



**BOLIVARIAN REPUBLIC OF VENEZUELA
PERMANENT MISSION
TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

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HIGH LEVEL PANEL

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Social Policies and Social Development in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela within the framework of the Tenth Anniversary of the World Summit for Social Development, held in Copenhagen in 1995.

Mr. Chairman,

First of all, we would like to extend our warm greetings to Your Excellency, Ambassador Dumisani Shadrack Kumalo, Chairman of the Commission for Social Development, to the Vice Chairmen of the Commission, as well as to Delegations and Organizations gathering at this important meeting.

The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela supports the position of the Group of Rio stated by the Delegation of Argentina in its capacity as Chairman of the Group, as well as the position of the Delegation of Jamaica in its capacity as Chairman of the Group of the 77 and China.

Mr. Chairman,

In Venezuela, the social policies implemented between 1995 and 1998 did not have a significant impact in the social development of the country, basically for its assistentialist character and their conception within the framework of new liberal policies, by which the market prevails over the real needs of the people. New liberalism and globalization have demonstrated its harmful effects in social development, especially in developing countries, as it is clearly expressed in the figures of the review of the outcomes of the Summit for Social Development held in Copenhagen in 1995, presented by the Secretary General.

Mr. Chairman,

In the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, social policies reflect a substantial change since 1999, when President Hugo Chávez Frías started to rule the country. Since then, an eminent group of constituents, elected by popular will, elaborated a new constitutional framework. The new Constitution, also submitted and approved in popular consultations, establishes the core principles for developing new social policies. Among the main principles set off by the Constitution, a special mention deserves the ones related to social polices, such is the case of the direct participation of the State in the universalization and guarantee of social rights as health, education, employment, housing, social security, gender equality, special attention to children, youth and elder people, people with

disabilities, indigenous people, all of them included in the Declaration of Copenhagen. An innovative and essential element of our new Constitution is the establishment of a democratic government based on the full respect for human rights; it's a participative and revocable government, by which each citizen has the right and duty to participate in an active and leading manner in governmental entities; and the mandate of its representative could be revoke by popular mandate of people who elected them.

Since the establishment of this new Constitution, we initiated the adjustment of the social legal framework, while we began the reform of the State to adequate its structure to achieve social development for all the population. The social and economic policies implemented started to reflect a positive balance in social and economic indicators during 2000 and 2001; therefore, we faced major obstacles caused by minority groups with economic power, labor unions, traditional and decadent political parties, backed by international economic groups; international labor unions that felt their interests threaten with the newly adopted policies. This situation lead the country to social and political unrest, to a coup d'état and several patronal strikes during 2002 and early 2003; fortunately, we overcame with the support and participation of the majority of the population, but it regrettable represented a set back in the economic and social indicators for the country.

Mr. Chairman,

Nonetheless, during the first half of 2003, we started a new strategy within the frame of social policies for development: The Social Missions, which basically are massive strategies, with substantial financial resources; with significant, active and leading volunteer participation form grassroots organizations and with the support of friendly countries with great expertise in the area. The main Social Missions are:

- Mission Barrio Adentro:

It was designed to provide public health. Its purpose is to provide medical care to population excluded from integral medical care. A group of physicians, primary care assistants and social advocates participate directly in the communities to provide health and social care, at an early and primary stage. We currently account on 1 service for integral care per each 250 families in situation of poverty, by which we extended free medic aid access to excluded areas of the population. This is part of an integral approach with emphasizes health promotion and prevention, and free distribution of more than 100 kinds of

essential prescriptions. This mission has been developed along with the cooperation of the Government of Cuba.

- Mission Robinson, Rivas and Sucre:
These are a set of educational mission. The first one of them is designed to eliminate illiteracy of almost more than 2 million illiterate people that existed in the country. By its implementation, in more than a year, we accomplished more than an 80 per cent of this population who after that will be enrolled in Mission Robinson II to complete their elementary education. Mission Rivas aims at all excluded population from secondary education. Our latter's figures indicates that more than 700,000 adults in Venezuela have not completed their secondary education; consequently, they have been incorporated to Mission Rivas. During the first quarter of this year, 30,000 student enrolled in 2003, will graduate. Mission Sucre is intended for students historically excluded from universities. At the present time, we account on a population of more than 400,000 students registered and ready to enter to the complete their higher education. Complementarily, we have implemented a scholarship system, in three levels, for students without economic resources to complete their education.
- Mission Vuelvan Caras:
This mission is focused on training and developing work skills and the creation of new employment opportunities through the development of endogenous nucleus, based on the necessities and potentialities of socially organized groups. These nuclei are centered in productive priority areas for development, among them: agriculture, cattle, fishing, aviculture, food technology, technological development, tourism and other services. Along with this Mission, we have created a scholarship program for training in the creation of cooperatives, and to extend low rate and medium term credit facilities. In 2004, more than 64 endogenous nuclei were established in several regions of the country, what has involved more than 300,000 workers. The creation of these nuclei together with the implementation of employment policies has reduced unemployment from 19.1 per cent, in January, 2003 to 10.9 per cent in December 2004; and has had an important impact in non-formal employment reduction to 3.2 per cent.

- Mission Mercal:
In the field of feeding, it comprises a whole network of production, distribution, and marketing of basic food that could be acquired by the population at a reduced cost of 38 per cent less than of the market. Currently, there are more than 12,000 centers located in socially excluded areas across the country, which since their launching has benefited more than 9.2 million people. This mission also includes the creation of popular feeding centers, one hundred per cent subsidized, to attend to more than 500,000 people in extreme poverty conditions.
- Mission Housing
One of the most recent missions that pursues rebuilding and reshaping appropriate housing provided with all utilities, for people that certainly need it. This also includes the creation of cooperatives, and low interest, medium term credit facilities. We are planning to build 200,000 houses every year until we finish paying our social debt in this area.

Mr. Chairman,

Since a welfare perspective, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela has been developing a series of programs attaining to bridge and improve the quality of life of the most vulnerable sectors of the population. Regarding children and youth, we registered an increased of 100 per cent in children care centers for the integral care of children in the range of 0 to 6 year-old, coming from excluded areas of the population. We also provide free nutritional care and education. We have also created the Bolivarian Schools, envisioning an integral and innovative concept; students spend most of the day at school involved in extra curriculum activities as music. Balanced and nutritional food is also granted for all the students. In the near future, we will create the Bolivarian liceos o High Schools which will provide similar attention to the students. With the leading and active participation of representatives of indigenous people, we have designed and implemented a program of integral assistance to this population by means of the social missions, consistent with their culture and customs. Also, we have heavily promoted integral programs for wholly social inclusion of disable people which includes employment, education and health, in order to guarantee their social security. In relation to elder people, we increased in more than 50 per cent the social security income for this population; likewise, we have established a fund to help people excluded from the

social security. Alike, by Mission Barrio Adentro, we have established shelter for elder people without own housing, farms and grandparent clubs for leisure and spare time. Regarding gender through the National Institute for Women we have made an effective promotion of the active role of women in all fields, since the community organizations with the encounters among women, and at higher level with the empowerment of women in political arena. In this sense, in the National Assembly, one of the most representative political parties achieved the same quota representative's women and men. We account on important number in cases of care provided for women victims of domestic violence, which has involved in particular situations shelter and legal and social assistance.

Mr. Chairman,

As you can realize we have made important progress towards social development in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, most of our achievements are concrete and encouraging results, however, at this time, we are not able to measure the impact of some programs still underway, but we are confident that in the near future, we will share our with all the countries of the world, our certain results as well as our mistakes.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman