

First Latin American Forum of Chairmen of Parliamentary Committees on Science and Technology

Buenos Aires, March 7-8, 2005

DECLARATION OF BUENOS AIRES¹⁰¹

The representatives of the parliamentary committees on science, technology and productive innovation of Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Ecuador, El Salvador, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay, Peru and Venezuela, met at the city of Buenos Aires, Argentine Republic, on March 7-8, 2005 during the *First Latin American Forum of Chairmen of Parliamentary Committees on Science and Technology*.

The meeting was organized by the Committee on Science and Technology of the Honorable House of Representatives of the Argentine Nation, UNESCO Regional Office of Science and Technology for Latin America and the Caribbean and the Secretariat of Science, Technology and Productive Innovation of Argentina.

Having considered the "Declaration of Santo Domingo"¹⁰² which recognizes that Latin America and the Caribbean confront the absolute need to increase the quality of life of their inhabitants and make progress in economic, social and environmental sustainable development where science, technology and innovation processes may contribute to: increase the quality of life of the population, raise its cultural and educational level, promote a genuine protection of the environment and natural resources, create more opportunities for the employment and qualification of human resources, increase economy competitiveness, help to transform production processes of goods and services, and reduce regional unbalances. In short, it is imperative to establish a social compromise (contract) of science and technology with society, which shall be based on poverty eradication, assuring a continuous increment in the quality of life of the population and promoting a harmonious relationship between nature and sustainable development.

¹⁰¹ NOTA DEL EDITOR: La traducción del castellano al inglés fue realizada por Nora Izetta, del Cuerpo de Traductores del Congreso de la Nación Argentina.

EDITOR'S NOTE: the translation from Spanish into English was made by Nora Izetta from the Translation Department of the National Congress of Argentina.

¹⁰² Regional Meeting of Consultation for Latin America and the Caribbean of the World Conference on Science, Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, March 10-12, 1999.

As set out above, this compromise or social contract of science and technology with society should include a series of explicit objectives jointly adopted by governments, the entrepreneurial sector, academic and scientific communities, other collective actors and international cooperation. It is necessary to establish solid foundations for long term strategies and policies on science, technology and innovation activities for self-sustainable human development, implying the adoption of measures that effectively promote scientific research, technological development and productive innovation in order to obtain original solutions for the specific problems of the region countries.

Having considered the Declaration of Lima¹⁰³, that recognizes the imperative need to work for the wide acceptance and recognition of science, technology, engineering and innovation as fundamental elements for the development of a social and economic growth strategy and their inclusion in national and regional development plans in order to reduce poverty in the hemisphere, and that also tries to achieve, for 2007, that all the States of the region adopt efficient national policies on science, technology, engineering and innovation clearly integrated to economic and social policies –being necessary, for this purpose, to enact legislation and legal frameworks to guarantee and promote these policies in the future.

Considering that regional integration in the activities of scientific research, technological development and productive innovation should imply the use of a powerful instrument to encourage synergy among the different individual groups of our countries, optimizing, in this way, physical, human and economic resources and favoring the existence of projects which may solve fundamental problems in Latin America, such as the quality of life of their inhabitants, the conditions for the preservation of the environment and natural resources, and the encouragement and promotion of creation and innovation processes in every aspect of human activities.

Taking into account the experiences and successful proposals of regional cooperation, integration and development among different governments implemented by the Regional Program of Scientific and Technological Development of the Organization of American States¹⁰⁴, different initiatives adopted within the framework of the member countries of the “Andean Pact”, the Iberoamerican Program of Science and Technology for Development (CYTED)¹⁰⁵ and MERCOS-

¹⁰³ Meeting of Ministers and Principal Authorities on Science and Technology, organized by the Inter-American Council for Integral Development, Organization of American States, November 11-12, 2004, Lima, Peru.

¹⁰⁴ OAS Regional Program of Scientific and Technological Development was created in 1968 by decision of America’s presidents during a meeting held at Punta del Este (Uruguay) in 1967.

¹⁰⁵ The Iberoamerican Program of Science and Technology for Development (CYTED), which was created in 1984 by means of an Inter-Institutional Frame Agreement signed

MERCOSUR Specialized Meeting on Science and Technology (RECYT)¹⁰⁶, it is recognized that the region is characterized by an asymmetrical development not only of its science, technology and productive innovation institutions, but also of its parliamentary committees, which are responsible for the legal frameworks that regulate the activities of the former. Meanwhile some countries have a consolidated institutional structure, others are just beginning institutionalization processes for scientific and technological activities. Certain phenomena such as institutional instability and lack of continuity in policies implementation limit the evolution of the scientific and technological systems of some countries in the region.

Considering the recommendations of the "Declaration on Science and the Use of Scientific Knowledge"¹⁰⁷ which suggests that governments, and particularly parliaments, should systematically turn to the cooperation of scientists and technologists in order to create adequate policies and legislation for the processes of economic, social and technological transformation. The contribution of these experts should become a part of the parliamentary advisory programs. This is an increasingly top priority in the decision-making processes and in the design of short, medium and long-term national and regional policies.

