



October 14, 2008

Compilation of all the answers and comments included in the virtual forum on the first main theme of the Draft Declaration of Commitment of Port of Spain, "Promoting Human Prosperity" (Paragraphs 5 to 29), **open from October 1<sup>st</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup>, 2008.**

**Sub-themes:**

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| 1. <a href="#">Poverty Reduction and economic growth</a> | 5. <a href="#">Education</a>               |
| 2. <a href="#">Labor and employment</a>                  | 6. <a href="#">Youth</a>                   |
| 3. <a href="#">Food security</a>                         | 7. <a href="#">Knowledge-Based Society</a> |
| 4. <a href="#">Health</a>                                | 8. <a href="#">Culture</a>                 |

Once the forum is concluded, the Summits of the Americas Secretariat will prepare a summary-report of all comments and recommendations made by the participants (both in the English and Spanish fora). This report will be distributed to the National Secretariat and OAS member States in order to contribute to the process of negotiation of the Draft Declaration of Commitment of Port of Spain.

**1. Poverty reduction and economic growth - (paragraphs 5 - 7 of the Draft Declaration of Commitment of Port of Spain)**

*(Claudia Salazar - Wednesday, October 1, 2008, 01:36:44 p.m.)*

5. Deep and persistent inequalities continue to exist, especially in education, income levels, health and nutritional status, exposure to violence and crime, and access to basic services. In response, we will continue to develop and implement social protection programmes that are specifically targeted to the poor and vulnerable groups in our societies, in order to ensure equal access for all men and women to basic social services such as water, housing, healthcare, food and sanitation.

6. We commit to exchange information on policies, experiences and good practices in order to support our national efforts to reduce social disparities and inequality, and halve poverty by the year 2015. We request the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) to coordinate the process of reviewing and consolidating all existing social protection and poverty eradication programmes by the end of 2010, in collaboration with the Ministers responsible for Finance, Planning and Development, as well as other regional and sub-regional financial and development institutions, in order to increase efficiency, reduce duplication, identify gaps and optimise the use of resources.

7. We recognize that to eliminate poverty and hunger, create jobs, and raise the standard of living of all our people, we must achieve higher levels of continuous economic growth with equity. We also recognize the positive contribution of open trade policies in the promotion of growth, employment and development. We, therefore, commit to continue implementing sound macro-economic policies that are characterized by appropriate and transparent fiscal and monetary measures, prudent public expenditures, higher domestic savings and high growth rates. We will also continue to promote private sector development, diversify economic activity, improve competitiveness and strengthen economic integration. We are committed to boosting investment in energy, transport and communications infrastructure to attract additional private investment and promote business development.

*(Lina Maria Marmolejo - Wednesday, October 1, 2008, 04:28:40 p.m.)*

Dear Claudia,

Thank you very much for posting the paragraphs of the Draft Declaration concerning the particular subject of poverty reduction and economic growth. To open the discussion, I would like to start by posing a question related to paragraph 7, which establishes a series of macroeconomic policies "appropriate and transparent fiscal and monetary measures, prudent public expenditures, higher domestic savings and high growth rates necessary to reduce poverty and promote economic growth.

Would the participants consider that additional fiscal and monetary policies should be specified in this declaration, taking into account the current world financial crisis?

*(Rudi Daniel - Wednesday, October 1, 2008, 05:28:41 p.m.)*

Hi Claudia

I think that "regulation" is becoming a very important word. If you take the current position with the Banking sector, as a layperson I really have to ask where the regulators were when these banks were throwing their risk management policies out with the bath water (so to speak). It needs to be stressed also that regulators have a role in protecting the public from such abuse.

*(Claudia Salazar - Wednesday, October 1, 2008, 06:01:36 p.m.)*

Thank you Daniel and Lina,

Both of you post the interesting matter of the current economic/financial crisis...in fact, when the Declaration was drafted lets say that "we didn't know what we know now". How do you think that this new context should be reflected in the Declaration?. Should the region's leaders call upon other actors to get involved?. Should the "regulators" that Rudi mentioned be a public-private partnership or strictly public?. Is there a regional approach that may be taken? (remember that the Summits Declarations are agreed to by 34 countries, and therefore go beyond national policies).

*(Rudi Daniel - Friday, October 3, 2008, 06:02:32 p.m.)*

We are always in a situation of not knowing what we don't now, and isn't that one of the exciting aspects of human existence? We are perhaps entering an exciting period of human development and social change. Advances in human communication and cross cultural interaction will undoubtedly challenge / attempt to reshape many reality concepts we hold dear.

*(Rodney Grant -Thursday, October 2, 2008, 04:00:08 p.m.)*

Hi Lina, Yes I believe we need the fiscal and financial policies to ensure that this kind of crash do not happen in the way that it has since it exacerbates poverty and the other social vulnerabilities that we are seeking to resolve

*(Roosevelt O. King - Wednesday, October 1, 2008, 09:11:27 p.m.)*

These provisions do not go far enough into the problem. They are very general and not constructed for commitment to specific actions that are solutions to the problems. E.g. Paragraph five starts out by recognising deep and persistent inequalities. However, when we get to the commitment clause, it speaks only of basic social services. In order to be consistent, the commitment should speak to all the inequalities. There is a commitment to supply water but not education, jobs or improved standard of living.

This paragraph should speak to empowerment and not hand-outs which tend to keep the poor, poor. There is no role here for NGOs, it would seem, while there is a definite role for the private sector and the development agencies. In perusing the entire document, the role of NGOs is subsumed. There is no participation or inclusion and as a matter of fact, NGOs are here being treated as one would treat a child; you have to do everything for them.

There is no doubt that there is a role for NGOs but what is happening here is the opening of opportunities for consultants, who incidentally must come to the NGOs for their information and in order to get their hefty fees while we stay unempowered and without the resources to build capacity. Our Council for the Disabled has a saying: "Nothing about us, without us". Why should our very existence create opportunities that will not benefit us. There is much capacity to be built by allowing NGOs to conduct their own research that will help them better implement solutions.

*(Karen Bart-Alexander - Saturday, October 4, 2008, 02:49:36 p.m.)*

Dear Participants,

I do agree with Roosevelt regarding the role of the NGOs. I have observed that the new partnership to be formed with NGOs that is touted by the government (at least in my own country) really favors the private sector, including the consultants and professional firms. The draft commitment ought to deal directly with the strengthening of civil society with specific reference to NGOs and CBOs. The role of Civil Society in governance and democratic processes ought to begin to evolve from the ambiguous, hit and miss, taken for granted position it now holds to one that is much more concrete and clearly spelt out. Regards to all.

*(Lina Maria Marmolejo - Monday, October 6, 2008, 08:18:21 a.m.)*

Dear Karen and Roosevelt,

Thank you very much for your contributions in this topic.

In effect, the role of civil society and NGOs in the Summit of the Americas is crucial as it reminds an excellent arena for democratizing regional policymaking. In this particular, the OAS and the government of Trinidad and Tobago held the Civil Society Hemispheric Forum last May, with the aim of consulting civil

society about the topics to be included in the agenda. Following your argument, how do you think NGOs can participate more directly in the summit process and what the summit can do to find a common ground among civil society actors in order to achieve measurable results in our regional agenda?

