

ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE SUMMITS OF THE AMERICAS: NATIONAL ACCOMPLISHMENTS

*Report from the Members States of the Summits of the Americas Process
on the Implementation of the Mandates from the Third Summit and the Special Summit of the Americas*

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INTRODUCTION

In April 2001, the 34 Heads of State and Government of member countries of the Organization of American States met in Quebec City, Canada, for the Third Summit of the Americas. At the conclusion of the meeting, the leaders adopted a Declaration and a Plan of Action that included 18 priority issues, as well as a number of specific mandates. The issues are:

- + Making democracy work better
- + Human Rights and fundamental freedoms
- + Justice, Rule of Law, and security of the individual
- + Hemispheric security
- + Civil society
- + Trade, investment, and financial stability
- + Infrastructure and regulatory environment
- + Disaster management
- + Environmental foundation for sustainable development
- + Agricultural management and rural development
- + Labor and employment
- + Growth with equity
- + Education
- + Health
- + Gender equality
- + Indigenous peoples
- + Cultural diversity
- + Children and youth

Nearly three years later, a Special Summit was held in Monterrey, México, at the end of which the Heads of State and Government of the democratic nations of the Hemisphere adopted the Declaration of Nuevo León, which focused on three main issues:

- + Economic growth with equity to reduce poverty
- + Social development
- + Democratic governance

The purpose of this document is to provide a general perspective on compliance with the mandates emanating from the aforementioned hemispheric Summits, from the standpoint of each of the nations associated with the process. The following pages reveal a strong correlation between the issues that countries identify as priorities and the development of each State's domestic agenda, regardless of its size, extension, or particular geographic location. While many challenges remain, there also have been noteworthy advances that demonstrate that the Summit Process has countless reasons to exist, perhaps the most important of these being the quest for a better quality of life of each and every inhabitant of the Americas.



INTRODUCTION OF THE GOVERNMENT OF ARGENTINA

The Summits of the Americas Process currently involves a vast array of initiatives that have emerged from the meetings held to date by the Heads of State and Government of our Hemisphere. While these initiatives clearly demonstrate the enormous wealth of issues that make up the regional agenda, it might be worthwhile to interpret them more cautiously since, for a variety of reasons, it has not always been possible to translate them into effective policy. Without a doubt, insufficient resources constitute one of the main limitations on the ability to carry these initiatives forward.

Therefore, the governments of our continent face the critical task of identifying priority areas for action as well as viable funding sources. As a result, it will be important to evaluate each proposed new mandate through the lens of the feasibility of actually implementing it.

The recommendations emanating from the ministerial processes represent a valuable source of input for identifying priorities because they link the development of mandates with their implementation. Specialized organizations also play an important role by preparing specific reports that aid governments in their efforts to implement the policies necessary to ensure the wellbeing of our peoples.

In the specific case of the IV Summit of the Americas, the Argentine Chair of the Summit Process considers it necessary to work on a Plan of Action to complement the Draft Declaration of Mar del Plata. As many countries have pointed out, it is important to make sure that this declaration is not merely illustrative or declarative in nature, while lacking in any concrete application, or impossible to carry out due to insufficient resources.

The Argentine proposal is for a Plan of Action focused on the theme that includes concrete, measurable actions. To this end, all of the countries must work together to avoid proposing the adoption of actions that are ambiguous or devoid of content.

Moreover, in order to ensure the relevance of the theme of the IV Summit, "Creating Jobs to Fight Poverty and Strengthen Democratic Governance," it is critical to avoid simply repeating prior Summit mandates. While we believe that the follow-up that we do at the SIRG meetings is sufficient, we consider it advisable to promote all those initiatives geared toward the preparation of reports with recommendations to improve our current procedures for following up on the principal mandates from past Summits.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs, International Trade, and Worship
Argentine Republic



PRESENTATION OF THE SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE OAS

The Summits of Miami, Santiago de Chile, Québec, the Summit on Sustainable Development in Santa Cruz and the Special Summit in Monterrey are the best demonstration of the pledge of our leaders to work collectively to strengthen our institutions, to open new avenues of hemispheric cooperation and to improve the quality of life of the 800 million citizens of the Americas, with special emphasis on meeting the needs of more than 200 million poor people that live in our Hemisphere. The fight against poverty, the strengthening of democracy and legal, economic, and trade integration have been the pillars of the Summit process.

This second report on the progress of this process, complements the one presented by the Summits of Americas Secretariat in Monterrey in 2004, contains a compilation of the actions carried out by our States in accordance with the mandates of the Plan of Action from the Third Summit of the Quebec City and the Declaration of the Special Summit in Monterrey, Nuevo Leon.

The goals agreed to by the community of the Americas over these 10 years have been quite ambitious. Nevertheless, we can already report some important achievements, such as the approval of the Inter-American Democratic Charter (IADC) in 2001, which puts the inter-American community and our Organization among those that now demand for their relevance, a combination of democratic requirements and allows better defense of the stability of the legally constituted authorities of the civil public powers. In another important area, the problem of drug trafficking, countries have agreed on principles and common policies, expressed in the hemispheric strategy against narcotics and in the creation of the Multilateral Evaluation Mechanism. Beyond the difficulties with the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA), we have seen important actions in the region in order to create a favorable environment for the private sector addressing the gap in physical infrastructure and telecommunications. Other clear examples of the positive impact of collective actions in the implementation of the Summits Mandates are the fight against HIV/AIDS, the increasing recognition of the role of women's leadership in public positions and achievements in the area of education.

These efforts have also taken into account the global and multidimensional nature of the diverse environments of our lives as citizens of the Hemisphere and the world. They have also contributed to strengthening governmental institutes, the political dialogue among our leaders and international and inter-American organizations in search of solutions for hemispheric problems, and have also created a space for dialogue among the 34 governments and the multiples actors within civil society, including non governmental organizations, the private sector and the media. This new hemispheric architecture reflects the understanding that the welfare of the Americas is a responsibility shared by all.

In spite of these advances, political fragility, slow economic growth and the unmet social demands continue to be priorities in the agenda of the Americas. The 57 million inhabitants in Latin America and the Caribbean that do not have jobs or have insufficient jobs, and the 80 million informal workers that live in our continent, have led the Heads of State and Government to propose a Fourth Summit, with the theme of "Creating Jobs to Fight Poverty and Strengthen Democratic Governance", that could not be chosen at a better time.

We have the challenge of adopting policies that allow us to increase the competitiveness of companies; ensure access to credit by small and medium enterprises - SME's, generate quality jobs and decent work. The Summit of Mar del Plata and the documents emanated from it—the Declaration and Plan of Action—should create conditions that support our democracy, the promotion of prosperity, the strengthening of cultural diversity, that promote better understanding and provide the opportunity for more equitable access to goods and public services to benefit all the citizens of the Americas.

José Miguel Insulza,

Secretary General of the OAS



XAVELASQUEX

OVERVIEW OF MEETING SUMMIT GOALS

With over 300 specific issues and guidelines that directly involve each and every one of the over 800 million inhabitants of the Americas, after nearly eleven years of existence, the hemispheric Summit Process has become the main source of political mandates for the democracies of the Continent. The Summits address a broad array of issues, ranging from trade to governance and from sustainable development to indigenous peoples, to name just a few areas.

But it is clear that underlying each case-specific analysis are three pillars—democracy, the economy, and social issues—upon which the wellbeing of the Americas rests. Given the enormous diversity of the Hemisphere, comprising nations of all sizes that serve as fertile ground for multiculturalism and diversity, it should come as no surprise that it is difficult to conduct a painstaking evaluation of each and every mandate emanating from the Summit Process through the lens of national realities.

Nonetheless, a glance at the available information reveals that progress has been made in recent years, particularly following the Summits held in Quebec City in 2001 and Monterrey in 2004. For example, empirical evidence indicates that democracy has become increasingly rooted in the Hemisphere, and that a growing majority of the people view it as the best form of government. While it is true that some nations have experienced turbulence, the crises that have arisen have been resolved within the respective constitutional frameworks and have been examined by the multilateral entities created for that purpose.

In other areas, statistics also confirm that the region’s economic performance in 2004 was the best in a quarter of a century, leading to a decline in unemployment and increased private investment.

While the goal, originally from the 1994 hemispheric Summit in Miami, to establish a Free Trade Agreement of the Americas by the end of this year has not been met, statistics show that intraregional trade has reached record levels across the Continent.

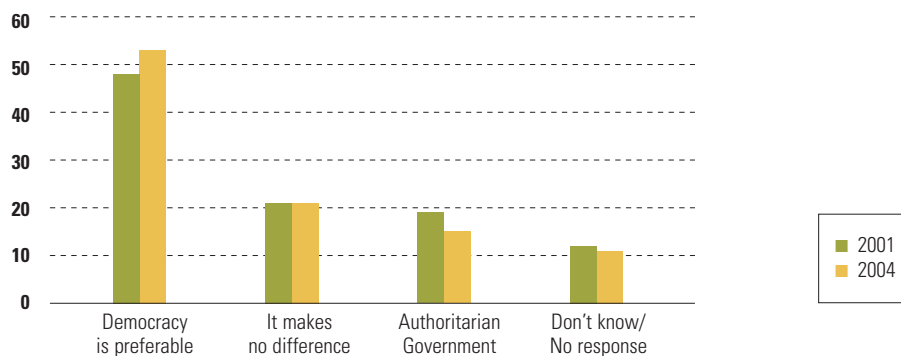
Progress has also been made in the social sphere, including a reduction in the percentage of the population living below the poverty line, higher levels of school enrollment, a notable decline in malnourishment, and significant increases in life expectancy. However, according to the United Nations’ Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, ECLAC, this area of the Hemisphere “has the unenviable distinction of being the most the most inequitable region in the world.”

It is therefore evident that despite the progress made, the challenge of making the continent more prosperous and with greater opportunities for all of its inhabitants remains. While the overall balance of compliance with the mandates of the Quebec and Monterrey Summits is encouraging and positive, there is still a long road ahead and persistence and political will are required to traverse it successfully.

DEMOCRACY

The Political Declaration and Plan of Action adopted by the Heads of State and Government of the Hemisphere at the Quebec Summit in April 2001, stressed the issue of democracy. The leaders pledged to produce an Inter-American Democratic Charter, which was approved in the framework of the Organization of American States (OAS) in September of that year and represents a landmark achievement.

LATIN AMERICA: TYPE OF SYSTEM
(Percentage of the surveyed population)



Source: Report – Summary Latinobarómetro 2004

The Charter affirms that representative democracy is strengthened and deepened by the permanent, ethical, and responsible participation of the citizenry, and that it is the right and responsibility of all citizens to participate in decisions relating to their own development.

It likewise emphasizes the constitutional subordination of all state institutions to the legally constituted civilian authority, and respect for the Rule of Law on the part of all institutions and sectors of society.

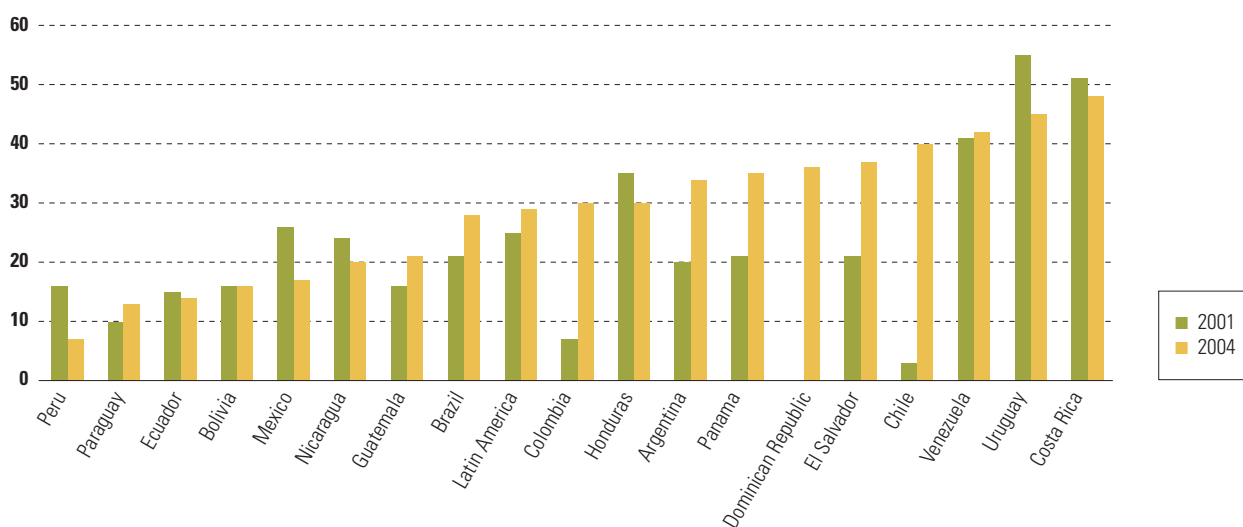
The Charter refers to situations that could constitute a breakdown or alteration of the democratic order, and the range of measures

or actions that the OAS may draw on to defend unbendingly the democratic order. In this regard it introduces the concept of "alteration of the constitutional order," which is to say that now an event preceding an "interruption" or "rupture" may be cause for action or reaction by the Organization.

In the framework of the Charter, representative democracy means much more than free and transparent elections; it entails respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, the separation of powers and independence of branches of government, transparency, accountability, probity, responsibility, citizen participation, a strong civil society, and a pluralistic political party system.

WOULD YOU SAY THAT YOU ARE SATISFIED WITH THE WAY DEMOCRACY IS FUNCTIONING IN YOUR COUNTRY?

(Percentage of the surveyed population that responded affirmatively)



Source: Report – Summary Latinobarómetro 2004

The Declaration of Nuevo León reiterated the commitment of member countries of the Summit Process to the full application of the Charter as an "element of regional identity."

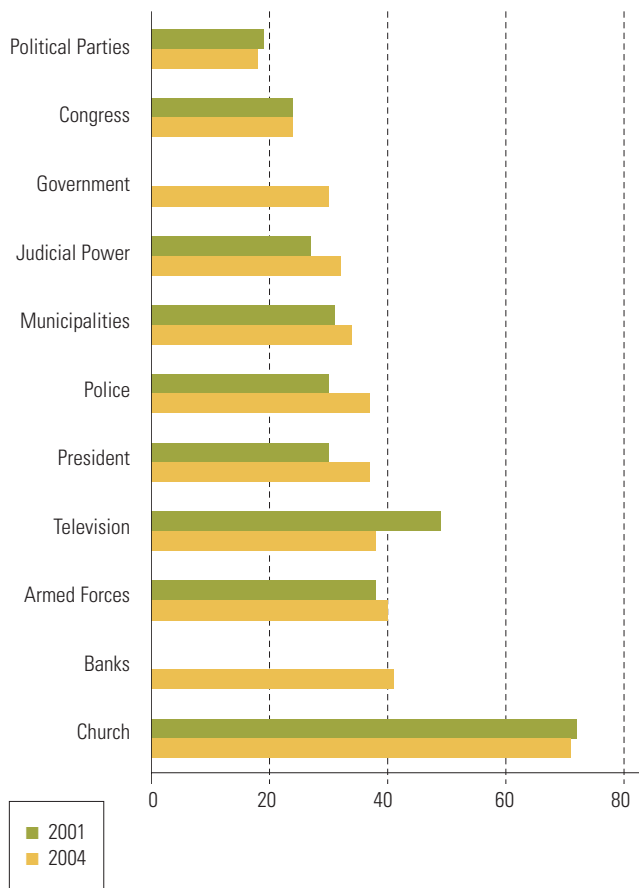
In Monterrey there also was an explicit will to promote transparency and anti-corruption measures in the framework of the Inter-American Convention against Corruption, which has been ratified by the majority of nations in the Hemisphere and whose follow-up mechanism has been used as a forum to examine additional concrete measures to combat this scourge. In fact, in June 2001, the States Parties, through a declaration, adopted the Report of Buenos Aires on the Mechanism for Follow-up on the Implementation of the Inter-American Convention against Corruption (MESICIC). This

document contains a series of goals aimed at following the advances reached by Member States, and to facilitate their cooperation. The evolution of the MESICIC has taken place in various conferences that have adopted a series of conclusions and recommendations of concrete measures to strengthen it, many of whom are in the process of application.

Facts such as those described above reflect a feeling in the Hemisphere where, according to the firm Latinobarómetro, public perception of democracy is increasingly favorable. In effect, support for democracy as a form of government is the dominant view in Latin America overall, as well as in each country, in contrast to the rejection engendered by authoritarian regimes.

CONFIDENCE IN INSTITUTIONS

(Percentage of the surveyed population that reports confidence in institutions)



Source: Report – Summary Latinobarómetro 2004

Surveys also show greater confidence in institutions, including the executive and legislative branches, and the judiciary respectively. Put another way, both credibility and public confidence are on the rise.

Notwithstanding, the individual situations that may have occurred in the region, there is no question that elections are being held regularly at the national, regional, and local levels. At the same time, changes in government abide by the respective constitutional standards and any issues that have arisen have been addressed in the framework of the multilateral entities created for that purpose.

An example of this is the strengthening of the Multilateral Evaluation Mechanism (MEM), established in response to a mandate of the Summit of the America that took place in Santiago de Chile in 1998. This Mechanism represents an acknowledgement by Member States that the drug problem requires a comprehensive and balanced response. The global objective of the MEM process is to encourage national and hemispheric advancement, as well as

cooperation in the fight against illicit drugs in all the countries of this region. The MEM intends to achieve this objective through the 34 annual national evaluations in which a report on the progress in the area of drug control and evaluations are produced by a group of government experts. In recent years, the MEM indicators have been modified and new programs of economic and financial investigations have taken place in order to respond to the new identified challenges. The changing needs of Member States in order to address new issues related to drugs, have demanded a change in the way of thinking and have created new actions.

The Special Conference on Security, agreed upon at the Quebec City Summit, took place in Mexico in 2003. It reiterated that the architecture of hemispheric security is the result of an open and cooperative agreement towards a democratic destination in peace, with full exercise of public liberties and human rights. It also stressed a multidimensional scope that recognizes that many of the new threats, preoccupations and challenges of hemispheric security are of transnational nature and require international cooperation. The traditional focus of the issue, linked to the so-called Cold War, was replaced in Mexico by one that includes economic, social and political aspects, included in the Inter American Democratic Charter. The debate also demonstrated that there is more space for diplomatic action for the prevention of conflicts or for cooperation in the Hemisphere, which are indispensable for the preservation of peace and security.

It is also important to highlight the adoption of the Inter-American Convention against Terrorism, which was approved in the OAS General Assembly in Barbados in 2002. The Convention reaffirmed the commitment of Member States of the Organization to cooperate under the scope of international law and it defined terrorist acts as all acts whose conducts were contemplated in the Conventions and in a series of international protocols approved at the United Nations. In the development of this Convention, the anti-laundering and terrorism financing measures have doubled and a better control of the frontier, ports and aerial security has taken place. Also, elements to facilitate mutual legal assistance have been introduced and cases have been established where the exception for political crime is inapplicable, as well as political asylum petitions and the denial of the refugee condition, all inside a strict framework of protection and defense of human rights and the principle of non-discrimination.

The above mentioned processes continue to promote the development of judicial issues in the Inter American agenda. Among the juridical and judicial cooperation mechanisms created and developed in the last decade, it is important to highlight the

process of the Meetings of the Ministers of Justice or of Ministers or Attorneys General of the Americas (REMJA) and the meetings, programs, institutions, and cooperation actions that have taken place within its framework, all related to areas of administration of justice, mutual legal assistance in the fight against transnational organized crime and terrorism, including the establishment of specialized hemispheric networks of exchange of information; and the fight against specific crime modalities with international scope such as cybernetic crime.

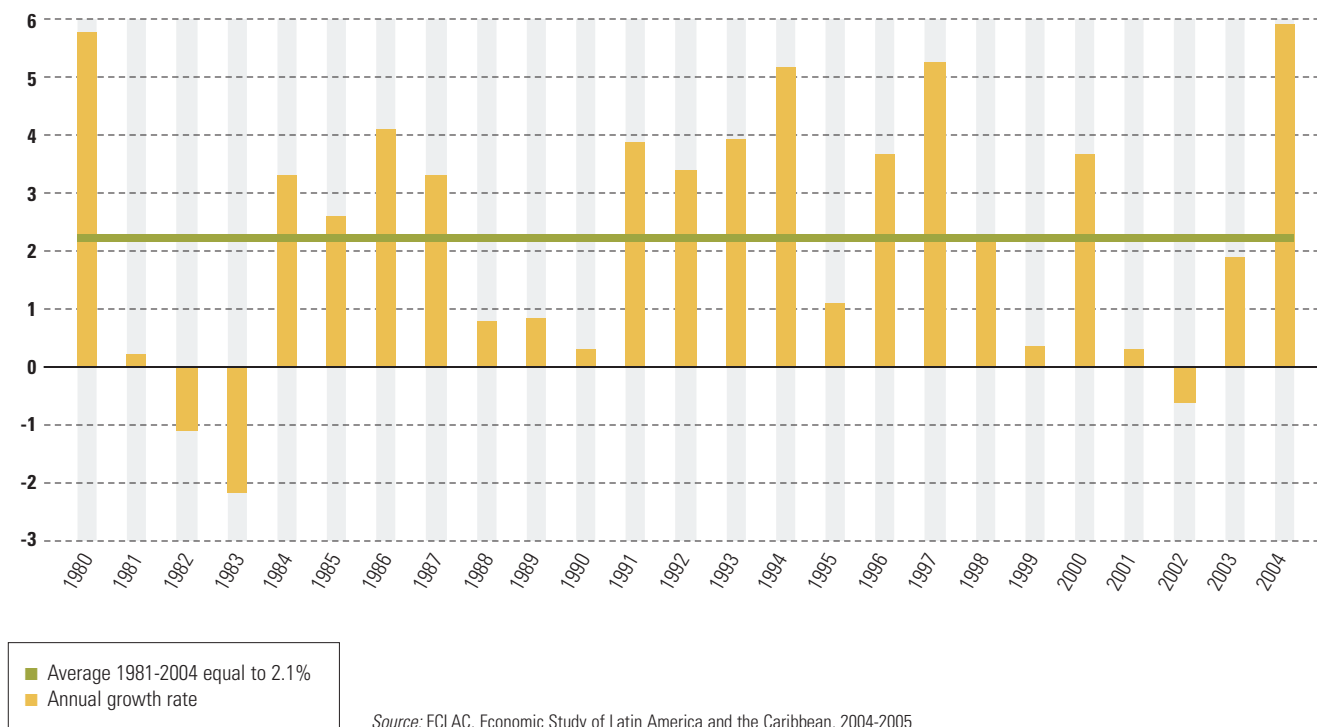
The Quebec Summit greatly valued civil society cooperation. Also, civil society organizations have provided hemispheric bodies

with information on diverse themes, such as equality, diversity, non-discrimination, human rights, governance, and sustainable development.

ECONOMIC ISSUES

Economic issues have always been a part of the Summits of the Americas. In Monterrey, for example, the countries pledged to “continue implementing sound macroeconomic policies, prudent fiscal and monetary policies, appropriate exchange rate regimes, prudent and appropriate public debt management, diversification of the economy and the improvement of competitiveness.”

ECONOMIC GROWTH IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

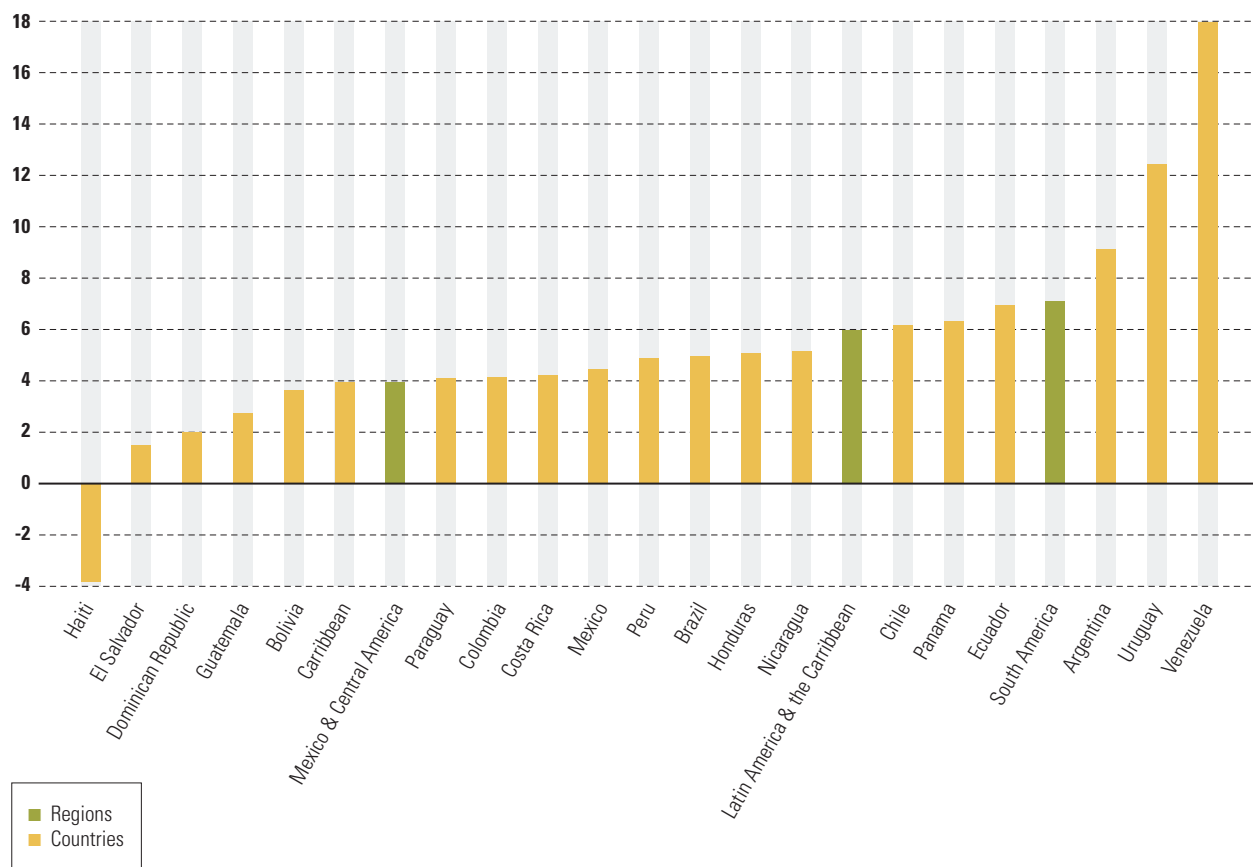


According to ECLAC, the economies of Latin America and the Caribbean have performed remarkably well in recent years. Indeed, regional growth was approximately 6% in 2004 and may reach 4.3% in 2005, and 4% in 2006. If the latter figure is confirmed, again according to ECLAC, then overall growth in per capita income between 2003 and 2006 would reach nearly 10%.

This hemispheric trend is similar to that registered in other regions of the world, which have also experienced positive growth.

Specifically, Latin America and the Caribbean have benefited from a climate of good prices for their main exports, greater insertion into international trade currents, generally low interest rates, good market liquidity, and the progressive recovery of domestic demand. While high international oil prices have affected certain nations that are net importers of fuel, and Caribbean countries in particular, in general, the region has benefited from higher prices for their main export products.

GROWTH BY COUNTRY AND BY REGION



Source: ECLAC, Economic Study of Latin America and the Caribbean, 2004-2005

Experts point out that exports of manufactured goods have grown steadily, while raw materials are experiencing an upward trend. All of this has occurred notwithstanding a tangible appreciation in national currency of some countries, relative to their main sources of foreign exchange.

An accelerated economic dynamic, together with an increasingly favorable international climate, has resulted in appreciable reductions in foreign debt indicators as well as a recomposition of liabilities which currently tend to be concentrated in long-term debts. In general, there is open access to international credit markets in what is regarded as a favorable context of interest rates and overall liquidity.

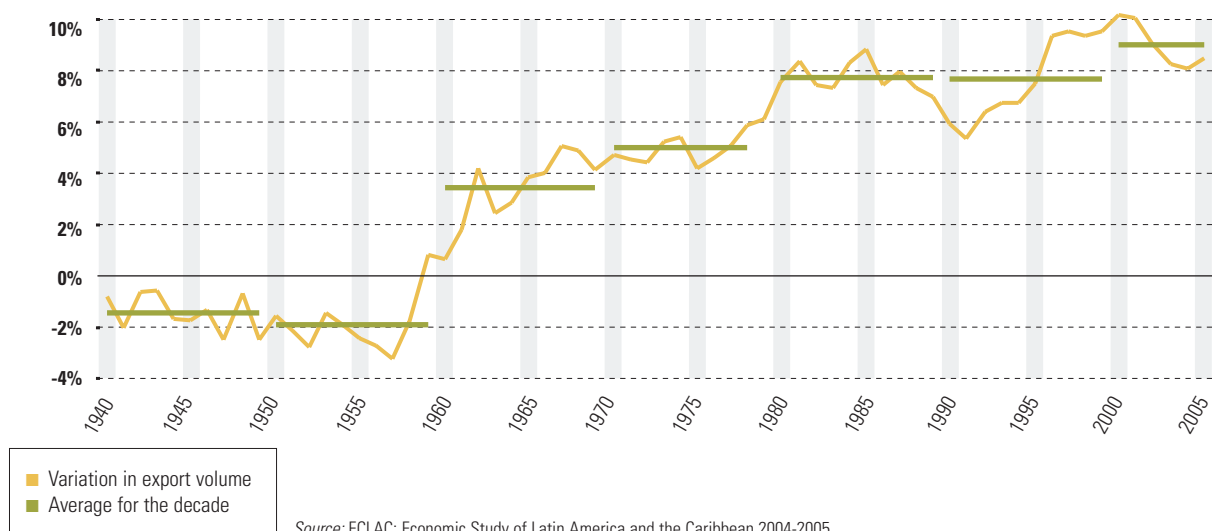
Simultaneously, the bond issues in international markets have

remained stable and the foreign debt risk spread of the main issuing countries has decreased noticeably since 2001, despite a few bumps, in keeping with market dynamics.

Hemispheric integration continues, even though the goal of establishing a Free Trade Area of the Americas by the end of 2005 ran into some snags and could not be met. In a sense, the region has felt the lack of progress in the discussions underway in the framework of the World Trade Organization, which include such complex topics as the handling of subsidies that some countries grant to various agricultural products. In the area of treaties, it is important to highlight trade agreements such as those entered into between the Andean Community and MERCOSUR, and between Central America and the United States.

EXPORT PERFORMANCE

Decennial rate of variation in export volume

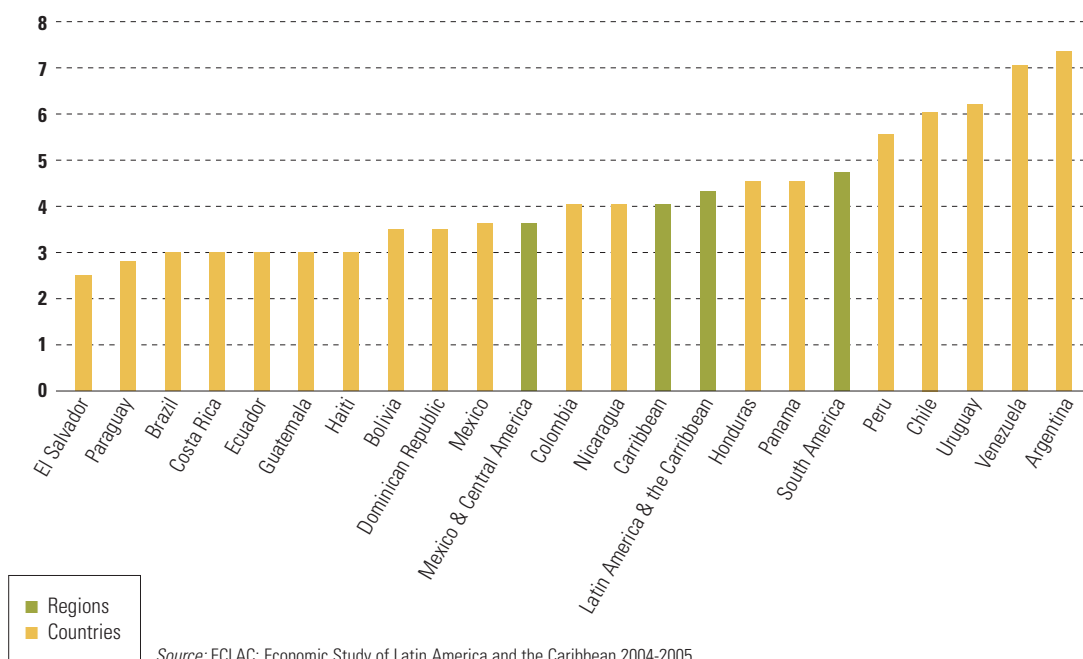


Moreover, ECLAC reported a strong increase in intraregional trade in 2004 "that represents an "historic record." In effect, exports within the Hemisphere grew by 33.8%, some eleven percentage points over the totals. Broken down by region, the most pronounced increase was observed in the Andean Community (58.5%), followed by MERCOSUR (36.2%), CARICOM (16%), and the Central American Common Market (11.8%).

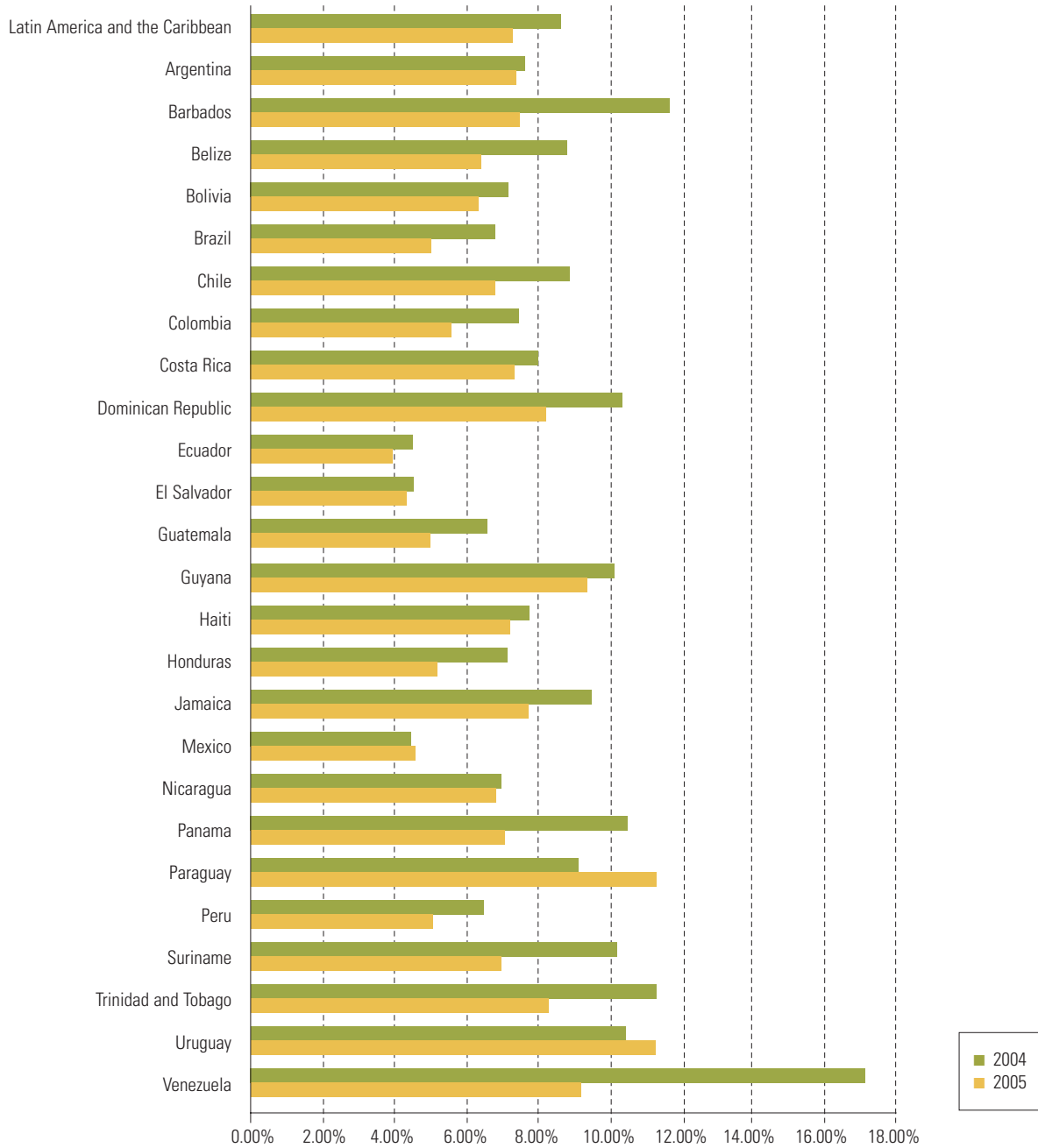
Of particular note were the remittances transfers made by immigrants

to their countries of origin, which reached a record high of 42.25 billion dollars in 2004, a figure equivalent to 2.2% of the Gross Domestic Product of Latin America and the Caribbean, it is important to highlight that the cost of these transactions have decreased in the last year. In June 2005, the cost of sending an average amount from United States to Latin America and the Caribbean was 7.26% , while in the same period of the previous year this same operation had a cost of 8.64% of the transferred amount.

PROSPECTS FOR 2005



COST OF TRANSFERRING AN AVERAGE AMOUNT OF REMITTANCES FROM THE UNITED STATES TO THE SENDER'S COUNTRY OF ORIGIN (JUNE 2005)



Source: Manuel Orozco - Inter-American Dialogue

Internally, improved economic performance has been accompanied by declining inflation. According to ECLAC, the regional average was 7.3% at the end of 2004, a decrease of more than one percentage point from the 2003 average.

In addition, the fiscal situation of most nations in the Hemisphere has improved as a result of increased growth and the attendant

increases in tax revenues. As a result, the public debt (internal and external) as a percentage of the Domestic Product, dropped from 66.8% in 2003 to 58.7% in 2004, according to ECLAC.

