

EU - Rio Group : Santiago Declaration / Xth institutionalised ministerial meeting

Santiago, Chile, 28 March 2001

1. The Xth Institutionalised Ministerial Meeting between the Rio Group and the European Union was held in Santiago, Chile, on 28 March 2001, in accordance with the Rome Declaration of December 1990 and the Final Declaration of the IXth Ministerial Meeting, held in Vilamoura on 24 February 2000.

2. The Rio Group delegation was led by Ms María Soledad Alvear Valenzuela, Minister for External Relations of Chile and pro tempore Secretary of the Rio Group.

The European Union delegation was led by Ms Anna Lindh, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Sweden and President-in-Office of the European Union. The European Commission was represented by Mr Chris Patten, Member.

3. In the context of the new relationship being created between the two regions, stemming from the First Summit of Heads of State or Government of the European Union and of Latin America and the Caribbean held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil on 28 and 29 June 1999, the Xth Ministerial Meeting presented a format and content intended to facilitate the dialogue between the two sides and make it more dynamic.

4. Discussions at the Xth Ministerial Meeting concentrated on two main subjects: "The New Economy, the Technology Divide and Employment", presented by the Rio Group countries, and "The Sustainability of Democracy, Good Governance and Poverty Reduction", presented by the European Union countries.

5. With regard to the discussion of the first subject, the Ministers agreed that the process of globalisation had formed a world with realities very different from those which we had known in the past, which had affected both international relations and people's daily lives. In that way, the use of new technologies, the growth of trade, the increase in investments and the expansion of communications had opened up unimagined prospects for economic growth and progress for all of mankind.

The Ministers also recognised that the opportunities provided by economic and technological globalisation had been exploited by some countries and were mainly of benefit to a few firms and to higher-skilled workers. For that reason, the technology divide between the industrialised and the developing countries was even wider than that shown up by the traditional indicators of productivity and socio-economic welfare.

The Ministers agreed that from that state of affairs it could be concluded that in Latin America the process of transition to an information society would require public-private coordination, which would seek to reduce inequality in the dissemination of the new information and communications technologies.

With that in view, the Ministers recognised the importance of broad and equitable access to the new information technologies. They therefore undertook to continue working to encourage and increase bi-regional cooperation so as to reduce differences in access and facilitate technology transfer to less-favoured regions.

The Ministers also stated their desire to enable wider sections of the public to enjoy the benefits of the new technologies. Governments undertook to develop cooperation programmes to design systematic policies of technology transfer and investment in areas such as telematics, the information society and distance education, so that these could have a positive effect on employment.

Ministers recognised the role played by Information and Communication Technology (ICT) to foster democracy and development through the use of electronic devices in the public administration as an instrument to involve civil society in the policy debate through direct interaction.

6. With respect to the subject of "The Sustainability of Democracy, Good Governance and Poverty Reduction" as proposed by the European Union, Ministers highlighted the fundamental values of

democracy and good governance as solid common bases for the partnership between the regions in an age of globalisation. The strengthening of democratic institutions, pluralism and the rule of law were highlighted as essential elements for preserving democracy, social development and for economic progress. Ministers agreed that democracy has to be continuously strengthened and is a task developing upon both governments and civil society.

Ministers recognised the need for special joint efforts in their respective regions to honour their commitment to reduce poverty by half by 2015.

7. The Ministers stressed the importance of the Second Summit of Heads of State or Government of the European Union and of Latin America and the Caribbean, to be held in Madrid on 17 and 18 May 2002.

In that context the Ministers confirmed their commitment to a strategic partnership as agreed on at the First Summit, held in Rio de Janeiro in June 1999. The Ministers confirmed their commitment to the principles of the Rio Declaration and to the continuation of joint work by the Bi-regional Follow-up Group so as to continue their work in time with the priorities adopted by the Heads of State or Government, concentrating on co-operation steps to speed up the implementation of projects and make concrete progress with a view to the Madrid Summit.

Ministers underlined the convergence of views achieved by both parties on a significant number of subjects of general interest and agreed to step up cooperation on all subjects of common interest within international fora.

8. The Ministers emphasised that respect for human rights, the rule of law and democratic institutions are essential to political stability and development in both regions and were mutually reinforcing. They also confirmed their Governments' commitment to representative and participatory democracy, political pluralism and full participation by civil society.

The Ministers highlighted the crucial role of international and regional systems for the promotion of human rights and fundamental freedoms and the importance of all countries cooperating with those systems.

9. Ministers repeated their repudiation of all forms of racism and xenophobia and expressed their willingness to adopt policies designed to promote respect for the dignity and welfare of migrants; they also undertook to guarantee that the fundamental rights of migrants and their families would be protected. They also stressed the need to give particular importance to promoting equality between men and women and promoting and protecting the rights of the most vulnerable groups in society, in particular children, young people, the disabled, displaced persons, migrant workers and their families and indigenous populations and minorities.

10. The Ministers rejected any extraterritorial application of national laws that infringe international law and reaffirmed their desire to continue to work jointly to gradually develop national and international provisions concerning the criminal responsibility of persons who have committed crimes against humanity.

Likewise, Ministers reiterated their categorical rejection of all unilateral trade measures with extra-territorial effect as being contrary to international law and the rules of the WTO. They agreed that practices of this type posed a grave threat to multilateralism.