(Roosevelt O. King - Wednesday, October 8, 2008, 09:33:57 p.m.)

Dear Lina,

Use a practical principle, allow the NGOs to be responsible for themselves. If you want information about Government you would not ask NGOs and therefore, matters which are clearly about NGOs and clearly involves NGOs should be the responsibility of NGOs to conduct. "Nothing about us, without us!".

Give NGOs the resources to attract the skills and services which would serve the purpose and agenda of the NGOs. This courtesy is granted to all the other sectors and it should be granted to the NGOs.

(Lina Maria Marmolejo - Thursday, October 9, 2008, 04:55:09 a.m.)

Dear Roosevelt,

Once again, thanks a lot for your comments! It is indeed very useful for this process of sharing and interaction! Which other elements should be taking into account in order to make this happen?

(Roosevelt O. King - Thursday, October 9, 2008, 10:36:18 p.m.)

Hi Lina,

Participation is truly the key. The problem is we participate and some other body makes the decision. There is usually a vetoing body which prevents a hands-on approach. Take for example, this document. Who decided on the final language? Who was part of the drafting? What suggestions were left out either because they were too practical and far reaching as an option that can be achieved?

This is new ground; a new frontier. We are about travelling roads where no man travelled before. There is therefore a fear on the part of the status quo to let go and explore new solutions because the old ones don't work anymore. So we would rather sit and generalise than put our creativity to work. The result is that NGO approaches are made to fit into mainstream thinking rather than mainstream thinking fit into the NGO approach.

For far too long, the mistrust taboo has worked and when you really think of it, this mistrust is used as a red herring to say no to NGOs. We must seek to implement our own processes rather than being always the invited ones. Usually, money talks. So whomever owns the process ensures that it serves their agenda. If NGOs have a process, then the process would have to fit into their agenda and developmental agencies should cooperate with us as we now cooperate to fulfill their agendas. So it comes back to the same principal, let NGOs conduct their business.

(Claudia Salazar - Thursday, October 2, 2008, 12:23:24 p.m.)

Greetings to all participants!

Please find attached a brief document that was just launched by our Joint Summit Working Group (JSWG) institutional partner the World Bank: "Human Opportunity Index (HOI)" - Selected Findings.

I will also make sure to update the "Reference document" with incoming material.

These findings will surely contribute to participants reflections on what is needed and appropriate for our region.

Thank you for your participation!

[iofactsheet\\_enf.doc \(47.5KB\)](#)

Best, Claudia

(Claudia Salazar - Monday, October 6, 2008, 04:49:44 p.m.)

Greetings to all participants!

For your information and reference, our Joint Summit Working Group (JSWG) institutional partner the *Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) of the United Nations*, has suggested the following documents and studies related to the subject poverty reduction, and in general, to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.

[Economic Survey of Latin America and the Caribbean 2007-2008](#)

[Social Panorama of Latin America 2007](#)

[The Millennium Development Goals Report, 2008 \(Global\)](#)

[Latin America and the Caribbean countries national progress reports](#)

[The Millennium Development Goals. A Latin American and Caribbean perspective](#)

[Millennium Development Goals. A look at Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women in Latin America and the Caribbean](#)

I will also make sure to update the ""Reference document"" with incoming material.  
Thank you for your participation! Best, Claudia

(Alexandra Gonzalez -Thursday, October 2, 2008, 01:02:12 p.m.)

Hi Claudia,

Thank you for this great initiative!

I have some comments related to the paragraph N. 7 (economic growth).

Regarding the proposal of recognizing the positive contribution of *open trade policies* in the promotion of growth, employment and development, I believe it would be useful to specify what "open trade policies" exactly means. This statement should also take into account the different levels of development between the countries of the region.

Moreover, I consider that the proposal of having macro-economic policies characterized by "*high growth rates*" will be difficult to implement. Not only because it does not define what could be considered as "High", but also for many other reasons, such as the current financial and economic crisis; every country has a different level of economic development and the growth depend on many different factors. Some countries can't/shouldn't have "high growth rates". Another reason is that for some countries this decision can not be taken in a multilateral forum.

Finally, I think that the suggestion to continue to *strengthen economic integration* is relevant and should be more treated in the Declaration. Even if the negotiation for the FTAA was very polemic during the Mar del Plata Summit, the idea of inter-American economic integration is still highly important. I consider that within the negotiations for the Fifth Summit, the Member States should try to find alternatives to the controversial factors that affect the hemispheric economic integration.

(Lina Maria Marmolejo - Friday, October 3, 2008, 06:50:16 a.m.)

Thanks to all participants for their contributions!

Please find below a contribution made by our colleague Felix Ortega from the Universal Civil Identity Program in the Americas of the OAS. Enclosed you will also find the Inter-American Program for Universal Civil Registry and the "Right to Identity", Adopted at the fourth plenary session, held on June 3, 2008.

In paragraph 5 of the Draft Declaration, Heads of States commit themselves to continue "continue to develop and implement social protection programmes that are specifically targeted to the poor and vulnerable groups in our societies, in order to ensure equal access for all men and women to basic social services such as water, housing, healthcare, food and sanitation." Not having a civil registry can difficult access to basic social services. Have you seen the impact of the lack of civil identity in your country? Do you consider that the Declaration of Commitment of Porto Spain should reflect the importance of a universal civil registry more explicitly?

[agres\\_2362 - inter-American program for universal civil registry and the right to identity.doc \(83.5KB\)](#)

(Karen Bart-Alexander - Saturday, October 4, 2008, 03:08:07 p.m.)

Dear Claudia and Participants,

I am of the view that economic growth is not a major catalyst for poverty reduction because we have seen countries in which economic growth has occurred concurrently with high poverty levels. I suggest that the commitment focuses on poverty reduction and human rights giving human rights a much more pivotal place in poverty reduction strategies. Specifically, I would like to see countries committed to recognizing all the human rights that are relevant to poverty reduction in their constitutions and legislative arrangements.

Regards

(Claudia Salazar - Wednesday, October 8, 2008, 09:43:30 a.m.)

Dear Participants, please find below a contribution kindly sent to me by Mr. Abe Fergusson, an active participant of the forum and advocate for the environment:

As young people we need to keep up with events on current issues and encourage more youth participation, What is Climate Change?

The International Panel on Climate Change believe that – human activities are already affecting the natural systems, recent report states that "unmitigated climate change would in the long term exceed the capacity of natural, managed and human systems to adapt" the climate is consistently changing but scientist are concerned that global warming caused by human has overtaken natural fluctuations in climate and this is having serious consequences for people and planet.

Poverty and climate and change are intrinsically linked and one cannot be tackled without addressing the other – it is clear that the poor are increasingly mostly affected by the impact of climate change, people living in the poorest countries in the hemisphere are already affected by flooding, deforestation and desertification; rapid rise in sea levels, already endangering peoples livelihoods and homes; climate change

will affect income generating capacity of vulnerable adaptation costs in the region- addressing climate change is an issue of justice not charity.

Solution, maybe? Build long term social protection; climate change is accentuating the fact for many poor people, rural communities, coastal communities aid should be used to build and protect the livelihoods and assets of poor people- sanitation, health and education long term social protecting systems from the foundation.