Due to all the above, and to the persistence of several other factors that contributed to 2004 being regarded as a good year, the optimistic outlook for the region continues, with annual growth

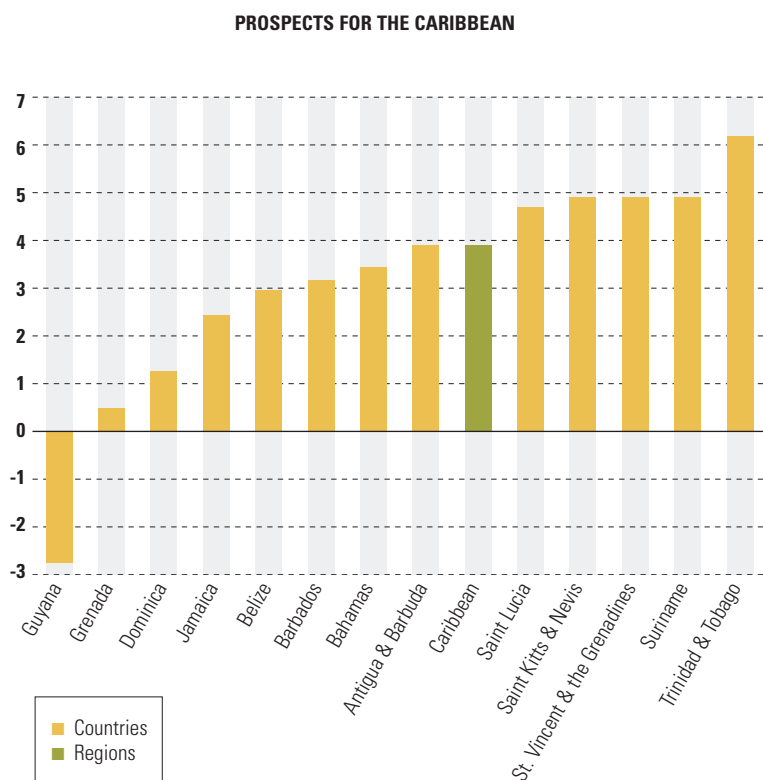
expected to reach over 4% spurred by high international oil prices in some cases, good price quotations for raw materials and, in general, the positive evolution of exports. Some countries, however, have felt the pressure of competition from China in such sensitive sectors as apparel. Nonetheless, the evidence indicates that most Latin American nations have experienced a significant recovery in domestic demand and consumer desire for all types of goods, including housing.

In contrast to the situation described above, high fuel prices can be expected to have an impact on non-producing countries and, in

particular, on Caribbean countries that are net importers. According to ECLAC, the average growth in this region will be close to 4%, although some countries will remain relatively far from that figure.

The outlook for 2006 is somewhat more moderate for Latin America and the Caribbean as a whole. ECLAC estimates that regional growth will be under 4%, a figure that will, in any case, far exceed the averages registered at the beginning of the decade.

Complementing this, per capita income has grown steadily and is anticipated to complete its fourth consecutive year of growth in 2006.



Source: ECLAC: Economic Study of Latin America and the Caribbean 2004-2005

The evolution of the growth rate and increased economic activity explain the encouraging progress that has been made in the area of unemployment. The regional jobless rate dropped from 10.7% in 2003 to 10% in 2004, while the employment rate rose from 52.2% to 52.8% of the working age population.

According to ECLAC, "the majority of new jobs were for salaried positions and, in many countries, formal employment increased significantly." Nonetheless, research suggests that real wages did not increase significantly during the aforementioned period.

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

The individual progress of the inhabitants of the Hemisphere has been a constant topic during the preparatory discussions and in the Declarations and Plans of Action adopted at the various Summits of the Americas. In Quebec and Monterrey, the Heads of State and Government discussed a series of specific topics and committed themselves to the goals established in the framework of the United Nations' Millennium Development Goals.

PERCENTAGE OF THE POPULATION LIVING ON LESS THAN ONE DOLLAR A DAY, ACCORDING TO THE UN



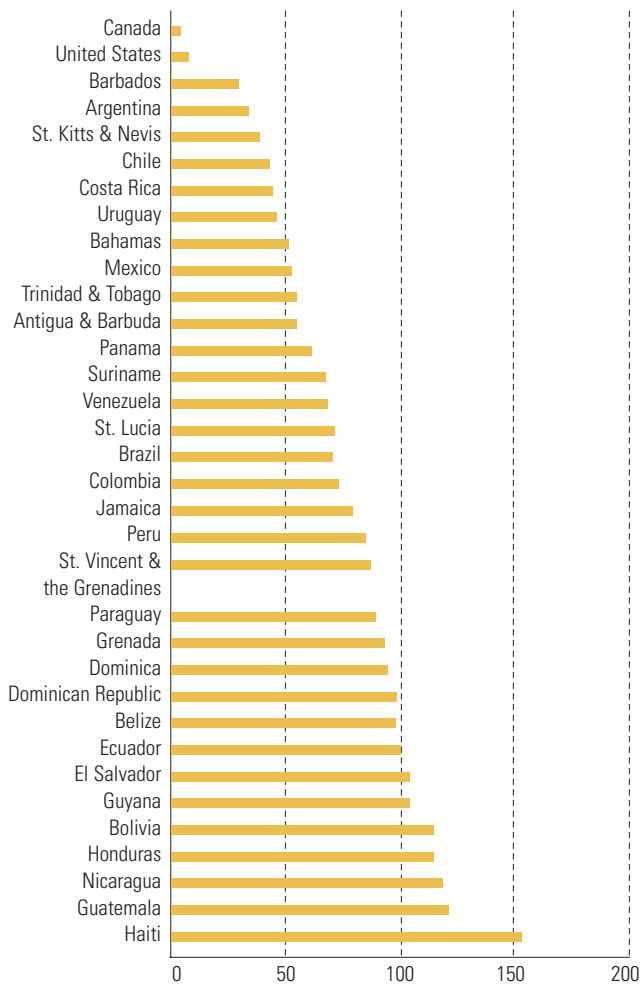
Source: The Millenium Development Goals: A Latin American and Caribbean Perspective. UN 2005

A look at the figures reveals profound disparities in the social development of the inhabitants of the Continent, depending on the nation to which they belong. Going beyond the individual considerations, however, evidence suggests that while major progress has been made in the Hemisphere in some spheres, in others much remains to be done.

Perhaps the single most complicated element is the persistence of poverty which, according to ECLAC, affects an average of 43% of the population (222 million people), 19% of which lives in extreme poverty (96 million people). While these figures are slightly lower than those registered at the beginning of the decade, they do not represent significant progress, although it is likely that recent economic improvements will lead to improvements in the next series of measurements.

Analysts assert that income inequity, coupled with the lack of jobs, in terms of both quantity and quality, creates a vicious circle that is hard to break, particularly for the children of the poor who have relatively much less access to education and health services. According to ECLAC, seven out of every ten new jobs created in the past decade are in the “informal” sector, and the average unemployment rate in the region grew from 6.9% 15 years ago to 10% in 2004.

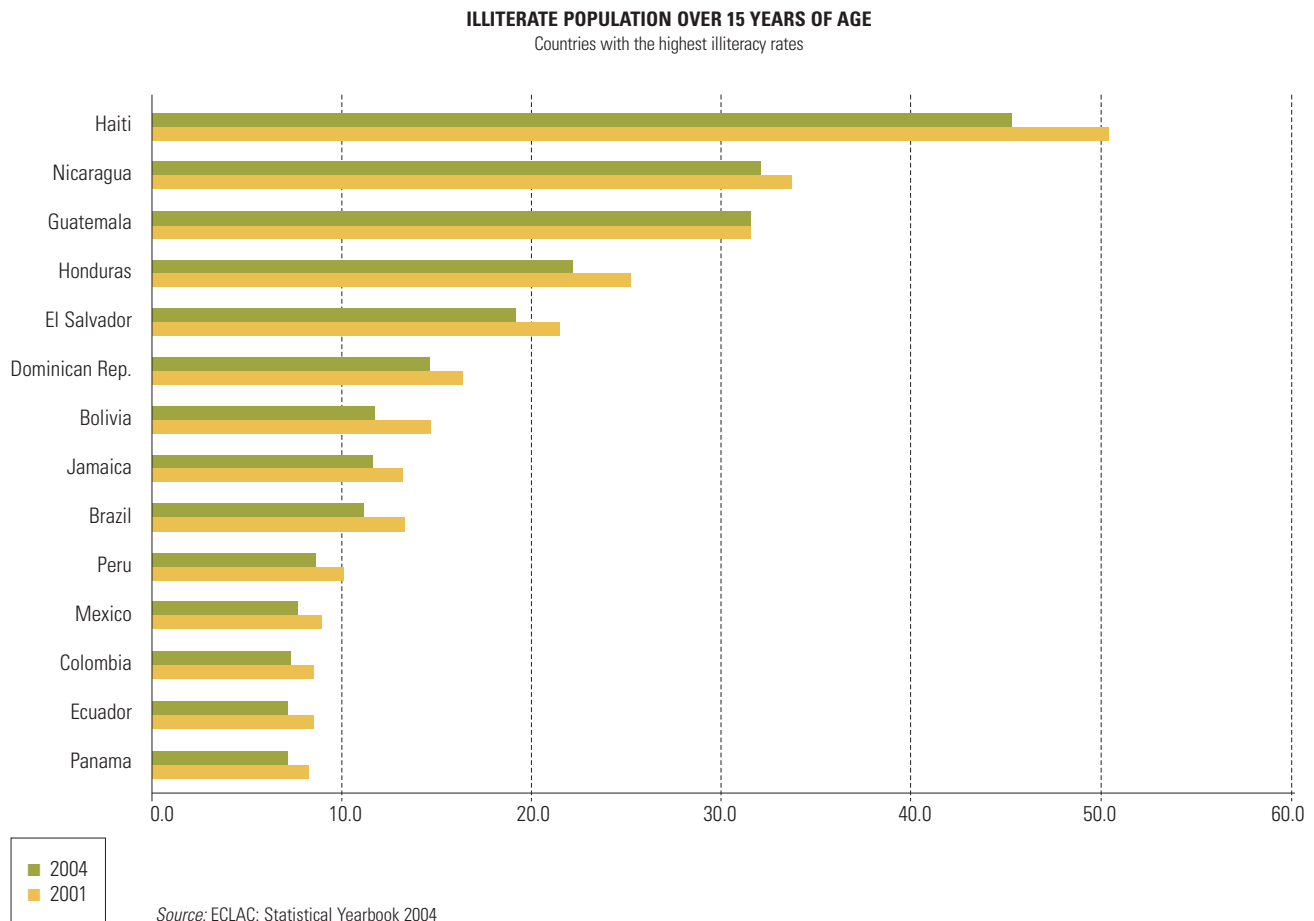
HUMAN DEVELOPMENT INDEX/RANK AMONG 177 COUNTRIES ACCORDING TO THE UNDP



United Nations’ reports underscore the effort made by the countries of the region to allocate a larger proportion of their budgets to social areas and the results they have obtained, particularly in health and education. Nonetheless, these reports also point to the lack of evidence of tangible progress in the areas of poverty and indigence.

The hemispheric Summits of 2001 and 2004 specifically addressed the subject of gender equality. A glance at the legislation in different countries reveals that the nations of the Continent have made significant progress in the adoption of anti-discrimination standards that promote equality among men and women. Employment statistics further show that the rate of women's participation in the labor force increased at more than proportional rates throughout the past decade, reaching 43% in the case of impoverished women in 2002 or seven percentage points over 1996 levels.

The leaders assembled in Quebec and Monterrey also addressed the issue of social safety nets. Studies conducted in the Hemisphere indicate that these safety nets have played a key role in improving the indicators for their target groups or in their specific problem areas. One example of this is the malnourished population, which declined from 13% during the past decade to 10% at the beginning of the current one.



Statistics also reflect the effort made in the area of education. To begin with, net enrollment in primary school has risen to 93% of Latin American and Caribbean boys and girls; this represents an increase of seven percentage points over 1990 levels with no significant differences based on gender. This explains the overall reduction in illiteracy rates in all countries in the Hemisphere. Having said that, ECLAC estimates that 92 million people in the region have not finished primary school, while 36 million report

that they cannot read or write, a critical factor in the fight against poverty.

Research on those who remain in the school system shows enormous disparities in the level of education received between different groups of countries and between public and private schools and institutions. Still, the secondary school enrollment rate is 65% of the target population, which indicates that dropout

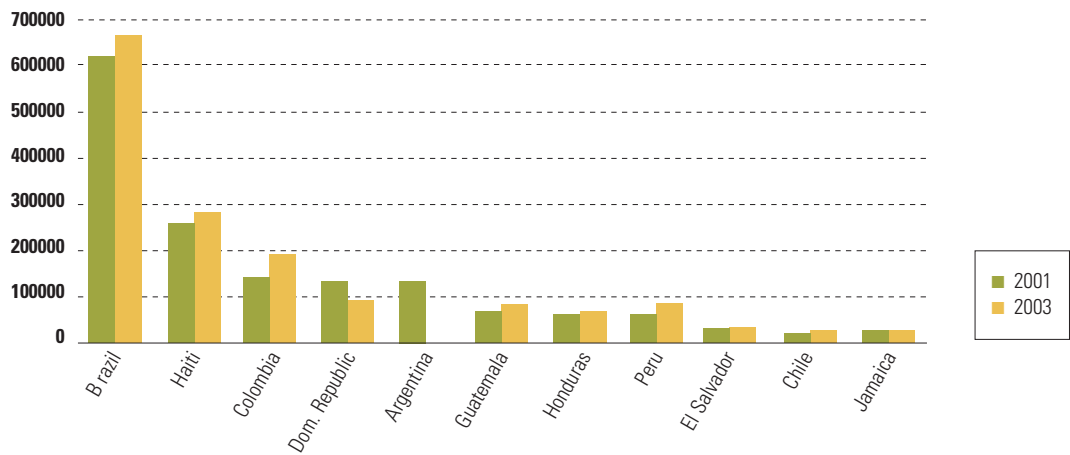
rates remain high; this, in turn, complicates the struggle against inequality.

There has also been significant progress in the Hemisphere in the health sphere, another issue that is strongly emphasized at the Summits. According to the United Nations, from 1990 to 2003, infant mortality in Latin America and the Caribbean dropped from 42.9 to 25.6 children per 1,000 live births, a 40% reduction.

Similar advances have been observed in other indicators, and the life expectancy of the inhabitants of the region has climbed to over 70 years, an all time high.

The issue of HIV/AIDS was specifically addressed at the Quebec and Monterrey Summits. According to World Health Organization estimates, 2.4 million people in Latin America and the Caribbean are infected by this virus.

LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN: PEOPLE LIVING WITH AIDS



Source: World Health Organization. CIA - The World Factbook

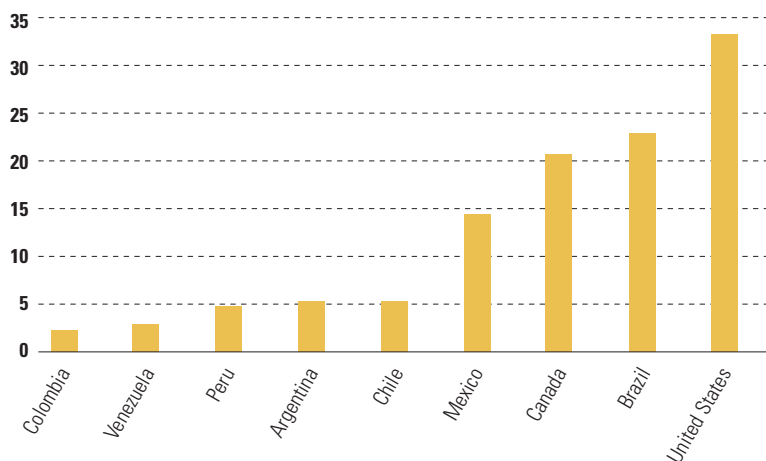
In view of the concern over this issue, the leaders assembled in Monterrey pledged that at least 600,000 people in the Hemisphere would receive antiretroviral treatment in 2005, a figure that was exceeded by nearly 30,000, according to the Pan American Health Organization. Specifically in Latin America, PAHO estimates that 73% of the 354,750 people in need of treatment in May 2005 were receiving it.

The Declaration of Nuevo León also pointed to the need to strengthen property rights, among other goals. While the figures here are not the most recent, it is anticipated that they will follow

the trend of the past few years. According to ECLAC, the increase in secure housing situations went from 49 million to 73 million households from 1990 to 2000.

The “digital divide” was another topic of interest to the Heads of State and Government in Quebec and Monterrey. According to the United Nations, the number of mobile and fixed telephone lines in Latin America and the Caribbean rose from 6.4 to 36.2 per 100 inhabitants from 1990 to 2002. The latest figures suggest, however, that those numbers may be much higher today due, in particular, to the rapid growth of the cellular telephone.

INTERNET USERS (Habitual users in millions)



Source: Computer Industry Almanac

Similar behavior has been observed in the number of habitual Internet users, which had reached 8.2 million people in the region in 2002 and today would exceed 50 million people. The mass connectivity programs implemented in public schools and in remote regions have contributed to this accelerated growth.

CONCLUSION

The preceding paragraphs offer a panorama in which the progress made by the Hemisphere in compliance with the mandates emanating from the Summits of the Americas is evident. The figures make it clear, however, that there is still a long way to go.

Current estimates indicate that the population of Latin America and the Caribbean is 563 million people in 2005; this is 120 million more than in 1990, and 76 million less than projected for 2015. Adding the North American population to this figure raises the number of inhabitants in the Hemisphere to 900 million. It will be

necessary to intensify efforts to reduce existing gaps and ensure a better future, so that all inhabitants of the Americas enjoy, to the extent possible, the same opportunities.

Indeed countries in the Hemisphere have strengthened their bonds between themselves, due, not only to commercial and economic links without precedent, but due to the development of mechanisms to face common political, economic and social threats under a multilateral focus, which recognizes the interdependence among the nations of the Americas. In this road towards a greater cohesion and cooperation, the Summits of the Americas Process continues to act as a catalyst and generator of mandates through open dialogue that respects the particularities of each nation and recognizes those differences in a constructive manner. By developing a broad agenda, the Summits of the Americas Process enhances the convergence of democracies of the Hemisphere to work together to provide a better present and future for their citizens within the framework of peace and cooperation. ■



NATIONAL REPORTS

Antigua and Barbuda

INTRODUCTION

Antigua and Barbuda has embraced the initiatives set forth in the Plan of Action and Declaration of Quebec City of 2001, and the Declaration of Nuevo Leon of 2004. In an effort to address the same, to the extent possible, national processes have been improved upon and laws have been developed and strictly adhered to. Its commitment remains unquestionable.

DEMOCRACY

ELECTORAL PROCESSES: The Constitution of Antigua and Barbuda gives citizens the right to elect their government peacefully. In practice elections are held every 5 years and are free and based on universal suffrage. The last general elections were held on March 23rd 2004, and contending parties were free to conduct their activities. The National Electoral Commission oversees the electoral process, ensuring elections are fair.

TRANSPARENCY AND GOOD GOVERNANCE: The Integrity in Public Life Act has been passed this year to create an atmosphere of transparency in the public sphere.

ECONOMIC GROWTH

Over the last five years, Antigua and Barbuda experienced cyclical fluctuations in the rate of economic growth, with real GDP growth as low as 1.49% in 2001 and recovering to 4% by 2003. The nation's economy is heavily services oriented, with tourism being the main engine of growth. Construction, financial and government services are also major contributors to the economy.

Antigua and Barbuda has actively pursued foreign direct investment as a vital component of the country's growth and has instituted a review of all existing processes and laws relating to attracting and retaining regional and international investment.

The government is in the process of establishing a one stop shop for investors: the Antigua and Barbuda Investment Authority which will function as an investment promotion and facilitation agency. The government also intends to establish the Antigua and Barbuda International Marketing Corporation to promote the country.

Antigua and Barbuda has emerged as an attractive offshore financial center. The major offshore services offered are banking, trust, international business corporations, gaming and ships registry. The government has put in place the necessary legal framework that governs the offshore jurisdiction. To this end the International Business Corporation Act, the Merchant Shipping Act, and the Consolidated Money Laundering Prevention Act have been passed. In addition Antigua and Barbuda has also signed up to the Financial Action Task Force Recommendations.

JUSTICE

The government remains committed to the fight against illicit drugs and their related crimes. In order to give teeth to this commitment, the Office of National Drug and Money Laundering

Policy was initiated in 2002. Antigua and Barbuda is also actively participating in the Third Round of the Multilateral Evaluation Mechanism (MEM) of the Organization of American States. In an effort to institutionalize the government's commitment to combat drug related crimes the government ratified the Inter-American Convention against Corruption.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Antigua and Barbuda adheres strictly to international standards of human rights. It has ratified almost all the major international human rights instruments and their protocols.

RIGHTS OF WOMEN: The government has ratified the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). Women are well represented in the public sector: 51% of the public service and over half of the permanent secretaries are female. In addition over 40% of the bar association are female. In 1999 it passed a Domestic Violence Act which criminalizes and provides penalties for domestic violence, rape, and other sexual offences. The Directorate of Gender Affairs operates a domestic violence program that includes training for police officers, magistrates and judges. The Directorate also operates a domestic violence hotline and collaborates with several local civil society organizations to provide havens for abused women and children. The Professional Organization for Women in Antigua was established as a networking and resource group for female executives. It holds seminars for women entering the workforce during the year.

RIGHTS OF CHILDREN: The government has ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. According to the Constitution, education is compulsory up to the age of 16 and it is both free and universal.

DISASTER MANAGEMENT

Antigua and Barbuda, like other Caribbean countries is susceptible to yearly violent hurricanes. As a result, the government is taking the necessary steps to have in place a National Comprehensive Disaster Management Plan. This plan would encompass mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery.

EDUCATION

The Government of Antigua and Barbuda has endorsed the opinion that 'education is the key of strengthening democratic

institutions, promoting the development of the human potential' as articulated in the Quebec Summit. In Antigua and Barbuda education is free and available to all children. It is compulsory up to the age of sixteen. Currently, the nation has 64 primary schools and 16 secondary schools. Additionally there are four widely recognized institutions offering post secondary, college and university level education. There is an educational institution for the mentally challenged and an industrial school for the blind. The government also provides free text books. As of September 2005, the government has initiated a pilot school meals program in 9 primary schools. It intends to provide a hot midday meal to school children by the 2006- 2007 school year. In Antigua and Barbuda 89% of the population aged 15 and over has completed 5 or more years of schooling.

HEALTH

The healthcare system in Antigua and Barbuda is robust, consisting of primary and tertiary healthcare. Primary healthcare is geared towards affordable medical care for all ages. To this end a national medical benefits scheme has been established and provides financing for endemic and chronic diseases such as hypertension, diabetes, asthma, cardiovascular diseases. The beneficiaries of the scheme make a contribution, matched by employers as a percentage of their wages. Offering primary healthcare, there are 26 public clinics and healthcare centers. Counseling and education form part of the protocol of the primary healthcare system.

Regarding tertiary healthcare there is one public hospital in Antigua and Barbuda—Holberton Hospital. At Holberton, surgical procedures are carried out by highly qualified surgeons. The laboratory services are extensive and other departments of orthopedics, gynecology, radiology, obstetrics and pediatrics are well staffed. Recently a dialysis program has been added to the hospital's services.

Private medical institutions and laboratory services are also scattered around the island. They complement, and in some cases, duplicate the services offered by the public institutions.

CONCLUSIONS

The Government of Antigua and Barbuda is proud of the advances it has made in the preceding areas. It is aware that there is considerably more work to be done. Nevertheless, it looks forward to continual implementation of initiatives of the mandates of the Third Summit of Americas. ■

Argentina

MAKING DEMOCRACY WORK BETTER

Argentina has promoted and publicized the application of the Inter-American Democratic Charter (IDC) by distributing it widely among the different social sectors, including the national government, provincial governments, national legislature, political parties, and civil society organizations. In view of its responsibility for chairing the Summit Process as the host country for the IV Summit of the Americas, Argentina regards the IDC as a fundamental, permanent framework for designing new advances consistent with the aspirations of consolidated democracies, respect for human rights, and the social and economic development of the Hemisphere, to strengthen the ability of our peoples to live together in democracy, justice, and peace.

FIGHT AGAINST CORRUPTION: Argentina chaired and participated actively in the Working Group on Probity and Public Ethics created by the Follow-up Mechanism for the Inter-American Convention against Corruption adopted through the Act of Buenos Aires in 2001. Argentina was the first state that offered to be evaluated by the Group of Experts established by virtue of that Act, and the subject of the Group's first country report. At the same time, it has participated actively in the Conference of State Parties and has formulated various proposals to support and strengthen the Follow-up Mechanism.

EMPOWERING LOCAL GOVERNMENTS: The Secretariat for Social Policies (SPS), under the Ministry of Social Development [MDS], has been promoting implementation of a National Plan for Local Development and Social Economy since 2003, for the purpose of implementing a unified system for local development involving the players and initiatives in the social economic area. The plan seeks to integrate the different activities and institutions of the MDS adding value to the installed institutional management capacity and jointly developing a series of specific development agendas. Argentina participates actively in the "Meeting of Ministers and High Level Authorities responsible for Policies on Decentralization, Local Government, and Citizen Participation at the Municipal Level in the Hemisphere" of the High-Level Inter-American Network on Decentralization (RIAD).

HUMAN RIGHTS AND FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS

IMPLEMENTATION OF INTERNATIONAL OBLIGATIONS AND RESPECT FOR INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS: The current administration has taken relevant measures to fight impunity. The Supreme Court of Justice of the Nation declared the unconstitutionality of the Final Point and Due Obedience laws; it likewise upheld the validity of the legislation through which the National Congress, in 2003, declared null and void of those laws. This ruling by the Court, coupled with legislative and executive actions, firmly establishes the government's obligation to investigate and punish the crimes that occurred during the last dictatorship, as stipulated in international rights treaties.

MIGRATION: In the international arena, Argentina has signed the "International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of all Migrant Workers and Members of their Families," which

is currently in the advanced stages of being incorporated into domestic law by the Parliament. Argentina is working on draft legislation on illegal trafficking in Persons.

HUMAN RIGHTS OF WOMEN AND GENDER EQUALITY:

In compliance with the Beijing Platform for Action and the commitments emanating from Beijing +5, several projects for the promotion and defense of women's rights are currently underway in Argentina. One such project is the national campaign, "Know your rights in order to exercise them," which includes seminars, workshops, publicity spots in the audiovisual media, and the distribution of pamphlets and informational materials. Moreover, significant progress has been made in terms of policy and concrete measures to address the problem of violence against women.

FIGHT AGAINST TERRORISM: Argentina promoted the establishment of the Inter-American Committee on Terrorism (CICTE) in the OAS framework and, in 1998, it hosted its first meeting in the city of Mar del Plata. Moreover, in July 2003, the First OAS Conference on Cybernetic Security was held in Buenos Aires. The strategy proposed at that time was later approved at the second meeting on this topic, which was held in March 2004 in Ottawa. Argentina also signed and ratified eleven of the twelve international conventions on terrorism. The remaining one—on suppression of the financing of terrorism—has been approved by the National Congress and should be ratified shortly. Argentina has signed the Inter-American Convention against Terrorism and the status of its ratification process is the same as the aforementioned convention. Another one of Argentina's priorities is to observe and monitor any potential connection to the attacks against the Embassy of Israel and the AMIA, given the high priority that the national government places on the clarification of these tragic episodes.

CIVIL SOCIETY

Civil society participation is coordinated in the Argentine Ministry of Foreign Affairs by the Special Representation for Regional Economic Integration and Social Participation established in November 2003. The Consultative Council of Civil Society (CCSC) currently comprises 740 social organizations including civil society organizations, chambers of commerce, academia, and the trade union and professional sectors. It also includes national and provincial public sector entities. By definition, it constitutes a pluralistic and non-neutral space where the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the aforementioned institutions disseminate information and organize around the larger issues relating to regional integration, mainly, although not exclusively, through MERCOSUR.

TRADE, INVESTMENT, AND FINANCIAL STABILITY

At the Ministerial Meeting of the FTAA (Miami, November 2003), a new political commitment was established to introduce the concept of flexibility in the negotiation process so as to take into account the needs and sensibilities of the 34 countries involved. Nonetheless, the process reached an impasse in May 2004 and it has been impossible to reinstate the negotiation process. In this context, Argentina has supported the efforts to produce a draft set of instructions that could serve as the basis for consensus among all the participants. In addition, in conjunction with MERCOSUR partners, it has followed up on the issues raised with regard to funding for the Administrative Secretariat, and has supported the co-Chairs' initiatives concerning the changes that need to be made to the Secretariat's structure, in order to ensure that it is funded until December 2005.

In terms of the dissemination of information about the FTAA negotiation process, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs webpage has been updated regularly and responses have been provided to the daily queries and requests for information. In terms of its relationships with civil society, the Argentine Ministry of Foreign Affairs has worked consistently to publicize the FTAA negotiation process through both the International Trade Council and the Consultative Council of Civil Society.

LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT

At the regional level, and as a commitment emanating from the MERCOSUR Regional Conference on Employment, Argentina—together with the countries of the subregional bloc—promoted the establishment of the High-Level Group on Employment to develop the MERCOSUR strategy for job growth. To this end, at the national level, the National Section of the High-Level Group was established, made up of representatives of the Ministries of the Economy, Education, and Foreign Affairs, under the coordination of the Ministry of Labor. A call went out to the various social actors in order to incorporate sector-specific representation into the makeup of the Group.

It is also worth noting that the Argentine Labor Minister was elected chair of the Administrative Council of the International Labor Organization (ILO), with the unanimous backing of all the countries of the Americas in recognition of the Argentine government's policies on fundamental labor rights.

At the national level, the policy of strengthening social dialogue and collective bargaining was maintained. The Program for Strengthening Social Dialogue was implemented with technical

assistance from the ILO, reinforcing three areas of labor administration that operate in a tripartite manner: The National Agrarian Labor Commission, the Tripartite Commission for Equal Opportunity and Treatment in the Workplace, and the National Council on Employment, Productivity, and Minimum Living and Mobile Wage. It is important to note that the establishment of the minimum wage and other issues relating to employment, and professional training, productivity, and social security fall under the purview of the latter.

As for collective bargaining, over 430 agreements have been signed covering more than 2,000,000 workers, making it an effective tool for employers and workers, with institutional support from the government, to develop enforceable and durable agreements.

In addition, as recognized in the Preamble of the ILO's 1998 Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, Argentina continues to pay close attention to workers with special needs, to the unemployed, and to migrant workers. The United Nations International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of Migrant Workers and their Families is currently in the process of being ratified.

In the area of other activities affecting vulnerable groups, Argentina continues to carry out actions to strengthen the integration of people with disabilities into various programs—including labor intermediation—, the establishment of clubs of businesses that hire disabled workers, and the participation of people with disabilities in job training programs and occupational workshops.

The Ministry of Labor continues to actively promote public policies on child labor in coordination with other Ministries of the National Government, trade union associations, organizations of employers, international entities, and provincial and municipal governments.

Regarding income distribution, the Argentine government continued to apply measures to strengthen the redistribution process, which is the backbone of its social inclusion policy. Therefore, the Minimum Living and Mobile Wage was increased by 215%, and basic contractual salaries and wages paid to employees in the private sector and in national government administration were also increased. Also, minimum pensions were raised, giving priority response to the 95% of retirees and pensioners with the lowest incomes, and family allocations per child were raised by 50%, and benefits for seniors were approved so that those over 70 whose

contributions were insufficient could enter the social security system.

Placing employment at the center of macroeconomic and social policy has borne important accomplishments. The trend toward job elimination was reversed and currently the trend is toward sustained growth in job opportunities, with 1.6 million jobs created from 2003 to 2005. The unemployment rate dropped from 20.4% in the first quarter of 2003 to 13% in the first quarter of 2005, meaning that there are 1.1 million fewer unemployed people in the national urban total. Finally, formal employment has been growing steadily and rose at a rate of 8.8% in 2005.

In regards to active policies to promote quality jobs, the National Employment Regularization Plan is currently in the implementation phase with the participation of the national labor administration and federal labor jurisdictions. The inspector corps was expanded and the budget allocation tripled for inspections to detect illegal employment situations so as to ensure that all workers enjoy social and health protection, accident coverage, and retirement benefits.

In addition, Argentina continues with the plan for the creation and strengthening of employment orientation and services centers continues to provide assistance, at the local level, to men and women workers with employment difficulties. The objective is to create a territorial network of employment services. Training programs fit into the framework of the Sector-specific Qualification Plans that are part of the productivity strategies in different productive sectors.

In the area of job training, 40 million pesos have been invested in 10,000 training and vocational training courses to improve the employability of the unemployed and respond to the new demands coming from companies. In the same way, technical assistance plans were furthered for 100 companies and factories that had been "recovered" by their workers, in order to strengthen their productive units.

Finally, in the area of unemployment protection policies, progress was made in the gradual reorganization of the Heads of Household Program oriented toward transforming it into a job insertion policy. Over 350,000 beneficiaries of social plans have obtained jobs, and 170,000 beneficiaries of social plans are currently being trained for job placement, 65,000 of them are in school completion programs to finish primary and secondary school. ■

The Bahamas

EMPOWERING LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

Annual local government conferences are held to promote the deepening of local government and the cross-fertilization of ideas so as to improve the administration of the local government districts.

COMBATING THE DRUG PROBLEM

The Bahamas has participated fully in the meetings and efforts of the Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission (CICAD) and the Multilateral Evaluation Mechanism (MEM).

The Government of The Bahamas in June 2004, completed a comprehensive five-year plan for the control of the demand and trafficking of drugs, referred to as the Anti-Drug Plan. The purpose of the Plan is to galvanize the Bahamian people in partnership with government agencies and civil society into organized, measurable and collective action.

The Plan establishes a new institutional framework designed to bring optimum coordination and efficiency to the many facets of drug control efforts. Moreover, this plan established the creation of a National Anti-Drug Secretariat, headquartered in the Ministry of National Security and headed by a Director who will be responsible for its administration, management, and coordination of its operations.

In the Plan, ways are examined by which institutions and related support groups may be strengthened to execute more effectively their functions and to measure and evaluate their performance in drug demand and drug supply reduction efforts.

Also in the Plan, policies are developed in relation to seven areas, namely, prevention, treatment and rehabilitation, law enforcement, money laundering, control of chemical substances, data collection and analysis and community organizations enhancement. Projects and activities with proposed budgets are developed in accordance with the objectives and strategies of the seven identified areas.

PREVENTION OF VIOLENCE

The Bahamas has instituted a successful inner city based policing initiative, linking law enforcement agencies with civil society and local communities. At the core of this effort is the national Urban Renewal Commission, which will identify needs in terms of employment, health, education and other social and environmental factors. Coupled with the recent report of the Prison Reform Commission, this initiative represents the government's major thrust against crime.

FIGHT AGAINST TERRORISM

In 2004, The Bahamas enacted anti-terrorism legislation to combat and eliminate all forms of terrorism. The Anti-Terrorism Act supports wide-ranging international measures calling for the suppression of terrorist financing and improved international cooperation. More specifically, the Act, among other things, explicitly defines the offence of terrorism, further provides special powers for local law enforcement agencies for investigation and punishment of terrorism, and seeks to empower the Minister of National Security to proscribe any organization he or she believes to be involved in terrorism in order that necessary action is taken against that organization.

The Act is designed to work in conjunction with existing Bahamian legislation such as the Proceeds of Crime Act which gives the police, customs and the courts certain powers in relation to money laundering and the search, seizure and confiscation of the proceeds of crime. Other supporting pieces of legislation to assist with anti-terrorism measures include the Financial Transactions Reporting Act and amendments made to the Central Bank Act, The Banks and Trust Companies Regulation Act and the International Business Companies Act. Lastly, the Anti-Terrorism Act specifically recognizes the importance of compliance with United Nations conventions.

Further augmenting the passage of the Act, were initiatives taken by various Departments within the Government of The Bahamas, which served to bolster the fight against terrorism. In 2004, the Bahamas Customs Department, signed a bi-lateral cooperative agreement with the Government of the United States for the installation of special equipment at the Grand Bahama Container Port Terminal located in the city of Freeport, on the island of Grand Bahama. The Agreement is known as the Megaports Initiative, and is a non-proliferation programme of the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) and the National Nuclear Security Administration (NSA). The installed equipment is expected to detect hidden shipments of nuclear and other radioactive materials that maybe stored in containers arriving or departing the facilities in Freeport. The Bahamas is the first country in the Caribbean to utilize this type of detection system.

In addition, the Airport Authority of the Bahamas has pursued efforts to ensure that the security at the international airport and other ports of entry are not compromised. For instance, the Authority, at Nassau's International Airport, has increased security patrols at ticket counters, aircraft parking areas, and air traffic facilities. The Authority has also purchased explosives detecting equipment, explosive sniffing dogs, and additional communications systems and transportation for security personnel. Lastly, the Authority has increased the frequency of security awareness seminars, where attendance by representatives of all airport agencies has been mandatory.

Finally, the Government of The Bahamas is currently evaluating bids received for the acquisition of the necessary hardware and software for the issuance of machine readable passports and an integrated border management system. It is anticipated that the system would become operational by the end of 2005.

TRADE AND INVESTMENT

The Government of the Bahamas has consistently engaged civil society in the national dialogue regarding the FTAA process and in 2002 established the Bahamas Commission on Trade (the Commission) comprising representatives of the public and private sector as well as academia and organized labor to review and examine all aspects of the various multi-lateral, regional and sub-regional trading

arrangements which are expected to require Bahamian participation and valuation and, if desired or necessary, Bahamian commitment.

DISASTER MANAGEMENT

In the Bahamas, the highest priority is being given to the development of a modern, high-powered emergency response organization with the administrative capacity to respond systematically to emergencies and disasters and mobilize recovery efforts in an immediate, orderly and effective manner; this is important given the country's vulnerability to hurricanes. Legislation will be enacted in due course to bring the National Emergency Management Agency into full effect for efficient disaster mitigation and risk reduction.

ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

The Bahamas was a participant at the ministerial level in the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable development in Johannesburg, South Africa and in January 2004, and hosted the Inter-Regional Preparatory Meeting for the 10-Year Review of the Barbados Plan of action for Small Island Developing States.

COMMUNICABLE DISEASES

In 2001 The Commonwealth of the Bahamas issued a National Health Services Strategic Plan to provide the highest quality of services for health promotion, protection and care within the country. As part of this cooperative effort, a national programme is in place to prevent and control the spread of sexually transmitted infections (STIs), and HIV/AIDS. Partnerships between the government and the private sector including the AIDS Foundation, Samaritan Ministries and other community organizations advance primary prevention, treatment and health promotion strategies throughout the country. The strategic Healthcare Plan specifies HIV/AIDS as a national health priority and defines target goals, providing direction for allocation of resources.

As a result, in recent years the Bahamas has made very significant progress in arresting the spread of HIV/AIDS in the Bahamian population. The AIDS Secretariat of the Bahamas has indicated that from 1994 to 2000, the HIV incidence rate has decreased from 286/100,00 to 151/100,00 predominately in the 20-40-year-old age group. Moreover, the number of new persons testing HIV positive has shown a modest decline. In the early years of the epidemic, more men than women were affected; now there is equal distribution of men and women. Recent trends also indicated a falling AIDS case fatality; from 70% in 1985, to 50% in 1999 and 2000. There is also a decrease in bed occupancy in the AIDS Unit at the Princess Margaret Hospital, from over 90 % in 1985, to 66% in 2000. ■

Barbados

MAKING DEMOCRACY WORK BETTER

ELECTORAL PROCESSES AND PROCEDURES: Barbados is committed to maintaining electoral processes of the highest integrity and transparency as guaranteed under the Constitution of Barbados. There is a continuous registration process and the voters list is published on January 31 every year so that citizens can confirm that their names are on the list. General Elections are held every five years with the last such election held in 2003. Several of the election officials of Barbados have served in election observer missions both regionally and internationally.

FIGHT AGAINST CORRUPTION: Barbados is a signatory to the Inter-American Convention against Corruption and is in the process of drafting the relevant enabling legislation that will allow it to ratify this Convention. In addition, Barbados is a state party to the UN Convention against Corruption and has incorporated the provisions of the Convention into its domestic legislation.

