and the Inter-American Convention. All of this will be considered in terms of the areas identified as priorities in MIPAA 2002, so that changes and/or permanence in the lines of action can be accounted for.

#### *Older persons and development*

From the SWAA, older person's social and economic security, as well as their plural, participative and participatory access in the developing countries was included in this action. The guidelines for action lay in a paradigm of active ageing, promoting participation in employment, in social life in general, access to knowledge, education and training, security in income and the eradication of poverty. Different government and CSOs meetings in LAC have recognized the need to respect older persons' human rights, which include a diversity of dimensions, such as the right to non-discrimination and non-violence.

Economic security is assessed through the receipt of both contributory and non-contributory pensions, and is considered both in the 2002 MIPAA and in some declarations of the intergovernmental meetings in LAC (Santiago 2003, Brasilia 2007 and San José 2012). However, it was only discussed by the CSOs in the 2012 Tres Ríos Declaration, which mentioned the importance of universality in pensions for older persons. If economic security is observed from the generation of income through employment, it is clearly seen to be very important both at intergovernmental and CSO meetings, which highlighted the concern not only that older people should be able to find jobs, but also in decent conditions. Eradicating poverty, present in the 2002 MIPAA, is less visible in the different intergovernmental meetings but not so in the CSO declarations, because it matters so much to older people's quality of life that they do not want it to be ignored. Some analysis show that the rapid ageing in the LAC region after MIPAA and the policies to mitigate the socio-economic challenges (Salazar & Jenkins, 2018). One predominant aspect at the different meetings is how important it is for older persons to participate in civil society organizations as well as in social and cultural life. In all cases, emphasis is placed on the importance of them taking part in drafting programmes and policies geared towards the older population, as well as in monitoring them. Some issues, such as older persons' access to education or care and the prevention of natural disasters, were conveniently incorporated into the 2002 MIPAA, and have been reinforced in the Montevideo Consensus and the Inter-American Convention. However, they attracted less interest at the different meetings, with the exception of the Declaration of San José and Tres Ríos, which stressed how much these issues matter for ensuring that older persons maintain an adequate quality of life, related with the improvement of training capabilities and the development of safe residential environments (Table 1).

**Table 1: Coverage of MIPAA priority direction 'older persons and development' in the documents analysed**

Official documents/ Priority directions	MIPAA 2002	Montevideo Consensus 2013	Inter-American Convention 2015	INTER-GOVERNMENT MEETINGS DOCUMENTS				CSO DOCUMENTS			
				Santiago 2003	Brasilia 2007	San José 2012	Asunción 2017	Santiago 2003	Brasilia 2007	Tres Ríos 2012	Ypacaraí 2017
Older Persons and Development	Older persons rights	Human rights	Art 6. Life and elderly dignity rights Art 7. Independence and autonomy rights	Human rights	Human rights	Human rights	Human rights		Human rights	Human rights	Human rights
	Personal liberty Freedom of expression and opinion, access to information Right to nationality and freedom of movement		Art 13. Personal liberty Art 14. Freedom of expression and opinion, access to information Art 15. Right to nationality and freedom of movement			Elderly personal liberty Access to information and rights dissemination					
	Equality and non-discrimination for reasons of age or gender	Gender perspective and elderly discrimination on eradication	Art 5. Equality and non-discrimination for reasons of age or gender		Gender perspective in elderly public policies	Eradication of all types of discrimination	Gender and inter-generational relations inequalities Fostering non-discriminatory dignity and freedom among the elderly		Ageing without age, gender, ethnicity, religion and nationality discrimination	Gender, ethnic and inter-generational perspective	
	Economic security		Pensions coverage enlargement	Pensions for all	Pensions sustainability				Pensions for all		
	Accessibility to jobs	Decent jobs	Art 18. Rights to work	Decent jobs	Dignified jobs for the elderly	Accessibility to jobs	Accessibility to jobs	Setting-up income for the elderly	Formal jobs to access the Social Security	Working conditions improvement	
	Social, economic and political roles of the elderly  Elderly participation in their own decision-making processes	Elderly participation in programs and public policies design	Art 8. Right to participation and community integration Art 27. Political rights Art 28. Freedom of association and assembly Art 21. Right to culture	Elderly social participation	Elderly participation in civil society organizations Social and political participation of elderly	Elderly participation in civil society organizations Fostering economic and social development by the elderly participation	Fostering elderly participation in civil society organizations Fostering economic and social development by the elderly participation	Elderly participation in civil society organizations	Social, political, economic and cultural participation of elderly	Not hindering political, social and cultural participation of the elderly	
	Poverty removal					Elderly poverty removal	Elderly free of poverty by improving life conditions		Elderly poverty	Elderly poverty	
	Knowledge, education and training accessibility		Art 20. Right to education		Right to education				Removal of illiteracy on reading, writing and ICTs accessibility		
	Attention to natural disasters and emergency situations	Facing disasters plans	Art 29. Situations of risk and humanitarian emergencies		Helping the elderly in disasters				Helping the elderly in emergency situations		

