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SEMINARIO UNIVERSITARIO INTERDISCIPLINARIO SOBRE ENVEJECIMIENTO Y VEJEZ

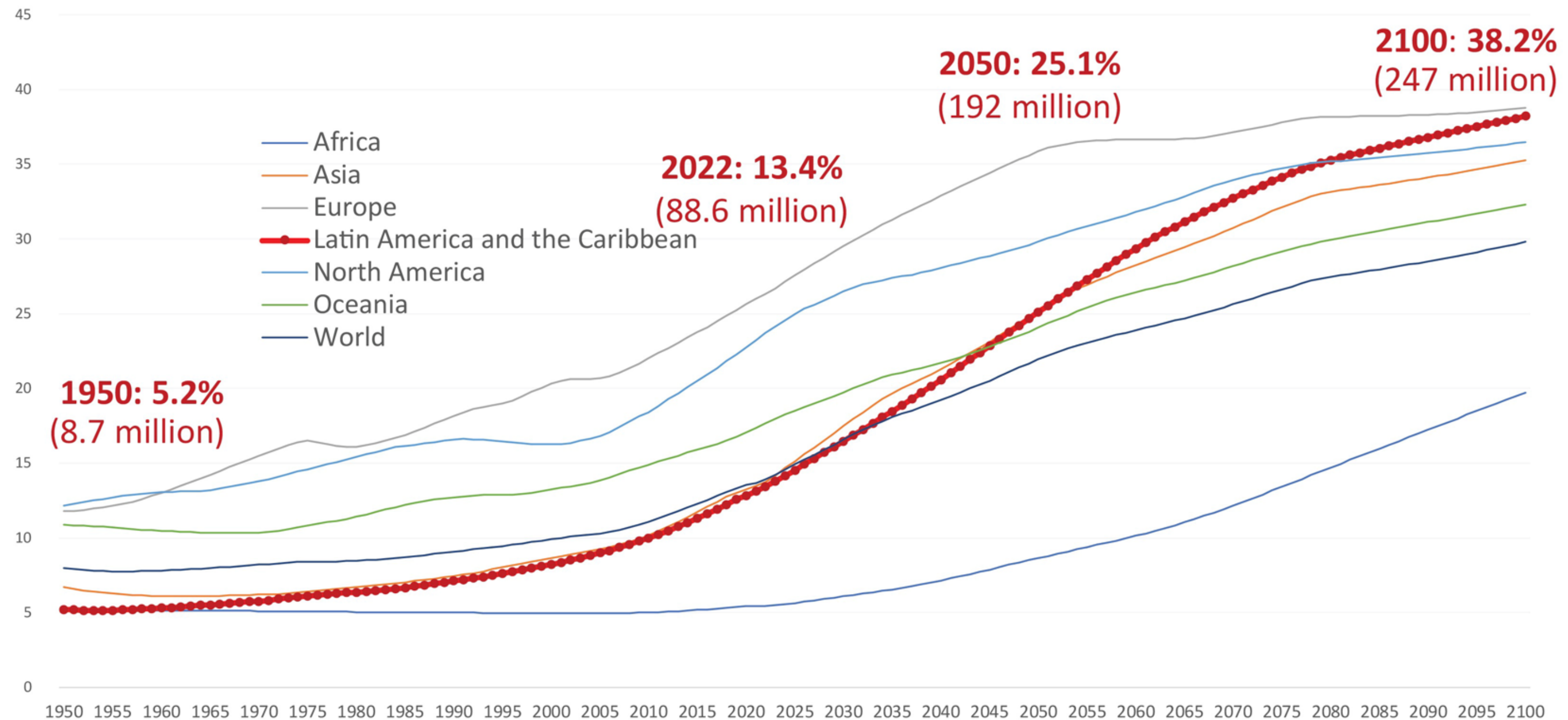INSTITUTO DE INVESTIGACIONES SOCIALES

Leaving No One Behind at the Regional Level:
Adopting an Age-Sensitive Lens to Policy Making

