

DECLARATION OF TURKEYEN

1. The Nineteenth Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Permanent Mechanism for Consultation and Political Coordination - Rio Group – took place at Turkeyen, Guyana on 3rd March 2007 under the chairmanship of His Excellency Bharrat Jagdeo, President of Guyana. The Troika was represented by His Excellency Jorge Enrique Taiana, Minister of Foreign Affairs, International Trade and Worship of Argentina and His Excellency Leonel Fernández Reyna, President of the Dominican Republic.

2. Noting that December 18, 2006 marked the twentieth anniversary of the establishment of the Rio Group, the Heads of State and Government expressed their satisfaction with the success achieved by the Group in fulfilling its major objectives as set out in the *Declaration of Rio de Janeiro* of 1986. They were especially pleased at the achievements recorded in regard to expanding and systematising political cooperation among Member States through a process of regular consultations on issues of common concern.

3. Encouraged by the progress and achievements of the last 20 years and convinced of the relevance of the Rio Group as a viable and necessary instrument for political dialogue in the region, the Heads of State and Government reaffirmed the importance of the Group as a privileged space for political consultation and coordination in Latin America and the Caribbean and renewed their commitment to the political consensus and principles outlined in the *Veracruz Act* of 1999.

4. They therefore endorsed the agreement reached in Guyana by their Ministers of Foreign Affairs on the strengthening of the Rio Group which paves the way for a more dynamic role for the Group in political coordination and as a regional interlocutor with other regions and countries, as well as in the principal multilateral fora.

5. They recognised that the longstanding commitment of the Rio Group to the defence of multilateralism, based on full respect for the principles of international law, was integral to its role and importance as a regional block. The Heads of State and Government therefore renewed their commitment to support the full and democratic participation of Member States of the Rio Group in international fora, with a view to contributing to the search for peace and security and a more balanced international system.

6. They observed that substantial progress had been achieved throughout the Latin American and Caribbean region in consolidating and strengthening democracy, maintaining peace and security, promoting development, combating terrorism and transnational organised crime and the worldwide drug problem, furthering regional integration, unity and solidarity. At the international level, the Rio Group stands as a legitimate and trustworthy partner, maintaining dialogue with a continuously expanding number of countries and groups of countries. In addition, the Group has emerged as a legitimate agent for change globally with a proven capacity for contributing meaningfully to the resolution of socio-economic and socio-political crises.

7. Heads of State and Government recognised that the growing involvement of the smaller states of the region in the Rio Group represents a favourable step towards greater inclusiveness, resulting in a stronger voice at the global level. In this regard, they recognised that increased political dialogue and cooperation among the sub-regions of

Latin America and the Caribbean, in particular between the countries of CARICOM and Latin America, would contribute to the effective functioning of the Rio Group. In an era in which sub-regional integration mechanisms are increasingly developing their own parameters of regional and international outreach, the Heads of State and Government underscored the need for the Group to retain its focus as a regional and extra-regional interlocutor. They therefore expressed their determination to make every effort to strengthen it.

8. Heads of State and Government highlighted the deepening of regional integration based on principles of co-operation, complementarity and solidarity, as a fundamental means of reducing poverty and preventing the negative effects of globalisation from deepening the asymmetries which contribute to economic, social and political marginalisation. Asymmetries must be overcome in order to achieve equitable and just integration, and concrete and effective mechanisms must be developed to solve the major inequalities in our region. They therefore noted the efforts being made to advance specific and effective measures and actions within a framework of common policies aimed at overcoming asymmetries in regional integration processes.

9. They therefore thanked the Pro Tempore Secretariat of Guyana for its excellent work in preparing the Report on the Treatment of Assymetries in the Context of Regional Co-operation, and noted that it can serve as a basis for promoting specific and practical measures for overcoming these asymmetries, especially with regard to the special needs of small vulnerable economies of the region. They agreed to keep this important subject on the Agenda of the Rio Group in order to deepen further discussion and thus achieve balanced and harmonious regional integration.

10. Heads of State and Government examined the current situation in Haiti and adopted the “Declaration of the Rio Group on the situation in Haiti and the role of MINUSTAH” issued in Turkeyen, Guyana on 03 March, 2007.

11. Heads of State and Government noted that natural and man made disasters exacerbated by global warming pose a significant threat to the welfare of their countries and that degradation of the global environment adds to the economic and social vulnerabilities of developing countries, in particular small vulnerable states. Whilst acknowledging the intrinsic relationship between disaster reduction, sustainable development and poverty eradication, among others, Heads of State and Government recognised the need to strengthen the capacity of nations in disaster prevention and response through the adoption of appropriate policies and increased international cooperation to support national efforts. They also recognised the importance for the countries that are parties to the respective arrangements of the Hyogo Declaration and the Hyogo Framework for Action, the Inter-American Sustainable Development Programme and Barbados Programme of Action on the Sustainable , in addressing the issue of disasters.

