

Our meeting has also enabled us to discuss our plans for the economic integration of the Americas, and measures that we can take to translate the benefits of growth into greater prosperity for all our fellow citizens.

With this in mind, our objective continues to be one of creating mechanisms and instruments of cooperation that will promote sustainable growth, increasingly equitable distribution of economic benefits and greater financial stability.

The creation of the Free Trade Area of the Americas is an essential part of our efforts. Within the framework of the Summit, we have reaffirmed our collective intent to establish and to apply, between now and 2005, clear and predictable rules for economic exchanges within the hemisphere.

Our efforts to strengthen democracy and promote prosperity must be accompanied by measures that expand and encourage participation by all citizens in the social, political and economic life of their nations and of our region.

We want to make sure that each citizen has an equal opportunity to live in dignity, to fulfil their full potential and to contribute to the development of society. This applies especially to those in our societies who have, too often, been marginalized or left out, among them youth, seniors, women and people with disabilities. It also applies to the indigenous peoples of the hemisphere, whose unique situation must be recognized by governments.

With this in mind, our *Action Plan* includes a recognition that we must continue to invest so as to provide our people with equitable access to quality education and health care.

We have also adopted a *Declaration on Connectivity*. It outlines how we plan to use information and communications technologies to facilitate contacts among people, promote participation in democratic institutions, create new economic opportunities, and deliver government services.

And I am pleased to announce today that, as a major contribution to fulfilling the goals of the 2001 Summit of the Americas, Canada will create the Institute for Connectivity in the Americas.

The Institute will build on the success of Canada's Connecting Canadians strategy as well as international experience.

We have made an unprecedented effort to make sufficient resources available to achieve the objectives that we have identified in our *Action Plan*. And we must continue to work with the multilateral development banks, other international, regional and subregional institutions, the private sector and civil society to fulfil our vision for the Americas.

This will allow us, the next time we meet, to look back on an even more impressive record of achievement.

This leads me to one final question. During our meeting, we formally accepted the generous offer of Argentina to host the next Summit of the Americas. I am delighted