The devastation wrought by hurricanes Gustav, Hanna, and Ike in the Americas has fuelled concern about the effects of global warming on the formation and intensity of tropical storms, this issue has divided the scientific community and causing alarm among island nations and coastal communities. International bodies are studying the economic and social effects of this catastrophes caused by cyclones in the Caribbean basin so it is time to implement adaptation measures to help countries cope with natural disasters.

Note: there has been an increase in Atlantic storms frequency since 1995, in the last few years the Caribbean has been battered ruthlessly by powerful hurricanes, remember 2004 Grenada, approximately 90,000 people suffered damage estimated at \$US 889. Million; Gustav and Ike losses in Cuba \$US 5. Billion and in Haiti the UN Office OCHA has launched an appeal for \$US108. Million for emergency relief and recovery efforts.

However the challenge is to rebuild with higher quality standards and not just houses with others that will continue to be vulnerable to natural disasters.

E.g. teach the people how to use Solar Energy in their homes, for cooking, baking, heating and not cut down the forest.

Submitted by: Abe Fergusson, Youth Ambassador Natural Disasters; Global Youth Facilitator Natural Disasters Youth Summit 2008/09, Environmental "Warrior" Agent and National Award Holder in the category of Advocacy. Website: <http://www.naturaldisastersiearntnt.org>

*(Claudia Salazar - Wednesday, October 8, 2008, 10:21:11 a.m.)*

In addition, please find another contribution submitted by Mrs. Gia Gaspard Taylor, from the International Education and Resource Network Trinidad and Tobago (iEARNTnT), which is another active participant of the forum:

With reference to Chapter 1 – Article 2. G.

"To eradicate extreme poverty which constitutes an obstacle to the full development of the peoples of the hemisphere?"

We are of that human development must take place to allow the people to become productive, on October 17 -19 annually we join the campaign to Stand-Up and Take Action to stamp out poverty and inequality, because more 43 million the world over are listed as poor, malnutrition is quite high resulting in health issues, in our region Haiti.

Climate Change and Poverty a threat to the developing world – it is the poorer nations that feel the brunt such as agriculture, water-resources, flooding, broken bridges, landslides, isolation, loss of marine life, coastal erosion to name a few, for Haiti help is coming but it is slow.

When the world came together for the recognition of the need for sustainable development and the establishment of the MDG's may have been the first time in history that governments recognized that there may have been enough resources to end poverty – provide education and health care for all, achieve gender equality and ensure sustainable development by 2015. Yet! To-day we are very far from reaching the target; we need to ask ourselves "was it just an unrealistic dream"? As we continue to see a growing sense of helplessness.

Civil Societies leaders are increasingly concern that the strategies to achieve the MDGs focus too much on economic growth as a catalyst for development and ignore the human aspect. We ask ourselves is there a link between climate change and poverty?

The lives and livelihoods of millions are being steadily destroyed by denying the poor among us the rights over land, water, forest, natural resources and energy, thus climate change is exacerbating this through floods, droughts famine and conflicts resulting from climate change, which also threaten the very development goals; for many of us in the hemisphere we must therefore continue to raise awareness, educate and build capacity – if we believe that climate change represents one of the greatest threats to people and hemisphere we must stop talking AND BEGIN TO TAKE POSITIVE ACTION N-O-W.

*(Marcia Brandon - Friday, October 10, 2008, 05:19:56 p.m.)*

It is important that it is recognised and acknowledged that investments for training and educating and making money available for lending to youth and other vulnerable groups are critical to poverty reduction and economic growth. Educating people and training them in competitive skills is vital.

(Gia Gaspard Taylor - Sunday, October 12, 2008, 08:10:13 p.m.)

We talk about reducing poverty in this region - but to do so we need to move of the beaten path Traditionally Caribbean farmers have stuck to producing and marketing a select group of crops, but in a changing world food has taken on some new dimensions, this is shaped by a number of factors which have led to some new opportunities (we can turn our challenges into opportunities) in exports agro-tourism, aquaculture, herbal and permaculture. Socio-cultural, consumers want more convenience, healthier, more natural safer foods and the desire to try new and exotic ones. Governments have responded to threats to their food security (bio-terrorism) by genetically modified food and higher prices - how can we reduce poverty? Can we look to technology? Genetic research and new farming methods and processes and the use of fast air transport to deliver food anywhere in the world in less than 24 hours? Will the cost be reduced?

We need to change our prospective, adopt new skills, have a clear understanding of how to rotate our planting as it relates to global warming - farmers can no longer spend the entire day in the fields, now it must be early mornings and late evenings, we must learn to recycle, farmers must change their frame of reference and assumptions of the world adopt new skills to the world or return to what our fore fathers use the technology of yesteryear.

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## **2. Labor and employment - (paragraphs 8 - 13 of the Draft Declaration of Commitment of Port of Spain)**

(Claudia Salazar - Wednesday, October 1, 2008, 01:39:35 p.m.)

8. In accordance with the [Decent Work in the Americas: An Agenda for the Hemisphere \(2006-2015\)](#), we will continue to facilitate and encourage the creation of more decent and productive employment opportunities in the formal sector. We instruct the Ministers of Labour, within the context of the OAS [Inter-American Conference of Ministers of Labour](#), in collaboration with the unions and the employers' organizations and with the support of the International Labour Organisation (ILO), to develop a coordinated plan to continue to address the objectives of the Agenda by the end of 2010.

9. With the support of the ILO and in accordance with the [Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work](#), we will adopt the necessary policies and regulations to facilitate and promote the movement of enterprises and workers from the informal to the formal sector. We also reaffirm that all migrants regardless of their immigration status, should be accorded the full protection of human rights and the full observance of labour laws applicable to them.

10. We reiterate our commitment to protect women and children from economic exploitation and we call on the Ministers responsible for Education, Labour and Social Development to adopt coordinated national strategies to prevent and eradicate child labour by 2020 according to the Decent Work Agenda, and develop innovative strategies to bring children back into healthy learning environments. We also reiterate our commitment to eliminate forced labour before 2010.

11. Micro, small and medium-sized enterprises are fundamental to economic growth, employment creation and poverty reduction. We call on the World Bank, IDB and other regional banks to accelerate their efforts to promote private sector expansion and development by doubling lending to micro, small and medium-sized enterprises and tripling the numbers of enterprises accessing credit by 2012.

12. We will work towards eliminating administrative and bureaucratic barriers to the creation of new enterprises. We will, therefore, adopt the necessary reforms to simplify the processes involved in starting and closing business ventures, and commit to reducing business start-up time to a maximum of 30 days by 2012. We call on the IDB and the World Bank to support national efforts to improve the legislative frameworks and administrative procedures for achieving this target.

13. In order to foster innovation and entrepreneurship, we commit to increasing investment in research and development to a minimum of 1% of GDP by 2015 and to strengthening the linkages among universities, science institutions, the private sector, multilateral agencies and workers. We will also develop, harmonise and enforce intellectual property laws and regulations in order to safeguard works of innovation and creativity.

(Lina Maria Marmolejo - Wednesday, October 1, 2008, 05:32:11 p.m.)

