



Decisions

DECISION 553: Guidelines for formulating the Integrated Social Development Plan

THE ANDEAN COUNCIL OF FOREIGN MINISTERS

HAVING SEEN: Articles 1, 2, 3, 16 c), 139 and 148 of the Cartagena Agreement, as codified through Decision 406;

WHEREAS: The poverty, inequality and social exclusion affecting the population of the Andean Community Member Countries at present threatens the future of democratic governance, weakens the Andean integration process and impedes the Andean countries from attaining a competitive position in the world economy and society;

The objectives of the Cartagena Agreement are to promote the balanced and harmonious development of the Member Countries under equitable conditions through integration and economic and social cooperation and its purpose is to strive for the growing improvement of the living standards of the people in the Subregion;

Andean integration has entered a new stage, with a second generation of policies and a multidimensional agenda that gives priority to a Social Agenda that will facilitate the development of mechanisms for enhancing social cohesion and contribute to the fight against poverty, inequality and social exclusion;

The Andean Presidential Council has stated on various occasions that it attributes priority to the implementation of Community programs and activities that help to reduce poverty and promote equitable social development and that at its Thirteenth Regular Meeting it had ordered an Integrated Social Development Plan to be drawn up for those purposes;

Through Resolution 370, the Twenty-Third Meeting of Ministers of Health of the Andean Area, which coordinates the Andean Health Body - the Hipólito Unanue Convention, decided to incorporate health priorities in the Subregional Andean Social Agenda;

The Meeting of Ministers of Education and Cultural Policy Officers of the Member Countries decided upon a working program in the priority will be to extend the coverage and improve the quality of education at all levels;

The Advisory Council of Andean Community Labor Ministers has identified as priorities within its area of competence the core issues of employment promotion and labor education and training;

An explicit objective of Community policy for the development of border areas, established through Decisions 459 and 501, is to improve the living conditions of the people in those areas;

One of the main aims of Andean Common Agricultural Policy, which has been defined by the Andean Presidential Council as being of fundamental importance to the Common Market, will be to support the development of the most isolated and impoverished rural areas;

The Regional Biodiversity Strategy for the Tropical Andean Countries adopted through Decision 523 promotes the sustainable use of the biodiversity resources as a means for helping to improve the people's living conditions;

It is of basic importance to reinforce the positive effect that the growth of productive activities and intra-regional investments can exert on the creation of employment and income;

The Tenth Regular Meeting of the Andean Council of Foreign Ministers decided to prioritize the development of the Andean Social Agenda; and

The General Secretariat has put forward Proposal 103 Rev 1 on Guidelines for Formulating an Integrated Social Development Plan.

DECIDES:

Article 1.- To approve the following Guidelines for Formulating the Integrated Social Development Plan:

I. OBJETIVES

The following are the objectives of the Integrated Social Development Plan:

- a) To complement through Community efforts, the national plans and programs on food security, the struggle against poverty, inequality and social exclusion, and the improvement of the people's living conditions;
- b) To jointly advance social development objectives and goals through the commitments that each Member Country has assumed at the World Summits on Social Development, Habitat, Population, and Women's and Children's Rights, among others;
- c) To contribute to the strengthening of democratic governance through plans, programs and projects involving creative financial mechanisms;
- d) To contribute to social cohesion and to reducing the glaring differences in levels of human development that exist among the Member Countries;
- e) To add to the store of analytical data and instruments available for formulating, executing or evaluating social policy through technical cooperation among the Member Countries;
- f) To maximize the positive effects of economic and trade integration on social development, particularly by creating employment;
- g) To take joint positions in international forums and negotiations that deal with issues relating to the reduction of poverty, inequality and social exclusion and the application for international financial and technical resources for that purpose.

