



## INTER-AMERICAN COMMISSION OF WOMEN

THIRD MEETING OF MINISTERS OR OF THE  
HIGHEST-RANKING AUTHORITIES RESPONSIBLE  
FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN IN  
THE MEMBER STATES (REMIM-III)  
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Santiago, Chile

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### DRAFT DECLARATION OF COMMITMENT

‘SECURING OUR CITIZENS’ FUTURE BY PROMOTING HUMAN PROSPERITY,  
ENERGY SECURITY AND ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY’

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



SUMMIT IMPLEMENTATION REVIEW GROUP (SIRG)

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

**Draft Declaration of Commitment**

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

## INTRODUCTORY NOTE

This version of the Draft Declaration of Port of Spain (GRIC/DC-V/doc.1/08 rev. 1) has been modified from its original version by the National Secretariat for the Fifth Summit of the Americas in Trinidad and Tobago to reflect proposed changes to the Preamble (paragraphs 1-4) and the section on Human Prosperity (paragraphs 5-29), based on submissions by Member States<sup>1/</sup>.

New paragraphs have been introduced and identified with letters in order to avoid altering the numbering of the paragraphs throughout the Draft Declaration at this time. Paragraphs will be re-numbered after the first revision of the entire document.

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1. All proposals presented in writing by member States on the occasion of the Third Regular Meeting of 2008 of the Summit Implementation Review Group "SIRG", held in Bridgetown, Barbados, on September 18-19, 2008 and during the week of September 22-26, 2008 have been already compiled and distributed in two different documents that are currently being placed in a sole new version of the compendium to facilitate its handling.

This new version of the compendium will be made available before the start of the Fourth Regular Meeting of 2008 of the Summit Implementation Review Group (SIRG) to be held on October 15 - 17, 2008 in Saint John's, Antigua and Barbuda.

Fifth Summit of the Americas  
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**Draft Declaration of Commitment**

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

**PREAMBLE**

1. Guided by a renewed spirit of cooperation, integration and solidarity, we, the Heads of State and Government of the democratic countries of the Americas, have gathered in Port of Spain, at the Fifth Summit of the Americas, with a firm commitment to improve the social, economic, and cultural well-being of all our peoples by advancing joint solutions to the most pressing challenges facing our Hemisphere. Recognizing 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 peace, security, prosperity and justice, across the Americas, based on respect for all human rights.
2. We reaffirm the principles and values of the Charters of the United Nations and the Organization of American States (OAS), the Inter-American Democratic Charter, the Monterrey Consensus on Financing for Development, and the goals of the Millennium Declaration, and are determined to continue our fight against poverty, hunger, social exclusion, discrimination and inequality.
3. We, therefore, renew our commitment, to all the peoples of the Americas, to improve the quality of their lives, and with the support of the institutions of the United Nations and the Inter-American System, to further our efforts to foster greater opportunities for decent work, to improve health, wellness and nutrition, to increase access to quality education, to ensure adequate, sustainable and accessible supplies of energy, food and water, and to manage our environment responsibly.
4. We affirm that the solutions to the challenges facing our people are closely inter-dependent with our efforts to build stronger democratic institutions; promote good governance, equitable development and social inclusion; preserve the rule of law and increase access to justice for all citizens; protect and promote human rights and fundamental freedoms; fight drug trafficking and related offences; prevent and combat violence, crime, terrorism, and corruption; and achieve broader civic participation of all citizens of the Inter-American Community.

## **PROMOTING HUMAN PROSPERITY**

5. We are aware that deep inequalities continue to exist, especially in education, health and nutritional status, income distribution and employment opportunities, access to basic services, and exposure to violence and crime. In response, we will continue to develop and implement social protection and inclusion programmes that give priority to the needs of the poor and vulnerable in our societies, in order to promote equal access for all to adequate housing, food, education, energy and basic social services such as safe drinking water, sanitation, healthcare and disease prevention.
6. To strengthen our efforts to reduce social disparities and inequality, and halve poverty by the year 2015, we commit to exchange information on policies, experiences, programmes and best practices. We, therefore, support the call by Ministers and High Level Authorities of Social Development to establish an Inter-American Social Protection Network to facilitate this exchange.