To open the discussion about labor and employment, I would like to ask the participants which national and regional actors will contribute to reach the deadlines established in paragraph 10, 2020 and 2010 to eradicate child labor and forced labor respectively, and how would they do it?



(Alexandra Gonzalez - Thursday, October 2, 2008, 01:04:11 p.m.)

Paragraph N. 13 mentions the idea of “developing, harmonizing and enforcing *intellectual property* laws and regulations in order to safeguard works of innovation and creativity”.

I believe that this statement should take into account the different levels of development between the Member States. Even if intellectual property is important for innovations, this should not affect the access to essential medicaments in developing countries.

There should also be specific considerations related to the protection of traditional indigenous knowledge and to avoid pharmaceuticals to patent developing countries natural resources.

(Lina Maria Marmolejo - Wednesday, October 8, 2008, 06:46:25 a.m.)

Dear participants,

I would like to share with you a contribution from our colleagues from the International Labor Organization (ILO).

Paragraphs from 8 to 10 refer to the Hemispheric Agenda of Decent Work in the Americas adopted by governments, employer organizations and labor unions, under the framework of the XVI American Regional Meeting of the ILO held in May 2006. It urges the ILO to keep advancing in the objectives of this agenda, as an instrument to reach prosperity and overcome poverty, the necessary conformity with the Declaration on Fundamental Rights and Principles at Work (ILO Declaration, 1998) and to adopt the necessary policies and regulations to facilitate and promote the movement of enterprises and workers from the informal to the formal sector.

The Hemispheric Agenda establishes a group of objectives and targets in four policy areas: Economic growth as a generator of employment, effective application of fundamental principles and rights at work, enhancing social security cover and effectiveness, effective social dialogue; these general policies are completed by 11 specific policy areas, which reinforce social security and labor institutionalization, en an equity framework.

The development of this agenda contributes to the promotion of an integrated Framework of policies, to place decent work as a central element of economic and social policies, and an essential factor to promote human prosperity and poverty reduction. The importance of promoting decent work as an integral factor of economic and social policies was ratified with the adoption of the 97<sup>th</sup> session of the International Labor Conference (2008) of the ILO Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization.

How human prosperity in the Americas could be promoted, if a high percentage of the population is occupied in the informal economy, with all that it involves of precarious work (income and labor conditions)? In other words, can we talk about human prosperity without considering an open access to the labor market and especially to the employments of the formal economy?

Do you consider that it is possible to build human prosperity in the Americas only with economic and social policies? Do you consider that it would be important to encourage the integration of economic and social policies to promote integral development and avoid problems like those we are seeing in the financial markets?

Is it possible to promote sustainable development in a democracy without people having access to a decent work?

(Rebecca Tromsness - Thursday, October 9, 2008, 02:29:18 a.m.)

With regard to employment for Mexicans available in Canada through the Seasonal Agricultural Worker's Program (SAWP), is there any consideration to set up policies that ensure reasonable working and housing conditions?

(Marva Ribeiro - Thursday, October 9, 2008, 08:43:28 a.m.)

10. Please include “*worst forms of child labour*”

(Marva Ribeiro - Thursday, October 9, 2008, 08:49:21 a.m.)

10 Include “Worst forms” to describe child labour

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### 3. Health - (paragraphs 16 - 23 of the Draft Declaration of Commitment of Port of Spain)

(Claudia Salazar - Wednesday, October 1, 2008, 01:43:42 p.m.)

16. We recognize that the problems of inequality of access and exclusion from basic health services persist, especially among the most vulnerable, including women, children, indigenous peoples and the poor. We, therefore, commit to providing essential social protection and universal access to quality healthcare, taking into account labour, environment, gender and social security policies, and will increase public spending on health to at least 5% of GDP by 2015 in order to address the health challenges faced by our people.

17. While the region has made strides in reducing mortality in infants and children under 5 years, neonatal mortality has not decreased at the same rate. We call on the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) to continue to assist countries in addressing this problem through the implementation of the [Regional Strategic Plan of Action based on the Interagency Strategic Consensus on Reducing Neonatal Mortality and Morbidity in Latin America and the Caribbean](#).

18. We are convinced that the burden of non-communicable diseases (NCDs) can be reduced by comprehensive and integrated preventive and control strategies at the individual, family, community, national and regional levels and through collaborative programmes, partnerships and policies supported by governments, the private sector, the media, NGOs and relevant regional and international partners. We, therefore, reiterate our support for the [PAHO/WHO Regional Strategy on an Integrated Approach to the Prevention and Control of Chronic Diseases Including Diet, Physical Activity, and Health](#).

19. We instruct our Ministers of Health, with the support of PAHO/WHO, to establish surveillance systems by 2015 for NCDs and their risk factors, as part of our national public health surveillance systems. We encourage the establishment of National Commissions on non-communicable diseases to plan and coordinate comprehensive prevention and control strategies.

20. We commit to improving reproductive health, mental health services, community-based health care; the introduction of cost effective prevention approaches; broader screening to permit early detection of disease; and the provision of essential medicines especially to the most needy.

21. In addition, we commit to taking the necessary actions to improve the nutritional levels of all the people in the Americas by 2015 and to the full implementation of the [Regional Strategy on Nutrition and Health Development 2006-2015](#), coordinated by PAHO.

22. In order to address the spread of vector borne diseases, especially dengue, we commit to the implementation of the [International Health Regulations \(2005\)](#) and call on PAHO to prepare a regional contingency plan that contains the new guidelines as set forth in the IHR by the end of 2009.

23. We are committed to the goal of halting and reversing the spread of HIV/AIDS and other Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs) by 2015 by providing universal access for men and women to prevention, care, treatment and support. We will implement a regional strategy to provide such access under the coordination of the WHO and PAHO. We also commit to reducing the incidence of mother-to-child transmission of HIV to less than 5% by 2015. We reiterate our commitment to strengthening and providing adequate financing to the [Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria](#)[1].

(Lina Maria Marmolejo - Wednesday, October 1, 2008, 05:08:53 p.m.)

Claudia,

Thanks again for the references.

Regarding the problematic of access to basic public services, specially health, the countries of the region recognize in paragraph 16 "the problems of inequality of access and exclusion from basic health services persist, especially among the most vulnerable, including women, children, indigenous peoples and the poor." And they have committed themselves to increase public spending on health up to 5% of the GDP. Do the participants consider that this percentage will be enough to overcome this challenge? Is this an adequate and realistic proposal for the countries of the region?

(Lina Maria Marmolejo - Friday, October 3, 2008, 05:46:12 p.m.)

Dear participants,

Please find below a contribution made by our colleagues from the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO).

The Health agenda for the Americas 2008-2017 is the framework that will orient actions related with health in the entire hemisphere, it has the commitment of the region's health high level authorities. Which challenges will the countries face in order to reach the objectives and lines of action established by the agenda? Which role could have the civil society, academia and the private sector in the implementation of this agenda?



(Claudia Salazar - Monday, October 6, 2008, 04:52:35 p.m.)

Greetings to all participants! For your information and reference, our Joint Summit Working Group (JSWG) institutional partner the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) of the United Nations, has suggested the following report related to the subject [Health](#). <?

