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The State and Social Responsibility for Ageing and its Discontents

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**WORK LIFE BALANCE
AND AGEING**

Ageing as a social problem

- The concern with ageing is not new to society or to human populations. We have always had to look after the young, the old, the disabled etc ie more vulnerable populations.
- **What is new about ageing in the 21st century?**
- Investment in ideas about quality of life and freedom from fear of discrimination or dependencies.

The Caribbean older population is growing relative to its working and younger populations

Factors accounting for this are:

- Lower fertility rates
- Lower mortality rates of young and old populations

Caused primarily by improvements in medical sciences and technologies

• “It is estimated that over the next twenty years the number of persons aged 60 and over will increase from 1.1 million (or 13 percent of the population) in 2015 to 2 million (or 22 percent) in 2035.” (Jones 2015:7)

What are the economic and social implications of this for the state, society, individuals and families?

Current Trinidad and Tobago Demographics

Total Population	1, 223, 916 est.
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0-14 years 19.4%	15-25 years 13%	25-54 years 46.9%	55-64 years 11.1%	65 years and over 9.5%
M- 121, 386	M-82,779	M- 298,156	M- 67,738	M- 50, 107
F- 116,661	F-76,785	F- 276, 205	F- 68,535	F- 65, 564

Life Expectancy at Birth	72.29 years
Male	69.42 years
Female	75.24 years

Source: Index Mundi last updated in June 30, 2015

Changing Age Composition – Trinidad and Tobago

Past and Current Pattern

Census Year	Under 15 Years	15-24 Years	25-64 Years	65+ Years
1950	39.9	16.8	39.2	4.0
1955	43.2	16.2	38.0	3.7
1960	42.8	17.3	36.3	3.5
1965	43.4	18.5	34.7	3.4
1970	41.4	19.8	34.5	4.2
1975	37.6	21.9	35.6	4.8
1980	34.0	23.1	37.4	5.5
1985	34.3	20.8	39.4	5.6
1990	33.6	18.0	42.7	5.8
1995	30.8	18.2	44.9	6.1
2000	25.6	20.2	50.7	6.5
2005	21.8	20.2	54.5	7.2
2010	20.7	16.5	56.4	8.3
2015	20.8	13.5	56.3	9.4

Projected Pattern

	Under 15 Years	15-24 Years	25-64 Years	65+ Years
2015	20.8	13.5	56.3	9.4
2020	20.4	12.7	57.1	11.1
2025	19.1	13.4	56.0	12.9
2030	17.4	13.8	54.7	15.0
2035	16.3	13.1	54.8	15.7
2040	15.9	11.8	54.4	16.5
2045	15.8	10.8	52.9	17.5
2050	15.5	10.4	49.4	19.6
2055	14.9	10.4	46.4	20.9
2060	14.1	10.4	44.9	20.6

(Godfrey St Bernard, 2016)

The Realities of the changing demographic...

Currently 9% of the TT population is over the age of 65

- This percentage is expected to grow to 20 % in 2050
- Although older adults serve as essential resources to their communities, they face a great risk of marginalization or exploitation of different kinds eg as caregivers themselves
- Older adults seeking support to maintain independence and quality of life frequently encounter either a lack of social services, especially in rural and remote areas, or services that are poor in quality or unresponsive to their diverse needs

Impact on ageing:

- Older adults often experience both social devaluation and poverty upon leaving the labour market; financial market fluctuations contribute to income and social insecurity regardless of employment history especially in countries experiencing recessions.
- In the Caribbean the average poverty rate among persons aged over 65 is 17 percent although rates varied from 7 percent in Trinidad and Tobago to 34 percent in Belize. (Jones 2015:31)
- The elderly are financed in the following ways: national insurance schemes, private retirement schemes, government retirement schemes, old-age pensions, and public welfare . Other sources of income are the church and family, dependency on relatives or savings
- “Women are most likely to be excluded from pension schemes since they have worked either at work or in the informal sector” (CHRP, 2008)

Impact on Health Services and Productivity

- “As the population ages, there will be more people suffering from diseases such as cardiovascular disease, cancer, type 2 diabetes, hypertension, Alzheimer’s and osteoporosis.
- Diseases such as cancer and Alzheimer’s require palliative care.
- This ... places a huge burden on health care services and undermines the productivity of the workforce”.

