

DECLARATION OF LOCAL GOVERNMENTS IN SUPPORT OF THE SUMMIT OF THE AMERICAS

We, the Mayors and Local Authorities, representing Associations of Local Governments and Organizations for the Support of Municipal Development in the Americas, meeting at the XI Inter-American Conference of Mayors and Local Authorities, held on June 21 - 23, 2005 in Miami, Florida, USA, in appreciation of the importance to the Municipal Sector of the upcoming Hemisphere Summit in Mar del Plata, Argentina, hereby adopt the following Declaration:

Whereas

Despite the differences in makeup, size, capacities, and cultures, the municipalities of the Americas face common challenges and share common aspirations;

The local and national governments are strategic allies;

The local level is the key player in building democratic governance;

The new millennium demands that our peoples make efficient use of the available natural, physical and human resources to achieve sustainable development;

In view of the demands of increasingly complex societies, local governments must be involved in the task of directing their actions toward encouraging investment, strengthening equity in the distribution of revenue, safeguarding the environment, and facilitating community involvement;

It is necessary to promote and develop the processes of transparency and accountability as mechanisms for strengthening democracy at the local level;

There is an urgent need to expand access to and utilization of information and communication technologies by the local governments and communities;

The cities and towns are the setting for improvement of the quality of citizens' lives and the municipalities are the tool for the appropriate channeling of public services;

The June 2000 Declaration of the Inter-American Conference of Mayors and Local Authorities, in support of the Summit of the Americas held in Quebec, Canada, has helped raise the Heads of State's awareness of the fact that the Economic, Social, and Democratic Development of the hemisphere is a joint task of the national and local governments;

Therefore, in view of the foregoing, **we**, the Mayors and Local Authorities, meeting at the XI Inter-American Conference, **declare** that the following priorities must be taken into consideration in preparation for the Hemisphere Summit to be held in Mar del Plata and included on the Agenda of the Heads of State and in the final document of the Summit, as tasks to be addressed jointly by the national and local governments:

Adopting, in their daily actions, the mandates and commitments assumed at the previous Summits of the Americas and in the Millennium Development Goals proposed by the United Nations to further well-being, more equitably distribute the achievements of economic growth, generate new work opportunities, eliminate poverty, and improve the standards of living of our peoples;

Strengthening the decentralization processes so that they are framed within national policies for sustainable development and combating poverty;

Strengthening local human resources in order to be able to respond to the challenges of globalization;

Fostering democratic mechanisms that promote active community involvement at the local level, respecting the peoples' ethnic and cultural diversity, allowing them to have honorable work without the need to renounce their culture and their traditions, and without exclusion or inequity based on physical condition, gender, or generational considerations;

Achieving and encouraging the generation of their own resources that enable the local governments to meet the communities' social demands;

Contributing to modernizing the management of local governments, strengthening financial administration and control for greater transparency in the use of public resources, and laying the groundwork for access to the capital markets;

Improving local public management and the communities' capacity to effectively participate in making the decisions that affect them, through connectivity and the use of modern computer technologies;

Supporting the strengthening of national, sub-national, and regional associations of local governments whose goals are to represent and improve the performance of their members; and,

Coordinating, with the national associations of municipalities, the policies and actions that affect the municipal sector. In this respect, we stress the importance of the Declaration that the Federation of Latin American Cities, Municipalities and Associations (FLACMA) will present at the Summit.

*Therefore, we, the local authorities, representing cities, local governments, and associations of municipalities of the Americas (more than five hundred participants) **undertake** to promote and actively participate, directly and/or indirectly, in meeting the aforementioned goals, in follow-up of the upcoming Hemisphere Summit of Heads of State, to be held in Mar del Plata, Argentina, in November 2005. We assert that this Summit will confirm the fundamental importance of honorable work as an indispensable means for satisfying the spiritual and physical needs of people and their communities, as a venue for social coordination, as a means for collective participation, and as a tool for achieving human dignity.*

Miami, Florida, USA, June 23, 2005.