

Promote dialogue involving government ministers, parliamentarians and civil society, in particular organizations linked to rural areas as well as the scientific and academic communities, with the objective of promoting medium and long-term national strategies toward sustainable improvement in agriculture and rural life;

Support national efforts to strengthen rural enterprises, in particular small- and medium-sized enterprises and promote, where appropriate, a favorable environment for agri-business; encourage, in a complementary manner, the training of small- and medium-sized rural entrepreneurs as well as the modernization of training institutions in this field;

Encourage the development of markets in the Hemisphere for goods obtained through the sustainable use of natural resources;

Strive to facilitate access to markets for those goods derived from alternative development programs implemented in countries engaged in the substitution of illicit crops;

Instruct the Ministers of Agriculture, during the next meeting of the Inter-American Board of Agriculture, to promote, in cooperation with the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA), joint action by all the actors of the agricultural sector to work towards the improvement of agricultural and rural life that enables the implementation of the *Plans of Action* of the Summits of the Americas;

## 11. Labour and Employment

Recognizing that employment is the most direct way in which economic activity is linked to the improvement of the standard of living of our citizens and that true prosperity can only be achieved if it includes protecting and respecting basic rights of workers as well as promoting equal employment opportunities and improving working conditions for people in all countries in the region, with special attention to those in the informal sector, to people belonging to ethnic and religious minorities, other vulnerable persons including women, youth, indigenous peoples, migrant workers, persons with disabilities and persons with HIV/AIDS; and noting the importance of investing in human resource development, of promoting employment security consistent with economic growth and developing mechanisms to assist workers with periods of unemployment, as well as of strengthening cooperation and social dialogue on labour matters among workers, their organizations, employers and governments:

Reaffirm the fundamental importance of the Inter-American Conference of Ministers of Labour, welcome the progress made through its *Plan of Action* adopted in 1998, support the preparatory process for the Twelfth Conference in 2001, and direct Ministers to build upon the *Viña del Mar Declaration*, which focused on the social dimensions of globalization and the modernization of Labour Ministries, by collaborating in the examination of the labour