



Fifth Summit of the Americas  
Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago  
April 19, 2009

DECLARATION OF COMMITMENT OF PORT OF SPAIN

*Securing Our Citizens' Future by Promoting Human Prosperity, Energy Security  
and Environmental Sustainability*

## **PREAMBLE**

1. We, the Heads of State and Government of the democratic countries of the Americas, guided by a renewed spirit of cooperation, integration and solidarity, have gathered in Port of Spain at the Fifth Summit of the Americas, with a firm commitment to protect and promote the political and civil liberties and improve the social, economic and cultural well-being of all our peoples by advancing joint solutions to the most pressing challenges facing our Hemisphere. Recognising the sovereignty and independence of each of our countries, we reiterate our will to strengthen national, regional and hemispheric efforts to create the conditions for justice, prosperity, security and peace for the peoples of the Americas, based on the protection and promotion of and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms.

2. We reaffirm the principles and values of the Charter of the United Nations, the Charter of the Organisation of American States (OAS), the Inter-American Democratic Charter, the Monterrey Consensus on Financing for Development and the Millennium Declaration; and we are determined to intensify our fight against poverty, hunger, social exclusion, discrimination and inequality, and promote social inclusion and cohesion to improve the living conditions of our people to achieve development and social justice.

3. We reaffirm the importance of promoting cooperation among our States on the basis of solidarity in the different spheres of inter-American relations in accordance with the principles and essential purposes of the Charter of the OAS, recognising our social, political and economic diversity.

4. We therefore renew our commitment to all the peoples of the Americas to improve the quality of their lives by strengthening inter-American cooperation and, with the support of the institutions of the United Nations, the inter-American system and other relevant regional institutions, to further complement our efforts to ensure greater opportunities for decent work; to improve nutrition and access to health, quality education and housing; to promote adequate and sustainable access to energy, food and water; and to manage our environment responsibly.

5. We affirm that the solutions to the challenges facing our peoples are closely inter-dependent with our efforts to promote sustainable development and social inclusion; build stronger democratic institutions; strengthen governance in our democracies; preserve the rule of law and ensure access to justice for all citizens; protect and promote human rights and fundamental freedoms; prevent and combat violence, crime, terrorism and corruption; fight the global drug problem and related crimes; and achieve broader civic participation of all citizens of the inter-American community.

6. We recognise the importance of considering the differentiated needs of women and men in promoting and ensuring the integration of the gender perspective as a cross cutting issue in national and hemispheric policies, plans and programmes to be implemented in the political, economic, labour, social and cultural spheres. In this regard, we will continue our efforts to produce regional studies and statistics disaggregated by sex for measuring and monitoring, and for promoting cooperation and the sharing of good practices, experiences and policies among States on gender equality and equity within the context of human prosperity, energy security and environmental sustainability.

## **PROMOTING HUMAN PROSPERITY**

7. We are committed to addressing the current economic and financial crisis in order to achieve our objectives of promoting human prosperity and securing our citizens' future. We are determined to enhance our cooperation and work together to restore global growth and achieve needed reforms in the world's financial systems.

8. We are aware that, notwithstanding the gains made since the Fourth Summit of the Americas, deep inequalities continue to exist in our countries and in our region. In response, we will continue to develop and implement social protection and inclusion policies and programmes that give priority to those living in conditions of poverty and vulnerability in our societies, and we will continue to promote access to education, health, nutrition, energy, basic social services and to opportunities for dignified and decent work. At the same time, we will stimulate income growth and better income distribution, increase productivity, and protect workers' rights and the environment.

9. To strengthen our efforts to reduce social disparities and inequality and to halve extreme poverty by the year 2015, we commit to exchange information on policies, experiences, programmes and best practices. We therefore support the establishment of an Inter-American Social Protection Network in order to facilitate this exchange.

10. We instruct our Ministers, in particular those responsible for finance, planning and social development, to initiate or strengthen the review of national social protection, inclusion and poverty eradication programmes, if deemed necessary, in order to increase efficiency and effectiveness, reduce duplication, identify gaps at the national level and optimise the use of resources. We also instruct the Ministers to share the experiences and best practices that emanate from these reviews at the Second Meeting of Ministers and high level authorities of Social Development scheduled to take place in Colombia in 2010, with a view to identifying opportunities for increased multilateral cooperation in the area of social development. We call on the OAS, the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) and other relevant regional and sub-regional development and financial institutions to support these efforts within the scope of their mandates.

11. We commit to strengthening the institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women, including, where applicable, the Mechanism to Follow Up on the Implementation of the Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence Against Women “Convention of Belém do Pará” and its funding. We will encourage the full and equal participation of women in the political life and decision-making structures of our countries at all levels through laws and public policies that promote respect for women’s human rights and fundamental freedoms, as well as gender equality, equity and parity.

12. We recognise that there are significant differences in the levels of development and the size of our respective economies. Accordingly, we must continue to make a particular effort to promote sustainable development in small and vulnerable economies of the Hemisphere by enhancing their competitiveness, human and institutional capacity-building, financial and physical infrastructure, as well as the development of information and communication technologies (ICT) and the development of the business sector and other productive economic sectors, including tourism. We will also continue to support the national development efforts of middle-income countries to achieve the objectives of the Millennium Declaration, emphasising the reduction of poverty and the eradication of extreme poverty. We will work, as appropriate, in coordination with the relevant international institutions and organisations to improve the effectiveness of aid and development cooperation with middle-income countries. In this context, we also recognise the challenges faced by the land-locked countries of the Hemisphere.

