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BRIDGING SCHOLARS AND BORDER POLICY MAKERS

"SOCIETY OF CITIES, REGIONS AND BORDERLANDS:
A ROADMAP TO THE IBERO-AMERICAN DREAM"

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ABSTRACT

SOCIETY OF CITIES, REGIONS AND BORDERLANDS: a roadmap to the IBERO-American dream”

COMBAR has been engaged for the last thirty years in regional and borderland integration issues in the Venezuelan Andean Region bordering with Colombia. Through this work, it has developed significant amounts of information, up-to-date contacts and experience in the search of a new model of regional and borderland sustainable economic development involving governments, universities, productive sector, labor and non-government organizations (NGO’s).

Currently, we are focusing on a concrete proposal of “Sustainable Regional and Borderland Economic Development Pilot Program” in the geographical settings of Venezuela-Colombia in order to compare experiences with other selected regions of Ibero-America, especially with crossing borders between the State of Chihuahua (Mexico) and the State of Texas (USA). In the Colombian-Venezuelan borderland, COMBAR detected the following priorities:

1. Tourism;
2. Integrated Food Chains Systems;
3. Rational handling of hydrographic rivers basins, including water, soil, forest resources and eco-systems of biological diversity.

We expect universities to assume a crucial role in the process of developing a viable “Agenda as a Road Map” toward the formation of new municipal governance, decentralization, cultural values, and cadres to orchestrate the changes needed to confront globalization, strengthening institutions, building coalitions and synergies, enhancing community participation through education, (workshops, forums, conferences, debates, etc) in the context of new global realities and anticipated political trends.” In this regard we are preparing a research-outreach proposal aimed at linking universities with policy makers, entrepreneurs and Civil Society as a multidisciplinary and inter-institutional paradigm.

Our analysis and activities will draw on local and regional planning and institutional experience of COMBAR1- CIEPROL2- IUFRONT3 in the States of Barinas, Táchira, Mérida, Portuguesa, Trujillo and High Apure District (Venezuela); extensive to the Departments of Santander North of Santander and Arauca (Colombia) in which this ongoing process will serve as a benchmark to other Regions in the Hemisphere.

This Mission will require:

A. Enhancing community and institutional participation in planning, decision making and institutional streamlining at all levels.
B. Improving communication and informatics systems.

C. Achieving solid institutional commitments with the Universities, beyond the personal participation scholars, researchers and outreach programs;

D. Establish the appropriate coordination systems toward the success of the proposed Pilot Program of Sustainable Regional and Borderland Economic Development in selected Ibero America scenarios;

E. Coping with deep rooted cultural values and embedded interests standing in the way.

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1The Statutory Law that created the Pro-Development Committee of the State of Barinas (COMBAR), establish the following: The State of Barinas is the founder COMBAR of public and private nature” “COMBAR is an apolitical and autonomous institution that serves as a link between universities, policy makers, the productive sector and Civil Society Non-Profit Organizations in order to promote regional and borderland integration strengthening their institutions to carry out programs of sustainable economics development in the context of the New International Realities.

2The Ibero American Provincials and Local Studies Center (CIEPROL) from the University of the Andes are engaged in studying of regional and local governments throughout Latin America. It provides technical assistance and assessment for elected municipalities officials, conducts workshops and organized in November Venezuela in November 2002 the VIII Conference of Federalism, Decentralization and Municipality. In Merida, –especially - International Conferences and on current strategies of government applied to local management, and the use of new technologies as part of his work. At the present time they are organizing an International Conference on Comparative Constitutional Law (Caracas, June 2005)

3The Frontier University Institute (IUFRONT) mission and vision is to contribute toward the formation of human resources for the regional and borderland economic and technological development, promoting strategic alliances with other universities in the area of its influence. Recently was signed an agreement of an Association of Venezuelan-Colombian Universities to join forces to undertake the solution of common problems and enhancing their academia, research an outreach programs. IUFRONT is a member of this governing body.
CHAPTER ONE

PROPOSALS

SUBMITTED TO THE LINEAE TERRARUM, INTERNATIONAL BORDERS
CONFERENCE - BRIDGING SCHOLARS AND POLICY MAKERS

Principle Objectives

First: *Strategic Thinking*

To promote *Strategic Thinking* like a key element of Situational Strategic Planning with the mission to fortify the institutions of the State’s organization tied in the promotion, planning and participation of Organized Civil Society in the fulfillment of the goals contained in the “Declaration of Principles” of this communication.

Second: *Motivation*

To motivate university authorities, governors, mayors; municipal, labor unions, community leaders and state deliberative bodies to play a leading role in the subjects being treated toward a free trade agreement of the Americas and similar initiatives, including NAFTA, CAN, MERCOSUR and the impact of the recently approved Center American and the Republic Dominic Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA-RD) in the search of a new Ibero-American integration paradigm taking into account the ongoing processes worldwide.

Third: *Strategic Alliances*

To strive toward the formation of *Strategic Alliances* among public and private municipal, state, regional institutions, labor unions and communities in order to:

A. Create synergies building a common platform of institutional representation with power of negotiation to interact in the regional, national and international scenarios toward goals of decentralization, improving economic competitiveness access to sources of capital for investment, expand international markets and fight the causes of poverty at all levels;

B. Interact in national and international scenarios toward the goals of decentralization, improvement in economic competitiveness, and access to sources of capital in national and international markets.

C. Master new technologies in the field of communication, information and knowledge applied to City’s, Region’s and Borderland’s Sustainable Economic Development.

Fourth: *Universities*
To commit Universities, to:

A. Take on a more active role in the inherent processes to inter-municipal, intra-regional, inter-regional and cross-border integration in the diverse hemispherical scenarios through investigation, outreach, workshops and involvement in public affairs.