*Source:* prepared by authors analysing United Nations (2002); CEPAL (2013); OEA (2015); CEPAL (2004); CEPAL-UNFPA (2011); CEPAL (2012); CEPAL (2017); Civil Society Declaration, Santiago 2003; Brasilia Declaration 2007; Tres Ríos Declaration, Costa Rica 2012; Ypacaraí Declaration 2017.

## **Advancing health and wellbeing in old age**

The 2002 MIPAA was a significant advance when opted for a comprehensive perspective of physical, mental and emotional well-being and not only the absence of diseases, following the WHO guidelines. Certain aspects of this were the promotion of health and well-being throughout life, universal and equitable access to health care services, the training of health service providers and health professionals in specific geriatric and gerontological areas, mental health-related needs and disability of older persons. These last two respond to new problems triggered by increased longevity and ageing of the octogenarian population. Similarly, targeting older people with HIV/AIDS also highlights a reality that affects minority and particularly vulnerable groups where policies show a bias towards younger population groups and their sexual and reproductive health, while the role of post-reproductive sexual health derived from ageing has been neglected to date. At the meetings held over the last 15 years, some issues have clearly remained a priority on government and civil society agendas in the region. This is the case of universal social security and the progressive extension of coverage in medical services for older persons, given the very different private and public systems, because the latter are not universal throughout LAC. It is worth mentioning that the Asunción Declaration 2017 omitted its relevance.

The 2002 MIPAA has underscored the importance of addressing older persons' different needs in terms of their illnesses arising from the changes in the epidemiological transition and causes of death. This subject was reinforced in the Montevideo Consensus, in the Inter-American Convention and in the different intergovernmental meetings (not in the 2007 Brasilia Declaration). Yet it failed to arouse the same interest in the CSO's declarations, except in the last Tres Ríos and Ypacaraí meetings, where the importance of accessing health services and treatments was underlined once again. One aspect not considered in the 2002 MIPAA was the protection of the rights of older persons who require long-term care, but it did arise in the 2003 Santiago Regional Strategy, and was maintained in the 2007 Brasilia and 2012 San José Declarations. CSO forums have also stressed how much this aspect matters for older persons' life in the last two declarations (Tres Ríos & Ypacaraí). Its importance is borne out when it was incorporated into the Inter-American Convention as a fundamental right of the old age. It is worth mentioning that concern about the care given in ageing and the people who give that care resurfaced in Ypacaraí and Asunción.

A collateral yet essential aspect for ensuring respect for individual rights, and that appears in MIPAA, is training personnel in gerontology and geriatrics so as to comprehensively tackle ageing. This training aroused interest among the governments that took up this action again in the intergovernmental declarations of Santiago, 2003, Brasilia, 2007 and San José, 2012, while the CSOs only emphasize it as a human right in the last declarations of Tres Ríos (2012) and Ypacaraí (2017). Finally, also worth noting is that older person's nutrition was not taken up at any LAC meeting, despite having been announced in MIPAA (Table 2).

**Table 2: Coverage of MIPAA priority direction 'advancing health and wellbeing into old age' in the documents analysed**

Official documents/ Priority directions	MIPAA 2002	Montevideo Consensus 2013	Inter-American Convention 2015	INTER-GOVERNMENT MEETINGS DOCUMENTS				CSO DOCUMENTS			
				Santiago 2003	Brasilia 2007	San José 2012	Asunción 2017	Santiago 2003	Brasilia 2007	Tres Ríos 2012	Ypacaraí 2017
Advancing health and well-being into old age	General coverage of social security and health benefits	Social and health benefits	Art 17. Right to social security	General coverage of health services	Social and health benefits	Universalization of social security		Universalization of social security	Universalization of social security	Health services accessibility	Exclusion of the elderly regarding social security
	Comprehensive health care and palliative care	Adequating health policies to changes in the epidemiological process	Art 11. Right to give free and informed consent on health matters	Access to comprehensive health services adapted to the elderly needs		Comprehensive care models		Comprehensive care model, social protection services		Health services considering the elderly needs	Access to health care, treatments and medications
	Reducing factors that increase the risk of diseases	Promoting the development and access to palliative care	Art 19. Right to health								
		Art 12. Rights of older persons receiving long-term care	Legal frameworks to guarantee the rights protection of people who receive long-term care	Challenges to address disability and dependency	Informed consent for medical interventions by the elderly					Institutionalization of older people violates their rights	Violation of the elderly rights living in long-term nursing homes
	Training of health personnel to meet the elderly different needs		Training for gerontologists and geriatricians	Training programs for gerontologists and geriatricians	Promoting training for gerontologists and geriatricians					Training on ageing considering a gender and human rights perspectives	Promotion capacities on the elderly human rights
	Access to adequate nutrition										