HUMAN RIGHTS AND FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS

HUMAN RIGHTS OF WOMEN: The Government of Barbados signed and ratified the Convention on the Elimination of all form of Discrimination against Women in 1980.

The status of women in Barbados has significantly improved over the past two decades. There has been a noticeable increase in the participation of women in all areas of national, social and economic activity. Since 1992, the Government has made significant progress in reforming laws and enacting new legislation to improve the status of women and to eliminate the legal areas of discrimination against them.

The government is in the process of drafting legislation to protect individuals from sexual harassment at the work place and the proposed Employment Rights Bill makes provision to protect employees with family responsibility from arbitrary dismissal. The Government of Barbados is also committed to the eradication of all forms of violence against women and works closely with a number of local NGOs in pursuit of this goal.

HUMAN RIGHTS OF CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS: It should be noted that while Barbados does not experience a problem with child labor, the Education Act has set the compulsory school-leaving age at sixteen years. Barbados has also amended the Employment (Miscellaneous Provision) Act Cap 136 to alter the definitions of child and young persons in accordance with ILO Convention No. 138 concerning the minimum age for admission to employment.

JUSTICE, RULE OF LAW AND SECURITY OF THE INDIVIDUAL

COMBATING THE DRUG PROBLEM: Barbados has participated over the past five years in the Multilateral Evaluation Mechanism (MEM) and has been an active participant in the Inter American Drug Abuse Control Commission (CICAD) evaluation rounds, coordinating roundtable discussions with the relevant stakeholders in both demand and supply reduction.

The National Drug Plan was completed in 2001, and the National Council on Substance Abuse has made significant advances in its demand reduction as well as supply reduction strategies. Its demand reduction capacity has continued to be strengthened through expansion of the coverage of training in drug abuse prevention research and on the supply reduction side. Its institutional framework has proven adequate to monitor and regulate the movement of pharmaceutical products and chemical substances. These measures along with counter money laundering initiatives continue to show steady progress.

Barbados has also enacted legislation dealing specifically with activities related to drug abuse, guns and international cooperation in relation to criminal matters.

TRANSNATIONAL ORGANIZED CRIME: Barbados has agencies that effectively perform monitoring, investigative, reporting and prosecutorial roles as they relate to combating money laundering. The Anti-Money Laundering Authority (AMLA) was established in 2001 by the passage of an Act of Parliament; the Financial Intelligence Unit (FIU) of the Anti-Money Laundering Authority (AMALA) has monitoring and investigative powers prescribed under the Money Laundering (Prevention and Control) (Amendment) Act, 2001. In addition, the Financial Crimes Investigation Unit (FCIU) of the Royal Barbados Police Force has the power to trace property and assets representing proceeds from crime as well as arrest, charge and prosecute cases of money laundering. Both agencies operate separately from, but cooperate fully with each other.

ENVIRONMENT FOUNDATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT: Barbados is a small island developing state that depends significantly on tourism for its national development. The government is committed to pursuing policies that prevent environmental degradation and is a signatory to Conventions that address protection and preservation of the environment. The National Commission on Sustainable Development (NCSDD) was established in 1996 and has produced a National Policy on Sustainable Development (NSP), which was launched in February 2004.

The national policy for energy in Barbados is geared towards promoting energy conservation practices and the use of renewable energy technologies, where possible, and becoming self-sufficient in oil and gas production. Plans to develop renewable sources of energy are focused on wind energy, solar photovoltaic, solar thermal, fuel cell and biogas/biomass. There are currently legislative proposals to deal with proper disposal of oil wastes, storage of products and remediation of vacated sites.

BIODIVERSITY: Barbados ratified the UN Convention on Biological Diversity (CED) in December 1993 and has developed a National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP) to conserve local biological diversity and promote sustainable use. The strategy and action plan covers a variety of issues including capacity building; legislation and policy revision and formulation; monitoring and mitigation; public education; incentives development; land use planning; in situ and ex situ conservation; biodiversity access and benefit sharing; and biosafety and biotechnology transfer.

CLIMATE CHANGE: Barbados participates actively in strengthening the Global Climate Observing System and is a part of the Global Ocean Observing System (GOOS). In addition, Barbados has a climate monitoring station obtained under the Caribbean Planning for Adaptation to Climate Change (CP ACC) Project, which monitors vertical movement of the land.

LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT

The Government of Barbados has ratified 36 ILO Conventions, including all of the eight core labor standards. Compliance with these Conventions is achieved through national law and practice and the free collective bargaining process.

Barbados enjoys a healthy labor environment, which has been enhanced by the existence of a consultative tripartite partnership involving government, the private sector and trade unions. Under this arrangement a number of Tripartite Committees have been established at the national level and five Social Partnership Agreements have been signed - the most recent of which, Protocol V, was signed on May 1, 2005. The Ministry of Labor and Social Security has established a tripartite plus 144 Committee to monitor ILO standards.

Significant progress has also been made in the last decade in reducing unemployment from 21.8% in 1994 to approximately 9.9% in 2004.

EDUCATION

Barbados provides universal free access at the primary and secondary level and will expand its access to early childhood education and care program from the current level of 80% to 100% by 2008. At the other end of the continuum, further expansion of access to tertiary education will be facilitated through the establishment of a University College of Barbados (UCB) by September 2006.

The government has adopted the policy of integrating the mentally and physically challenged in the general school system and has

provided newly constructed schools with resources to pursue such a policy.

Barbados has sought to revolutionize the curriculum by developing national curricula that would see the student being more effectively prepared to play a meaningful role in the social and economic development of Barbados. Plans are well advanced for the introduction of a National Diploma of Secondary Education by 2006 that should gain recognition and acceptance in the job market and at post secondary/tertiary institutions.

The introduction of Spanish language programs in all primary schools is intended to sensitize pupils to the language and culture of the Spanish-speaking countries of the Hemisphere; foster appreciation for diversity; and prepare them for the challenges of living in a multicultural community.

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY: As part of its Education Sector Enhancement Program to introduce Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) into the teaching and learning process. Four thousand, one hundred and forty-five computers have been installed at schools. These computers were installed along with related peripherals such as file and video servers, network printers, digital cameras, and electronic whiteboards and UPS systems.

HEALTH

COMMUNICABLE DISEASES: In 1996, the Social Partners began work on the development of a policy on HIV/AIDS in the work place. This policy is based on the philosophy that the work place should be committed to “balancing its business needs with a compassionate response to employees with HIV/AIDS or other life-threatening illness, to enable them to continue to work productively while their health allows”.

The Prime Minister’s Office assumed responsibility for the National HIV/AIDS program in 2000 and a National Commission on HIV/AIDS has been established with a Secretariat headed by a Director.

The Government of Barbados has adopted a number of initiatives to address the matter of discrimination. Issues relating to HIV/AIDS have been covered in Protocol IV, the Social Partnership Agreement which was signed by the Social Partners on May 1, 2002. The policy on HIV/AIDS and other life threatening illnesses in the work

place has been included in the Agreement and accepted as the National Policy.

Barbados has made significant strides in fulfilling the commitments set out to its National Report. Anti-retroviral medication is available free to all Barbadian residents who meet the medical criteria for treatment. In addition, counseling interventions, including voluntary counseling and testing, supportive counseling and counseling to promote adherence to the antiretroviral medications are provided.

In 2004, the Ministry of Education revised its Health and Family Life Education curriculum to include age-appropriate modules on HIV education for students throughout the school system.

GENDER EQUALITY

Barbados has signed and ratified the International Conventions of CEDAW and Belem do Para. It also has enshrined in its Constitution the right to equality and therefore it continues to support and uphold gender equality.

The Bureau of Gender Affairs has been given a mandate to mainstream gender into all aspects of Government’s programs and policies as well as work in the area of gender sensitization. The Bureau of Gender Affairs in collaboration with National Organization of Women (NOW) has introduced a Gender Sensitization Program in the secondary schools to raise the awareness of students of the importance and implications of gender and hence start the process of creating a society that accepts gender equality as a national goal; to sensitize students about the causes of gender based violence and to introduce the topic of conflict management.

CULTURAL DIVERSITY

Barbados has acceded to a number of International Conventions for the Protection of Cultural Heritage including the World Heritage Convention, and the Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property and is in the process of acceding to the UNIDROIT Convention, the new Underwater Cultural Convention and the Intangible Cultural Heritage Convention. Barbados is in the process of drafting domestic legislation for the protection of its cultural heritage. ■

DEMOCRACY

ELECTORAL PROCESSES AND PROCEDURES: In accordance with Article 90 of the Constitution of Belize, the Elections and Boundaries Department of the Government of Belize has recently completed a redistricting exercise. The purpose of the exercise was to ensure that as populations grow and shift, each electoral division has, as nearly as may be, the same number of registered voters. This exercise was undertaken as a part of the maintenance work that is required to preserve the representativity of each vote. A similar effort was completed in 2002.

In addition to the redistricting exercise, the Elections and Boundaries Department, in collaboration with the University of Belize continued its voter education campaign by holding the 5th Conference in the series "National Dialogue for a Culture of Democracy". The general aim of the conference series is to build awareness pertaining to the participation of the electorate in the registration process, and to remind electors of the importance of people participation in the electoral process and Belize's democracy.

HUMAN RIGHTS

HUMAN RIGHTS OF WOMEN: The Ministry of Human Development through the Women's Department has commenced a nationally executed project to create public awareness on the issues of Family Violence and Gender Inequality. The project coordinated door-to-door campaigns, disseminating information in local communities with the goal of reducing the instances of violence against women. This initiative was part of the activities leading up to the Belize's historical first observance of International Zero Tolerance Day.

JUSTICE

ACCESS TO JUSTICE: The Attorney General's Ministry has created the Legal Information Bureau (LIB) and has opened branch offices in three towns as part of a pilot project jointly funded by the United Nations Development Programme and the Government of Belize. This project was created to improve access to justice through the ready dissemination of accurate legal information.

COMBATING THE DRUG PROBLEM

AMENDMENTS TO THE EVIDENCE ACT: The Government of Belize recently amended the Evidence Act legislation to reform the law relating witnesses testifying in criminal cases. The fight against crime may be undermined by witnesses refusing to testify or going into hiding after being intimidated and threatened by persons associated with accused persons. The Act seeks to ensure that the evidence of witnesses, who have a real and genuine fear of testifying, is admissible in evidence.

ESTABLISHMENT OF THE NATIONAL COAST GUARD SERVICE: Belize has authorized the development of a National Coast Guard Service with full responsibility for law enforcement, resource protection and safety at sea. The Belize National Coast Guard will be an integral force in Belize's efforts to deter narcotics trans-shipments. Belize has joined other Central American countries participating in

the Cooperating Nations Information Exchange System (CNIES), which has resulted in several significant seizures in coordinated interdiction operations, particularly with Guatemala.

TRANSNATIONAL ORGANIZED CRIME

TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS: The Belize National Assembly has passed the Trafficking in Persons (Prohibition) Bill, 2003. The Bill seeks to give effect to and implement the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially women and children, which was adopted to supplement the United Nations Convention against Trans-national Organized Crime.

This Act creates, for the first time in Belizean law, the specific offences of trafficking in persons, as well as the offences of unlawfully withholding a person's identification papers in order to exploit the person, and transporting a person for the purpose of exploiting that person. There are also provisions for the court to order a trafficker to pay restitution to the victims and guidelines to be used by the court to determine the quantum of such restitution.

ANTI-MONEY LAUNDERING, TERRORIST FINANCING AND FRAUD: A two-day seminar on the "Combating of Money Laundering, Terrorist Financing and Fraud" was hosted in Belize by the Office of the Supervisor of Insurance (OSI), Ministry of Finance, in collaboration with the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

A similar group of participants, representing Belize's Insurance Sector attended a seminar to gain understanding of how the insurance agencies can identify money laundering, noting its vulnerability to these criminal activities and how they could prevent or mitigate this problem.

CENTRAL AMERICAN REGIONAL SECURITY FORUM: For the first time Belize participated in a Central American Meeting of Ministers of Home Affairs and Security. During their deliberations, the Ministers discussed issues affecting the region including illicit drug trafficking, border security, domestic violence, human trafficking, stolen vehicles, gang violence and terrorism.

HEMISPHERIC SECURITY

STRENGTHENING MUTUAL CONFIDENCE: Delegations from Belize and Guatemala, met on 25th July, 2005 in Antigua, Guatemala in a new era of Belize-Guatemala relations.

The ministers had a positive exchange of views on a number of topics including a new Agreement on Confidence Building Measures designed to enhance cooperation and foster good neighbourliness and better understanding between the people of both countries in

the Adjacency Zone and on a Framework Agreement for Negotiations to arrive at a solution to the territorial differendum.

TRADE AND INVESTMENT

Belize has ratified the legislation to adopt the Caribbean Court of Justice as Belize's final court of appeal. The Court will be the first of its kind in the world, and will be charged with dealing with cases of international law and with applying the revised Treaty of Chaguaramas, the treaty that established the Caribbean Community (CARICOM).

DISASTER MANAGEMENT

The government continues to strengthen its National Emergency Management Organization (NEMO). Studies conducted by several consultants on Emergency Telecommunication, National/District Emergency structures, Hazard Mitigation Planning, Economic/Infrastructure Assessment and Disaster Emergency Legislation, have been incorporated into Belize's Emergency Plans for Hurricane, Floods, Fires and Oil Spill. The NEMO Secretariat regularly conducts Shelter Inspections in support of and in conjunction with the Hurricane Rehabilitation Project.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT: The Caribbean Regional Environmental Programme, the Toledo Institute for Development and Environment (TIDE) and the Ministry of Natural Resources and the Environment, Commerce and Industry have launched a three-year conservation and development project for the Port Honduras Marine Reserve (PHMR) and Payne's Creek National Park (PCNP), as well as for the surrounding communities of Monkey River, Punta Negra and Punta Gorda.

AGRICULTURE: The new Caribbean Research and Development Institute (CARDI) Belize Headquarters was officially opened in Central Farm, Cayo District, enabling closer ties with other institutes in agricultural development. Belize has benefited from CARDI projects, focusing on citrus, rice, bean, ginger, peanuts, cereal and other crop production, as well as pesticide control.

GROWTH WITH EQUITY

ENABLING ECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT: The Government has established a National Economic Council which brings together members of the Cabinet, the Legislature, the University, senior Public Officers, and representatives of the private sector in an effort to build consensus on public policies and programs to achieve our shared national objectives.

EDUCATION

ENHANCEMENT OF TECHNICAL VOCATIONAL EDUCATION:

The Belize Technical Vocational Education and Training Act of February 2004 regulates the development and delivery of Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET), through the establishment of a National Council whose responsibility is to monitor and provide direction.

A National Apprenticeship Program for persons 16 years and older has been established to provide on-the-job practical and technical training in designated trades.

Instructional programmes in this area are being strengthened through the development of employer driven occupational standards supported by modularized teacher/learning packages for 10 programme areas at three levels. In addition, a system of accrediting technical vocational education and training institutions and programmes is in place.

In addition, national and regional standards for secondary education have been presented to the Ministry of Education. More than 200 teachers in Belize contributed to the construction of the secondary standards, establishing Belize as one of the few countries with such standards at secondary level.

HEALTH

HEALTH SECTOR REFORM: The Ministry of Health is presently undergoing reform aimed at improving its effectiveness and efficiency. The Ministry is focusing its energies on three major areas: Health Reform, Quality Improvement and Caring for its Care Providers.

COMMUNICABLE DISEASES: After more than one year of offering free universal Antiretroviral Therapy against HIV/AIDS and Voluntary Counselling and Testing Services, the National AIDS Programme, Ministry of Health has obtained technical support from the Caribbean Epidemiological Centre (CAREC), Centre for Disease Control and Prevention–Global AIDS Programme (CDC–GAP) and Pan-American Health Organization (PAHO). In collaboration with these partners the Ministry has conducted for the first time, an in-depth and specific Situational Analysis of HIV/AIDS Care and Treatment

in Belize as a part of its National Operation Plan for Comprehensive HIV/AIDS Care and Treatment in Belize.

CULTURAL DIVERSITY

The National Institute of Culture and History (NICH) was recently created by the Government of Belize to bring together diverse government departments, which had historically worked to preserve and promote Belizean culture and to allow for the management of newer endeavours. The Institute is tasked with the preservation of Belize's ancient and historical era monuments and artefacts; the interpretation of Belize's documented, photographic and oral history; and the promotion of contemporary visual, literary and performing arts. Through research and community outreach activities, NICH seeks to help provide access for all to the diverse cultures of Belize.

CHILDREN AND YOUTH: The Prime Minister launched the 'Youth for the Future' initiative. This initiative encapsulates youth leadership and governance, youth enterprise development, youth mentoring and youth volunteering. Youth should also be targeted with initiatives that intervene to reduce crime and violence and the fight against HIV/AIDS.

The initiative is a refocusing, in a very direct way, of policies and resources to address the critical issues related to youth development in Belize. The Youth for the Future Initiative is aimed at coordinating service delivery for at-risk youth in a timely manner and with a rights approach. The initiative envisions collaboration and cooperation with the private sector, non-governmental organizations, religious institutions, civil society and the international community to ensure that Belizean young people are provided the opportunities which they need today to be the leaders and responsible adults of tomorrow.

CONNECTIVITY

Besides a far-reaching twelve-point proposal for developing a "High Tech Belize", one of government's specific goals is to establish "Computer Education Centres" in all districts. The Government of Belize is committed to facilitating the development and coordination of a unified software and hardware infrastructure throughout the national educational establishment. ■

Bolivia

DEMOCRACY

Bolivia, with 23 years of democracy, six consecutive terms of democratically elected governments and with the purpose of promoting and strengthening its institutions, during the current constitutional period determined to hold general elections on December 4, 2005, for the 2006-2011 term; elect a Constituent Assembly in 2006 through Special Law N° 3091 of July 6, 2005; hold elections for departmental governors through Executive Decree N° 28229 of July 6, 2005; and hold a 2006 Referendum on Indigenous Autonomy.

TRANSPARENCY AND ACCESS TO INFORMATION

In the subject of transparency and access to information, the Presidential Office on Anti-corruption has been working on a policy which consists of complying with Executive Order 27329, the Law of Transparency and Access to Government Information. Workshops have been held in all of the major cities across the country to publicize the draft legislation, raise awareness, and obtain input. As a result of this publicity and awareness effort, the suggestions and modifications obtained through a thorough, consensus-based analysis have been incorporated.

EMPOWERING LOCAL GOVERNMENT

In recent years, Bolivia has undertaken a structural reform of its public administration model and has included the enactment of laws such as "Municipal Public Participation" and "National Dialogue," geared toward including men and women from throughout the territory in the political and economic life of the country, without discrimination of any sort. The Law on Citizen Groups and Indigenous Peoples allowed men and women to run for municipal government office through citizen groups or in representation of their people, without requiring political party affiliation.

ELECTORAL PROCESSES AND PROCEDURES

The National Electoral Court played an active role in sharing practices and technology with other entities of the region. A three-year Citizen Education plan (2004-2006) was launched and Electoral Code reform and technical and administrative changes have led to progress in modernizing and simplifying the Electoral Register and voting procedures. The permanent objective has been to encourage the participation of all sectors; therefore, since 2004, a number of campaigns have been carried out to provide identification documents to groups living in remote, rural areas.

HUMAN RIGHTS AND FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS, JUSTICE, RULE OF LAW, AND SECURITY OF THE INDIVIDUAL

The Government of Bolivia is implementing the *"Integral Plan of Action for Citizen Security"* to contribute to the construction of a culture of dialogue and cooperation rather than repression. In this sense, a *Communication Strategy* began and actions are being taken to promote the creation of networks of contacts and to organize the communities themselves for the prevention of citizen insecurity. In the framework of expanding the "Regulatory Development and Strengthening, Public Prosecution, and Administration of Justice Policy," the Ministry of Government, which is responsible for security matters in the country, has been implementing actions to coordinate activities relating to human, civil and political rights.

MIGRATION

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs is working on the links between migrant communities and their places of origin. The objective is to implement the Consular Registration system, which other Latin American countries are using successfully. Additionally, the National Migration Service uses technical systems equipment in the area of migration to harmonize and make more efficient its control. Those measures facilitate integrated border controls and information exchange to enhance regional security in the regional context.

EDUCATION

In education, the Ministry of Education implemented three strategies: the Rural Strategy through Cluster Educational Projects; the Urban Strategy through Network Projects; and the Indigenous Strategy through Indigenous Educational Projects.

POLICIES TO PROMOTE UNIVERSAL ACCESS TO QUALITY BASIC EDUCATION: Bolivia has obtained achievements in the increased primary school coverage; the implementation of the early education curriculum; the introduction of actions to mainstream boys and girls with special needs; the development of intercultural, bilingual education; the inclusion of a gender equity focus as a cross-cutting issue in the primary school curriculum; the development of actions to promote access; and the continuance of keeping girls in rural areas in school.

The strengthening of Bolivian school systems was achieved through the participation of all sectors of society, decentralization, and transparency in school management.

JUSTICE AND RULE OF LAW

In view of the problems associated with limited access to justice,

the Judiciary, through the establishment of the Institutional Reform Project, has set a defined course to ensure that the Judicial Reform solves short, medium, and long term actions to address the problems that have been detected. The judicial reform is premised on "Justice for All," meaning that its goal is to ensure not only independence and balance between the branches of government. Since the entry into force of the New Criminal Procedures Code in May 2001, a procedural reform has been underway to replace the inquisitorial criminal procedures system with an investigatory system; this, in turn, has reduced the time it takes to prosecute criminal cases.

The Bolivian government opened the Center for Citizen Information, Orientation, and Training to bring the government closer to citizens to help familiarize the latter with their rights and responsibilities. It also introduced Integrated Justice Centers which were established to resolve the most common types of conflicts that arise among citizens. The government successfully promoted the principle of equality before the law, alternative conflict resolution, and procedures to streamline the administration of justice and to ensure due process.

ILLEGAL DRUG TRAFFICKING

Bolivia has a national antidrugs strategy that is being implemented through the National Council for the Fight Against Illegal Drug Trafficking (CONALTID). It has ratified the following international conventions in this area:

- + Inter-American Convention against the Manufacturing of and Illicit Trafficking in Firearms, Ammunition, Explosives, and Other Related Materials
- + United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances
- + United Nations Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs

INDIGENOUS PEOPLES, AND CULTURAL DIVERSITY

Bolivia seeks to empower the participation of indigenous peoples in order to establish a dialogue leading to the implementation of pertinent government policy in keeping with the reality. The mission of the Ministry of Indigenous Affairs and First Nations (MAIPO) is to promote, protect, and ensure the rights of indigenous. In this way, Bolivia makes sure that indigenous affairs are a crosscutting issue in public administration, contribute to policy-making and to the design of legislation for the integral development of indigenous peoples and to advance in the construction of an intellectual, democratic and equal state and society.

LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT

The National Employment and Emergency Plan (PLANE) was in its

second phase of implementation from March 2003 to May 2004 with the objective to reduce the impact of reduced income due to loss of employment among the poorest sectors of the country. To this end, three strategies were established: large-scale, temporary job creation in the short term for the poorest urban and rural inhabitants of the country; application of an intermediation system in administration and supervision, as well as among wholesalers; and promotion of the establishment of micro-enterprises by the beneficiary population.

GROWTH WITH EQUITY, TRADE, INVESTMENT, AND FINANCIAL STABILITY

The Bolivian economy grew 3.6% in 2004, its highest growth rate in recent years, and the per capita GDP rose by 1.3%. As a result of a favorable climate of international demand, increases in international price quotations for Bolivia's basic exports, and the efforts of the Bolivian business sector, the country's exports from January to November 2004 reached the record high of US\$2 billion. The share

of public investment executed rose by 17.5% by the third quarter of 2004, and the level of execution grew from 46% in September 2003 to 66% in September 2004. Fiscal policy for 2004 was geared toward containing the deficit and covering the fiscal gap.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND ENVIRONMENT

The implementation of the Ten-Year Basic Reorganization Plan in the period 2003-2004, has served as a guide for the overall development of the sector, inasmuch as it includes the three most significant structural processes such as public participation, decentralization, and the National Compensation Plan.

Public investment was geared toward increasing the coverage of water and sewage services. The integral, regional approach adopted replaced the previous approach of case-specific solutions by settlement size. The objective of this measure is to enhance sustainability and increase the social, economic, and environmental impact of the investment made. ■

Brazil

DECENT JOBS

In its conception and implementation of public policies, Brazil has sought to follow the Millennium Development Goals, the Monterrey Consensus, the commitments arising from the sustainable development conferences (held in Rio and Johannesburg), and the principles established in the Summits of the Americas Process.

Generating decent jobs is the guiding focus of Brazilian government policies. The challenge of generating quality employment involves large subject areas: education, instruction and training, technology and innovation, and health, which have as their vector the growth of productivity and income with a view to sustained, social inclusive growth.

ECONOMIC STABILITY

In that context, primary attention is placed on maintaining responsible, coherent macroeconomic policies and increasing investments in infrastructure and social programs. Important in making those investments viable are the “innovative financial mechanisms,” whether already designed or under study. These fund the pursuit of the millennium goals and, in particular, action to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger, in response to the mandates of the Monterrey Conference on Financing for Development.

In the case of Brazil, the mechanisms include differential accounting for public investments. In February 2005, Brazil reached an agreement with the IMF on differential accounting for pilot public investment projects under the new frame of reference proposed by the Fund in 2004. For 2005, 97 pilot projects (most in the transport sector) were included in that accounting, totalling approximately 3 billion reais. In the 2005-2007 term, projects totalling 9 billion reais should receive that treatment.

The resolution of external constraints—which, at the end of the 1990s, resulted in low rates of increase in production—has significantly spurred growth. The results of Brazilian exports—which, in 2003 and 2004, rose to rates of 22% and 31.5%, respectively—yielded a marked improvement in foreign accounts. Consequently, in 2004, Brazil had a surplus of around 0.82% of the GDP in its current account. In 2005, Brazilian exports continued to break records month after month; this rapid growth is expected to continue.

In the meanwhile, foreign sales, as a proportion of the overall production, still fall short of the country’s export potential. Old distortions in the international market—which affect agribusiness products in particular, though not exclusively—hinder the full realization of the export capacity,

which Brazil's competitive products could guarantee under more equitable market conditions. Therefore, Brazil remains committed to promoting multilateral trade negotiations, particularly with respect to subsidies, anti-dumping measures, liberalization of trade in farm products, tariff peaks and staggered tariffs, differential treatment, and other subjects decisively linked to sustainable development.

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

The *Bolsa Família* program, which aims at maximum access to employment and income opportunities for the poorest levels of the population, is, on the other hand, one of the government policies developed to meet the imperative of growth with equity and inclusion. Part of the *Fome Zero* (Zero Hunger) program, the initiative combines a number of social benefits, with the common goal of increasing school enrollment among poor children by supplementing family income. Disbursements under the *Bolsa Família* program are conditioned upon children's school attendance and regular visits to the health station. The *Bolsa Família* program also includes prenatal exams and nutritional counseling, professional training, and literacy programs for parents. Launched in October 2003, the program serves more than four million families in 5,461 municipalities; this means it covers 98% of the country's municipalities.

The adoption of policies to eradicate racial and gender discrimination, and to encourage young people's entry into the job market, is another important element in promoting equity and inclusion. Recently adopted Brazilian initiatives against gender discrimination include:

- + Creation of the *Dial Women's Health* service;
- + Launching of the National Plan to Prevent, Assist Victims and Fight Violence against Women;
- + Incentives for professional training programs at the *Specialized Police Stations for Women*; and
- + Support to campaigns promoting the rejection and prevention of violence against women.

New economic and social inclusion measures have also been taken for persons of African descent, notably under *the First Job* program and in access to public educational institutions.

Indigenous peoples have also benefited from the success of initiatives in areas like land demarcation. From January to May 2004, for example, 11 new indigenous lands were demarcated, benefiting 5,904 Indians. In parallel fashion, medical and social services were improved, as were access to education and basic sanitation, serving indigenous communities.

As for improving the Rule of Law, the Brazilian government has sought

to intensify and improve the regulation and monitoring activities requested for more efficient promotion of and support to the growth process and concomitant provision of appropriate social protection.

FIGHT AGAINST ORGANIZED CRIME

To fight and suppress organized crime, which often has a transnational dimension, the Unified Public Security System was conceived to coordinate the actions of federal, state, and municipal bodies responsible for maintaining public order and imparting criminal justice. The National System to Integrate Justice and Public Security Data is being broadened and restructured, through the unification of existing databases. These measures made possible large-scale operations that successfully dismantled vast criminal networks involved in smuggling, piracy, drug trafficking, corruption, fraud, electronic crimes, money laundering, illegal arms trafficking, and environmental crimes.

The Department of Asset Recovery and International Legal Cooperation, and an Office of Integrated Management to Prevent and Fight Money Laundering were created to more effectively fight money laundering—a key factor in dismantling organized crime.

PUBLIC HEALTH

Effective in the health area—also essential to the Brazilian social inclusion project—has been the Program to Fight Sexual Transmitted Diseases (STD/AIDS), which continued its notable success in preventing these diseases and, especially, in treating carriers of HIV and AIDS. Among the measures undertaken was the incentive to 411 municipalities, with transfers of financial resources—fund to fund—for activities to fight HIV/AIDS and other STDs. By October 2004, 138.3 million male condoms and 1.6 million female condoms had been distributed. In addition, 170,000 people who applied for STD and/or HIV/AIDS services received assistance. By September 2004, 152,000 people living with HIV/AIDS were receiving cost-free anti-retroviral treatment. This treatment was provided to nearly 132,000 people in 2003 and nearly 119,000 in 2002.

The Brazilian Government's success in fighting HIV/AIDS has been recognized by various international organizations and forums. During the high-level meeting at the special session of the United Nations General Assembly on AIDS, the UN Secretary General again cited the Brazilian HIV/AIDS prevention program as a model. The Brazilian experience has been transmitted to other countries under various cooperation initiatives.

In short, the Brazilian Government has sought to encourage sustained growth, with social inclusion and the generation of decent work, as a way to achieve development with social justice and, therefore, the continual strengthening of democratic governance. ■



Canada

MAKING DEMOCRACY WORK BETTER

EMPOWERING LOCAL GOVERNMENTS: In Haiti, Canada contributed \$5 million¹ to strengthen development and local governance in the Commune of Marmelade through agro-forestry activity, agricultural marketing and the development of watersheds. The purpose of the project is to increase and diversify agricultural production, identify new markets and apply soil conservation techniques. Canada also contributed \$3.65 million to improve living conditions in the four communes of Haiti's Northeast Department and thereby increase the sustainability of the process by continuing to build the capacities of local stakeholders in the areas of participatory planning, applying good governance practices, restoration, validating the environment in production areas, economic diversification and improving basic infrastructure.

INCREASED EFFICIENCY IN PUBLIC AID: Canada contributed resources to help reduce poverty in Haiti by increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of official development assistance allocated to Haiti under the jurisdictions of local funds.

HUMAN RIGHTS AND FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS

INTERNATIONAL OBLIGATIONS AND STANDARDS: In Bolivia, Canada contributed \$5 million in the area of human rights through the Ombudsman's Office. In addition, the Quebec City Plan of Action encourages all countries in the Hemisphere to consider signing and ratifying the Inter-American Convention Against the Illicit Manufacturing and Trafficking of Illegal Firearms, Munitions and Other Related Materials (CIFTA). Canada is not yet compliant with all measures contained within the CIFTA convention, but has made significant progress in addressing CIFTA compliance in the last year.

MIGRATION: Canada co-funded production of a print and electronic training module on the essentials of migration management by the International Organization for Migration (IOM), for widespread use as a learning tool for officials and other stakeholders throughout the Hemisphere and globally. Canada has participated actively in several conferences and seminars on this subject.

HUMAN RIGHTS OF MARGINALIZED PEOPLE: Canada provided a contribution of US \$50,000 to the Colombian Center for International Rehabilitation (CIREC), Seeds of Hope Project (Phase II). The Seeds of Hope project also disseminates information on the Ottawa Convention, its implementation both in Colombia and at the international level, as well as mine action awareness and accident prevention, targeted primarily at children.

HUMAN RIGHTS OF WOMEN: Canada approved funding of \$5 million (2005-2010) and \$1 million (2005-2008) to help combat violence against aboriginal women. Canada also began spending \$700,000 over the next year on two other initiatives to help reduce violence against aboriginal women. The purpose is to undertake research to assess the extent and causes of racial and sexualized violence against aboriginal (First Nations, Inuit and Métis) women in Canada; and to monitor trends; engage in public education initiatives to increase knowledge

¹ Figures are given in Canadian Dollars

and understanding of the problem; and inform policy direction and development.

JUSTICE, RULE OF LAW AND SECURITY OF INDIVIDUALS

INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT: Canada provided support to the Jamaican Defense Force as well as the National Police Force of Peru and the training for Guatemalan officials in the area of crime scene investigation.

PREVENTION OF CRIME: Canada also worked closely with numerous OAS Member States to secure the inclusion of crime prevention as a component of a sound criminal justice system (and its rightful place in the work of the UN Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice across a range of issues, including: youth justice, victims, trafficking in persons) in the Bangkok Declaration, in particular a reference urging implementation of prevention strategies in line with the UN Guidelines on Crime Prevention (2002).

TRANSNATIONAL ORGANIZED CRIME: Canada continued to support efforts in respect to the prevention of trafficking in persons by way of providing financial funding to a follow-up conference of a cross-sectoral Regional Roundtable on Trafficking in Persons.

COMBATING THE DRUG PROBLEM: Canada demonstrated its commitment to the Inter-American Commission for the Control of Drug Abuse (CICAD) by increasing by 40% its annual financial contribution for 2004 and 2005, where a significant portion is directed at funding projects and activities related to CICAD's Multilateral Evaluation Mechanism (MEM) process and assisting CICAD members in implementing MEM recommendations.

HEMISPHERIC SECURITY

INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT TO COMBAT ILLEGAL ARMS

TRAFFICKING: Canada provided support to a seminar on the proliferation and illegal trafficking of small arms and light weapons that focused on OAS initiatives to enhance hemispheric security through the management of weapons arsenals and the collection, identification and destruction of small arms and light weapons.

FIGHT AGAINST TERRORISM: Canada is an active participant in the work of the Inter-American Committee against Terrorism (CICTE), working closely with the CICTE Secretariat to encourage cooperation and to provide further training and other assistance to our hemispheric partners, including for emergency response to terrorist attacks. Canada also continues to play a leading role in the development of the hemispheric cyber security strategy.

INFRASTRUCTURE AND REGULATORY ENVIRONMENT

TRANSPORT: Canada has created and encouraged the development of the Western Hemisphere Transportation Data System (WHTDS), begun working towards the establishment of a Dangerous Goods Working Group, and chaired the Group of Experts on Aviation Safety and Security (GEASA). The GEASA is comprised of senior aviation safety and security officials, brought together to study the safety and security needs of the Western Hemisphere, prioritize safety and security initiatives and deal with funding and implementation issues.

TELECOMMUNICATIONS: Canada has actively supported the Institute for Connectivity in the Americas, which develops programs throughout the Americas.

DISASTER MANAGEMENT

Canada's Joint Emergency Preparedness Program (JEPP) supports capacity building for emergency preparedness at the provincial/territorial and municipal levels. Revisions to the JEPP took effect in November 2004 and continue to allow for cost sharing of Critical Infrastructure Protection projects with the Provinces and Territories. The initial projects funded focused on building partnerships and knowledge sharing between owners of critical infrastructure in the provinces.

HEALTH: Through the Guyana Flood Recovery Project, Canada allocated \$2.7 million to help the stricken communities of Guyana recover from the floods that occurred between December 2004 and February 2005. The recovery efforts include: assisting the Government of Guyana to undertake urgent repair work on their drainage and irrigation system, and helping restore the livelihoods and health conditions of the population in the affected areas.

ENVIRONMENTAL FOUNDATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

MULTILATERAL COOPERATION ON REGULATORY MEASURES:

The 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) encouraged countries to implement the Globally Harmonized System for Classification and Labeling of Chemicals (GHS) as soon as possible, with a view to having the system fully operational by 2008. Canada is currently consulting with stakeholders on recommendations for implementing the GHS.

NATURAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT AND SOCIAL

DEVELOPMENT: Canada has helped communities of El Salvador by ensuring that they receive a potable water supply free from contaminants such as arsenic and heavy metals. Canada has also committed \$10 million over 8 years to improve quality of life and

economic well being of residents of the semi-arid northern highlands of Nicaragua through improved management and use of water.

NATURAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT AND GOOD GOVERNANCE: Canada is providing funds to several projects in Costa Rica.

AGRICULTURE MANAGEMENT AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Canada has contributed to projects in Paraguay and Haiti by promoting models that provide improved management of natural resources through agricultural marketing and the capacity-building of local stakeholders to initiate and manage local development programs in a participatory and democratic manner.

Canada committed funds to projects aimed at supporting the reduction of rural poverty in Nicaragua and Guatemala, by improving the ability of vulnerable groups to expand their productive activities and by improving access to basic services, such as water, sanitation and education.

LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT

Canada supported several labor-related cooperative and technical assistance projects in Central America, the Dominican Republic, Costa Rica, and the English- and Dutch-speaking Caribbean and activities to strengthen occupational safety and health (OSH) in Central America, Belize, and the Dominican Republic.

HEALTH

Canada provided funds for a project supported by the Pan American Health Organization on long-term care for senior citizens with a loss of autonomy, involving Canada, Argentina, Uruguay and Chile.

The Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC) is the first international treaty negotiated under the auspices of the World Health Organization (WHO), which sets out minimum standards for domestic tobacco control initiatives, and provides a framework

for international co-operation. The legislative and regulatory framework from Canada's approach, along with Canada's extensive experience in tobacco control programming, inspired much of the design of the FCTC.

Likewise, Canada contributed funds to cover the costs of activities involving consultation, logistics and the services of technical experts necessary to develop a trilateral initiative among Canada, Brazil and Haiti to meet fundamental human needs in terms of health care for target populations and groups in Haiti through cooperation with the Brazilian government.

INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

Canada contributed funds for Phase II of a project aimed at promoting the integration of members of Bolivia's indigenous population into the armed forces and an education campaign focused on equitable and responsible citizenship in the military.

CHILDREN AND YOUTH

Canada worked in close collaboration with other donors to support Nicaragua's national basic education sector plan within the context of the Education for All Initiative. Canada's contribution will provide essential incremental resources for the Government of Nicaragua to use increasing access to, and quality of early childhood, primary and junior secondary schooling, and in improving governance. Canada has also contributed in support of a 3-year project in Argentina to provide youth with training in information technologies, management skills, and job skills applicable to the tourist industry.