B. Articulate the conclusions and papers from related events presented at various scenarios to conciliate theoretic criteria with policy maker’s decisions and the productive sector of society as an interdisciplinary and inter institutional paradigm of government, policy makers and Civil Society.

C. To open a worldwide intellectual and pragmatic debate to re-examine the role of Universities, local and regional governments in the new scenarios of globalization and integration processes and challenges.

D. To stand by against fragmentation of ideas and actions as intellectually unjustifiable and practically counterproductive by the universities and policy makers.

E. Building a solid platform in selected poles of Sustainable Regional and Borderland Economic Development based on a genuine democracy, accountability and direct participation of Society in public affairs as a roadmap to override the increasing levels of poverty, environmental deterioration, and depletion of natural resources throughout Latin American countries and the United States.

Fifth: “Sustainable Regional Economic Development Agenda”

To propose the elaboration of a “Sustainable Regional and Borderland Economic Development Agenda” under the leadership of Municipal authorities grouped in a Commonwealth of Municipalities and Partnerships; promoting strategic alliances and other closed relationships with the productive sector, labor unions, non-government organizations (NGO’s); and the vast human resources and capabilities of universities to undertake unifying actions to face the challenges of a globalized world.

Sixth: Pilot Program: “Society of Cities, Regions and Borderlands: A ROADMAP to the Ibero-American Dream”

To support the efforts promoting the proposal of “Society of Cities, Regions and Borderlands” presented by the Pro-Development Committee of the State of Barinas (COMBAR), Venezuela and the Ibero-American Provincial and Local Studies Center (CIEPROL) of the University of los Andes, Mérida (Venezuela).

These efforts are geared toward the establishment of partnerships within Regions in Venezuela, Colombia, Mexico, Brazil, Central America, Caribbean countries, the United
States, Spain, Portugal interested to participate as a “Sustainable Regional and Borderland Economic Development Pilot Program” taking into account the combined experiences of COMBAR-CIEPROL-CUPPA and other institutions in the hemisphere willing to be part of this proposal.

Seventh: Agenda by Objectives and Priorities

To achieve general consensus in the preparation of an “Agenda by Objectives” for its immediate application based on the three regional high-priority described to achieve a Regional and Borderland Integration and Sustainable Economic Development goals.

In the case of Venezuelan-Colombian the regional and borderland Agenda is as follows:

1. **TOURISM**, as the spearhead of the processes of intraregional, inter-regional associations and strategic alliances tending to regional-border and international integration in order to materialize the proposal sketched in the paper.

2. Protection and rational handling of **Regional Hydrographic River Basins** including: preservation of eco-systems of biological diversity; handling and rational management of renewable water and forest resources, land usage, and status of land entitlements.

3. The promotion of “integrated systems applied to the agro-alimentary chains” based on specific commodities that offer higher comparative and competitive advantages in national and international markets.

Related to the three priorities are activities such as:

- The design of new and creative Regional Public Policies to confront the economical, social, cultural, environmental and technological challenges at the level of Municipalities, States and Regions in the context of the New Realities presented in the XXI Century.

- The search for a “New Model of Sustainable Regional and Borderland Economic Development” that highlights the moral, humanistic, cultural-historical values and the quality of family life and environment to guarantee the processes of transformation of the “Cities and Regions We Have into the Cities and Regions we all Want”.

- To explore areas of complementation, in the technological field, especially communication and informatics; human resources, labor and governance of cities and regions in the realm of globalization.

- To stimulate comparative studies of the inequalities among cities, regions and borderlands and draft proposals of solutions to unemployment, migration, poverty and violence.
CHAPTER TWO

“NAVIGATIONAL CHART”

Opportunities and Challenges

Nowadays, the world is going through revolutionary changes that are forcing all countries to revise their national and foreign policies; make adjustments to their institutional frameworks of economic strategic planning, develop advanced methods of city and state governance and management, envisioned in the new role assigned to political, economic, social and cultural leadership.

The protective barriers to international trade and flow of capital are being collapsed. The scientific and technological innovations in the field of information, communications, robotics, genetics; and the outsourcing of labor and manufacturing facilities have both a positive and negative impact on cities, regions affecting the income of families, quality of life and environment. It is the appropriate time to speed up reforms to build up a new vision of the traditional cities and regions based on the strategic premise of our “Digital-Global-City-Region Proposal” in order to handle the present and forthcoming challenges of the new scientific and technological era.

What actions are to be taken immediately and by whom? First of all, it is a problem of leadership in public affairs. The “Gordian knot” is to open the doors to an orderly participation of every institution and individuals to configure a strategic mindset focused on a new Model of Regional and Borderland Integration and Sustainable Economic Development Plan as the result of joining efforts and resources of the executive and legislative branches of government, universities, productive sector, labor forces and non profit organizations through permanent debates, workshops and reforms to the educational research and outreach policies.

The Multiples Facets of Globalism

The Merriam Webster Dictionary (1951) and Encarta (1999) define the word globalization in the following terms

“The act or process of globalizing: the state of being globalized; especially: the development of an increasingly integrated global economy marked especially by free trade, free flow of capital, and the tapping of cheaper foreign labor markets (Merriam-Webster’s 1951.)

“The belief that public policies must take into consideration the world affairs before attempting to concentrate on national state and local issues” (ENCARTA 1999).

This work is intended to present ideas to be considered in the analysis and handling of the
different forces that are pressing cities and regions throughout Latin-American political geography.

Globalization or globalism goes beyond a social and economic phenomenon. It has deep and serious implications embedded in the political culture, the roots of migratory, labor and social conflicts; environmental issues and the distribution of portions of power that tests the structure of democratic regimens with a limited and conditional participation of people. There are prevailing concepts such us: freedom, democracy, government, political parties, universities, civil society, poverty and terrorism that need to be submitted to a thorough evaluation in the new scientific and technological era and challenges to be met with a global vision of their respective roles.

