

Recommendation on the fight against poverty

**Second General Assembly of the Parliamentary Conference of the Americas
Río Grande, Puerto Rico, July 19 to 23, 2000**

WHEREAS there are one billion human beings in the world who are still unable to satisfy their basic needs, and poverty affects half the population of the Americas, in all countries of the Americas, regardless of their level of economic development;

WHEREAS globalization, including the economic integration process leading toward the creation of the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA), provides great opportunities for progress for the countries of the Americas, and opens new fields of cooperation, yet sometimes widens the gaps in terms of wealth between countries and within societies;

WHEREAS the elimination of poverty constitutes the greatest challenge faced by the Americas, since poverty threatens to limit both the progress and the stability of societies, as well as the functioning of democratic institutions, the security of individuals and economic development;

WHEREAS the situation of the foreign debt in underdeveloped or developing countries is such that their governments cannot invest in the fight against poverty, and as a result, the social differences and differences in the quality of life among the populations of those countries are progressively worsening, thereby preventing the achievement of social justice in the Americas;

WHEREAS, as technology grows, new strategies develop to harness technology as a means to fight poverty and deliver health and educational services;

WHEREAS it is the responsibility of parliamentarians to foster the inclusion of all citizens, both female and male, without any discrimination, in the processes aiming to ensure human, economic and democratic development in the Americas;

We, the women and men representatives of the parliamentary assemblies of the unitary, federal and federated States, regional Parliaments and interparliamentary organizations of the Americas:

REAFFIRM our deep concern regarding the increasing gap between rich and poor within the countries of the Americas, and regarding the obstacle which that gap represents for the sustainable development of the populations of the hemisphere;

FERVENTLY DEPLORE the fact that throughout the Americas, certain persons are still unable to satisfy their basic needs, namely access to potable water, to daily food and to adequate health and education services, considering that these inadequate living conditions represent a violation of fundamental human rights;

AGREE to continue to promote social integration and access to employment, and to collaborate actively in order to eliminate poverty and to provide concrete guarantees of the right to human dignity for all citizens of the Americas, both female and male;

REAFFIRM our will to participate actively, in the context of the hemispheric integration process, in implementing policies that generate stable jobs, and to ensure that workers benefit from adequate working conditions, fair pay, freedom of association, and protection from unemployment, in accordance with the provisions of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights;

COMMIT OURSELVES to increase the efforts, within our respective assemblies, to facilitate universal access to education, in order to enhance personal development as well as to improve the living conditions and economic rights of the entire population, without exception, and to harness technology to serve these goals;

URGE the Heads of State and Government and all parliamentarians of the Americas to discuss the means by which to solve the foreign debt problem, so as to enable debtor countries to obtain better conditions of access to increased financial resources, in order to invest in the elimination of poverty.