12. They thus recognised the urgent need to strengthen Latin American and Caribbean civil defence networks, and they took note of the contribution which the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela has been providing through the “Simón Bolívar” international humanitarian brigade.

13. In examining other dimensions of regional security, Heads of State and Government viewed with deep concern the continued perpetration of terrorist acts in some regions of the world. They strongly rejected terrorism in all its forms and

reaffirmed that irrespective of its origin or motivation, the resort to terrorism is entirely without justification. They also reaffirmed their commitment to prevent, combat and eliminate terrorism and its financing by cooperating extensively, fully respecting the mandates of national and international law, in particular international human rights and international humanitarian law.

14. Heads of State and Government reaffirmed the commitment of their countries to the fight against the worldwide drug problem, through an integrated and balanced approach, based on the principle of shared responsibility, and underscored the importance of international co-operation, having due regard to national sovereignty.

15. With the aim of advancing the democratisation of international relations, Heads of State and Government undertook to promote changes necessary to the promotion of greater transparency in international organisations and stressed the need to strengthen multilateralism as a tool for maintaining and reinforcing the principle of equality between states. They renewed their call for more democratic multilateral institutions and the necessary reform of these institutions in order to better address the challenges faced by developing countries in an increasingly globalised world.

16. In this context the Heads of State and Government expressed appreciation for the Report of the Workshop on the *Democratisation of International Relations* held in Georgetown on 13 November, 2006 and took note of the Plan of Action which resulted therefrom. They reaffirmed the importance of continuing to build a more democratic and just international system with a view to ensuring lasting peace in a context of sustained economic and social development.

17. In reaffirming their unwavering adherence to the principle of multilateralism, Heads of State and Government expressed their support for initiatives aimed at establishing a new global partnership that would provide practical and effective responses to the quest for a new paradigm to promote human and social development. In this regard, they agreed to advance consideration of Guyana's proposal for a New Global Human Order, and urged favourable consideration of the resolution on the Role of the United Nations in promoting a New Global Human Order which is currently on the Agenda of the United Nations General Assembly.

18. Recognising the importance of the respect for human rights in particular economic, social and cultural rights of our people as an ideal means of combating hunger and poverty, and thus ensuring social inclusiveness, the Heads of State and Government appreciated the efforts of the OAS in adopting the Social Charter of the Americas. It is hoped that, together with the Inter-American Democratic Charter, it will strengthen the Inter American System for the Promotion and Defence of Human Rights. They therefore reiterated their countries' commitment to the mandate established in the OAS General Assembly resolution AG/RES 2241 (XXXXVI-0/06), and expressed their confidence that the current negotiation process of the Social Charter of the Americas would be successfully concluded. They therefore expressed their support for the initiative by the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela to host a Special General Assembly to approve this very important hemispheric instrument, once the relevant negotiations have been concluded.

19. Heads of State and Government pledged their support for the UN Reform process with a view to the strengthening of this most representative of multilateral organisations, and its three main pillars of development, peace and security, and human rights.

20. Heads of State and Government welcomed the progress made in the United Nations reform process which, *inter alia*, has facilitated the establishment of the Human Rights Council. They also highlighted the establishment of the Peace Building Commission and underlined the need for this body to fulfil its mandate of providing assistance in support of national efforts for the reconstruction of countries and societies emerging from conflict, at the request of the States concerned.

21. They also underscored the need to redouble efforts in dealing with pending reform issues relating to the General Assembly, the Security Council, the Economic and Social Council, administrative reform and system wide coherence with the aim of building a strengthened organisation in the current international environment. Having regard to the consultation and co-ordination carried out by the Permanent Missions to the United Nations, they stressed the importance of making further efforts towards the co-ordination of positions on relevant issues in this area.

22. The Heads of State and Government congratulated Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon on the assumption of his duties at the helm of the Organisation.

23. The Heads of State and Government expressed their commitment to fostering progress towards the objective of nuclear disarmament, especially in the promotion of substantial progress in the work of the First Preparatory Committee of the Conference of the Parties charged with reviewing the implementation of the Convention on the Non Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons of 2010, to be held in Vienna, Austria from April 30 to May 11, 2007.

24. In the same spirit the Heads of State and Government, recognising the contribution of Latin America and the Caribbean as the forerunner in the establishment

of Nuclear Weapons Free Zones, reaffirmed the validity of the denuclearisation regime established in 1967 by the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean and, to that effect, expressed satisfaction with the political message conveyed by the 40th Anniversary celebration of the Treaty of Tlatelolco on 14 February.

