

DECLARATION OF TEGUCIGALPA November 1991

The Mayors and the representatives of the Municipal Associations and the supporting institutions to the municipal development of Guatemala, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Costa Rica y Panama, assembled in the City of Tegucigalpa, for the Regional Seminar “The role of the Municipality: the Essential Elements of the Municipal Activity,” celebrated on November 19 to 21 of 1991.

Considering

- ♦ The municipal corporations are the natural stages of the citizens and the municipalities represent the basic cell of public administration, and thus, the government institution where the satisfaction of the fundamental needs of social life and communal welfare should be guaranteed.
- ♦ That the countries of the Central America Isthmus confront the challenge to overcome the political institutional, economic and social crises through a new organization of the government, that assures the economic growth and peace based in social justice and the acknowledgement of all citizen’s rights;
- ♦ That the people of the Central America Isthmus have expressed the will to face the challenges of their development by means of the democratic systems that guarantee the complete representation of the citizens and new spaces of agreement.
- ♦ That the development of democracy depends mainly of the complete execution of their local government;
- ♦ That it is essential to support the process of integration, oriented to face some of the basic problems that our development demands.

We declare:

1. The express will of the mayors of the region and local communities that we represent to demand a better and larger participation of the local governments in the decisions and in the management of the development of our countries.
2. The unpostponable need of the complete restructure of the government in all our countries in order to satisfy the needs of the community in the most efficient, fair and democratic way.
3. Our clear support to the political, fiscal and institutional decentralization.
4. That within the decentralization process it is necessary to give back to the municipal corporations the actions that guarantee the attention of the fundamental needs of our communities, together with the transfer of the technical and financial resources needed to adequately perform their functions. This transfer should guarantee a larger distribution justice of resources among the citizens of the countries. We claim these actions as a fundamental attribution of the local governments.

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5. Our will to assume the execution of the returned actions, which should be gradually transferred in accordance with the needs, capacity and development in relation to the different municipal corporations.
6. Our complete resolution to confront the challenge of the direct satisfaction of vital needs of our communities under the previously defined conditions.
7. Our conviction that the municipalities have important comparative advantages for a better direct attention of the local demands, such as the proximity to the user reflecting in a cheapest cost in the execution of works and the providing of services; more receptive to local peculiarities and the claims; possibility of acting together and shared responsibility with the users and subject to the control of the citizens.
8. That the municipal development requires a large legitimacy and political representation in order to guarantee the credibility and the support of the citizens in the execution of their instructions. Consequently we urge that the selection of local authorities be made through direct elections in different ballots and date, apart from the national voting, parting from the local debate of the proposed candidates for conducting the community's interests. The formation of the councils should be made keeping the principle of proportion in the representation.
9. For the attainment of the above-mentioned purposes, we restate our will to strengthen the national association of municipal corporations under the principles of free association and independence. We entrust the municipal corporations the duties to negotiate and sponsor the political will that the process of change in the governments' structure and the decentralization demand. The representation of the municipalities in the discussions and in the national decisions that affect the interests and the municipal obligations. The management of supporting services, which will permit to strengthen the local governments technically and administratively in order to fully and efficiently, execute its functions.
10. Our total support to FEMICA, Federation of the Municipal Corporation of the Central America Isthmus, as the organization that represents and supports the fundamental purpose of strengthening the governments and municipal administrations politically and economically. We particularly support the work of FEMICA in the search of strategies and mechanisms towards the political back up and support in the national processes of decentralization.

We expressly commission FEMICA to be our spokesman before the regional integration institutions and we require it to express the feeling of this declaration in the next meeting of Central American presidents.

We commission FEMICA and the National Associations of Municipality Corporations to promote and execute the conclusions of this seminar and the outlines of the present Declaration of Tegucigalpa.