The practical application of the concept “Digital-Global-City-Region Proposal” is not a call to oppose the irreversible processes implied by globalization, but instead, to capitalize on its positive features and neutralize or minimize the negative impacts if preventative actions are ignored.

Questions without Answers

1. - What is the impact of globalization on municipal governments in urban, sub-urban rural areas and cross-border cities and regions?

2. - What strategic formalities must local and regional governments adopt to meet the aspirations of their constituents on economic, social, cultural, technological and environmental issues in the context of globalization?

3. - How to proceed in order to accelerate the decentralization of national political and institutional power in favor of local, municipal and state governments?

4. - How to achieve political and institutional consensus among local governments to conform metropolitan and rural municipal groupings to undertake jointly the tasks their main economic development priorities demand; common challenges of leadership in multidisciplinary and intra-regional efforts to overcome poverty; unjustifiable standards of inequality; fight corruption; poverty and inclusive social public policies?

5. - How to influence the thinking of the political class in government positions to apply a new model of governance and municipal management inclusive of all productive sectors of the economy and participation of Civil Society in public policy and decision making?

6. - What are the reasons to justify the increasing levels of extreme and relative poverty in Regions of Latin America that possess valuable natural, human and institutional resources and the will to contribute to the prosperity and economic well being of Society?

7. - Why the structure of the organization of the State does not create permanent mechanisms of communication and public participation to allow non-government
organizations to share responsibilities in the design, implementation and follow up of viable Municipal, State, Regional and Borderland Sustainable Economic Development Plans of Action?

These reflections have a common answer:

“The exercise of a genuine participative democracy, without the interference of strange particular interests and partisan influences that may deviate it from the ideals of equality, social justice, equal opportunities, quality of life and the preservation of historic and cultural values”.

New Styles of Municipal Government

Robin Hambleton, Dean of the College of Urban Planning and Public Affairs of the University of Illinois at Chicago, USA is the author of recent book entitled: “Globalism and Local Democracy” (2003). His accumulated knowledge and experience in the field of public affairs make his work a useful tool to political leaders, mayors, aldermen, state legislatures, academics and researchers in public affairs and globalization.

Hambleton insists on the new role of municipal management: “Public authorities must look out in the innovation of new methods to harmonize governance, municipal management skills and active citizen’s participation”

These close relationships require the drafting of an “International Agenda of Governance of Cities and Regions”. It must include the promotion of coalitions between economic and social forces and government authorities; better systems of accountability, permanent training programs and compatibility with the principles of an authentic participative democracy.

Local Government versus the Art of Governance

Hambleton (1) differentiates the term “Art of Governance” (2003) from traditional forms of municipal public administration. “It has to do with an interactive process that promotes the collaboration and participation between municipal governments, the most diverse actors of Civil Society. It stems from the principle that government is not in a position to solve all problems by itself”. In this regard, organizations such as COMBAR and CIEPROL fulfill partially this need as catalytic-facilitators to bridge the gap between universities, local and state government in regional, national, and international scenarios.

This new phase in the “art of governance” requires of local and regional leaders that understand the dynamics of international processes and have a vision of the “Digital-Global-City-Region Proposal”; the knowledge to work with inter-disciplinary team works; handling of conflicts and internal and external pressures. Fortunately, the Bolivarian Constitution of Venezuela recognizes the Municipal Institution autonomy as the primary organization of the State.
Lessons from the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA)

David Ranney (2003) a recognized international authority on Globalization and author of his recent book *Global Decisions Local Collisions (2003)* reminds us that a decade ago the proponents of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) assured everyone that the so called *free commerce* will result in the creation of new sources of employment and improvement of the quality of family life due to the increment of exports; better wages and fringe benefits, economic development, and reduction of the levels of poverty. *The balance after ten years of this free trade experience proved that none of the promises made was fulfilled. In its place the opposite effect was the outcome.*

The new world order is depicted by a global system that favors the circulation of and flow of capital, products and services among countries, but does not include the mobilization of labor and protection to the quality of life and environmental equilibrium.

In the city of Chicago, Ranney has done extensive research work and calls the attention to the numerous manufacturing plants that dismantled their physical installations searching for lower operational costs abroad. *Labor organizations and communities suffered the consequences of outsourcing of jobs, technologies, capital investment and services without an adequate compensation for these losses.*

*The main promoters of globalization are the multinational corporations,* affirms Ranney in coordination with international institutions such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank (WB), the Inter American Development Bank (IDB) the World Trade Organization (WTO) with the support of their governments.

Protests and resistance to globalization are expressed under the label of “anti-global movements”. Labor and ecological organizations and some Latin American governments do not accept the proposal of extending NAFTA and recently CAFTA to all countries in the hemisphere.

*Ranney is a strong supporter of the idea of searching for a new paradigm that makes substantial changes to the proposed Free Trade Agreement of the Americas (FTAA) that was scheduled to become effective on January 2005, opposing the idea of exclusion of the human and environment elements.*

**Building Integration consciousness**

John Jairo Betancur, (2003) Professor at the College of Urban Planning and Public Affairs of the University of Chicago and lecturer has been for many years connected with the university programs in the city of Chicago. He is a firm believer that *“if Latin America negotiates the terms of the Free Trade Agreement of the Americas (FTAA) country by country it will be defeated at the roundtable”.*

“The municipalities associated in groups with other municipalities are the first step to be
taken in order to establish a solid foundation to the Latin American integration processes”. Betancur believes that “the main idea is that the citizens must decide what they want, express their will in a coherent plan and take actions to materialize the same”.

The municipalities acting each one separately do not have the same power of negotiation. Group action will result in a differentiated force that can obtain many more benefits. “People as a whole, must have a clear position of what they want, identify the obstacles to overcome and act accordingly using the resources of strategic planning and strategic alliances”. In his classes Betancur tells his students that the best project is the one based in the principle that one plus one equals three, four or five. This same principle applied to the association of several municipalities creating synergies and a mass of resources that no single municipality is able to unfold.