13. To reduce poverty and hunger, eradicate extreme poverty, create dignified and decent work, and raise the standard of living of all our people, we must achieve higher levels of business development and sustainable economic growth with equity. Subject to the domestic laws of each country, we will continue to promote diversified economic activity in the energy, transport, tourism, communications, services, financial services and agricultural sectors. We are committed to facilitating investment and public-private partnerships in infrastructure and other relevant sectors in order to promote business development, economic growth and social development with equity. We will continue to promote increased corporate social responsibility and improved competitiveness, to which the Americas Competitiveness Forum in Chile in 2009 will contribute.

14. We recognise the positive contribution of trade among our nations to the promotion of growth, employment and development. We will therefore continue to insist on an open, transparent and rules-based multilateral trading system. We further recognise the need for all our peoples to benefit from the increased opportunities and welfare gains that the multilateral trading system generates.

15. Reaffirming our commitment to the International Labour Organisation (ILO) Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, we will continue to promote the creation of more opportunities for decent work in the formal sector. We will enforce our domestic labour laws to provide for acceptable conditions of work and safe and healthy workplaces, free from violence, harassment and discrimination. We will promote continuous training programmes in collaboration with workers’ representatives and the private sector as appropriate, with the goal of generating the necessary technical skills to enable workers to respond to the demands of the labour market. We therefore call upon the Ministers of Labour, within the context of the OAS Inter-American Conference of Ministers of Labour (IACML), in collaboration with their workers’ and employers’ consultative bodies and with the support of the ILO, as appropriate, to endorse, at the 16th IACML to be held in 2009, a work programme that advances these objectives.

16. We will adopt the necessary policies and regulations with the support of the ILO, IDB, World Bank and other regional bodies as appropriate to facilitate and promote the movement of enterprises and workers from the informal to the formal sector, without adversely affecting the rights of workers.

17. We reaffirm the importance of fully protecting the human rights of migrants, regardless of their immigration status, and observance of the labour laws applicable to them, including the principles and labour rights embodied in the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work.

18. We reiterate our commitment to protect all people, particularly women, children and adolescents, from all forms of trafficking in persons and sexual and economic exploitation, and to provide protection and attention to the victims. We call on Ministers responsible for education, labour, social development, security and justice to adopt coordinated national strategies to prevent and eradicate the worst forms of child labour by 2020 at the latest, in accordance with the Plan of Action of the Fourth Summit in Mar del Plata, Argentina, and in accordance with national legislation, and to develop innovative strategies to bring children and adolescents who are victims back into healthy learning environments. We also reiterate our commitment to eliminate forced labour before 2010.

19. We reiterate our commitment towards families and society to protect the rights of children and adolescents, including the right to education, the right to the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health, and the entitlement to special care and assistance, in order to promote their social well-being, protection and integral development.

20. We recognise that micro, small and medium-sized enterprises constitute a strategic force to generate new employment, improve the quality of life, and have a positive impact on development and economic growth while promoting equity and social inclusion. We also recognise the contribution to the economy and to the creation of decent work by productive organisations, in accordance with each nation's characteristics, such as cooperatives and other production units. In this context, we call on international and regional financial institutions, as appropriate, to increase their efforts to promote our economies' development and growth by increasing lending and significantly expanding access to credit by 2012.

21. We will continue to work towards eliminating administrative and bureaucratic barriers to the creation of new public and private enterprises. We will therefore take the necessary and feasible measures to simplify the processes involved in establishing and closing business ventures, with the goal of reducing business start-up time to a maximum of 30 days by 2015. We request that the IDB, World Bank, ILO and other relevant regional organisations support national and local government efforts to improve the legislative frameworks and administrative procedures for achieving this target.

22. In order to foster innovation, increase competitiveness and promote social development, and taking note of the outcomes of the Second Meeting of Ministers and High Authorities of Science and Technology, held in Mexico City in 2008, we commit to create conditions for increasing public investment and to take measures that promote investment in the private sector, particularly in science, technology, engineering, innovation, research and development, and to encourage the strengthening of linkages among universities, science institutions, the private and public sectors, multilateral agencies, civil society and workers. We recognise that the protection and enforcement of intellectual property rights should contribute to the promotion of technological innovation and to the transfer and dissemination of technology, to the mutual advantage of producers and users of technological knowledge and in a manner conducive to social and economic welfare and to a balance of rights and obligations. Therefore, we reiterate our commitment to their protection in accordance with the Agreement on Trade-related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights of the World Trade Organisation (WTO).

23. Providing our people with adequate and timely access to safe and nutritious food is among the most immediate challenges confronting our Hemisphere and the world. We recognise the negative impact on our people of food crises when they occur, and commit to taking urgent and coordinated action, working in partnership with the relevant international and regional organisations, as appropriate, to develop and implement comprehensive policies and programmes in order to confront the challenges of food security. We reaffirm our commitment to the objective of the Millennium Declaration to halve by 2015 the proportion of people who suffer from hunger; and we recognise United Nations General Assembly Resolution 63/235, which calls for addressing these challenges.

24. We call on our Agriculture Ministers to develop activities aimed at addressing issues affecting access to and availability of food in order to combat chronic malnutrition and to promote adequate nutritional policies for our populations. We support the promotion of investment in agriculture, as well as the strengthening of our States' institutional capacity, with a view to increasing and intensifying productive activities, particularly in the countries most affected by hunger.

25. We believe that a multidimensional and multisectoral approach to agriculture and rural life is a key factor for sustainable development and food security. In this context and within the framework of the Agro Plan 2003–2015 of the Fourth Ministerial Meeting on Agriculture and Rural Life in the Americas held in Guatemala in 2007, we support the efforts in the repositioning of agriculture and rural issues and priorities in our national strategies and we commit to strengthening national, sub-regional, regional and hemispheric approaches and strategic actions, as applicable, with the support of the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA) and other relevant organisations.

