



**STATEMENT OF THE DELEGATION OF MEXICO  
ON BEHALF OF THE RIO GROUP  
47° SESSION OF THE COMMISSION FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT  
“PROMOTING SOCIAL INTEGRATION”**

Madam Chair,

I have the honor to speak on behalf of the Member States of the Rio Group, Argentina, Belize, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Dominican Republic, Uruguay, Venezuela and Jamaica on behalf of CARICOM, as well as my own country, Mexico.

First of all, I am pleased to congratulate you and all members of the Bureau on your election to lead the 47 session of the Commission for Social Development. We are confident that your experience will enable us to reach a successful conclusion of our work.

Madam Chair,

The Rio Group welcomes the designation of "Social Integration" as a priority theme for the 2009-2010 cycle of the Commission for Social Development. Given the challenges facing our societies regarding the fight against inequality, it is particularly important to address this issue.

"Social integration" was one of the key elements of the Copenhagen Social Summit and the creation of a "Society for All" may be considered the most ambitious commitment included in the documents of the aforementioned Summit.

The main focus of this commitment is the creation of a social order based on the full respect of all human rights; a form of government that ensures effective and democratic participation of the population, an atmosphere of tolerance and respect for diversity in all its forms, while advocating for equality and fairness. Social integration also involves adequate living standards, employment opportunities and development.

Madam Chair,

Unfortunately, Latin America continues to be one of the more unequal regions in the world. As the Secretary General points out in his report, discrimination is a factor that increases inequality in our region and it is necessary to reverse it. In some cases, significant segments of the population, such as indigenous peoples or Afro-descendants face social indicators below national averages.

However, the Members of the Rio Group established programs and national strategies to fight poverty, promote social inclusion, employment and address the needs of vulnerable groups. The most effective way to ensure social cohesion is, precisely, closing the income gap of inequality.

Despite the magnitude of the challenge that our countries face, the social programs that have been launched in Latin America attend to support a considerable part of the excluded population by implementing comprehensive schemes that provide not only income transfers, but in several cases, ensure children's and older persons access to basic healthcare and education, and consider women as central actors in the strategy to fight poverty. Investing in favor of children and young people is paramount to break the generational cycle of poverty and exclusion.

The Rio Group members recognize the importance of fighting gender inequality. The feminization of poverty has had disproportional effects on women and represents one of the mayor challenges for their empowerment. The Rio Group countries are aware of the importance of increasing economic opportunities for women, as a precondition for their effective participation in the decision-making process as well as in the full access to resources. It is essential to not exclude women of basic services and social participation.

Regardless of what has been said, and despite of the policies adopted by our countries, we still face great challenges in social inclusion, poverty reduction, discrimination, employment creation, and social integration. We encourage the international community, especially the financial institutions and donors, to increase international cooperation for development, and effectively support national efforts.

Madam Chair,

The Rio Group considers that the promotion of employment is one of the most effective strategies for social integration. Labor policies that promote social inclusion should be based on non-discriminatory practices for employment and training. The inclusion in the labor markets of the young, older persons, women, indigenous people, migrants and persons with disabilities should be a priority.

In particular, policies aimed at social inclusion of indigenous peoples need to take into account their experience and concepts of welfare and development. Such policies should address the structural causes of exclusion, the rights of indigenous peoples and the promotion of cultural diversity.

Madam Chair,

Even though the countries of the Rio Group are much better prepared than in the past to deal with the current crisis in the global economy, it is clear that it has a negative impact on our countries and threatens the improvement of our social indicators in which we had worked hard to achieve.

The environment of economic uncertainty forces us to strengthen our actions to promote social cohesion, because the loss of jobs and the decline in economic activity could exacerbate inequality even further. Experience had shown us that the most vulnerable groups are the most affected by rising food prices and decreasing social budgets.

Madam Chair,

The Members States of the Rio Group consider international cooperation, including the commitment of developed countries to assign 0.7% of their GDP towards Official Development Assistance, as well as South-South cooperation, technical cooperation, and the general exchange of best practices, essential to promote "Social Integration" both in developed and developing countries.

Finally, the Rio Group shares the view that Social Integration is not just a matter of economic efficiency. It is the expression of a social contract based on solidarity and humanism. Economic growth is not enough if it is not accompanied by redistributive policies to close the gap of inequality.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

