



Declaration of Nuevo León

Preamble

We, the democratically elected Heads of State and Government of the Americas, who include fourteen new leaders who have taken office since the Third Summit of the Americas, in Quebec City, Canada, have gathered together for a Special Summit in the city of Monterrey, Nuevo León, Mexico. Our purpose is to advance implementation of measures to combat poverty, to promote social development, to achieve economic growth with equity, and to strengthen governance in our democracies. With a renewed and strengthened vision of cooperation, solidarity, and integration, we will confront the continuing and growing challenges in the Hemisphere.

Guided by the need to work together to stimulate prosperity, promote social inclusion and a more equitable distribution of economic growth, eliminate hunger, raise living standards, generate new employment and investment opportunities, and promote decent work as well as confront the new threats to security, such as terrorism, organized crime, and illicit trafficking in arms, we reaffirm our commitment to the Inter-American Democratic Charter and we reiterate our firm intention to continue implementing the mandates of the Summits of the Americas, as well as the commitments made at the Millennium Summit, the International Conference on Financing for Development (the Monterrey Consensus) and the World Summit on Sustainable Development, held in Johannesburg.

We affirm that the well-being of our people requires the achievement of three closely linked and interdependent objectives: economic growth with equity to reduce poverty, social development, and democratic governance.

We therefore declare:

Economic Growth with Equity to Reduce Poverty

In the search for sustained and equitable economic growth that contributes to long-term development, reduces poverty, eliminates hunger, and raises the standard of living of the population, with special attention to the most vulnerable sectors and social groups, we commit to continue implementing sound macroeconomic policies, prudent fiscal and monetary policies, appropriate exchange rate regimes, prudent and appropriate public debt management, diversification of the economy, and the improvement of competitiveness. We also commit to the qualitative transformation of

public administration through its modernization, simplification, decentralization, and transparency. Furthermore, we will redouble our efforts to improve the investment climate in our countries and promote corporate social responsibility.

We reaffirm our commitment to the Monterrey Consensus, adopted at the International Conference on Financing for Development in 2002, that each country has primary responsibility for its own economic and social development through sound policies, good governance, and the rule of law. Fulfillment of this responsibility enables effective use of domestic and international resources for development, economic growth, and poverty reduction. In this context, we reaffirm the imperative for the international community to support national development efforts. In accordance with the recommendations of the Monterrey Consensus, we will seek to coordinate international efforts with a view to mobilizing resources for sustainable economic development and for combating poverty and hunger in all countries of the Hemisphere. In particular, we will continue our efforts with a view to identifying secure sources of financing to meet the needs of developing countries, and to opening markets for their products.

We will continue to implement public policies that stimulate greater domestic savings, meet the need for the creation of productive jobs, and contribute to greater social inclusion.

We emphasize the importance of the participation of the private sector in achieving our objectives. We recognize that micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises constitute a fundamental component for economic growth, employment creation, and poverty reduction in our countries. We will support micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises through policies and programs that facilitate their consolidation and incorporation into the formal sector, allow their effective access to markets and to government procurement, and, *inter alia*, promote investment in and training of human resources, and facilitate access to credit, business development services, and new technologies in order to reduce administrative costs. Additionally, we will promote greater international cooperation in order to foster the sharing of best practices for the development of micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises.

We will take all necessary and feasible legal, regulatory, and institutional measures, by the next Summit of the Americas to be held in 2005, to simplify the procedures and significantly reduce the time and cost of establishing businesses in each country of the region.

We support the work of the Inter-American Development Bank, so that through its mechanisms and programs for private sector development, it triples, by the year 2007, its lending through the banking system to micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises, striving to benefit all of the countries that participate in the Summits of the Americas process.

We recognize the important role that trade plays in promoting sustained growth and economic development. We affirm our commitment to advance the Doha Agenda in order to benefit all our economies, particularly developing economies, by promoting, among other measures, better access to markets and by eliminating export subsidies and by substantially reducing trade-distorting domestic support.