### **NEW PARAGRAPH A**

We request our Ministers responsible for Financing, Planning and Social Development to review and consolidate, by 2010, the existing social protection, inclusion and poverty eradication programmes deemed necessary by each country, in order to increase efficiency, reduce duplication, identify gaps and optimize the use of resources at the national level. We also request that the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) and other regional and sub-regional development and financial institutions, support these efforts within the scope of their mandates.

7. To reduce poverty and hunger, create stable jobs, and raise the standard of living of all our people, we must achieve higher levels of sustained economic growth with equity. We, therefore, commit to continue implementing macro-economic policies that are characterized by appropriate and transparent fiscal and monetary measures, and prudent public expenditures. We will continue to promote both public and private sector development, diversified economic activity, improved competitiveness and increased corporate social responsibility. We are also committed to increasing infrastructure investments in the energy, transport, communications and agriculture sectors, in order to promote business development and economic activity.

### **NEW PARAGRAPH B**

We recognize the positive contribution of open trade policies in the promotion of growth, employment and development. We also recognize that we must continue to address the deep asymmetries in the levels of development among our countries, with a particular effort to improve the conditions in the smaller and more vulnerable economies and facilitate their integration into the global marketplace. We will, therefore, continue to insist on a fair and transparent multi-lateral trading system and pursue efforts to promote economic integration based on the principles of cooperation, complementarily and solidarity.

8. 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, stable and productive employment 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 workplace violence and discrimination. We will improve the quality and relevance of workforce development to ensure that workers are equipped with the skills and knowledge needed by employers. We, therefore, call upon the Ministers of Labour, within the context of the OAS Inter-American Conference of Ministers of Labour, in collaboration with their workers' and employers' consultative bodies and with the support of the ILO, to implement a work program that advances these objectives by 2010.
9. With the support of the ILO, IDB, World Bank and other regional bodies, we will adopt the necessary policies and regulations to facilitate and promote the movement of enterprises and workers from the informal to the formal sector, without affecting the rights of workers. We reaffirm the importance of observing labour laws and fully protecting the human rights of all migrants regardless of their immigration status.
10. We reiterate our commitment to protect all people, particularly women, children and adolescents from all forms of human trafficking, and sexual and economic exploitation, and to guarantee full protection for the victims of those crimes. We call on the 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, in accordance with the Plan of Action of the Fourth Summit in Argentina, 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.<sup>2/</sup>
11. Micro, small and medium-sized enterprises are fundamental to economic growth, employment creation and poverty reduction. We call on the World Bank, IDB and other financial institutions to increase their efforts to promote private sector expansion and development by doubling lending to micro, small and medium-sized enterprises and to facilitate the tripling of the numbers of enterprises accessing credit by 2012, with particular attention to those led by women.
12. We will work towards eliminating administrative and bureaucratic barriers to the creation of new enterprises. We, therefore, commit to adopting the necessary reforms 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 2012. We request the IDB, the World Bank, the ILO and other relevant regional organizations to support national and local government efforts to improve the legislative frameworks and administrative procedures for achieving this target.<sup>3/</sup>

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2. An alternative target is suggested: "reduce the number of workers in forced labour by between 20% and 35% by 2015"

