

**XVI GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MINISTERS AND MAXIMUM AUTHORITIES  
OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE  
CARIBBEAN**

Santiago, Chile

October 8 - 9, 2007

**DECLARATION OF SANTIAGO DE CHILE**

**Whereas:**

1. The General Assembly of Ministers and Maximum Authorities of Latin America and the Caribbean of the Housing and Urban Development Sector are the main instances for political concertation, regional coordination and cooperation on issues of housing and sustainable development of human settlements.
2. The urban population of Latin America and the Caribbean has experienced steady growth, with 77.6% of the 561 million inhabitants of the region living in urban centers. Nevertheless, a significant part of the population cannot have access to all the services and rights guaranteed by the city.
3. Although the region classifies as the second most urban one on the planet, it is necessary to bear in mind that the rural population is 126 million people, and in four countries it is higher than the urban population, presenting severe conditions of structural poverty that are reflected in unsatisfactory levels of coverage of basic needs.
4. The region is the frequent scenario of devastating natural phenomena with serious impact on the constructed environment, particularly in the case of makeshift settlements.
5. The countries in Latin America and the Caribbean have invaluable ethnic and cultural diversity that must be respected and preserved by housing and zoning policies through management models that guarantee active social participation and effective social control.
6. In order to respond to the poverty and makeshift nature of the urban and rural habitat, social housing programs shall strengthen the following tasks: expand the possibilities of the poor to enjoy formal access to urban land; provide utilities, potable water, and sanitation for the most needy neighborhoods; provide and improve housing that satisfies basic needs for comfort, safety, and sanitary conditions; give consideration to the accessibility and connectivity of those settlements among themselves and with the city; contribute to better integration of

the poor in cities through the provision of public areas that promote a feeling of belonging and harmonious social relations.

7. Having information about Programs of Social Housing and Human Settlement in the region makes it possible to prepare diagnoses of conditions, establish comparisons, and reach useful conclusions, when implementing policies on housing and human settlements.
8. The financing applied to developing and facilitating the population's access to the constructed substratum of the urban environment (housing, infrastructure, and community equipment) shall be considered an investment, not an expense.
9. It is necessary to raise the profile of the housing sector in the international scenario of institutions of finance, cooperation, and promotion, in view of the insufficiency of available resources for loans and donations to national and local governments.
10. It is necessary to promote actions of national and local governments for fulfillment of goals 10 and 11 of the Development Objectives of the Millennium adopted in the United Nations General Assembly at the 2000 Summit, which requires significantly increasing the national and international resources intended for those purposes.
11. It is necessary to strengthen integration processes at the subregional and regional level, to harmonize human settlement policies, promote cooperation between countries and cities, and improve mechanisms of exchange, transfers of know-how, and training of human resources.

**Recognizing:**

1. The constant support and collaboration of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) in the implementation of the MINURVI agreements, materialized in the support provided for the preparation of thematic documents and the production of seminars and training courses.
2. The support provided by the Regional Office of the United Nations Program for Human Settlements (UN-Habitat / ROLAC) in the tasks of MINURVI.
3. The hospitality of the authorities of the Republic of Chile and particularly the excellent organization of the meeting by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development as host to this Assembly.

Ministers and Maximum Authorities of Housing and Urban Development of the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean, participants in this General Assembly,

**We agree:**

1. To reiterate, to the member countries of MINURVI, the need to contribute the necessary information to complete the data base of the Regional Program of Social Housing and Human Settlements and its evaluation, with the participation of ECLAC and the technical secretariat of MINURVI in its systematization.
2. To reiterate the agreements reached at the Assemblies of Guadalupe, Spain and Montevideo, Uruguay, about the need to assure national resources in sufficient and stable quantity for the progressive implementation of housing and human settlement programs for the underprivileged population, both urban and rural.
3. To help raise the political and institutional priority of the housing and urban development sector, creating or reinforcing government agencies at all levels, and acting jointly for this purpose in international organizations.
4. To reiterate the importance of strengthening the role of the State at all levels in the promotion and application of policies to improve housing conditions, especially of the most underprivileged sectors.
5. To call attention to the negative impact of the over-exploitation of natural resources and emissions that affect the environment with greater frequency and intensity and to encourage the governments of Latin America and the Caribbean to take actions to halt those practices that threaten the life of our peoples.
6. To recognize the need to improve territorial and urban planning and management in order to reduce conditions of vulnerability in constructed areas, and to improve the monitoring of areas that have not been constructed; to establish funds to finance measures of prevention and mitigation, and to promote discussions about joint responsibility, among other actions.
7. To recognize and consider cultural, multiethnic, and multilingual diversity through the active participation of communities in the development and implementation of sectoral policies in order to promote sustainable development and improve the quality of life through programs of housing and development of human settlements.
8. To recognize that citizens, in their social, cultural, and organizational diversity, are active subjects in the construction of a society and urban and rural life of quality, based on equality of rights, freedom of choice and decision, dignity and social justice.
9. To promote processes of social participation in the preparation of public policies on housing and urban development and to establish mechanisms of social control for the implementation of those policies.

