

## **IV Euro-Latin American & Caribbean Civil Society Forum**

*Lima, Peru, 31 March – 1 April 2008*

### **LIMA DECLARATION**

#### **Towards the V Summit of Heads of State and Government of the European Union, Latin America & the Caribbean**

#### **PREAMBLE**

The social organizations gathered at the IV Euro-Latin American and Caribbean Civil Society Forum at the invitation of the MESA de Articulación de Asociaciones Nacionales y Redes de ONG de América Latina y el Caribe and the European Platform of Development and Emergency NGOs – CONCORD, wish to express before the V Summit of Heads of State and Government which will take place in Lima in May, the need to redirect the process towards the finalization of a Bi-Regional Strategic Association that contributes to strengthening democracy and combating poverty, exclusion, discrimination and inequality, as well as defending and sustainably managing the environment and natural resources in both regions.

To do so, we submit the following considerations and proposals to the Heads of State and Government of LAC and the EU on some particularly important issues:

#### **CONSIDERATIONS**

##### **State of democracy and political rights**

1. In the last decades, formal civil and political rights have been enhanced in LAC and the EU. Periodical elections and the orderly succession of governments are now a regular part of the political regime in our countries. However, the majority of the population is very distant from politics, i.e., from the decision-making processes. Electoral democracy and basic liberties rule in Latin America, but citizens feel that their rights are not effective, which is incompatible with democratic strengthening and sustainability.

The failure of the European Union in agreeing upon a common constitutional frame reflects the weakening of its political dimension. The mechanism of the simplified treaty is insufficient as it does not live up to the initial expectations and the trust of European citizens in this integration project. Over the past years, the European Union has lost political weight, particularly its external policies and the European Parliament

2. Citizens in many LAC countries feel great mistrust towards States that show no political will to manage their natural resources with sovereignty and to redistribute national wealth and income. This situation leads to an increase in social protest and mobilization, which is in turn frequently met with the criminalization of social movements, deepening the acute legitimacy problems of the social and political actors that support the democratic system. Most democracies in the countries of

this region are under construction and weak, and they are questioned due to economic and social inequality, corruption, the capture of portions of the State by often illegal private interests. In our continents, there are persistent and emerging new expressions of authoritarianism that maintain democratic formality, while developing exclusion and repressive policies against the opposition's institutions and currents.

3. The development and strengthening of democracy requires peace, not as an absence of conflict, but as an institutional, political and cultural environment where conflict is not criminalized, but resolved through legitimate social and political struggle, without any of the parties having to resort to violence. The existence of armed conflict in LAC has a distressing destabilization power, as shown by recent events, while in Europe, phenomena such as racism and xenophobia, the proliferation of anti-immigration laws, and some governments choosing unilateralism and the so-called war on terror, entail democratic setbacks.
4. The main factors for the democratic consolidation of LAC are: democratizing the relations among the various levels of government, dynamizing the various spaces and processes for citizen involvement in public affairs, and strengthening social mobilization. The active involvement of social and popular movements and national civil society has proved essential for the defense, promotion and enhancement of democratic spaces in this continent.

#### **Economic model, regional integration and the state of economic rights**

5. The dominant economic model both in the EU and in LAC is guided by neoliberalism, that reduces and downplays the role of the State in the economy, while granting capital and markets a superlative role, reaffirming the primary exporter profile of the countries of the South, subordinating peoples' effective access to their rights and conditioning least developed countries to their international participation, subjected to the interests of transnational capital and of large national economic power groups.
6. In this context, subregional integration processes in LAC are gradually being dismantled, as a consequence of attempts to impose a neoliberal model of integration that fails to recognize the potential of some of them and that confronts sustainable, community and alternative self-development initiatives that promote the integration of peoples on the basis of equity and justice.
7. Dominant economic sectors fail to recognize that poverty is the result of a massive and structural violation of civil and political as well as economic, social, cultural and environmental human rights. This affects Latin American and Caribbean as well as European citizens, although in different ways and varying degrees. However, while the European Union makes progress in consolidating its integration process, in LAC most of its regional blocks and countries are subordinated to the logic of the economic model through the Free Trade Agreements (FTA).

#### **Social Inclusion, Inequality and the state of social rights**

8. Inequality, poverty and social exclusion increasingly affect the men and women of our people. The problems generated by the neoliberal model equally concern European and Latin American and Caribbean citizens, although in different degrees. They can only be overcome through political will and joint mobilization to make progress towards social well-being and new social relations in the context of a culture of rights in both continents. It is essential to create policies to face all

forms of discrimination and inequality, particularly by gender, ethnic group, culture, generation, disability and access to health.

9. Negative social indicators persist in LAC, with high levels of poverty and inequality that are a serious obstacle for building equitable societies. Improvements in this area are barely statistical and do not mean a real change in the lives of men and women condemned to this situation.

