



# Caribbean Euro-Latin American forum of the civil society

**"Toward an European Union-Latin America and the Caribbean Association  
for the promotion of economical cohesion with social justice and equity"**

**Pátzcuaro, Michoacán, México, 24-26 march 2004**

## **STATEMENT BEFORE THE III SUMMIT OF HEADS OF STATE AND GOVERNMENT OF THE EUROPEAN UNION, LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN**

**C**onvinced that the participation of civil society should be one of the basic components for achieving more equitable and supportive relations between the European Union, Latin America and the Caribbean, the representatives of more than 100 civic organisations of the three regions gathered at the III Euro-Latin American-Caribbean Civil Society Summit in Pátzcuaro, in the state of Michoacán, Mexico, to draft proposals and recommendations to the III Summit of Heads of State and Government, which will take place in Guadalajara, Jalisco, Mexico, on 28 and 29 May, 2004.<sup>1</sup>

The fight against poverty, combating exclusion and the promotion of equity should be recognised as the fundamental objectives of the EU-Latam Strategic Association. To achieve this end, the participating orga-

nisations at the Summit identified 10 central themes in the areas of political and economic relations and cooperation between the EU and Latin America and the Caribbean, which require concrete actions in favour of social cohesion:

### **Proposals**

#### **1. Regional integration and social cohesion:**

- The processes of regional integration should be strengthened as a key element of a biregional relationship that contributes to social cohesion. The participation of civil society should be incorporated in an effective manner into the processes of regional integration, within the framework of the Association Accords as well as in the Summits of Heads of State and Government. Opportune access to information is necessary, as is the development of consultation with and responses to the demands of citizens, who should have the opportunity to intervene in the process of decision taking. The states should finance, support and promote the strengthening of the capacity of citizens to participate in the processes of regional and biregional integration.

<sup>1</sup> This Forum was called by the Asociación Latinoamericana de Organizaciones de Promoción (ALOP), the Consejo de Educación de Adultos de América Latina (CEAAL), the Plataforma Interamericana de Derechos Humanos, Democracia y Desarrollo (PIDHDD), the Copenhagen Initiative for Central America and Mexico (CIFCA), Eurostep, European Grupo Sur, and the following Mexican Associations: Asociación Nacional de Empresas Comercializadoras (ANEC), DECA Equipo Pueblo, Movimiento Ciudadano por la Democracia (MCD) and the Unión Nacional de Trabajadores (UNT). The Forum was supported by 11.11.11 (Belgium), CordAid, Hivos, ICCO and Novib (Holland), the European Commission, the Mexican Foreign Ministry and the Government of the state of Michoacán,

- In order for the Association Accords between the EU and the countries and regional blocks of Latin America and the Caribbean to be an instrument that contributes to development, their redesign is imperative, incorporating the recognition of asymmetries, which implies inclusion of clauses relative to preferential and differential treatment, and the exclusion of sensitive areas of the economy, compensation funds and safeguards for state autonomy in the management of countries' economies.
  - The cooperation component of EU-LAC relations should be reformulated so that it is consistent with the objective of social cohesion and, in relation to the implementation of the Social Initiative foreseen in the Regional Strategy for Latin America (2002-2006), should contemplate sub-regional particularities, should give effective participation to civil society and should develop creative strategies that promote social inclusion. In order for the Social Initiative to have a real impact on the promotion of social cohesion in Latin America and the Caribbean, it should be granted the necessary resources, adjusted to the scale of the problems it is intended to tackle.
  - We encourage the development and consolidation of a Biregional Solidarity Fund as has been proposed by the European Parliament, which would help attenuate the costs of the changes necessary for development, for the promotion of social equity and for productive transformation.
  - The countries of the EU should contribute 0.7 % of GDP to development cooperation, along a set calendar, with the central objective of guaranteeing full respect for human rights and sustainable development.
- ## 2. Trade, investment and foreign debt
- In the area of multilateral negotiations, the EU-LAC relationship should promote transparent and democratic negotiation and decision taking mechanisms, both at the WTO and in international financial negotiations; it should achieve concrete advances in the Doha development agenda, excluding the themes addressed in Singapore; and should allow for greater international financial stability, taking up and translating into reality the Tobin tax on financial capital with the aim of redirecting resources towards social development and the strengthening of domestic markets.
- It is vital that the issue of foreign debt is given priority treatment in the political dialogue between the EU and LAC, and that our regions promote a world conference on debt and the creation of an international court of arbitration for its renegotiation or cancellation.
  - As a matter of necessity the association accords must incorporate the same criteria that regulate private trade and investment in the EU, for the generation of dignified work, social protection and universal access to basic services.
  - The states of our regions should comply with the commitments taken up in the Monterrey Summit on Financing Sustainable Development (Monterrey Consensus) and the Summit on Sustainable Development, held in Johannesburg.
- ## 3. Enforcement of economic, social and cultural rights and social cohesion
- A political dialogue must be begun between the regions on the enforcement of international instruments and protection of human rights as integral and interdependent rights, as well as on pushing for an international optional protocol on ESCR and the UN norms on corporate responsibility in the area of rights.
  - The democratic clause contained in the Accords between the EU and LAC countries should be applied positively to ensure that human rights can be demanded and enforced in a spirit of reciprocity and with effective civil society mechanisms both in the countries and in the regions.
  - The governments of the regions should promote the standardisation of norms at the level of every state as well as in their inter-state commitments to avoid impunity in the face of violations of economic, social and cultural rights.
- ## 4. Policies of inclusion of women and their effects on social cohesion
- It is necessary to eliminate inequality in the access women have to education, health and work opportunities, as well as to promote their inclusion in the process of public decision-taking at all levels.
  - All public policies should include the following dimensions: a gender perspective, transversality, recognition of multiculturalism and diversity. Contributing to empowerment of women to achieve the necessary conditions of autonomy and control of their lives in order to allow them to enjoy a full civic life is crucial.
  - It is vital that every agreement between the EU and those countries and regions of LAC take into account the differential impacts on different genders and incorporate organisations that promote women's rights into the political dialogue.
- ## 5. Land, food sovereignty and family farming:
- In order to promote social cohesion in rural areas, governments must push and deepen the processes of integral agrarian reform. Similarly, development policies are necessary so that small and medium producers can carry out programmes that lead to housing, food, education and health in order to combat rural poverty.
  - Eliminate unfair trading practices such as through internal subsidies that support export prices of developed countries, and guarantee food sovereignty, excluding strategic foods for de-