[Millennium Development Goals. Progress towards the right to health in Latin America and the Caribbean](#)

I will also make sure to update the ""Reference document"" with incoming material.

Thank you for your participation! Best, Claudia

(Roosevelt O. King - Thursday, October 9, 2008, 10:05:52 p.m.)

Health is one of those areas which require security. This should start with the training medical personnel go through. Every country should be encouraged to research the medicinal and nutritional value in their plants, fruits and vegetables. Food/Diet/nutrition and health go hand in hand.

It has been recently found that many deaths are unexplained and in a lot of cases medical conditions arise from medical treatment. In this regard, I refer you to Dr. Carolyn Dean, a medical researcher who investigated this matter and wrote a book called "Death by Medicine". She also investigated the side effects of vaccinations, which are mandatory for children entering school in most countries. Our children are at the mercy of an unscrupulous private sector manufacturing drugs and for many years manufactured vaccinations with a mercury base, which was poisoning our children.

There is therefore need for health security in every country.

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#### **4. Food Security - (paragraphs 14-15 of the Draft Declaration of Commitment of Port of Spain)**

(Claudia Salazar - Wednesday, October 1, 2008, 01:45:34 p.m.)

14. Feeding our people is now the most immediate challenge confronting our Hemisphere and, indeed, the world. We, therefore, commit to taking an active role, working in partnership with the international community, to develop and implement comprehensive policies and programmes to resolve this challenge. We reaffirm our commitment to the [2008 Rome Declaration on World Food Security](#), to the objectives of the [World Food Summit](#) and to the Millennium Development Goal to halve the number of undernourished people by 2015.

15. We commit to developing new national and regional approaches under [AGRO Plan 2015](#) and instruct Ministers of Agriculture to adopt strategic actions to facilitate the implementation of this Plan based on the consensus of their [2007 Hemispheric Meeting in Guatemala](#).

(Rudolph Callender - Wednesday, October 1, 2008, 04:39:50 p.m.)

What about developing partnership among young in Agriculture business

(Lina Maria Marmolejo - Thursday, October 2, 2008, 07:24:09 a.m.)

Thanks Mr. Callender for your contribution.

How do you think the declaration could make the idea of encouraging youth to work on the land feasible and realistic? Through which actors this could be promoted? Maybe community networks of agricultural and small agricultural businesses?

(Kris Rampersad - Sunday, October 5, 2008, 05:26:50 p.m.)

It would be useful if we can look at this from our regional home-grown perspective rather than from and with all the imported approaches that we are being spoon-fed and adopting wholesale - with evident disastrous effect...(The reasons why are we in the current crisis!!!)

Brazil's is a great model to follow - combining as it does political will with mechanisms to support home grown methods and technologies...Will post more on this before end of the week.

(Lina Maria Marmolejo - Monday, October 6, 2008, 08:45:15 a.m.)

Dear Kris,

Thanks a lot for your comment!

Food security is indeed, recognized as a really important topic in the declaration. As you mentioned it is relevant to start thinking locally about our food and develop strategies reflecting our own social and environmental realities. Looking forward to read about the Brazil's case!

(Roosevelt O. King - Thursday, October 9, 2008, 09:52:36 p.m.)

To feed the world's population. This is a frightening statement within the context of food security. If for example one nation decides that to feed the world it produces and seeks to produce sufficient volume to feed the world and capture the markets. Worse yet is when the rest of the world become dependent on that source for food; Several problems arise here. For example, genetic modification without proper research on side effects; and the use of chemicals to grow food, including animals and birds at a rapid rate of production, far speedier than when left natural and far larger. What are the effects of the chemicals on the human body when in turn we ingest the same chemicals?

Food security must therefore be about self-sufficiency in food; or at least as close to it as possible, leaving very little room for imported foods. Starting with self-sufficiency in the home, then the community and then nationally. When you grow your own food, you know what you eat.

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## 5. Education - (paragraphs 24-26 of the Draft Declaration of Commitment of Port of Spain)

(Claudia Salazar - Wednesday, October 1, 2008, 01:52:53 p.m.)

24. We affirm that equal access to quality education, adapted to local and global realities, is a human right, a public good and a political priority. Improving early childhood care and education, primary education and teacher training are essential approaches to achieving universal primary education by 2010.

25. We reaffirm our commitment to achieving a secondary education enrollment rate of at least 75% by the year 2010 and we now call on the Ministers of Education and the OAS, with the support of the specialized regional institutions and UNESCO, to develop a gender-sensitive hemispheric strategy to reform secondary education and make it accessible to all our children, especially those from marginalised groups, by 2015. This strategy must include reform of curricula based on the principles of equity, quality, relevance and efficiency in education, take into account cultural, linguistic and ethnic diversity, and encourage innovation and creativity.

26. Recognising that education is a lifelong process that promotes social inclusion and allows people to contribute more fully to their societies, we give high priority to improving the quality of, and access to, tertiary, vocational and adult education, especially for women, rural inhabitants, persons with disabilities, Afro-descendants and indigenous peoples. We, therefore, commit to increasing the tertiary participation rate to a minimum of 40 per cent by 2020, and urge countries which have already made considerable advances in this area, to exchange good practices that will support the efforts of other countries to achieve this target. We also commit to support the ongoing professional development of teachers.

(Lina Maria Marmolejo -Thursday, October 2, 2008, 07:27:08 a.m.)

In Paragraph 25, Head of States propose the development of an hemispheric strategy which must include "reform of curricula based on the principles of equity, quality, relevance and efficiency in education, take into account cultural, linguistic and ethnic diversity, and encourage innovation and creativity." In addition to the reform of curricula, which other elements should be highlighted in this paragraph in order to achieve the proposed objectives?

(Marva Ribeiro - Thursday, October 9, 2008, 08:34:26 a.m.)

Recognising that education is a lifelong process that promotes social inclusion and allows people to contribute more fully to their societies, we give high priority to improving the quality of, and access to, tertiary, vocational and adult education, especially for women, rural inhabitants, persons with disabilities, Afro-descendants and indigenous peoples. We, therefore, commit to increasing the tertiary participation rate to a minimum of 40 per cent by 2020, and urge countries which have already made considerable advances in this area, to exchange good practices that will support the efforts of other countries to achieve this target. We also commit to support the ongoing professional development of teachers.

"Afro-descendants" should be struck. This is specific to some countries and can cause racial tension in others.

High priority is given to improving the quality of and access to .....Therefore the sentence "We, therefore commit to increasing....." follows as it relates to access. The last sentence is tacked on almost making it meaningless. I assume that it refers to improving quality.

"Ongoing" professional development of teachers implies in-service development. Shouldn't we also be concerned with the preparation of persons to become teachers (initial formation)?

(Lina Maria Marmolejo - Friday, October 10, 2008, 06:26:19 a.m.)

Dear Marva,

Thanks a lot for your contributions on this topic! Yes indeed, training and initial preparation of teachers poses an specific concern. In your regard, which particular actions should be implemented by our countries in order to tackle this challenge?

(Marcia Brandon - Friday, October 10, 2008, 03:41:11 p.m.)

