

Themes of the Summit of the Americas, 2001

The strength and unity of the Western Hemisphere is based both on a shared interest in producing greater growth and fostering freer trade and on collective undertakings to consolidate democracy, promote and protect human rights, enhance human security and support social development. Articulating common principles and values and committing to collective action are fundamental to creating more stable and freer societies and a stronger community of nations in the Americas.

Strengthening Democracy

Promoting democracy, protecting human rights and building respect for the rule of law have been the central elements of the summit process and of the efforts to provide a durable foundation for hemispheric integration since the first Summit of the Americas, in Miami in 1994. Initiatives have reflected a common interest in strengthening democratic governance and making institutions more transparent in their dealings with citizens. Part of the process is engagement between governments and citizens to create greater space within democratic systems for informed debate and better understanding.

Increased co-operation on human rights reinforces the foundations of democracy. Effective human rights institutions and frameworks can strengthen and sustain them. Further practical initiatives to implement commitments to equality between men and women and to the rights of children will be considered. Improved co-operation in promoting the civil, cultural, economic, political and social rights of indigenous peoples remains a hemispheric priority.

Universal access to impartial, independent judicial systems is essential to confidence in hemispheric and national institutions charged with upholding the rule of law. Growing concern about criminality and demands for increased security need to be addressed in the context of a strong collective commitment to human rights and the rule of law. Hemispheric co-operation to deal with transnational criminal activity, notably the drug trade, has progressed. Further co-operation between judicial authorities and between police forces will be encouraged.

Creating Prosperity

At the second Summit of the Americas, in Santiago, Chile, in 1998, leaders formally launched negotiations on the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) to give a concrete expression to their faith in the dynamism, talent and creative energy of the people of the hemisphere.