



Consultative Group for the Reconstruction
and Transformation of Central America
Stockholm, Sweden 25-28 May 1999

THE STOCKHOLM DECLARATION

Hurricane Mitch that hit Central America in 1998 with devastating effects, demonstrated the ecological and social vulnerability of the region. This natural disaster occurred when Central America had regained hope for a better future, after years of internal conflict, violence and deep economic crisis and had dedicated its efforts to the consolidation of peace, democracy and sustainable development.

Response from the international community was prompt and international concern was confirmed at the first meeting of the Consultative Group for the Reconstruction and Transformation of Central America that took place at the Interamerican Development Bank (IDB) Headquarters on 10-11 December, 1998, in Washington D.C. The Presidents of Central America made clear their view of the tragedy as a unique opportunity to rebuild – not the same – but a better Central America. They reiterated their firm commitment to continue to consolidate peace and democracy in their countries, and to seek higher levels of equitable growth. The Presidents referred to the progress made towards sustainable development and affirmed their wish to reinforce the foundation of this development. The Presidents also reiterated their support to the process of regional integration.

At this second meeting of the Consultative Group, held in Stockholm 25-28 May 1999, the Governments of Central America and the international community have committed themselves to sharing the responsibility for achieving the reconstruction and the transformation of the countries concerned, thus establishing a long term partnership guided by the priorities defined by the Central American countries and based on the following goals and principles:

- Reduce the social and ecological vulnerability of the region, as the overriding goal.
- Reconstruct and transform Central America on the basis of an integrated approach of transparency and good governance.
- Consolidate democracy and good governance, reinforcing the process of decentralization of governmental functions and powers, with the active participation of civil society.
- Promote respect for human rights as a permanent objective. The promotion of equality between women and men, the rights of children, of ethnic groups and other minorities should be given special attention.
- Coordinate donor efforts, guided by priorities set by the recipient countries.
- Intensify efforts to reduce the external debt burden of the countries of the region.

To respond to the magnitude of the challenge faced by this new partnership, the partners agreed to provide all parties with continuous follow up and information on progress in Central America's reconstruction and transformation, with respect to the previously stated goals and principles. Initially Canada, Germany, Spain, Sweden and United States have agreed to begin the consultation process to establish or strengthen a country-based mechanism working with each nation, including its civil society.

Other donors and international institutions are expected to participate in each country. Consultations also will be undertaken with the Secretary General of the Central American

Integration System (SC-SICA) to include regional progress as well. It is anticipated that international financial institutions and international organizations will support this process. This Declaration reflects the mutual understanding reached at this second meeting of the Consultative Group and will provide invaluable guidance for common efforts for the reconstruction and transformation of Central America. The historical importance of this meeting is expressed by the high-level representation from both Central American governments and the international community. With the challenges and prospects of the new Millenium ahead of us, we welcome this Declaration as a substantial support towards securing a better future for present and coming generations of the peoples of Central America.

Agreed upon in Stockholm, 28 May, 1999