Ageing in Latin America and the Caribbean

Inclusion and rights of older persons

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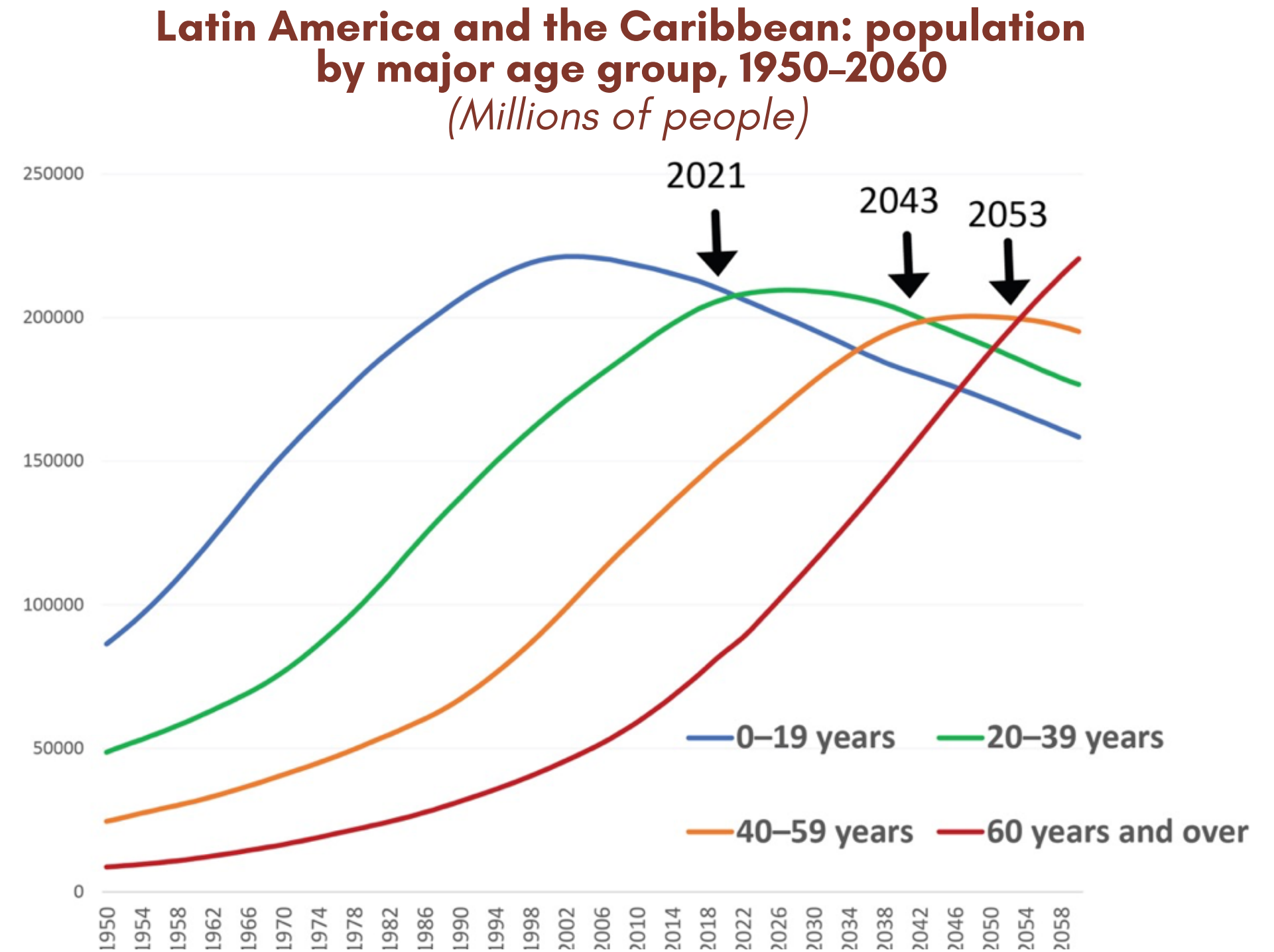**National Autonomous University of Mexico**

Latin America and the Caribbean is undergoing rapid population ageing: by 2050 there will be 2.1 times as many older persons as there were in 2022

2100: 38.2%
(247 million)

2050: 25.1%
(192 million)

2022: 13.4%
(88.6 million)

1950: 5.2%
(8.7 million)

Legend:
- Africa
- Asia
- Europe
- Latin America and the Caribbean
- North America
- Oceania
- World

Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), on the basis of United Nations, World Population Prospects 2022, New York, 2022.
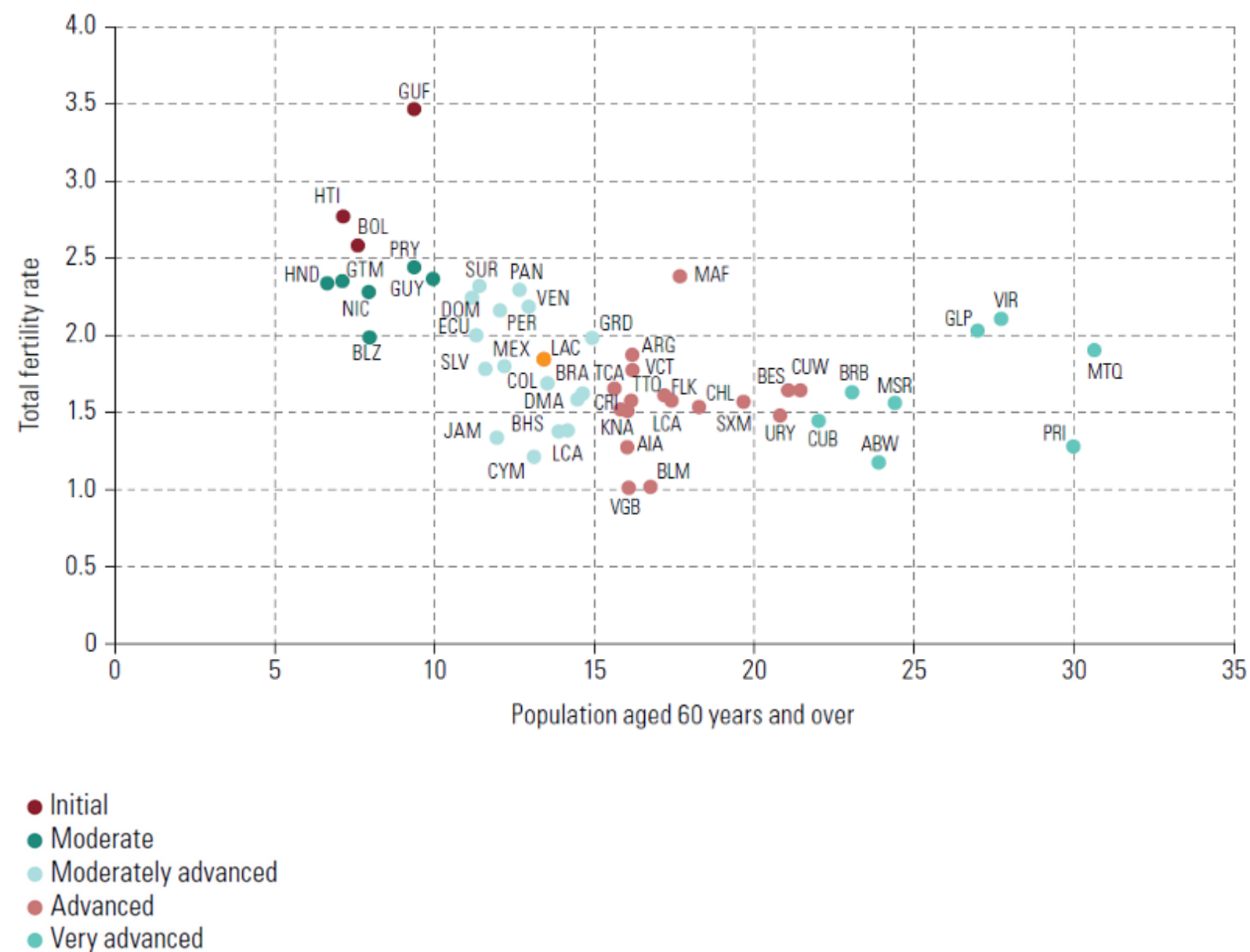
From a young society to an ageing one

- Latin American and the Caribbean changed from being a young society to being a young adult society in 2021. In 2043, the region will become an adult society.

- In 2053 it will become an ageing society: the group of persons aged 60 and over will be larger than any other age group.

- This will have enormous public policy repercussions. Medium- and long-term planning is needed for policies on issues such as work, health, social protection and care.

Latin America and the Caribbean: population by major age group, 1950–2060
(Millions of people)