26. We recognise that the problem of inequality of access to comprehensive health care and health services persists, especially among vulnerable groups. We therefore commit to redoubling our efforts to promote social protection and to identify and implement strategies to advance towards universal access to quality comprehensive health care, taking into account labour, environment, gender-sensitive and social security policies, as well as the Health Agenda for the Americas 2008–2017, and will seek to provide necessary resources in order to improve our health indicators.

27. While the region has made significant progress in reducing both maternal mortality and mortality in infants and children under 5 years, neonatal mortality has not decreased at the same rate. We call on the Pan American Health Organisation (PAHO) to continue to assist countries in addressing this problem through the implementation of the Regional Strategy and Plan of Action for Neonatal Health within the Continuum of Maternal, Newborn, and Child Care. We recognise the importance of cooperation in sharing experiences within the framework of the global Partnership for Maternal, Newborn and Child Health.

28. We are convinced that we can reduce the burden of non-communicable diseases (NCDs) through the promotion of comprehensive and integrated preventive and control strategies at the individual, family, community, national and regional levels and through collaborative programmes, partnerships and policies supported by governments, the private sector, the media, civil society organisations, communities and relevant regional and international partners. We therefore reiterate our support for the PAHO Regional Strategy and Plan of Action on an Integrated Approach to the Prevention and Control of Chronic Diseases Including Diet, Physical Activity, and Health. We also commit to measures to reduce tobacco consumption, including, where applicable, within the World Health Organisation (WHO) Framework Convention on Tobacco Control.

29. We instruct our Ministers of Health, with the support of PAHO, to incorporate the surveillance of NCDs and their risk factors into existing national health information reporting systems by 2015. We encourage national planning and coordination of comprehensive prevention and control strategies for NCDs and the establishment of National Commissions where appropriate.

30. We commit to strengthening actions aimed at reducing drug abuse and illicit drug use, with particular regard to prevention, education, treatment, rehabilitation and reincorporation into society, with public awareness campaigns to assist in reducing the demand for illicit drugs.

31. We commit to improving the health of our people through the renewal of primary health care and access by the population to comprehensive health care and health services, as well as to essential medicines. We therefore commit to take the necessary actions, in accordance with the laws, needs and capabilities of each of our countries, bearing in mind the Health Agenda for the Americas 2008-2017, the 2005 Declaration of Montevideo on the New Orientations for Primary Health Care, and the 30-15 Buenos Aires Declaration of 2007, as appropriate.

32. We commit to improving the nutritional status of all the people of the Americas by 2015 and to the full implementation of the PAHO Regional Strategy on Nutrition in Health and Development 2006-2015. We will continue to promote the integration of nutrition into social and economic policies and plans and to reduce nutritional deficiencies through prevention and treatment strategies, including those targeted at the control of obesity and nutrition-related diseases. We also commit to increase awareness and educate our populations about the importance of diet and physical activity.

33. We recognise that nutrition is important in combating poverty, hunger and chronic malnutrition for children, especially those under age five, and vulnerable groups. We consider it a high priority to address the issue of nutrition through the joint efforts of the public and private sectors, civil society and communities. We call upon international organisations where appropriate to continue to support national efforts to confront malnutrition and promote healthy diets.

34. We reaffirm our commitment to the implementation of the International Health Regulations (IHR) (2005) to prevent the international spread of diseases such as pandemic influenza, yellow fever, dengue, malaria and others, and we commit to establish in our countries the basic capacities needed for surveillance and for responding to events that could constitute public health emergencies of international concern. We request that PAHO work with and support the countries, in accordance with the functions entrusted to it in the IHR (2005), in the areas of public health emergency prevention, control and response, particularly with respect to epidemics.

35. We are committed to meeting the Millennium Declaration objective of halting and beginning to reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS by 2015 through, inter alia, identification and implementation of strategies to scale up towards the goal of universal access to comprehensive prevention programmes, treatment, care and support. We will promote scientific research and social awareness geared towards producing safe and high quality medicines and supplies with the aim of increasing access to treatment. We will implement the Regional HIV/STI Plan for the Health Sector 2006-2015, in coordination with PAHO, UNAIDS and other relevant institutions. We commit to strengthening public policies aimed at reducing the incidence of mother-to-child transmission of HIV to less than 5% by 2015. We reiterate our commitment to participating in and strengthening the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, including through resource mobilisation.

36. We affirm that equal access to education is a human right and that quality education is essential, a public good and a priority. Therefore, we will continue promoting access to quality education for all. We also recognise that improving access to and the quality of early childhood education is a key factor in achieving universal primary education by 2015. Recognising that investing in quality care and education from birth through the early years of primary education improves learning, social, health and employment outcomes, we take note of the Hemispheric Commitment to Early Childhood Education adopted by the Ministers of Education in 2007. We call upon the Ministers of Education to increase efforts to measure educational progress in the Americas by the year 2010, both within our individual countries and through multilateral initiatives such as the Regional Educational Indicators Project (PRIE).

37. We reaffirm our commitment to achieving a gross secondary education enrolment rate of at least 75% by the year 2010 and we call on the Ministers of Education, with the support of the OAS, specialised international and regional institutions and civil society organisations, to develop strategies to make quality secondary education accessible to all our young people by 2015, especially the most vulnerable groups and those with special education needs. These strategies should be based on the principles of equity, quality, relevance and efficiency in education, taking into account the gender perspective and student diversity, and should also encourage innovation and creativity.

