



THE BOLIVARIAN REPUBLIC OF VENEZUELA
PERMANENT MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS

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PRESIDENT OF THE 49TH SESSION OF THE COMMISSION FOR
SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

CIVIL SOCIETY FORUM:
ERADICATION OF POVERTY: HUMAN DIGNITY DEMANDS IT!

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NEW YORK, FEBRUARY 8, 2011

Distinguished Representatives of the various civil society organizations gathered here today,

On behalf of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, and in my capacity as Chairman of the Commission for Social Development, I would like to express my deepest appreciation for sharing with you in this scenario, which allows us to deliberate on the challenges we face in the Eradication of Poverty.

Within the framework of the Presidency of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, we firmly intend to re-power the work of the Commission for Social Development. This is why, starting with the 49th Session of the Commission for Social Development we will undertake an intensive work plan to promote various participative and inclusive debates and events in order to identify innovative strategies and policies to help eradicate poverty and overcome inequality in the world.

At almost sixteen years since the commitments were made by Heads of State and Government at the World Summit for Social Development, held in Copenhagen in the year 1995, the the Eradication of Poverty is still a pre-condition *sine qua non* in order to achieve social justice and comprehensive development for our peoples.

This should become a priority issue on the international agenda, as there is widespread evidence that poverty, injustice and inequality undermine human dignities and deny the peoples their rights and aspirations. Within this context, it is necessary to give a social approach to the multilateral agenda to guide the action of the United Nations.

The exercise and enjoyment of all human rights for all inhabitants of planet earth, is the most pressing challenge of our time.

In various documents adopted at major United Nations Conferences, the intimate relationship between poverty eradication and the achievement of social justice has been emphasized.

However, the comprehensive development of our peoples is now seriously threatened. Spending destined for social programs is being cut. Social gains are diminishing in order to satisfy the chrematistic appetites of a few. On this road – and this is where we stand- it will be impossible to meet the Copenhagen Commitments and the Millennium Development Goals.

The dilemma facing the world today is very simple: either we promote development with equity and social justice, or we promote economic and financial policies that deepen inequality and injustice between human beings.

Despite the efforts that many countries are making to meet the goal of poverty eradication and overcoming inequality, it is likely that they will continue to grow and become more difficult to solve in many countries, as was recognized in the Report of the Secretary General.

It has been shown that those countries that have reduced inequality and poverty the most have been those where there has been extensive social investment. Consequently, just and inclusive social policies must be part of a comprehensive strategy for development.

We are required to confront all structural and cyclical factors that cause poverty. In this sense, it is imperative to rescue the social dimension of development models, and move towards new forms of social organization, with security and social protection systems that help to eradicate poverty, hunger, misery, discrimination, inequality, and prevent unemployment.

The construction of a new model of development must be human centered. The aim is to achieve social justice through social inclusion, equity and active participation of the peoples. These are the new paradigms of the new model of development.

In order to eradicate poverty, overcome inequality and discrimination, it is essential that the benefits of economic growth are shared equitably; that there are comprehensive social protection policies that benefit the majority

of the population; that access to universal education is made available at all levels; that access to healthcare, food, decent work and decent housing, and other benefits that dignify human beings be guaranteed.

Also, policies and strategies for social inclusion must be adapted to the realities and specific objectives of each country. The externally imposed conditionalities have generated more poverty and inequality, proving their failure.

The process of formulating social policies should be sovereign, inclusive, participatory and co-responsible. Here we have a good space for civil society and social and popular movements to participate in.

Likewise, further progress is needed in gender equality and the empowerment of women and special measures should be implemented to ensure equal opportunities for the most excluded and vulnerable sectors of the population.

Civil society and social movements are part of a social and institutional fabric that can contribute – in a relevant manner - to the comprehensive development of the peoples. Along with States and Governments they can make a major contribution to achieving social justice and development.

This is a great moment to examine the complex phenomenon of poverty and design and implement innovative policies to combat it.

I invite you to exchange views and experiences during this important gathering of Civil Society, in order to look for alternative solutions that will help build societies based on equality and humanism.

Complying with the Declaration and Plan of Action on Social Development from Copenhagen, with the Millennium Development Goals and with other relevant international commitments on social development, constitutes an ethical and moral imperative for all the peoples of the world. Civil society and social movements have the floor.