

products, especially as it affects children; share best practices and lessons learned in the development of programs designed to raise public awareness, particularly for adolescents, about the health risks associated with tobacco, alcohol and drugs;

Connectivity

Provide sound, scientific and technical information to health workers and the public, utilizing innovations such as the Virtual Health Library of the Americas; encourage the use of tele-health as a means to connect remote populations and to provide health services and information to under-served groups, as a complement to the provision of existing health care services;

15. GENDER EQUALITY

Recognizing that women's empowerment, their full and equal participation in the development of our societies, and their equal opportunities to exercise leadership are all central to the reduction of poverty, the promotion of economic and social prosperity, people-centered sustainable development, consolidation of democracy and conflict resolution and the development of equal partnerships between women and men; further recognizing that these principles are the basis for promoting gender equality and women's human rights in the Americas and working towards the elimination of the full range of inequalities:

Endorse the *Inter-American Program on the Promotion of Women's Human Rights and Gender Equity and Equality* approved at the First Meeting of Ministers or of the Highest Ranking Authorities Responsible for the Advancement of Women, held in April 2000, by the CIM; endorse as well the *Regional Programme of Action for the Women in Latin America and the Caribbean 1995-2000* and the further actions and initiatives adopted at the Twenty-Third Special Session of the UN General Assembly (Beijing +5) to implement the *Beijing Declaration* and its *Platform for Action*; and integrate a gender perspective into the programs, actions and agendas of national and international events, to ensure that women's experiences and gender equality are an integral dimension of the design, implementation and evaluation of government and inter-American policies and programs in all spheres;

Strengthen national machineries and other government bodies responsible for the advancement of women and for the promotion and protection of the human rights of women; provide them with the necessary human and financial resources, including through exploring innovative funding schemes so that gender is integrated into all policies, programs and projects; and support both the fundamental role that women's organizations have played and will continue to play in advancing gender equality and the joint efforts between governments and the private sector which contribute to respect and understanding of the human rights of women;

Promote gender equity and equality and women's human rights by strengthening and fostering women's full and equal participation in political life in their countries and in decision-making at all levels;