10. To recognize that urban development is only possible if it is based on a sustainable territorial system – an essential commitment of the state-, for the appropriate redistribution of economic burdens and benefits and the capture of the increase in value that is produced by public investment.

11. To charge the Executive Committee of MINURVI with the following tasks:

- a. To organize periodic regional workshops or seminars, whose results would be included in virtual forums on the Web, thereby becoming a reflection on the proposed tasks and delving more deeply into the issues discussed up to that point, and pending ones:
  - The study of mechanisms to deal with the informal nature of settlements, promoting the regularization of titles and assuring access to land and basic services for low-income populations.
  - Financing for social housing.
  - Criteria of priority to identify and select the target populations of social housing and human settlement policies.
  - Programs for integral promotion of rural settlements.
  - Mechanisms of promotion for technological innovation and technical quality of construction.
  - Exchange of experience in the sphere of normalization and legislation that provides safety and quality in housing and infrastructure solutions.
- b. To coordinate, with ECLAC and UN-HABITAT, continuity in the analysis of experiences of countries in the region in the framework of the Regional Program of Social Housing and Human Settlements, including housing problems in rural areas in the analysis.
- c. To coordinate, with ECLAC and UN-HABITAT, the preparation of projects and the search for financing in support of the many tasks on the MINURVI agenda. In this context, to look favorably on the suggestions to propose the IDB to study the possibility of taking charge of the financing of the definition of a common regional methodology and its application for the recording of financial resources assigned to social housing and related urban development.
- d. To study, particularly, expansion of the scale of resources applied to urban infrastructure, through differentiated treatment of those investments that includes their total or partial exclusion from current budget restrictions.
- e. To outline a strategy to achieve greater recognition of the magnitude of urban housing problems in Latin America and the Caribbean in pertinent international forums, such as the Habitat Administration Council in Nairobi and the Governors Assembly of the Interamerican Development Bank, among others, coordinating tasks with local ministries of foreign affairs and public officials.

- f. To establish a network of iberoamerican technicians on the Web, related to the subject of housing, to support countries in achieving the Objectives of the Millennium, in improving the quality of life of the inhabitants of Latin America and the Caribbean, with social inclusion.
- g. To disseminate, on the Web, cooperation projects that member countries are developing, with details of general and specific objectives, operating rules, progress, results, and problems encountered in the process.
- h. To complete the updating of the data base of the authorities of English-speaking countries in the Caribbean subregion, and to promote fluid communication with them.
- i. To take measures to develop a program of exchange and regional technical cooperation among the countries that make up MINURVI, with emphasis on national policies and programs of access to urban land, social housing, development of rural housing programs, instruments, and mechanisms of financing and migrations in the region, from a perspective of shared development.

12. To establish the Executive Committee, until the XVII MINURVI, as follows:

The subregion of Central America and Mexico shall be represented by Honduras and Mexico, and the latter shall act as the focal point of the subregion.

The subregión of the Caribbean shall be represented by Jamaica and Cuba, and the latter shall both act as the focal point of the subregion, procuring the participation of the English-speaking and French-speaking countries in the activities of MINURVI.

The subregion of South America shall be represented by Bolivia and Brazil, and the latter shall act as the focal point of the subregion.

12. To appoint Argentina as the Technical Secretariat of MINURVI.

13. To hold the XVII General Assembly of MINURVI in 2008 in the Republic of El Salvador.



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