

To the members of the XV Ibero-American Summit of Heads of States and Governments

The International Committee for Democracy in Cuba attentively follows the activities and bodies of the Ibero-American Summit of Heads of State and Government. The Committee regards the Summit as a mechanism of political coordination of countries which are part of a great cultural community. The Committee also welcomes the decision to institutionalise the General Ibero-American Secretariat with the aim of achieving continuity in fulfilling the resolutions and accords of the Summits that express the wish and commitment of the participant countries in issues related to equal development, respect for Human rights, cultural development and the continuation of efforts for peace. We, members of the Committee for Democracy in Cuba, address with respect the XV Summit of Heads of States and Governments:

The Ibero-American Summit of 1996 adopted the Viña del Mar Declaration which acknowledges the Americas as a democratic region of the world. The declaration was signed by all Heads of State and Government present at the Summit, including Fidel Castro Ruz, representing the Republic of Cuba.

As a signatory of the Viña del Mar Declaration, Cuba has committed itself to encourage democratic institutions and democratic culture in the country. According to the Declaration, that includes: political pluralism, i.e. adequate representation and participation of majorities as well as minorities, respect for political groups and parties, respect for human rights in accord with international norms, including those established by the United Nations, and respect for fundamental freedoms, including the freedom of expression, association and assembly and access to information.

As leader and head of the Cuban state and as signatory of the declaration, Fidel Castro Ruz is committed to improve the politics of his government respecting democracy and human rights.

In accordance with the Declaration, the consolidation of democracy calls for a great and united effort on our part. The pro tem Secretariat of the General Ibero-American Secretariat is the body responsible for the promotion of and the adherence to the main conclusions of the Summit.

The goal of the Summit is to encourage all activities which will aid the establishment of democracy, the practice of liberty and the validity and protection of human rights in the Republic of Cuba. In our opinion, the compliance of the Cuban government with the Viña del Mar Declaration would suffice in order for our goal to be achieved. That is why we understand that it is necessary to work hard and accomplish this as soon as possible.

Even though it may seem paradoxical, since the signing of the above mentioned Declaration, several judicial and constitutional reforms have been implemented in Cuba. These reforms have had the opposite effect; contrary to free pluralistic participation, they endorse repressive methods and the incarceration of dissidents, independent journalists, human rights activists, and have provided for the use of the death penalty.

That is why we address the XV Summit with the following:

The profound concern for the respect of liberties and regarding the violation of human rights, the persecution of dissidents, human rights activists and independent journalists in Cuba.

The conviction that the compliance of the Cuban government with the conclusions of the Viña del Mar Declaration would provide for the immediate acceptance of Cuba into the community of countries which respect human rights and liberties.

The conviction that social development of the Cuban people is only possible with the full and free participation of all Cubans. We are prepared to cooperate in all activities which pursue the noble goal of helping Cuba to create a stable democracy which respects human rights and liberties.

We ask the Summit to order, by means of the General Ibero-American Secretariat (SEGIB), the implementation of the commitments stated in paragraph 39, Chapter VI, entitled “Our commitment“ of the Viña del Mar Declaration. These commitments were formulated and signed by the Heads of State and Government, including Fidel Castro Ruz, representing the Republic of Cuba.

As representatives of the ICDC, the signatories wish that the XV Ibero-American Summit of Heads of State and Government and the General Ibero-American Secretariat will be successful in developing the Assembly. The signatories also express their certitude that this will be a useful instrument in the development of Ibero-America.

For the Committee signed by following Ibero-American members:

Marcos Aguinis, Argentina, writer

Armando Calderón Sol, El Salvador, former president

José Ribeiro e Castro, Portugal, member of the European Parliament, President of CDS/Partido Popular

Luis Alberto Lacalle, Uruguay, former president

Mario Vargas Llosa, Perú, writer

Luis Alberto Monge Alvarez, Costa Rica, former president