Source: prepared by authors analysing United Nations (2002); CEPAL (2013); OEA (2015); CEPAL (2004); CEPAL-UNFPA (2011); CEPAL (2012); CEPAL (2017); Civil Society Declaration, Santiago 2003; Brasilia Declaration 2007; Tres Ríos Declaration, Costa Rica 2012; Ypacaraí Declaration 2017.

### *Ensuring enabling and supportive environments*

This area is divided into two groups of actions. The first are geared to physical environments, such as the adaptability of infrastructures that older persons require, and ranging from inside the home to the outside, transportation, the neighbourhood and the city. The second refers to social environments for assessing older people's relationships with their social, family and community support networks. They are defined in MIPAA as inclusive policies for integrating older people into the development process, both through access to services and their participation in drawing up and applying policies. Access to decent housing as appropriate for the older persons' needs is fundamental for analysing the old age environments, which was first established in MIPAA and culminated in the Inter-American Convention. In the Brasilia and San José Declarations it is also considered a topic of interest within the environments, while the Asunción Declaration only mentions the importance of access to housing. For the CSOs and tangentially, only the Tres Ríos Declaration refers broadly to the generation of legal frameworks for protecting older persons' assets. There are other environment-related aspects that vary in the different documents. For example, MIPAA specifically mentioned improving transport to make it accessible for older persons, while the Inter-American Convention focuses on more general aspects, such as the right to a healthy environment and the right to accessibility and personal mobility. Meanwhile, the 2003 Santiago and the 2017 Asunción Declarations refer to the adaptation and importance of physical environments, in general, an aspect that is not taken into consideration by CSO forums, except in the 2007 Brasilia Declaration, which mentioned the importance of having favourable conditions in various aspects, including housing and public services.

The MIPAA mentioned the importance of the right to personal freedom, freedom of expression and opinion, as well as of movement. These rights were readdressed in the 2012 Declaration of San José and the 2015 Inter-American Convention. It also applies to the eradication of gender and age-based discrimination, which has been taken up again in the 2013 Montevideo Consensus and the 2015 Inter-American Convention. All the intergovernmental meetings, except for the 2003 Santiago Declaration, highlighted the importance of promoting non-discrimination based on gender and age. By contrast, this discourse is only present in the CSO forums held in Brasilia, 2007, Tres Ríos, 2012 and Ypacaraí, 2017. From a rights recognition perspective, older person's self-image is the subject of outstanding attention. In MIPAA, it was considered relevant to promote recognition of older persons' knowledge and contributions in order to generate respect for this population. This approach did not prosper at the different meetings in LAC, with the exception of the 2003 Santiago Regional Strategy, where the importance of considering a positive image of old age was declared to include in the mass media. It was only in the 2007 Brasilia Declaration that CSOs raised the need to promote the vision of an active, participatory and healthy old age. Another environment-related action refers to the importance of offering assistance to older persons' carers, particularly women, as already established in MIPAA, yet its continuity was only maintained in the intergovernmental meetings of Brasilia, 2007 and San José, 2012, and its inclusion was not considered until the documents drafted at the last two CSO meetings (Tres Ríos, 2012; Ypacaraí, 2017) (Table 3).

## **Older persons' scientific research and policies**

Research plays a key role in identifying scientific evidence, which is recognized by the political documents analysed. The Santiago Regional Strategy for implementing MIPAA in LAC (CEPAL, 2004) recognizes the need to promote national and regional ageing research when designing the political agenda, the funding measures and the development of cooperation structures. The 2007 Brasilia Declaration directs this commitment "at academic centres, scientific societies and ageing cooperation networks". With a similar emphasis, CSOs consider the role of research in allowing states to detect priorities for protecting older persons' rights (Coordinación, 2013). Finally, the Inter-American Convention, in 2015, recognizes that States will foster research and the provision of statistical data as an aid for devising policies for the protection of rights, essentially in the field of health, highlighting that research helps to train people in general and professionals in particular (OEA, 2015).