CONFLICT RESOLUTION FOR ADOLESCENTS: Canada supported the Conflict Resolution for Adolescents II initiative supported by Foster Parents Plan and Canada. The goal of this project is to promote increased awareness among youth, teachers, and parents of peace-building concepts and methodologies and to improve the Colombian capacity to progress towards peace building while addressing some of the key causes and intensifiers of violence among adolescents. ■

DEMOCRACY

The Government of Chile has promoted the State Modernization and Reform Project premised on the principles of transparency, efficiency, equity, and participation as the basis for a functioning democratic state. This has included forging ahead with the implementation of electronic government, the modernization of public administration, encouraging civil society participation, simplifying administrative procedures, and strengthening regional governments. Initiatives in the area of transparency and probity include: the enactment of the Probity Law to ensure that public ethics prevail in State administration and the New Public Treatment Law that includes significant advances in the modernization and professionalization of public management. The National Civil Service Directorate was also established to develop and implement personnel policies including initiatives to modernize central administration. Other initiatives aim to enhance the transparency of electoral processes and campaign financing.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Chile abides by its relevant international obligations in this area and supports the strengthening of human rights systems in the Inter-American and United Nations spheres. International treaties on the rights of women, children and adolescents, and those relating to freedom of thought and expression have been ratified and incorporated into domestic law. Nondiscrimination and the gender perspective are part of public policy and have been incorporated into budget instruments by the Ministry of the Treasury, where progress toward gender equity in the workplace is tied to an across-the-board financial incentive in public administration.

HEMISPHERIC SECURITY

Chile participates actively in mechanisms for transparency and the development of mutual confidence measures, as well as in the struggle against drugs and terrorism. Important mechanisms to strengthen mutual confidence include: structures for bilateral political coordination with the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Defense of Argentina and Peru; joint exercises with the Armed Forces of several countries; the development of a standardized methodology to measure defense expenditures, which has already been established with Argentina and is in process in Peru; the second addition of the Defense White Paper; Chile's periodic reports to the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms and the United Nations Standardized Reporting Instrument for Military Expenditures; and Chile's periodic reports to the OAS Inventory of Confidence- and Security-building Measures.

The Interior Ministry's National Council for Narcotics Control (CONACE) developed a National Antidrug Strategy (2003-2008) whose priorities include demand reduction and drug use prevention programs in the school system and the workplace. CONACE also participates in CICAD's Multilateral Evaluation Mechanism (MEM) and its Program to estimate the social, human, and economic costs of the drug problem. Chile also participates in the IDB – CICAD/OAS project for the implementation of Financial Analysis/Intelligence Units to combat transnational organized crime and to detect money laundering offenses.

GOVERNMENT IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

Government improvement has been accomplished through judicial, education, and health sector reforms. The Criminal Procedures Reform has transformed the Chilean justice system into a more efficient and expeditious service that genuinely upholds the rights of the victims and the accused.

In another area, the Public Ministry was created; its prosecutors are responsible for public criminal investigation and prosecution, while the task of judging cases is left to the judges. Education reform has modernized the infrastructure of educational establishments, extended the school day, and modified the curriculum. This has been accompanied by initiatives to encourage English language study and digital literacy. Health sector reform has included the launching of a System of Universal Access with Explicit Guarantees (AUGE); this system ensures service accessibility, timeliness, and quality, and financial coverage for all beneficiaries of the public and private health system.

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Social policies have a strong impact on the quality of life of citizens and have targeted the most vulnerable groups such as those living in situations of poverty and indigence, indigenous groups, and migrant populations. Through various initiatives, it has been possible to reduce the percentage of the population living in conditions of poverty from 38.6% of the total population in 1990 to 18.8% in 2004. Indigence has been reduced from 12.9% that same year to 4.7% today. One of the programs that has had a positive impact on poverty reduction is the Social Protection System Chile Solidario. This program incorporates 225,073 families into the government's Social Protection Network, thereby ensuring their access to subsidies, funds, and programs that enable them to reverse chronic vulnerability and precarious conditions.

INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

The New Treatment of Indigenous Peoples Policy (2004-2010) has established as its main objectives the recognition of the rights of indigenous peoples and their development in keeping with their own identity. It seeks to improve the administration of natural resources and sustainable development and the management of the Indigenous Lands and Waters Fund and the Indigenous Development Fund.

TRADE

The country is known for its policy of open regionalism. Chile has trade agreements with the United States, Korea, Canada,

the European Union, Central America, EFTA, and Mexico, and has concluded negotiations with New Zealand, Brunei, and Singapore. It has signed Economic Complementarity Agreements (ACE) with Argentina, Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, MERCOSUR, Peru, and Venezuela, in addition to numerous Agreements on the Promotion and Protection of Investments (APPI), agreements to avoid double taxation, and bilateral aero-commercial agreements. Chile has been involved in the negotiation process of the Free Trade Agreement of the Americas (FTAA) from the outset, due to the opportunities for growth and improved trade flows it would entail for the region. Chile is willing to continue to work toward consensus-building and reconciling of positions in order to achieve an FTAA that covers all the issues and one in which all countries participate.

Special attention has been paid to small and medium-sized enterprises, recognizing their capacity to create jobs and the importance of providing them with more support in marketing their products and services, entering new markets, and technology transfer. In the same vein, the Ministry of Agriculture has targeted its public policies toward small and medium-sized farms, mainly to address factors that limit the ability of such operations to develop and adapt.

ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

As for the environment and natural resource management, Chile ratified the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Kyoto Protocol. In 2001, Chile presented the First National Communication where it reports that the country contributes less than 0.2% of total emissions on the planet.

In the area of Civil Protection, the Ministry of the Interior's National Emergency Office conducts citizen information and prevention activities and involves the public in civil protection programs in emergency and disaster situations.

JUDICIAL REFORMS

The Criminal Procedures Reform separates the functions of investigation and judgment so that the Public Ministry, through its prosecutors is tasked with public criminal prosecutions, while the judges perform their jurisdictional functions. Because of this reform, criminal trials are speedier and more transparent and society is represented by the prosecutors of the Public Ministry, who must safeguard and protect the victims as well as guide police actions.

The new justice system concluded its progressive installation process throughout the country on June 16, 2005. It required an investment of nearly US\$590 million in infrastructure, technology, human resources, and training. The Public Criminal Justice System comprises 7,500 professionals and officials working exclusively for

the system and has increased by 400% its staff working on criminal prosecutions. Chile's Criminal Procedures Reform is the expression of its will to implement the principles of legality and due process guarantees, to uphold the principle of presumed innocence as the main constraint on the punitive power of the State and to protect individuals from the small everyday violations of their rights due to lack of timeliness, publicity, the submission and development of evidence at trial, and an adequate defense in criminal proceedings.

EDUCATION

Chile achieved 97% primary school coverage and 87% enrolment in secondary school in 2002. It has therefore focused its efforts on improving the quality of education. The constitutional reform approved in 2003 guaranteed mandatory, free middle school education up to 21 years of age, thereby raising to ten years the national average length of schooling. The initiatives undertaken to accomplish this included: the Complete Schooling Plan, the Complete School Day law, and the Teacher Evaluation System.

Other Ministry of Education campaigns to improve the quality of education and offer better opportunities in a globalized world are: Reading, Writing and Mathematics (LEM), National Digital Literacy, "English Opens Doors," and "Chile Keeps Learning: Lifelong Education and Training" (2002-2008).

HEALTH

The System of Universal Access with Explicit Guarantees (AUGE) installs a Health Guarantees Regime ensuring access, timeliness, quality, and financial coverage for all beneficiaries of the public and private system. The care priorities that were initially established were based on the health objectives set forth by the Ministry of Health (2000-2010), which include the Millennium Goals and the mandates of the Summits of the Americas.

Birth and death rates have declined over the past 20 years and this has modified the size and distribution of different age groups. At the same time, the rates of infant mortality and mortality of children 1 - 4 years of age have declined steadily due to social policies and programs targeting children under six. The main actions undertaken in this area are: the equipping of neonatology units, the regionalization of neonatal care, the National Program for the Use of Surfactant, the installation of polyclinics, and the National Program for the Use of Indometacine. The Ministry of Health has also launched mass vaccination and measles monitoring programs; the National Complementary Food Program (PNAC) for the free food distribution to children and pregnant women, and the Winter

Campaign for the Prevention and Control of Acute Respiratory Infections.

The maternal mortality rate is 2 per 10,000 live births. This reduction is attributable to the impact of the maternal health program as well as to family planning programs that have reduced the number of unwanted pregnancies. The Government Proposal on Responsible Sexuality to reduce the risks associated with unplanned adolescent pregnancies is an intersectorial collaboration among the Ministries of Education and Health, the National Women's Service, and the National Institute for Youth.

With respect to communicable diseases, 3,494 people had died of AIDS as of 2002. Currently 100% of Public Health System beneficiaries have access to TARV (triple therapy). The annual HIV-AIDS prevention campaign targets the general population, and is complemented by other campaigns for adolescents to provide them with information, education, and sexual and reproductive health services.

The priority health problems associated with non-communicable diseases are those of a chronic and degenerative nature (cancer) and those associated with contemporary lifestyles (cardiovascular disease and mental health problems). Therefore, the Ministry of Health has concentrated on addressing the main risk factors: tobacco, hypertension, high cholesterol, and obesity.

OVERCOMING POVERTY

The "Chile Solidario" system coordinates government transfers, subsidies, funds, and programs targeting families living in extreme poverty. The system is based on equalizing basic skill levels so that people can overcome conditions of chronic vulnerability and precariousness; society's commitment to guaranteeing social, economic, and cultural rights; the promotion of equity through the creation of conditions and mechanisms for redistribution; empowering the family as the nucleus of development; and local development and citizen participation as the social and institutional spaces closest to the target population. All of this occurs in the framework of an integral intervention strategy carried out through the various government institutions and activities.

Chile Solidario is operating in 332 population centers in the country with 148,063 families. A total of 19,025 families have already achieved the goal of exiting the program after 24 months of intervention; 75.6% of these families have successfully achieved the 53 minimum standard of living conditions necessary to surmount their situation of extreme poverty. ■

Colombia

GROWTH WITH EQUITY

Real annual economic growth rose from 1.9% in 2002 to 4% en 2003-2004; inflation declined from 7% in 2002 to 5.5% in 2004; urban unemployment fell from 17.6% at the end of 2002 to 15.4% at the close of 2004, and the current account deficit was at approximately 1% of the GDP in 2004. During the first quarter of the year, the Colombian economy experienced a private sector-driven annual growth rate of 5.82%. This growth was mainly attributable to domestic demand spurred by low interest rates, by the wealth effect produced by rising stock prices, and by improvements in the terms of trade observed during this period.

Significantly, unemployment rates have declined noticeably. Between January 2004 and mid year, 418,000 new jobs were created and the employment rate rose by two tenths. At the same time, underemployment fell from 31.0% to 28.2%. The national government granted 91,995 unemployment subsidies between January 2003 and January 2005.

Colombia has worked to improve the investment climate, guaranteeing stability through a clear regulatory framework conducive to legal stability. To this end, Law 963 of 2005 on Legal Stability for Investors in Colombia was enacted.

As for the opening up of markets, the country currently is making preparations in view of the prospect of signing a Free Trade Agreement (FTA) with the United States and Andean countries in order to maintain macroeconomic and fiscal conditions that are increasingly stable and conducive to growth.

MICRO AND SMALL ENTERPRISES

The main priority of micro credit, training and procedure simplification programs is to formalize and consolidate micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises.

As of mid 2005, 707 micro credits had been granted with a total value of US \$4.5 million. Moreover, 21,591 training courses have been imparted on various subjects, at a cost of US\$ 8.6 million; these courses are designed to impart skills to unemployed individuals who also are beneficiaries of unemployment subsidies, for a total of 41,821 beneficiaries.

It is important to mention the Procedures Simplification Program for the business sector, which is conducted by the Multilateral Investment Fund of the IDB in conjunction with the mayors' offices of Barranquilla, Bogotá, Bucaramanga, Cali, Cartagena, and Medellín, and the Chambers of Commerce; through this program, it is possible to establish a company meeting the goal of one day, one step, one contact, one place, one single requirement, and a minimum cost.

EDUCATION

The National Government's Education Revolution policies include two strategies for creating 1.5 million new classroom slots during the four year period: 1) the reorganization of the sector, and 2) resource allocation targeting the vulnerable population. Significantly, the Colombian government has worked on the application of new pedagogical methods and educational models such as New School, and Rural Post-Primary. The cumulative progress made between 2003 and 2004 is 734,413 new slots, of which 147,321 correspond to vulnerable groups

(rural population, those displaced by the conflict, indigenous population, and special needs groups). Nonetheless, 300,000 (75%) of the 400,000 new slots included in the 2005 goal are slated for vulnerable groups. Policies relating to quality have accompanied these school coverage policies. In the past two years of this administration, literacy training has been imparted to 152,645.

In 2004, the Colombian Institute for the Development of Science and Technology, (Colciencias) increased its total budget by 10% in real terms relative to the preceding year and is currently planning for a level of investment in 2006 that will represent at least 0.6% of the GDP, through increased private sector participation.

SOCIAL SECURITY

Colombia has sought to reinforce promotion, prevention, control, and treatment programs, and to strengthen technical cooperation strategies to eliminate emerging and reemerging diseases. In 2004, the rate of endemic diseases in different areas of the country, such as malaria, fell by 40%.

Some of the most noteworthy accomplishments were: the development of programs to improve vaccination coverage; the implementation of plans to reduce the risk of urbanization of yellow fever in the country by reducing environmental risks; the enormous efforts made to control tuberculosis; and the consolidation of the goal of eliminating leprosy, with a prevalence rate of 0.36 cases per 10,000 inhabitants.

The Government is making efforts to increase access to health services with a view toward universal service provision. Specifically, the subsidized system had a membership of 11,867,947 in 2003; coverage has been increased by 1,091,546 (or 9%) for a current total membership of 12,959,493.

DEMOCRACY

Democracy has become enormously revitalized over time due to the security enjoyed by citizens. Three years ago, 34,800 candidates participated in the elections for governors, deputies, and council members. That number doubled last year. Nearly 76,000 candidates ran without incident and voter turnout was broad and substantial throughout Colombian territory.

The main activities and achievements of the Presidential Program on Modernization, Efficiency, Transparency, and the Fight against Corruption for the period from July 2004 to July 2005 are grouped into four categories: (i) Developing a government anti-corruption policy; (ii) Regional strategy; (iii) Promoting a culture of legality; and (iv) inter-institutional coordination.

As for Colombia's outcomes in controlling corruption, since 1996, the World Bank has been conducting a study on governance in 209 countries. Based on the most recent measurements taken in 2002, we can assert that Colombia improved its performance in five of the six indicators evaluated. The most significant improvement was in the area of controlling corruption. In 2004, Colombia received its best rating yet, ranking higher than 52.2% of the countries surveyed and exceeding the Latin American average.

SECURITY

Colombia continues to implement its Democratic Security Policy, which aims to reinforce and guarantee the Rule of Law throughout the national territory by strengthening democratic security. This includes the free exercise of institutional authority, the primacy of the law, and active citizen participation in matters of common interest. The policy is premised on the conviction that strengthening the Rule of Law is a prerequisite for protecting the human rights of each and every inhabitant in the country.

A couple of years ago, government security forces were not present in 180 municipalities. Today, there is a police station in every one. At that time, mayors were under threat in 416 municipalities and half of them were working from locations outside their offices. Today they are all back in their own offices.

The effectiveness of this policy was reflected in a 15% decrease in homicides in 2004, and the lowest homicide rate in the past ten years, with 44 homicides per 100,000 inhabitants. Massacres were reduced by 52% and the number of victims by 49%; kidnappings dropped by 35% and forced displacement by 37%. Due to government sponsored protection programs, in 2004, the murder of trade union representatives decreased by 52%, the murder of indigenous people by 60% and of journalists and council members by 57% and 76% respectively. Terrorist acts, which include incidents involving the indiscriminate use of explosive devices, decreased by 44% relative to the preceding year.

HUMAN RIGHTS

The outcomes of the Democratic Security policy have contributed in a significant and sustained manner to improving the human rights situation in the country. In 2004, the Project to Fight against Impunity for Serious Human Rights Violations worked on the design of an interinstitutional management and coordination system with two objectives: 1- To promote and follow up on a set number of investigations of serious human rights and international humanitarian law violations. 2- To design and implement a public policy that puts into action the Colombian government's strategy

in the struggle against impunity for violations of human rights and International Humanitarian Law, thereby strengthening the Rule of Law in society.

ILLEGAL DRUGS

Colombia continues to produce significant operational outcomes in the area of dismantling drug trafficking networks. In 2004, 65,827 people were arrested (65,731 Colombian nationals and 96 foreigners) for the crime of drug trafficking. Maritime, river, air, and land interdiction produced substantial, high impact results, leading to the destruction of laboratories and the seizure of large quantities of illicit drugs and chemicals. In effect, some 1,926 drugs and chemical processing laboratories were dismantled. Approximately 145,000 kilos of cocaine derivatives, 772 kilos of opiate derivatives, and 155,000 kilos of pressed marihuana were seized. In addition, 2,274,000 kilos and 1,215,000 gallons of chemicals were seized. In 2004, 6,000 fewer hectares were detected compared to the 86,000 identified in 2003; this figure, added to the accomplishments for the 2001-2003 period translates into an overall reduction of 50%.

The fight against drug trafficking falls within the struggle against terrorism. In this regard, the Democratic Security Policy identifies terrorism as a serious threat facing the Colombian state and works unrelentingly against it. Colombia regards terrorism as the primary method employed by illegal armed groups to destabilize its democracy. Its antiterrorism strategy includes adapting domestic law, developing interinstitutional coordination mechanisms,

strengthening intelligence-gathering capability to prevent terrorist acts and interrupt terrorist networks and support structures, the creation of rapid response forces, and active citizen cooperation.

Colombia also promotes the implementation of existing international agreements on terrorism and the adoption of those to which Colombia is not yet party.

CONNECTIVITY

Colombia adopted the Agenda for Connectivity in 2000. The aim of this policy is to promote the mass use of information technologies to improve the productive sector competitiveness, modernize government agencies, and expand access to information. With regard to the Rural Community Telephone Service, 13,000 telephones were installed at 10,000 community access points via satellite in rural areas. The Social Internet Program Phases I and II facilitated the installation of 1,440 telecenters in municipal seats with populations under 10,000 and provided local Internet access to 40 cities of over 30,000 people. In phase III of the project, 500 telecenters were installed. The Wideband Connectivity Project provides connectivity via satellite to 3,000 educational institutions, 624 municipal mayors' offices, 120 hospitals, and 30 military garrisons.

Through the use of Government on Line, all national, departmental, and municipal entities strive to serve the public transparently and provide opportunities for citizens to voice their opinions and monitor community matters and resources. The Internet is available in 40% of municipal public order agencies, representing an 80% increase. ■

Costa Rica

At the Special Summit of the Americas held in Monterrey, Mexico, the discussion of the Heads of State and Government was guided by the need to work together to bring about prosperity and promote social inclusion and a more equitable distribution of economic growth.

The Heads of State and Government pledged to put an end to hunger and raise the standard of living, create new opportunities for employment and investment, promote decent jobs, and confront new threats to security such as, for example, terrorism, organized crime, and illegal weapons trafficking.

The Monterrey Summit reaffirmed the commitment to the Inter-American Democratic Charter and reiterated the unwavering intention to continue to implement the mandates of the Summits of the Americas as well as the commitments assumed in the Millennium Summit, the International Conference on Financing for Development (Consensus of Monterrey), and the World Summit on Sustainable Development held in Johannesburg, South Africa.

Costa Rica supported the work of the Inter-American Development Bank in the implementation of programs to help strengthen different sectors of the country, thereby stimulating more growth and promoting nascent companies.

In this context, after the signing of the Declaration of Nuevo León, Costa Rica has defined its priority areas as social development and reducing inequality of opportunity, both essential for the evolution of our population, and the fight against poverty, education, and the formation of human capital.

EDUCATION

The Government of Costa Rica is convinced that education is the cornerstone that provides opportunities for all Costa Ricans to have access to a better quality of life. This belief is reflected in broad primary school coverage, which has remained steady over the past two years.

Therefore, our efforts have been concentrated mainly on improving the continuity between primary and secondary school. This is reflected in the gross rate of secondary school education, which increased from 75% in 2002 to 84% in 2004.

Costa Rica believes that its government authorities have been successful in improving opportunities for Costa Rican young people. In this regard, secondary schooling increased from 75.4% in 2002 to 84% in 2004, the highest percentage attained in recent years.

Similarly, it is implementing a program to directly combat school dropout, which is based on actions relating to equity and solidarity to reduce the social and economic causes underlying this phenomenon.

As part of the actions implemented by the Government of Costa Rica during the 2004 academic year, over 530,000 students were served in school cafeterias, at a cost of over 8.5 billion colones.

In addition, there is a bonds-for-education program in place that reached nearly 60,000 students in 2004 and the value of the bond was raised from 10,000 colones to 13,000 colones per student.

As part of its ongoing quest for greater equality for its civil society, Costa Rica offers free student transportation and subsidized fuel and fares for students with disabilities.

HEALTH

The Government of Costa Rica believes that public health care is a critical aspect of the war on poverty. It therefore guarantees the entire population free access to the means to satisfy its basic healthcare needs.

It is worthwhile to recall that a healthy population is a productive and competitive population. In pursuit of this goal, then, the Government of Costa Rica and the Costa Rican Social Security Fund have stepped up their efforts in the areas of health promotion, prevention, and treatment of diseases.

It is important to recognize the enormous efforts made by the Costa Rican Social Security Fund and the Ministry of Health to reduce infant mortality, which dropped to 9.25 per 1,000 live births in 2004; this is the lowest infant mortality rate in the history of Costa Rican medicine.

The decision has been made to further reduce the maternal mortality rate, which was 3.6 per 10,000 births in 2004, even though it is one of the lowest rates in Latin America. Today 99.5% of births are attended to in hospitals pertaining to the Costa Rican Social Security Fund. Moreover, 97% of infant girls and boys receive the "screening" test; this is a medical test for the early detection of an infant's predisposition to over seventeen different congenital diseases.

Another goal achieved by the Costa Rican government in recent years has been increased life expectancy at birth, which grew steadily over the past three years and reached an average of 78.7 years in 2004.

SECURITY

Social wellbeing must include the right of each person to life, personal integrity, defense of his or her property, and personal tranquility; this type of security is something that all states must defend and ensure for their citizens.

Taking an innovative approach to integral security and citizen participation, the Costa Rican government has consolidated several important programs to protect individuals, prevent and prosecute crime, and effectively punish criminals.

From the standpoint of security, the national government has consolidated the institution of proximity and community policing, the professionalization of the police forces, police training in prevention of domestic and gender violence, and has waged a direct war on corruption and the sexual exploitation of minors. These policies have made it possible to engage in a battle that, despite the unequal circumstances, has demonstrably put a stop to impunity.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION

Throughout its history, Costa Rica has been characterized by its struggle to conserve nature; based on a discourse of peace in search of an ecological balance, it has worked to design and set into motion an environmentally sustainable economic and social model. Today, environmental sustainability has become, and must continue to be, a crosscutting issue in public management.

Among the main initiatives of the current administration has been the prohibition on using exotic or endangered animals in public shows; such measures have been taken in order to discourage the capture, captivity, and exploitation of wild animals.

In addition, over 9 billion colones have been allocated to the payment for environmental services program and to fund reforestation programs. Similarly, more than 126,000 hectares of forests are protected under various payment-for-service systems. Of this total, 22,000 hectares are located on indigenous reserves, where payment-for-services has become the primary source of direct income for the aboriginal communities.

Costa Rica has spoken out at international forums in favor of payment of a fair price for goods and services produced in an environmentally-friendly manner, in order to recognize the producer's efforts and investment in producing without damaging the surrounding environment.

The Costa Rican government's efforts on behalf of the approval and implementation of the draft constitutional reform creating environmental safeguards is just one more example of the Costa Rican government and people's interest in conserving and preserving the environment in our country, by supporting projects that ensure this in our laws and, most importantly, in our Constitution.

Costa Rica believes that poverty and inequality go hand in hand and that the quest for greater political and economic stability in the societies of the region are clear and well-defined objectives since, in a system of government of the people and for the people, the actions taken must benefit all citizens. For this reason, one of the great challenges for the societies of the Americas is to combat poverty and social inequality, the evils that lie in wait to ambush them and submerge them in a state of misery and underdevelopment.

Improving domestic democratic processes is key to accomplishing the proposed tasks. Government reforms should respond to the diverse realities present in the region. The implementation of effective mechanisms for citizen participation and accountability for the purpose of creating solid foundations for stability and social cohesion are the cornerstones of growth and the economic development of the people. ■



Dominica

EDUCATION

At the Quebec Summit, education took a central role. There was also a commitment made at this and other summits, to pursue the goal to foster equity, improve and maintain quality and relevance of education. Pursuant to the foregoing, the Government of Dominica through its Ministry of Education is committed to achieving the goals as outlined in these Summit mandates.

Since 1996, Dominica has embarked upon a policy of Universal Secondary Education (USE) in which it is hoped that by 2005, all eligible students will be enrolled in secondary schools. This policy has resulted in the expansion of secondary school places particularly in rural areas, which were previously underserved. This also included areas of the indigenous Carib population whose enrolment in secondary schools has increased from 11% in 1996 to 89.8% in 2004. The transition rate from primary to secondary in 2004 was 90% up from 45% in 1995.

While a school for the hearing impaired exists, the challenge has been getting them into the mainstream school system and extending their education beyond the primary level. Results indicate that they have tremendous potential and that there is the need to expand access to all students. The provision of education for the blind is not existent and that for the severely mentally challenged is provided by non-government agencies with assistance from government.

Several initiatives have been designed and implemented to improve the representation of boys in schools by improving their performance. These include curriculum differentiation, action research training for teachers, and assisting in identifying and responding to their needs.

Boys continue to be under-represented at secondary schools even though a higher proportion of boys are enrolled in primary schools. This is because girls outperform boys on all national examinations and therefore gain access to secondary school where there are limited spaces. The policy of USE is increasing the number of boys at secondary schools.

The issue of the relevance of education is captured in the comprehensive National Curriculum as mandated by the Education Act of 1997. This document represents a national cross-sectoral consultation of Dominica.

EDUCATION SAFETY NETS PROGRAM:

SCHOOL FEEDING PROGRAMME: A school feeding programme continues to provide a midday meal for primary students in targeted areas as to increase attendance and boost performance by improving nutrition. Several parenting programmes have been conducted in schools, designed to inform and train parents in providing learning and other support for their children.

TEXTBOOK SCHEME: The Textbook scheme continues to provide subsidised textbooks to all primary students and first year secondary students. This significantly reduces the high cost of textbooks and increases the educational access to vulnerable groups and individuals.

EDUCATION TRUST FUND: Government and the general public continue to support an Education Trust Fund that provides textbooks, and cover transportation costs for secondary and college students.

Dominica also implemented policies to improve the quality of the instruction received as a critical tool to the students' learning process and their outcomes. The number of teachers who have achieved professional training often measures this. The number of trained teachers in Dominica as of 2003 stands at 60% of two-thirds of the teaching force, in primary schools. The situation is even more acute in secondary schools. However this is being targeted and a proposal is being prepared as to determine the best modality to be used in the training of the backlog of untrained teachers in the school system.

A national policy and action plans on literacy and numeracy have been adopted and schools have been mandated to include programmes designed to improve literacy and numeracy as part of the School Development Plans.

Wastage is used as a proxy measure for efficiency within the system. This includes repetition and dropout: the lower the two, the more efficient the system. In Dominica, repetition has been on the decline.

Based on the aforementioned focus areas, the Ministry of Education was able to conclude that the recent economic difficulties in Dominica have posed serious challenges for maintaining the gains made in education over the last seven years. However, the Government of Dominica remains committed to the pursuit of education as a necessary condition for economic growth and development and will continue to commit itself to the ideals and protocols of the Quebec Summit.

Outstanding gains have been made in access, teacher education and reduction in repetition and dropout rate. More has to be done with respect to teacher quality and status and quality of learning, and Dominica will require assistance in doing so. These are long-term goals for which Dominica is committed and with the assistance of its regional and international partners, will make good on the goals of the Quebec Summit many of which are already contained in the Education Sector Plan, 2002-2006.

SOCIAL ISSUES

HUMAN RIGHTS OF WOMEN: Dominica is finalizing its 7th Combined report of the Convention for the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). This report highlights the various efforts made by Government and non-governmental organisations towards the equality of men and women. Dominica has not ratified the optional protocol of CEDAW.

There have been various efforts mainly through the Women's Bureau to sensitise persons on gender issues. Dominica also has a Protection Against Domestic Violence Act No. 22 of 2001.

HUMAN RIGHTS OF CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS: In June 2004, Dominica presented in Geneva its report on the Convention of the Rights of the Child. Work has been ongoing as part of the follow-up to the recommendations made in the report and the process will be phased. It is important to mention that pursuant to the report, the Government has taken steps to institute an amnesty to allow parents to register the births of their children and correct the registrations of births without a penalty.

LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT: Dominica is presently conducting a legislation and policy review to determine its readiness to deal with issues of HIV/AIDS. This will allow for the relevant changes and new laws and policy to be made in keeping with best practices, which recognize human rights and ethics as integral to any strategy to combat HIV/AIDS. The Dominica Employers Federation recently submitted a policy on HIV/AIDS in the workplace for consideration.

Through the support of PROMALCO (Promotion of Management Labour Cooperation), funds have been disbursed to the Dominica Employers' Federation to launch a National Productivity Enhancement programme that ultimately seeks to boost productivity, economic growth and competitiveness. Government (public sector), Trade Unions (Employees) and Employers (private sector) in Dominica are major participants in the programme. The programme underscores the need for social dialogue among the various social and economic partners if economic growth through productivity enhancement is to be attained. A steering committee involving all three parties (government, unions and employers) has been formed to formulate and promote such a programme.

TRADE

Trade has continued to be a primary issue especially at more recent Summits of the Americas. With the emergence of the FTAA and deadlines given for certain mechanisms to be put in place, Dominica will have to move quickly if it is not to miss this opportunity. The Ministry of Trade in Dominica has provided some

information about the direction it is taking with regard to trade issues and the Summits of Americas Process.

CITIZENS PARTICIPATION: The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Marketing has endeavored to keep the private sector and civil society informed of developments with regards to the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA), and to seek their input through consultations, seminars and workshops and the dissemination of documentation. This process has been rather ad hoc and limited due to the lack of a permanent mechanism of engagement with the private sector and civil society. A paper was prepared for Cabinet's consideration for the establishment of a new framework for trade policy management. This new framework envisages the establishment of structures and mechanisms that would entail constant contact and dialogue with the private sector and civil society on trade policy matters.

FULL PARTICIPATION OF ALL COUNTRIES IN THE FTAA:

Dominica's participation in the FTAA negotiations has been extremely limited. Dominica lacks the financial and human resources to attend all the meetings of the negotiating groups. Even when participation could be restricted to the regional technical preparatory process through CARICOM- CRNM (Caribbean Regional Negotiating Machinery) Dominica faces constraints for adequate participation. Some financial assistance has been provided (by OAS, CDB, IDB, US, Canada) to enable Dominica and other CARICOM countries to attend some key meetings.

FULL IMPLEMENTATION OF ADOPTED BUSINESS FACILITATION

MEASURES: Dominica has fully implemented one of the measures and partially implemented six others, and has not implemented one. Dominica requires technical assistance in all areas for which the measures are not fully implemented. ■

Dominican Republic

INSTITUTIONAL DEMOCRACY

A presidential election was held during 2004 that helped to secure the institution of democracy in Dominican Republic.

Immediately upon taking office, the current administration established various mechanisms for dialogue and collaboration. For example, the Economic and Social Council was created to allow various sectors of civil society to participate in the formulation and implementation of public policies; the National Dialogue was taken up again by the major political actors as a mechanism for collaboration regarding the subjects on the national agenda; and the Provincial Development Councils were created as venues for discussion of public policies and various agencies of the Executive Branch have established agreements with universities, NGOs, and social organizations for the development of their work.

The State Reform Council is taking the first steps in promoting the initiative on the Forum of Political Parties as a national entity that in addition to contributing to democratic governance serves as a venue for defining the outlines of a national project based on more inclusive development parameters.

ECONOMIC PROGRESS AND WELL-BEING WITH SOCIAL JUSTICE

The new government's principal task was to stabilize the peso as the national currency which led to a reduction in the prices of products in the family food basket and confidence was restored in the national economy, thus initiating a reactivation of national and international private investment.

The government is implementing a series of social policies designed to focus investment on the poorest population segments promoting the Single Beneficiaries System (Siuben) that identifies families living in poverty and extreme poverty, various social programs have been developed, among them Eating Comes First and Propane Gas Subsidy Cards.

The Secretariat of State for Education (SEE) is working on implementing various social programs in the area of education, to a large extent in order to provide incentives for attending school and to reduce the dropout rate, all accompanied by targeted subsidies and incentives for families of children living in poverty and extreme poverty. The social programs being implemented by the Secretariat include:

- + **School Attendance Incentive Program (ILAE):** This program is a government initiative to promote school attendance among children from extremely poor homes. Specifically, the program seeks to reduce absences, reduce dropouts, and increase school enrollment rates.
- + The instrument for achieving these objectives is the Conditioned Subsidy, which consists of granting the beneficiary home direct monetary support in exchange for the household members' fulfilling some commitments. The program will grant subsidies to close to

80,000 homes in extreme poverty (estimated by the Social Cabinet), covering approximately 180,000 children between the ages of 6 and 16.

- + The School Attendance Card (TAE): The TAE began operating in 2002 and is intended to mitigate and eliminate school dropout rates at basic educational levels through the provision of incentives (subsidies) to families or mothers in extreme poverty who receive monetary assistance (via a check) every month during the school year.
- + Economic Cafeteria Program: This program offers a targeted service. Every day more than 50,000 people are benefited through this program as are inmates in prisons throughout the country.
- + Program to Repair Dwellings in Poor Sectors: Developed by the National Housing Institute, this program seeks to provide a cement floor in the houses of poor families in the Dominican Republic.
- + Municipal Monitoring Fund: The Dominican government, through the National Council for State Reform (CONARE) and the Program to Support State Reform (PARME) is developing a successful program to support municipal initiatives by financing social and institutional development projects in all the country's municipalities.

The Secretariat of State for Public Health and Social Assistance (SESPAS) has operated a "National Plan for Health Sector Reform" to ensure services relating to health promotion and protection, disease prevention, medical care, and rehabilitation for the entire Dominican population, particularly those most in need.

SESPAS is currently working on a large number of social programs in the area of health, such as:

The Maternal-Child Healthcare Program: is one of the principal programs in primary healthcare, it also provides the principal indices of quality and development in public health. Through this program, children are immunized against 12 diseases during the first year of life.

The program for control of sexually transmitted diseases and HIV/AIDS: This program focuses on implementing national policies facilitating measures to protect the population at the highest risk of infection. It is also working to increase its prevention efforts against mother to child transmission and working through sexual educational programs to provide guidance to youth and adults.

The Dominican government is currently developing a budget that responds to the needs of the population and that contains a vision of the future based on guidelines used to guide the budget planning process.

SECRETARIAT OF STATE FOR LABOR (SET): The training program called Youth and Employment (an IDB-SET program) seeks in 2005 to train 20,000 young people between the ages of 16 and 29 who have abandoned their studies and find themselves outside formal education. This program includes a theoretical section on employment training in areas sought by the productive sector and an internship section in private companies.

This program seeks to serve vulnerable sectors in order to increase their chances of accessing the labor market and fulfills the modern view of a ministry assuming the role of linking the components of the employment system.

PROGRAM AGAINST CHILD LABOR: The Government of the Dominican Republic has assumed a strong commitment to confront the problems of child labor in the country and to develop a comprehensive national infrastructure that encompasses existing institutions and other newly created institutions in order to work on all dimensions of the problem of child labor. In this respect, one of the Secretariat of Labor's priorities is to gradually eliminate child labor as a part of our contribution to creating a more just society while fulfilling international commitments and Conventions 138 and 182 of the International Labor Organization (ILO).

For this reason, this year our institution is seeking to rescue 15,000 children and adolescents from the worst forms of child labor through projects implemented at different points in the country. The commitment has been made to work jointly with ILO/IPEC to implement a Time Bound Program called the Combating the Worst Forms of Child Labor in the Dominican Republic.

TRANSPARENCY IN POLITICAL PROCESSES, IN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION, AND FINANCE MANAGEMENT

Dominican Republic has created the National Commission on Ethics and Combating Corruption (CNECC), which represents significant progress in confronting corruption in government administration. The commission's primary functions are to: 1) Advise the President on fighting corruption and promoting ethics and transparency; 2) Develop a plan to combat and prevent administrative corruption; and 3) Design a strategy for implementing the plan. It is currently discussing "Proposed Regulations on Purchases and Contracting of Goods, Services, and Concessions" that will become a decree. This commission represents combined the efforts of government and society to make progress toward transparency in society and particularly in government.

Another significant step has been promulgation in mid-2004 of the General Law on Access to Public Information. Governmental

and civil society institutions reproduced it immediately and distributed to the population, no doubt strengthening the fight against corruption in government administration. The pending task is to generate awareness among public servants so that they will develop an attitude of openness and comply with the law to the benefit of democracy.

In addition, a group of governmental institutions took the initiative to resolve the problem of the absence of a birth certificate (for children and adults) in broad sectors of the population, who on the one hand cannot benefit from social policies because they lack documentation and on the other find it impossible to exercise their political rights and thus continue to be excluded. For these reasons, administrative measures are being sought as well as reforms to the law that is more than 60 years out of date.

TRAINING OF NEW LEADERSHIP

Training that contributes to democratic change in political culture is the great challenge of the reforms. Although little progress has been made in this respect, the current administration has begun to consult with universities, civil society institutions, and international institutions on developing political training programs, with particular emphasis on youth and women in political parties.

At the same time, daily activities with political actors through programs of involvement in municipal and central government institutions point precisely to the transformation of Dominican political culture and the creation of new practices by a new political leadership. In this regard, we can point to the following instruments or programs of involvement: the participatory budget; the integrated system of municipal finances; the implementation of the rendering of accounts and social audits; and others. We must

insist on the work that must be done to amend and implement the law on government careers and civil service, the implementation of which will represent a constraint on the patronage practices that are at the core of the Dominican political culture we want to change.

Government agencies and civil society organizations are working in coordination to design and support a campaign of training for candidates in next year's municipal and congressional elections.

MODERNIZATION OF THE STATE

The Dominican government is making progress on the modernization of government institutions. It has taken up a broad process to introduce electronic government. Many services are already beginning to be offered using the latest technology. This provides for greater transparency, takes less time, saves money, and eliminates hassles for taxpayers. Some examples are drivers' licenses, vehicle license plates, vehicle inspections, and the issuance of passports.

In addition, with assistance from the Program to Support Reform and Modernization of the State, the corporation GTZ and other cooperation programs are implementing a policy to support the development of local governments, including participatory budgeting methods, the use of information and communication technologies to improve efficiency and democracy, and training programs.

The Dominican government is currently embarked on a comprehensive reform effort that includes building the conditions for social equity; combating corruption; consolidating institutional democracy, particularly in financial matters; and expanding opportunities for the participation of civil society. ■

DEMOCRACY

ELECTORAL PROCESSES AND PROCEDURES: The Supreme Electoral Tribunal, with OAS support, has adopted electoral programs using state-of-the-art tools, including controls on spending and campaign advertising.

TRANSPARENCY AND GOOD GOVERNANCE: The Constitution guarantees the right to access information sources and, to complement this, the Organic Law of Transparency and Access to Public Information was enacted on May 4, 2004, and its respective regulations on January 19, 2005.