Betancur states that some multinational corporations have more economic power than many governments together. They do have a power of negotiation that exceeds the power of many countries acting on an individual basis. The interests of these big corporations in Latin America are their markets, raw materials, cheap labor force, natural resources and land ownership. One of the main priorities that municipalities must confront together is the protection and administration of their water and energy resources, which in the near future will represent the most valuable assets of all Latin America.

**Saskia Sassen Concept of globalization**

Saskia Sassen states in the current phase of world history the ascendance of information technologies and the associated increase in the mobility and liquidity of capital has influenced the international economic system, opening up dramatically national economies to foreign firms and the growing participation of national economic actors in global markets.

When she first chose to use global city (1984) it was an attempt to establish a difference: the specificity of the global as it gets structured in the contemporary period. Thus the choice of the term global city-region also comes with that same specificity –incorporating the particular features of the current phase of economic globalization.

Globalization has brought with it a change in the scales at which strategic economic and political processes territorialize. Global Cities and global city-regions have emerged as major new scales in this dynamic of territorialization.

Economic globalization and telecommunications have contributed to produce new spatialities for the urban that pivot on cross-border networks and territorial locations with massive concentration of resources and a disproportionate share of national wealth or its control.
CHAPTER III

BORDELAND, REGIONAL, STATE AND MUNICIPAL GOVERNANCE

Cultural Obstacles to the “Digital-Global-City-Region Proposal”

There are significant resistances very deeply embedded in the cities, regions and borderland political culture with tendencies toward restricting the participation of the Organized Civil Society in the governance of municipalities, cities, states and regions sharing tasks and responsibilities together in the making of a meaningful, viable and Sustainable Regional and Borderland Economic Development Plan. The apparatus displayed during electoral campaigns does not deserve to be qualified as a direct-genuine expression and articulated participation of all citizens in the various institutional structures of democratic forms government.

Even though the Bolivarian Constitution of Venezuela in its text has provisions to facilitate the participation of the Civil Society in the State affairs as a constitutional right, in practice political leaders are more interested in sharing power with their inner circles to achieve personal benefits, than in extending those benefits to their constituents.

The challenge to progressive and renewed leadership resides in achieving a genuine democratic regimen that will lead to a better quality of life. It is by joining forces through strategic alliances and empowering municipalities and regions as the roadmap to competitive international markets and the rational use of new technologies by entrepreneurs, universities and governments.

In Venezuela there is a growing movement of a renovated generation of leaders from political parties and non profit organizations (NPO’s) that reflects the interest of Society to conquer new spaces of participation in all phases of Regional and Borderland Integration and Sustainable Economic Development planning, implementation and oversight as indispensable actors in the processes of government decisions.

Currently, the political scenario in Venezuela is in effervescence searching for new and revolutionary changes that have as a common denominator the interpretation of the principles and mandates established in the Constitution that emphasizes the values of an authentic democracy of consensus and sharing of powers with all Sectors of Society without discrimination of any nature.

All issues treated in this paper on the role of the “Digital-Global-City-Region Proposal” in the new era of technological and scientific developments, call for urgent political decisions to accelerate the processes of building strategic alliances, especially among municipalities in urban and rural areas to capitalize on the synergies derived in order to compete in the national and international scenarios dominated by big
corporations with the support of their respective governments.

The experience at the Conference, “Crossing Borders: U.S./Latin American Relations in the 21st Century” organized by the Ibero-American Consular Corp. in San Francisco, the World Affairs Council of Northern California, Stanford University, the University of California, Berkeley University and the University of San Francisco offered an unique opportunity for a constructive dialogue North-South and the drafting of a master plan or International Agenda to incorporate municipalities, cities, states and regions and borderlands in order to search for new ways of relationships; and learning from each other, as a result of the exchange of ideas and comparative experiences that will shed new light on the most effective strategies to understand and deal with regional integration globalization.

In spite of the success of this event its promoters did not foresee a follow up to the conclusions and papers presented in this important forum. The University of Texas, El Paso, New Mexico State, Las Cruces, El Colegio de la Frontera Norte y la Universidad Autónoma de Ciudad Juárez should become pioneers to fill this gap between academics and policy makers in the implementation of the agreements and conclusions reached in forums that discuss issues relevant to its mission to foster intellectual discussion, research and encouraging civic engagement through network building and public debate.

The following is a list of the main issues that face the cities and states in the Venezuelan Andean and Western Plain Region in order to establish a referential framework or “pilot program” to be applied to the premise of “Digital-Global-City-Region Proposal” presented in this paper before a highly qualified audience. Proposal that requires its implementation with the participation of Universities, Municipalities, state governments and the Consular Corps accredited in the cities selected and willing to participate in this pilot program.

1. The organization of qualified team works to assist in the strengthening of institutions involved in community affairs and productive activities related to economic development and quality of life.

2. The creation of a reliable, up-to-date Municipal, Regional and Borderland Database.

3. The promotion of strategic alliances among public and private institutions, including labor, community and non-profit organizations with strengths in planning, organization, promotion and encouraging the active participation of universities and Civil Society Institutions.

4. The joint preparation with all Government Agencies, Universities, Productive Sectors and Civil Society of an Agenda by Objectives inserted in the Regional and Borderland Integration and Sustainable Economic Development, highlighting their main Priorities.
Specify the role of Municipalities, Universities and Non-Profit Organizations (NPO’s) in the planning, promotion and organization of Commonwealths of Municipalities articulated in a framework of strategic alliances to confront the challenges of decentralization, regional integration, conflict of interests, project management and effective interaction in the international arena.

The establishment of a platform integrated by valuable human resources from Universities, Government Agencies, Productive Sectors and Civil Society with power of representation and negotiation in order to interact with other institutions at national and international levels to accomplish the goals stated in the Declaration of Principles and Agenda by Objectives established in this paper.

