



## COMMITTEE ON HEALTH AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

### RECOMMENDATION

*WHEREAS* the Heads of State and Government of the Americas at the Miami Summit adopted a commitment “to work to improve access to quality healthcare”;

*WHEREAS* the Heads of State and Government of the Americas at the Santiago Summit adopted a commitment “to work to improve the availability, accessibility and quality of medications and vaccines”;

*WHEREAS*, according to the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), nearly one-fourth of the population of the Americas does not have permanent access to healthcare;

*WHEREAS* nearly half the population of Latin America and the Caribbean is not covered by health insurance;

*WHEREAS* poor women living outside large urban centers have an unacceptable maternal mortality rate, a reality that takes a heavy human and social toll on our societies;

*WHEREAS* healthcare for the most poor is the responsibility of public health systems, and our States need enough leeway to establish health programs to improve the living conditions of our fellow citizens;

*WHEREAS* in 2001, only 1.4% of the loans disbursed by the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) were devoted to health;

*REITERATING* the commitment adopted at the first Parliamentary Conference of the Americas (COPA) in Quebec City in September 1997, reiterated at the second COPA General Assembly (Puerto Rico, July 2000) and the third COPA General Assembly (Rio de Janeiro, November 2001), “to work to improve the quality of health services and to increase public access to those services, so that every person may benefit from the best possible state of physical, mental, and social health, as stated in the United Nations Declaration on the Right to Development”;

*WE, the women and men representatives of congresses and parliamentary assemblies of the unitary, federal, federated, and associated States, regional parliaments, and interparliamentary organizations of the Americas meeting in Ixtapan de la Sal for the fourth COPA General Assembly:*

*URGE* our Heads of States and Governments to devote more resources to the healthcare systems operating under our governments;

*DEMAND* that more IDB resources be allocated to projects aimed at improving healthcare;

*URGE* our governments to invite parliamentarians to join national delegations at meetings of the governing bodies of inter-American organizations in the healthcare field and agree to delegate representatives from the COPA Permanent Committee on Health and Social Development to attend these meetings;

*- Pioneering initiatives*

*UNDERTAKE* to share, notably through the work of the COPA Permanent Committee on Health and Social Development, pioneering initiatives that we can promote within our assemblies and before our governments;

*UNDERTAKE* to promote, within our respective States, the concept of *a set of basic services* in order to ensure universal access to healthcare;

*UNDERTAKE* to use new technologies for training front-line workers and spreading knowledge to improve the quality of basic healthcare;

*INVITE* parliaments to legislate to fight alcoholism and drug abuse, which cause diseases and considerable social costs;

*ASK* that our States guarantee access to health care for the elderly, taking into account the ageing of the population and the growth of degenerative diseases;

*UNDERTAKE* to define a patent registration policy which, without causing harm to pharmaceutical companies with regard to fundamental research, will make it possible to reduce the costs of medication for underprivileged populations;

*UNDERTAKE* to recognize mental health as an important component of public health, and invite our respective States to devote sufficient resources to it;

*UNDERTAKE*, as legislators, to defend the public and universal nature of our health care systems, and to approve no law or policy that would aim to privatize them, thereby depriving the most underprivileged citizens of the care to which they are entitled, since although the private sector may be permitted to play a role under the control of the public sector, we affirm that health is primarily the responsibility of States;

*UNDERTAKE* to guarantee the improvement of vocational training in the field of health;

*URGE* the Heads of State and Government to protect and ensure the rights of children who are the victims of forms of illegal trade, such as drug trafficking and child prostitution;

*- Health and international trade regulations*

*AFFIRM* that the regulations governing international trade must not limit the ability of States to offer and protect public healthcare services and to guarantee universal access to medication;

*- Women's health*

*UNDERTAKE* to make our colleagues and Heads of State and Government aware of the importance that all births occur under the supervision of trained professionals in order to decrease infant and maternal mortality rates;

*UNDERTAKE* to promote measures to improve the health of mothers and newborns, such as genetic screening for prenatal risks, programs to prevent underweight births, family planning, and breastfeeding, family planning programs and measures to protect women's health;

*UNDERTAKE* to ensure that the appropriate authorities in our respective States improve systems for collecting data on women's health.