MEDIA: The communications media in Ecuador enjoys every right to report news and opinions, free of any form of censorship whatsoever. Absolute freedom of the press, coupled with the good democratic health enjoyed by the media, have strengthened the institutional structure and respect for human rights and citizen freedoms in the country.

FIGHT AGAINST CORRUPTION: The fight against corruption and its eradication are priorities on the government agenda. There is a constitutionally-mandated Commission on the Civic Control of Corruption that represents Ecuadorian society, is removed from political influences, combats corruption, and serves the cause of public ethics with independence and responsibility.

HUMAN RIGHTS

IMPLEMENTATION OF INTERNATIONAL OBLIGATIONS AND RESPECT FOR INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS: Ecuador ratified the Rome Statute on February 5, 2002, and the Inter-American Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Persons with Disabilities on March 18, 2004. A National Human Rights Plan is being implemented fully and involves a variety of activities and the same is true of the National Committee on the Application of International Humanitarian Law.

STRENGTHENING HUMAN RIGHTS SYSTEMS: Ecuador reviews proposals for strengthening and improving the Inter-American human rights protection system, and particularly the Draft Resolution approved by the OAS Committee on Political and Juridical Affairs, recommending the establishment of a Fund for Strengthening Democracy and the Inter-American System for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights in the Americas.

MIGRATION: The government has adopted as official policy the Migrant Protection Plan and has adopted all international instruments, in particular those concerning respect for the human rights of migrants, and incorporated their standards into its domestic legislation.

HUMAN RIGHTS OF WOMEN: The main international conventions are in force. The law is very advanced and the National Council of Women (CONAMU) enjoys the active involvement of civil society. In addition, the Public Ombudsman's Adjunct Office on Women is active and an Operational Plan for Women's Human Rights is in place (adopted as government policy in 1998). An intensive campaign for the prevention and treatment of domestic violence operates

at the local government level and has facilitated protection campaigns targeting rural women and indigenous sectors.

HUMAN RIGHTS OF CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS: The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child is in force as are its Optional Protocols on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict, and the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution, and Child Pornography. There is a constitutional obligation to protect children and ensure their rights. The Childhood and Adolescence Code is based on a doctrine of integral protection that treats children as citizens and contains explicit regulations concerning their rights, child violence, sexual exploitation, child labor, and so forth. A National Council on Childhood and Adolescence established in 2004 directs the Decentralized System for the Integral Protection of the Child with a Ten-year Integral Protection Plan and coordination for the progressive eradication of child labor.

FREEDOM OF THOUGHT AND EXPRESSION: There is total freedom of thought and expression in Ecuador. It is enshrined in the Constitution of the Republic and in various secondary laws.

JUSTICE

ACCESS TO JUSTICE: The Attorney General, together with the International Center for Advanced Studies in Communication for Latin America (CIESPAL), has launched public broadcast radio and television programs to educate people about their right to access to justice. The scripts are developed by a Commission of Jurists under the Attorney General's Office.

INDEPENDENCE OF THE JUDICIARY: The democratic outcome of the recent institutional and constitutional crisis stemming from interference in the judiciary by other branches of government has created consensus around the transparent appointment of the Supreme Court of Justice through an objective, impartial, professional, and depoliticized process to select the justices, that includes monitoring by international observers and Ecuadorian civil society.

HEMISPHERIC MEETINGS OF MINISTERS OF JUSTICE: In compliance with the recommendations from these meetings, Ecuador ratified the Inter-American Convention on Mutual Assistance in Criminal Matters and the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime.

FIGHT AGAINST THE DRUG PROBLEM: The fight against drugs is a government policy in Ecuador. For this reason, since 1980, successive National Plans for the Prevention and Control of Drugs have been developed and implemented. The most recent plan, for the 2004-2008 period, is currently being implemented. Various

Combined Anti-drug Commissions have been established for collaboration between Ecuador and other countries.

TRANSNATIONAL ORGANIZED CRIME: Ecuador is party to the main international instruments on the subject and its Constitution and domestic law contain specific provisions in this regard. An Executive Decree was issued recently declaring the fight against trafficking in persons and sexual and labor exploitation in all of its forms to be official government policy. To this end an Inter-institutional Commission was created to develop a National Plan with an emphasis on fighting trafficking in minors, pornography, prostitution, and the sexual exploitation of children.

VIOLENCE PREVENTION: Although Ecuador has ratified the Inter-American Convention against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Ammunition, Explosives, and Other Related Materials, the Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission (CICAD) Model Regulations have yet to be applied.

HEMISPHERIC SECURITY

STRENGTHENING MUTUAL CONFIDENCE: Ecuador subscribes to the need to redefine the hemispheric security system based on a concept that includes traditional continental threats and the new concerns and challenges that have led to the current situation.

FIGHT AGAINST TERRORISM: Ecuador reiterates its conviction that the struggle against international terrorism, in all of its forms and manifestations, should involve solidarity and employ all of the mechanisms that international law places at the disposition of peace-loving peoples. It believes that our Hemisphere must have at its disposal the most appropriate, updated, and effective legal instruments for the struggle against this crime against humanity. It complies with Resolution 1373 (2001) of the United Nations Security Council and has drafted legislation on the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism.

CIVIL SOCIETY

Citizen participation in social processes and democratic institutions clearly has been strengthened. The government has fostered and promoted broad-based citizen assemblies through multiple communication channels and openness to receiving civil society proposals.

TRADE AND FINANCES

TRADE AND FINANCES: Ecuador has promoted trade liberalization processes at the regional and multilateral levels, which are contributing to the modernization of the state and the

economic development process. There are many expectations surrounding the conclusion of a free trade agreement with the United States, together with Colombia and Peru, just as recent trade agreements have been negotiated successfully with Chile, the European Union, the Andean Community, MERCOSUR, and the Russian Federation.

INFRASTRUCTURE

TELECOMMUNICATIONS: Pursuant to the Economic Transformation Law (2000) all telecommunications services operate under an open competition system; this has led to greatly expanded and higher quality services.

ENERGY: Several hydroelectric and thermoelectric projects will provide more economical energy sources in the medium term and the energy integration in Latin America program is underway through electrical interconnection with Colombia.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND ENVIRONMENT

In compliance with the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development's Multi-year Program of Work, Ecuador has submitted interim reports that reflect its compliance with the commitments acquired in the Rio Summit and in the Johannesburg Summit in 2002. Ecuador is party to the Andean Committee for Disaster Prevention and Relief (CAPRADE) and has signed the Conventions on Biological Diversity, Bio-security, and the Agreement on the International Trade of Endangered Species of Fauna and Flora (CITES). Currently there is a draft Biodiversity Law and a National Working Group on Biodiversity.

AGRICULTURE

Ecuador is implementing the strategic objectives of the Plan of Action "Agro 2003-2015", adopted at the Second Ministerial Meeting on Agriculture and Rural Life (Panama, November 2003). It is negotiating to improve its market access conditions for export products, using a production chain approach. It supports technology transfer processes that meet the training needs of the Ecuadorian rural sector.

LABOR

An oral system has been established to expedite labor-related trials (which previously took over a year and currently last two months). A Mediation Center has been set up to respond to consultations on labor issues and a National Vocational Training Council has been established to match labor supply to demand in companies. A Disabilities Unit has been created to ensure the labor rights of

people with disabilities. Finally, the National Labor Council works on safety and health issues.

GROWTH WITH EQUITY

Growth with equity, economic and financial stability, and a favorable economic environment are focused on economic stabilization as a prerequisite for achieving sustained growth. Ecuador has seen its GDP grow by 5.1% (2001); 3.4% (2002); 2.7% (2003), and 6.6% (2004), with an estimated growth of 3.9% for 2005; this is in contrast to the 6.3% decline observed in 1999. One of the main achievements of the dollarization has been a 91% reduction in inflation (2000) which dropped to international single digit levels: 1.95% (2004) and will be at an estimated 2.5% for 2005. This made it possible to reestablish trust in the banking system and foster the economic recovery of the country, coupled with the Law on Responsibility, Stabilization, and Fiscal Transparency.

EDUCATION

The main projects have been the promotion of research and development projects, coordination between the Ministry of Education and the National Council on Higher Education for post-secondary school studies, and national contests of pedagogical excellence.

HEALTH

Morbidity rates remain high (especially among the poor and rural sectors); the same is true of maternal and infant mortality, infections (intestinal, skin, and respiratory) are still common, and malaria and tuberculosis are persistent problems.

GENDER EQUALITY

For the past two decades, women's participation has increased in all aspects of national life, including the business, political, and academic spheres. Article 1489 of the Ecuadorian Civil Code establishes the full legal capacity of women in conditions of equality with men, guaranteeing the principles of freedom of hiring, and freedom to engage in work, trade, and industry.

INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

Indigenous peoples and communities play a protagonist, essential role in all spheres of contemporary Ecuador and it is impossible to understand the reality in the country without knowing and grasping their history. Ecuadorian indigenous peoples have a high level of social and political organization and a tremendous mobilizing capacity, making them indispensable actors in Ecuadorian public

life at all levels. They preside over various government jurisdictions, enjoy significant representation in the National Congress, and have led several Ministries.

CULTURAL DIVERSITY

Ecuador is an essentially multicultural and multiethnic country and its diversity is one of its greatest riches. The Constitution explicitly recognizes the pluralistic and diverse nature of the Ecuadorian State, which comprises many races and ethnic groups, is multilingual, and respectful of individuality and specific characteristics. Indeed, cultural diversity is one of the cornerstones of government and public action in Ecuador; it is applied across the board to all State actions and influences all government policy.

CHILDREN AND YOUTH

The Youth Law stipulates the creation of the National Council of Youth Policy and contemplates a National Youth Promotion System, complemented by initiatives such as Youth Houses and the Youth Employment Plan.

CONNECTIVITY

Ecuador supports the Agenda for Connectivity in the Americas: Plan of Action of Quito, approved by all OAS countries in the Inter-American Telecommunication Commission (CITEL). The National Agenda includes five main programs: infrastructure for access, tele-education, tele-health, electronic commerce, and government on-line. ■

El Salvador

MAKING DEMOCRACY WORK BETTER

FIGHT AGAINST CORRUPTION: El Salvador signed the United Nations Convention against Corruption on December 10, 2003, at the High Level Conference held in Merida, Mexico. The Municipal Transparency Bill was submitted to the Legislative Assembly. The Comptroller held a training session on transparency in the management of public funds for all the country's municipalities.

STRENGTHENING LOCAL GOVERNMENTS: El Salvador has the Social Investment Fund for Local Development that relies itself on municipal governments as strategic partners in social investment. Using a "learn by doing" approach, it helps strengthen their capacity by delegating to them the investment cycle and offering technical assistance and training in areas such as citizen participation, project administration, municipal management, risk management, land use planning, and sustainability.

HUMAN RIGHTS AND FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS

El Salvador ratified the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its three Additional Protocols in November 2003. Indeed, El Salvador has fulfilled satisfactorily with the submission and review of reports on the application of the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, (January 2003) and the International Pact on Civil and Political Rights (July 2003). Currently it is in the process of writing the report for the International Pact on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights. An additional significant achievement is the revitalization of the work performed by the Human Rights Ombudsman.

JUSTICE, RULE OF LAW, SECURITY, AND SECURITY OF THE INDIVIDUAL

In November 2003, El Salvador participated in the meeting of the Governmental Experts Group of the Multilateral Evaluation Mechanism (MEM), which evaluated the progress made in the 34 countries of the Hemisphere. At that meeting El Salvador served as the Vice Chair of the Intergovernmental Working Group (IWG) and coordinated Working Group 1.

El Salvador has been complying satisfactorily with the recommendations formulated by the Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission (CICAD), as well as the ratification of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its three Additional Protocols, and the expansion of the prevention system's coverage.

CIVIL SOCIETY

In the area of citizen participation, El Salvador focused its efforts in the promotion of the cultural work through several decentralization programs. As a result, it disseminated experiences to 170 Cultural Center Support Committees and transferred resources to 25 cultural NGOs. Resources were also delivered to 170 Cultural Center Support Committees throughout the country for community activities, contributing to the development of activities with communities in all the nation.

TRADE, INVESTMENT, AND FINANCIAL STABILITY

El Salvador has continued to promote the development and diversification of the country's exports through economic integration with the rest of the world. Greater trade liberalization has been consolidated through various mechanisms including the negotiation and signing of the Free Trade Agreement between the United States and Central America and the country's active participation at the forums of the Free Trade Area of the Americas and the World Trade Organization. El Salvador continues to implementing a responsible fiscal policy, contributing to the generation of public investments for the creation of productive projects that generate more jobs. Finally, El Salvador boasts one of the most stable macroeconomic environments in Latin America, with low inflation and interest rates; thereby increasing the confidence in the country, and stimulating the public and private savings and investment.

INFRASTRUCTURE AND REGULATORY ENVIRONMENT

TELECOMMUNICATIONS SECTOR: The Government of El Salvador is working on: a) the elaboration of a Draft National Plan for the Second Phase of the World Summit on the Information Society. Tunisia 2005; b) the strengthening of the Salvadoran Telecommunications Regulatory Framework; c) the improvement of telecommunications' human resources; d) the optimization of the administration, management, and oversight of the radio electric spectrum; e) and the improvement of the membership agreements within the mobile telephone service.

ENERGY SECTOR: El Salvador is working on: a) the regional integration of energy markets; b) the regional regulatory reform; c) the support for the Hemispheric Energy Initiative. The following are the main projects in the telecommunications and energy sectors: "Meso-American Information Highway Project," (MIH) under the Plan Puebla-Panamá, and the "Central American Electric Interconnection System" (SIEPAC).

DISASTER MANAGEMENT

Regarding the disaster management area, El Salvador formulated the National Plan for Land Use and Development. Thus, there are four services responsible for monitoring and researching several natural phenomena like: meteorological, hydrological, geological, and land studies, and risk management services. The National Plan has produced national maps that identify landslides, flood, seismic, and dangerous volcanic activities and risks. Finally, the National Plan has in place an organizational structure for emergency preparedness and response at the national, departmental, and local levels.

ENVIRONMENTAL FOUNDATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

El Salvador participates in and has ratified various international conventions and agreements on the environment. El Salvador has subscribed technical cooperation agreements with two national universities for joint actions to promote scientific and technological development in the area of climate change. The "Cleaner Production Panel" has been established at the national level with the participation of the government and the private sector. Lastly, El Salvador has carried out a census on solid waste management in 262 municipalities.

EDUCATION

The educational challenge in El Salvador is becoming daily more intense and complex. El Salvador has stepped up its efforts to improve access, school retention, and the successful promotion of the students. At the same time, it has begun to transform the quality of its school system throughout the dynamics and demands emerging from the schools and classrooms.

The schools in El Salvador are undertaking important changes to offer boys, girls, and young people an education featuring ongoing improvements in quality, a sustained progress in generating opportunities for students to leverage the educational resources, and a quest for relevance in the context of their needs and realities.

All of the educational processes taking place in its educational institutions and centers, infrastructure, educational techniques and technologies, curricula, pedagogical methodological strategies, evaluations and interpersonal relations in the daily life of educational centers are geared toward quality education. Quality is not, then, a separate or isolated component, but rather an integral part of education in all its dimensions. Coverage, quality, and relevance have become indivisible elements of the present method of implementing and carrying out education in El Salvador.

GROWTH WITH EQUITY

FUNDING FOR DEVELOPMENT: The Multisectoral Investment Bank (BMI) is El Salvador's development bank and the government's main tool for supporting private investment. It is the sole domestic provider of medium and long term funding to the private sector. The Multisectoral Investment Bank is implementing the following projects: Micro and Small Enterprise Development Trust (FIDEMYPE)—\$8.5 million available to anchor resources for micro financing institutions. Electronic billing—Integration of goods and service providers and companies through an electronic platform.

MIGRATION: In this area, El Salvador has monitored the human rights situation of Salvadorans in transit or already at their destination point. The International Organization for Migration (IOM), with the authorization of the Government of El Salvador, has negotiated with the United States Government the amount of US\$250,000 for the establishment of a shelter for migrants and victims of trafficking in El Salvador. El Salvador also has instituted the Welcome Home Program, which has received government funding from the Ministry of Government's budget since 2002. This program has provided humanitarian assistance to approximately 22,505 deportees.

IMPROVED STABILITY AND SOCIAL MOBILITY: Through the gathering and updating of the land census-registry information for 454,181 properties around the country, the government has implemented a new registry system and produced 2,007 digital land survey maps, finalized an impact assessment with a gender focus, and designed a statistical system to obtain land tenancy information broken down by gender. A Registry Law degree was introduced in February and an agreement is in process with the National Council of the Judicature to train registrars in the areas of registry, mercantile, banking, and family law.

HEALTH

El Salvador has increased resources for prevention, education, and access to care and treatment of HIV/AIDS. It also has developed and approved the Law for the Prevention and Control of HIV/AIDS and initiated its corresponding regulation. Strategic alliances have been created with the antiretroviral treatment (TAR) and the Joint United Nations Programme in HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) to decrease the costs of TAR and legislative processes. It has successfully reduced the incidence of malaria and implemented community care, prevention, and promotion programs to reduce health risks. Furthermore, El Salvador has established the Integral Adolescent Car Center and promoting the operation of twelve units specialized in providing reproductive sexual health care. Finally, it has concluded the official adoption of the Integral Health Care for the Adult Male mode and elaborated the draft of a tobacco control bill. Infant mortality decreased by 10 points, neonatal mortality by 4 points, and mortality of children less than five by 13 points.

INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

Meetings and conferences have been held in coordination with the indigenous organizations. The "Profile on Indigenous Peoples in El Salvador" was presented on February 13 and the "Revitalization of the Nahuat" project has been designed. In addition, workshops and forums on "Indigenous Identity" have been offered in schools and universities.

CULTURAL DIVERSITY

El Salvador continues to implement activities relating to cultural diversity and to strengthen cultural spaces such as the remodeling and restoration of the Natural History Museum of El Salvador. It has also successfully created a database registry of 220 Ethnographic Cultural Artifacts. ■

Grenada

The main goal of the Special Summit of the Americas (2004) was to facilitate hemispheric cooperation at the highest level of Government in order to address current economic, social and political challenges in the region.

The Summit focused on three main issues

- 1. Economic Growth and Equity to Reduce Poverty**
- 2. Social Development**
- 3. Democratic Governance**

This report will highlight achievements in the above stated areas.

DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE

In 1974 Grenada became an Independent State. The Parliamentary System is based on the British model. The Head of State is the British Monarch who is represented in Grenada by the Governor General appointed on the advice of the Prime Minister. The executive power is vested in the Prime Minister and his Cabinet. Parliament has two houses: the House of Representatives with fifteen elected members and the Senate with thirteen nominated members, of which seven are appointed on the advice of the Prime Minister, three on the advice of the leader of the opposition and three are independent.

Elections for members of the House of Representative are held every five years. The Constitution is the Supreme law and all other laws must conform to it.

The Government of Grenada is committed to the involvement of all stakeholders in policy formulation and implementation. There is open dialogue between public and private sector officials. In 2003 a National Trade Policy Committee was established to advise Government on trade issues; membership includes public sector officials, private sector, labour unions and Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs).

The Government recognized the role of civil society and its contribution to public administration and continues to forge closer collaboration with them. In order to achieve the mandates of good governance, the government continues to hold dialogue with civil society.

ECONOMIC GROWTH WITH EQUITY TO REDUCE POVERTY

Grenada is endeavoring to rise to the triple challenges of globalization, trade liberalization and poverty reduction.

In 2003, the number of persons living in poverty was estimated at 30% of the population. A number of concrete programmes were designed by Government to address this problem. Emphasis was placed on rural development. A Food Security Program was put in place and funding sought to transform the rural economy. Priority attention was given to the private sector, so it can continue to function as the principal driver of economic growth and development.

The entire Plan of Action to implement the mandates of the Summit was disrupted as a result of the passage of hurricane Ivan on September 7, 2004.

In all international negotiations and efforts at making the transition to the new global requirements Grenada has placed the issue of vulnerability on the Agenda. Hurricane Ivan must have delivered the message.

Prior to hurricane Ivan, Grenada's economy was on a path of economic growth. The economy registered a positive growth rate of 5.7% in 2003, fuelled by expansion in the hotels and restaurants, transportation, construction and wholesale and retail trade sectors. The economy was projected to grow by 4.7% in 2004 driven by growth in tourism, agriculture and the transport and communication sectors. Hurricane Ivan caused widespread devastation to the environment, the productive base of the economy, and Grenadian society as a whole.

The impact included:

- + 90% of housing stock was destroyed or damaged;
- + 92% of the forest area and watersheds were destroyed;
- + The agriculture sector was decimated, with 95% of the nutmeg trees imported and 90% of short-term cash crops wiped out;
- + The tourism sector was significantly damaged, with virtually all the hotels experiencing partial, in some cases, total destruction;
- + 95% of the schools were damaged of which 42 are beyond repair;
- + Sporting facilities have been damaged;
- + A large number of churches and community centers destroyed; and
- + Hospitals and community health facilities require extensive repair and in some cases restoration.

As a result of hurricane Ivan, the economic growth potential of Grenada has been reversed and the level of vulnerability for some sections of the population has increased.

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

The challenges to the social sector relate primarily to the need for physical rehabilitation of the education, health, housing, security and social services in order to ensure the physical well being of the nation. The Ministry of Social Development works in collaborative effort with the line Ministries to spearhead these programs.

The social recovery program is envisaged in four main areas. The major thrust is in the area of trauma counseling to address the widespread psychological instability, which exists.

Recognizing that the effectiveness of counseling will be determined by the extend to which the causes of the trauma and disorientation are removed, the next three areas focus on security and reconstruction of buildings and programs in the key sector of education, health, housing and social services.

CONCLUSION

The Government of Grenada remains committed to the values and principles of the Organization of American States and particularly the Summit Process. Grenada fully supports the work of the Summits of the Americas Secretariat.

The Government of Grenada places great importance on the IV Summit and its theme "Creating Jobs to Confront Poverty and Strengthen Democratic Governance."

Grenada supports the view that economic growth is a necessary condition. However in the wake of the natural disasters which have set back the country; Grenada now needs to broaden its efforts to reach out to micro, small and medium sized enterprises.

There is need for re-training, and training in preparation for the creation of high-quality jobs and an institutional infrastructure that supports competitive business investment.

The Government of Grenada remains grateful for the support provided by the Organization of American States in the rebuild of the country. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Trade will continue to collaborate with the various agencies and department of the OAS and other stakeholders in the Inter-American System to achieve the Summit mandates. ■

Guatemala

MAKING DEMOCRACY WORK BETTER

ELECTION PROCESSES AND PROCEDURES: Taking into account Guatemala's interest in electoral reform, in observance of transparency and public responsibility for electoral systems, and in increasing citizen participation as essential elements to strengthen democracy, the Electoral and Political Party Laws have been revised. These reforms were considered necessary to consolidate the democratic process, citizen participation, the institutional strengthening of electoral authorities, freedom of organization for political parties, and to optimize electoral operations.

TRANSPARENCY AND GOOD GOVERNMENT: As of 2004, Guatemala society began a new stage in its short but complicated process of democracy which began in 1985. The first challenge of the government is to revive credibility and citizen confidence in the potential and virtues of the Rule of Law; in the capacity and efficiency of the State and its institutions to take care of basic necessities; in the integrity and commitment to service of its public officials; and in its capacity to guarantee public security and democracy. The commitment to transparency and integrity is in this same context, demonstrated in the announcement of the President to appropriately disclose the declarations of integrity of his principal advisors, the announcement of a code of conduct for public officials, the start of public bids on the Internet, the announcement to reduce the public sector budget by ten percent and the practice of austerity in the administration of state resources, as well as the cancellation of thousands of contracts assumed by the previous administration, among other actions in this area.

FIGHT AGAINST CORRUPTION: The Inter-American Convention against Corruption was ratified by Guatemala, entering into force on May 15, 2001. The Office of the Commissioner for Transparency and Against Corruption was created in 2004. Its principal objective is to generate in the Guatemalan population and in the international community, confidence in public institutions, derived from the political will to promote transparency and to fight corruption.

STRENGTHENING OF LOCAL GOVERNMENTS: Guatemala recognizes that citizen participation and adequate political representation are the foundations of democracy and that local governments have the most presence in the daily life of citizens. The National Constitution establishes municipal autonomy, as does the Municipal Code which assigns municipal administrations broader responsibilities and the General Law of Decentralization with establishes that any transfer of responsibilities is accompanied by the financial resources needed to carry them out.

HUMAN RIGHTS AND FUNDAMENTAL LIBERTIES:

COMPLYING WITH INTERNATIONAL OBLIGATIONS: Guatemala has ratified the majority of instruments of universal and inter-American human rights and supports measures to strengthen the inter-American system of human rights protection. In addition, it complies with the judgments of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights and the recommendations of the Commission, taking into account the responsibility of the State in the various cases submitted to the Court.

MIGRATION: To serve Guatemalans living abroad, the Ministry of External Relations has produced a proposal on Public Policy on Attention to Migrants which is based in three major principles that reflect a perspective on human development, relations with communities

abroad and the protection of human rights. The Ministry established an Inter-institutional Group to work in a coordinated manner to combat trafficking of persons and illegal trafficking of migrants, made up of 22 state institutions, including Congress and civil society groups.

HUMAN RIGHTS OF WOMEN: Among the principles achieved in the area of human right for women in Guatemala, is the creation of a Presidential Secretariat for Women. The first successful action of the Secretariat was the formulation of a National Policy for the Promotion, Development and Equal Opportunity of Guatemalan Women 2001-2006, which responds to international commitments assumed by the State and consists of a careful constructed consensus of state initiative and the broad women's movement in civil society in the presentation of their demands since facing historic conditions of oppression, exclusion and discrimination.

LIBERTY OF OPINION AND EXPRESSION: Guatemala, with the support of the Special Rapporteur for Liberty of Expression of the Inter American Commission of Human Rights (CIDH), prompts the law known as Hábeas Data.

JUSTICE, RULE OF LAW AND SECURITY OF THE INDIVIDUAL

ACCESS TO JUSTICE: The Supreme Court of Justice, through its Modernization Unit, has instituted a system for the promotion of the mechanisms for alternative conflict resolution, giving priority to the promotion of a cultural dialogue to avoid conflict, facilitate the agile and direct solution of controversies, reduce the burden of the courts, and consequently, reduce the cost of lawsuits by implementing a mediation system based on the creation of mediation centers.

INDEPENDENCE OF THE JUDICIARY: The Political Constitution of the Republic of Guatemala established the Judicial Career. The career system has allowed the strengthening of the judicial independence of judges by entering in opposition to service, and in general has improved the recruiting, selection, and training processes. It also has a disciplinary and evaluation system of human resources of the judicial organ.

COMBATING THE DRUG PROBLEM: The Executive Secretariat of the Commission against Addictions and Illicit Drug Trafficking is in charge of the prevention, treatment and rehabilitation of addicts, through the support of prevention, training, and rehabilitation programs, as well as investigation programs. Guatemala receives with pleasure the development of the Multilateral Evaluation Mechanism (MEM) of the CICAD, and it reiterates its commitment to make this mechanism, unique in the world, one of the central pillars of hemispheric cooperation in the fight against all factors that constitute the worldwide problem of drugs.

TRANSNATIONAL ORGANIZED CRIME: One of the political axes of the current government in reference to preventive security has been the productive, social, and legal reintegration of former gang members or the aid to youths with diverse problems, with the purpose of avoiding that they be incorporated to the youth gangs or "maras".

HEMISPHERIC SECURITY

STRENGTHENING MUTUAL CONFIDENCE: From the firm of the Peace Agreements, one of the fundamental features of the State has been the demilitarization of its structures in terms of troop and budget reduction. In parallel, a gradual redefinition of the civilian and military relations has been carried out, in terms of subordination of the armed institutions to the civilian power, as well as the delimitation of the roles performed by the military, circumscribing them strictly to the functions of external security. Additionally, the creation of the National Security System has been stipulated, which supposes the creation of a principal entity that defines politics of external and internal security, and of a National Security Agenda, as well as the coordination of internal control mechanisms for this effect.

The current administration has initiated a new era in its bilateral relations with Belize, in which a parallel solution to the existing territorial disagreement between both countries is being looked at. They agreed to generate the adequate conditions to achieve a final solution to the disagreement. On the other hand, they are looking to sustain a constructive effort that allows resolving the socio-economic problem that threatens their people.

FIGHT AGAINST TERRORISM: Guatemala is working on a series of measures to strengthen border security, adjust custom controls, and improve the quality of the identification and travel documents. Also, it is applying financial controls in order to prevent money laundering and the financing of terrorist acts.

CIVIL SOCIETY

STRENGTHENING PARTICIPATION: The Presidential Commission for Reform, Modernization, and Strengthening of the State and its Decentralized Entities, in its efforts to strengthen civil society participation in national processes, has executed various actions. In the hemispheric level, civil society participation takes place through a dialogue established between the Foreign Affairs Ministry and the Research and Political Formation Institute (INIAP).

TRADE

The main achievement in the area of trade is the conclusion of the negotiations of the Free Trade Agreement between Dominican Republic, Central America and the United States, as well as its approval in the second semester of 2005.

DISASTER MANAGEMENT

The work of the National Coordinator for the Reduction of Disasters (CONRED) consists in organizing all participants, giving them information that is trustworthy, exact and on time, establishing efficient communication mechanisms, and providing an adequate methodology for the reduction of disasters in the national territories.

ENVIRONMENTAL FOUNDATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

The Program of Social and Economic Reactivation "Vamos Guatemala" from the sustainability perspective, recognizes the importance of the environmental dimension and the need of its cross incorporation into the entire strategic framework. For that reason, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (MARN) has taken the task of this cross incorporation, in coordination with the National Counsel of Protected Areas (CONAP), the National Institute of Forests (INAB), and the Secretary of Planning and Programming of the Presidency.

AGRICULTURAL MANAGEMENT AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

The Department of Agriculture, Stockbreeding and Food has been developing strategic actions defined in the Agricultural Policies 2004-2007 that constitute the foundation to build, in a participatory manner, the development of agriculture and the rural area. The objective of this policy is to contribute to the sustainable improvement of the quality of life of the population that depends directly and indirectly on agriculture, through the promotion of the competitiveness, the attention to the rural agriculture, and the management of the natural resources, in a favorable climate that supports the coordinated actions of the different entities involved.

LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT

Important activities have been reported in the advancement of the fulfillment of the Agreements of the ILO and the reform initiatives of the Work Code, especially in the areas of eradication of child labor, regulation of domestic work, sexual harassment, the creation of the Institute for Recreation of State Workers, process reforms, and universal indemnization.

GROWTH WITH EQUITY

The economic and social reactivation program "¡Vamos Guatemala!" promoted by the current administration, is an integrated effort of the public management that gives priority to social harmony, and economic reactivation and competitiveness, through its three strategic

components: "Guate Solidaria", "Guate Crece" y "Guate Compite".

EDUCATION

In the Education Plan 2004-2007, the objective is to expand the outreach, improve the quality, and reach 100% coverage in the year 2008 in primary and 40% coverage in secondary levels. Guatemala estimates to reduce by the year 2008 the illiteracy rate to 23%.

HEALTH

In general, Guatemala has sought to strengthen the principal role of the Ministry of Public Health and Social Aid, and has managed to deliver health services with quality, equity and with an intercultural focus in the different levels of attention. It has also given priority to the satisfaction of the health needs of the Guatemalan population. Also, there have been advances in relation to reproductive health, immunizations, attention and processing of people affected with the Virus Acquired Immunodeficiency (HIV/AIDS), illnesses transmitted by vectors, tuberculosis, buco-dental health, non-transmissible chronic diseases, attention to adults or older adults, anti-tobacco initiatives, attention to the migrant population, mental health, strengthening of the modernization and decentralization process of health, strengthening and development of the human resources in health as well as in popular, traditional, and alternative medicine.

INDIGENOUS PEOPLES AND CULTURAL DIVERSITY

The present government, based on the established Agreement 169 of the ILO in reference to consultations with the indigenous peoples, through dialogue and participation, assumed a series of commitments to prompt the creation of communication channels, the coordination and work with representatives of the different indigenous and non-indigenous social organizations, with the purpose of transforming the political, cultural, economic, social, non equitable and exclusion conditions that have generated poverty and intolerance in the country. The following commitments are worth mentioning: a) introduction of reforms to the Law of Political Parties, to the Supreme Electoral Court and to the Law of Civil Service; b) presentation of the proposal on regulation of the Law of National Languages; c) installation of tables for dialogue as healthy debate spaces to translate the dialogue into legislation; d) consultations with the indigenous peoples in the framework of the Agreement 169 relaunching the Peace Agreements and revitalization of the Agreement on Identity and Rights of the Indigenous Peoples; and f) creation of a principal instance for the interests of the indigenous peoples, including a contest for the best minds among all linguistic groups. ■



Guyana

EDUCATION

IMPROVEMENT IN THE QUALITY OF THE DELIVERY OF EDUCATION: The improvement in the quality of the delivery of education, especially in the area of literacy, is the most important objective for the education sector within the framework of the Education Strategic Plan (ESP) 2003-2004.

Literacy has been emphasized at the pre-primary and the first two grades of primary through a project funded with assistance from the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB). The project aims at laying the foundation for early literacy through a child centered approach to pre-literacy and pre-writing and also a print rich classroom environment. Literacy is also emphasized at the Technical and Vocational institutions through a remedial reading programme for those trainees who need it.

IMPROVING EQUITY IN THE EDUCATION SECTOR: Guyana has recognized that geographical factors, historical trends and some cultural norms have hampered efforts to provide equal opportunity to children with special needs and those in remote and river areas. As a result the Education For All Fast Track Initiative project was introduced.

The initiative focuses on the printing and purchasing of text books, establishment of Learning Resources Centers, payment of remote area incentives and utilities upgrading in schools during the first year of the project. Activities for the second year of the project include the building of teachers' houses, development of school improvement plans and upgrading the School Feeding Programme to hot meals in the remote regions.

Also, initiatives in the Guyanese education system have sought to address the issue of girls' education in a number of ways. In the Guyanese situation, girls' education takes on a unique feature as they are subject to some peculiar circumstances such as sexual abuse, teenage pregnancy and caring for siblings.

The Health and Family Life Education programme focuses on the development of life skills for psychosocial competence i.e. cognitive life skills (e.g. decision making), social skills (e.g. assertiveness) and coping skills (e.g. coping with emotions).

Most schools (over 80%) have Parent Teachers Associations (PTA) and at least one PTA meeting is held per year. Most regions also have Regional Education Committees and these which meet regularly and monitoring education activities in the region.

The School Improvement Action Committee (SIAC) including administrators, teachers, parents and community members plays an active role in school management; and is responsible for designing the School Improvement Plan for the schools.

The National Advisory Council on Education (NACE) is currently working on recommendations for a new Education Act and reviewing possible new recommendations for teacher education.

FIGHT AGAINST CORRUPTION

Prior to the Third Summit of the Americas in 2001, Guyana enacted anti-corruption laws which serve to increase transparency, disclose assets of public officials, prevent corrupt practices, and promote accountability in governance. Breaches of the anti-corruption laws may result in loss of contracts, of fine imposition and/or imprisonment. These laws serve as a deterrent against corruption of public officials in a wide range of circumstances where corruption is possible.

PROCUREMENT OF GOODS AND SERVICES: Guyana reformed its procurement procedures by the enactment of the Procurement Act 2003. This Act has brought into the procurement system, a more transparent regime for acquisition of goods and services and made stronger provisions against inducements from suppliers or contractors.

MIGRATION

Over the last two years citizens of Guyana have been sensitized by the Government and non governmental organizations (NGO's) to the inhuman, degrading and traumatic experiences of the various forms trafficking in persons may take. As a result, there is now a higher awareness of the problem and a willingness of the law enforcement agencies and civil society, to eradicate this crime, particularly from the communities and groups at risk, and among women and children. The Parliament of Guyana has passed into law the Combating Trafficking In Persons Act which criminalises the act of trafficking in persons and other acts which facilitate commission of the crime.

In support of the Caribbean regional integration movement, Guyana has established the legal and administrative framework for the free movement of CARICOM nationals, their families and employees into and within Guyana and has facilitated their unimpeded access to all social benefits enjoyed by Guyanese nationals.

COMBATING THE DRUG PROBLEM

Guyana is committed to the implementation of proposals and recommendations of the 2003-2004 Multilateral Evaluation Mechanism (MEM) Report on Guyana, and in that regard, specially supports the recommendations made concerning "concrete actions to encourage inter-American cooperation and national strategies to combat this scourge".

The Narcotics Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (Control) Act of 1988 has been amended from time to time to strengthen its application as changes in the drug situation demand. Guyana has

entered into (8) eight bilateral anti-drug agreements and several other agreements on the regional, hemispheric and international levels.

To further strengthen efforts against drug trafficking, the financial gains derived from crimes have been targeted, and persons found guilty of money laundering are now liable to imprisonment and their assets seized. On 21st June, 2005 the government launched its National Drug Strategy Master Plan 2005-2009 which, in a comprehensive manner, has charted the direction in which anti-drug activities of the various concerned agencies will flow over the next five years.

Guyana has ratified the UN Convention Against Transnational Organised Crime and the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children and has passed in parliament the enabling legislation combating of trafficking in persons act which makes trafficking in persons an extraditable offence.

The Money Laundering (Prevention) Act of Guyana provides for the grant of mutual legal assistance in investigation of crime, tracing and seizing of assets and for the provision of evidence.

In addition, community-policing groups have been established throughout Guyana for more than ten years. They have proven their worth to the communities in crime prevention and maintenance of law and order. A Ministerial unit on Community Policing is soon to be created within the Ministry of Home Affairs.

Neighbourhood Police is a new category of police officers to be introduced into the community security system. Under this programme, 600 men and women drawn from their communities between the ages of 18 and 45 will be trained and employed to full time residential police work to assist in the prevention and reduction of crime in their communities.

The Domestic Violence Act came into existence to protect members of families from physical and psychological violence and from cruel and inhumane treatment such as deprivation of food, rest, adequate human habitation and the minimum requirements of life.

HUMAN RIGHTS

HUMAN RIGHTS OF WOMEN: Guyana continues to work to integrate fully the human rights of women into the work institutions and to also nominate women as candidates for positions into hemispheric institutions e.g. OAS/CIM. Further, Guyana continues to work to prohibit all forms of discrimination against women.

The Constitution Reform Commission in recognition of the priority

status accorded to women's issues has responded positively to the establishment of the Women and Gender Equality Commission, which falls under the umbrella of the Human Rights Commission. One of the objectives of the new Commission is to strengthen, monitor and protect women's human rights.

Strategically, the Government of Guyana has adopted a gender mainstreaming approach which seeks to integrate women's needs and interests in major sectors of development as well as into the wider spectrum of economic and social development of the country. There are also on-going training programmes to integrate gender perspectives in the work of Ministries, agencies and corporations.

HUMAN RIGHTS OF CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS: A Children's Bill has been drafted, which seeks to harmonize the laws pertaining to children with specific reference to the protection of children's rights.

