



CARACAS DECLARATION VI LOCAL AUTHORITIES FORUM

The VI edition of the Local Authorities Forum takes place in a time when the construction of another world becomes urgent rather than possible. Indeed, the context where the demands for social inclusion are being made is marked by the hegemonic impositions of the neoliberal thinking with the use of commercial and military policies.

The practice of the strategic concept of pre-emptive war, which has developed into a permanent war with an increasing number of casualties among civilians; the restriction of free movement of people, both inside and among countries, with its most ignominious and recent examples in the wall in the borderline with Mexico, the wall which limits the development of a life with dignity in Palestine and the fences in Ceuta and Melilla; the rise of racism; the abduction situation by prisoners in Guantanamo and other parts of the world in flagrant violation of the universally recognized Human Rights; the stubborn attempts to intervene the sovereignty of the South by the G8 and the World Trade Organization; the continuous aggressions against the sovereign will of countries such as Venezuela, which have chosen the path of solidarity in favor of the marginalized people of the world; the exclusion endured by the impoverished majorities in Africa, Latin America and Asia, as well as the increasing development of poverty and precariousness in the rich countries of the North before the unmovable look of those who exercise their hegemonic power over the world; the proliferation and modernization of nuclear weapons in open violation of the provisions of the Treaty on Non-proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, are but symptoms of such hegemonic ambition.

Nevertheless, *altermondialist* efforts start to successfully participate in the world context in favor of cultural diversity, participatory democracy, equality and social justice. Among the excluded peoples, new and numerous political organization and action initiatives start to emerge. At the same time, many local governments have begun to play an outstanding role by committing themselves to work along with these movements. But it is just a beginning.

The VI Local Authorities Forum 2006 gathered in the city of Caracas, Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, has debated and deliberated on several subjects related to the current state of affairs and the various actions undertaken in many locations all over the world – both urban and rural, in capital cities and their peripheries – leading to reduce exclusion, poverty and precariousness and encourage citizen

participation in the construction of an alternative world inspired in the values of solidarity, co-responsibility, tolerance and sustainable development. We have likewise discussed and analyzed the paramount importance of local authorities in this initial process and the necessity of accelerating, based on our convictions, the empowerment of the people and the concomitant social inclusion.

In this connection, the local authorities and representatives gathered in Caracas, Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela on January 23 and 24, 2006, do hereby reaffirm our commitment to social inclusion as the necessary means to achieve the construction of a fair society and a more participatory democracy.

The Caracas VI Local Authorities Forum has discussed in depth in the full meetings and workshops topics essential for the construction of another world, such as social inclusion, peripheral cities, human rights in the city, decentralized cooperation, culture for peace, and participatory democracy, which conclusions are attached hereto:

In furtherance to the axis of topics of the Forum, we have specially focused on the topic of the monopolization of mass media which try to generate a public opinion that distorts the truth and adopts positions against the *altermondialist* thinking. These mass media spread the neoliberal paradigms, render invisible the fair struggles of social organizations for a life with dignity for the impoverished majority of people and exert pressures on the authorities to execute actions contrary to such majority. Therefore, we deem it a priority to effectively and disinterestedly back the alternative community-based media.

We commit ourselves to endorse the Social Inclusion and Participatory Democracy Committee, created by this Forum within the framework of the United Local Government and Cities, work for the achievement of the Goals of the Millennium in the Cities and strengthen the relation with social movements and the organized civil society.

We likewise decided to continue to follow the dialog and the constructive exchange with the Social World Forum, abiding by its Charter of Principles and the Porto Alegre Charter. For this reason, we will endeavor to go to Nairobi (Kenya), in the African Continent, where the WSF 2007 will take place.

Caracas, January 24, 2006.