We recognize that liberalization of trade of agricultural products constitutes, *inter alia*, an essential element for the development of agriculture in the countries of the Hemisphere. We therefore reaffirm our commitment to trade negotiations to promote effective access to markets.

We welcome the progress achieved to date toward the establishment of a Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) and take note with satisfaction of the balanced results of the VIII Ministerial Meeting of the FTAA held in Miami in November 2003. We support the agreement of ministers on the framework and calendar adopted for concluding the negotiations for the FTAA in the established timetable, which will most effectively foster economic growth, the reduction of poverty, development, and integration through trade liberalization, contributing to the achievement of the broad Summit objectives. *

We will continue working to reform the international financial architecture with the following objectives, among others: to contribute to the prevention and rapid resolution of financial crises, which particularly harm developing countries in the region; to enhance financing for development; to combat poverty; and to strengthen democratic governance. We support the efforts of borrowing countries to work with the private sector to explore new approaches to reduce the burden of debt service during periods of economic downturns. We applaud the leadership of countries in the region in including collective action clauses in their international bond issues. We call upon the international and regional financial institutions to enhance coordination of their activities so that they can respond more effectively to the long-term development needs of the countries of the region to achieve measurable results in their efforts to eradicate poverty through more effective use of all available development financing sources.

We maintain that sustainable economic growth is the most important factor for the management and servicing of public debt.

We recognize that sound macroeconomic policies and prudent fiscal management are also central to achieving long-term fiscal sustainability.

We also consider it relevant to take into account, when appropriate, the external debt relief measures set forth in paragraph 48 of the Monterrey Consensus.

Moreover, we recognize the responsibility of each country for its own economic development, but also that there is a link of interdependence between domestic economies and the international economic system.

In the context of the Enhanced Heavily-Indebted Poor Countries Initiative, we call upon all creditors to participate in debt relief to benefit eligible countries in the Hemisphere in support of economic reforms and poverty reduction.

We recognize that legally secure property rights are one of the essential elements for economic growth, since proof of ownership helps people to obtain loans and start businesses.

Therefore, we commit, where necessary and appropriate, to: strengthen property rights and expand the use of property as collateral, ensuring enforceable, efficient, transparent, comprehensive, and equitable rules governing property contracts; and improve or promote the related measures governing the transfer of property, property registries, the use of property as collateral, and the rights and responsibilities of debtors and creditors.

With regard to these measures, we commit to undertake concrete actions prior to the next Summit of the Americas to be held in Argentina in 2005, and to report at that time on progress achieved. We will seek to ensure that property rights benefit all people without discrimination.

We recognize that remittances are an important source of capital in many countries of the Hemisphere. We commit to take concrete actions to promote the establishment, as soon as possible, of necessary conditions, in order to achieve the goal of reducing by at least half the regional average cost of these transfers no later than 2008 and report on progress achieved at the next Summit of the Americas in Argentina in 2005. We will adopt, as needed or appropriate, measures such as: the promotion of competition between the providers of these services, the elimination of regulatory obstacles and other restrictive measures that affect the cost of these transfers, as well as the use of new technologies, while maintaining effective financial oversight.

We will promote consumer protection, fair competition, and the improved functioning of markets through clear, effective, and transparent regulatory frameworks.

Social development

We recognize that overcoming poverty, hunger, and social inequality are major challenges facing many countries of the Hemisphere in the twenty-first century. We are convinced that coordinated and integrated economic and social policies are a prerequisite for success in combating inequality of opportunity and marginalization

and such policies are fundamental pillars for constructing a more just society. We underscore that work, employment, and income are essential for an inclusive social policy.

We reiterate that the empowerment of women, their full and equal participation in the development of our societies, and their equal opportunities to exercise leadership are fundamental for the reduction of poverty, the promotion of economic and social prosperity, and for people-centered sustainable development. We reiterate our commitment to continue promoting gender equality and equity and the mandates of the Summits of the Americas on this matter.