(Jones 2015: 41)

The UWI/RDI Research Project

- In 2014, a multi-sectoral team came together to explore Work/Life Balance: Its Impact on the Productivity of Working Men and Women and on the Wellbeing of Ageing Populations.
- Partnership between Institute for Gender and Development Studies and Social Work department of UWI but equally drawing on partnerships with TTARP, ILO, ECLAC and Cipriani Labour college
- The nexus between work life balance and ageing presents one of the new challenges which the stresses of contemporary life has placed on both categories of population
- The goal of the project is to generate data towards changing policies and social attitudes protective of both the work life balance for working populations and the well-being of the aged.

Social and Economic Budgeting for the Aged

Insights from Research including Talking circles, journals, visits to home for the aged and series of Work life balance workshops with a corporate service provider in 13 branches throughout Trinidad and Tobago



Uncovering the Discontents of Ageing in Trinidad and Tobago

- The research revealed the multiple needs experienced by the elderly in Trinidad and Tobago.

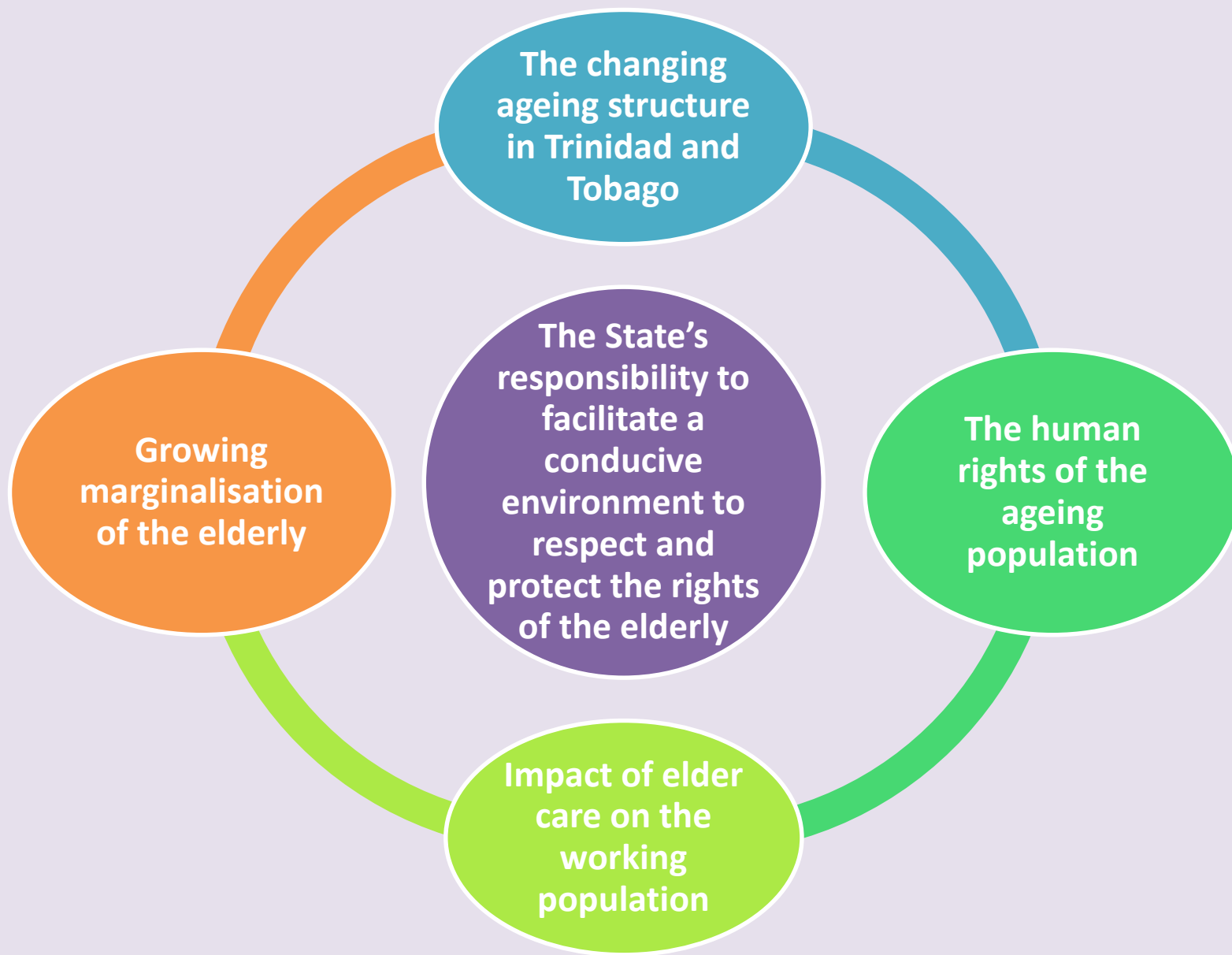
Risk Factors	Issues/ Needs of the Elderly		
Social isolation	Health Care	Social interaction	Grandparents parenting children
Societal depiction of older people as frail, weak and dependent	Care-giving	Elder care responsibilities of adult working children	Elder Abuse
Erosion of bonds between family generations	Economic needs	Discrimination and ageist policies and practices	Limited recognition of the contribution that the elderly can make to national development
Poverty	Improved mobility and access to social protection	Appropriate housing	Hobbies/ recreational activities