### **Climate change**

10. During the past two decades, many civil society organizations have drawn attention to the threat of climate change and the effects of global warming on the planet and humanity. The warnings of the IPCC experts have been proven right by the repeated and intensifying extreme climate events around the world and by irrefutable and irreversible facts. Climate change has finally been recognized as a global problem. This requires an adaptation of public policies.
11. The rich natural resources of LAC are at risk, and its population in an increasingly vulnerable situation, due to permissive environmental legislations and to economies based on exporting natural resources with little value added, and on burning fossil fuels to produce energy. The impacts on greenhouse gases emissions of activities such as agriculture, energy, transport, and consumption and production patterns should be taken into account from now onwards.
12. The importance of the Bali Action Plan should be stressed, as well as the commitments by developed countries to reduce their greenhouse gases emissions and by emerging countries to switch to a low-carbon and low-energy development. Governments must recognize the importance of dialogue with civil society in the context of international negotiations, as well as for the implementation of existing agreements. Strict environmental controls on transnational corporations should be put in place.

### **Assessment and perspectives of Association Agreements and their relation with regional integration processes in LAC**

13. The crisis of the multilateral trade system was accelerated by the bilateral negotiations of the Free Trade Agreements promoted by the European Union and the United States. These seek to ensure access to markets for their products and to natural resources and raw materials for their industries, as well as stable conditions for their investors. The treaties intend to generalize commercial rules that favor the profit of transnational corporations in various areas, such as investments, services, competition, public purchases and intellectual property. This commercial liberalization system generates an exclusive development model that pursues only economic growth and does not comply with basic sustainability principles. The chapters on political dialogue and cooperation of the Association Agreements, that should be the core of genuine agreements on relations, are thus subordinated to commercial interests.
14. Regional integration cannot be built from the outside, or on the basis of commercial agreements. It should emerge from a democratically shared common political project. In this perspective, Agreement Associations in their current form tend to disintegrate rather than integrate.

### **EU-LAC Cooperation**

15. EU development cooperation with LAC should mainly aim to eradicate poverty and inequity in a framework of respect and promotion of human rights in their integral dimension, sustainable development, consolidation of democracy and the rule of law, social cohesion and people-based regional integration.
16. The objectives and priorities defined by the EU cooperation strategies for LAC for the period 2007-2013 place social cohesion and regional integration –linked to economic growth and trade- as key issues. However, the actions designed in the area of social cohesion are very general and depend on definitions and concepts adapted to the reality of each country and of the region. With respect to regional integration, EU support is based on a “regional economic integration” strategy that does not include other essential dimensions of integration with a view to sustainable human development.
17. With respect to the ensemble of EU policies and actions, an essential principle is the “coherence of policies in favor of development”. International EU policies, particularly on agriculture and trade, are in contradiction with some of the postulates of development and integration, since European hegemony over the Latin American regional reality prevails, and its understanding of the imbalances present in LAC is limited. We demand coherence in all EU interventions, as well as of its international policies and their implementation, with the principles of development, association and participation.

#### **Civil Society Involvement**

18. Civil society involvement is essential to achieving more equity and solidarity in relations between the EU and LAC. Its role as a key actor in these relations cannot be limited to a few moments or issues, but must be part of a process that allows for genuine impact of citizen involvement in decision-making on bi-regional relations.

### **PROPOSALS**

#### **On democracy and political rights**

1. Consolidating democracy in both regions, aiming to strengthen citizenship and to expand the existing margins for exercising and enjoying citizen rights.
2. Making progress in some strategic areas to enhance the economic and cultural dimensions of democracy: strengthening social and political actors, assigning resources for a deep reform of the State to address its high degree of illegitimacy and distrust that it creates; advancing decentralization and regionalization processes; expanding mechanisms for citizen involvement, monitoring and control of public affairs; strengthening civil society networking at the bi-regional, hemispheric and sub-regional levels.
3. In defense of peace –a requirement for democracy-, we call for a negotiated political solution and humanitarian agreements in the Colombian conflict, in order to stop an ongoing tragedy and avoid its expansion to the regional level. In the case of Europe, the punishment of racist and xenophobic conduct; curbing immigration laws and ratifying multilateralism as a condition for a democratic international order. EU cooperation policies and those of its member countries should not be linked to objectives aiming to regulate migratory flows.

#### **On the economic model and the state of economic rights**

4. Promoting economic and social policies that are in keeping with priorities such as generating productive employment, the right to “Decent Work” and a fair salary, as well as full respect of labor and social rights, without exceptions for multinational corporations, ensuring the compliance of equal labor and taxing standards in both regions.
5. Focusing on issues such as social inequity, lack of decent work, education and health services, as well as all forms of discrimination, to combat the root causes and conditions of poverty and social exclusion.