Research has already received institutional recognition for its role of "providing decision-making criteria" (Huenchuan, 2016) through the analysis of information sources, methodologies, use of techniques and intervention. This role can be recognized in some of the institutions that lead the older people-oriented policies in Latin America, such as the National Institute for Older Adults (Inmayores) in Uruguay, the Mexico City Care Centre for the Elderly (IAAM) or the National Directorate of Policies for Older Adults (DINAPAM) in Argentina. These organizations promote research, by providing data necessary for analysis, completing projects in liaison with universities and research centres, performing on-demand studies for regional organizations such as CEPAL or the Ibero-American Office of Social Security, OISS (Huenchuan, 2016; UNFPA, 2017), or reinforcing professionals' training (CEPAL, 2017). Special attention have the Caribbean research and intervention with life course perspective and not only with cross-sectional analysis (Quashie et al., 2018). Regional political agencies promote research projects. The Latin American Demographic Centre (CELADE) is the driving force behind research in this field, first in data provision and database maintenance, at a regional and national level, as established in the 2003 Santiago Regional Strategy. Second, external researchers and the CELADE itself engage in providing technical support, training, research and advice on ageing in the region, as the focal point on ageing in CEPAL for monitoring the United Nations' actions. The result, thirdly, is the wide range of ageing publications produced by CELADE or by Latin American social researchers, using multidimensional perspectives of ageing (demography, social protection, households, health, pensions, etc.). The 'institutionality' of research in Latin America is also recognized in the role that regional academic networks and research centres play, in accordance with each country's scientific capacities and its degree of development. For example, *research groups* could be identified (like in Brazil, through Curriculo Lattes, with countless scientific approaches), as well as *thematic networks* (like the Ageing, Health and Social Development Network in Mexico), *academic centres* (like the Interdisciplinary Center for Ageing (CIE in Spanish), in Uruguay, or the Center for Research and Studies on Culture and Society (CIECS in Spanish)), in Argentina, *government institutes* (like the National Institute of Geriatrics in Mexico, more oriented to health issues), or *multi-academic and multidisciplinary institutes* (like the Interdisciplinary University Seminar on Ageing, SUIEV, in Mexico).

**Table 3: Coverage of MIPAA priority direction 'ensuring enabling and supportive environments' in the documents analysed**

Official documents/ Priority directions	MIPAA 2002	Montevideo Consensus 2013	Inter-American Convention 2015	INTER-GOVERNMENT MEETINGS DOCUMENTS				CSO DOCUMENTS			
				Santiago 2003	Brasilia 2007	San José 2012	Asunción 2017	Santiago 2003	Brasilia 2007	Tres Ríos 2012	Ypacarai 2017
Ensuring enabling and supportive environment	Elimination of all forms of violence, abuse and mistreatment towards the elderly	Elimination of violence towards the elderly	Art 9. Right to safety and a life free of violence of any kind	Elimination of all forms of discrimination and mistreatment towards the elderly	Elimination of discrimination and violence towards the elderly	Elimination of all forms of mistreatment towards the elderly	Eradication discrimination, mistreatment and violence towards the elderly				Mistreatment towards the elderly persists
	Consider housing preferences for the elderly regarding suitability and location		Art 23. Right to property Art 24. Right to housing		Accessibility to public spaces and housing adaptation for the elderly, according their needs	Improving housing and environmental conditions	Housing accessibility			Safeguarding the elderly patrimony	
	Transportation improvement		Art 25. Right to a healthy environment Art 26. Right to accessibility and personal mobility	Physical environment adaptation the characteristics and needs of the elderly			Healthy, accessible and suitable environments		Setting up suitable conditions on health, housing, food, education and public services for the elderly		
	Public acknowledgment of the elderly mastery and social contributions			Promoting a positive image of the old age					Promoting an active, participative and healthy image of the elderly	Removing the negative image of the elderly	
	Supporting people who help or assist the elderly, mainly the old women			Support to care families, mainly women	Generate measures for families, mainly those taking care of the elderly Developing home care Social services to take care of the elderly				Women taking care of the elderly Home care programs for the elderly	Women taking care of the elderly	

Source: prepared by authors analysing United Nations (2002); CEPAL (2013); OEA (2015); CEPAL (2004); CEPAL-UNFPA (2011); CEPAL (2012); CEPAL (2017); Civil Society Declaration, Santiago 2003; Brasilia Declaration 2007; Tres Ríos Declaration, Costa Rica 2012; Ypacarai Declaration 2017.