38. Recognising that education is a lifelong process that promotes social inclusion and democratic citizenship and allows people to contribute fully to the development of society, we will give high priority to improving and expanding literacy, numeracy and science proficiency, as well as access to tertiary, technical-vocational and adult education. We intend to increase the tertiary education participation rate to a minimum of 40 per cent by 2020 and urge countries which have already made considerable advances in this area to exchange best practices that will support the efforts of other countries to achieve this target. We commit to support the initial preparation and ongoing professional development of teachers.

39. Considering that young people are integral to development in our societies, we commit to continue investing in our young people by implementing policies and programmes aimed at: expanding their economic opportunities; providing access to comprehensive education and training for in-demand skills; opening avenues for leadership; and promoting healthy lifestyles. We therefore reaffirm our commitment to the 2008 Declaration of Medellin on Youth and Democratic Values.

40. In accordance with the Declaration on the Decade of the Americas for the Rights and Dignity of Persons with Disabilities (2006-2016), we reiterate our commitment to protect the rights and dignity of persons with disabilities and to promote their full participation and inclusion in the development of our societies. We will undertake, as appropriate, social, political, economic, cultural and development programmes to enable such persons to access opportunities without discrimination and on an equal basis with others.

41. We will continue working to incorporate issues of aging into public policy agendas. To this end, we request that the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) further strengthen its programmes in this area, through the creation of enhanced information and data systems on the social and economic impacts of aging, as well as technical assistance, as appropriate, for the development of policies and programmes in support of the elderly.

42. In this context, we will promote, in the regional framework and with support from PAHO and ECLAC, a review of the feasibility of preparing an inter-American convention on the rights of older persons.

43. We recognise that the benefits of a digital society should reach all citizens of the Americas. Additionally, we consider that reducing the digital divide, both among and within the nations of the Americas, is one of the conditions for achieving internationally agreed development objectives, including those of the Millennium Declaration. We therefore renew our commitment to collaborate with regional, subregional and multinational agencies to advance progress in the implementation of the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS), the Agenda for Connectivity in the Americas - the Plan of Action of Quito and the Declaration of the OAS General Assembly held in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic in 2006 on 'Good Governance and Development in the Knowledge-Based Society', and we take note of the eLAC 2010 Plan of Action contained in the San Salvador Commitment of 2008. We call upon our Ministers and high level authorities with responsibility for information and communication technologies (ICT) and for health and education to promote the use of ICT in all those areas in which they can improve our public and private sectors and the quality of life of our people, and to seek to improve access for households and communities.

44. Culture has a central role in the overall development of our countries, in the fight against poverty and in our efforts to improve the quality of life of all our peoples. We acknowledge the positive contribution of culture in building social cohesion and in creating stronger, more inclusive communities, and we will continue to promote inter-cultural dialogue and respect for cultural diversity in order to encourage mutual understanding, which helps reduce conflict, discrimination and the barriers to economic opportunity and social participation. We also commit to increase our efforts to promote and support cultural and creative industries and activities as part of our national policies for the promotion of sustainable economic growth, job creation and income generation, especially for young adults. We further commit to facilitating the sharing of knowledge and practices on protecting and promoting cultural heritage and to educating communities on how best to protect their heritage sites and manage them in a sustainable manner.

## **PROMOTING ENERGY SECURITY**

45. We recognise that energy is an essential resource for improving the standard of living of our peoples and that access to energy is of paramount importance to economic growth with equity and social inclusion. We will aim to develop cleaner, more affordable and sustainable energy systems, to promote access to energy and energy efficient technologies and practices in all sectors. We will aim to diversify our energy matrices by increasing, where appropriate, the contribution of renewable energy sources, and will encourage the cleaner, more efficient use of fossil fuels and other fuels.

46. We reaffirm the sovereign right of each country to the conservation, development and sustainable use of its own energy resources. We will continue to promote efficient and transparent energy resource management for achieving sustainable development in all our countries, taking into consideration national circumstances. We support the exchange of experiences and best practices and will seek to cooperate, where appropriate, in the implementation of energy efforts in the Hemisphere.

47. We will foster energy efficiency and conservation in the public and private sectors, particularly in our transport systems, industrial sectors, commercial enterprises, including small and medium-sized enterprises, as well as at the household level, and will promote cleaner, more sustainable patterns of production and consumption.

48. Taking into consideration national needs and priorities and consistent with applicable national and international law, we will strive to foster investment and innovation in the development and diversification of energy sources and of efficient and environmentally friendly technologies, including cleaner technologies for the production of fossil fuels. Furthermore we recognise the importance of transparency in energy-related government and private sector activities.

49. We recognise the potential of new, emerging, and environmentally friendly technologies for diversifying the energy matrix and the creation of jobs. In this regard, we will encourage, as appropriate, the sustainable development, production, and use of both current and next-generation biofuels, with awareness of their social, economic and environmental impact. In accordance with our national priorities, we will work together to facilitate their use, through international cooperation and the sharing of experiences on biofuel technologies and policies.<sup>1</sup>

50. We will encourage the development of diverse renewable energy sources and technologies. We will develop national strategies, in keeping with each country's capacity, to promote the science-based development and use of increasingly advanced technologies for sustainable energy production, taking into account possible social or environmental impacts.

51. We recognise that many sources of energy are available at particular times and locations. We will therefore, in accordance with applicable national and international law and considering the particular needs and priorities of each of our countries, encourage investment in the development and scaling-up of renewable and non-renewable energy, energy integration projects, new, efficient energy generation, including storage and energy sharing systems, cross-border transportation and distribution systems and other energy-trading and cooperation networks. We affirm that nuclear energy production in our countries will be carried out in strict compliance with our respective obligations under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, as well as under other applicable multilateral international agreements on non-proliferation, nuclear safety and nuclear security, to which the Member State is a party. We will cooperate to improve the security, safety, quality, reliability and protection of our critical energy infrastructure and supply networks, including regional interconnection networks where feasible and useful, and will seek to ensure that all links in the energy supply chain operate to the highest standards of human health and safety, environmental protection and physical security.