II. CRITERIA

The following guidance criteria will be used in formulating and executing the plans, programs, projects and activities that comprise the Integrated Social Development Plan:

a) Gradualness. The component issues of the Integrated Social Development Plan will be addressed progressively, as the spheres of Community action and the social situation of the target population are identified and the jurisdictional levels for subregional coordination are consolidated.

b) Comprehensiveness. The strategic objective of reducing poverty calls for going beyond the narrow sectorialized approaches taken by social policy, inasmuch as both the causes and expressions of the phenomenon are multidimensional.

c) Subsidiarity. Community jurisdictional levels should intervene only when the objectives sought can be better served through Community action than through national efforts or when Community action is able to complement national efforts to an important degree.

d) Focalization. Because resources are scarce, government policies and programs should give priority to the poorest and most vulnerable population groups.

III. LINES OF ACTION

The Integrated Social Development Program will initially emphasize the performance of activities in the areas of health, education, the creation of employment and labor education and training. It will also help to identify and develop the contents in the Community Border Integration and Development Policy, the Andean Common Agricultural Policy, and the Regional Biodiversity Strategy for the Tropical Andean Countries that will contribute most directly to overcoming poverty.

The Plan will be executed using three lines of action:

1. Community Social Programs and Projects

Programs or projects that can be carried out jointly or in coordination by all of the Member Countries, or to which at least three of them are committed and which can be extended in the medium term to the rest.

2. Social Alignment

The gradual and progressive harmonization of the social objectives and targets instituted by each Member Country within its development plans, in keeping with the commitments assumed in international or regional forums, particularly the worldwide social summits, and by establishing a common Andean system and methodology for monitoring and evaluating the social alignment process.

3. Horizontal Technical Cooperation

The exchange and dissemination of experiences and knowledge that will help to enrich the store of analytical data and instruments available to social policy-makers, contribute to a better mutual knowledge of the true social situation in the Member Countries, foster a common Andean vision of the development of the social dimension of integration and facilitate better communication and coordination among those responsible for social policy.

IV. PROCEDURE FOR PREPARING THE INTEGRATED SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

a) The General Secretariat will hold systematic consultations with the social authorities of each Member Country in order to develop these Guidelines and identify the programs, projects or activities whose implementation the Member Countries consider most important.

b) Armed with the results of these consultations and the consensuses reached among the Member Country social authorities, the General Secretariat will draw up a consolidated draft proposal of the Integrated Social Plan to be submitted to the Ministers responsible for coordinating social policies and the Andean Council of Foreign Ministers for their consideration.

Article 2.- The body that is charged with approving, evaluating and updating the Integrated Social Development Plan is the Andean Council of Foreign Ministers, meeting in enlarged session with the ministers responsible for coordinating social policy in the Member Countries.

A High-Level Group will be set up to undertake the formulation, execution and monitoring of the Plan. It will be made up permanently of the Ministries and other public institutions that are responsible for social policy in the Member Countries and, in an ad hoc capacity, according to the topics to be addressed, the bodies responsible for economic policy, planning and sector development not included among those involved in social policy. The High-Level Group may form specialized subgroups on the various aspects to be covered in the Integrated Social Development Plan. The working subgroups may be made up of representatives of two or more Member Countries and will be open to the participation of the rest.

The formation of a Subregional Andean network of academic centers and non-governmental organizations that are involved in social policy formulation, execution and evaluation will be fostered, based on a selection made by the General Secretariat in consultation with the Ministries of Foreign Affairs of the Member Countries. Its purpose will be to collaborate with government officials in the social sector and the General Secretariat in drawing up, executing and evaluating the programs, projects and activities that are carried out within the aegis of the Integrated Social Development Plan.

The Andean Community General Secretariat will act as the technical secretariat of the High-Level Group.

TEMPORARY PROVISIONS

First: The General Secretariat will support and coordinate the efforts by Member Countries to obtain financial and international cooperation funding to carry out the agreed programs, projects or activities.

Second: The General Secretariat will propose a system to monitor and evaluate the Integrated Social Development Plan to the Andean Council of Foreign Ministers.

Signed in Quirama, Antioquia, Colombia, on the twenty-fifth of June of two thousand three.

