



DECLARATION OF MEDELLIN “Better Quality of Life for the Inhabitants of the Americas in the 21st Century”

III Congress of the Americas of Municipalities and Healthy Communities

**8 to 12 March 1999
Medellin-Colombia**

INTRODUCTION

The movement of Municipalities and Healthy Communities in the Americas, committed with the principles of equity, solidarity, and living together, proposed in the Ottawa Charter (1986), reaffirmed in the Declaration of Bogotá (1992) and with the contributions of the Congresses of Brazil (1996) and Mexico (1997), has fulfilled a very important role in the search for new ways of promoting the ambitious goal of health for all, sustainable human development, and the improvement of the quality of life of the inhabitants of this region of the world.

Similarly, it has helped to strengthen the autonomy of the local levels and the ties among the countries. Nevertheless, it is urgent to continue the efforts so that the municipalities and local communities advance toward the 21st century with clear and precise proposals to reach a greatest development with social equity.

The III Congress of the Americas of Municipalities and Healthy Communities, brought together in Medellín-Colombia, from 8 to 12 March 1999 and

CONSIDERING:

1. That the components of the human development and the quality of life are closely related with the rights and citizen duties recognized in all the countries of America.
2. That the improvement of the quality of life requires the commitment of the different actors of development and of multisectoral and interinstitutional actions.

3. That the municipality is the unit political--administrative from where there are constructed the relations government--citizen and where there should be met the basic needs, for decent and productive life, and that is the primary reason for the social policies.
4. That the existing situation in our countries indicates that one comes to the new millennium with the following challenges:
 - ◆ Achieve *equity and the equal rights*, in order to reduce effectively all form of social exclusion.
 - ◆ Direct with social sense the *recovery of the economic development*, taking into account that this, should be for benefit of the human being, whose rights cannot be undermined for the sake of an economic growth as ultimate end.
 - ◆ Establish a new way of *interaction of the people with the environment* in such a way that it is possible to advance in the protection and conservation of the natural resources, in relation to sustainable human development.
 - ◆ *The search for the living together* based on the effective respect of the human rights, that there rebuilds the social fabric, based on the tolerance, equity, and the solidarity, as a way of *facing the different types of violence*, in our countries.
 - ◆ Reach the *efficiency in the local management* regarding the municipal development, taking into account globalization and the urgent need for *combating the corruption*.
5. That the ultimate end of the municipalities and healthy communities, it is to make it possible that the human beings reach the their right to be increasingly healthy and to have better quality of life in the 21st century.

THEY DECLARE:

1. Strengthen in the area local, the implementation of development plans, as integrating element of the communities, the private and public actors, in a permanent exercise of consensus-building, aimed at improving the living conditions of the population, with gender perspective and a rational and efficient utilization of the resources.
2. Design and to implement healthy public policies in the local area, of education, employment, housing, health, nutrition, peace, living together, quality of the transportation, public services, adequate utilization of the public space, the environment; among others, who seek the improvement of the life* conditions of the population, based on their needs and within the framework of the international

and national policies.

3. Strengthen the empowerment of the communities and that of the municipal institution, consolidating the processes of decentralization, in search of the autonomy, the self-management, and the utilization of its potentialities, in contrast to the challenges of globalization.
4. Promote the search for new economic models or the review and modification of the current, that permits the recovery and the economic growth, in order to guarantee the social equity, the universal access to the services, to the technology developments, and to the scientific and cultural advances.
5. Strengthen programs in the local area for the protection and environmental conservation and the awareness of the dangers of their destruction, with a clear commitment by its defense.
6. Promote multisectoral interventions in the municipal area directed toward the determinants of the different types of violence, based on the defense of the human rights and as practices of the peaceful coexistence with tolerance and recognition of the difference.
7. Help from the local area to combat the corruption and construct the civil ethics, rector of the different ways of relationship among the people, the organizations, and the institutions.
8. Develop methodologies for the evaluation of the processes and of the projects of municipalities and healthy communities that take into account the social, political, cultural, and epidemiological context in that are developed, and that point out their impact on the local inequity.
9. Obtain the convergence of movements of the municipal area of the Americas, that have common goals, oriented to the improvement of the quality of life, utilizing the holistic concept of the health as conductive axis.

The participants in this congress present their solidarity with the municipalities of America that have suffered serious catastrophes, especially in Central America, by Hurricane Mitch, and in Colombia by the earthquake of the coffee belt, and promote them in order to find in the strategy of Healthy Municipalities, an inspiring possibility of recovery of the community well-being.

The defense of the protagonism and the respect for the rights and duties of the local communities should give the just environment so that the society of the new century is more balanced and just.