

**Fourth Summit of the Americas
Draft Declaration of Mar del Plata
Mar del Plata, November 4 and 5, 2005**

Creating Jobs to Fight Poverty and Strengthen Democratic Governance

1. We, the democratically elected Heads of State and Government of the Americas, gathered in the city of Mar del Plata on the occasion of our Fourth Summit, reaffirm 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. We assign decent work a central place on the hemispheric agenda, associating it with human dignity, human rights, and the principles of liberty, justice, security, equality, social protection, and nondiscrimination. Recognizing the essential role of work in fostering economic growth, investment, and business activity and its important contribution to promoting human development, we agree to adopt the attached Plan of Action, committing our efforts to its implementation.

2. Taking into account the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, and the commitment we made to promoting, strengthening, and defending democracy in the OAS Charter and the Inter-American Democratic Charter, we will promote social well-being, a more equitable distribution of the benefits of economic growth, an increase in hemispheric standards of living, the elimination of hunger and improved food security, the creation of new employment opportunities, and the entrepreneurial spirit.

3. We reaffirm our firm intent to maintain our support for the mandates and commitments undertaken at the Summits of the Americas, the World Summit for Social Development, the World Summit on Sustainable Development, the United Nations' Millennium Summit and 2005 World Summit, and the International Conference on Financing for Development, as an essential condition for the sustainable development of our countries.

Growth with Employment

4. (Despite efforts made by the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean and successes already achieved with the implementation of responsible economic and fiscal policies, more than 96 million people still live on less than one dollar a day.) We commit our maximum efforts toward attaining the Millennium Development Goals, especially that of reducing by 50% the proportion of persons living in extreme poverty by 2015.

5. We recognize that economic growth is a basic, indispensable, and necessary, but not sufficient, condition for overcoming the high rates of unemployment and the growth of the informal economy. (In the recent past, many countries in the Hemisphere have experienced periods of high growth with low employment generation, which aggravated the high concentration of income and led to a significant increase in the incidence of poverty and extreme poverty.)

(6. We believe that democracies, to ensure their continuation, must usually have a greater capacity to generate good, productive jobs.) We commit to improving health and education and providing increased training and information to our peoples in order to achieve an increase in and improvement of jobs to strengthen democracy.

7. We recognize that the problems associated with inequality and poverty cannot be solved solely by welfare-oriented social policies. We commit to undertaking national social safeguard policies and

specific programs to address the challenges associated with inequality and poverty. Although welfare plans and programs are often a necessary temporary remedy within our social policies, we commit to consolidating societies with opportunities for all. To attain these objectives, we must seek to develop prudent long-term policies to provide our population with greater access to education, health care, the labor market, and credit.

8. The ability of democratic governments to meet society's legitimate demands for job generation is affected by protectionist measures that restrict trade, in the farm sector among others; by the excessive burden of foreign debt; by insufficient flows of foreign investment; by today's international financial architecture; and by the role of multilateral lending institutions.

9. We maintain our commitment to the WTO's Doha Development Round in order to gain greater access to markets for our exports; the elimination of subsidies of any kind for agricultural exports; and a substantial reduction—and eventual elimination—of internal assistance measures for farmers. We remain committed to achieving substantial progress in the negotiations, in order to expand our trade, our growth potential, and the possibility of generating more and better jobs with better pay.

Jobs to Fight Poverty

10. The hope of having decent work and job opportunities is the principal and most widespread demand in the American democracies. The great task of our societies in combating poverty and social exclusion is to promote policies for generating more and better jobs, which are essential to social cohesion, prosperity, and democratic governance.

11. We commit to implementing active policies to generate decent work and create the conditions for good employment. In the context of a new paradigm that imbues economic policies and globalization with a strong ethical and human component, putting the individual at the center of work, the company, and the economy, we will facilitate the convergence of the various dimensions of good employment: respect for fundamental labor rights, good jobs, adequate social safeguards and job security, and the right to representation and participation through social dialogue.