We recognize the urgency of strengthening the mechanisms of the Organization of American States for fighting poverty, such as the Inter-American Council for Integral Development, the Inter-American Committee on Social Development, and the Inter-American Program to Combat Poverty and Discrimination. We also recognize the importance of the promotion and observance of economic, social, and cultural rights. We urge the Organization of American States to carefully consider the recommendations approved at the High-Level Meeting on Poverty, Equity, and Social Inclusion, held on Isla de Margarita, Venezuela, to strengthen the hemispheric social agenda.

We will foster policies that strengthen the social security systems in our countries. We will also implement, within our capacities and financial means, social safety nets, or other appropriate modalities, to address the needs of the most vulnerable segments of our societies. We encourage the countries of the Hemisphere that have not yet established these nets to explore the possibility of doing so as soon as possible.

We recognize the efforts made by countries in the Hemisphere to address the social problems caused by unemployment, such as the adoption of unemployment insurance systems and subsistence income programs.

We reaffirm that the diversity of cultures that characterizes our Hemisphere greatly enriches our societies, and that the cultural development and social cohesion of our countries is enhanced through respect and appreciation for our cultural diversity.

With respect to the rights of indigenous peoples, we recognize the substantive progress achieved in the negotiations launched in the framework of the Organization of American States on the American Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, with effective participation of representatives of these indigenous peoples. We reiterate our political will and support for the successful conclusion of the negotiations and prompt approval of the Declaration, whose objective is to promote and protect their human rights and fundamental freedoms.

We underscore the importance of cooperation between countries of origin, transit, and destination, to ensure the full protection of human rights of all migrants, including migratory workers and their families, and the observance of labor laws applicable to them, in accordance with the commitments agreed to in the Santiago and Quebec City Summits. We support the adoption of programs for orderly migration as a factor of economic and social development; and we will cooperate in the fight against trafficking in persons, which especially affects women and children.

We are committed to the principles of decent work proclaimed by the International Labour Organization, and we will promote the implementation of the Declaration on the Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work in the conviction that respect for workers' rights and dignity is an essential element to achieving poverty reduction and sustainable social and economic development for our peoples. Additionally, we agree to take measures to fight the worst forms of child labor. We recognize and support the important work of the Inter-American Conference of Ministers of Labor toward achieving these vital objectives.

Education is a decisive factor for human development, because of its impact on the political, social, cultural, economic, and democratic life of our societies. The increasing rates of illiteracy in many of the states of our Hemisphere are a matter which demands our immediate action. We commit to continue promoting access to quality basic education for all, based on the principles of participation, equity, relevance, and efficiency that generate the necessary capabilities and skills to foster the development process of our peoples without discrimination or exclusion of any kind and thereby respond to the challenges of the twenty-first century.

We commit to increase access to and dissemination of information concerning our educational systems with the objective of improving their performance. In this regard, we reiterate our commitment to continue implementation of the Regional Education Indicators Project, endorsed during the Third Inter-American Meeting of Ministers of Education, held in Mexico City. In particular, each country that has not yet done so will develop and publicly disseminate by the next Summit a report based on the education goals of the Plan of Action of the Second Summit of the Americas, with the objective of fostering its use as a decision-making tool to evaluate and improve results.

We agree that scientific and technological research and development plays an important role in creating and sustaining productive economies. We will continue to formulate policies and guidelines that support public and private research associations and promote their interaction with the productive sectors, taking into account the requirements and objectives of our countries. We will continue to enhance investments in the area of science and technology, with the participation of the private sector and the support of multilateral organizations. Accordingly, we will strive to improve effective and equitable access to, and transfer of, technology. We

will also redouble our efforts to encourage our universities and higher institutions of science and technology to multiply and strengthen the links among them, and deepen basic and applied research. In all of these undertakings, we commit to the protection of intellectual property in accordance with both national laws and international agreements.

We are aware that the information revolution brings new opportunities for increasing access to knowledge for development, and for enhancing equitable citizen participation in the sustainable development of our societies, particularly in rural, remote, and marginalized areas. In an endeavor to close the digital divide, both within and between our countries, we are committed to the Declaration of Principles of the World Summit on the Information Society, and the continued implementation of the Agenda for Connectivity in the Americas and Plan of Action of Quito. We therefore reaffirm our commitment to build a people-centered, inclusive, and development-oriented information society, inspired by objectives of social inclusion, poverty reduction, and progress in the framework of balanced economic and social development.