Finally, other, more flexible institutional structures are also important due to their role in organizing activities and events in which ageing plays a prominent role, such as the Ageing Network of the Latin American Population Association (ALAP in Spanish), the Brazilian Association of Population Studies (ABEP in Portuguese), the Mexican Society of Demography (SOMEDE in Spanish) and the Association of Population Studies of Argentina (AEPA in Spanish) or the Latin American Research Network on Ageing, of the Oxford Institute of Ageing (LARNA in English), oriented to the analysis of demographic change and its consequences for society, or the Interdisciplinary Network of Psychogerontology (RediP in Spanish), oriented to the psychosocial sphere, or the Latin American Gerontology Network, which fosters interaction among stakeholders interested in ageing and practices in local environments.

Ageing projects leaders increasingly use mixed methodologies and advanced techniques to analyse socio-demographic situations in a multi-thematic manner. Their results are published in different dissemination channels, conditioned by two essential factors. One is the personal and institutional ties to international organizations such as CELADE. In this case, studies are often published, such as Population Notes, aligned with the institution's goals, which are multidisciplinary, not only oriented to the older population. A similar approach is taken with regard to academic networks that bring together ageing research, such as the ALAP Research Series or Latin American Population Review. Another important factor is the proximity to national or regional, disciplinary or interdisciplinary journals (health, economics, demography, psychology, etc.), which make it easier to publish in Spanish, with important national and regional repercussions, and which are indexed in regional platforms (e.g. Redalyc, Scielo, Dialnet or Latindex). Their international impact is more limited, especially in platforms based on citations and impact indexes: for example, Scimago only indexes five Latin American demographic journals, all in Q3 and Q4. A similar situation is to be found in the journals indexed in Scopus. All these magazines publish in Spanish or Portuguese, admitting some articles in English. This fact leads to another: hardly any papers of Latin American researchers are considered in successful bibliographical reviews on active or successful ageing in English. Menichetti *et al.* (2016) and Cosco *et al.* (2013) only quote one Brazilian study among the 20 and 26 analysed. Cosco (*et al.*, 2014) and Annear *et al.* (2014), in their review of 103 and 83 articles, only include two (Mexico and Brazil, and Colombia and Brazil). However, when the review is specific to Latin America, a sufficient number of articles is included, most of them in English, but also in Spanish and Portuguese (Da Mata *et al.*, 2016). Capacity of Latin American research on ageing is verifiable when appropriate tools are used for its detection and analysis. The role of research acknowledged by public policy documents in LAC is only fulfilled when the focus is placed on its impact within LAC, where the research capabilities, its scientific structures and its production in Spanish and Portuguese ensure its social function.

## **Final considerations**

The diversity of the demographic transition process places different LAC countries in particular situations regarding population ageing, in the integration of human rights in old age policies and in their political development. Even so, the continent is already experiencing

changes in the social, institutional and family organization derived from the substantial increase of older persons. The 2002 MIPAA and its follow-up in regional meetings have been central as a regional experience in three areas: economic situation and development, health and well-being, and physical and social environments. Several regional organizations have committed the different governments and CSOs to move forward in the implementation of public policies towards old age. The central axis that has changed this orientation is defined by the perspective of rights where older persons take part in the design, monitoring and evaluation of public policies. The supreme example of this approach may be found in the Inter-American Convention on the Protection of the Rights of Older Persons, as the first binding document for LAC countries. Essentially it acknowledges older person's right to non-discrimination and lists their specific rights to be protected. Scientific production has contributed to the design of policies by generating research on older persons' situation and often proposing concrete inputs for action. Undoubtedly, academic bodies are participating more and more actively in the regional and CSO meetings. The path that has been followed over these fifteen years – from the Madrid Assembly in 2002 – has been varied and covered several public policy priorities, and, despite the differences between each LAC government's commitment and implementation of actions, the region has made substantial progress in elderly-oriented policies. The recognition that the older persons are subjects with rights, fully integrated into the development of societies; the comprehensive, multidisciplinary health and well-being approach that must be addressed in these stages of life, as well as the adaptation of physical environments, have continued to structure the action. Social environments, support networks, abuse and mistreatment, as well as the discrimination experienced in old age, have also remained key issues on the agenda. The path of recognising older people as subjects with rights is what guarantees their inclusion in an integrated society. A set of measures to gain international visibility for the ageing policies is needed, such as a legally binding convention, the assessment toolkits (Sidorenko & Zaidi, 2018).

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