#### **On social inclusion, inequality and the state of social rights**

6. Urgently promoting and investing in social policies, aiming to create a social protection system without exclusions, beyond the focused vision of compensatory policies, and clearly differentiating aspects related to reducing poverty and to inequality.
7. Developing instruments to act against poverty by stimulating productive transformation, local development, strengthening productive associations and social economy, family agriculture and small and medium-sized enterprises. Policies aiming to enhance access to quality education for all are essential.
8. Implementing policies to guarantee the free movement of people and the full recognition of their rights as citizens wherever they are, in LAC as well as in the EU.

#### **On the challenges of climate change**

9. Generating regional cooperation mechanisms to create capacities for the management of risks caused by the increasingly frequent extreme events stemming from climate change, particularly affecting small island states.
10. Guaranteeing access to water as a social good and basic human right, slowing down the accelerated deforestation and desertification processes, preserving biodiversity of water and terrestrial ecosystems, and protecting the quality of water and land.
11. Enforcing clear regulations, strengthening institutions in charge of environmental management, controlling productive and economic activities to protect natural heritage and indigenous peoples; and promoting education and awareness-raising on production and consumption patterns and sustainable livelihoods for present and future generations.
12. Harmonizing the relation between investments and the protection of the natural and social environment, and of local communities and indigenous peoples, ensuring their ancestral rights- frequently affected by extraction activities that displace them from their lands-, and guaranteeing cultural and biological diversity.
13. Changing the EU’s greenhouse gases emissions goal for 2020 from 20% to 30%. EU and LAC governments should also consider the socioeconomic and environmental impact of the production of agro-fuels.
14. Guaranteeing, that funding to combat global warming in the context of multilateral negotiations, stays within the UN system and is available for local communities and NGOs.

## **Association Agreements and their relation with integration processes in LAC**

15. Making the construction of a just social order the guiding principle of all LAC-EU negotiations; we want association agreements guided by the principle of asymmetries, both internal and external, which should be expressed in differentiated trade treatment mechanisms.
16. Instead of focusing on the commercial dimension, creating genuine links based on political dialogue and cooperation, promoting social justice and human, economic, social cultural and environmental rights,. Consequently, recognizing asymmetries should be the guiding principle of EU-LAC negotiations.
17. In the framework of Association Agreements, negotiating agendas such as WTO plus cannot be imposed by the EU, and issues such as water, services, investments, public purchases, competition and intellectual property should be excluded. Agriculture should receive a special treatment in the negotiations, recognizing the principles of food safety and sovereignty, and eliminating the distortions generated by agricultural subsidies, which affect the poorest producers.
18. Considering the current advantages as a starting point in the ongoing commercial negotiations. The validity of the General Preferences System and access to existing markets should not be conditioned to the negotiation of the Association Agreements.
19. Including a clear position on the access of migrant workers to both regions in commercial negotiations, with a comprehensive treatment that includes their legal status and ensuring the largest coverage of their rights. The exchange of goods cannot be viewed separately from the labor force that produces them.
20. Enhancing and effectively implementing the Democratic Clause, establishing implementation and follow-up mechanisms in the Association Agreements. This should allow for an effective protection of civil and political rights, economic, social, cultural and environmental rights, as well as the rights of indigenous peoples, women, children and afro descendents.
21. Setting up appropriate institutional mechanisms for prior, free and informed civil society involvement in the various phases of the Association Agreements: a) Preliminary studies, b) elaboration of national and regional negotiating positions, c) follow-up and participation in the negotiations, d) implementation, e) monitoring phase of social, economic and environmental impact of the Association Agreements.

## **On EU-LAC Cooperation**

22. Promoting the necessary participation and institutionalized dialogue with civil society in the design and implementation of EU cooperation strategies, setting up effective involvement, consultation, and monitoring and evaluation mechanisms for cooperation programs.
23. Including the discussion of poor and developing countries' external debt in development cooperation, including supporting and promoting audit processes as a tool to determine the legitimacy demanded by European countries, as well as the consequences of paying the debt.
24. Considering a clear definition of mechanisms, criteria and the process for the mid term review (2010) of EU cooperation strategies for LAC (2007-2013), as well as their publicity and timely availability; and setting up structured, clear and broad

procedures for civil society involvement in the exercise of this review. Also, defining transparent mechanisms on how their recommendations will be acknowledged in the results of the review and in the identification of cooperation activities for 2010-2013.

***We call for establishing links among the various consultation mechanisms foreseen on the road to the V Summit of Heads of State and Government of Latin America, the Caribbean and the European Union. Likewise, we commit ourselves to debate in-depth and disseminate these issues in the context of "Enlazando Alternativas III". We request the authorities to guarantee the appropriate security and working conditions for this social gathering.***

***The organizations that subscribe this Declaration commit to disseminate its contents in each of our countries, particularly to EU and LAC Heads of State and Government, seeking its inclusion in the Final Declaration and Plan of Action of the Lima Summit. Likewise, we commit to strengthen our coalitions and joint work, as well as the links between European and Latin American and Caribbean civil societies.***

Lima, April 1, 2008.