We will seek, within the framework of our national legislation and authority, to promote affordable access to information and communications technology for all, and encourage the full and active participation of civil society, including the private sector, in meeting this goal.

We emphasize that one of the pillars of human development and national progress is social protection for health and, accordingly, we will continue to broaden our prevention, care, and promotion strategies as well as investment in this field in an effort to provide quality health care for all and to improve, to the extent possible, social protection for all people, with a particular focus on the most vulnerable segments of society.

We are particularly concerned with the toll that HIV/AIDS is taking on our respective societies, the proliferation of the disease, and the threat that it poses to the security of our peoples. We recognize that in order to combat the HIV/AIDS pandemic we must intensify our prevention, care, and treatment efforts within the Hemisphere. Our political leadership is essential to confront the stigma, discrimination, and fear, which deter people from being tested and from accessing treatment and care. We recognize that to confront the challenge posed by the HIV/AIDS pandemic, it is necessary to continue increasing global cooperation efforts.

Pursuant to the relevant resolutions of the United Nations and its specialized agencies, the relevant decisions of the World Trade Organization and the World Health Organization's 3x5 Initiative, we commit to facilitate affordable treatment for HIV/AIDS, with the goal of providing antiretroviral therapy to all who need it as soon as possible and to at least 600,000 individuals needing treatment by the year 2005.

We also urge the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria to identify criteria to enable the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean to have greater access to its resources.

We are also concerned about emerging diseases and reemerging diseases, such as malaria, dengue, yellow fever, tuberculosis, leprosy, Chagas, and others, bearing in mind the current economic, social, and environmental health contexts, the impact of recurrent natural disasters, and health problems associated with the unplanned growth of densely populated areas.

We are therefore committed to reinforcing promotion, prevention, control, and treatment programs, continuing to develop and strengthen technical cooperation strategies among the countries of the region, and to deepening technical cooperation with Pan-American Health Organization, the Inter-American Development Bank, and other inter-American agencies and key actors, with a view to implementing integral public health activities for the control and eradication of these diseases.

We commit to maintain a sustained effort to improve living conditions for inhabitants of rural areas, by promoting investment and creating a favorable environment to achieve sustainable improvements in agriculture that will contribute to social development, rural prosperity, and food security. In this context, we support the implementation of the AGRO 2003-2015 Plan of Action for Agriculture and Rural Life of the Americas, adopted at the Second Ministerial Meeting on Agriculture and Rural Life, held in Panama in November 2003, and we trust that the Global Forum on Biotechnology, which will take place in Chile in March 2004, will contribute to fighting hunger in the region.

We commit to increase cooperation and strengthen the institutions responsible for coordinating and implementing measures to reduce the impact of natural disasters on people and their effect on national development plans, with emphasis on prevention, mitigation, emergency measures, and risk management at all levels.

We believe that ensuring environmental health for our people is an investment for long-term well-being and prosperity. We are encouraged by the new alliance between our Ministers of Health and Environment in the Americas and we instruct them to develop a cooperation agenda to prevent and minimize the negative impacts to the environment and human health.

Democratic governance

We express our support for the Declaration of Santiago on Democracy and Public Trust to define an agenda for good governance in the Hemisphere that enables us

to address political, economic, and social challenges in order to foster credibility and public trust in democratic institutions.

We reiterate our commitment to the full application of the Inter-American Democratic Charter, which constitutes an element of regional identity, and, projected internationally, is a hemispheric contribution to the community of nations. We reaffirm our decision to coordinate immediate action whenever democracy is threatened in any of our countries. In addition, we will continue our efforts to strengthen mechanisms for the defense of democracy and to develop and promote a culture and education for democracy.

We recognize the participation of many countries of the Hemisphere in the Community of Democracies and call upon the Third Ministerial Conference to continue supporting the strengthening of democratic institutions, particularly political parties.