The opening of a permanent public debate through the media and the promotion of workshops, panels, conferences, and symposiums addressed to government officials, legislators, academics, researchers, community leaders, non-profit organizations and institutions responsible for planning and development at municipal, state, regional and borderland levels.

COMBAR presents hereby a summary of the issues that need to be addressed in cities, regions and cross-borders of the Andean and Plain Region of Western Venezuela as a guideline for a comparative study with other cities, regions and borderlands comprised in the following Agenda by Objectives:

**Politics:**

1. Excessive concentration of power in the hands of mayors, governors and political organizations with limited and sporadic accountability to their constituents.

2. Deficient channels of communication between municipal, state governments, universities, Civil Society institutions and non-profit organizations that makes it difficult to join efforts and reach strategic alliances to share responsibilities in the planning and solution of community, regional and borderland economic and social issues.

3. The important role of Universities and the Educational System to promote outreach programs to train and form the human resources needed in city and regional governance, public affairs, leadership and handling of political, social and managerial conflicts.

4. To revise and bring up to date the legal framework and legislation to mark the boundaries of power and functions assigned to different levels of government and decision making in accordance with the “Digital-Global-City-Region Proposal”.

5. To make provisions to counteract the centralized tendencies of national governments, slowing down the transferring of competencies and sharing of
power to states and municipalities; as well as the excessive influences of political parties and other particular interests, that collide or interfere with the constitutional mandate toward decentralization, accountability and citizenship participation in decision making policies.

6. The absence of meaningful and coherent plans of Sustainable Regional and Borderland Integration and Sustainable Economic Development with a global vision, defining the principal priorities to undertake; pointing out specific goals and objectives to be accomplished in the short, medium and long term in the context of the new era of technological and scientific innovations, especially in the field of telecommunications, informatics and robotics.

7. The marked absence of efficient systems of inter-institutional and multi-disciplinary coordination among government organizations, and marked exclusion of the participation of the Organized Civil Society in all phases of planning, implementation, control and follow up of a comprehensive Plan of Regional and Borderland Integration and Sustainable Economic Development. Most of the existing plans lack these ingredients.

**Informal Economy**

The recent phenomenon of the appearance of the informal economy is perhaps the best evidence of the failure of governments to deal with the governance and economic development of cities, regions and borderlands throughout Latin America.

Associated with this picture are the increasing level of unemployment, sub-employment, and migration of labor to other latitudes, the disruption of the Society’s family cell, complex social problems, abuse of power, corruption and delinquency...

This state of affairs, represent the core of COMBAR’s proposal to search for a new Model of Regional and Borderland Integration and Sustainable Economic Development, calling to progressive universities, municipalities, state governments, labor organizations, the Ibero-American Consular Corps and non-profit organizations to join ranks in this challenge to explore the possibilities of materialization strategic alliances based on the re-activation of Latin American integration processes applying the “Digital-Global-City-Region Proposal” and building bridges with cities, regions and borderlands of more developed nations in the world in order to undertake joint actions.

**Information and Communication Technology**

Telecommunications and informatics are excellent tools to contribute to the improvement of relationships between government institutions and leaders of all Sectors of Society, in order to join forces toward the common objective of regional and borderland prosperity and quality of life. The missing link is the lack of political will and consensus among
the various government and political parties to reach agreements on governance of cities, regions and borderlands to produce a common and viable Plan of Regional and Borderland Integration and Sustainable Economic Development in the context of globalization.

The figure of the “Digital-Global-City-Region Proposal” would mark the road ahead to visualize a horizon of the regional geography in order to facilitate the processes of integration among municipalities, regions and borderlands; and the promotion of strategic alliances to access to new technologies that will benefit all sectors of society. Again, we must insist that if the political leaders do not change their “cultural mindset” no progress will be possible.

A step in the right direction toward the conformation of valuable strategic alliances and partnerships would be studying the interaction and comparison of the inequalities with other cities, regions and borderlands in the world and build suitable partnerships on common issues strengthening their institutions through the exchange of ideas, events, negotiations and agreements.

Urban and Rural Development

The common denominator of urban, sub-urban and rural developments in the Andean and Western Plain Region of Venezuela is the proliferation of squatters in the periphery of the cities from other states and other countries, mainly Colombia. These invasions create multiple urban and social problems that require a holistic approach as part of the proposed Municipal, Regional and Borderland Plan that will preserve the quality of life and economic sustainability of all families residing in these regions. The absence of opportunities of employment, deficient infrastructure and public services, deterioration of hydrographic basins contribute to social instability, health problems and poverty.

This exhibition of poverty in the form of “barrios, ranchos, favelas and villas miseries” is typical of many cities in Latin America, that deserve an analysis of the subjacent causes of social marginalization that stems, in most cases, from cultural habits, government corruption, lack of cooperation among institutions and clash of interests.

The immediate tasks are overwhelming:

1. Rearrange the social and economic fragmentation.

2. To channel the positive changes in the citizens’ political culture toward the solution of problems through a trustworthy and capable leadership.

3. To identify the issues and social behavior of people in the communities, fortify their local institutions and associations and develop opportunities of education, employment in agriculture, manufacturing, tourism, handicrafts, and service industries
4. To give special treatment to the informal economy, through comprehensive educational and training programs, promotion of small business, cooperatives, and craftsmanship’s, non-profit organizations, neighborhood associations and family enterprises.

5. To establish direct channels of communication and accountability with political leaders representing their borough and communities at the Municipal and State Legislature levels, in order to establish coalitions to facilitate the access to other instances of government and political power.

**Ecological Issues**

It is notable that the more active and aggressive actors in opposing the controversial issue of liberalization of international commerce were labor organizations and environmental groups from many countries. The cities, states and regions did not have a voice in the negotiations, even though they suffer the negative impacts of the decisions and agreements reached in the deliberations.

