



**DECLARATION OF THE REGIONAL SUMMIT FOR
POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT
AND DEMOCRATIC PRINCIPLES**

Governing Globalization

(The Brasilia Consensus)

1. On the eve of a new century humanity finds itself at a crossroads which could lead to a change of civilization. Technical and scientific progress have provided us with enormous capacities for protecting and preserving life. Cultural and artistic creativity have given rise to a joyful celebration of plurality and diversity and have enriched our life experience. But the exclusion of the majority of men and women from the enjoyment of even minimum standards of living, and ever-widening inequalities, have increased human pain and suffering. At the same time, the undesirable side-effects of mass culture are impoverishing the quality of life and fostering a widespread cultural malaise, even in those who materially are very well provided for. Technological and scientific advances, which if guided by a modern understanding of the meaning of ethics and humanism could contribute to the happiness of men and women, are often used to maintain a situation in which banality and injustice prevail and compassion is held at arm's length.

2. The Latin America and Caribbean region has come to this crossroads too. Poverty, backwardness and marginalization coexist with the intellectual and moral resources which could transform the promises held out by life in Latin America into reality. Throughout nearly the entire twentieth century economic growth has been higher on average in this region than in any other. Nevertheless our countries also exhibit the greatest social inequalities in the world. In recent years an exemplary effort has been made to build democracies, and concern about human rights has become widespread. Still, large sectors of the population especially women and the victims of ethnic segregation are faced with what are at times insurmountable obstacles to the exercise of their civic rights. Latin America is renowned for its intellectual and artistic creativity and its cultural diversity. Yet it has still not attained political and economic unity, even in this age of 'blocs'.

3. The response of Latin America and the Caribbean to the process of globalization has oscillated between passive adaptation and a tendency to autarky. Nevertheless, a cautious revolution is taking place, a process of intellectual and social maturation which is trying to come to terms with complexity and, building on the positive aspects of the very costly modern reforms, is seeking to revitalize economic growth and link it with equality and social justice, while preserving a healthy environment. Our peoples have before them the task of governing globalization, which means neither ignoring it nor slavishly subjecting themselves to it.

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4. Governing globalization implies a new, shared responsibility which involves the countries of both North and South, governmental and non-governmental organizations, local communities and international organizations. Global problems call for global solutions. At the end of the Second World War political and economic planning was needed to achieve peace and save the defeated countries from the ruins of the war. Now the Cold War has ended we must conclude a new pact, on global governability. It will include a new moral contract for peace and new arrangements to make international economic flows equitable, to control financial speculation and to democratize communications so that a system of shared development may be constructed which will free humanity from the social ruin of poverty and inequality.

5. This pact must be founded on dialogue between the few who enjoy the fruits of modernity and the enormous majority that has been excluded from it. Its sole purpose will be to acknowledge the need for a different kind of modernity, one which enables the diversities of our mixed races to be given equal recognition and human potentials to unfold. To arrive at this pact which will govern globalization and keep the self-determination of the region and its peoples intact, the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean must make full use of their potential. The efforts and achievements of the various regional integration bodies must be complemented by the determination of our governments to create a Latin American community of nations; a joint Latin American agenda - which can adopt a distinctively Latin American approach such issues as the external debt, the protection of our migrant population, and the combat against drug trafficking; and address the question of full regional citizenship. These are the conditions urgently needed to ensure a viable national strategy in every one of our countries.

6. Full equality in a global context means that our countries must achieve social, regional and technical integration. Constructing non-exclusionary societies is a economic, social, political and ethical necessity. The region has already grasped that competitive markets are essential to stimulate economic growth. It is now learning that the marketplace offers neither social equality nor political stability. Sustainable development calls for a democratic reconstruction of the state: a reformed, modernized state, legitimate and effective enough to achieve the balance that the market does not automatically create and, above all, a state that reflects our societies' plans for the future.

7. The democratic reconstruction of the state must be supported by all citizens, men and women alike. They are the true protagonists of democracy. The reconstruction of civic life means the establishment of arrangements for participation in political life which offer an opportunity to learn about responsibilities, rights and duties in full respect for all freedoms and in particular freedom of expression. Reinforcing the inviolable rights of the individual and the values of community life should lead to a flourishing of local and municipal authority, the modernization of legislative and executive bodies, the strengthening and democratization of the system of political parties, full empowerment of autonomous social organizations, and recognition of the multiethnic and pluricultural nature of our societies. The democratic reconstruction of the state calls for an austere and responsible approach to politics and deeply rooted ethical convictions.

8. The daily application of democratic principles represents the politics of the future. A new mode of political discourse is not sufficient. What we need is to change our habits, awaken our consciences and practice what we preach. Democratic life among nations and among individuals requires an ethos of responsibility. There can be no shared future unless we can devise a modern form of humanism based on commitments that are entered into freely. The unremitting application of the principles of justice, freedom, equality and solidarity is the first step to a major reform: the transition from a culture of war to a culture of peace. To educate, to change people's habits, to create institutions founded on democratic principles, is to light the fire of freedom.

9. Democratic principles find expression today in policies of inclusion, which require of us no less than eight commitments. The first is to banish corruption from politics. The second is to resolve conflicts of interest within countries democratically, through dialogue and negotiation. The third is to halt the build-up of armaments, especially high-technology arms, fostered by the arms-producing countries, and to ban war as a way of settling border disputes. The fourth is to achieve peace and security for all. The fifth is to accord priority to children and youth in solving social problems: governing for children and youth means governing for the present and the future. The sixth is to end the impunity of public and all *de facto* authorities and to promote the capacity of citizens to exercise due control of authorities set over them. The seventh is to provide and guarantee equal quality education for all throughout life. The eighth is to preserve the environment, biodiversity and the quality of urban life.

10. As humanity reaches the crossroads marked by the end of the century, Latin America and the Caribbean can and must choose a new direction. This is vital in order to consolidate peace, democracy and development, which are in grave danger if the current economic models, devoid of justice, equality or solidarity, continue to function. The Regional Summit for Political Development and Democratic Principles calls upon the leaders of our countries to fulfil these eight pledges in order to bring about the transition to shared responsibility. Governing globalization requires leaders capable of reflection, determination and ethical commitment: they must reflect in order to master a situation of growing complexity and to find new directions for society; they must be determined in order to accept the risk and moral responsibility of the decision to change; and they must be capable of ethical commitment in order to improve the quality of politics and let it serve the people.

11. The participants at the Regional Summit for Political Development and Democratic Principles wish to thank the Ministry of Culture of Brazil, the Government of the Federal District of Brazil and UNESCO for their support for this initiative carried out under the auspices of DEMOS, a forum for pluralistic and democratic debate.

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