52. Based on our technical and financial capabilities, and consistent with applicable national and international law, we will continue to promote cleaner energy through research and development, capacity building and the transfer, on mutually agreed terms, as well as the commercialisation, of environmentally sustainable technologies. We will also promote, where appropriate, participation in mitigation and adaptation mechanisms and funds, and in international carbon markets. Priority should be given to the sharing of information and experiences, and to increasing international cooperation and the fostering of domestic enabling environments to support clean energy technologies that could benefit all our nations.

53. We will aim to develop public education campaigns in each nation, with commitments from governments and industry, which serve to provide the people of the Americas with access to accurate, reliable and impartial information on energy, environmental and climate change issues.

54. We will take further action to improve and enhance the collection and reporting of market data on oil and other energy sources in all countries to ensure smooth functioning of energy markets at the regional and global levels. We will also support ongoing international initiatives such as the Joint Oil Data Initiative to promote improved governance, transparency and accountability in the energy sector.

55. We will continue to support the development and implementation of voluntary corporate social responsibility best practices in the energy sector, with particular emphasis on initiatives that enhance dialogue among government, industry, local communities, indigenous groups and non-governmental organisations, to enable all stakeholders to better understand, participate in and benefit from energy sector activities. We welcome the efforts of countries to effectively manage their extractive sector, thereby contributing to economic and social development, and environmental stewardship.

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<sup>1</sup> Footnote for paragraph 49 presented by the delegation of Bolivia:

Bolivia is of the view that the development of cooperative policies and arrangements intended to expand biofuels in the Western Hemisphere can adversely affect and impact on the availability of foods and raise food prices, increase deforestation, displace populations due to the demand for land, and ultimately aggravate the food crisis. It would directly affect low-income persons, especially the poorest economies of the developing countries. Thus, while the Bolivian Government recognizes the need to seek and use alternative, environmentally friendly sources of energy, such as geothermal, solar, wind energy and small and medium-sized hydroelectric plants, it proposes an alternative vision based on living well and in harmony with nature, developing public policies aimed to promote safe, alternative energies that guarantee the preservation of the planet, our "Mother Earth."

56. We recognise the different and valuable existing energy cooperation and integration initiatives in the region, based, inter alia, on solidarity, complementarity, efficiency and sustainability. In this sense, and in order to advance hemispheric energy cooperation, we instruct our Ministers or pertinent national authorities, in a spirit of partnership, to develop cooperation strategies that will promote access for our people to reliable, efficient, affordable and clean energy, especially for the poorest sectors, and foster sharing of best practices and experiences, with a view to increasing energy efficiency, diversifying energy sources and minimising environmental impact, with the support of the institutions of the Joint Summit Working Group (JSWG) and other relevant international and regional organisations, within the scope of their mandates, as well as the private sector, as appropriate. To this end, we will convene a meeting as a first step toward the development of an implementation plan for this initiative, as well as other energy action items arising from this Declaration, for the consideration and approval of Ministers or pertinent national authorities. We further instruct Ministers or pertinent national authorities to submit a progress report on the implementation of this initiative by the next Summit of the Americas.

## PROMOTING ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

57. We recognise that social and economic development and protection of the environment, including the sustainable management of natural resources, are mutually reinforcing, interdependent pillars of sustainable development. We therefore reaffirm our strong commitment to sustainable development, as set out in the 1992 Rio de Janeiro Declaration on Environment and Development, the 1994 Barbados Programme of Action (BPOA), the 1996 Declaration of Santa Cruz de la Sierra, the 2002 Johannesburg Declaration on Sustainable Development, the 2005 Mauritius Strategy for the implementation of the BPOA, the 2006 Declaration of Santa Cruz + 10 and the objectives of the United Nations Millennium Declaration.

58. We recognise the adverse impacts of climate change on all countries of the Hemisphere, in particular, Small Island Developing States, countries with low-lying coastal, arid and semi-arid areas or areas liable to floods, drought and desertification, developing countries with fragile mountainous ecosystems and land locked countries. We reaffirm our commitment to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and its objective of achieving stabilisation of greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that would prevent dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system. We recognise that deep cuts in greenhouse gas emissions will be required to achieve the ultimate objective of the Convention, respecting its principles, notably that which states that we should protect the climate system for the benefit of the present and future generations of humankind, on the basis of equity, and in accordance with our common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities.

59. We also support further dialogue and cooperation under the UNFCCC in order to strengthen long-term cooperative action, pursuant to the 2007 Bali Action Plan, and commit to work towards an agreed outcome at the Fifteenth Session of the Conference of the Parties to the Climate Change Convention (COP15) in Copenhagen in 2009, to enable the full, effective and sustained implementation of the UNFCCC.

60. We commit to improving regional cooperation and strengthening our national technical and institutional capacity for disaster reduction, prevention, preparedness and response, rehabilitation, resilience, risk reduction, impact mitigation, and evaluation. We will strengthen our monitoring, surveillance, communications and early warning systems and will encourage the sharing of information and research on disasters. In this regard, we recognise the importance of our active participation in the Pan American Institute of Geography and History, the Global Earth Observation System of Systems (GEOSS) and the Global Climate Observing System (GCOS) as tools to increase access to information and facilitate coordinated action, as well as in the regional meetings on international mechanisms for humanitarian assistance and the Inter-American Network for Disaster Mitigation, as appropriate.