Education for teachers is extremely important, especially in today's global realities. Teachers themselves need to be properly prepared in a practical way to ensure that they can properly prepare the children with whom they are entrusted to impart knowledge to. Areas such as entrepreneurship and business development are key areas that in today's realities teachers must have training in.

(Marva Ribeiro - Saturday, October 11, 2008, 03:34:55 p.m.)

I would like to suggest a new paragraph after No 26. First delete the last sentence of para 26 then add a new one. The last sentence is tacked on and does not add any meaning or value to the theme it expresses, which is access.

New Para suggestion:

Recognizing also that education is key to sustainable development, increased competitiveness, the alleviation of poverty and enhancement of the quality of life of all our people; and acknowledging the critical and central role that teachers and schools play in the quality education we provide, we commit to placing high priority on teacher development from initial preparation to retirement.

(Hugo Concha - Monday, October 13, 2008, 03:32:56 p.m.)

Emphasize the importance of the "ongoing professional development of teachers".

To be able to reach the 24, 25 and 26 goals, it is fundamental to provide the teachers the tools needed to aim these goals, since they will be the ones making them happen in everyday life.<?

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## **6. Youth - (paragraph 27 of the Draft Declaration of Commitment of Port of Spain)**

(Claudia Salazar - Wednesday, October 1, 2008, 01:56:50 p.m.)

27. We will continue to invest in our young people and adopt policies and programs that will expand their economic opportunities, increase their social engagement, open avenues for leadership, allow for meaningful participation in decision-making activities, and increase the quality and coverage of social services aimed at improving their lives and promoting healthy lifestyles. We, therefore, reaffirm our commitment to the [2008 Declaration of Medellin on Youth and Democratic Values](#).

(Rudolph Callender - Wednesday, October 1, 2008, 04:36:07 p.m.)

What about empowering the youth . I prefer the concept "teach to fish instead of give a fish"

(Lina Maria Marmolejo -Thursday, October 2, 2008, 07:45:05 a.m.)

Thanks again Mr. Callender for your comment.

Yes indeed it is important for our youth to have the tools and elements to work for their future and integrate themselves into the economic sphere. Do you consider this element could be treated more explicitly in this particular paragraph of the declaration?

(Lina Maria Marmolejo - Friday, October 3, 2008, 09:12:23 a.m.)

Please find below a contribution made by our colleague Felix Ortega from the Universal Civil Identity Program in the Americas of the OAS.

In paragraph 27 of the Draft Declaration, Heads of State declare that "We will continue to invest in our young people and adopt policies and programmes that will expand their economic opportunities, increase their social engagement, open avenues for leadership, allow for meaningful participation in decision-making activities, and increase the quality and coverage of social services aimed at improving their lives and promoting healthy lifestyles." Having a civil identity is essential for young people to exercise its social and political rights, and take part in the life of a democracy. Do you consider that the lack of a civil identity is an obstacle to increase equal opportunities and citizen participation? If yes, should this Draft Declaration face this problematic more explicitly?

*(Melissa Golladay - Thursday, October 9, 2008, 08:56:02 a.m.)*

I don't think we need to address specific issues such as identity in this forum. The goal of this Summit is to get away from creating more and more mandates and begin finding ways to make sure that action is taken to address these issues post-summit. Identity is an important issue, but not the only one.

*(Luis Viguria - Wednesday, October 8, 2008, 12:50:44 p.m.)*

Thanks a lot Claudia and Lina for your comments, I really believe in the importance of a process. As Mr. Callender pointed, is not just a fact of giving a fish but to teach them how to fish. For sure, here, what we are also trying to do, is to make sure that there are fishes that can be fished.

At the OAS, a very interesting evolution regarding the topic of giving young people a more active role has grown a lot. We are trying to build capacity in order to make them real actors and participants of the entire process, but also trying to have them as a priority in the organization so that the actions developed within the organization and its members states has more impact.

The Summit of the Americas is a clear example, in 2005, within the framework of the IV Summit of the Americas held in Mar del Plata, Argentina, young people has the opportunity to participate in the process through the Young Entrepreneurs of the Americas Forum.

[http://www.ybiz.org/yabt/events/foro/eng/about\\_foro.asp](http://www.ybiz.org/yabt/events/foro/eng/about_foro.asp)

After that, young people got the opportunity also to present their opinions at the Dialogue of the Civil Society Representatives with the Heads of Delegations at the OAS General Assembly held in Panama in 2007.

(please take a look at the video there)

[http://www.myybiz.net/projects/leadership/leadership\\_main/consultations/transparency021208/index](http://www.myybiz.net/projects/leadership/leadership_main/consultations/transparency021208/index)

In 2008, Summit of the Americas has open also an space for young people to become active participants in the process, by providing their recommendations and inputs at the Young Americas Forum to be held in Port of Spain in April 2009 and prior the Summit of the Americas. Please visit; [www.ybiz.net](http://www.ybiz.net) and get involve in this initiative, I believe is our chance to make some positive impact in our countries.

Have all of you a great day!, Luis

*(Melissa Golladay - Thursday, October 9, 2008, 08:56:41 a.m.)*

Thank you for the information on how youth have been increasing incorporated into the inter-American system. I wonder how the Summits can help countries to take similar steps.

*(Luis Viguria - Thursday, October 9, 2008, 10:45:54 a.m.)*

I am a believer of the important role of the Summit of the Americas, but also we need to be conscious is a both sides process. With the support of the Summit, we can have an important role at the time to define priorities and mandates for our countries, but then, it is up to us to use those legal mechanisms to make the change. Maybe, what we can do is continue this process, not to stop with the Summit in Trinidad, but after that, to develop some implementation and monitoring mechanism, where young people can also have a key role. There is the Summit Implementation and Reviewing Group (SIRG) already working in that field, and maybe if possible we can open more mechanisms of involvement. Anyway, just an idea. Claudia, can you please tell us more in that field. Thanks. Luis

*(Claudia Salazar - Thursday, October 9, 2008, 12:05:53 p.m.)*

Hi Luis and all participants!

Well, I think that the issue Luis is bringing up is very important in the overall discussion - for all issues. The Summits is in fact a process, therefore we cannot stop in the Fifth Summit in Trinidad. In fact, through the Declaration the countries are committing to implement and make an effort to achieve the targets and goals agreed upon, thus Summits' efforts continue past this event. In fact, that's when the hard work should begin! Right now an important window of opportunity is open, social actors have the option to present their interests and stress their priorities. After the Summit, the Declaration should guide regional cooperation efforts, not only for governments, but for civil society as well. There is indeed a high level of duplication of efforts in all sectors and what the Youth group is doing is a great example of how these political processes provide a guiding framework for all countries to work in.

Actually, the idea of this forum is for it to continue to have 'life after the Fifth Summit', remember that it is not only the work done in preparation for this meeting, but what we do with its output - the commitments. Can this new mechanism assist countries and social actors in coordinating efforts to achieve the goals put forth in the Declaration?, I believe it certainly may and we invite all of your recommendations to make it possible!

Remember that:

- The Summits is a process of the countries, by the countries.