This reflection should result in a new attitude to making the cities, regions and borderlands more active in the future deliberations and negotiations. The “Digital-Global-City-Region Proposal” should be a stepping stone to advance in the comprehension of such mega project as the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA), CAFTA and other similar initiatives.

The experience with the *North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA)* integrated by Canada, United States and Mexico, shows that the Ecological Urban Agenda did not have positive results, keeping a balance between the rational handling of forests, land use, water resources, benefits of the labor force and Sustainable Economic Development that guarantees the quality of family life, ecological equilibrium, political integration and free movement of the labor force in the case of Mexico and the United States.

Again, we have to emphasize that political will, governance, inter-institutional consensus are indispensable elements to rectify the role of cities, regions and borderlands to become more involved in international issues and trends, assimilating whatever circumstances that contribute to their progress and discard influences and decisions that will harm their ecology and labor conquests with meager contributions to their priorities in economic and infrastructure development.

**Land Entitlement and Land Use**

Land-Ownership and Land Use are two important parameters to be considered in the conceptual and legal framework of the “Digital-Global-City-Region Proposal”. The figure of Large Estates (Latifundium) and Small Parcels
(Minifundium) systems must be considered in the context of its relationship to the overall vision as a country and its policies in agro-industrial, manufacturing, public services and urban and rural expansion in order to attract international investment.

The COMBAR’s proposal of selecting several cities and regions in Latin America and the Iberian Peninsula to combine all political, legal, economic, social, cultural and technological factors fits into the pilot project aimed at the search of a new model of Regional and Borderland Integration and Sustainable Economic Development.

**Historical and Cultural Patrimony**

The new projects of urban planning must take into account the preservation of the city’s historic and cultural patrimony that represents the values, traditions and idiosyncrasy of its inhabitants. We must be aware in urban planning of the importance of preserving buildings and landmarks whose architecture and art works are a semblance of past periods and transcendental historical events.

Cities such as Chicago offer great contrasts in this subject. On one side, there are many old buildings declared “historic landmarks”. However, we can also notice the phenomenon called “gentrification” or eradication of urban zones with a historical and cultural tradition to give way to modern urbanistic developments, without any regard for the immigrants culture that for several generations were established there.

In the processes of globalization the cities and regions must be alert to prevent examples of “gentrification” being exported to Latin America. There are many cities in the world declared patrimony of Humanity, such as Cartagena in Colombia, Cuenca in Spain, Oporto in Portugal, that attract numerous tourists every year and represent a substantial source of income.

**Vulnerability of Cities**

The recent experiences of terrorism that culminated with the destruction of the twin towers in the World Center in the city of New York on September 11th 2001, represents a reminder to all cities to take appropriate preventive measures to avoid similar and recent disasters such as the one that occurred in the city of Madrid that took the lives of two hundred and two (202) persons and wounded many more.

The role of Civil Society in moments of crisis such as those referred to and natural disasters is obvious, to prevent intents of sabotage and attacks against the cities. Once more, sharing responsibilities on social and security issues between government and Civil Society are relevant. Why is it so difficult to apply the same treatment and rules to economic and social issues?
Another testimony of the spirit of solidarity and participation of citizens in difficult moments occurred during the earthquake in the capital of Mexico City in the year 1985 and the Katrina (USA) disaster in 2005, especially New Orleans. Political leaders and government officials must learn lessons from these unfortunate experiences where the collective interests and participation prevailed over selfish motivations of power and personal gains.

**The Venezuelan-Colombian Borderland**

COMBAR took part in the preparation of a document presented to the Venezuelan-Colombian Cross-border Regional Assembly (1998) describing the border common issues with proposals, which we summarize as follow:

a) Pointing out the conceptual, structural, functional and legal gaps in public and private institutions established on both sides of the common border, including the mechanisms to facilitate the participation of Civil Society organizations in cross-border economic developments.

b) Severe damages to the ecosystems affecting the river basins of Catatumbo and the sub-basins of the rivers of Táchira and Pamplonita. Special attention must be paid to the Tama mountain range.

c) Very little attention is given by government institutions to promote public consciousness of the importance of protecting water resources, flora, fauna, forests from exploitations and fires; threats to public health; and other actions, such as: engaging the public educational system, the intensive use of media and strengthening the structures of government and Civil Society non-profit ecological organizations.

d) Dispersive efforts of both human and economic resources; lack of institutional coordination and political will to meet the challenges of competitiveness, new technologies and governance in a globalize world.

e) The absence of a cross border urban plan to coordinate the construction of Infrastructures, Public Services; and the promotion of cross border agro industrial and technological parks; and joint projects aimed at the international markets as a Cross Border Metropolitan platform, whose epicenters are the cities of San Cristóbal (Venezuela) and Cúcuta (Colombia).

From the different agreements reached we underline the following:

2. - The proposal of creation of a Bi-National Technological Park.

3. - Strengthening the cross border initiatives and programs that are developing universities, the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), Andean Development Corporation (ADC), the Latin American Integration Institute (LAIi), the Latin American Institute of Social Research (LAISR) from the Friedrich Ebert Foundation of Germany.
CHAPTER FOUR
COMBAR

Antecedents

I bring to the attention to the Executive Committee of the Venezuelan Studies Section Latin American Studies (LASA) scholars and researchers the unique COMBAR’s experience in the Andean and Plain Western Plain Region of Venezuela and cross border and its respective Colombian Departments, with the purpose to contribute in some degree to up date public policies that have a positive impact on governance and the management of cities, states, regions and borderlands in order to approach the solution of pressing issues on Urban planning, public affairs and the sustainability of economic, social and cultural development under the present conditions of the undergoing processes on globalism and technological innovations.