61. We will encourage the strengthening of domestic planning and zoning measures and building codes, as appropriate, in order to reduce risks, mitigate impact and enhance the resilience of future residential, commercial and industrial developments. We will consider measures, where feasible, to discourage developments in areas where risks cannot be reduced or impacts mitigated and to facilitate the protection or relocation of any areas of human settlement and sections of essential industrial and transport infrastructure that might be at risk. We will also promote education and training with the aim of increasing public awareness of natural disaster preparedness and of national plans for prevention, mitigation and post-disaster recovery.

62. We instruct the relevant Ministers or pertinent high level authorities, in collaboration with the specialised national, regional and international disaster organisations, and in the context of the United Nations

International Strategy for Disaster Reduction and the Hyogo Declaration and Framework for Action 2005-2015, to strengthen cooperation within the Americas in the areas of disaster risk reduction and management.

63. We will continue to work towards promoting good environmental governance by, inter alia, advancing conservation efforts and strengthening, implementing and effectively enforcing national environmental laws, in accordance with our sustainable development priorities and international law.

64. We will collaborate to promote environmental sustainability through regional cooperation, in accordance with national legislation and applicable international law, in the areas of human and institutional capacity building, transfer on mutually agreed terms of environmentally sound technology, and effective mobilisation of new and additional human and financial resources, as appropriate, including innovative public and private financing mechanisms and instruments, for inter alia:

- (a) the sustainable management of forests, including efforts for reducing deforestation;
- (b) the sustainable management of protected areas and World Heritage Sites;
- (c) protecting endangered and migratory species;
- (d) combating illegal international trafficking of biodiversity;
- (e) promoting the exchange of scientific knowledge on biodiversity, such as through the Inter-American Biodiversity Information Network; and,
- (f) recognising and sharing the benefits arising from access to and use of genetic resources and associated traditional knowledge.

65. We recognise that the conservation of marine resources and the protection of marine ecosystems, including estuaries and coastal areas, throughout the Americas are vital for the continued economic and social well-being of those who live near or otherwise depend on the sea. We will seek to secure the wider adoption and implementation of existing regional and international marine conservation and marine pollution agreements. We further recognise that the wider Caribbean is a marine area of unique biodiversity and highly fragile ecosystems, and we will continue to work together along with other countries and relevant regional and international development partners to continue to develop and implement regional initiatives to promote the sustainable conservation and management of Caribbean coastal and marine resources. In this regard, we take note of the ongoing efforts to consider the concept of the Caribbean Sea as a Special Area in the context of sustainable development without prejudice to relevant national legislation and international law.

66. We renew our support for the Inter-American Program for Sustainable Development (PIDS) (2006-2009), and we instruct the relevant Ministers and invite all other authorities responsible for sustainable development to gather in 2010, under the auspices of the OAS, with the collaboration of relevant international organisations and financial and development institutions, and with the participation of the academic community and other members of civil society, to assess the achievements of the Program to date, and renew or modify the PIDS as necessary. We will give special attention to the most vulnerable areas.

67. We renew our support for the work of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), whose findings provide valuable information on climate change mitigation and adaptation. We call upon the relevant Ministers and other responsible authorities, and with the support of relevant international and regional organisations including those of the Joint Summit Working Group (JSWG), within the scope of their mandates and capabilities, to consider the findings of the IPCC with the aim of examining, as appropriate, the potential implications for our respective countries, in particular the poorest and the most vulnerable sectors, in order to reinforce national adaptation and mitigation actions and plans, and to inform, as appropriate, sub-regional plans for the management of the impact of climate change. We will enhance our cooperation in this area throughout the region.

#### **STRENGTHENING PUBLIC SECURITY**

68. We recognise the importance of addressing the threats, concerns and other challenges to security in the Hemisphere that are diverse, multidimensional in scope and impact on the well-being of our citizens. We reaffirm that our concept of security in the Hemisphere incorporates the priorities of each State, contributes to the consolidation of peace, integral development and social justice, and is based on democratic values, respect for and promotion and defence of human rights, solidarity, cooperation and respect for national sovereignty. It is indispensable for our States to strengthen cooperation on security matters. We therefore reaffirm our commitment to the Declaration on Security in the Americas.

69. We reiterate our most vigorous condemnation of terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, as criminal and unjustifiable under any circumstances, in any place, and regardless of who perpetrates it, because it poses a grave threat to international peace and security, and to the democracy, stability and prosperity of the countries in the region. We commit to prevent, punish and eliminate terrorism and to continue the fight against all criminal activities that finance and facilitate it, with full respect for domestic law and international law, including international human rights law, international humanitarian law and international refugee law. We also commit to strengthen cooperation, including mutual legal assistance and extradition, in combating terrorism and its financing, in accordance with our domestic law and established international conventions. We urge those States that have not yet done so to accede to the international conventions on terrorism.

70. We will continue to fight all forms of transnational organised crime, illicit trafficking in drugs, illicit trafficking in arms, ammunition and explosives, illicit trafficking in persons and smuggling of migrants, money laundering, corruption, terrorism, kidnapping, criminal gangs, and crimes associated with the use of technology, including cyber crime. We therefore reaffirm our will to implement the Commitment to Public Security in the Americas adopted by the First Meeting of Ministers Responsible for Public Security in the Americas in October 2008 in Mexico City, the commitments emanating from Meetings of Ministers of Justice or other Ministers or Attorneys General of the Americas (REMJA), as well as the 2006 Hemispheric Plan of Action Against Transnational Organised Crime. We thus invite the international community and international financial organisations to continue making financial contributions and other appropriate forms of assistance, within the scope of their respective competencies, to facilitate the achievement of the objectives of public security in the Americas.