Currently efforts are being made to institute the juvenile justice system, which aims at providing timely and continuous rehabilitative intervention upon the detention of a juvenile. In addition, a number of seminars and workshops have been conducted nationally which focus on the laws of Guyana relating to children and on articles of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

The Children and Violence Project has established a National Child Protection Monitoring Data Base within the Ministry of Labour Human Services and Social Security, together with technical assistance from the Bureau of Statistics, CARICOM and the United Nations Children's Fund. This database will protect children and adolescence from violence through monitoring and surveillance.

To protect persons, including children who were suspected of being victims of trafficking in persons, a Counter Trafficking in Persons Unit has been established and extensive training and sensitization campaigning were done in all the Administrative Regions of Guyana.

GENDER EQUALITY

In the area of gender equality, Guyana's Constitution Revision Process which began in 2000 reinforced all existing measures by establishing as an enforceable fundamental right to every woman "equal rights and status with men in all spheres of political and social life."

Guyana has strategically adapted the integration of women's needs and interests and, consequently, a gender mainstreaming approach is being progressively adopted in several sectors of development. In this context a strategy document on Women Gender and Development forms part of a chapter of the National Development Strategy which was presented to the Ministry of Finance and later laid in Parliament.

The recommendations regarding political participation of women emanating from the Beijing Platform for Action as well as the Commonwealth Plan of Action have shown that currently in Guyana there are sixty five (65) parliamentarians, of whom 30.7% are women, women's representation on the Regional Democratic Councils increased from 21% in 1997 to 30% in 2001.

LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT

There is general respect for the basic rights of workers and the promotion of equal employment opportunities for citizens. There are legal minimum standards with respect to working conditions for all workers. The Prevention of Discrimination Act provides for the elimination of discrimination in employment, training, recruitment and membership of professional bodies and for equal remuneration for equal work or work of equal value.

Guyana has ratified all the core labour standards and fundamental International Labour Organisation (ILO) Conventions. Guyana has ratified Convention No 182 and there is a National Committee on Child Labour. ■

Haiti

STRENGTHENING DEMOCRACY

Despite the political scenario in Haiti since 2000, it is interesting to note several positive developments in connection with implementation of the mandates of the Summits of the Americas. These successes relate, first, to issues addressed at the Third Summit, held in Quebec City, Canada, in April 2001, regarding the strengthening of democracy, the generation of prosperity, and fulfillment of human potential, and then to the Special Summit, held in Monterrey, Mexico, on the fight against poverty, promotion of social development, and economic growth.

As regards to the strengthening of democracy, the political crisis resulting from the election of May 2000 gave rise to a transition founded upon the 1987 Constitution and the Project in Initial Agreement drawn up by the Organization of American States (OAS). Anxious to put the country back onto democratic tracks, the Government, with the support of the international community and in concert with national political forces, set about forming the Provisional Electoral Council (PEC).

In February 2005, the PEC completed the text of the electoral decree, which was promulgated and published by the interim Government. It also set the dates for elections: on October 9, municipal and local elections; November 13, legislative and presidential elections; December 18, second round, if required. Moreover, benefiting from the technical support provided by the OAS, the electoral body made substantial headway with the process of registering voters and political parties, while continuing consultations with the political sectors, without excluding any of them.

The transition team's policy of inclusion was manifested in the days following its accession to power, that is to say, in April 2004, through the political transition consensus underwritten by practically the entire political class to determine the parameters of interim management of public affairs. That policy was, moreover, confirmed by the launching in early February 2005 of a process of national dialogue, a genuine catalyst of national reconciliation and the participation of all sectors in the development of the country. The dialogue also serves to generate an environment conducive to the holding of fair elections and to instill greater harmony in Haitian society. It should address the structural problems, the solution of which would make it possible to put an end to cyclical crises.

FIGHT AGAINST CORRUPTION

On another level also related to good governance, in June 2004 the Republic of Haiti deposited with the OAS Secretariat the instruments of ratification of the Inter-American Convention against Corruption, this initiative complements internal institutional efforts to come to grips with the scourge of corruption. In fact, an Anti-Corruption Unit has been established, an Administrative Commission of Inquiry has been charged with examining transactions carried out between January 2001 and February 2004, and steps have been taken to resolve the problems associated with money laundering. It is worth noting that that Commission

delivered its final report in July of 2005 and that it clearly shows that much remains to be done to clean up national administrative practices.

GENDER POLICIES

On July 6, 2005, the Government issued a Decree supporting women's organizations in their struggle to achieve gender equity, by repealing sexist legal provisions in the Haitian criminal code. This decree, presented jointly by the Ministry of Women's Affairs and Women's Rights and by the Ministry of Justice and Public Safety, amends legal provisions on sexual assault and eliminates social discrimination against women in the criminal code. The Decree defines rape, hitherto included under "offenses against moral standards" as a "sexual assault." This defect and the lightness of the sentence contemplated in the law "had contributed to a minimization of the gravity of the offense and to the only weak attempts to prosecute and eliminate" rape in the past.

SECURITY AND JUSTICE

In the area of reform of the justice system, the Government of Haiti has embarked on a program to enhance the professionalism of the National Police. With the support of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti and the OAS Special Mission for Strengthening Democracy in Haiti, the interim Government has taken steps to make certain kinds of courts more effective by making them hold two sessions with a view to reducing the number of cases of prolonged detention.

In the same vein, the number of policemen has been raised from 3,000 to almost 4,000, following graduations in both December 2004 and May 2005. This increase in the police force—apart from its positive impact in terms of justice—is essentially geared to restoring and maintaining security and public order. That trend should become more marked, judging by the eight-year strategic plan to develop the police force that covers a whole range of improvements, such as: a career plan, human resource management, firearms control, intelligence, recruitment, infrastructure, communication, and an expansion of the number of police stations to cover highly populated areas.

In an order issued on February 3, 2005, the transition Government also set up a National Disarmament Commission responsible for

guiding police efforts to disarm illegally armed individuals and groups.

COMBATING POVERTY

With regard to generating prosperity and the fight against poverty, numerous challenges remain, but there is room for satisfaction with the significant progress that has been made. Indeed, according to a World Bank report dated July 2005, "in the year that has just elapsed, a sense of hope began to stir in Haiti: tens of thousands of jobs have been created, nearly 200 schools have been rehabilitated, and 300 kilometers of roads have been rebuilt".

These achievements are due to the Interim Cooperation Framework (ICF) for Haiti, which defines the country's immediate and medium-term development objectives. In that connection, it is important to note the efforts of the international community, manifested at Conferences in Washington, Cayenne, and Montreal. The IMF's Public Information Notice No. 05/78 of June 17, 2005 points out that; "Despite difficult political and security conditions and the devastating floods in 2004, the authorities have been successful in stabilizing the exchange rate, bringing down inflation, and strengthening international reserves." Reserves grew by 53 percent over 2004.

The positive results so far achieved reflect the Government's four strategic priorities, set forth in the Interim Cooperation Framework, namely: democratic governance, economic governance and institutional development, economic recovery, and access to basic services, as well as the four cross-cutting themes identified as: crisis prevention, human rights, the gender equality perspective, and controlling HIV/AIDS.

In the same way, through the actions that has been undertaken, the government seeks to lay the solid foundations needed for Haitians to realize their full potential. The progress made in education, broader administration of justice, security, and employment should be continued and indeed stepped up to become more tangible. To that end, the negative impact of the natural disasters that have hit the towns of Gonaïves, Fonds Verrettes, and Mapou so hard must be mitigated, normalization of the political situation must be completed thanks to the participation of all sectors, disinvestments must be curbed, and capital flight curtailed. ■

Honduras

CIVIL SOCIETY

The Government of Honduras recognizes the initiatives, vision, mission, and ample proposal-generating capacity of civil society organizations operating throughout the national territory. It supports their plans, programs, and projects in the different pivotal programmatic coordinating areas. The implementation of these programs facilitates the development of the Poverty Reduction Strategy in the search for the common good as the main alternative for attending to disadvantaged and highly vulnerable population segments, and/or those living in fragile social, economic, financial, and environmental circumstances, indigenous peoples, afro-descendance, peasants, and fishermen.

SOCIAL, POLITICAL, AND ECONOMIC REACTIVATION OF LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

The new municipal legislation, in its conception, content and spirit, promotes scenarios for the development of municipalities, in which the municipal corporations play a truly protagonist role. This dynamic municipal organizing process has made it possible to create commonwealths in zones of socio-economic and environmental development and growth, involving local governments with the support of international cooperation.

COMMERCIAL DYNAMICS IN THE QUEST FOR SOCIAL, ECONOMIC, AND FINANCIAL STABILITY TO REDUCE VULNERABILITY: Honduras respects international conventions and treaties and implements efficient trade mechanisms, strengthening the domestic market and penetrating the international market with excellent agricultural, livestock, agroindustrial, hand-crafted, and manufactured products. Honduras participates actively in the assessing agricultural market information systems in the member countries of the Market Information Organization of the Americas (MIOA), forming regional and trade blocs under the Central American Integration System (CAIS).

HUMAN RIGHTS

An ongoing positive relationship has been established between the government, civil society, local leaders, and the human rights commissioner, creating a valuable space for handling, paying special attention to, and solving the problem of human rights. All of this occurs in the framework of the national legislation in force and the international provisions emanating from the relevant human rights entities created by the OAS, preserving the essence of the principles of the United Nations and the resolutions issued by the Summits of the Americas.

ENVIRONMENTAL FOUNDATIONS OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

The Government of Honduras supports, in the Meso-American region, the concept that affirms that "sustainable development seeks to meet the needs and aspirations of the present without

compromising the ability to meet those of the future;” this citation is from the report “Our Common Future,” Oxford, University Press, 1987.

Therefore, the Secretariat of Natural Resources and Environment and the various environmental units attached to the state agencies develop short, medium, and long term plans based on ratified environmental agreements and resolutions: the Kyoto Protocol, climate change, drought and desertification, protected areas, wildlife refuges, forests, ecosystems, biodiversity, Meso-American biological corridor, environmental impact assessment, fight against the illegal trafficking in species (CITES), and the development of activities in the framework of the Environmental Plan for the Central American Region (PARCA):

In the implementation of the PARCA, Honduras recognizes the initiatives of the CCAD of CAIS and the proposal-generating capacity of the CAIS Advisory Council and the Permanent Forum of Civil Society on the environment and development, and establishes a sociopolitical context for integral development, based on the biophysical context or as part of the initiatives being implemented in Meso-America through international cooperation, so as to ensure the successful development of a strategic regional environmental and development program.

SECURITY AND DEVELOPMENT

The Government of Honduras promotes and implements programs to address social problems, confronting the real situation with social approaches and through the enforcement of the anti-gang law. It should be added that while the problem of minors in trouble with the law is common in society, there are alternative solutions. Therefore, legal measures are in place whose technical and operational approach serve as a model for the countries of the region and other nations facing similar problems.

In order to ensure citizen security and stability, the Real Estate Law [*Ley Predial*] was enacted, creating the Property Institute. This technical, agrarian, and legal entity plans to legalize in the medium term, over 800,000 properties to benefit a similar number of families. It will ensure the participation of these families in business development programs, along with measures to achieve social security and economic stability in the national territory. It will operate based on the principles of integration, solidarity, brotherhood, and the quest for sustainable development.

For this reason, the Government of Honduras has issued the relevant poverty reduction guidelines, taking advantage of the important supply of the Millennium Challenge Account and the forgiveness of

over 60% of the foreign debt.

PRODUCTION, TOURISM, AND COMPETITIVENESS

Honduras has taken into consideration international treaties and conventions dealing with production and trade in the development of the National Plan to Develop and Stimulate Production, Tourism, and Competitiveness.

The Plan has strengthened the national economy, mainly from resources that come from exports: coffee, shrimp and tilapia, as well as the tourism industry.

In this panorama, the Government of Honduras consider tourism and ecotourism a priority area for the economy, and has taken the steps to establish scaled projects, such as the development of the Bahia de Tela in the northern part of the country.

In the industrial sector, the *maquilas* have created more than 120,000 jobs and, with the implementation of CAFTA, 260,000 more people will join the industry. This shows that Honduras encourages national production, tourism, and competitiveness.

SOCIAL AND EDUCATIONAL APPROACH

Honduras supports the promotion of grassroots organizations that encourage the incorporation of women into the productive processes using up-to-date participatory methodologies.

Honduras develops plans and programs for integral attention to children, for the formation of young people with a new development mission, preventing the exploitation of children and youth who are in the process of growth.

Additionally, Honduras implements educational development plans with curricular content adapted to the Honduran social and economic reality, with the participation of all sectors of society, local government, and teachers associations. In this sense, advanced school management programs have been reinstated to stimulate the school population, defining the bases for the promotion of science and technology. The National Autonomous University of Honduras is undertaking an extensive reorganization process, and a Transition Board has been created with broad powers to fulfill this worthwhile objective.

CONTROL OF DRUG TRAFFICKING

The Government of Honduras has reorganized the National Committee to Combat Drug Trafficking, incorporating civil society organizations; the latter plays the most important role in carrying out this task. Its efforts are based on international agreements and

treaties, including:

- + The Inter-American Convention against the Manufacturing of and Illicit Trafficking in Firearms, Ammunition, Explosives, and Other Related Materials. In this regard, a firearms registration plan was implemented.
- + The Convention against Corruption.
- + The United Nations Convention against the Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances.
- + The United Nations Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs.

COOPERATION

The Government of Honduras has promoted the development of international cooperation by bringing together bilateral and multilateral organizations and international cooperation agencies and sponsoring donor forums to secure fresh, preferably non-reimbursable, funding sources to benefit urban and rural poverty reduction plans and programs in the country. ■

Jamaica

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

The reform of the Social Safety Net (SSN) has introduced the Programme for Advancement through Health and Education (PATH) which is a new type of social protection programme that seeks to promote human capital development, especially among the youth, as a means of breaking the intergenerational cycle of poverty. Some 236,000 persons living below the poverty line have received assistance in the form of cash transfers and have been identified by the system used to recognize the poor.

These objectives are being achieved through the provision of income support to families below the poverty line, which are conditioned to certain behavioural requirements in families such as sending children to school and ensuring regular visits to health centres. It also represents a key element to the Government's initiative to transform the social safety net to fiscally sound and more efficient system of social assistance for the poor and vulnerable.

Several legislative changes are being updated through the development of a National Assistance Act which would modernise the social protection legislation.

PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES: The Ministry of Labour and Social Security is preparing a Disability Act to strengthen enforcement of their rights.

In May 2004, the Government hosted the first regional Meeting of CARICOM Ministers with responsibility for disability issues and adopted the Kingston Accord, a framework Agreement for a regional action plan on disability.

PROTECTION FOR SENIOR CITIZENS: Adjustments have been made to update the plans and programmes for seniors in the National Policy for Senior Citizens, passed in 1997. The current emphasis is being placed on research on the impact of crime and violence on citizens facilitating policies and strategies to combat these trends.

ELIMINATION OF THE WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOUR: Jamaica ratified the ILO Convention on the Worst Forms of Child Labour in 2003 and has since institutionalised an ILO/ IPEC (International Programme for the Elimination of Child Labour) Programme. As a result, a draft Plan of Action on Child Labour has been developed and presented to Cabinet for its endorsement.

PROTECTION OF WORKERS: The Government of Jamaica has fully recognised the importance of worker's rights as prerequisites for economic growth, social harmony and poverty reduction. Consequently, the Government actively promotes and facilitates dialogue to settle industrial disputes and is actively reviewing the Labour Relations and Industrial Disputes Act so that

non-unionised workers can have access to the Industrial Disputes Tribunal to have their disputes settled.

The Ministry has instituted an Annual review of the National Minimum Wage that is used to guide salary levels for the lowest paid categories of workers, to protect and prevent the exploitation of workers.

GENDER EQUALITY: A number of initiatives have been undertaken to promote gender equality and the empowerment of women and men. These initiatives include the passage of the Property Act (Right of Spouses), amendment to the Domestic Violence Act, institutionalising and strengthening government and civil society in gender analysis and the staging of workshops, seminars and community meetings to sensitise people on gender equality.

POVERTY REDUCTION

The National Poverty Eradication Programme (NPEP) completed its sixth year of operation in the financial year 2003-2004. The objectives of the programme have been to promote economic and social development, reduce the number of persons below the poverty line in targeted communities and eradicate absolute poverty.

After a comprehensive review of the programme, it was determined that a number of elements needed to be adjusted to deal with the current challenges and, as such, a Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper that can form the new thrust for poverty eradication is being elaborated.

Consideration is also being given to the establishment of an Executive Agency, attached to the Cabinet Office, which would have responsibility for managing the poverty reduction/eradication programme. The framework document for the establishment of the agency is currently being prepared, and appropriate consultations are being undertaken.

HIV/AIDS

A national HIV/AIDS policy was developed and passed in May 2005. The policy establishes the foundation for guidelines and legislation to reduce the stigma and discrimination, promote an enabling environment for improved access to prevention, treatment and support for those living with and affected by the disease.

A Caribbean HIV/AIDS Regional Training (CHART) Centre was established in 2004 and upgrading work carried out on the facilities to house the Centre. A number of activities were targeted under the Ministry's Programme of Capacity Building, including inter alia, analysis for laboratory information system, improvement of the

HIV/AIDS database, a comprehensive review of infectious waste disposal practices and a review of the National AIDS Committee (NAC). Since the outset of the Voluntary Counselling and HIV Testing (VCT) training programme in 2003, over 1000 counsellors and 50 trainers have been certified.

In 2004, following on a grant of US\$23m over a five year period, fourteen treatment centres were established across the island, under a public access programme for anti-retroviral (ARV) drug treatment, to provide access to these critical drugs.

Increased testing of mothers under the Mother-to-Child Transmission Prevention Programme has helped to increase the level of awareness and early treatment. Some 30-50% of persons attending sexually transmitted Infections (STI) clinics were tested.

PROTECTION OF CHILDREN

In 2004, the Government took the decision to pass the Child Care and Protection Act which provides for *inter alia*, the establishment of the Office of Children's Advocate and the Central Registry for Child Abuse, which orders the mandatory Reporting of Child Abuse and increased penalties for offenders.

The designation of the Child Development Agency as an executive agency for all the issues related to children under one umbrella to more effectively respond to children's issues.

Two other instruments for treating development issues related to youth include the National Strategic Plan for Youth Development and the Plan of Action for an Integrated Response to Children and Violence.

DISASTER PREPAREDNESS AND MITIGATION

The Office of Disaster Preparedness and Emergency Management (ODPEM) has responsibility for the country's operational disaster management and has undertaken a number of initiatives, including the shifting of its approach from disaster management to risk management. ODPEM has carried out multiple activities aimed at improving its effectiveness in the event of disasters.

SECURITY

As a part of its strategy to fight crime, a comprehensive approach has been adopted by the Ministry of National Security to establish mechanisms for consultation and collaboration at the neighbourhood, community and parish levels.

Increased and improved communication between the citizenry and the Police has enhanced the level of understanding and willingness to cooperate. This effort has been undertaken through

the Neighbourhood Watch, Parish Crime Prevention Programmes and the Community Safety and Security Programme. The efforts to integrate the communities and interest groups in the fight against crime and violence continue to be pursued as the most sustainable approach to rebuilding the social fabric of families and communities, renewing and promoting adherence to law and order and the long-term reduction in crime.

Other initiatives which include, "Get the Guns", "Crime Stop" and *Operation Kingfish*, are aimed at bringing all measures to bear on the disruptive elements in society and tackle trans-national links which support the criminal networks.

PORT SECURITY: In an effort to meet the required international standards established by the International Maritime Organization (IMO) after the events of 2001, the Government of Jamaica has spent over US\$90m to upgrade its systems and facilities at its ports.

The fact that ninety percent (90%) of the country's trade is carried out on ships, compels the Government to establish and maintain the measures required to keep the country in compliance with the International Ship and Port Facility Security (ISPS) Code. A comprehensive set of arrangements for monitoring the statutory safety and environmental compliance of both local and international ships has been established by the maritime authority.

ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE

The Ministry of Justice has determined that sound legal frameworks are prerequisites for economic growth and social development. As a result, the focus has been on the automation of the justice system and on institutional and human resource capacity building. Also, the promotion of a legislative framework that supports legal and judicial reform as well as sustainable social and economic development. Over the last four years, the Ministry has carried out different programmes and activities aimed at meeting its objectives.

A number of bills have been prepared, tabled and are in various states of review. Among these are the Criminal Justice and Maintenance Acts which have been tabled in Parliament. The Domestic Violence Act and Coroner's Act have already been passed.

STRATEGIES FOR ECONOMIC GROWTH

The growth strategies being pursued by the government are outlined in its Medium Term Socio-Economic Policy Framework 2004-2007 and which was last revised in August 2004. The objectives relate to increased investment for social capital, creation of increased employment, increased investment in infrastructure and a more responsive public sector.

FOREIGN TRADE AND INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC NEGOTIATIONS

Jamaica developed a new trade policy in 2001 in a bid to adapt to the rapid changes taking place in the world economy due to globalization and liberalization. The Government continues to employ a system of extensive consultations across the widest cross-section of society in order to reach consensus positions on the issues of greatest importance.

The new trade policy focuses on the creation of new exports, displace imports and increase the flow of net positive returns from overseas inflows from remittances and capital flows and investments in Jamaica.

Strengthening relations with a number of countries in the region around the Caribbean Basin constitute another important aspect of the Jamaican policy.

The country has also been preparing for an end to preferential arrangements and to the reciprocal trade arrangements which will take place within the framework of the FTAA and the EU trade regimes in the near future. In spite of delays in advancing the FTAA, Jamaica maintains that the FTAA will be an important part of its strategic trade policy as well as a means to create sustained economic development and remains committed to the negotiating process.

A proactive approach in the WTO negotiations is crucial to the overall policy for trade adjustment and Jamaica has long been an advocate for initiatives to advance special and differential treatment for developing countries and to enhance north-south trade. Jamaica has made significant efforts to make its trade and investment regime more open and transparent, through initiatives to accelerate customs clearance. Much work has also been done to liberalize the financial services and telecommunications sectors.

Steps are already being undertaken to establish the requisite legislative and institutional framework to adequately support the new systems which will be required, nationally and within the context of CARICOM. Jamaica is now considering the steps necessary for implementation of the Single Economy in 2008 and work is being done at the regional level to put in place a Regional Strategic Development Plan.

As a member of the African Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) group of countries, Jamaica is now participating in the negotiations to conclude Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) with the EU. In April 2004, the launch of the regional negotiations took place in Kingston. The European Union currently provides support for projects in a range of areas including infrastructure development, education and private sector initiatives. ■



Mexico

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Mexico is satisfactorily implementing programs designed to fulfill the mandates of the Third Summit of the Americas and the Special Summit of the Americas to promote development of its society.

Mexico's priority in its social development policy is to reduce poverty, as evidenced by the highest budget in its history allocated to this area. During the period 2001-2003, spending on social development amounted to 10.23% of GDP. In the context of actions Mexico has set in motion to reduce poverty, the social policy strategy called "*Contigo*" stands out. This strategy integrates and coordinates all social programs implemented at the national level and has helped to produce a significant turnaround in poverty levels. In 2004, the "*Oportunidades*" program served five million families. This program has been so successful that its guidelines have been introduced in 27 countries.

MIGRATION

One of the Mexican government's fundamental assumptions in the area of migration is that migrants are not criminals and their rights must be guaranteed regardless of their migrant status. With respect to the commitment to significantly reduce the time and cost involved in sending remittances, the average cost of remittances fell significantly in the period 1999-2003, from US\$31 to US\$14 per transaction.

EDUCATION

One out of every four pesos of programmable spending in Mexico goes to education. Including investments from local authorities and the private sector, spending in education represents 6.8% of GDP. Mexico carries out actions that help to promote education as a fundamental right, as well as innovation and shared utilization of knowledge. An example of this is implementation of the project called Statistics and Indicators for the Population with Educational Needs in Latin America, conducted in coordination with the OECD.

INFRASTRUCTURE

In terms of infrastructure and regulation, scientific and technological support have increased, with tax incentives provided for the first time. To develop the information society, the National

e-Mexico System has been implemented, setting up Community Digital Centers where the population has access to education, health, and economic services as well as other services.

HEALTH

In the area of health, Popular Health Insurance (*Seguro Popular de Salud* – SPS) was created in 2001. Its purpose is to ensure that families without institutional medical services have access to a basic package of health services without having to make direct payments. By January 2005, there were 1,560,000 families enrolled, a figure that is expected to reach 5,000,000 families in 2006. Also noteworthy are the programs Tuberculosis Free Mexico 2001-2006 and the HIV/AIDS and STDs Actions Program. The aim of this latter program is to give people living in Mexico what they need to prevent HIV/AIDS and STDs and provide all people affected by them with access to comprehensive and quality health care.

GENDER EQUALITY

In the area of equality, Mexico's Federal Law to Prevent and Eliminate Discrimination, promulgated on June 11, 2003, protects Mexican citizens from all types of discrimination.

One of the Mexican government's priorities has been to incorporate the gender perspective in the design and implementation of policies and programs. Accordingly, in 2001 the National Women's Institute was legally created and the National Program for Equality of Opportunities and Non-Discrimination 2001-2006 (PROEQUIDAD) was implemented.

INDIGENOUS PEOPLE RIGHTS

In the area of indigenous affairs, the constitutional reform relating to indigenous rights and culture was published in August 2001, leading to important changes in the State's relationship with indigenous peoples and communities and reaffirming the multicultural nature of Mexico. The reform recognized the right of indigenous peoples to free determination and consequently to autonomy in decisions regarding their internal lifestyle and organization. Legal frameworks have been adopted to protect these rights such as the General Law on the Linguistic Rights of Indigenous Peoples of March 2003 and creation of the National Commission for the Development of Indigenous Peoples under a law promulgated in May 2003.

CHILDREN AND YOUTH

Efforts to combat child labor and trafficking in persons include the Program to Prevent and Eliminate the Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children (CSEC) and to Protect the Victims of CSEC

in Mexico, in effect since 2002 with technical and administrative support from the ILO-IPEC Program, both nationally and in high-incidence areas at the state and local level. In addition, in accordance with the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Mexican government is implementing the 2002-2010 National Plan of Action for Children.

EMPLOYMENT

In labor affairs, the Mexican government has fostered a climate of labor peace in light of the new labor culture that places the individual at the center of all economic decisions. The Training Support Program (PAC), co-financed by the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), focuses on the learning of multiple skills, workers' participation in decision-making within industry, and the development of skills for the ongoing learning that is part of the new labor culture.

CIVIL SOCIETY

The demands presented by civil society have been answered through promulgation of the Federal Law on the Promotion of Activities by Civil Society Organizations.

MICRO, SMALL AND MEDIUM-SIZED ENTERPRISES

Mexico's Rapid Business Start-Up System (SARE) is a permanent program allowing businesses to open in less than three days. At the national level, the Internet site: www.contactopyme.gob.mx gives micro-, small, and medium-sized business owners the ability to connect with various public and private institutions. Each of the country's states has its own programs to promote and support the creation, productivity, and sustainability of micro-, small, and medium-sized enterprises.

DEMOCRACY

In the area of democracy, from 2001 to May 2005, Mexico provided technical assistance on elections to various countries in the region, including Haiti. In addition, it has signed cooperation and experience-sharing agreements with various countries.

CORRUPTION AND TRANSPARENCY

The National Program to Combat Corruption and Promote Transparency and Administrative Development has involved society in efforts to combat this scourge and to build a culture of transparency and integrity. In May 1999, Mexico ratified the OECD Convention on Combating Bribery of Foreign Public Officials in International Business Transactions.

In the area of transparency, the Federal Law on Access to Public Government Information of June 2002 helps to disseminate information to citizens and to make government administration transparency. Mexico's Electronic System for Government Procurement (COMPRANET) is a tool promoting transparency and accountability and the Electronic Government Filings System (TRAMITANET) aims to convert any computer into a government services window.

COMBATING DRUGS

With respect to drug control, the Mexican government is developing actions in this area in the context of the National Program for Drug Control (2001-2006).

HUMAN RIGHTS

Mexico has adopted human rights as government policy. Thus, in December of 2002 it signed a Technical Cooperation Agreement that includes a Headquarters Agreement to establish an Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights in the country and has since 2002 been a signatory of the following treaties: the Inter-American Convention on the Forced Disappearance of Persons; the Convention on the Non-Applicability of Statutory Limitations to War Crimes and Crimes against Humanity; the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict; the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography; the Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights; the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women; and the Optional Protocol to the Vienna Convention on Consular Relations on Compulsory Jurisdiction for Dispute Settlement.

RURAL DEVELOPMENT

In the area of agricultural management and rural development, Mexico has signed the Punta Cana Declaration for Improving Agriculture and Rural Life in the Americas. In the period 2001 to 2003, 17,024 million hectares were legalized. In the area of rural development, there are two valuable instruments, the Sustainable Rural Development Law of December 7, 2001 and the National Agreement for Rural Areas and the Development of Rural Society of April 28, 2003. The latter is contemporary Mexico's most important instrument for participatory and democratic planning in the rural sector.

HEMISPHERIC SECURITY

In the area of security, Mexico set up an inter-institutional coordinating mechanism that is charged with implementing and following up agreements under the Declaration on Security in the Americas, which adopted a new conception of hemispheric security.

ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION AND DISASTER MANAGEMENT

On the subject of disaster management, Mexico hosted the Sixth Meeting of the Special Committee on Natural Disasters of the Association of Caribbean States and the Sixth Conference of the Conference of the Association of Ibero-American Governmental Organizations for Civil Defense and Protection. In addition, Mexico's Natural Disasters Fund (FONDEN) is a financial mechanism through which the federal government assists the population affected by a natural disaster. On environmental issues, Mexico signed the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants, demonstrating its commitment to the environmental basis of sustainable development. As of August 2003, designated Protected Natural Areas (PNAs) amounted to 17,856,227 hectares, equal to 9.1% of the country's total area. ■

Nicaragua

ECONOMIC GROWTH WITH EQUITY

In an effort to organize public finances and to reactivate the economy, the Nicaraguan government reached agreement with the International Monetary Fund on a Poverty Reduction and Growth Facility (PRGF) Program. The program defined a macroeconomic framework for the period 2003-2005 as well as policy measures and structural reforms needed to ensure the country's economic and financial stability.

In 2003, the program showed satisfactory performance that, along with the achievement of the agreed-upon goals, made it possible to maintain a stable macroeconomic framework with an appropriate level of inflation. This allowed the country to reach the completion point in the HIPC initiative, which will serve to strengthen poverty reduction programs in the context of the Enhanced Economic Growth and Poverty Reduction Strategy (ERCERP). The primary objective of the World Bank Board's approval of the Poverty Reduction Support Credit (PRSC) is to support implementation of the ERCERP and the country's political, institutional, structural, and social reforms.

Trade policy is directed to opening new markets that will in such a way that Nicaragua can grow sustainably through exports. In the context of globalization, it can be argued that progress has been made through the free trade negotiations between Central America and the United States (CAFTA) as well as the possibility of a customs union among the Central American countries and other free trade treaties.

In terms of improving the investment climate, progress is being made in contracting the FIAS (Foreign Investment Advisory Service), which will develop the program of reforms to eliminate administrative obstacles. The goal is to eliminate obstacles to investment by simplifying procedures and improving the business climate in order to promote competitiveness.

The World Bank project on Competitiveness: Project/Ministry of Development, Industry and Trade (PROCOMPE/MIFIC)), is supporting modernization of the Commercial Property Registration System, with the aim of modernizing the legal and institutional framework.

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

SOCIAL SECURITY: The Nicaraguan Social Security Institute (INSS) has undertaken various actions to promote a strengthened Social Security System for Nicaraguan workers. The number of insureds has increased by 11.8% over December 2001. A total of 351,340 workers are currently protected by the integrated regime or for the IVM-RP [disability, old age, and death/professional risks] regime, with rights to social security and pensions.

The increase in the insured population allows the government, through the Ministry of Health, to reduce service demand on public centers and to direct resources to the most vulnerable population groups. Hence, thirty-two thousand old-age retirees have access to a basic health

program that allows them to receive medical care, diagnostic tests, and medications for their most frequent illnesses. To promote improvements in the quality of care provided to those injured, beneficiaries, and retirees, in early 2002 the INSS implemented the Health Services Providers Certification Process (Medical Insurance Companies and Accredited Health Units).

A voluntary Health Care Plan has been separated out under Optional Insurance and the informal sector is offered an independent segment, given that this sector does not currently enjoy the benefits provided under the Social Security Law. The design of the plan has taken into consideration the characteristics of the labor market, where the sustained growth of the economically active population (EAP), which is concentrated in the informal sector of the economy, is particularly important. This plan consists of a set of benefits equal to those offered to current affiliates, excluding economic subsidies.

INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

Nicaragua guarantees indigenous communities the exercise of the same rights, duties, and constitutional guarantees that protect all the Nicaraguan people. Therefore, it guarantees that these communities are able to enjoy equally the rights and opportunities that national legislation grants to other members of the population. This law undoubtedly promotes the full effect of their social and cultural rights, their customs and traditions, and thus their social, economic, cultural, and political institutions. Nicaragua has gone beyond the rights recognized earlier by establishing the System of Autonomy for the Indigenous Communities of the Atlantic Coast, where most of the indigenous communities live.

The Secretariat of Atlantic Coast Affairs was created as an Executive Branch institution and began to operate in July 2004. In addition to recognizing the rights of indigenous peoples, Nicaragua has been creating the conditions for achieving their inclusion and development.

MIGRANTS

Nicaragua has already ratified the Convention against Transnational Organized Crime. The General Directorate of Migration and Alien Status is a full member of the Regional Conference on Migration (RCM), in which 11 countries participate (original, transit, and destination) as a forum for dialogue and coordination to deal with all aspects of the phenomenon of migration, working with civil society and providing opportunities for it to express its concerns and make suggestions. The Central American Commission of

Directors of Migration (OCAM) plays a similar role. As part of its strategic objectives, the institution is developing a draft law that will be suited to the new dynamic of the subject of migration in the international arena, as well as treaties, conventions, protocols, and agreements to which Nicaragua is a signatory, covering issues relating to unlimited respect for human rights.

EDUCATION

Consistent with the guidelines of the National Development Plan and the National Education Plan (2001-2015), the Ministry of Education, Culture, and Sports (MECD) has undertaken a comprehensive transformation of the country's educational system. The educational policies put forth by the MECD with respect to the Structural Transformation are based on greater relevance, flexibility, interconnectivity, and diversity and also take into account the expansion of supply and demand and transformation of governance, with emphasis on the subjects of democratization and efficiency.

Nicaragua has achieved the following advances: a) The system's coverage has expanded by an average of 3.94% per year, with emphasis on the adult (9.93%), preschool (6.22%), and secondary (5.85%) educational levels. b) The number of educational centers incorporated in the educational participation system in 2004 grew to 3,409, representing 54% of the total. c) Educational decentralization, through municipalization, has become a reality, with the signing of 21 agreements between the MECD and the respective municipal governments. d) In adult education, the educational lag of youth and adults is being addressed with the creation of the Third Alternative Level, which is equal to basic education with work training and business linkage. e) The MECD, in collaboration with the Natural Disaster Prevention and Mitigation System, has incorporated risk management topics in the curricula at the various levels, organizing first aid brigades, selecting educational centers that could be used as shelters in emergencies, and training the respective teaching staff. f) Human rights and particularly the rights of children and adolescents have been incorporated in primary and secondary education, along with teachers' guides, 30,000 copies of which have been distributed as supporting materials in training courses. g) In the area of social communication, the MECD launched a national educational participation campaign during the first meeting held between the Ministry and private enterprise. In addition, internal forums have been held on the launch of the educational system's transformation so there will be a single institutional presentation that will later be communicated to the mass media.

HEALTH

The Ministry of Health expanded on its reforms and hospital modernization in terms of infrastructure, technology, planning, management, and quality and successfully improved the levels of coordination and standardization with cooperation agencies, particularly harmonization in the treatment of chronic malnutrition. Progress has been made in the design of the National Health Plan for 2005–2015, in defining the Basic Health Package, in Evaluating the National Health Policy for 1997–2002, and defining Health Policies for the period 2004–2015. The Ministry of Health has considered the prevention and control of infectious and reemerging diseases to be a subject of great importance for public health and safety and has dedicated significant efforts to organizing the fight against these diseases.

In 2004, a strong program was developed to control malaria, dengue fever, and tuberculosis. There is a national program to eliminate the vectors of Chagas' disease, which has allowed for the near total elimination of *Rhodnius prolixus* in the country. The fight against HIV/AIDS has intensified in recent years and antiretroviral therapy began nationally in 2004. The Ministry of Health acts in a joint and organized way with the private sector, the Ministry of the Environment, immigration authorities, and the management of the international airport on various disease prevention programs.

AGRICULTURE

The various actions carried out by Nicaragua's Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (MAGFOR) in the field of food safety are part of efforts relating to the availability of and access to foods. The government's agricultural policy Nicaragua has revolved around several key concepts such as increasing the profitability of production, reducing the risks proper to agricultural activity, increasing the flow of resources to agriculture, and modernizing

the sector. In this context, efforts have been made to generate and transfer technology, particularly for the production of basic grains, as well as to reduce post-harvest losses, using food safety as the cross-cutting issue.

A support program is being developed to grant financing to farmers to withhold harvests, seeking to improve their participation in the marketing process. In addition, The Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, and Forest (MAGFOR) is acting as the focal point in the installation of an information system to monitor food and nutritional safety. The purpose of the system is to compile, analyze, and make available to the respective authorities the information they need to make decisions in the area of food and nutritional safety. With the support of World Food Programme (WFP), food assistance is being provided to those affected by crises to allow families affected by emergencies to recover the means of subsistence.

DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE

Nicaragua has made significant progress in promoting citizen participation and increasing the role citizens play in the process of designing, implementing, and evaluating public policy. The National Economic and Social Planning Council (CONPES) has been strengthened as a venue for dialogue and national collaboration on public policies. The Council's membership was increased to improve the representation of various organized sectors of civil society: private enterprise, unions, universities, journalists, non-governmental organizations, women, and youth in general. Through their participation in the Council, all these sectors have continued an open dialogue with government representatives in order to help increase the quality of public administration to benefit the country's development. Analysis and debate of the subjects under discussion culminate in a series of recommendations that are submitted directly to the President of the Republic for due incorporation in the implementation or design of the respective policies. ■

Panama

ECONOMIC GROWTH WITH EQUITY

Panama is developing public policies on internal savings through serious management of public financing, putting into practice a fiscal system that is based on a principle of equity (those who earn more pay more taxes), increases the tax base, creates a more just tax system, and strengthens public finances, under Law 5 of February 2, 2005.

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

The Government of Panama is implementing social inclusion policies for the most vulnerable sectors of society. A subsidy program is in effect that is able to immediately satisfy the basic needs of the more than eighty thousand families, i.e., half a million Panamanians, who live in extreme poverty, so that they can access basic health and education services, helping them to develop their productive capacities (pregnancy visits and childbirth care are completely free at all public service centers in the country and the health caravans program has treated more than 650,000 cases).

DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE

Aware that corruption and impunity weaken public and private institutions, erode the people's morale, work against the Rule of Law, and distort economies and the allocation of resources for development as stated in the declaration from the Special Summit, the national Government of Panama created the National Council for Transparency and against Corruption and issued a decree governing the ethical conduct of public servants. In addition, constitutional reforms were implemented to give the country a constitution more consistent with current reality, contributing in this way to democratic governance.