THE LATIN AMERICAN LEGISLATORS WHO PARTICIPATE IN THE FIRST LATIN AMERICAN FORUM OF CHAIRMEN OF PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEES ON SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY DECLARE THAT:

1. It is essential to take measures tending to promote the institutional and organizational strengthening of the legislative Committees devoted to the design of legislation and legal frameworks for the performing and financing of scientific research, technological development and productive innovation activities, which permit the formulation, implementation, execution, evaluation and management of adequate national and regional policies.

by 19 countries of Latin America, Spain and Portugal, is defined as an international program of multilateral scientific and technological cooperation, with horizontal character and Iberoamerican basis.

¹⁰⁶ The Specialized Meeting on Science and Technology of MERCOSUR (RECYT) was created at the II Meeting of the Common Market Council (CMC), held in June 26-27, 1992 in Las Leñas (Argentina)

¹⁰⁷ "World Conference on Science" held at Budapest (Hungary) from June 26 to July 1, 1999, under the auspices of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the International Council for Science (ICSU).

2. It is imperative to consider science, technology and innovation activities as a fundamental axis of national and regional development, reducing the investment gap that separate us from the developed countries, implementing adequate measures in national budgets and favoring private investment in such sector.
3. The region's parliaments should propose and adapt national legislation to encourage systematic activities directly and specifically related to scientific and technological development, through the generation, spreading, transmission and application of knowledge, technologies and productive innovations deriving from the creation of scientific and technological systems and the traditional knowledge of every country.
4. It is necessary to harmonize national legislation in order to favor international cooperation mechanisms for scientific research, technological development and productive innovation which should contribute to: (i) the stable installation of fundamental scientific capacities in the less developed countries; (ii) the training of young researchers integrated with their own social realities; (iii) the adequate management of researching agendas according to the values and priorities of the region and a global perspective.
5. Horizontal cooperation should be encourage among the region's countries, and particularly among their parliaments, creating unprecedented possibilities to allow the exchange and supplementation of human, physical and financing capacities among the different parliamentary groups which have the responsibility for legislating about science, technology and innovation matters.
6. It is fundamental to update information for legislators and other individuals responsible for decision-making processes on subjects related to science, technology and innovation, which continuously expand their influence to all human activities.
7. Permanent dialogue mechanisms with academicians, scientists and all the experts' community should be established in order to promote the development of the necessary information at decision-making processes related to science, technology and innovation activities.

8. It is necessary to study the possibility of implementing an interparliamentary Latin American network of advice and evaluation of legislative bills on science, technology and innovation, in order to share the necessary resources, keep academic excellence in the advice and evaluation processes and undertake joint working actions among the region's parliaments.
9. It is essential to promote the establishment of national parliamentary forum as a way to study medium and long-term strategies and scenarios in order to design policies stimulating the application of science, technology and innovation in the improvement of the region's inhabitants life conditions.
10. The systematic studies of different national laws and existent bilateral and multilateral treaties shall be considered in order to harmonize, if possible, the different national laws and legal frameworks to promote regional integration on science, technology and innovation subjects.
11. Nations know that the exchange, among them, of the information about science, technology and innovation legislation, shall facilitate knowledge about our respective legal frameworks. For this purpose, the Argentine Republic offers, in this first stage, the data base on MERCOSUR science and technology legislation of the Secretariat of Science, Technology and Productive Innovation (SECyT) to include there the data of the other participant countries. In order to systematize the analysis and search in the future regional data base, the legislation to be send shall be grouped in the following categories: (1) institutional organization of the science, technology and productive innovation system; (2) training and technological development; (3) tax incentives: exemptions and deductions; (4) financial credit; (5) non tax incentives: economic assistance; (6) others; (7) copyright; (8) biosecurity; and (9) international treaties on scientific technological cooperation.
12. Parliaments should prepare legislative bills promoting the exchange of teachers and researchers among Latin American countries in order to take advantage of the existing capacities in science and technology and to increase the critical mass, in relevant subjects for the region, by means of Master's degrees and Doctorates.

13. It is necessary to propose another meeting of Latin American legislators, specialized in science, technology and innovation subjects, in order to establish an agenda that guarantees the regional integration process and the viability of the social contract during the following decade.

This declaration is signed at the Autonomous City of Buenos Aires on March 8th, 2005.

The following representatives, congressmen and parliamentary members sign the declaration:

Luz Doris Sánchez Pinedo de Romero (Republic of Peru);
H. Guadalupe Larriva González (Republic of Ecuador);
Edmundo Villouta (Republic of Chile);
Julio César Córdova Martínez (United Mexican States);
Lilia J. Puig de Stubrin (Argentine Republic);
André Zacharow (Federative Republic of Brazil);
Luis Guillermo Berdugo Rojas (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela);
H. L. Jassir Purcait (Republic of Panama);
Fernando Oreggioni (Republic of Paraguay);
Carlos Larreguy (Argentine Republic) and
Rubén Orellana (Republic of El Salvador).