2021   2043   2053

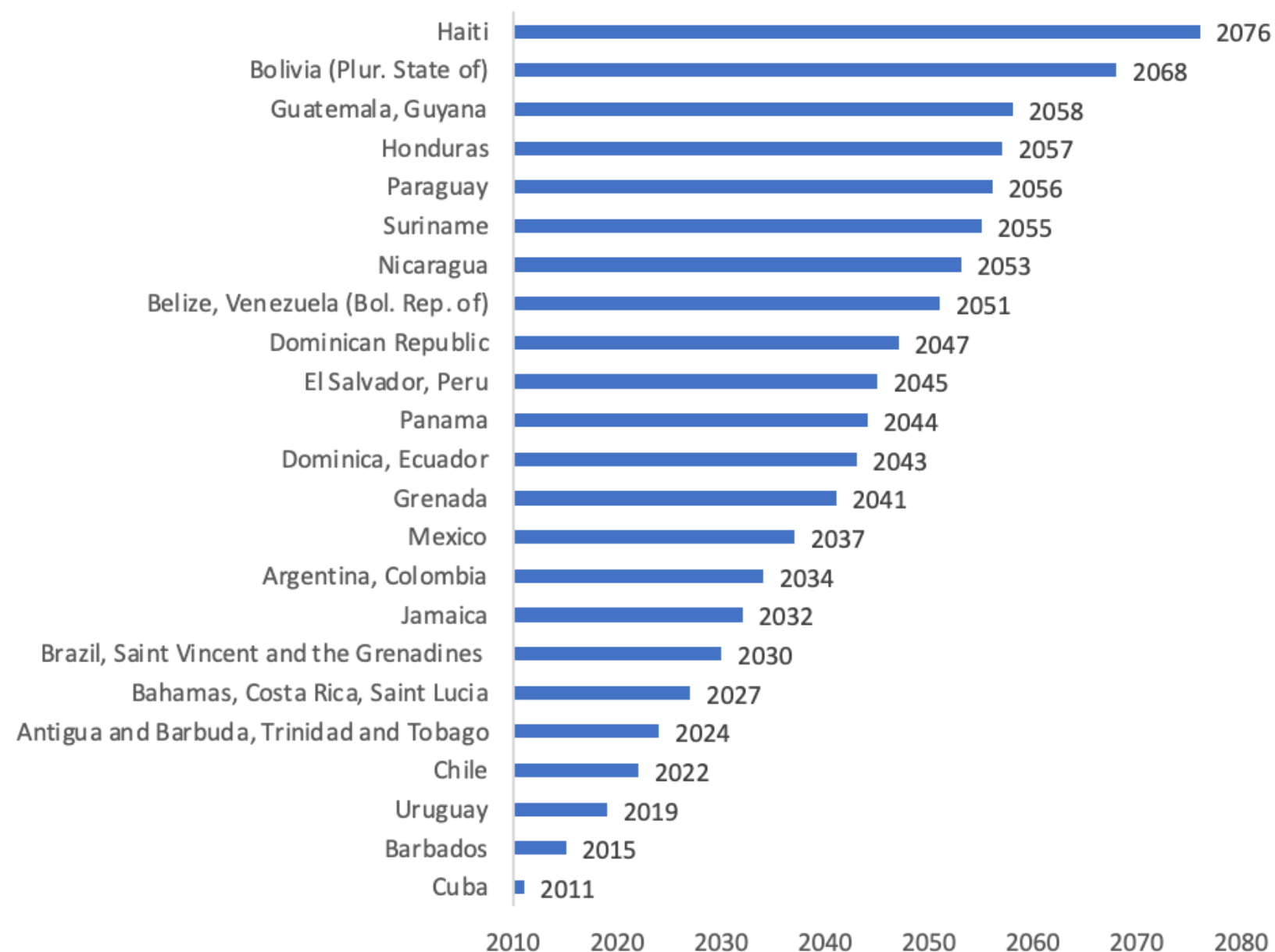- 0–19 years
- 20–39 years
- 40–59 years
- 60 years and over

Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), on the basis of United Nations, World Population Prospects 2022, New York, 2022.

Ageing: the situation of the countries in the region

Latin America and the Caribbean: total fertility rate, stage of ageing and population aged 60 years and over, 2022,
(Number of live births per woman and percentages)

Latin America and the Caribbean: year in which the proportion of persons aged 0–15 years of the total population equals the proportion of persons aged 60 years and over

What are the challenges faced in developing ageing policies and mainstreaming ageing into other policies?

Challenges remain in giving due status to issues involving older persons (60+) in the State apparatus. Requirements include institutional and budgetary autonomy, an appropriate position in the institutional hierarchy and the availability of trained work teams.

Public institutional framework for older persons from the human rights perspective

▶ Institutions responsible for older persons are located mainly within ministries of social development.

▶ At least **19 countries have national legislation** to protect the human rights of older persons (compared to only 14 countries in 2013).

▶ **Laws on emerging themes**: palliative care, long-term care institutions, the prevention of and response to violence, technological inclusion and elimination of labour discrimination.

▶ Signing or ratification of, or accession to, the **Inter-American Convention on the Protection of the Human Rights of Older Persons**: ten countries.