- The OAS is the Technical Secretariat to this process – the countries agree to implement and we are here to assist them.
- The [Joint Summit Working Group \(JSWG\)](#) and the [Summit Implementation Review Group \(SIRG\)](#) are also important mechanisms for coordination and follow-up.
- There are also many activities being coordinated with [Civil Society](#) (not only for the Summit, but for OAS as a whole).

Hope all of this information helps! Best to all participants! Claudia

*(Luis Viguria - Friday, October 10, 2008, 10:34:36 a.m.)*

Good morning,

I would like to take this opportunity to invite the young people from the Caribbean English Speaking Countries to participate in the Youth Dialogue to be held in Trinidad and Tobago on Oct 29 and 30. I am attaching a document with detailed information, please contact Valerie Lorena, [vlorena@oas.org](mailto:vlorena@oas.org) who is managing this activity to get more details.

Thanks a lot and have a great weekend.

Luis

[young americas forum - caribbean dialogue - oct 8.pdf \(164.266KB\)](#)

*(Marcia Brandon - Friday, October 10, 2008, 03:36:54 p.m.)*

It is extremely important that we ensure that not only are we ensuring that we guide the youth through our own experiences but also that they are able to make some input as well. That means we need to invest in our youth to ensure that they are given the necessary tools to become agents of change. We should not however make the mistake that youth want to make all their decisions for themselves. Due to their limited knowledge and experience, they are looking to knowledgeable adults to guide, advise, encourage and support them.

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## **7. Knowledge-Based Society - (paragraph 28 of the Draft Declaration of Commitment of Port of Spain)**

*(Claudia Salazar - Wednesday, October 1, 2008, 01:54:20 p.m.)*

28. It is essential that the technological gap, both among and within the nations of the Americas, be reduced. We, therefore, renew our commitment to collaborate with regional, sub-regional and multinational agencies to advance progress in the implementation of initiatives under the [Agenda for Connectivity in the Americas and the Plan of Action of Quito](#). We instruct our Ministers and High Level Authorities with responsibility for Information and Communication Technology (ICT) to promote the use of ICTs in our education systems and our public and business sectors, and to widen access for households and communities.

*(Lina Maria Marmolejo -Thursday, October 2, 2008, 07:38:40 a.m.)*

To open the discussion about this topic, I would like to start by highlighting that in paragraph 28, the countries of the region consider of great importance to train public officials in the use of new technologies "We instruct our Ministers and High Level Authorities with responsibility for Information and Communication Technology (ICT) to promote the use of ICTs in our education systems and our public and business sectors, and to widen access for households and communities."

Is it important to consider including in this paragraph training given to citizens in order to guarantee its participation in the modernization process?

*(Rudi Daniel - Friday, October 3, 2008, 07:18:55 p.m.)*

Important yes the inclusion of citizen training, and the role of education systems and their ability to respond to the real needs of society. Does the prevailing systems of education lead, follow or obstruct the knowledge potential of social systems? In the light of an emerging knowledge society, it is wisdom which has value because of the availability of information systems. Present education systems have arguably developed an ability to serve capital and labour with Money as the valued output whereas we now would seem to be looking at more intangibles as valued outputs...So I need to ask if present leaders comprehend/pay homage to the notion of collective wisdom as the valued output of a knowledge society and as Hiroshi Tasaka suggests; managing society as an eco system.

*(Lina Maria Marmolejo - Monday, October 6, 2008, 09:18:10 a.m.)*

Dear Rudi, Very interesting contribution!

As you mentioned, the role of education systems is of key importance, preparing students for life-long learning by including training programs linking private and public institutions and since knowledge has always been at the base of economic activities, it is also important to concentrate in upgrading of skills and the speed of acquiring new knowledge. So how through this declaration and which actors could help our countries could advance in managing knowledge and innovation?

*(Kristjan Sigurdson - Friday, October 3, 2008, 05:45:43 p.m.)*

Hello everyone,

I am very interested in the issue of digital poverty, a somewhat undefined terminology that refers to those individuals or groups that exist on the most marginal fringe of what is commonly known as the digital divide.

My question is: To what extent should digital poverty, that is, a major lack of access to information and communication technologies, be considered a component of poverty more generally? It is often the case that access to the internet and other ICTs is thought of as frivolous when compared to much more pressing and emotionally powerful issues such as violence, starvation, displacement and other immediate threats to human well-being. Yet, it is a fact that access to ICT can play a massive role in the amelioration of all of the above mentioned human security threats. The internet, for instance, can allow for the transfer of information related to the resolution of medical problems, and the improvement of crop production. It can also allow for enduring communications among communities prone to conflicts or violence, or between these communities and external sources of assistance and observation, whether these are regional or national governments, or even relevant NGOs.

I feel that ICT has the capacity to give communities a voice and the level of informational "hearing" that is necessary a world that is increasingly run and participated in online. Democracy is also an important issue. as it is hard to consider a citizen with access to, and just as important, the capacity to filter the information of the web, as being able to make the same quality of democratic choice, as someone with access to a mere fraction of that information. Without universal access to ICT and the capacities to use ICT, is true democracy being practiced?

So,

How should we consider the importance of digital poverty with reference to poverty more generally? How important is moving towards universal access and the equalization of capacities in ICTs for ensuring an adequately and equally empowered voting public?

The link below is to a book published in 2007 by the IDRC that deals specifically with the issues I have described above.

[Digital Poverty Online Book](#)

Saludos, Kristjan Sigurdson

*(Lina Maria Marmolejo - Monday, October 6, 2008, 10:13:32 a.m.)*

Dear Kristjan,

Thanks a lot for such an interesting contribution and the resources on digital poverty ! As you mentioned it would be an interesting element to be included in the poverty debate, knowledge creation, catching-up and democracy.

I would like to ask you how do you think the summit of the Americas process and the declaration could help advance in this issue?

*(Kristjan Sigurdson - Wednesday, October 8, 2008, 05:51:15 p.m.)*

Thank you for the kind words Lina,<?

The issue of how the Summits of the Americas process ought to deal with Digital Poverty and the Digital Divide is a complicated one.

As the Action Plan of Quito asserts, there needs to be comprehensive strategies that involve not only the creation of access to technologies of information and communication, but also important complimentary actions such as the development of local, or locally-relevant content, and creative ways of familiarizing and building the capacities of new users in the uses of these technologies.

The time-honored cliché 'If you give a person to fish, she/he will eat for a day, but if you teach a person to fish she/he will eat forever' comes to mind. Except that it may better be expressed in this case as 'If you teach a person to fish she/he will eat forever, but if you simply give a person a fishing rod she/he will struggle to figure out how to use it properly, to determine what lakes/rivers even have fish in them, and eventually the person will probably give up on fishing altogether because of how difficult, time-consuming and unrewarding it seems to be.'



The point is that access without relevance is only a partial solution, and one that will be a costly and inefficient use of limited resources. My opinion of an ideal strategy draws from the *Real Access Criteria* developed by the Non-profit organization Bridges.org. I believe that comprehensive ICT access strategies must involve: Physical access to appropriate, affordable technology; access to a variety of training in the many uses of this technology; the encouragement of locally created and relevant content applications and services; the creation of legal frameworks; the eventual integration of ICT into daily life; and the incorporation of other contextual elements such as socio-cultural factors, and local and macro economic environments.