3. The National Secretariat now suggests the target date of 2015.

13. In order to foster innovation and increase competitiveness, we commit to create the conditions for increasing public and private investment in research and development to a minimum of 1% of GDP by 2015 and to encourage the strengthening of the linkages among universities, science institutions, the private sector, multilateral agencies, civil society and workers. We also commit to safeguard works of innovation and creativity by cooperating to enforce and improve intellectual property laws and regulations, while maintaining the necessary balance between private rights and public interest.<sup>4/</sup>
14. Providing our people with adequate supplies of healthy food is now among the most immediate challenges confronting our Hemisphere and, indeed, the world. We, therefore, commit to taking urgent and coordinated action, working in partnership with the international community, to develop and implement comprehensive policies and programmes to address this challenge and ensure food security. We reaffirm our commitment to the objectives of the World Food Summit and to the Millennium Declaration target to halve the proportion of people who suffer from hunger by 2015.
15. We believe that a multidimensional and multisectoral approach to agriculture and rural life is a key factor for sustainable development and food security. Therefore, we commit to strengthening national, regional and hemispheric approaches under the AGRO 2003-2015 Plan and instruct Ministers of Agriculture, with the support of the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA), to adopt strategic actions to facilitate the implementation of this Plan based on the consensus of their Fourth Ministerial Meeting on Agriculture and Rural Life in the Americas. We also recognize the importance of supporting other regional initiatives aimed at repositioning agriculture in the Hemisphere.
16. We recognize that the problems of inequality of access and exclusion from basic health services persist, especially among the most vulnerable. We, therefore, commit to redoubling our efforts to provide essential social protection and universal access to quality healthcare, taking into account labour, environment, gender-sensitive and social security policies, as well as the Health Agenda for the Americas 2008-2017, and will increase public investment on health to at least 5% of GDP by 2015 in order to improve our health indicators.
17. While the region has made strides 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 Organization (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 Childcare. We recognize the importance of cooperation in sharing experiences within the framework of the Global Partnership for Maternal, Newborn and Child Health.
18. We are convinced that we can reduce the burden of non-communicable diseases (NCDs) through comprehensive and integrated promotion, 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 and relevant regional and international partners. We, therefore, reiterate our support for the PAHO Regional Strategy and Plan of Action on an

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4. An alternative target is suggested “a minimum of 0.7% GDP”

Integrated Approach to the Prevention and Control of Chronic Diseases Including Diet, Physical Activity, and Health. We also commit to introducing measures to reduce tobacco consumption within the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control.

19. 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.

### **NEW PARAGRAPH C**

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

20. We commit to improving primary healthcare to allow for prevention and early detection of diseases; to increasing the availability and accessibility of sexual and reproductive healthcare and mental health services; and to facilitating access to essential medicines especially by the most needy.
21. In addition, recognizing the continuing problem of malnutrition among our people, we commit to taking the necessary actions to increase awareness and educate our populations about meeting nutritional needs, and to improving the nutritional levels of all the people in the Americas by 2015, and to the full implementation of the Regional Strategy on Nutrition and Health Development 2006-2015, coordinated by PAHO.
22. To combat the transmission of diseases, especially dengue, malaria, yellow fever and pandemic influenza, we commit to the implementation of the International Health Regulations (IHR) (2005) and to enhancing the capacity for disease surveillance, prevention and management in our countries. We call on PAHO to prepare and facilitate the implementation of regional contingency plans, by the end of 2009, that take into account specific country needs, and incorporate the new guidelines as set forth in the IHR.
23. We are committed to meeting the Millennium Declaration goal of halting and reversing the spread of HIV/AIDS by 2015 by providing universal access for men, women and children to comprehensive prevention, care, treatment and support services. We will implement the Regional HIV/STI Plan for the Health Sector 2006-2015, under the coordination of PAHO and in collaboration with UNAIDS and UNFPA. 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 also support the recommendations and commitments made at the First Meeting of Ministers of Health and Education of Latin America and the Caribbean to coordinate policy and inter-sectoral action to prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS. We reiterate our commitment to strengthening and providing adequate financing to the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria.

24. We affirm that equitable and timely access to quality education, adapted to local and global realities, is a human right, a public good and a political priority. We therefore commit to continue promoting access to quality basic education for all. Improving early childhood care and education, primary education and continuous teacher training are essential approaches to achieving universal primary education by 2010. We also instruct the Ministers responsible for Education to increase efforts to measure student learning outcomes in the Americas by the year 2010.
25. We reaffirm our commitment to achieving a secondary education enrollment rate of at least 75% by the year 2010 and we now call on the Ministers of Education, with the support of the OAS and specialised regional institutions, to develop gender-sensitive strategies to make secondary education accessible to all our young people, by 2015, especially the most vulnerable and those with special education needs. These strategies must include reform of curricula based on the principles of equity, quality, relevance and efficiency in education, take into account cultural, linguistic and ethnic diversity, and encourage innovation and creativity.
26. Recognising that education is a lifelong process that promotes social inclusion and allows people to contribute fully to the development of society, we agree to give high priority to improving and expanding literacy as well as access to tertiary, vocational and adult education. We, therefore, commit to increasing 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 also commit to support the ongoing professional development of teachers.
27. We commit to continue investing in our young people and implementing policies and programmes that will expand their economic opportunities, increase their social engagement, open avenues for leadership, allow for meaningful participation in decision-making activities, and increase the quality and coverage of social services aimed at improving the quality of their lives and promoting healthy lifestyles.