TOWARDS A MORE EFFECTIVE DEMOCRACY

In conjunction with the Ministry of Education, Panama has continued to implement the Voter Civil Education Program to promote democratic culture among teachers and students at the various educational centers in the country. At the regional level, specialized technical assistance has been provided to electoral bodies in Nicaragua, El Salvador, Haiti, Guatemala, and Honduras.

HUMAN RIGHTS AND FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS

The Republic of Panama ratified the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its three additional protocols (to prevent trafficking in women and

children, the manufacture and illicit trafficking of firearms, and illegal trafficking of migrants by land, air, and sea).

Efforts have been made to adapt the domestic legal system to prevent any type of discrimination against women, pursuant to the Convention of Belem do Para.

TELECOMMUNICATIONS

Telecommunications in Panama are governed by the Public Services Regulatory Agency that, since 1997, has been regulating the granting of concessions for the delivery of telephone services and cellular telephone services in the country and promoting the extension of these services to the most remote areas of the country.

In a regional context, Panama is party to the Central American Treaty on Telecommunications and under this scheme supports the project to install fiber optics through the use of electrical towers from Guatemala to Panama.

ENVIRONMENTAL BASIS OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

At the hemispheric level, Panama has participated in developing the Latin American Manuals that will allow countries to comply with the Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs). Panama supports the Mesoamerican Biological Corridor Project that seeks to contribute to the conservation and sustainable use of the biodiversity of Central America and Mexico. Various international conventions have been signed that seek to comply with the MEAs and Panama's domestic legislation has been adapted accordingly to protect the environment. The national government is developing an environmental strategy that will seek to develop important projects that will contribute to environmental preservation.

AGRICULTURAL MANAGEMENT AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

On the subject of agricultural management, Panama has followed up the Agro 2015 Plan by adopting measures that include:

- + Eliminating tax certificates (CATS)
- + Promoting the implementation of regional animal and plant health policies such as CODESS and the EUROGAP standards
- + Promoting the participation of private banking in financing innovative actions within the agricultural sector
- + Promoting the Nutritional Food Safety Program

EDUCATION

Efforts have been made to improve the quality of teaching in the country by improving the infrastructure, by appointing teachers in areas that are difficult to access, and by including special needs children in the country's public and private schools.

HEALTH

Under the 2004-2009 Government Program, the national government continues to develop public policies and health policies that include reform and modernization of the state. In the context of prevention, the Plan to Reduce Maternal Mortality is being successfully implemented as part of meeting the Millennium Development Goals to reduce maternal and perinatal mortality and morbidity. With respect to combating STDs/HIV/AIDS, Panama has developed a Multisectoral Strategic Plan and has increased the coverage of antiretroviral therapy for patients. A Strategic Plan on Renewal of Actions to Strengthen the Virtual Health Library in Panama has been developed.

GENDER EQUALITY

Panama presented the Country Report on 12 areas of the Beijing Platform for Action in the context of the 49th Session of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women. Our country's legal framework was adapted to promote equal opportunity for women through the installation of Offices for Women and the creation of the Network of Governmental Mechanisms to Promote Equal Opportunities in Panama. Studies have also been conducted to verify the needs of youth with a view to establishing a public policy on youth.

INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

With the goal of integrating indigenous peoples, the national Government of Panama has created the Indigenous Peoples Health Unit under the Directorate for Health Promotion in order to improve the living conditions of Panama's indigenous peoples. In addition, it has initiated measures to implement an Intercultural Bilingual Education Program during the early years of primary education that will allow for better integration of these groups and the system with their culture. ■

Paraguay

HUMAN RIGHTS AND FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS

The Government of Paraguay places the highest priority on promoting and protecting human rights domestically as well as in its international relations, and for this reason this has been incorporated as state policy. Since the beginning of democratic rule in 1989, importance advances have been made such as the progressive internalization of international human rights instruments; facilitation of individual access to international protective organizations; strengthening of the national system to protect the individual through the creation and effective operation of new institutions such as the Office of the Ombudsman; and establishment of an inter-institutional government network to promote and protect human rights that maintains an ongoing and constructive dialogue on the subject with civil society organizations.

The Truth and Justice Commission was created to consolidate a democratic and social state of law with human rights fully in effect and to promote a culture of peace, solidarity and harmony among Paraguayans. It is responsible for investigating events that constitute or may constitute human rights violations committed by governmental or quasi-governmental agents from May 1954 until promulgation of the law as well as for recommending the adoption of measures to prevent a repetition of such violations.

On July 20, 2005, during the last MERCOSUR Summit, the Asuncion Protocol on Commitment, Promotion, and Protection of Human Rights was signed at the initiative of Paraguay.

WOMEN AND CHILDREN'S RIGHTS

The Women's Secretariat, with ministerial rank, promotes action plans to foster equal opportunity and equity between men and women. It is currently coordinating implementation of the Second National Plan for Equality between Men and Women (2003-2007), which was approved by Executive Branch decree. This plan is a benchmark in the country's history because it represents a qualitative step in the search for equality between men and women as a necessary condition for strengthening democracy.

Notable achievements in the area of promoting gender equality include increased educational coverage and a decline in the illiteracy rate with implementation of the 2020 Strategic Plan on Educational Reform. Important steps have been taken in the area of women's health under the National Policy on Comprehensive Healthcare for Women and the Second National Sexual and Reproductive Health Plan (2003-2008).

The National Secretariat for Children and Adolescents was implemented in 2003, with ministerial rank. Its purpose is to promote, organize and supervise the implementation of national policy designed to ensure that the rights of children and adolescents are fully in effect.

With respect to the human rights of children and adolescents, ILO Convention 138 on the Minimum Age for Admission to Employment and the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children have been ratified. Paraguay is a party to Convention 182 on Eliminating the Worst Forms of Child Labour.

MIGRATION

Paraguay is an active participant in the South American Conference on Migration and its technical meetings. The Sixth Conference will be held in Paraguay in 2006.

In the MERCOSUR context, initiatives have been developed on better control of migration. Because of this, the MERCOSUR Ministers of the Interior have decided to create a Specialized Forum on Migration under MERCOSUR.

COMBATING THE DRUG PROBLEM

Paraguay has a National Anti-Drug Secretariat (SENAD) that answers directly to the Office of the President of the Republic.

In combating drugs, priority is being given to specialized training for professionals working in the area of prevention by strengthening Inter-Institutional Technical Groups. The minimum standards for treating drug addicts have been revised and a census and an epidemiological study of drug-dependent patients in treatment centers has been conducted through Paraguay's SENAD Drug Observatory. An important step forward is the change in the research criterion and the restructuring of the entire anti-drug effort, which is now directed to dismantling criminal structures, and not drug seizures, as the ultimate goal. With this change, the results in seizures, arrests, and extraditions of criminals as a guarantee of bilateral and multilateral cooperation have been strengthened and efficiency in operations and in the anti-drug struggle is evident. In addition, Paraguay is implementing the new Hemispheric Strategy for school-based prevention in combating drugs.

COMBATING TRANSNATIONAL ORGANIZED CRIME

Under a set of provisions called the "National Security Plan," a series of reforms are being introduced in the current criminal and security system.

In order to update legal instruments against the growing crime of money laundering, a bill is in Congress to amend the Law on the Laundering of Financial Assets. For its part, the National Customs Directorate has established specific mechanisms facilitating the objectives of the Fight against Illegal Substances, such as

implementation of Integrated Border Control Areas, mandatory use of the SOFIA Computerized Information System, full application of selectivity channels, application of the Red Channel, and mandatory application of the Value Suffix.

HEMISPHERIC SECURITY

In December 2004, a High-Level Workshop to Follow Up the Recommendations of United Nations Resolution 1373 was held at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Participants included representatives from the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the Counter-Terrorism Committee (CTC) of the Security Council, and the Office of the High Commissioner of Human Rights.

During the upcoming legislative session, a draft of the Anti-Terrorism Law will be submitted to the National Congress. Paraguay is a party to the 12 international instruments against terrorism. It has ratified and deposited the Inter-American Convention against Terrorism (OAS), which has been in effect since February 2005.

Paraguay has been a solid proponent of the 3+1 Group on Tri-Border Area Security, whose members are Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay, and the United States. It is dedicated to the fight against terrorism and other related crimes. It has developed a series of preventive measures against terrorism based on training, strengthening of financial institutions, and improvements in national legislation against money laundering, terrorism financing, and weapons trafficking in the member countries.

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

In order to promote conditions for social well-being among the population, the Executive Branch created the Social Action Secretariat (SAS), which has ministerial rank. During 2004, the SAS dedicated its efforts to promoting a national strategy to reduce poverty and social inequality. In this regard, it has successfully made adjustments to programs and projects currently underway in accordance with the National Poverty and Inequality Reduction Strategy and the Millennium Development Goals.

ELECTIONS PROCESSES AND PROCEDURES

The Superior Court of Electoral Justice is the supreme authority in the area of elections and is responsible for managing and supervising voter registration and managing the resources allocated for elections in the General Budget of the Nation. It directs its activities primarily to education, training, raising the awareness of citizens, and disseminating the message that citizens must be aware in a democracy in order to participate adequately in the country's voting process. In February 2004, it created the

Department of Electoral Services to offer free technical-electoral consulting services, including logistical assistance, support, and electoral process assistance to intermediate organizations.

FIGHT AGAINST CORRUPTION

Paraguay has created the National Council to Promote the National Integrity System. Its mission is to promote the National Integrity Plan to facilitate the reform of public administration in the country. Areas of progress include creation of the Government Procurement Unit and the Transparency and Citizen Participation Unit (UTPC); development of Transparency Maps; a draft Law governing the System for Declaring the Assets of Public Servants; development of the Program of Institutional Strengthening of the Office of the General Comptroller of the Republic in the strategic context of the 2003-2007 legal reform; creation of the Directorate of International Affairs and Foreign Legal Assistance (2004); inclusion of the Office of the Attorney General of Paraguay in the OAS Pilot Project on Secure Electronic Mail; creation of a computerized system between the Supreme Court of Justice, the Ministry of Foreign Relations, and the Office of the Attorney General; amendments to the Law on Private Information protecting access to information by the press (2002); and creation of the Presidential Council on Modernization of Public Administration.

TRANSPARENCY

In order to make government agencies' administrative and management activities transparent, the Office of the President of the Republic has set up a web page from which the pages of the other Ministries can be accessed. The Government Procurement Portal is fully operational.

TRADE, INVESTMENT, AND FINANCIAL STABILITY

The government has taken administrative steps to formalize the economy and reduce tax evasion. A highly positive result was rapidly obtained, with fiscal year 2004 tax collections 34.1% higher than collections in fiscal year 2003. In addition, efforts continue to incorporate as soon as possible the single window for establishing companies, a simplified processing system, and a single physical location for the relevant procedures.

DISASTER MANAGEMENT

The National Emergency Secretariat (SEN) was created in June 2005. Its primary purpose is to prevent and counteract the effects

of natural and other disasters. It promotes, coordinates, and guides the activities of public, municipal, and private institutions engaged in prevention, mitigation, response, rehabilitation, and reconstruction of communities affected by emergency situations.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND ENVIRONMENT

The Secretariat of the Environment (SEAM) is promoting scenarios and activities appropriate to the effective participation of agricultural and rural community leaders in forums to discuss the importance of conserving natural resources. Paraguay has ratified the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Kyoto Protocol.

AGRICULTURAL MANAGEMENT AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Given the need for varied actions against poverty, increased competitiveness in the agricultural sector, sustainable management of natural resources, human resource policies, and local rural development, Paraguay has developed the 2004-2008 Agricultural and Rural Development Plan. In fact, the various projects underway, with both domestic and foreign financing, have succeeded in promoting economic and social conditions favorable to agricultural and business development, job creation, the integration of agricultural production and commercial chains, and Paraguay's participation in the global context.

HEALTH

The indicators show a logarithmic increase in the number of cases, with between 18,000 and 20,000 people living with HIV/AIDS in Paraguay. The foundations have been established for better access to diagnosis and treatment of HIV/AIDS. Achievements include antiretroviral therapy (ARV) for 300 people, training of human resources in the program, a 50% reduction in the cost of antiretroviral medication. The first National HIV/AIDS Forum, strengthening of healthcare centers for mothers and children in seven health regions for adequate management of prophylaxis against the transmission of HIV/AIDS from mother to child, instructional work among the most vulnerable populations, formation of a multisectoral national management committee, formation of a technical committee on comprehensive care, strengthening of the PRONASIDA's Education and Prevention Department, execution of projects in border cities, specifically on subjects related to risk reduction in persons using injectable drugs. ■

PERU

STRENGTHENING DEMOCRACY AND DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE

DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE AND DEMOCRACY: On July 22, 2002, political parties, the Peruvian government, and civil society signed a long-term National Agreement with the following goals: to promote democracy and the Rule of Law; achieve equity and social justice; develop the country's competitiveness; and consolidate an efficient, transparent and decentralized state. A total of 30 government policies designed have been adopted to achieve those objectives.

The National Development Plan has been designed to strengthen democratic governance. It is directed to coordinate among government, regional and local institutions and private enterprises on actions intended to promote development and social peace in areas affected by high levels of poverty.

Also, the principles and standards of the Inter-American Democratic Charter have been incorporated in the curriculum for early, primary, secondary, and technological and teachers' education. The charter has also been translated into Quechua.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Starting with the Quebec Summit, Peru has been a party to the following international instruments on the subject of human rights:

- + Inter-American Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Persons with Disabilities.
- + Rome Statute creating the International Criminal Court.
- + Inter-American Convention on Forced Disappearance of Persons.
- + Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict.
- + Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography.
- + Convention on the Non-Applicability of Statutory Limitations to War Crimes and Crimes against Humanity (accession).

Since 2004 the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in conjunction with the National Human Rights Council and the National Human Rights Coordinator, has been promoting preparation of the first draft of the National Human Rights Plan. The President of the Republic has announced that the National Human Rights Plan will be promulgated on December 10th, 2005, the anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

In order to clarify the process, events and responsibilities for the terrorist violence and human rights violations that occurred between May 1980 and November 2000, the Truth and

Reconciliation Commission (CVR) was created on June 4, 2001 and issued its final report on August 28, 2003.

In order to implement the recommendation of the Truth Commission, in 2004 the government created the High Level Multisectoral Commission and through a recently approved law it established the Integrated Reparations Plan for the victims of the violence that occurred during the indicated period. That law provides for the creation of a Single Registry of the Victims of violence as well as a Reparations Council that will be responsible for the registry.

Based on the Commission's report, the Office of the Prosecutor has proceeded to file a series of indictments with the courts in connection with human rights violations.

WOMEN'S RIGHTS

Peru has a National Plan for Equal Opportunity for Men and Women (2003-2010) that was arrived at through consultation with and participation from civil society.

In this context, various legislative measures have promoted the more equitable political participation of various sectors of society. To this end, measures such as gender quotas were adopted through the General Elections Law, establishing that the lists of candidates for Congress must include no less than 30% of women or men and the Municipalities Law that establishes that the lists of candidates must be made up of no less than 30% of men or women and a minimum of 15% of representatives from native communities and aboriginal peoples in each province where they exist, as determined by the National Elections Court.

Women's representation in the legislative branch has tripled, going from 6% to 19%. At the same time, there has been a significant increase in women's access to local governments.

TRANSPARENCY AND ACCESS TO INFORMATION

The right to information is a constitutionally recognized right. Under the Constitution, anyone is allowed to request, without indicating any reason, the information he or she needs and to receive it from any public agency. Under the Law on Transparency and Access to Public Information, the Peruvian government has regulated the right to public information, establishing in principle that "all information held by the State is presumed to be public information" except as expressly indicated in the law.

FIGHT AGAINST CORRUPTION

Peru is a party to the Inter-American Convention against Corruption as well as the United Nations Convention against Corruption.

The National Commission to Fight Corruption and Promote Ethics and Transparency in Public Administration and society is a governmental institution answering to the Council of Ministers, Office of the President.

COMBATING THE DRUG PROBLEM

The National Anti-Drug Strategy (2002-2007) designed by the National Commission for Development of a Drug-Free Life (DEVIDA) has been approved. It is a multisectoral strategy and is designed to confront the problems of drug production, trafficking, and consumption, and other related crimes. Through the Anti-Drug Directorate, the Peruvian National Police have been developing a series of actions to deal comprehensively with the problems of illegal drug trafficking and related crimes, with full respect for human rights and the environment.

COMBATING TERRORISM

Peru is party to the 12 United Nations Conventions against Terrorism and the Inter-American Convention against Terrorism. It is also bound by Security Council resolutions on the subject, notably Resolutions 1267 and 1373.

In order to ensure adequate implementation of international antiterrorist provisions, a Special Multisectoral Commission (CEMINATI) has been created and charged with incorporating international antiterrorism provisions in national legislation.

SUSTAINABLE GROWTH AND ECONOMIC STABILITY

Since 2001, Peru has grown sustainably at an average rate of 5% per year. Peru's economy will have grown about 25% between the years 2001 and 2006. Economic growth is accompanied by low inflation, averaging slightly higher than 2% per year.

International reserves have grown from 8.2 billion dollars in 2001 to more than 14 billion dollars. The fiscal deficit fell from 3.4% in 2000 to 1.1%. Exports increased from 6.8 billion dollars in 2001 to more than 14 billion dollars without including services.

This economic stability has allowed the current country risk indicator to fall gradually, placing Peru in a situation similar to that of investment grade economies.

GROWTH WITH EQUITY AND COMBATING POVERTY

According to Peru's National Institute of Statistics and Information Technology (INEI), the percentage of those living in extreme poverty fell from 24.1% to 19.2 % between 2001 and 2004. The figures are even more striking in rural areas where extreme poverty fell from 49.8% to 40.3%.

About one million Peruvian men and women have left extreme poverty behind. This change is directly reflected in the level of poverty in general, which has declined from 54.3% to 51.6%. Rural poverty fell from 77.1% to 72.5%.

According to a study by the Universidad del Pacifico, the personal spending of 50% of Peruvians grew by 11.7% in real terms between the years 2001 and 2004. In the poorest sector, food consumption grew by 31% between 2003 and 2004.

STRENGTHENING PROPERTY RIGHTS

Through the Commission for Formalizing Informal Property (COFOPRI) the Peruvian government seeks to create a system that will allow those occupying urban lands informally to have access to legally secure property rights that can be maintained over time. To do this, mechanisms are being developed for legal physical regularization, low-cost formalization, a property records system, etc. This has allowed 1,405,216 settlers to obtain properly recorded property titles.

REMITTANCES

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs has promoted programs so that the migrant population and those receiving remittances can access the banking system in the destination countries and the receiving population can access various banking services.

As a result of various steps that have been taken, it has been possible to significantly reduce the cost of sending remittances. Thus, in 2002, the charge was 15% of the value of the remittance while the charge is currently between 3% and 5%. In addition, financial products have been developed that allow mortgage loans to be paid with remittances.

EDUCATION

Investment per student in public schools has increased by 84% since 2001. During the same period, the number of classroom hours has risen from 1000 to 1100 hours at the primary level and from 1140 to 1330 hours at the secondary level. From 2001 to date, more than 95,000 teachers have been trained. The Huascarán Program

was created to promote education in rural areas. This is a strategic program that specializes in the educational use of information and communication technologies (ICTs) and seeks to help improve the quality of education in a context of equity.

LABOR RIGHTS AND EMPLOYMENT

Peru has ratified 100% of the eight basic ILO conventions as well as 75% of the four priority conventions. Taken as a whole, the country has ratified 40% of the ILO conventions.

As part of these measures, in 2004, the Ministry of Labor and Employment Promotion created the Directorate for the Protection of Minors and Social Security and Occupational Health to deal with issues relating to protecting the rights of working children and adolescents. In addition, the National Executive Committee for the Prevention and Eradication of Child Labor has been created.

Regarding to the creation of employment, 1,700,000 new jobs were created between the fourth quarter of 2001 and the third quarter of 2004. The number of people with adequate employment increased by 580,000 during this same period.

HEALTH

Comprehensive Health Insurance now serves 9,000,000 people, 84% of whom live in rural and marginal urban areas. Of the 600,000 births occurring each year nationwide, half are cared for under Comprehensive Health Insurance. In addition, infant mortality has declined from 33 per thousand to 23 per thousand in 2004, and professional childbirth care has doubled in rural areas.

The National Health Strategy for the Prevention and Control of Sexually Transmitted Diseases and HIV/AIDS was established in 2004. This strategy designs and provides standards for organizational procedures in the area of institutional and sectoral management in order to achieve operational objectives relating to a culture of health, and prevention and control of sexually transmitted diseases and HIV/AIDS, with a focus on equity, law, and the exercise of citizenship. ■



Saint Kitts and Nevis

DEMOCRACY

ELECTORAL PROCESSES AND PROCEDURES: In accordance with the Constitution, citizens have the right to elect their government peacefully. Citizens exercise this right in practice through elections usually held at approximately 5-year intervals on the basis of universal suffrage. In the last general elections held in October 2005, a multiparty political system existed, in which political parties were free to conduct their activities. It was conducted peacefully. The Government is committed to enhancing the electoral process.

TRANSPARENCY AND GOOD GOVERNANCE: Several Acts have been passed to create an atmosphere of transparency and good governance, including, inter alia: Financial Services Intelligence Act (2000), Recording of Court Proceedings Act (2002); Tax Administration and Procedures Act (2003), Private Investigators and Security Awards Act (2004); Financial Services Commission Act (2000), etc.

FIGHT AGAINST CORRUPTION: In 2004, St. Kitts and Nevis became a States Party to the International Convention against Corruption.

MEDIA AND COMMUNICATIONS: The Constitution provides for freedom of speech and of the press, and the Government generally respects these provisions in practice.

TRADE AND INVESTMENT

CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY: St. Kitts and Nevis as an active member of the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) welcomes the Draft Corporate Governance Principles for Caribbean Countries, which the Eastern Caribbean Stock Exchange is currently formulating. Though the principles are not law, they will reflect the standard for good governance practices, among all stakeholders, including the public, throughout the Caribbean.

INVESTMENT: St. Kitts and Nevis has become one of the more recent international financial centres to emerge in the world. The Government of St. Kitts and Nevis has continuously embarked on a program to diversify the agricultural sector and stimulate the development of other sectors of the economy. Observation of international initiatives against money laundering and terrorism creates a climate conducive to doing business.

Through the institution of a program of investment incentives for businesses contemplating locating to St. Kitts or Nevis, the Government has been encouraging both domestic and foreign private investment. Policies which provide liberal tax holidays, duty-free import of equipment and materials, and subsidies for training provided to local personnel have been implemented.

The Government of the twin island state has been aggressively pursuing investors, especially in the tertiary industry and has attracted 5 star hotel developers. Local legislation has been adopted to increase its niche and range of services.

The Foundations Act 2003 (No. 8 of 2003) was passed in September 2003, and came into effect on January 31st 2004. This piece of legislation provides for the establishment of private foundations (exempt and ordinary) in St. Kitts and Nevis.

JUSTICE

In the area of combating the drug problem and related crimes, the Government of St. Kitts and Nevis welcomed the opportunity to again participate in the Third Round of the Multilateral Evaluation Mechanism of the Organisation of American States (OAS). The country recorded significant progress in the fight against drugs. Through the National Anti-drug Strategy (2000–2005), the outcome has been successful with a reduction of supply and demand, effective control measures, strengthening of institutional framework, excellent programme evaluation and reduction in money laundering. The National Council on Drug Abuse Prevention is responsible for coordinating demand reduction and drug-related statistical data. It engages in the Inter-American Uniform Drug Use Data System (SIDUC) and the Uniform Statistical System on Control of the Supply Area (CICDAT). In 2003, the Government enacted the Pharmacies Act, which regulates and monitors pharmacists, pharmacies, the sale and storage of drugs, controlled drugs and poison.

In an effort to combat drug-related and other crimes, the Government ratified the Convention Against Transnational Organised Crime, the Inter-American Convention against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearm, Ammunition, Explosives and Other Related Materials. The most recent amendment to the Firearms Act 1967 was completed in 2003. National Laws which require that firearms be marked at time of manufacture and on importation have been enacted.

The Federation of St. Kitts and Nevis continues to enforce a variety of legal instruments criminalizing money laundering, in particular, the sanctions to be applied in case they are infringed. Such laws include Organised Crime Prevention and Control Act 2002, Financial Matters Information Unit Act of 2000, Money Laundering Act (Prevention) 2000, Proceeds of Crime Act of 2000, with its amendments of 2001 and 2002, Regulations of 2002 on Financial Services and the Anti-Terrorist Act of 2002.

HUMAN RIGHTS

HUMAN RIGHTS OF CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS: The Government of St. Kitts and Nevis generally respects the rights as outlined in the Constitution. The Government is committed to children's rights and welfare and has incorporated most of the provisions of the U.N. Convention on the Rights of the Child into

domestic legislation. According to the law education is compulsory up to the age of 16; it is free and universal. More than 98 percent of children completed school. Under the law, the age of consent is 16.

Child labour is addressed in the Employment of Women, Young Persons, and Children Act (2002). Legislation regarding equal opportunity and treatment in employment and protection against sexual harassment are currently being reviewed for passage.

St. Kitts and Nevis ratified the International Labour Organisation (ILO) Conventions on: Discrimination in respect of Employment and Cooperation, Prohibition and Immediate Action for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour, Abolition of Forced Labour, Minimum Age, and others.

HUMAN RIGHTS OF WOMEN: The law is void of any impediments that prevent women from participation in leadership roles in government and politics. The Speaker of the National Assembly is female, three of four magistrates were female, the court registrar was female, and six of eleven permanent secretaries were female.

DISASTER MANAGEMENT

By adopting the Development Control and Planning Act, the Government of St. Kitts and Nevis continues to reduce vulnerability to disasters. Its Board regulates and monitors the construction industry and ensures that all construction complies with the Building Code.

With financial assistance from the World Bank, the Government has constructed five (5) Community Centres/Emergency Shelters, three on St. Kitts and two in Nevis, consequently increasing the emergency sheltering capacity on both islands. Constructed to resist earthquakes and hurricanes, they will provide safe temporary accommodation if required in the event of a national disaster.

In addition, the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) and Emergency Operations Centre now claim a new building, which is also home to a disaster relief warehouse. These facilities enhance the country's disaster management capacity to undertake pre and post hazard impact activities and will be the central point of coordination. Training sessions, meetings and simulation exercises will also be conducted at the same site.

The Government of St. Kitts and Nevis, as part of a regional initiative, has embraced the concept of Comprehensive Disaster Management (CDM) – a mechanism to incorporate disaster management in national development. This strategy, along with additional measures, will seek to mitigate the impact of future disasters on these islands.

GROWTH WITH EQUITY

In 1994, the United Nations Development Programme ranked St. Kitts and Nevis first among the best countries to live and second best in the Caribbean and Latin America.

Efforts to reduce and eradicate poverty have intensified. Numerous social development programmes focus on poor people; cater their needs even more effectively. Efforts are being pursued to revise the taxation systems to shift the burden of taxation away from the poor. The Government is very sensitive to gender issues and much care is given to the needs of the elderly.

EDUCATION

The Education system of St. Kitts and Nevis is amongst the highest quality and places 39th in the world in the 2003 United Nations Report. Results from the Caribbean Examination Council continue to improve annually.

HEALTH

A newly refurbished state-of-the-art general hospital and health centres cater to the needs of the patient population of the Federation.

LABOUR

Unemployment is at 5%, the lowest in the region and among the world's lowest, and the minimum wage has increased during the last year. Employment opportunities continue to increase as capital projects are implemented. Plans are in place for sugar workers to be able to find suitable employment as necessary.

INFRASTRUCTURE

TELECOMMUNICATIONS: St. Kitts and Nevis signed onto the Eastern Caribbean Telecommunications Authority (ECTEL) Agreement some three years ago. The outcome has been beneficial in positively impacting the direction of the telecommunications sector in St. Kitts and Nevis. Liberalization of the telecommunications market has removed the monopolistic approach to the industry in the Federation and now allows for more cellular phone companies to compete fairly in the local market.

CONCLUSION

The Government of St. Kitts and Nevis looks back proudly at the advances it has made in development of all areas and looks with great anticipation to continuing to implement initiatives that will result in satisfying the mandates of the Third Summit of the Americas and beyond. ■

MAKING DEMOCRACY WORK BETTER

ELECTORAL PROCESSES AND PROCEDURES: Currently, a House-to-House Enumeration of Voters programme is being undertaken with a view to creating a more accurate Voter Register. Additionally, a new identification card system is being implemented which will incorporate technological and security features. Officers of the Electoral Office have also benefited from training in computer operations at various levels, to provide them with the necessary skills for the proper registration of voters.

TRANSPARENCY AND GOOD GOVERNANCE: Saint Lucia is committed to the practice of good governance and to ensuring the protection of Civil/Constitutional Rights, for that end the Constitutional Review Commission was established, with the mandate to review the Constitution of Saint Lucia. The Commission comprises government appointed persons, members of the opposition and non-governmental organisations. The work of the Commission includes identifying the strengths and weaknesses of the Constitution and making recommendations for reform. This work also includes consultations with the general public.

The members of the public have a means of redress for complaints against officers of the Public Service and statutory bodies through the Office of the Ombudsman. The Office of the Ombudsman has launched a successful public awareness exercise aimed at informing the public of its role and functions.

Weekly press conferences are held by the Prime Minister with both private and public media houses for the purpose of informing on government decisions. In addition the Prime Minister hosts a weekly radio programme "Conversations with the Nation" during which he informs of issues of critical importance. The nation is also kept informed of government business by the Government Information Service (GIS), which produces several radio, and television programmes in both English and the local dialect, Creole. These programmes are broadcast through both public and privately owned media houses.

FIGHT AGAINST CORRUPTION: The Integrity Commission, established under the Constitution of Saint Lucia, is charged with examining the financial affairs of persons holding specified positions in public life for the purpose of establishing probity, integrity and accountability in public life and related matters. The Commission receives and examines all declarations of assets, liabilities and income from public officials and makes inquiries as deemed necessary in order to verify or determine the accuracy of declarations filed.

EMPOWERING LOCAL GOVERNMENT: The central government, together with local government authorities, is currently involved in a process of local government reform with a view to implementing an effective decentralized system of local governance. A White Paper on Local Government Reform has been approved by the Cabinet of Ministers. Additionally, the management of a number of public facilities and parks has been transferred to the local councils.

JUSTICE, RULE OF LAW AND SECURITY OF THE INDIVIDUAL

ACCESS TO JUSTICE: Several programmes have been instituted or are underway with a view to ensuring prompt access to justice. The programmes have addressed both administrative and structural measures that have greatly improved the quality and efficiency of services to the public. The High Court building has been refurbished and space has been provided for Chamber facilities, a Conference room for Alternative Dispute Resolution (Mediation) and office space for new positions of Court Administrator, Systems Administrator and Case Management Team Members.

A Court Reporting Unit has also been established. The introduction of audio equipment together with qualified staff has resulted in improvements in transcript accuracy, reduction in transcript preparation time and a significant reduction in trial time.

A new Criminal Division has been created which results in year-round High Court Criminal Sittings. Previously the Criminal Assizes sat three times a year averaging two and a half months per sitting.

These improvements coupled with the computerisation of the court records have resulted in the effective management and speedy hearing of cases.

COMBATING THE DRUG PROBLEM: With assistance from the Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission (CICAD) and the Multilateral Evaluation Mechanism (MEM) various measures are being undertaken to combat the use and trafficking of illegal drugs. Saint Lucia has successfully implemented its Anti-Drug Strategy, which includes such activities as educational exercises in schools, workshops for inmates at the country's correctional facility, and school surveys aimed at identifying critical areas. A general education exercise with a view to establishing a policy on dealing with drug abuse in the workplace is presently being undertaken. Attention is also being focused on the abuses of chemical and pharmaceutical substances. A Drug Inspectorate has been established to deal with these issues. The Money Laundering Prevention Act and the Financial Investigation Authority investigate money laundering.

PREVENTION OF VIOLENCE: The Government of Saint Lucia through the Constitution is committed to the protection of life, liberty and security of the person. In this regard, efforts being undertaken to prevent violence encompass not only the preventative aspects, but also address other issues such as the rehabilitation of offenders and juvenile delinquency.

A new Correctional Facility has been built and a Correctional

Services Act has been passed. The government is making concerted efforts in the area of rehabilitation as a way to limit the cases of repeat offenders. Various outreach programmes as a means to aid in the smooth transition of inmates back into the community are on-going. Inmates have the opportunity to get involved in various farming and carpentry activities. Additionally, an effective adult literacy programme is also underway which provides training for inmates who would then be used as trainers to teach other inmates both in Creole and English.

A *'Scared-Straight'* programme has also been initiated. This programme facilitates visits by secondary and primary school students to the correctional facility in order to get a first-hand look at *'Life In Prison'*, and as a means to serve as a deterrent to criminal activities. This programme has proven very successful as a number of community groups are requesting such visits for the youth within their communities.

With regard to juvenile delinquency, the law enforcement authorities conducted workshops for the Boys' Training Centre, the detention centre for male juvenile delinquents. These workshops resulted in the drafting of an Operational Manual for the Centre. A review of the current legislation governing the Centre is also being undertaken. A committee was established to conduct a comprehensive review of services for juvenile delinquent girls, and has submitted a proposal for the establishment of a Juvenile Centre for Delinquent Girls.

DISASTER MANAGEMENT

Saint Lucia, like its other Caribbean neighbours, is extremely vulnerable to the ravages of natural disasters. Disaster management, therefore, plays a critical role in the national agenda.

Currently, the country is focusing on implementing its National Emergency Response Plan which takes into account the various aspects of natural and man-made disasters. Training is also a very important part of the disaster plan and during the last year, over nine hundred persons have been trained in various aspects of disaster management.

AGRICULTURAL MANAGEMENT AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

The World Trade Organization (WTO) ruling in favour of the removal of the historical preferential treatment on bananas has had serious negative impacts on the agricultural and rural sectors of Saint Lucia. This has resulted in a decline in the banana industry; the displacement of hundreds of banana farmers, repercussions of which are felt throughout the country. Saint Lucia has had to

embark on various initiatives to diversify its agricultural product. Training plays a key role in this diversification exercise and has to be an on-going process. Training is being provided for farmers, cottage level processors and exporters in the areas of post harvest handling, good agricultural practices, enterprise management, business development, chemical use and safety, and other technical areas which impact on food quality, safety and availability. Agri-business training is also being provided to exporters, processors, farmers, farmers' organisations and fishers. Various informative and educational programmes are aired weekly and monthly, both in English and Creole, in an effort to sensitise stakeholders to the critical areas of focus.

Additionally, food promotion activities have been organized with farmers at various national and international events, to increase awareness of the diversity of locally produced agricultural products. Trade missions to other parts of the region are also being undertaken by both private and public sector entities, in an effort to develop export markets for agricultural commodities.

LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT

Saint Lucia has ratified all fundamental International Labour Organisation (ILO) Conventions. In April 2003 Saint Lucia established an Industrial Relations Tribunal. The Office of the Attorney General is presently reviewing a Draft Labour Code for Saint Lucia.

HEALTH

Mindful of the importance of a healthy population to the sustainable

development of the country, the government has embarked on an extensive reform of the health sector, which will address improvements to both the infrastructure and the quality of service provided.

Assistance has been received from the Government of the People's Republic of China, for the construction of a new mental health facility which will begin in November 2005. A revision of the Mental Health Policy and a Human Resource and Training Plan is also being undertaken. The new mental health service, when completely reformed will assist greatly in providing a comprehensive service comprising acute, rehabilitative and community care.

In order to improve the capacity of the country to deliver better hospital care, plans are also underway for the construction of a new national hospital. With assistance from the European Union (EU), construction of the new national hospital is expected to begin during the first quarter of 2006.

With regard to HIV/AIDS, Saint Lucia has made substantial progress in fighting the disease. A National Strategic Plan that focuses on prevention, treatment, care and advocacy is currently underway. The Ministry of Health has embarked on a Pre-natal HIV Prevention Programme as well as a programme where affected persons are provided with free anti-retroviral drugs.

Through the efforts of the Aids Action Foundation and the private sector a host of public awareness campaigns have been organized. Free anti-retroviral drugs and condoms are also available through this initiative. ■

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines

MAKING DEMOCRACY WORK BETTER

ELECTORAL PROCESSES AND PROCEDURES: When conducting elections, the Governor General issues a Writ addressed to the returning officer for the constituency, specifying the day of nomination, the day on which the poll should be held and the day Writ is returnable to the Governor General. The election is based on a first past the post system; agents are appointed by candidates to look after their interest on polling day and the final count of votes.

Regarding registration of voters, a registering officer is appointed for each constituency whose function is to register persons 18 years and over for a National Identification card.

In order to ensure that the public is well educated about the electoral process, a series of Radio programmes is conducted to inform the public about the electoral process and to educate them about their electoral rights.

FIGHT AGAINST CORRUPTION: Saint Vincent and the Grenadines is a signatory to the Inter-American Convention against Corruption. It has participated in global forums to put an end to corruptive practices and to further develop systems based on good governance and integrity.

TRADE

Saint Vincent gave technical assistance to various groups such as students at the St. Vincent Technical College, a group of small business executives at the National Development Foundation and the Micro Business trainees of the National Commercial Bank.

The CARICOM Secretariat Statistical Unit, in conjunction with USAID and the Caribbean Trade and Competitive Development Programme, has developed some common guidelines for the collection, compilation and dissemination of statistics on Trade Services for CARICOM region. The Trade Department is working closely with the local statistical department on this initiative.

St. Vincent has joined with twelve other Caribbean states to form an economic union called Caribbean Convergence Market, CARICOM. By January 1st 2006, the Union will move to a single market economy.

Actions were taken to encourage economic diversification that include the development of the industrial sector with priority on small-scale value added industries; the development of a financial sector; the development of the tourism sector with emphasis on the stay-over tourist; the education revolution with emphasis on science and technology and universal education; and human resource development.

TOURISM: St. Vincent and the Grenadines completed the final draft of a promotional book that highlights trading activities in St. Vincent and the Grenadines. Also, the Hotel Aid Act was approved, and thirty four hotel improvement applications were processed for the year.

ENVIRONMENTAL AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

In this regard, the development of a National Strategy and Action Plan was done in accordance with article (6) of the Convention on Biological Diversity. This identified several strategic areas to support biodiversity conservation. These areas include among others:

- + The conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity.
- + Review and update environmental legislation.
- + Other work has also been done to assess and address the State's vulnerability to global change and land degradation.

Some of the measures adopted in relation to the commitment on the issue of climate change and sea level rise include:

- + Workshops, presentations and training sessions conducted in schools and community;
- + Secondary schools public speaking competitions covering such topics as 'the consequence of *Sea Level Rise on Small Island Developing States*';
- + Saint Vincent phasing out the use of leaded gasoline within the country;
- + Workshop on 'Risk Management' was held for financial institution and business houses; and
- + The draft policy on Climate Change was submitted to Cabinet by the Ministry of Health and Environment.