The IDRC funded Book *Digital Poverty: Latin American and Caribbean Perspectives*, mentioned in my previous post also offers a few lines of attack that I feel are theoretically sound, albeit difficult to implement effectively and equally across the Americas, especially by the OAS's hands alone. The book's authors contend that:

1) The strategies must be primarily directed towards creating conditions for private sector initiatives and investments through the normal operation of markets. We need to help private enterprise to create ICT infrastructure, training opportunities and relevant content.

2) Strategies must be capable of offering more direct support to communities that will inevitably lie outside of the private market's reach: encourage and sponsor cooperatives and community owned projects, micro credit financing initiatives and rural development projects.

3) Strategies must also ensure that existing, new and potential ICT users are made aware of their rights to access. At the same time, rights to certain connectivity standards (minimum service bandwidth etc) must be carefully managed so that rights of access to quality internet, does not mean no access at all for those that can currently only be served by substandard connection quality.

Implementing these ideas is the problem, and one that will be hard for the next Summits declaration to achieve on its own simply by reaffirming the Action Plan of Quito. This is due to the many levels of complexity and cooperation necessarily involved in providing *Real* universal access.

I do believe though, that one step in the right direction would be to study and to certify that the reduction of digital poverty on a grand scale is indeed a crucial part of a comprehensive poverty reduction, and equity generation strategy.

Perhaps we have to better acknowledge the essential role of basic communication and information, which has come to include the internet and associated technologies, in facilitating the successful improvement or failure of almost every realm of development, from the practice of democracy, to the provision of health, education and security. By asking the key actors of all developmental sectors to push comprehensive ICT access strategies as a part of their overall objectives, we may be able to achieve the kind of pressure needed to get businesses, governments and communities all working towards the same goal.

(Roosevelt O. King - Wednesday, October 8, 2008, 09:48:33 p.m.)

Interesting response. Certainly we cannot ignore the developmental potential of ICTs. It may not be a contributor to poverty right now, but in times to come, as more and more business is transacted via ICTs, not having ICTs may be a large contributor to lack of education, lack of information and lack of the capacity or ability to raise themselves out of poverty because these services are not available. This is so from urban to rural to remote areas.

(Lina Maria Marmolejo - Thursday, October 9, 2008, 05:23:19 a.m.)

Dear Kristjan and Roosevelt,

Thanks again for an enriching debate on access to ICT and digital poverty. In effect it is a growing concern that would be important to be considered in this process. Which national/regional actors could act as catalyst on this issue?

(Claudia Salazar - Monday, October 6, 2008, 04:54:39 p.m.)

Greetings to all participants!

For your information and reference, our Joint Summit Working Group (JSWG) institutional partner the *Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) of the United Nations*, has suggested the following report related to the subject Science and Technology.

[eLac 2010, SAN SALVADOR COMMITMENT, Adopted at the Second Ministerial Conference on the Information Society in Latin America and the Caribbean, San Salvador, 6-8 February 2008](#)

I will also make sure to update the ""Reference document"" with incoming material.

Thank you for your participation!

Best, Claudia

(Miguel Porrúa - Friday, October 10, 2008, 09:19:55 a.m.)

Hi everyone thanks for this opportunity to bring messages to those responsible to lead the countries of the hemisphere. I am not going to repeat what Kristijan said because he presented it perfectly. Information and communication technologies may not be enough to take people out of poverty but in the knowledge-based society they are absolutely necessary.

It is well described and signed by the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the 34 countries that will attend the Port of Spain meeting in the Declaration of Santo Domingo "Good Governance and Development in the Knowledge-based society" (attached here).

In this regard, I have two specific suggestions:

- a) paragraph 28 should not be under "science and technology" but under "Knowledge-based society"
- b) I would change the wording something like *We recognize that the benefits of the Knowledge-based society must reach every citizen of the Americas. We therefore renew our commitments under the Agenda for Connectivity in the Americas, the Plan of Action of Quito and the Tunis Commitment to ensure the advancement of information and communication technologies as a cross-cutting tool to accelerate the achievement of human prosperity, environmental sustainability and good governance. We instruct our Ministers and High Level Authorities with responsibility for Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) to promote the use of ICTs in all areas where they can improve the quality of life of our citizens and the functioning of our societies.*

We still have digital divide in Latin America and the Caribbean because politicians either have not understood the importance of information and communication technologies or they don't show this understanding by investing resources or both. As expressed in previous comments the digital divide relates to lack of infrastructure, expensive connectivity, digital analphabetism, lack of local content, ... To solve this problems governments must commit politically and make an effort financially.

I hope while negotiations and discussions conducive to the final Declaration of Commitment pay attention to how information and communication technologies can help achieve human prosperity, energy security and environmental sustainability.

Thanks.

[decsantodome04.doc \(72.5KB\)](#)

(Claudia Salazar - Friday, October 10, 2008, 12:04:28 p.m.)

Thank you Miguel for your suggestions!

Taking into consideration your suggestion and that this paragraph specifically refers to information and communication technologies, we will change the sub-theme "Science and Technology" to "Knowledge-based society". It is important to highlight however that we will make this change in the reference documents and in the final report, but unfortunately we cannot change the title of this discussion chain as doing so would eliminate all of the comments that have been posted.

Thank you for your suggestion and comments!

Best to all participants!

Claudia

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## 8. Culture - (paragraph 29 of the Draft Declaration of Commitment of Port of Spain)

(Claudia Salazar - Wednesday, October 1, 2008, 01:55:28 p.m.)

29. We recognise that inter-cultural dialogue and respect for cultural diversity promote mutual understanding and convergence, which help reduce conflict, discrimination and the barriers to economic opportunity and social participation. We commit to nurturing creativity and promoting cultural industries as part of our policies for the promotion of social development, sustainable economic growth, job creation and income generation, especially for young adults.

(Lina Maria Marmolejo - Friday, October 3, 2008, 06:05:29 p.m.)

In paragraph 29, head of States commit themselves to "to nurturing creativity and promoting cultural industries as part of our policies for the promotion of social development, sustainable economic growth, job creation and income generation, especially for young adults." How creativity and cultural industries could be encouraged taking into account national and regional differences?

(Melissa Golladay - Thursday, October 9, 2008, 08:44:28 a.m.)

I think that opportunities for multi-cultural or bi-cultural interaction and sharing is the key to fostering creativity and ideas. The truth - highlighted in forums such as the Summits of the Americas - is that we

share many of the same problems and concerns. Finding ways to bring people together across borders and socio-economic or ethnic groups is important for finding the solutions that will work effectively and successfully to bring change.

(Kris Rampersad - Sunday, October 5, 2008, 05:37:49 p.m.)

..it is amazing at how we talk of cultural diversity as if it is new to us - our societies that are bred on diversity - coming to terms with each other, learning to live and grow with each other without a thought - Evidently, again, another imported concept we ought to be wary off from societies that are only now awakening to the fact that others who do not look, think or act like them are their neighbours.... When will we wake up to our own realities and confidence in the strengths that our cultural realities offer us?

It would be heartening to see policy directions in all aspects of the Summit designed on these cultural strengths than force-feed our way into alien concepts and beliefs...

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