Social protection coverage for older persons

▶ **25 countries** in the region have **non-contributory pension programmes** for older persons.

▶ Some pension programmes are **almost universal**, while others exclusively target **the poor**.

▶ **Employment rates** of older men and women are closely correlated with **inadequate pensions**.

▶ **Discrimination based on age** (ageism) and **gender** remains one of the main challenges for older persons to finding decent work.

Challenges faced in developing ageing policies

Promoting health and well-being in old age

- The **improvement in living conditions**, that leads to an increase in life expectancy and a decrease in mortality, **is not uniform**.

- In 2019, **non-communicable diseases** were the leading cause of death among persons aged 55 years and over (87.6%). **Institutional strengthening of health systems is required**.

- Around **85 million** people were living with some form of **disability** in 2020.

- The gender, age and intercultural perspectives must be strengthened. There are **few specific measures** for the older **Indigenous** and **Afrodescendent populations** or for persons with **non-binary gender identities (LGBTQ+)**.

Creation of enabling and supportive environments in ageing

- It is necessary to design **urban, transport** and **housing polices** to create enabling and supportive environments.

- **Disparities** between **urban and rural** areas in the access to basic services as water and sanitation, energy and Internet residential rates and subsidies.

- **Legal rights** and obligations of older persons **are not often recognized**. There is a lack of knowledge of their human rights among personnel working in the **justice systems.**

- It is important to **create and enhance** supportive environments for **older persons to participate actively.**

Challenges faced in developing ageing policies

➤ Ageing implies a **significant increase in care needs**: older persons are more likely to experience some degree of functional dependency.

➤ The **pandemic** has shown that there can be no development without sustainability of life: moving towards a care society.

➤ Historically **care** has been **provided** within **households** and by **women**.

➤ There is a **need** of co-responsibility and State intervention to ensure **comprehensive care systems**.

➤ It has been estimated that by **2050**, older persons in situations of **functional dependency** (requiring assistance to carry out basic daily activities) will represent more than **3% of the total population**.

➤ **Only eight countries** in the region recognize **palliative care** as a medical specialty.

Promising policy solutions and good practices

➤ **ECLAC** has been a great promoter of cooperation, coordination and technical assistance among the countries of the region.

➤ The inclusion of the **human rights perspective** is currently present in the regional and national agendas.

➤ **Civil Social Organizations**, both regional and national, have had a **relevant participation** in the construction of the aging agenda in Latin America and the Caribbean.

➤ Progress has been made in recognizing the importance of incorporating **intersectionality and intercultural perspectives** in the design of public policies.

➤ Some countries in the region have shared innovative experiences in the design of public policies, as in the case of the inclusion of the older persons in **risk and natural disaster programs** in the Caribbean.

➤ In the region, progress is being made in the construction of alternatives to address urgent issues such as **care**, **climate change**, prevention of **violence** against older persons, especially women and transgender people.

How to make aging policy a priority in Latin America and the Caribbean

➤ Overcome **age** (ageism)**, gender and ethnic discrimination**.

➤ Strengthen mechanisms for collecting **sociodemographic data** disaggregated by age, sex, ethnicity, territory, gender identity, morbidity and disability.

➤ Include ageing and older persons in **national and local government agendas** as a transversal, intersectoral and institutionalized theme.

➤ Strengthen national and local **legal frameworks** for the protection of the human rights of older persons.

➤ Broaden **older person's participation** in public policymaking.

Opportunities for cross-regional learning

➤ Strengthen mechanisms for developing **quantitative and qualitative research** with incidence in public policies, that allows knowledge transfer and mobilization**.**

➤ To collect and analyze **information disaggregated** by age, sex and other variables including feminicides or femicides in old age. The human rights, gender, intercultural and intersectional approaches are the cornerstones for building comprehensive information systems to document the realities faced by older persons.

➤ Integrate the **intersectional perspective** into the design of public policies, programmes and legislation, as it increases the visibility of the diversity of old ages and of ageing.

➤ It is important to draw on the **innovative legislative experiences** concerning issues that can affect and foster protection of older persons, in areas such as the **right to care**, **prevention of discrimination**, **labour inclusion** and **financial safeguards**.

➤ It is crucial to recognize that **health systems** are not well-equipped to meet the preventive, curative, palliative and specialized care needs of a rapidly ageing population. **Prevention** perspective must be strengthened.

➤ To incorporate the **participation of older persons in climate action measures**. Public policies, programmes and measures have overlooked the issue of fostering older persons' involvement in the protection of the environment.

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