PROTECTION OF COASTAL AND MARINE RESOURCES: In this sense the actions taken include:

The establishment of inter-ministerial committees on the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas and the Convention for International Trade in Endangered Species of Flora and Fauna to review, develop and implement plans and activities/actions for meeting obligations, including legislative obligations.

The formulation of national projects related to the sustainable use, management and conservation of coastal marine resources.

PROTECTION AND CONSERVATION OF LAND RESOURCES:

Establishment of national projects such as the Integrated Forest Management and Development Programme. Other local initiatives include:

- + The establishment of a national steering committee on the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in 2001;
- + Public education programmes on issues pertaining to desertification;
- + 'Market to production' skills, a training programme by the

Ministry of Social Development;

- + Ongoing reforestation activities by the Forestry Department and watershed management programme with support from the Soil Conservation Unit in the Ministry of Agriculture, through their soil conservation and stabilization efforts;
- + The Riverbank Stabilization Programme using gabion baskets and vegetative wattles;
- + Sand mining regulations and the planting of *Pandanus sp.* and coconut to address coastal erosion; and
- + The Integrated Watershed Management Project.

In the areas related to the conservation of non-renewable resources of energy such as fossil fuel, environmental pollution there are initiatives in place to try to facilitate Independent Power Producers, i.e. private persons/individuals who are interested in investing locally in renewable sources of energy.

COMMUNICABLE DISEASES

St. Vincent has launched a strategy to strengthen the institutional capacity to manage and coordinate the functions of the HIV/AIDS Unit that involves staff in preparation of the Annual Report 2003; Performance Appraisals; Quarterly Report 2004; Cooperate Plan 2005; perform supervisory functions; recruit additional staff for AIDS Unit.

It has also implemented prevention and control programmes targeting adolescents, young adults and vulnerable groups: through the definition of a communication strategy by designing a behavior communication change package; produce messages; train personnel; launch programme; and evaluate communication package.

In the same way San Vincent and the Grenadines has strengthen HIV/AIDS surveillance systems by continuing the management of data for HIV/AIDS Unit; produce monthly reports by appropriate personnel; disseminate locally all analyzed reports for HIV/AIDS; conduct a behavioral surveillance study; collaborate with community nursing personnel to reach HIV/AIDS/STDs contacts; conduct a contract tracing workshop with technical assistance from the Caribbean Epidemiology Centre; Continue treatment programmes for population living with HIV/AIDS; antiretroviral drugs available and maintain; 80% persons in treatment programmes compliant.

Finally, the promotion of a supportive environment for people living with HIV/AIDS has been done, collaborating with people living with HIV/AIDS and their families to address psychosocial, spiritual and economic needs; develop two programs based on the above. As well as, collaborate with CARICOM and other sectors to develop legal frame work for people living with HIV/AIDS; establish

formal support groups for people living with HIV/AIDS; support non-governmental organizations and Social Welfare in providing services and facilities for HIV/AIDS clients, orphans and families.

INFRASTRUCTURE

LIBERALIZATION OF THE TELECOMMUNICATION SECTOR:

Introduction of a new agreement to break the monopoly with Cable & Wireless; setting up of a National Telecommunications Regulatory Commission to lead the process of liberalization in the five participating Organization of Eastern Caribbean States countries.

INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

Due to the experience of exile much of the Garifuna elements of our heritage were lost. Special efforts are being made to retrieve this aspect of our culture through on going work. Much of this is under a current 3 year capital project 'Cultural Development'. Therefore, a special day has been dedicated to the recognition of Indigenous People (August 16th) as well as National Hero's day a public holiday (March 14th).

The involvement of NGOs, is key, as they play a major role in strengthening pride, fostering preservation of traditions and seeking economic development among the descendants of indigenous people. For example, one such NGO is the Chatoyer Youth Movement.

CULTURAL DIVERSITY

St. Vincent and the Grenadines has created an environment which ensures the awareness of the multiple backgrounds that makes up our cultural heritage. Government policy put in place to recognize the multiple back grounds of our heritage; updated Cultural Policy specifically addresses diversity in a number of the sub-sections for Cultural Heritage. For example under sub-section 7.1 Ethnicity, the government recognizes and respects the equality of all the different ethnic groups which constitute our cultural heritage and the inestimable value of the synthesis of the stands of this heritage.

AGRICULTURE MANAGEMENT AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Export expansions led to a growth of foreign exchange earnings due to:

- + Fish and fish products
- + Fruits and food crop
- + Root crop
- + Value added Products
- + Superior plant and animal varieties and breads within the region
- + Ensure that 37% of forest cover is sustained ■

HUNGER AND POVERTY ERADICATION

The Government of Suriname has formulated and implemented several policies aimed at improving the well being of its citizens, in particular of those who are in great need.

These policies contributed to:

- * Concession of a financial allowance to the youth, elderly people and those who are physically disabled;**
- * Improvement of access to health care services, in particular for the disabled and elderly people;**
- * Assistance to social institutions in order to facilitate the implementation of actions by the non governmental organizations committed to social welfare.**

Furthermore, at the domestic level, with the support of the Netherlands, China and Venezuela, efforts are being made to implement an effective housing policy while, also in collaboration with the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), special attention is being given to the reform of the Social Welfare System, also called the Social Safety Net, in order to improve the social services granted by the Government.

A Low Income Shelter Programme (LISP) was introduced in April 2003, while the implementation of the reform of the Social Safety Net is expected to be initiated before April 2006.

In addition, for the purpose of collecting relevant information of those who are most in need of social services, a Beneficiary Information and Payment System (BIPS) has been introduced in 2005, with implementation expected in two years.

RURAL DEVELOPMENT

In order to promote rural development, Suriname has also adopted an Agricultural Sector Plan, to contribute to effectively coping with the challenges of hunger and poverty.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

The Government of Suriname is formulating a national strategy for the protection of bio-diversity. In compliance with the United Nations Convention on Bio-diversity, the creation of an information network with the participation of all relevant stakeholders is a priority.

In collaboration with the UNDP, a study on Bio-prospecting is underway and, while, in order to prepare for the ratification of the Cartagena Protocol on Bio-safety, a National Bio-safety Framework Project was launched in July 2003.

It is important to note that Suriname is committed to the implementation of the Protocol of Montreal, which should contribute to the protection of the ozone layer. In order to cope with land deterioration, and also as a result of Suriname's commitment to the United Nations

Convention to Combat Desertification, a national report containing information on the situation in Suriname has been developed. This report should contribute to the formulation of a National Action Plan to counter land deterioration.

An environmental legal framework has already been finalized and will be submitted for consideration by the National Parliament shortly. This legal framework is designed to contribute to addressing the challenges regarding land, air and water pollution in Suriname, and also to comply with international commitments.

HUMAN RIGHTS PROTECTION

THE RIGHTS OF CHILDREN: In collaboration with UNICEF a Plan of Action 2002–2006 is being implemented in order to:

- + Adjust legislation where needed, in order to protect children;
- + Eliminate all forms of ill-treatment of children;
- + Guarantee equal development opportunities;
- + Raise awareness of children with regard to sexually transmitted diseases.

Suriname is party to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Children, and also signed, in May 2002, the Protocols related to this Convention, and is progressing toward their ratification.

THE RIGHTS OF PHYSICALLY DISABLED PEOPLE: Actions are being taken to raise the awareness with regard to the rights of the physically disabled.

THE RIGHTS OF WOMEN: In compliance with Suriname's commitment to the protection of the rights of women, in 2003 the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) was ratified by Suriname, as well as the Convention of Belem do Para.

In addition to these actions, and, with the participation of all

relevant stakeholders, a Gender Action Plan was formulated in order to raise gender awareness and increase the participation of women in political, social and economic activities.

Along with these purposes, this Action Plan is aimed at diminishing violence against women.

Domestically, the Commission for Gender Legislation has also suggested that legal adjustments be adopted, and new legislation introduced to address discrimination against women.

PROTECTION OF INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

In Suriname copyright protection is automatically extended when the work of an artist is published.

PEACE AND SECURITY

In order to comply with the commitments of the United Nations and the Organization of American States Conventions to counter terrorism, Suriname has developed a roadmap in order to accelerate ratification of the aforementioned instruments.

As a result, since 2004, Suriname has met 6 of the 12 commitments in this regard, including the ratification of instruments related to nuclear material, bombing, plastic explosives, acts committed on aircraft, terrorism and transnational crime.

GOOD GOVERNANCE AND TRANSPARENCY

In order to effectively combat corruption and illegal practices within governmental institutions, the Government of Suriname has formulated an anti-corruption law, which has already been passed to Parliament for its approval. Suriname underlines the importance of the observance of the principles of transparency, the prevalence of democratic institutions and order as well as of the participation of all in the formulation and implementation of government policies. ■

Trinidad and Tobago

PROGRESS AND CHALLENGES

The Government of Trinidad and Tobago has successfully improved the climate for the growth and expansion of the Small Business and Micro-Enterprise sector. It views the development of Small Business and Micro-Enterprise as an important instrument for economic growth and employment generation which would enable ordinary citizens to attain economic power, enjoy property ownership and maintain individual autonomy and independence.

To this effect, the Government has included policies in its Medium Term Policy Framework and Public Sector Investment Programme to assure the development of the Small Business and Micro Enterprise sector. Substantial amounts of funding and other resources have been injected into the establishment of credit facilities and programmes of business development. A Small and Micro-Development Division has been established in the Ministry of Labour and Small and Micro Enterprise Development which is charged with the responsibility to develop policies and coordinate the implementation of such policies in the small and micro-enterprise sector, with the aim of fulfilling the Government's mandate with regard to job creation and employment.

At least six institutions have been identified to provide support for the Government's initiatives in the Small and Micro Enterprise sector. Two of these fall under the purview of the Ministry of Labour and Small and Micro Enterprise Development:

- + A Small and Micro-Enterprise Development Council, advisory to the Minister for the purpose of monitoring and review.
- + A Small and Micro-Enterprise Development Company, with its subsidiary companies to be the implementing agency for the Government's policy.

Other agencies:

- + The National Entrepreneurial Development Company (NEDCO) whose objectives are to promote and facilitate the formation growth and development of small and micro-business in Trinidad and Tobago and nurture the development of this sector.
- + The Business Development Company (BDC). BDC and NEDCO offer credit facilities for the formation and/or development of small and micro-enterprises.
- + The Tourism Industrial Developmental Company (TIDCO).
- + The Youth Training and Employment Partnership Program (YTEPP).

Currently the Government is working on a policy document known as the Fair Share Legislation which would allocate by law a designated share of all government (including Local Government and State Enterprise) purchasing and capital project spending to qualified small and micro-enterprises.

In Trinidad and Tobago the rate of informal employment is unknown, however the Government has recognized the importance of addressing the issues of the informal economy.

The Government's objective is to obtain sufficient information in order to develop policies to ensure the protection of those involved in this informal market. Further investigations and surveys into this sector are needed.

MOVEMENT TO STRENGTHEN REPRESENTATIVE DEMOCRACY AND PROMOTE GOOD GOVERNANCE

The Government of Trinidad and Tobago in all its undertakings strives for the attainment of the principles of justice, equality and equity. It anticipates that a culture of transparency, integrity and accountability should permeate in all governmental practices. Several initiatives have been undertaken to underscore the importance and enforce the application of the aforementioned principles.

Trinidad and Tobago is concentrating on a programme of legislative reform to ensure that the nation possesses the necessary legal framework to support Human Development. The legislative areas targeted for immediate attention are:

- + Sentencing;
- + Laws and Regulations in terms of Prison Reform;
- + Review of all laws to identify amendments and regulations needed to adequately cater for the differently-abled;
- + Terrorism;
- + Legislation to secure compliance with our obligations under the CARICOM Single Market and Economy, including the Caribbean Court of Justice.

Further to the Summit of the Americas and the Declaration of Nuevo León, the Government of Trinidad and Tobago recognizes that in its bid to achieve developed country status by the year 2020, the ingredients of economic growth and equity, social development and governance, must be present in the design and implementation of all government programmes and projects. Consequently the Government has been pursuing participatory approaches to policy and programme development through the public sector. A number of consultations and focus sessions are being held throughout the country to obtain inputs from key stakeholders in designing and developing government policy.

MOVEMENT TO PROTECT FUNDAMENTAL HUMAN RIGHTS AND FREEDOMS AND FOSTER SOCIAL JUSTICE

The Government has embarked on a programme aimed at the decentralization of the delivery of social services to ensure the more systematic, equitable and efficient delivery of services to all citizens. In concurrence with this initiative, the Government is signatory to an agreement with the European Union for the Implementation of the EU sponsored Poverty Reduction Programme

which focuses on poor single parent female-headed families and the youth from disadvantaged communities. Currently 11% of the population is affected by severe poverty.

TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO'S EFFORTS TO REALIZE THEIR HUMAN POTENTIAL

The Government has isolated several key social developmental areas that are in need of attention to better advance the nation's development of its human resource potential. The main objectives in this sphere include: increased access to educational opportunities at all levels of the education system, the enhancement of the delivery of social services to communities, assuring the health of the population and the fostering of greater participation in community development. Programmes which have been further developed or newly implemented in these various areas include:

EDUCATION

- + The Education Management Information System;
- + The School Nutrition Programme;
- + The provision of free text books and book grants to students;
- + The introduction of Health and Family Life Education at all levels of the education system;
- + The Government Assistance in Tertiary Education or G.A.T.E Programme which offers financial assistance to students, widening access to tertiary education;
- + The establishment of the University of Trinidad and Tobago;
- + The expansion and continuation of an extensive on-the-job (OJT) training programme.

HEALTH

The Government, being fully aware of the current and potential impact of HIV/ AIDS on the work force, is committed to the finalizing and implementation of a National Policy on HIV/AIDS in the Work Place. A Platform for Action was adopted by Caribbean countries, including Trinidad and Tobago, in May 2002. Caribbean countries are urged to be guided by international and regional initiatives regarding HIV/AIDS such as:

- + The ILO Code of Practice on HIV/AIDS and the World Of Work;
- + The ILO Resolution Concerning HIV/AIDS and the World Of Work;
- + The Caribbean Plan of Action on HIV/AIDS;
- + The Pan Caribbean Strategic Plan of Action on HIV/AIDS;
- + The Nassau Declaration on Health 2001.

Trinidad and Tobago has also developed a National HIV/AIDS Strategic Plan of Action.

A review of the health of the population has shown some improvement due to success in reducing death rates from communicable diseases and improvements in general living standards. However the high incidence of chronic, non-communicable diseases poses a continuing challenge.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

In this area, the following programs are being developed:

- + The Community Enhancement and Regeneration Programme (CERP);
- + The Community Development Scholarship Programme;
- + The Prime Minister's Best Village Competitions and Exhibitions
- + The Community Development Fund (CDF);
- + The National Commission for Self-Help Limited (NCSH Limited);
- + The Youth and the Elderly people are being benefited from programs like the National Youth Policy and the Retirees/Adolescents Partnership Program (RAPP).

ENVIRONMENT

Attention has also been paid to the role of the environment and its contribution to human productivity and development. The Government recognizes the symbiotic relationship between

development and the environment and as such programmes have been put in place to ensure that an adequate level of protection is afforded to the environment. They include:

- + The National Biosafety Framework;
- + The establishment of the Water Resources Management and Meteorological Authority;
- + National Solid Waste Management System;
- + The Community- Based Environmental Protection and Enhancement Programme (CEPEP).

CONCLUSION

The Government of Trinidad and Tobago is aware of the high levels of dissatisfaction within large sections of the population brought about through the inability of Governments to fulfill their promises on improved living standards, greater progress on anti-corruption matters, and equal access to justice. Every effort is, therefore, being made to provide effective governance, which is viewed as "an indispensable political component of economic growth." Through the various projects and programmes, Trinidad and Tobago is, therefore striving to operationalize and provide "teeth" to the issues adopted in the 2001 Quebec Plan of Action and the 2004 Declaration of Nuevo León. ■

ECONOMIC GROWTH WITH EQUITY TO REDUCE POVERTY

Broad-based economic growth and poverty reduction remain key challenges for our Hemisphere. To meet these challenges, all governments must implement sound macroeconomic policies, strengthen the foundations for growth, spur private sector-led development, and work towards the eradication of poverty. The U.S. Government has taken the following steps to implement Summit mandates:

ADVANCING FREE TRADE: The U.S. Government has led the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) negotiations process as Co-Chair since 2002, working to bring about a comprehensive agreement that benefits all participating countries. With U.S. leadership, trade ministers agreed in 2002 to establish a Hemispheric Cooperation Program to help ensure that small and developing countries—such as those in the Caribbean—benefit from free trade. In 2004, the U.S. Government conducted \$233 million in trade-capacity building assistance in Latin America and the Caribbean. Beyond the FTAA, the U.S. Government is pursuing free trade on multiple fronts. The U.S.-Chile Free Trade Agreement entered into force in 2004, and already bilateral trade figures have shown remarkable growth. In 2004, U.S. exports to Chile increased by 33 percent compared to 2003 and U.S. imports from Chile increased nearly 28 percent. The United States also recently concluded a free trade agreement (DR-CAFTA) with El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Costa Rica and the Dominican Republic. For the first time in a free trade agreement, the DR-CAFTA includes a Committee on Trade Capacity Building, in recognition of the importance of such assistance in promoting economic growth, reducing poverty, and adjusting to liberalized trade. Negotiations are also underway to conclude free trade agreements with Panama and with the Andean region (Colombia, Ecuador, and Peru).

LOWERING THE COST OF REMITTANCES: According to the Inter-American Development Bank's Multilateral Investment Fund, the cost of sending remittances from the U.S. to Latin America has fallen from an average of 12% in 2003 to approximately 8% in 2004. This decline represents progress towards the Summit goal of establishing conditions for a reduction of 50%. The U.S. has led efforts to promote competition, eliminate unnecessary regulatory barriers, and encourage the adoption of new technologies. The cost of sending remittances between the U.S. and Mexico has fallen by 50% in some key corridors since the Partnership for Prosperity program was inaugurated in 2001. The U.S. and Guatemala announced a pilot project partnership in late June 2005 to lower costs by fostering competition, efficiency, and accessibility in the remittance market. The U.S. has also engaged in extensive outreach, including an October 7-8, 2004 conference in Atlanta on "Payments in the Americas." Over 130 participants attended the conference, including officials from multilateral development banks, the commercial banking community, credit unions, and wire transfer operations.

REDUCING THE TIME AND COST TO START A BUSINESS: According to the World Bank, it takes an average of five days to start a business in the United States, and the cost is 0.6% of Gross National Income (GNI). In the 22 Western Hemisphere countries (excluding the U.S. and Canada), the average time of starting a business has been reduced from 71 days in 2004 to 63 days in 2005, and the average cost was reduced from 67 percent of GNI in 2004 to 62 percent

of GNI in 2005. The U.S. sponsored a meeting in March 2005 in Paraguay to share country success stories in implementing reform. In October 2004, the U.S. helped organize the Small- and Medium-Sized Enterprise (SME) Congress of the Americas in Chile, a hemispheric network of SME service providers working together to promote the participation and competitiveness of SMEs in international trade. Over 75 representatives of public, private, and non-profit small business service providers attended from 12 countries, and the meeting included a session on lowering the time and cost of starting a business.

FACILITATING SME ACCESS TO CREDIT: The U.S. supports the ongoing strong efforts by the Inter-American Development Bank to meet the 2007 deadline for tripling credit through the private banking sector to small businesses.

STRENGTHENING PROPERTY RIGHTS: The government organized the Inter-American Alliance for Accountability on Property Rights which unites technical experts, academics, and implementing agencies to build momentum for strengthening property rights. Working with its Alliance partners, the U.S. is testing a draft blueprint for monitoring progress in Bolivia. In June 2002, President Bush set a domestic goal of achieving 5.5 million new minority homeowners by 2010. To date, over one million minority families have attained this goal.

SUPPORTING DEVELOPMENT FINANCING: The U.S. established the Millennium Challenge Account to provide grant development assistance to those countries in the region that rule justly, invest in their people, and encourage economic freedom. The Millennium Challenge Corporation recently signed a \$215 million Compact with Honduras and a \$175 million Compact with Nicaragua.

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Overcoming poverty, hunger and social inequality and creating opportunity for all remain important challenges for the Hemisphere. To meet these challenges, the government seeks to implement constructive policies that promote equal opportunity and the eradication of poverty.

IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION: In the U.S., the states and school districts have continued to improve and expand mechanisms for reporting student performance and other indicators. The Federal "No Child Left Behind" Act requires states and school districts to develop and disseminate progress reports to parents and the general public. To improve the quality of education throughout the Hemisphere, the U.S. helps fund the three Centers of Excellence for Teacher Training (CETT). These Centers have trained over 12,500 teachers in effective reading methodologies, reaching over 415,000

children in the Latin America and Caribbean region. These centers have helped children read with more understanding and become more expressive and creative.

FIGHTING HIV/AIDS: Through the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, the Global Fund to Fight HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, and bilateral initiatives, the U.S. has devoted \$235.97 million over the last two years in Latin America and the Caribbean to the fight against HIV/AIDS. About 640,000 individuals living with HIV/AIDS in the region now receive anti-retroviral therapy (ART), exceeding the Nuevo León Summit goal of treating 600,000 people by November 2005.

ENHANCING CULTURAL DIVERSITY THROUGH CULTURAL PRESERVATION: The State Department's Bureau for Educational and Cultural Affairs administers the Ambassador's Fund for Cultural Preservation. This program supports preservation projects for endangered objects, sites, and forms of traditional expression. Since its inception in 2001, it has provided over \$1.2 million to back initiatives in 21 countries in the region. The U.S. has also signed cultural property protection agreements with Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, Peru, and Bolivia; another is pending with Colombia. The intent of these agreements is to reduce the incentive for archaeological and ethnological pillage, which causes irreparable damage to heritage and deprives us of information about mankind's development in the Hemisphere.

ELIMINATING THE WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOR: Department of Labor funded initiatives have resulted in over 109,000 children being removed from, or prevented from, the worst forms of child labor in the Americas since 1999. In 2004 alone, the Department of Labor's financial commitment to child labor projects in the Americas amounted to nearly \$22 million. Additional resources of \$16 million were provided in 2005 to continue to help countries combat hazardous child labor in various agricultural and industrial sectors and to support Child Labor Education Initiatives (EI). EI projects improve the accessibility and quality of basic education for children who have been involved in the worst forms of child labor or are at risk of becoming involved.

IMPROVING OPPORTUNITIES FOR WORKERS: Since 2001, the Department of Labor has provided over \$151 million for initiatives in the Americas aimed at strengthening the rule of labor law, building efficient and responsive labor markets, and addressing the impacts of HIV/AIDS in the workplace. In September 2004, the U.S. collaborated with our North American Agreement on Labor Cooperation partner countries to organize a conference for all countries in the Hemisphere on "Supporting Economic Growth Through Effective Employment Services."

DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE

This Hemisphere's countries have taken a comprehensive approach to the promotion of democratic governance. On each front, we are actively involved in the development of policies that focus on practical, concrete commitments.

STRENGTHENING THE INTER-AMERICAN DEMOCRATIC CHARTER: The U.S. fully participated in the drafting of the Inter-American Democratic Charter, signed in Lima on September 11, 2001. At the U.S.-hosted OAS General Assembly, the U.S. worked actively with its hemispheric partners on the Declaration of Florida, which calls for a strengthened role for the OAS Secretary General to propose timely application of the Charter and other initiatives to enhance democratic governance in the Hemisphere.

INCREASING CIVIL SOCIETY PARTICIPATION: The U.S. is deeply committed to strengthening civil society engagement with local and national governments and with the Inter-American system. Since 2000, USAID has given over \$6 million dollars to develop and support the Inter-American Democracy network (RID) which links 400 local civil society organizations (CSO) across the Hemisphere, fostering partnerships and promoting citizen participation in public decision-making. In 2004, USAID gave \$200,000 to the OAS Summits of the Americas Secretariat to strengthen CSO participation in the OAS General Assembly and Summit Process.

PROMOTING HEMISPHERIC SECURITY: In October 2003, the United States actively participated in the Summit-mandated *Special Conference on Security* in Mexico City which produced the *Declaration on Security in the Americas*. This Declaration encouraged states to build on existing frameworks and complemented them with a cooperative hemispheric security approach to effectively address both

traditional and new threats, concerns, and challenges in the region. We sponsored four OAS General Assembly resolutions that focused on the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, combating the illicit trafficking in small arms, denying Man-Portable Air Defense Systems (MANPADS) to terrorists and advancing confidence and security building measures in the Hemisphere. In 2005, the United States vice-chaired the OAS Forum on Confidence and Security Building Measures (CSBMs). This meeting, which featured active consultations with civil society, advanced implementation of CSBMs as a basis for trying to overcome historical rivalries, tension, and hostility by building mutual confidence and trust.

DENIAL OF SAFE HAVEN POLICY: President Bush signed Presidential Proclamation 7750 on January 12, 2004, making certain corrupt foreign officials, those who corrupt them, and their dependents ineligible for U.S. visas. In March 2005, with State Department funding, the OAS hosted a meeting of experts in Washington to discuss practical measures for implementing the Denial of Safe Haven policy and areas for potential international cooperation.

INTER-AMERICAN CONVENTION AGAINST CORRUPTION (IACAC): The U.S. supports and participates in the OAS Follow-up Mechanism. Created in 2001, the Mechanism promotes implementation of the Inter-American Convention Against Corruption, the world's first multilateral treaty focused on the fight against corruption. This convention contains commitments to criminalize corrupt actions and to facilitate mutual legal assistance among nations. It also urges governments to take good governance measures to prevent corruption. We continue to be a major contributor to the Mechanism, giving \$900,000 to it over the last three years. ■

The conditions of extreme social vulnerability faced by a significant portion of the Uruguayan people led the government that took office on March 1, 2005 to declare a social emergency projected to remain in effect for two years. The National Plan to Attend to the Social Emergency (PANES) was established to deal with this situation.

The approach to the social emergency focuses on building a new scheme of citizen participation at the national level that will make possible a new relationship between the State and society. The objective is to promote a national dialogue that will make the problems of the poorest and most neglected sectors a subject for discussion by the entire society.

The Plan consists of the following programs:

- + National Food Plan (PAN)
- + Health Emergency Program
- + Citizen Income Program
- + Program of Education in Critical Contexts
- + Temporary Employment Program
- + Squatter Settlements and Pensions Program
- + Program to House People Living on the Street

OBJECTIVES OF THE PLAN

- + To guarantee coverage of the basic needs of the most vulnerable people and rein in the process of acute impoverishment suffered by Uruguayan society.
- + On a collective and participatory basis, develop ways to leave indigence and poverty behind in the context of an effective integration process.

Through the Ministry of Social Development created in March 2005, the Executive Branch will develop the actions needed to carry out, implement, execute, coordinate, and evaluate the various programs.

The Work for Uruguay Program, which mixes community projects and employment training, should be highlighted. The axis of the emergency plan is work, understood as a social value and life ethic. It has been implemented in the belief that economic and social policies must be coordinated if we want to build a more just society.

A temporary employment program has been put into operation. It is called Work for Uruguay and incorporates various programs that from different perspectives support the sustainable creation of employment and improvements in the most depressed incomes. The tasks to be carried out under the program will have value to the community and will be coordinated primarily with municipal mayors' offices and the Ministry of Labor and Society Security.

In order to receive the benefits provided under the National Program to Attend to the Social Emergency, heads of family must meet requirements such as having their children enroll in and regularly attend the formal education system; getting medical check-ups for children, adolescents, and pregnant women; participating in community activities; and generally and in each case taking specific actions required for each program according to the evaluations done by the different organizations involved.

Households included in the Plan, based on working with multidisciplinary teams, may join the "Work for Uruguay" program and will receive support for projects related to their skills.

The National Program to Attend to the Social Emergency was conceived as a bridge to facilitate the social inclusion of thousands and thousands of people who are living in a situation of extreme poverty and will be closely tied to medium- and long-term social policies. ■



Venezuela

TOWARD A MORE EFFECTIVE DEMOCRACY

DEMOCRACY AND FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION: In accordance with the Constitution of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, a referendum was held on August 15, 2004 to revoke the mandate of the President. The referendum was witnessed and guaranteed by international observers and was a completely new experience in the history of Venezuela.

The Law of Social Responsibility in Radio and Television has been approved. It adopts the standards and principles established in the American Convention on Human Rights in the area of Freedom of Expression and the Right to Information with the objective of regulating the social responsibility of the communications media in order to guarantee the comprehensive education of children and adolescents, democratization of access to the media, and promotion of primary participation.

CORRUPTION

Venezuela is party to the Inter-American Convention against Corruption. It participates actively in the Follow-Up Mechanism on the Implementation of that instrument.

HUMAN RIGHTS

With respect to the strengthening of judicial and institutional systems, in 2003 the Office of the Ombudsman held more than 200 events to train public officials on the subject of human rights. The Office has carried out various training projects.

MIGRATION AND REFUGEES

The National Refugees Commission (CNR) complies with the Organic Law on Refugees and Asylum Seekers. During 2004, the CNR analyzed 137 applications involving 342 people. Sixty-three applications were approved (165 people) and 74 were rejected (177 people).

HUMAN RIGHTS OF WOMEN, CHILDREN, AND ADOLESCENTS

The Government of Venezuela established the Special Office of the Ombudsman with National Jurisdiction on Women's Issues; with National Jurisdiction on the Human Rights of Children and Adolescents, to deal with alleged cases of human rights violations against children and adolescents.

COMBATING DRUGS

Important actions (at the national, regional, and international level) have been taken to combat the drug problem. Venezuela participates actively in the activities of CICAD and the Inter-American Convention follow-up mechanism against corruption.

At the national level, there is an intensive campaign for prevention, treatment, rehabilitation, raising public awareness; teaching materials are prepared on the dangers of drug use; counseling and treatment is provided to family groups; there are comprehensive prevention programs on radio and television; students are provided with academic guidance; there are new forms for drug seizure reports; crops are eradicated and seized for drugs; databases and statistical software are being installed in police corps and personnel are being trained how to use them.

TRADE

Ratification of the qualification at paragraphs 15 of the Declaration of Quebec City and 6-A of the Plan of Action, relating to the FTAA, was reaffirmed in the Declaration of Nuevo León.

INFRASTRUCTURE

The Organic Telecommunications Law and its Regulations were approved. This law forms the legal basis for modernization and development of the sector. There are regulations in the areas of connection, equipping, community radios, universal service, and taxes.

Human and institutional, technological and financial training actions include:

- + Creation of the Center for Telecommunications Development and Information with the purpose of meeting the training needs.
- + Establishment of the Telecommunications Research and Development Fund that guarantees financing for research and development in the sector.
- + Elaboration of norms on electromagnetic compatibility, user security, and environmental effects. Resolution on foreign entities and organizations recommended for accreditation and certification of telecommunications.
- + Implementation of National Telecommunications Plan, National Information Technologies Plan, and Decree 825 giving priority to use of the Internet. Law on Data Messages and Electronic Signatures. Establishment of government portals on telemedicine and tele-education. A Technological Free Zone promotes the establishment of software manufacturers.
- + Elaboration of a national connectivity agenda that allows the use of information and communication technologies and adequate infrastructure to join the information and knowledge society.
- + Release of the regional channel *TeleSur* with which is sought to establish a hemispherical audiovisual media to diffuse to everyone a real vision of the cultural and social diversity of Latin America and the Caribbean.

- + Presentation of the Report on the VSTA Database Initiative concerning the work done by the CITEI countries.
- + Implementation of the pilot project "Access Points", which is sought to give the least served communities the ability to access telecommunications and computer services and instructs them in their use.

LABOR

Regarding this issue Venezuela has taken the following actions:

- + Ratification of ILO priority conventions numbers 87, 98, and 138.
- + Creation of the National Employment System in order to develop opportunities to exercise the right to work.
- + It devised an Employment Observatory design proposal that seeks to consolidate a network of monitoring on the dynamics of the labor market.
- + Enlargement of the *Servicio Nacional de Intermediación Laboral* that attends the workers in situation of involuntary loss of the employment. At present counts with 25 agencies of employment.
- + An institutional structure was designed to coordinate, execute, and evaluate employment policies; information bank on employment in public administration projects. Ministerial Employment Specialist Committees.
- + Agreement between the Ministry of Labor and the United Nations Population Fund that creates learning corners in public employment agencies with informative material that will guide people in issues related to sexual health and reproductive, as well as in the equity of the genre.
- + Agreement between the Ministry of Labor and the Venezuelan Corporation of Guayana that establishes a regional employment and labor intermediation system in the region of Guayana.
- + Creation of the Institutional Technical Committee that ensures inclusion of the country's disabled in the labor force.
- + Designed of the *Vuelvan Caracas Mission*, which seeks to guarantees the participation of the creative force of the people in producing wealth and overcoming conditions that exclude them.

EDUCATION

Regarding this issue Venezuela developed educational policies directed to achieving quality education for all, based on expanding coverage of school systems; eradication of illiteracy; extension and improvement of early childhood care and comprehensive education; and equal opportunities.

For this end the following measures were implemented:

With the objective to democratize the education and to achieve a

social equilibrium, the following Educational Missions have been implemented:

- + Robinson Mission: The purpose of this mission is to eradicate illiteracy, dropout and exclusion from school. Youths and adults gain knowledge and skills in various subjects, until completing studies in the third grade of basic education and diversified and professional secondary education.
- + Ribas Mission: Allows high school graduation for any citizen (a) who did not complete secondary education.
- + Sucre Mission: The objective with this mission is to expand study opportunities for the population excluded from the higher education system.

Implementation of the Bolivarian Schools Program, which guarantee comprehensive education, primarily to children and adolescents living in the poorest conditions through the creation of equipped infrastructure and settings, integrated schedules, daily meals, training in education, culture and sports, directed tasks, orientation, health, recreation, and full-time teachers. More than 3,000 schools have been built and are serving more than 85,000 children.

Regarding the early childhood care, it has been increased coverage and improved quality of care for children aged 0 to 6, with emphasis on the most socio-economically vulnerable populations, particularly in indigenous, rural, and marginal urban areas.

Creation of Productive Technical Schools that promote technical education in order to strengthen teachers through ongoing education, and serve students in farm schools.

HEALTH

Significant achievements have been made by Venezuela in meeting health and social development commitments. There are expanded strategies for prevention, care, health promotion, and social development:

- + Integrated Social Development Plan and nutritional programs. There are 23 school cafeterias.
- + Implementation of the Food Houses Program (CA), by which are attended 600,000 people in conditions of poverty.
- + Operation of MERCAL, which are nutritional training programs that will serve as the basis for establishing cooperatives and/or micro-enterprises.
- + Presentation of the Draft Organic Health Law, which recognizes traditional medicine and complementary therapies. Special Project on Indigenous Community Cooperatives; Household and

Multi-Household Program.

- + Social Protection in Health: *Barrio Adentro* Mission (primary health care), creation and financing of 10,000 public clinics (free delivery of 120 essential generic medications for 12,000,000 people between 2003 and 2004).
- + Implementation of the program to prevent mother to child transmission. Training on HIV/AIDS prevention, policy of free access to 100% of antiretroviral medications, high-efficiency triple therapy and immunological and virological follow-up tests. Epidemiological surveillance on STDs/AIDS and health surveillance. Fourteen contracts signed to purchase HIV/AIDS antiretroviral and generic medications, development of combined vaccines and plant advisory services, medical equipment, anti-hepatitis vaccines, among others.
- + Four million people were vaccinated in 2003. For 2004, the goal is to immunize 7.5 million people and 100% of the population will be covered against 12 emerging and reemerging diseases by 2005.
- + Development of environmental health through preventive measures that allows the establishment and revision of regulatory instruments, particularly regarding comprehensive waste and solid waste management. Draft Law on Waste and Solid Waste.

CHILDREN AND YOUTH

With the purpose of protect children and adolescents of any kind of violence; Venezuela has the National System for Protection of Children and Adolescents, through the National Council on the Rights of Children and Adolescents:

These are some of the achievements made by the National Council on the Rights of Children and Adolescents.

- + It was putting in operation the telephone line 800-MUJER to receive accusations by acts of violence against the children and girls.
- + Victim Services Units in the Attorney General's Office and Councils for the Protection of Children and Adolescents deal with accusations regarding violations of the rights and guarantees of children and adolescents.
- + Important documents have been adopted to prevent the sale and trafficking of children, and resources have been allocated.
- + The birth registry has been improved and modernized.
- + There is an Inter-sectoral Commission against Sexual Abuse and Commercial Sexual Exploitation (CICAES), and a Proposed National Plan of Action for Prevention and Handling of Sexual Abuse and Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children and Adolescents. ■



CREDITS



4
HECTOR POLEO
b.1918, d.1989 Venezuelan
Familia Andina (Andean Family), 1944
oil on canvas, 27 x 23 in.
Gift of IBM
Collection of the Art Museum
of the Americas OAS



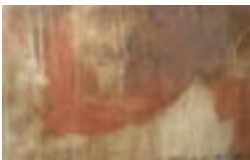
6
MERCEDES ROCCA
b.1932 Peruvian
Escarabajos
acrylic, 27 x 23 in.
Private Collection



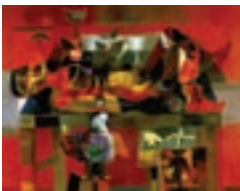
8
CANDIDO PORTINARI
b.1903, d.1962 Brazilian
Return From The Fair (1940)
oil on canvas, 40 x 32 in.
Gift of Jose Gomez-Sicre
Collection of the Art Museum
of the Americas OAS



10
JOSE ANTONIO VELASQUEZ
b.1906, d.1983 Honduran
View of San Antonio de Oriente, 1957
oil on canvas, 26 x 37 in.
Collection of the Art Museum
of the Americas OAS



23
EVANGELINA ELIZONDO
b.1972 Argentine
La nena
mixed media, 30 x 48 in.



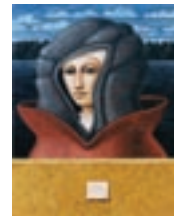
42
ALEJANDRO OBREGON
b.1920, d.1992 Colombian
Estudiante Muerto (The Dead Student),
1956
oil on canvas, 55 x 69 in.
Collection of the Art Museum
of the Americas OAS



54
EVERALDO BROWN
b.1917, d.2002 Jamaican
Victory Dance, 1976
oil on canvas mounted on wood
panel, 33 x 49 in.
Collection of the Art Museum
of the Americas OAS



73
FERNANDO DE SZYSZLO
b.1925 Peruvian
Cajamarca, 1959
oil on canvas, 50 x 36 in.
Collection of the Art Museum
of the Americas OAS



85
JOSEPH FIRBAS
b.1962 Peruvian
Madonna Silence
acrylic on canvas, 39 x 31 in.



100
GILLES COLLETTE
b.1963
Glass Warriors
acrylic on canvas, 40 x 54 in.
Private Collection



119
EMILIO PETTORUTI
b.1892, d.1971 Argentine
La Ultima Serenata (The Last Serenade) 1937
oil on canvas 77 x 51 in.
Gift of IBM
Collection of the Art Museum
of the Americas OAS



123
HUMBERTOIVALDI
b.1909, d.1947 Panamanian
El Garito, 1939
oil on canvas, 43 x 46 in.
Gift of IBM
Collection of the Art Museum
of the Americas OAS