



FIFTH REGIONAL FORUM OF THE AMERICAN CONTINENT OF
GLOBAL PARLIAMENTARIANS ON HABITAT

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HABITAT**

DECLARATION OF MONTERREY

“SAFE CITIES”

Monterrey, Nuevo Leon, Mexico, October 4th, 2007



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CONSIDERATIONS

We, legislators and other participants in the Fifth Regional Forum of the American Continent of Global Parliamentarians on Habitat, held in the city of Monterrey, Nuevo Leon, Mexico, on October 4th, 2007, as an event to follow up and meet the commitments made during the previous meetings of the World Forum of Parliamentarians on Habitat and of the Regional Commission of the American Continent.

Emphasizing that this Regional Forum was held within the framework of the Universal Forum of the Cultures Monterrey 2007, as a space for freedom, conceived to stimulate social participation focused on the changes and challenges of the new millennium.

Noting that this Forum was organized within the framework of the International Conference on the State of Safety in World Cities, an event organized by the Habitat Agency of the United Nations Organization, as a contribution of the Global Parliamentarians on Habitat to this Conference.

Reaffirming the First Conference of the United Nations on Human Settlements held in Vancouver in 1976, and the Second Conference held in Istanbul in June 1996, as well as the Habitat Agenda, are aimed at reaching a world sustainable development in human settlements and adequate housing for all.

Confirming that the Declaration of Istanbul, and the Habitat Agenda, still constitute the basic framework for sustainable development of human settlements.

Recognizing that one of the most significant causes of insecurity in many cities is the increasing presence of crime and violence that have raised in the recent years, particularly in Latin America and the Caribbean, creating fear and restlessness to the citizens and representing a serious threat for sustainability and urban development.

Noting that these threats for urban safety represent a challenge for the national governments as well as for those of the cities, and that it is necessary to research, analyze and reflect on these threats.

Admitting that we cannot postpone the analysis of the damages caused by climate change and the implementation of the necessary actions to control it as well as natural disasters in the cities of our continent, especially floods, fires, hurricanes, rivers overflows and intense rains, *inter alia*, situations that constitute a high risk for the safety of the cities inhabitants and for their sustainability.



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Recognizing that a weak governance, as well as the irregularities in land property, real estate speculation, housing deficit, weak infrastructure for urban services, pollution of the environment and above all, the lack of enforcement of the urban planning laws and bylaws, are the main characteristics of many of the urban areas, especially in the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean, and that these facts require urgent attention to improve the quality of life of the population, as well as the social and environmental sustainability of the cities.

Meeting these issues, precedents and principles, the Global Parliamentarians on Habitat organized the Fifth Regional Forum of the American Continent with the general topic "Safe Cities" to address the most important matters for the implementation of the Habitat Agenda, especially regarding those issues that represented the topics of discussion, namely: Trends in the legislation regarding human settlements, public safety, civil protection in the cities, climate change, and sustainable development; in regard of these issues we have resolved to approve the following:

DECLARATION OF COMMITMENTS OF THE FIFTH REGIONAL FORUM OF THE AMERICAN CONTINENT OF GLOBAL PARLIAMENTARIANS ON HABITAT

COMMITMENTS

FIRST. We ratify the recommendations of the Declaration of Istanbul regarding human settlements and those of the Habitat Program, approved during the Second Conference of the United Nations.

SECOND.- We ratify the Declaration of Principles and Commitments of the World Forum of Parliamentarians on Habitat approved in 1996 in the City of Istanbul, Turkey and completed with the meetings of Cancun, Mexico, in 1998, Manila, Philippines, in 2000, Berlin, Germany, in 2003 and Rabat, Morocco, in 2005.

THIRD.- We recommit ourselves to assist in the implementation of the United Nations Program for Human Settlements of the period of 2007-2009, supporting the legislative and institutional implementation of the Habitat Agenda.



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We emphasize that the most important challenge the parliamentarians of the American Continent face, is to promote the institutionalization of these recommendations, with full consideration of the sovereignty of each country, to pass or update legislation that specifically regulate sustainable human settlements and adequate housing for everyone, contributing to define and adequate urban and housing public policies and supporting government institutions, especially the local ones, so they can enforce the relevant laws and comply with the corresponding policies with a permanent participation of the civil society.

FOURTH.- We will intensify our efforts to promote coherence, uniformity and relevancy in the national and local laws regarding essential topics of human settlements and their sustainability.

Regarding this aspect it is necessary to consider the capacity of local authorities to pass the required laws and to enforce them, and when these actions are not sufficient, we intend to design complementing and supporting institutional measures by regional and national governments.

FIFTH.- We Intend to promote actions to control de negative effects of climate change and the risks that it produces in urban areas. We will promote the strengthening of preventive and civil protection programs, to diminish the risks created by natural phenomena in the cities.

SIXTH.- We will support in each of our countries the implementation of measures that strengthen the United Nations programs regarding climate change.

We support initiatives to reinforce programs coordinated by the United Nations, as the expressed in October 1st by the Mexican President regarding the creation of a Multinational Fund to finance programs addressing climate change and its negative effects. Also we will support the creation of agendas in each of our countries in which all activities with a low environmental impact are rewarded, for example, the ones related to the support and growth of the forests and the activities that are hazardous to the environment are penalized.

SEVENTH.- We will promote the updating of laws and the necessary public policies to address the growing urban crime and violence, especially concerning the sale and consumption of illegal drugs. We will emphasize in the establishment of mandatory preventive measures addressing these issues, in particular the ones aimed at the protection of children and youths.



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EIGHTH.- We reaffirm we will continue to promote the strengthening of the Fifth Regional Forum of the American Continent of Global Parliamentarians on Habitat, undertaking *-inter alia -* the following activities:

- a) Identify the progress in the legislative and institutional implementation of the Habitat Agenda in the region;
- b) Participate in the Fourth World Forum in Nanjing, China in 2008, as well as in the regional and national forums of Global Parliamentarians on Habitat;
- c) Promote the establishment of national groups of parliamentarians on Habitat;
- d) Contribute to the strengthening of mechanisms of coordination and collaboration with the Regional Group and the World Group; and
- e) Work to promote the growth in the membership of the Group and the participation of its members.

NINTH.- Global Parliamentarians on Habitat will promote the coordination and cooperation to achieve the implementation and execution of this Declaration.

Approved in the plenary session of the Fifth Regional Forum of the American Continent of the Global Parliamentarians on Habitat, held in the city of Monterrey, Nuevo Leon, Mexico, on October 4th, 2007

Attached to this declaration are the summaries of each work group: Human Settlements, Safe Cities and Climate Change.