The roots of COMBAR stem from the year 1963 with the creation by the Venezuelan government of the “Andean Promotional Development Commission (COMANDES) --- nowadays, he Andean Development Corporation (CORPOANDES)” -- to initiate the promotion and feasibility studies of a pulp and paper plant in the State of Barinas to process 1,000 metric tons of pulp daily. At that time an interdisciplinary teamwork COMANDES and the Andean University and the Latin American Forestry Institute was set up in the city of Mérida, Venezuela.

This was the first intent to produce a Regional Development Plan comprised by the States of: Mérida, Táchira, Trujillo, Barinas; the Municipality of Guanare and the Sucre District of Portuguesa State; and the Páez District of Apure State. COMBAR produced the first Plan of Integral Development of the State of Barinas (Venezuela) in the year 1969.

As soon as took place the transition from COMANDES to CORPOANDES the new appointed directors decided that all projects initiated by COMANDES would be completely ignored. It was obvious that the pulp and paper project run with the same luck. This practice of ignoring previous work done by the following changes in the board of Directors is still a practice. Recently the national government closed the CORPOANDES office in Barinas. The negative influence of political partisanship and economic groups in CORPOANDES has always been a constant factor that does not allow planning with a long term regional vision.

COMBAR detected that the vast forest resources in the State of Barinas were being devastated by illegal exploitations and settlers and started a campaign to protect the forests and river basins. In the research done we discovered a document presented to the Federation of Chambers of Commerce of Venezuela that met in the city of San Cristóbal on the 3rd and 4th day of March 1948 denouncing the same problem in the following terms:

“Up to date, very little was done to organize an effective national campaign against fires, indiscriminate forest exploitations, soil erosion and floods. This problem is
perhaps the most severe that the nation confronts. It is the government responsibility to take appropriate actions to limit the ecological damages and eliminate the causes of impoverishment of the Venezuelan soil. A national campaign to fight this calamity must incorporate all Venezuelan people”

COMBAR recognizing the value of the above alert statement, presented a paper before the XXXII Annual Assembly of Fedecámaras, in the year 1976 that was approved but no practical actions were taken by government. Following we quote the statement made by COMBAR::

“Conscious of the document presented before the IV Annual Assembly of Fedecámaras entitled: “Economic Chart of San Cristóbal” it calls to the reflection that after twenty eight years we must repeat that: “Very little or nothing was done” to stop the voracity of fire forests, criminal deforestations, floods, irreparable damages to arable land and to water resources” We are facing a national calamity!.

Today, (1976) we have to repeat the same statement: “Very little was done to attend this problem by the governments up to this date” Amount to millions of tons of stratum (capa vegetal) that the rivers moved to the ocean, undermining a priceless resource as are the forests, the fertility of soil the water to feed irrigation dams and hydroelectric power plants. This drama represents the priority number I that progressive governments must face and search for solutions in the international arena.

The failure in the enforcement to protect the Forest Reserves of Ticoporo, Caparo in the State of Barinas; San Camilo in the State of Apure; and Turén in the State of Portuguesa with concessions up to forty years to guarantee the survival of the forests must be object of an exhaustive investigation to punish those responsible for ecological crime of extinction of these forest reserves, in most cases with the complicity of political parties and government officials. The irreparable damages inflicted will affect the present and future generations.

At the present time, the University of the Andes in Mérida, Venezuela is trying to preserve the remaining of these national forest reserves under the classification of “genetic genes” in order to preserve the rich variety of plants, trees and species of biological diversity for its great scientific, educational and cultural value.

This is a true testimony of the cultural obstacles to overcome, with the common denominator of “corruption, inefficiency and complicity” in order to change the label of underdevelopment countries to progressive nations in the realm of the challenges we must face in the new millennium.
The Iberian-American Provincial and Local Studies Center (CIEPROL) were founded by the University of the Andes, in accordance with Resolution Number 0435 dated May 21st 1995 by the University Council. Its founders are: Dr. Fortunato Gonzalez, Dr. Elias Mendez V. And Dr. Marcos Avilio Trejo,

CIEPROL\(^2\) is an academic unit attached to the Faculty of Legal and Political Sciences whose mission is to form the human resources needed in Venezuelan Public Administration. In addition, their staff is involved in research projects, community development and assessment of Municipal and State branches of government.

Some specific issues (CIEPROL) are under research such as:

1. The Decentralization processes of exclusive and concomitant functions from National to State and Municipal Government. The Bolivarian Venezuelan Constitution (1999) states that the country is a Decentralized Federal State.


3. Intergovernmental coordination and cooperation faculties laid out in the Venezuelan Constitution, as indispensable State functions, are carried out in a very unpredictable and unstable manner.

4. The European sociological influence in the Latin America legal system shows voids in the methodology applied to specific regional and local territories in each country to assure applicability.

5. The United States exerts a strong influence on the political and legal Latin American Systems of government: Constitutionalism, Federalism, and Centralism. In practice, a pathologic legal pluralism prevails, expressed when one branch of the governmental system tries to impose its will and the law on other government agencies or upon Civil Society organizations in an arbitrary administration of justice.
6. “Sustainable Local Economic Development with community participation is the roadmap to the paradigm of Sustainability of Regional Economic Progress”.

7. The concept of “Administrative Consortiums”, as an association between different public institutions, the Productive Sector and Non-government organizations (NGO’s), to explore jointly common issues such as: recycling waste management, environment protection, Borderland Integration, Sustainable Regional Economic Development, Tourism, International Commerce, Education, Cultural Programs and other activities.

WIII CONFERENCE ON FEDERALISM, DECENTRALIZATION AND MUNICIPALITY,


The Final Document of this event pointed out the importance in understanding the cultural values of Venezuelan Society, in order to appeal to the consciousness of its leaders, joining forces to achieve a “Sustainable Regional Economic Development” and the application of the “rule of law and justice” as it appears in the current Bolivarian Venezuelan Constitution (1999).

