



ORGANIZACION DE LOS ESTADOS AMERICANOS



**Consejo Interamericano para el Desarrollo Integral
(CIDI)**

**HIGH LEVEL MEETING ON POVERTY,
EQUITY AND SOCIAL INCLUSION**
October 8 – 10, 2003
Isla de Margarita, Venezuela

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DECLARATION OF MARGARITA

Recommendations of the High level Meeting on Poverty, Equity and Social Inclusion

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Isla de Margarita, Venezuela, October 8, 9, and 10, 2003

We, the high level authorities of the Member States of the Organization of American States, those responsible for social development policies and programs, meeting on Isla Margarita, Venezuela, on the 8th, 9th, 10th of October 2003.

CONSIDERING:

That The Charter of the Organization of American States establishes as one of its central purposes the eradication of critical poverty, which represents an obstacle to the full democratic development of the peoples of the hemisphere the commitment ratified by the Resolutions AG/RES 1854 (XXXII-O/02) AG/RES 1962 (XXXIII-O/03), priority that it is inspired in the principles of inter-American solidarity and cooperation in the search for equity and social justice and the integral development of its peoples.

That The Inter-American Democratic Charter reaffirms “that the fight against poverty, and especially the elimination of extreme poverty, is essential to the promotion and consolidation of democracy and constitutes a common and shared responsibility of the American states;”

That The Declaration of Santiago on Democracy and Public Trust: A New commitment to good governance for the Americas states that Strengthening democratic governance calls for the elimination of poverty and social exclusion and the promotion of equitable economic growth by means of sound public policies and practices that promote equal opportunity, education health and full employment;

The Millennium Declaration, in which Heads of State and Government of the world declared that they would “spare no efforts to liberate men, women, and children from the abject, dehumanizing conditions of extreme poverty”, the Monterrey Consensus on financing for development, as well as the commitments on sustainable development and other international agreements on social development issues agreed upon at the hemispheric level, the United Nations and other multilateral forums.

The importance and interest in advancing the regional and sub-regional integration processes in the Hemisphere.

That The Special Summit of the Americas to be held in Mexico will address the issues of economic growth with equity, social development and democratic governance.

WE DECLARE:

1. Our determination and our commitment to urgently combat the serious problems of poverty, social exclusion and inequity that affect, in varying degrees, the countries of the hemisphere; and to face the causes that generate them and its consequences, and create

favorable conditions for socio-economic development with equity to promote more just societies.

2. Our commitment to strengthen the policies and programs intended to facilitate processes of social inclusion that allow the creation of integrated societies; as well as our special obligation towards people, families - as the nucleus of society –, communities, groups that live in poverty and those that are in a situation of vulnerability, disadvantage and marginalization.
3. Our commitment to promote greater cooperation and coordination between or among national sectors which have a role in determining economic and social policies, which must be mutually complementary.
4. Our interest in advancing the development of an open and transparent international trade system through bilateral, regional and global negotiations, that promotes economic and social development that, contributes to the fight against poverty, improved living standards and enhanced trade opportunities for all. Accordingly, we call for a constructive dialogue within the appropriate fora on topics such as access to markets, subsidies and protectionism.¹
5. That among other factors mentioned in the Monterrey Consensus, official development assistance and external debt relief as appropriate may help to improve the capacities of some countries to promote social and economic development, and that this should be accompanied by sound domestic macro-economic policies. Therefore, it is necessary to keep working towards new financial and economic domestic and international policies, taking into account the social dimension and the principle of shared responsibility.
6. Our commitment to strengthen our efforts at the national level, to work in conjunction with municipal and regional administrations, private sector and other actors of civil society, to achieve a more equitable distribution of income and increase economic opportunities of our people. Accordingly, we acknowledge the potential of local and regional economies as engines for growth.
7. Our readiness to promote and strengthen cooperation initiatives in areas relating to poverty, social exclusion, and inequity, in support of national efforts based on the principle of partnership for development. In this connection, we reiterate the importance of promoting the sharing of expertise and best practices that help to eliminate poverty and narrow social gaps in our countries, and improving the coordination of multilateral action, especially among organizations of the inter-American system, as well as with international and regional development agencies.
8. That official development assistance plays an essential role as a complement to other sources of financing for development, especially in those low and middle income countries with the least capacity to attract private direct investment.
9. That good governance, transparency and accountability are some of the essential elements to make an efficient use of official development assistance and other available resources.

¹ For some of the Member States the subregional trade negotiations should be considered included in this paragraph.

- 10 The importance of providing the necessary resources to existing mechanisms within the inter-American system to enable effective action in the fight against poverty and the need to assess any new initiatives, which may be complementary to our efforts .²
11. That, in fighting poverty, inequity, and social exclusion, we will place priority on eradicating hunger, accessing adequate food and potable water, and ensuring access for all to basic social services, with special attention to quality education and the health care safety net.
12. We declare that access and the practical application of the different advances in science and technology and innovation are keys to the reduction of poverty and the improvement in standard of living.
13. Our commitment to the promotion of dignified, productive and decent labour, and the improvement of labour conditions, the creation of job opportunities, and the elevation of the qualifications of workers.
14. The importance of the Inter-American Committee on Social Development for the formulation of policies related to social matters and the strengthening of existing instruments and cooperation initiatives to fight poverty, social exclusion and inequity, as well as the strengthening of the Inter-American Program to Combat Poverty and Discrimination. We encourage the Committee to celebrate a meeting on 2004; and we entrust the Unit of Social Development and Education to support the activities of the Committee.
15. Our interest in having the Inter-American Council for Integral Development evaluate the advisability of periodic meetings of the ministers and high government authorities responsible for social development policies and plans with the objective of outlining concrete joint actions, assess funding needs, and share expertise.
16. The need to deepen the commitments undertaken in the OAS Charter, the Inter-American Democratic Charter and other international commitments on social matters in relation to the advancement and observance of economic, social, and cultural rights. Accordingly, we propose that the Permanent Council and the Inter-American Council for Integral Development take up this matter, and explore the possibility of having an instrument and mechanisms that respond to this end.
17. We express our commitment to seeing that CIDI, as the hemispheric political forum for dialogue in combating poverty, contribute to following up on, evaluating, and supervising the Eight Development Objectives established in the Millennium Declaration for the year 2015.
18. We urge this declaration to be examined by the Inter-American Committee on Integral Development and the Permanent Council for the actions that these bodies may determine.

² The Venezuelan Delegation presented a proposal for the creation of a Humanitarian International Fund, to finance social development programs.