12. We reaffirm our respect for the essential rights set forth in the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work and pledge to strengthen the enforcement of those laws. We will develop and implement programs that help labor markets to function efficiently and transparently and that help workers respond to the opportunities created by economic growth and the new technologies.

13. We will substantially reduce gender-based and racial discrimination in the workplace, promoting equal opportunities to reduce existing disparities between men and women in the working world, according to an integrated approach that incorporates the dignity of persons and a gender and race perspective into employment policies.

14. We undertake to protect children from economic exploitation and from performing tasks that may be hazardous, that interfere with their education, or that may be harmful to their health or physical development. In addition, we will implement immediate and effective measures to prevent, eradicate, and eliminate child labor. As a priority, we will adapt national laws, regulations, and policies in accordance with ILO standards. We will strive to improve access to and the quality of basic education for all children, recognizing that providing educational opportunities is an investment in the future of our economies.

15. We reaffirm our commitment to protecting the labor rights of all workers, regardless of their immigration status, within the legal framework of each country and in keeping with universal principles protecting the human individual. We emphasize the fundamental importance of the

principle of equality and nondiscrimination in employment, which entails obligations to protect workers in general. The right of all migrants to due process of law must be recognized, regardless of their immigration status.

16. We urge those countries that have not yet ratified the International Convention on the Protection of the Human Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families to do so as soon as possible. We call for an increase in international cooperation to lower the costs of remittances; the establishment of bilateral temporary programs for migrant workers, in order to reduce labor exploitation and illegal migration; efforts to combat illicit smuggling of migrants and trafficking in persons; and the dignified, orderly, and safe return of migrants.

17. Within the expansion of employment opportunities for all, special attention must be paid to vulnerable groups, such as indigenous peoples, minorities, persons with disabilities, youth, and the elderly, and to inequalities in the workplace and in remuneration for reasons of social origin, race, gender, age, or any other kind of discrimination.

18. We commit to implementing policies to protect the health and safety of formal and informal workers, whether paid or unpaid, regardless of gender, race, religion, political opinion, or socioeconomic condition.

19. We recognize the positive contribution of unemployment insurance systems to relieving the economic suffering of individuals and limiting the need for workers to resort to the informal economy. We will examine the forms of unemployment protection most appropriate to our respective economies, with the goal of having workers reenter the labor market.

20. We consider it essential to strengthen social dialogue at the local, national, regional, and hemispheric levels as an important instrument for society's participation in building a development process with inclusion and social justice, in order to develop strategies designed to strengthen democratic life in the work environment, and as a central factor in maintaining harmonious labor relations. We will also strengthen collaboration with civil society and other private sector actors, including micro-, small, and medium-size entrepreneurs, in order to participate jointly in the discussion and development of job creation strategies.

Training the Labor Force

21. We recognize the essential role of training in enabling our workers to take full advantage of emerging job opportunities. Improvements in the quality of education are central to strengthening our democracies and giving workers the tools and knowledge required by the labor market. This requires access to good basic education as the basis for knowledge throughout the working life of individuals.

22. We recognize the importance of good and efficient educational and professional training systems to allow the formation of societies with higher educational levels and efficient professional training. In order to integrate those systems, linked to economic, educational, and employment policies, we will promote increased investment in professional instruction and in training—in both the private and public sectors—to foster the productivity of companies and the employability of individuals.

23. We will ensure that public education at the primary level creates opportunities for all children to continue their education successfully at the secondary and tertiary levels. We recognize the importance of facilitating the inclusion and employment of youth in the labor market, expanding coverage and improving the quality of information and employment counseling services.

Micro-, small, and medium-size enterprises as an engine of job growth

24. Micro-, small, and medium-sized enterprises represent a strategic force in the effort to generate more employment, a more balanced production and labor structure, and inclusive, sustainable economic development. We recognize the importance of developing explicit policies to promote these enterprises in order to improve competitiveness and expand the formal enterprise network.