25. The Heads of State and Government of the Rio Group were deeply concerned that poverty continues to be a scourge within the region and recommitted themselves to the attainment of the United Nations Millennium Development Goals. They were heartened by recent reports from international organisations, which point to a significant reduction in poverty levels over recent years in some countries of the region with the enviable prospect of their attainment of the Millennium Development Goals. They recognised however that for a majority of member states the elimination of poverty and hunger remained a challenge to be addressed with even greater intensity and focus. They also congratulated His Excellency Bharrat Jagdeo, President of Guyana, on his presentation on the human and social aspects of development within the region and their implications for national development, peace, order and stability in Latin America and the Caribbean. Pursuant thereto, the Heads of State and Government adopted a Declaration on Social and Human Issues.

26. Heads of State and Government agreed that in order to respond to the challenges posed by poverty and hunger, and achieve the highest level of economic and social development for their peoples, efforts must be focused on the most vulnerable in the population, with special emphasis on action for providing universal education, basic health care, and potable water, safeguarding the welfare of children and women, programmes for the empowerment of women and young persons of both sexes, as well as the promotion of gender equality. They therefore agreed to promote development

policies in their respective countries which accord priority attention to programmes aimed at the reduction of poverty and the fight against hunger, as well as the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.

27. In this context, Heads of State and Government reaffirmed their willingness to continue to advocate for the coordinated implementation of the series of measures agreed in the Monterrey Consensus for Financing for Development, including the establishment of new and innovative sources of financing, taking into account the high level review process scheduled for 2008 in Doha, Qatar. In this regard, they decided to set up a Working Group to define the position of the Group at this Conference.

28. They pledged the Rio Group to continued work with a view to ensure that the issue of development, particularly in developing countries continues to occupy a central position on the international agenda, and also to concretise the commitment made by the developed countries to devote 0.7% of their GNP to Official Development Assistance.

29. In this regard, acknowledging the existence of external factors which impede the sustainable economic growth of our States, we reaffirm the importance of maintaining international cooperation for middle income countries, including those of low middle income, to complement their efforts at the national level to implement their development programmes and the Millennium Development Goals. They also noted that the International Forum for Low Middle Income countries was to be held in San Salvador during the first week of October, 2007.

30. Heads of State and Government also noted the effects of problems associated with globalisation on countries of the region, especially small states. They reiterated the importance of taking into account the special needs of small and vulnerable economies

to enable them to effectively confront these challenges and promote their sustainable social and economic development.

31. Heads of State and Government agreed that the Rio Group will continue the dialogue on the promotion of innovative financial mechanisms, sharing positive experiences with a view to expanding on existing proposals as well as proposing new initiatives for joint consideration.

32. Heads of State and Government highlighted the importance of new information and communication technologies (ICTs) for enhancing the economic and social development of their people. In this regard, they reaffirmed their commitments made at the World Summit on information society at the Geneva and Tunis rounds to promote and consolidate an inclusive information society, and to overcome the digital divide. They also acknowledged the importance of the First Forum on Internet Governance held in Athens in November 2006 where, from a participatory and multidisciplinary perspective, the issues of transparency, security, diversity and access with a view to promoting and guaranteeing the development of a global, reliable, and safe network, accessible to the entire population. Finally, Heads of State and Government underlined the importance of the Regional Plan for Latin America and the Caribbean for the Information Society, ECLAC 2007, as the most important regional initiative in this regard. They noted that the Second Regional Conference on the Information Society was held in San Salvador to assess the implementation of the 2007 Plan of Action and to formulate the Plan of Action for 2010, in the context of the fulfilment of the Millennium Development Goals and the Goals of the Plan of Action of the World Summit on the Information Society.

33. The Heads of State and Government called attention to the importance of a people centred, inclusive, non discriminatory and development oriented information society contemplated in the Millennium Development Goals. They also expressed the need to bridge the digital divide and reaffirmed the validity of multilateral, democratic, transparent and multi stakeholder principles for the proper functioning of the internet.

34. A major aspect of the functioning of the Rio Group is its involvement with extra-regional countries, groups of countries and organisations. Heads of State and Government agreed that the Rio Group would continue to strengthen and expand its contacts with countries and regional groupings with an action-oriented focus to ensure positive and advantageous results for the benefit of participating groups and also as inputs towards the amelioration of the international political, social and economic situation.

35. Heads of State and Government welcomed initiative taken by the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela to host the South American Energy Integration Summit in April, 2007, as evidence of the strides which have been made in integration among the countries of South America in the area of energy.

36. Heads of State thanked the Government of the Dominican Republic for its generous offer to host the XX Summit of Heads and Government of the Rio Group and accepted the offer of the United Mexican States to host the XXI Meeting of Heads of Government of the Rio Group.

37. They expressed their gratitude and congratulations to the President, Government and people of Guyana, for the gracious hospitality extended to them and the excellent organisation as well as the commendable effort on their part to ensure the success of this

Nineteenth Summit of the Permanent Mechanism for Consultation and Political Coordination of the Rio Group being held for the first time in a CARICOM Member State.

38. Done at Turkeyen, Guyana on 3 March 2007, in the English, Spanish and Portuguese languages, all three texts being equally authentic.