11. The Ministers reaffirmed the commitment of their Governments to continue developing policies designed to eliminate poverty, marginalisation and social exclusion and reduce socio-economic inequalities. Similarly, they stressed the need, against a background of increasing globalisation, for the developed countries and other significant players on the international scene to demonstrate their willingness to work together to devise a balanced and fair development strategy.

12. The Ministers welcomed recent progress in the process of bringing the two regions closer together, such as the entry into force of the Partnership Agreement with Mexico and the steps forward made in the negotiation of Association Agreements with Mercosur and Chile. Ministers agreed to make all the

necessary efforts with the aim of concluding the above negotiations as soon as possible.

At the XVIIth Ministerial Conference of the San José Dialogue, the Ministers agreed on the need to continue analysing the current situation and the prospects for economic and trading relations, based on stability and predictability, which would have mutually beneficial results. On this basis, Ministers agreed to establish shortly a joint technical working party in which interested Central American countries could participate.

The Parties welcomed the adoption of the terms of reference of the study to assess the current state of and prospects for economic and trading relations between the Andean Community and the European Union, and agreed on the need to accelerate the preparation of the study.

13. The Ministers recognised the importance of maintaining the high-level political dialogue on drugs between the two regions.

The Ministers reiterated the importance of the principle of shared responsibility in addressing the worldwide problem of illegal drugs and of the crimes mentioned in the following paragraph.

In that regard, they undertook to combat more efficiently money laundering, chemical precursor trafficking and diversion, and arms smuggling and trafficking. It is also necessary to develop joint actions to strengthen alternative development and reduce consumption.

In that connection the Ministers expressed their support for the implementation of the Comprehensive Action Plan on Drugs between the European Union, Latin America and the Caribbean, adopted in Panama in April 1999, and stated their intention of strengthening the Bi-regional Coordination Mechanism. They also undertook to support the IIIrd High-Level Meeting of the Mechanism, to be held in Cochabamba, Bolivia, in June 2001.

14. The Ministers agreed on the need for further cooperation as regards civil security and consequently decided to give high priority to combating the movement of and trafficking in small arms, including by means of specific measures concerning the collection and destruction of such arms held by civilians. The Ministers also supported the work of the Preparatory Committee of the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons.

Ministers energetically condemned all forms of international organised crime and terrorism.

Ministers expressed satisfaction with Central America's success in eliminating anti-personnel mines and appealed to the international community to continue supporting the mine clearance process until the region can be declared an area free of anti-personnel mines. Both sides expressed the need to continue humanitarian cooperation in respect of the rehabilitation of the victims of such devices.

In addition, Ministers also expressed their support for a Third Meeting of the States Party to the Ottawa Convention, to be held in Nicaragua in September 2001.

15. The Ministers agreed on the need to join forces to reduce the vulnerability of the Latin American region, as recently highlighted by the earthquakes in El Salvador, and reaffirmed their commitment to cooperate very closely in preventing, mitigating and responding to natural disasters with specific measures.

16. The Ministers reiterated their commitment to applying the Rio Principles, the Agenda 21 and the multilateral agreements reached at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, with the objective of achieving sustainable development in all respects: economic, social, environmental and cultural.

The Ministers also call upon the negotiating blocks at the Conference on Climatic Change to reach agreement promptly so as to implement the Kyoto Protocol, thus contributing to the protection of the

global environment.

17. The Ministers stressed the prior importance of the World Trade Organisation (WTO) as the forum for furthering gradual and mutually advantageous multilateral trade liberalisation and establishing basic rules and principles for the international trading system, resulting in a more equitable distribution of the benefits of globalisation.

They also highlighted the need to make important progress in the ongoing mandated negotiations which include agriculture and services, as well as on the implementation of the agreements reached under the Uruguay round.

In the prospect of the 4th Ministerial meeting of the WTO in Qatar, the Ministers agreed to work further towards the launching of a new comprehensive round based on a balanced agenda taking adequate account of the interests of all the members of the Multilateral Trading System. This round must be directed at strengthening access to markets without excluding any sector, to develop and strengthen the rules and disciplines of the WTO and to promoting a better integration of developing countries into the Multilateral Trading System.

The Ministers also stressed the need to make progress on the WTO's cooperation schemes designed to strengthen the technical and institutional capacity of the developing countries and, particularly, of the least developed countries.

They also underlined the need for a transparent and inclusive preparatory process leading up to the 4th Ministerial meeting involving all members of the WTO and of the need for civil society to have appropriate access to information and to provide opportunity for dialogue prior to and during the conference.

18. The Ministers reiterated their conviction that promoting new productive investments constitutes a fundamental objective and agreed to promote the development of initiatives aimed at greater flow of interregional investments.

19. The Ministers stressed the importance of reforming and strengthening the structure of the international financial system and called for a fair and lasting solution to the problem of foreign debt.

20. The Ministers highlighted the importance of promoting and stepping up exchange and cooperation between the civil societies of Latin America, the Caribbean and the European Union.

21. The Ministers reiterated their shared vision of the role of regional integration as a significant factor both for economic and social development and for consolidating the position of their respective regions on the international stage.

22. The Ministers agreed to hold the XIth Institutionalised Ministerial Meeting between the European Union and the Rio Group in Greece in 2003.

23. The Ministers expressed their thanks to the Government and the people of Chile for their hospitality and the excellent organisation, which had helped make the Xth Institutionalised Ministerial Meeting between the European Union and the Rio Group a complete success.