25. We will pursue industrial and competition policies that boost markets, eschew unfair trade practices, and develop production networks or chains which, as they expand and become more dense and competitive, will contribute to the growth of private investment and employment. We will implement specific programs for micro-, small, and medium-sized enterprises, providing them with training and technical assistance, microcredit, labor mediation, and technology transfer services, with emphasis on productivity, quality, and innovation. These programs must foster the development of entrepreneurial skills and technical competence, the integration and harmonization of training systems, qualification for loans, access to the financial market, the use of information and communications technologies, administrative simplification, and participation in competitive internal markets and international trade.

Framework for Creating Decent Work

26. We commit to building a solid institutional framework for generating jobs, to which end we will establish:

- a) A transparent legal framework that provides legal security; independent, impartial, and accessible judicial institutions; effective action against corruption and organized crime.
- b) A macroeconomic framework characterized by rational economic policies, solid public finances, transparent fiscal management, and monetary policies geared to price stability and full employment.
- c) An effective labor framework that respects the essential labor rights set forth in the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work.
- e) Solid environmental laws that ensure economic growth and employment.
- f) Efficient, affordable, and environmentally responsible energy services.

Strengthening Democratic Governance

27. We will promote economic prosperity by maintaining the democratic community of states committed to peace and to dealing with threats, concerns, and other challenges to security in the 21st century. We recognize that strengthening cooperation among our states, in the context of the Declaration on Security in the Americas, helps to strengthen peace and security in the Hemisphere. Strengthening cooperation among our states in fighting the threats of terrorism, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, trafficking in persons and narcotics, transnational organized crime, money laundering, illicit arms trafficking, and the connections among them is essential to security.

28. We recognize that the legitimacy of democratic institutions derives from an implicit promise to help all citizens achieve their potential in society and contribute to the common good. On the basis of our commitment to the Inter-American Democratic Charter, we reiterate our firm decision to strengthen the effective exercise of representative democracy. On the basis of the rule of law, we will promote better citizen training and participation and the development of local communities, so that the benefits of democracy will be shared by all of society. To that end, it is essential to create decent

employment so as to ensure a better quality of life for citizens and the political, economic, and social development of the Hemisphere.

29. We recognize that the universal promotion and protection of human rights, including economic, social, and cultural rights, on the basis of the principles of universality, indivisibility, and interdependence, as well as respect for the rules and principles of humanitarian law, is essential to the functioning of democratic societies; and stressing the importance of respect for the rule of law, effective and equal access to justice, and participation by all sectors of society in public decision-making.

30. We will support the work of the OAS in drafting the Social Charter of the Americas, whose principles and political objectives will be geared toward ongoing action on economic, social, and cultural rights in the American Hemisphere, inspired by justice, universality, solidarity, and the shared responsibility of all to achieve more equitable and inclusive societies. In that spirit, we recommend the intensification of all necessary actions to bring about the conclusion and adoption of the Social Charter of the Americas by the Organization of American States in the near future.

31. We reaffirm our commitment to successfully concluding negotiations on the American Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

32. Fighting corruption is one of the essential means of strengthening democracy and a necessary condition for economic growth. For this reason, we have agreed to strengthen and accelerate the evaluation rounds of the Follow-up Mechanism for the Implementation of the Inter-American Convention against Corruption, meeting the demands of our citizens. We reaffirm the need to strengthen the supervisory role of legislators and to encourage interparliamentary exchanges for the development of national and international anti-corruption strategies.

33. National efforts to generate decent jobs and good employment must be supported by international cooperation and solidarity. In this context, we will strengthen hemispheric cooperation mechanisms and international financial institutions, will promote greater involvement by the OAS and other multilateral institutions, and will seek the full and effective use of institutions and instruments to promote development. We also encourage competent institutions to develop innovative financing mechanisms in order to promote equality within and among the nations of the Hemisphere.

34. With this Declaration and the attached Plan of Action, we Heads of State and Government of the Hemisphere reaffirm the central role we assign to the creation of decent jobs, as an activity that structures the lives of men and women, children and youth, as a setting for social interaction, as a means of participation in the achievements of society, and, fundamentally, to promote human dignity as the primary objective of our governmental action for the Americas.