Despite the discontent of ageing, if we invest in our elderly ...



... the elderly still can make viable contributions to community and civic development

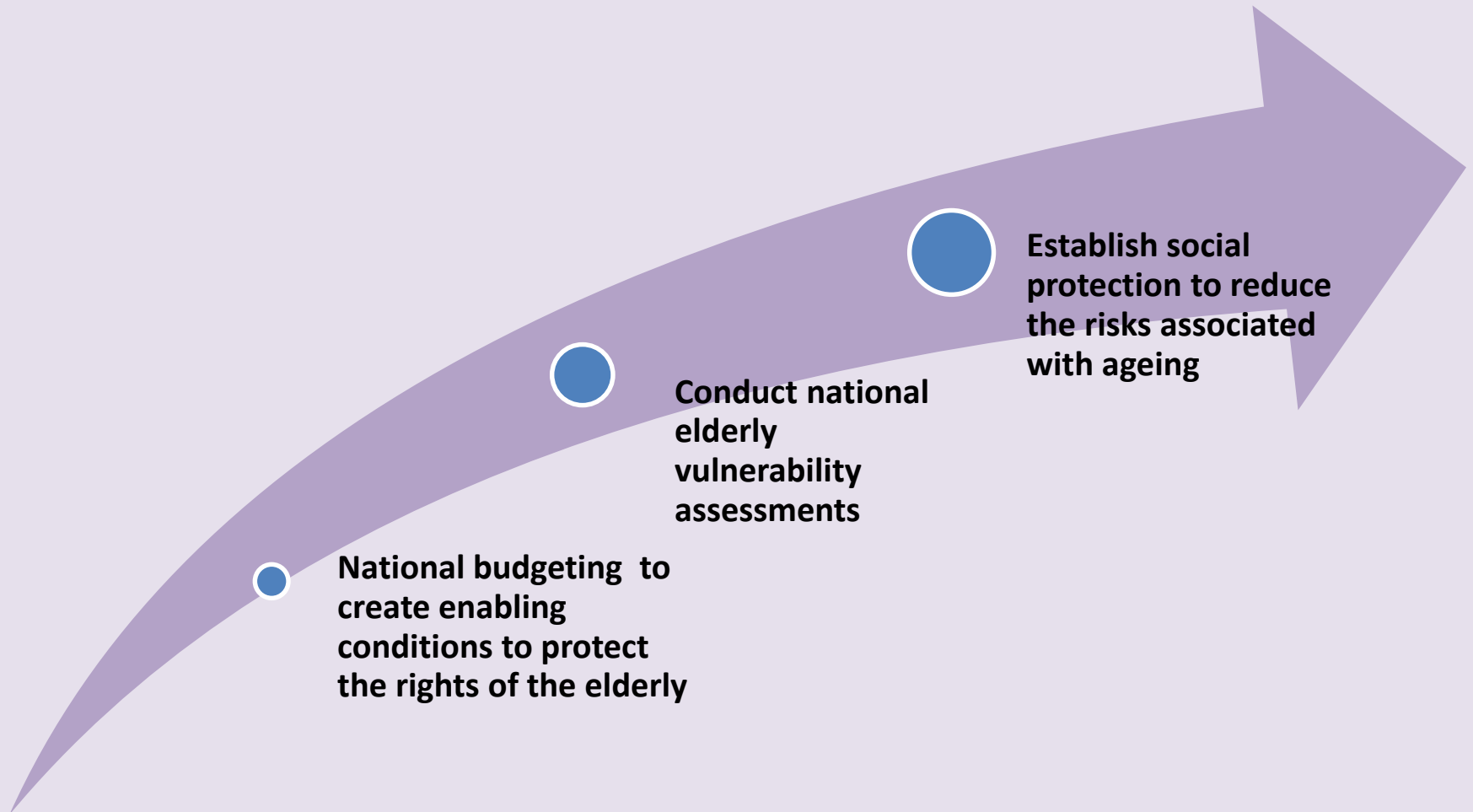
The findings reinforce the imperatives for Action