#### **NEW PARAGRAPH D**

We will continue working to incorporate issues of aging into public policy agendas. To this end, we request the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) to 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 for the development of support systems for the elderly.

28. Reducing the digital and technological gap, both among and within the nations of the Americas, is important to achieving the goals of the Millennium Declaration and building an information society that is centered on the individual, oriented toward development, and free of discrimination. We, therefore, renew our commitment to collaborate with regional, sub-regional and multinational agencies to advance progress in the implementation of initiatives under the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS), the Agenda for Connectivity in the Americas, the Plan of Action of Quito, and the eLAC 2010 Plan of Action emanating from the San Salvador Commitment. We instruct our Ministers and High Level Authorities

with responsibility for Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and for Education to promote the use of ICTs in our education systems and public and business sectors, and to widen access for households and communities.

29. 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 will continue to promote inter-cultural dialogue and respect for cultural diversity, to encourage mutual understanding and convergence, which help reduce conflict, discrimination and the barriers to economic opportunity and social participation. We also commit to increase our efforts to support cultural and creative industries as part of our national policies for the promotion of sustainable economic growth, job creation and income generation, especially for young adults.

### **PROMOTING ENERGY SECURITY**

30. We will develop clean, affordable and sustainable energy systems by reducing the energy and carbon-intensity of our economies, promoting energy efficiency in all sectors, diversifying our energy by developing low-carbon and renewable sources, and encouraging the cleaner, more efficient use of fossil fuels. We commit to increase the contribution of renewable and low-carbon energy sources to meet a minimum of 50 per cent of our national primary energy demands by 2050 at the latest and will introduce, as necessary, new financing and policy frameworks in order to facilitate and accelerate this process.
31. We also commit to enhancing energy efficiency and conservation, especially in our transport systems and industrial sectors, among small and medium-sized enterprises and at the household level in order to promote more sustainable patterns of production and consumption. We encourage the introduction of minimum efficiency requirements and harmonized ratings systems for both domestic and industrial appliances. We will review building codes and raise the standards for energy efficiency, and develop urban planning guidelines to encourage more energy-efficient cities.
32. We will further promote diversification of energy technologies, infrastructure, supplies and routes, and facilitate non-discriminatory third-party access to transit infrastructure to encourage the development of transparent, efficient and orderly energy markets. We commit to making all relevant planning and regulatory requirements simpler, more coherent, transparent and effective by the end of 2012.
33. Recognising the potential of new and emerging technologies for diversifying the energy matrix, we will encourage the development, manufacture and use of both current and next-generation biofuels including sugar-based, cellulosic, algal and bacterial biofuels, and will develop a set of compatible specifications by the end of 2015 in order to facilitate their trade and increased use, taking into account existing and planned standards. We will develop strategies for sustainable biomass cultivation and production, with particular regard to the need to ensure food security and, by the end of 2012 at the latest, develop a strategy for second-generation and more advanced biofuels that will ensure that they do not compete directly with other agricultural crops for land, water or fertilizer. We will also support the

development and use of on and off-shore wind turbines, conventional and polymer photovoltaics, solar towers, geothermal and hydropower, hydrogen fuel cells and other new energy technologies.