71. Accordingly, we commit to fostering public policies, in coordination with pertinent institutions and with citizen and community participation, designed to prevent crime, violence and insecurity, and to strengthen with a multidimensional approach and in accordance with domestic law, the channels of communication and the exchange of information, practices and experiences among Member States in combating and preventing crimes affecting public security. Moreover, we will strengthen our national and regional capacities through, inter alia, increased cooperation and technical assistance, as appropriate, that enable us to benefit from the expertise of each Member State.

72. We will increase our efforts to prevent and combat all aspects of the global drug problem and related crimes, with strengthened international cooperation and an integral and balanced approach based on the principle of common and shared responsibility, in accordance with the principles enshrined in the United Nations and OAS Charters, international law and our applicable legal frameworks. To this end, we will strengthen our national capacities and will continue to implement, as appropriate, the recommendations of the Multilateral Evaluation Mechanism (MEM). We welcome the completion of its latest Evaluation Round, and we will continue strengthening the Mechanism so as to enable it to face the new challenges and needs of the countries of the Hemisphere. We also recognise the importance of sustainable alternative development programmes and, where appropriate, of preventive alternative development in tackling the global drug problem.

73. We request that the General Secretariat of the OAS submit to the next Summit of the Americas a progress report on the implementation of commitments made at the Meetings of Ministers Responsible for Public Security in the Americas (MISPA) and at the Meetings of Ministers of Justice or other Ministers or Attorneys General of the Americas (REMJA). We look forward to advancing further cooperation at these meetings and the work of the OAS in support of the MISPA and the REMJA. We express appreciation for the ongoing technical support of the OAS in matters covered by these meetings.

74. We recognise that violence is preventable and as such, we will formulate or strengthen policies that take an integrated approach to its prevention. To this end, we will complement law-enforcement policies with other violence-prevention strategies of measurable outcomes, in areas such as education, labour, health and other pertinent fields, as appropriate. We will continue to strengthen and implement activities that promote a culture of non-violence within a public health context, and to create safe, healthy, sustainable environments and communities. We acknowledge the Declaration of the First Meeting of Ministers of Health of the Americas on Violence and Injury Prevention, held in Merida, Mexico in March 2008, which commits to further innovate, develop, implement, and evaluate plans for violence prevention.

75. We are convinced that illicit manufacturing of and trafficking in firearms, ammunition, explosives and other related materials are a threat to security, breed violence, exacerbate conflicts and adversely affect the rule of law. We reiterate the need for effective cooperation to prevent, combat and eradicate this threat and in this regard we reaffirm the value of the Inter-American Convention against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Ammunition, Explosives and other Related Materials (CIFTA) and its model

legislation as a basis for such cooperation. We will continue to combat the illicit manufacturing of and trafficking in firearms, ammunition, explosives and other related materials by, among other actions, marking and tracing firearms, destroying excess stocks of firearms designated by each State, securing and managing stockpiles and regulating firearms brokering, including sanctions for illicit arms brokering for the purpose of avoiding their diversion through illicit channels and their proliferation.

76. We will redouble our efforts to prevent access to our financial systems by funds/assets of illicit origin, through national measures and international cooperation to identify, track, freeze, seize or forfeit the funds/assets that are proceeds of criminal activity, and determine their destination and/or return in accordance with our national legislation and international law.

77. We also emphasise our decision to address the criminal gang problem, its related aspects and its effects on the social environment, which challenge the progress made by our societies in the process to achieve stability, democratisation and sustainable development, taking a global approach that includes, inter alia, prevention, rehabilitation and reintegration of individuals affected by this phenomenon. To that end, we will encourage OAS efforts to prepare a comprehensive hemispheric strategy to promote inter-American cooperation in dealing with criminal gangs.

## STRENGTHENING DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE

78. Our aspirations and goals for the Americas depend on strong democracies, good governance, the rule of law and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. We believe that democracy is essential for the social, political and economic development of the peoples of the Americas. We therefore renew our commitment to fight poverty, inequality, hunger and social exclusion in order to raise the standard of living of our peoples and strengthen democratic governance in the Americas, and we will uphold the principles of and fully implement the Inter-American Democratic Charter. We reaffirm our commitment to fostering credibility and public trust in democratic institutions, in particular the legitimacy of electoral processes and full respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms.

79. We recognise the role of governance at the local level as a tool for strengthening democracy and sustainable development. We affirm the importance of enhancing decentralisation, local government and citizen participation and we reiterate our commitment to supporting the work of the high level Inter-American Network on Decentralisation, Local Government and Citizen Participation (RIAD) and its continued engagement in initiatives that promote good governance principles and practices at the local level.

80. We will strengthen our fight against all forms of corruption, fraudulent practices and unethical behaviour by increasing transparency, integrity, accountability and efficiency in the public and private sectors. We reaffirm our commitment to the Inter-American Convention against Corruption, and declare our support for the ratification and effective enforcement of the United Nations Convention against Corruption. In the framework of applicable national and international law, we reiterate our commitment to deny safe haven to corrupt officials, 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.

81. Alarmed by the corrupt, illegal and fraudulent practices in the management of some national and transnational private enterprises, which have a negative impact on the economies of our countries and could present a threat to their political and democratic stability, we will continue to enhance legal mechanisms for information sharing, and we will develop and implement policies that foster a culture of integrity and transparency within public and private offices and institutions. We will therefore seek to ensure that important progress is made in providing access for our citizens to public information, particularly on government revenues, expenditures and budgets.

82. We reaffirm the principles contained in the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, which recognises that all human rights are universal, indivisible and interdependent and interrelated. We recognise that the universal promotion and protection of human rights, including civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, as well as respect for international law, including international humanitarian law, international human rights law and international refugee law, are essential to the functioning of democratic societies. We further recognise that the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action reaffirms, inter alia, the importance of ensuring the universality and objectivity of the consideration of human rights issues.

