

sphere, we recognize the need to address, in the relevant hemispheric and international fora, issues of globalization related to employment and labour. We instruct the Inter-American Conference of Ministers of Labour to continue their consideration of issues related to globalization which affect employment and labour.

Recognizing the importance of energy as one of the fundamental bases for economic development, the region's prosperity and improved quality of life, we commit to pursuing renewable energy initiatives, promoting energy integration and enhancing regulatory frameworks and their application, while promoting the principles of sustainable development.

Democracy and economic and social development are interdependent and mutually reinforcing as fundamental conditions to combat poverty and inequality. We will spare no effort to free our fellow citizens from the dehumanizing conditions of extreme poverty. We commit to further efforts to reach international development goals, especially the reduction by 50 percent by the year 2015 of the proportion of people living in extreme poverty.

We commit ourselves to promote programs for the improvement of agriculture and rural life and agro-business as an essential contribution to poverty reduction and integral development.

We commit to strengthening hemispheric cooperation and national capacities to develop a more integrated approach to the management of natural disasters. We will continue to implement policies that enhance our ability to prevent, mitigate and respond to the consequences of natural disasters. We agree to study measures to facilitate timely access to financial resources to address emergency needs.

We recognize the cultural and economic contributions made by migrants to receiving societies as well as to their communities of origin. We are committed to ensuring dignified, humane treatment with appropriate legal protections, defense of human rights, and safe and healthy labour conditions for migrants. We will strengthen mechanisms for hemispheric cooperation to address the legitimate needs of migrants and take effective measures against trafficking in human beings.

Progress towards more democratic societies, growing economies and social equity relies on an educated citizenry and a skilled labour force. We have agreed to a series of policies to improve access to quality education through teacher training, education in civic values and the use of information technologies both in our classrooms and in measuring progress toward achieving these goals. Improved education policies and increased investment in our education systems will help reduce income disparities and close the digital divide in our Hemisphere.

Our collective hemispheric efforts will be more effective through innovative uses of information and communications technologies to connect our governments and our people and to share knowledge and ideas. Our statement, *Connecting the Americas*, underscores this conviction.