34. Many renewable sources of energy are intermittent or only available in particular locations. We will, therefore, develop and invest in new energy infrastructures, support the development of cross-border, efficient low-carbon energy generation and distribution grids and other energy-trading and cooperation networks. We will cooperate to improve the security, safety and stability of our critical energy infrastructure and supply networks and 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.
35. We commit to the promotion of clean energy through research and development, the transfer of environmentally sound technologies, and the commercialization of new, cleaner energy solutions. Priority will be given to increasing international cooperation and sharing information in the search for solutions that can benefit all our nations.
36. We will increase public awareness on energy and environmental issues and commit to ensuring, by 2012, that the people of the Americas have universal access to accurate, reliable and impartial information on energy, environmental and climate change issues.
37. Recognizing that the issues of the availability, cost and security of our energy supplies, our economic competitiveness and the sustainability of our environment are closely intertwined, we commit to the development of a coherent policy framework that takes into consideration our diverse situations, circumstances and opportunities and allows for the simultaneous strengthening and diversification of all our economies.
38. We, therefore, instruct all Ministers with responsibility for Energy, Planning, Regulation and Finance, within the framework of the OAS and the Sustainable Energy Partnership of the Americas (SEPA), with the support and guidance of the IDB and the World Bank, taking into account the diverse conditions, opportunities, legislative and regulatory frameworks in our countries, and building on existing energy cooperation and integration initiatives, to develop a strategy of cooperation among our nations, international organizations and the private sector that will increase energy efficiency, diversify energy sources, minimise environmental impact, strengthen energy independence, and secure access to safe, affordable energy supplies for all, especially the poorest. We further instruct our Ministers to develop this strategy by the end of 2011 at the latest.

## **PROMOTING ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY**

39. All social and economic development depends on the conservation and protection of the environment. We, therefore, reaffirm our strong commitment to sustainable development, as set out in the World Summits on Sustainable Development in Rio in 1992 and Johannesburg in 2002, the Declaration of Santa Cruz de la Sierra of 1996, the Declaration of Santa Cruz +10 of 2006, and the Millennium Development Goals of the United Nations.

40. We commit to take the necessary steps to ensure the eventual stabilization of greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that will not incur a risk of serious changes in the Earth's climate and weather systems.
41. We will strengthen our mechanisms for the sharing of early warning information on natural disasters, for disaster planning and preparedness, and for managing and coordinating response and relief programmes following a disaster.
42. We instruct Ministers and High Level Authorities responsible for Sustainable Development, in collaboration with the specialised national and regional disaster organizations, to develop, by 2011, a cooperation system within the Americas through which they can collaborate, share information, develop models of good practice, and ascertain which areas of human settlement and sections of essential industrial and transport infrastructure are at risk, and to then ensure that they are either protected or relocated.
43. We will introduce stronger planning and zoning measures to ensure that any future residential, commercial or industrial developments are not located in vulnerable areas, and we will facilitate better access to education, training, land, credit, and housing to ensure that poor people are not trapped in vulnerable areas by the fear of losing their livelihoods.
44. We will also work towards promoting sound environmental governance by strengthening national environmental laws and building institutional capacity to manage environmental resources in accordance with our sustainable development priorities.
45. We also support further dialogue and cooperation under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), including the commitments on long-term cooperative action established in Montreal in 2005 and in the Bali Road Map of 2008, and commit to work towards a global agreement at the UNFCCC Meeting in Copenhagen in 2009.
46. We renew our support for the Inter-American Programme for Sustainable Development (IAPSD) and instruct the Ministers and all other authorities responsible for sustainable development to gather in 2010, under the auspices of the OAS, in collaboration with the PAHO and the international financial and development institutions concerned with sustainable development, and with the participation of the academic community and civil society, to assess the achievements of the Programme to date, and to propose, where appropriate, new goals for a renewed IAPSD, with a particular focus on the integrated management of both domestic and shared water resources, prevention and mitigation of disasters, forest and fisheries management, sustainable agricultural management and rural development, ecosystem and biodiversity protection, natural resources management, urban environmental management and the treatment of hazardous wastes. We will give special attention to the most vulnerable areas, including low-lying coastal regions and small island developing states.
47. We also direct the Ministers and all other authorities responsible for sustainable development, in conjunction with the World Bank and the IDB, working under the auspices of the OAS, to undertake a comprehensive review of the potential impacts of climate change for all the nations of the Americas by 2011, and to formulate national Plans of Action for the management and mitigation of these impacts, with special attention to the needs of people

likely to be displaced or to lose their livelihoods. We further instruct that each of these national reviews be used to inform the development of a Regional Strategy for the Management of Climate Change Impacts, to be formulated jointly by the World Bank and the IDB by 2013.