...ing countries from the process of liberalising trade.

- Develop a long-term integration model for LAC that makes it possible to reduce asymmetries between the countryside and the cities and between the different rural regions, respecting the multifunctionality of campesino and indigenous agriculture and of agricultural traditions with African roots.

#### 6. Policies of inclusion for indigenous and Afrocaribbean peoples and communities

- Acknowledge the multiethnic, multilingual and pluricultural character of our societies in order to implement policies of social inclusion and effective participation in the development of our peoples.
- Respect the right to self-determination of indigenous, meztizo and Afro-Caribbean peoples and guarantee their rights over their lands and natural resources. Demand respect for basic rights of indigenous and Afro-Caribbean communities and peoples, in particular ratifying and implementing ILO Convention 169.

#### 7. The inter-relation between democracy, the fight against corruption and justice for social cohesion

- Acknowledge the actors of civil society as participants with joint responsibility in the development and carrying out of public policies with regard to the fight against corruption and the promotion of social cohesion.
- The governments of our regions should take concrete actions to eradicate corruption, penalise fiscal evasion, regulate the flow of capital and fight money laundering.
- The crime of illicit enrichment should be homogenised in all nations, whether it is a physical or legal person in question. Banking secrecy should be eliminated and the most severe penalties should be

applied to officials involved in corruption crimes.

- Eradicate impunity for perpetrators of human rights violations through the ratification of the International Criminal Court.
- In order to promote social inclusion and the full enjoyment of civic rights, the governments of our countries should guarantee access to impartial and transparent justice, regardless of the social, racial or sexual characteristics of the people.

#### 8. The responsibility of the State in the fight against exclusion: fiscal policy and policies to redistribute wealth.

- The governments of our regions should modify the tax legislation according to social criteria in order to move towards redistribution of wealth. In order to do so fiscal reforms that modify the current tax and spending structures are necessary. These should be directed at obtaining taxes from those who have the highest income.
- The EU countries should be consistent and not demand of the LAC countries the elimination of taxes and regulations that favour their companies.

#### 9. Informal economy, assembly plants and dignified work:

- In order to generate dignified jobs, the unrestrictive respect for human rights accords must be observed. These include labour rights incorporated in the conventions signed with the ILO. In the establishment of labour rights, consideration must be given to the principle of equal rights in the work place, such as equal pay, freedom of association and unionisation, gender equality and non-discrimination.
- The creation of maquiladoras, or assembly plants, must be in adherence with the logic of sustainability and social responsibility, with the capacity to prevent damaging outcomes, for instance concerning

duration of jobs, skills, reproductive rights, as well as with respect to immediate compensation for failure to adhere to these standards or for damages.

#### 10. The new Latin American emigration and its economic and social impact

- The issue of migration must be included in the agenda of the Summit, and in future in the framework of political dialogue, in the economic and trade relations and in the cooperation agreements between the EU and LAC. It must be done so in the spirit of mutual responsibility, seeking multilateral solutions that take into account the participation of civil society organisations that work with and for migrants. The possibility of emigration should be guaranteed in the joint legislation on migration flows.
- Acknowledge the importance of the phenomenon of migration from Latin America to Europe and reevaluate its contribution, fighting against the crime of organised people trafficking and decriminalising its victims and ensuring that they are treated with dignity.
- Design a joint EU-LAC plan of action to harmonise the laws on foreigners, using the highest standard of protection and respect for the human rights of migrants, and to make agreements that foment the voluntary accompanied return and programmes of social inclusion and inclusion into the labour market of emigrants in their countries of origin.
- Pay special attention to the problem of migrant women, making a call to the governments of the EU to defend the human rights of migrant women, taking account of their particular vulnerability and exposure to situations of violence and exploitation, both sexual and in the labour market.