The strengthening of and respect for the rule of law, the defense of human rights and fundamental freedoms, economic progress, well-being and social justice, transparency and accountability in public affairs, the promotion of diverse forms of participation by our citizens, and the development of opportunities for all are fundamental to promote and consolidate representative democracy.

Democratic governance is strengthened through dialogue among all sectors of society. We will continue to foster a culture of democracy and development based on pluralism and the acceptance of social and cultural diversity.

We recognize that corruption and impunity weaken public and private institutions, erode social values, undermine the rule of law, and distort economies and the allocation of resources for development. Therefore, we pledge to intensify our efforts to combat corruption and other unethical practices in the public and/or private sectors, strengthening a culture of transparency and ensuring more efficient public management.

We express our concern regarding corrupt, illegal, and fraudulent practices in the management of some national and transnational enterprises, that may have a negative impact on economies, in particular those of developing countries and on their producers and consumers.

The Inter-American Democratic Charter states that the peoples of the Americas have the right to democracy and that their governments have the obligation to promote and defend it, and it establishes that transparency in government activities, probity, and responsibility in public management are key components of the exercise of democracy. We will therefore increase our cooperation within the framework of the Inter-American Convention against Corruption, particularly by

strengthening its follow-up mechanism. We charge the upcoming meeting of the Conference of States Parties to the follow-up mechanism of the Convention with proposing specific measures to strengthen this mechanism. These recommendations will be evaluated at a meeting of the States Parties to the Convention, to be held in Managua, Nicaragua in mid-2004. That meeting will also consider additional concrete measures to increase transparency and combat corruption. We instruct our foreign ministers to report on the progress achieved to the Fourth Summit of the Americas.

We agree to hold consultations in the event that adherence to our shared transparency and anticorruption objectives, as articulated in the Inter-American Convention against Corruption, is compromised to a serious degree in any of our countries.

We undertake to promote transparency in political processes, in public financial management, and in government transactions, procurement processes, and contracts, in accordance with domestic legislation, in order to, *inter alia*, prevent abuse and maintain public confidence.

In the framework of applicable national and international law, we commit to deny safe haven to corrupt officials, to those who corrupt them, and their assets; and to cooperate in their extradition as well as in the recovery and return of the proceeds of corruption to their legitimate owners. We also commit to enhance regional mechanisms for mutual legal assistance in criminal matters and their implementation.

The United Nations Convention against Corruption is a valuable instrument to confront this scourge, and therefore we commit to consider signing and promoting its ratification.

We further commit to increase transparency in the international organizations of which we are members by strengthening their accountability mechanisms.

We recognize that political pluralism and sound political parties are essential elements of democracy. We underscore the importance of rules to ensure the transparency of party finances, to prevent corruption and the risk of undue influence, and to encourage a high level of electoral participation. Therefore, we will promote the conditions that enable political parties to thrive, autonomous of government control. We will encourage political training and leadership development, including for women, youth, indigenous people, members of ethnic groups, and marginalized segments of the population. We acknowledge the important work of the Inter-American Forum on Political Parties in enabling political parties to share best practices and strengthen themselves, as well as promoting reforms of political party systems.

We agree that, through citizen participation, civil society organizations should contribute to the design, implementation, and evaluation of public policies adopted by different orders or levels of government. We recognize the role of civil society and its contribution to sound public administration and we reaffirm the importance of continuing to forge new partnerships that will enable constructive ties to be built between governments, nongovernmental organizations, international organizations, and the diverse sectors of civil society to work in favor of development and democracy.

We encourage the participation of civil society in the Summits of the Americas process and we undertake to institutionalize meetings with civil society and with the academic and private sectors.

We will encourage the modernization of the State as an important element for strengthening democratic and good governance, combining effectiveness and efficiency with greater access to services, transparency, and responsibility in management and the consolidation and professionalization of the civil service. We undertake to promote the use of new information and communication technologies in public administration and to adopt strategies for the development of electronic government.