#### **STRENGTHENING PUBLIC SECURITY**

48. We are determined to persevere in our efforts to prevent and combat terrorism and organized crime, in full compliance with our obligations under international law, including human rights, refugee and international humanitarian law. We, therefore, instruct all Ministers with responsibility for security, policing, intelligence and armed forces, within the framework of the OAS, to continue to cooperate and utilize our collective resources to prevent terrorists and criminal organizations from trespassing across borders and acquiring weapons, and to prevent and combat terrorism and organized crime.
49. We will deny any resources to terrorists and criminals and will combine our efforts to identify, track, seize or freeze assets associated with terrorism and organized crime, in accordance with national legislation and consistent with international law.
50. We direct the OAS, through the Secretariat for Multi-Dimensional Security, to continue in the preparation of a high level meeting of experts and authorities to develop a common approach to matters related to crime and violence and also to prepare a regional strategy to promote Inter-American cooperation in dealing with criminal gangs, giving special attention to young people.

#### **STRENGTHENING DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE**

51. All of 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, therefore, renew our commitment to strengthen our democratic institutions and uphold and apply the principles and values of the Inter-American Democratic Charter.
52. Committed to increasing the transparency, integrity, accountability and efficiency in the public and private sectors, we will strengthen our fight against all forms of corruption and unethical behavior. We renew our commitment to the Inter-American Convention Against Corruption and will develop and implement policies that foster a culture of integrity and transparency among citizens and public officers, and within public offices and institutions.
53. We reaffirm our commitment to the defense, protection and promotion of human rights and to the independence and strengthening of the Inter-American System of Human Rights.
54. The Social Charter of the Americas and its Plan of Action will offer our citizens more opportunities to benefit from sustainable development with equity and social inclusion. We, therefore, commit to conclude and adopt these documents before the end of 2009.

55. We also reaffirm that discrimination of any kind inhibits the full participation of all persons in society and will continue and conclude negotiations on the Inter-American Convention Against Racism and All Forms of Discrimination and Intolerance. We will also continue to develop the American Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.
56. We commit to continue mainstreaming gender into our public policies and to strengthen the institutional mechanisms for the advancement of girls and women. We will advance women's full and equal participation in political life and decision-making at all levels in their countries, and enforce laws that promote respect for their human rights, and gender equity and equality.
57. We recognise the important role of the OAS in the peaceful resolution of our differences and in support of the objectives 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**

58. We recognise that the issues of human prosperity, energy security and environmental security 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.
59. In order to strengthen Ministerial participation in the Summit Process, to improve the implementation of our decisions at this Fifth Summit, and to increase accountability to the people of the Americas, we instruct the technical secretariats of all Ministerial Meetings to inform their Ministers and High Level Authorities of the mandates of this Summit and 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.
60. We instruct the General Secretariat of the OAS, in accordance with its central role in the implementation of Summit mandates, to provide a comprehensive report to the Summit Implementation Review Group (SIRG), annually, on the actions and progress made at all Ministerial Meetings and by the institutions of the United Nations and the Inter-American System, towards achieving the specific targets set at this Summit.
61. We direct the Ministers of Finance in collaboration with the multilateral financial institutions to convene a meeting, in the first quarter of 2010, to ensure that technical cooperation resources are available to finance the different elements of the Inter-American initiatives agreed in this document.

62. We reiterate the call, made at the Third Summit of the Americas in Quebec City, for Ministers of Finance to increase their involvement in the Summit of the Americas process and instruct them to explore ways to strengthen the strategic alliances, at the national level, among all Ministries, including those responsible for education, health, labour, social development, youth, information and communication, agriculture, energy, the environment, and crime and security.
63. We also call upon the institutions of the Joint Summit Working Group to further strengthen their commitment and to develop coordinated programmes of action to deliver the goals for the Americas set out in this Declaration.
64. We commit to encouraging the participation of civil society in the design and execution of development policies and programmes by providing technical and financial assistance to strengthen and build their capacity to participate more fully in the Inter-American System.
65. We also commit to continue exploring ways in which our governments can build, strengthen and maintain alliances with the business sector and to harness the expertise and resources which exist within this sector, in order to develop and implement effective, practical and sustainable interventions to achieve our national and hemispheric development goals.
66. We, the Heads of State and Government of the Americas, agree that this document shall be known as the 'Declaration of Commitment of Port of Spain', and we hereby approve it on this the 19th day of April, in the year 2009.