83. We reiterate our commitment to protect and promote human rights in our Hemisphere, and to the strengthening of the inter-American human rights system, with due respect for its autonomy and independence. We express our support to continue furthering the constructive dialogue with the participation of all actors, including the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights and the Inter-American Court of Human Rights, in the framework of the reflection process which contributes to enhancing its effectiveness, universalisation, and the adequate financing of the bodies of the system.

84. We reiterate our support for the objectives of the Social Charter of the Americas and its Plan of Action, which seek to offer all of our citizens more opportunities to benefit from sustainable development with equity and social inclusion. We encourage the OAS to conclude the drafting of these instruments and will endeavour to conclude negotiations and adopt these documents before the end of 2009.

85. We also reaffirm that all forms of discrimination inhibit the full participation of all persons in society and commit to taking continued steps to combat them. We will continue our efforts to conclude negotiations on the draft Inter-American Convention Against Racism and All Forms of Discrimination and Intolerance.

86. Recognising the diversity and the traditional and ancestral nature of the cultures, histories and demographic, socio-economic and political circumstances of indigenous peoples, we reaffirm our commitment to respect their rights and we will promote the successful conclusion of negotiations on the American Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Recognition of the rights of indigenous peoples is essential for their existence, welfare and integral development. In accordance with the domestic laws of each State, we will promote the exercise of their rights, their full participation in national activities and the creation of the conditions that allow them to overcome poverty, social exclusion and inequality.

87. Considering the importance of child protection public policy and legislation in our Hemisphere, as well as the need for institutions at the state level to channel these efforts, we reaffirm the relevance of strengthening the institutions that work with children, and improving their linkages to the inter-American system, and in particular the system for the promotion and protection of human rights, as appropriate. Taking into consideration national circumstances, we will continue to encourage efforts to ensure that child protection systems facilitate family, community and social environments that are free from violence and abuse and promote comprehensive development of the child, adolescent and the family environment with special emphasis on the most vulnerable sectors of our societies. In this sense, we support the organisation of the XX Pan American Child Congress, to be held in Lima, Peru from September 22 to 25, 2009.

88. We recognise the important role of the OAS in the peaceful resolution of our differences, its participation in the promotion of a culture of democracy, peace, dialogue and non-violence in the region, as well as its role in the implementation of the Inter-American Democratic Charter. We commit to improve the capacity of the OAS in its efforts to assist in enhancing peace and the democratic, social and economic stability of our region.

#### **STRENGTHENING THE SUMMIT OF THE AMERICAS, FOLLOW-UP AND IMPLEMENTATION EFFECTIVENESS**

89. We recognise that the issues of human prosperity, energy security and environmental sustainability are closely intertwined and that an integrated, coherent policy framework is essential to the achievement of the commitments we have made here to the people of our Hemisphere.

90. In order to strengthen ministerial participation in and continuity with the Summits of the Americas Process, improve the implementation of our decisions at this Fifth Summit, and increase our accountability to the people of the Americas, we call on the technical secretariats of all inter-American Ministerial Meetings to inform their Ministers and high level authorities of the mandates arising from this Summit and to initiate strategic actions, by the end of 2009, to facilitate the implementation of our commitments. We further commit to convening the Summit of the Americas on a regular basis and no later than every three years.

91. Our countries will aim to continue to provide annual national reports to the OAS on the actions and progress made towards achieving the specific objectives set at the Summits of the Americas. In addition, we instruct the General Secretariat of the OAS, in accordance with its central role in supporting the implementation of Summit mandates and in coordination with the members of the Joint Summit Working Group (JSWG), to

provide a comprehensive report to the Summit Implementation Review Group (SIRG), annually, on the actions and progress made at all inter-American Ministerial Meetings towards supporting Summit objectives.

92. We instruct Ministers of Finance or pertinent authorities to convene a meeting in 2010 to address regional financial and economic issues. In that context, we request that they continue to explore ways to ensure that international financial institutions, regional development banks and other international bodies take due account of the Summit mandates in their lending policies and technical assistance programs for the Hemisphere. We will also continue to strengthen the mechanisms to build strategic alliances within our countries among relevant ministries with responsibility for implementing commitments and mandates contained in this Declaration. To that same end, we will continue to strengthen the capacities of our national authorities to use technical cooperation resources more effectively, with the aim of fulfilling Summit objectives.

93. We call upon the institutions of the Joint Summit Working Group (JSWG) to further strengthen their commitment and to develop coordinated programmes of action aimed at achieving the goals for the Americas set out in this Declaration.

94. We commit to continue encouraging the participation of our peoples, through the engagement of our citizens, communities and civil society in the design and execution of development policies and programmes, by providing technical and financial assistance, as appropriate, and in accordance with national legislation to strengthen and build their capacity to participate more fully in the inter-American system.

95. We also commit to continue exploring ways in which our governments can build, strengthen and maintain alliances with all sectors of society, especially the business, labour and academic sectors, in order to harness the expertise and resources that exist within these sectors, and to develop and implement effective, practical and sustainable strategies and cooperation to achieve our national and hemispheric development goals. Considering that the contribution of science, technology and innovation is crucial for attaining the objectives of this Declaration, strategic initiatives to better mobilise these resources of the region should be formulated.

96. We applaud the commemoration of the bicentennial of the independence of Latin American countries and the work being undertaken jointly by those countries for their celebration, recognising that their independence has played a key part in shaping the contemporary world and that it will remain relevant in shaping the world of the future.

97. We, the Heads of State and Government of the Americas, hereby approve the contents of this 'Declaration of Commitment of Port of Spain' on this the 19th day of April, 2009.