Access to information held by the State, subject to constitutional and legal norms, including those on privacy and confidentiality, is an indispensable condition for citizen participation and promotes effective respect for human rights. We are committed to providing the legal and regulatory framework and the structures and conditions required to guarantee the right of access to information to our citizens.

We take note with satisfaction that governments in the Hemisphere are implementing the Monterrey Consensus by exploring innovative ways to mobilize financing for private and public investment and to strengthen debt management, by considering financial instruments, such as growth-indexed bonds and others, to promote macroeconomic stability and reduce financial vulnerability. The implementation of such measures would be aimed at accelerating growth, reducing poverty, and strengthening democratic governance. We also note the efforts of governments in the region to promote discussion in this area.

We emphasize the role of the existing multilateral agencies in providing humanitarian assistance. We also take note of discussions and initiatives oriented on improving the effectiveness of providing humanitarian assistance and alleviating poverty, such as the proposal to create a voluntary International Humanitarian Fund.

Social justice and the reduction of poverty contribute to the stability, democracy, and security of our States and the region. We reiterate that among the principal causes

of instability in the region are poverty, inequality, and social exclusion, which we must confront comprehensively and urgently.

The progress made in economic and social development and in attaining a higher standard of equity through good governance will contribute to the advancement of stability in the Hemisphere and deepen the human dimension of security.

We reiterate our commitment to the objectives and purposes contained in the Declaration on Security in the Americas, approved at the Special Conference on Security, held in Mexico City in October 2003, based on, *inter alia*, the multidimensional concept of security as well as the principle that the basis and purpose of security is the protection of human beings.

This is our first meeting since the tragic events of September 11, 2001. We reiterate that terrorism, as well as the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, constitute grave threats to international security, to the institutions and the democratic values of States, and to the well-being of our peoples. We resolve to intensify our efforts and strengthen cooperation in confronting these threats.

We will take all necessary steps to prevent and counter terrorism and its financing in full compliance with our obligations under international law, including international human rights, refugee, and humanitarian law. Similarly, we commit to fight all forms of transnational crime, including illicit trafficking in drugs, arms, and persons, particularly when they generate funds used in support of terrorist organizations. We also commit to adhere to global anti-money laundering and anti-terrorist financing standards.

We call upon all countries that have not yet done so to ratify the Inter-American Convention against Terrorism, the twelve United Nations conventions and protocols on terrorism, as well as other related instruments. We further call upon all countries to urgently consider signing and ratifying the Inter-American Convention on Mutual Assistance in Criminal Matters and to participate actively in the Network on Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters.

We call upon the Organization of American States, the Inter-American Development Bank, the Pan American Health Organization, the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, the World Bank, the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture, the Andean Development Corporation, the Central American Bank for Economic Integration, and the Caribbean Development Bank to strengthen their coordination, and to continue deepening their support, through their respective activities and programs, and committing appropriate resources to implement and conduct follow-up on the Plans of Action of the Summits of the Americas, and this Declaration, and to assist in preparations for the Fourth Summit of the Americas in 2005.

We thank the Organization of American States and its General Secretariat, in particular the Secretariat of the Summits of the Americas Process, and the Joint Summit Working Group for their work in Summits follow-up and in the preparatory work for this Special Summit.

We express our appreciation to the people and Government of Mexico for hosting this Special Summit, and to the Government of Argentina for confirming its offer to host the Fourth Summit of the Americas in 2005.

We, the Heads of State and Government of the Americas, agree that this document shall be known as the “Declaration of Nuevo León” and we hereby approve it on this thirteenth day of January, in the year two thousand and four.

* “Venezuela enters a reservation with respect to the paragraph on the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) because of questions of principle and profound differences regarding the concept and philosophy of the proposed model and because of the manner in which specific aspects and established timeframes are addressed. We ratify our commitment to the consolidation of a regional fair trade bloc as a basis for strengthening levels of integration. This process must consider each country’s particular cultural, social, and political characteristics; sovereignty and constitutionality; and the level and size of its economy, in order to guarantee fair treatment.”