Imperatives for National Budgeting to protect rights of the elderly

- Conduct regular elderly and vulnerability assessments
- Establish social protection to reduce the risks associated with ageing.
- Establish national budgeting which will create enabling conditions to allow for the elderly to make these types of contributions

Imperatives for National Budgeting to protect rights of the elderly



Imperatives for National Budgeting to protect the rights of the elderly

- Promote active ageing programmes which provide opportunities for participation, security and planning in order to enhance the quality of life of elderly people
- Recognise the contributions that the elderly can make to economic, cultural, civic and family life
- Use human rights' lens in mainstreaming elderly and their needs into policies.

Recommendations emerging from RDI research:

- National budgeting:
 - Budgeted assisted care for the elderly, such as increases in GAPP programme
 - Development of an elderly and vulnerability survey
 - Mainstreaming elderly into fiscal and monetary policies
 - Establishment of community care incentives for the elderly
- Labour:
 - An ageing-friendly labour market requires increased recruitment of older adults and elimination of promotion barriers and retirement regulations that neglect older adults' wishes and competencies, such as restricting the GATE programme.
- Strategies relating to the scheduling of work to support elder care
 - Changing shifts
 - Flexi time employment, shorter work weeks or work days considerations – that free up time for caring
 - time banking (working time hours –which enables workers to accumulate leave time, often by working overtime during peak periods, which can be used for unexpected family events or for other personal reasons)
 - tele-working

- Family Friendly Initiatives :
- workplace support for employees taking care of elderly family member(s)
 - retiree clubs

- Care -
 - What kind of 'care' do we want? What provisions does the state make for care eg GAPP programme, Regulating Homes for Aged and Nursing care
 - How do we want to be treated when we get older?
 - Do we want to go to a nursing home/ home for the aged?
 - Cultural and traditional positions can be destructive – in terms of the quality of care received
 - The role the wider community plays in 'caring' for the elderly

Considerations for the way forward

- There is a need for national budgeting to be concerned with ensuring and enabling supportive environments for older adults.
- Major areas of focus should be on enabling:
 - safe, accessible, and affordable housing
 - support and relief of family and other informal care givers;
 - prevention and reduction of elder mistreatment;
 - participation and empowerment of older people;
 - elimination of ageism.

Innovative ideas for Ageing - Dementia Villages





Thank You