It is evident that the Decentralization processes in Venezuela since the passing of the State Reform (1989) made significant advances in the period of 1989-1999. However, since then, the decentralization process has been reversed toward the recentralization of public government powers.

To fulfill the constitutional mandate, it is the responsibility of local, state and regional institutions to step forward and promote a “new set of values and commitments” to reinforce “freedom, a genuine participative democracy and a strong Federal Decentralized State” that boosts the participation of Civil Society in all levels of government decision making.

Federalism demands that local, state and regional institutions and communities must develop the capacity to connect heterogeneous forces and demand accountability of elected and appointed government authorities. The imposition of cumbersome controls, imposed inspections by the Central Power and unnecessary red tape, adds to the holding back of decentralization in most Latin American countries. Society needs to address this issue in the context of Latin American culture and the challenges of globalization.
CHAPTER SIX

“THE SEARCH FOR A NEW MODEL OF REGIONAL AND BORDERLAND INTEGRATION AND SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT”

Objectives

I. To create citizen and institutional conscience of the important role that Universities should perform in the search of a “New Model of Regional and Borderland Integration and Sustainable Economic Development” starting up working with base civil society organizations and Municipalities.

II. Create favorable conditions, by means of strategic institutional alliances with the objective of constructing a platform with the adequate institutional prestige at the national and international level to inspire confidence, credibility, and endowed with the following capabilities:

1. Expertise in the disciplines of strategic thinking, strategic planning; urban and rural affairs involving municipal, state and regional institutions: conflict solving, project management; intra-regional and inter-regional and cross border integration processes.

2. Expertise in the disciplines of economic, social, political, cultural, and technological disciplines; Regional and Borderland Integration and Sustainable Economic Development; International Commerce and furthering research on regional and borderland priorities.

3. Recruitment of a qualified staff to train the human resources needed to carry out programs to empower people and institutions through leadership, teamwork, community participation, institutional coordination and implementation of viable programs and projects with government agencies, productive sector, and labor and community organizations.

III. The geographical and geopolitical scopes that would form part of the pilot project: Digital-Global-City-Region-Proposal comprised by the States of: Barinas, Táchira, Mérida, Trujillo, Portuguesa and the Autonomous Municipality of Alto Apure, Apure State in Venezuela

IV. The promoters of this proposal at this preliminary stage – that will grasp the changes and adaptations that would be necessary are the following:

1. Pro-Development Committee of the State of Barinas (COMBAR), Barinas, Venezuela and State Government of Barinas, Barinas, Venezuela

2. Iberian-American Provincial and Local Studies Center (CIEPROL), University of
los Andes, Mérida, Venezuela and Regional/borderland universities.

3. College of Urban Planning and Public Affairs (CUPPA), University of Illinois at Chicago, USA.

4. Domingo Felipe Maza Zavala Foundation, Universidad Central de Venezuela in San Cristóbal, Táchira State, Venezuela

5. The City Halls and Commonwealth of Municipalities being discussed.

6. The Legislative Assemblies of the States being discussed

7. Regional Banking and Financial Institutions and other institutions being considered in Latin America, United States and Spain

V – Premises on which the proposal “Search of a New Model of Regional and Borderland Integration and Sustainable Economic Development” are based:

1. On January 16th 1996 the Official Gazette of the State of Barinas, published the Decree Number 07 recognizing the role of COMBAR as an entity to establish functional mechanisms of participation for citizens and Municipalities in State Affairs and the following acknowledgment: COMBAR is advancing research and promotional work to comply with its statutory mission.

2. There is not in existence a coherent methodology to approach and deal with the impacts of global forces that exert undue pressure on Latin American cities, regions and borderlands in the context of the framework of globalization; regional and sub-regional integration issues.

3. Filling the gap of the absence of a viable Iberian-American Agenda to confront the present issues of globalization affecting many cities, regions and borderlands dispersed and isolated across the Western Hemisphere.

4. To gain insight into the “Ibero-American Dream or Paradigm” from the perspective of Latin American and United States regions and public opinion as a cultural pivot to induce the processes of economic complementation between both regional and borderland counterparts.

5. Conform adequate responses needed to prevent subsequent effects of social disintegration, increased poverty, unemployment, migratory movements and terrorism. “Think Global and Act Local” is the rule to follow by local and regional leaders willing to break the traditional paradigms, that are responsible of the economic chaos and social marginalization.

6. Reviewing the recently signed Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA) (July 2005) between the United States, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Nicaragua,
Honduras in Central American and Dominic Republican in the Caribbean and its impact on labor, environment and quality of life.

7. To follow up on the Resolution of the XXXIII General Assembly Civil Society Resolution AG/RES 1915 “Increasing and Strengthening Civil Society Participation in the Organization (OAS) of American States Activities”

**Regional SCENARIOS**

With the intent to reach the goals of this proposal we identify the following specific Regional Scenarios in both Venezuela and the United States of America:

**Scenario Number 1** The geographical area of the selected “Emblematic Municipality” of planning, implementation, promotion, coordination, citizen’s participation and periodical evaluations of the goals achieved of its economic development and cultural obstacles to overcome. This selected Municipality would serve as model to all others willing to join in a Commonwealth of Municipalities in the context of the “Digital-Global-City-Region Proposal”.

**Scenario Number 2**: The geographical scope of the potential municipalities interested in an association as a Commonwealth on the basis of achieving consensus on their main priorities to build up a Sustainable Strategic Economic Development Plan in the Andean Region are:

**Commonwealth of Great Metropolitan San Cristóbal**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Municipality</th>
<th>Capital</th>
<th>Área/km²</th>
<th>Population*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>San Cristóbal</td>
<td>San Cristóbal</td>
<td>247</td>
<td>330.244</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cárdenas</td>
<td>Táriba</td>
<td>298</td>
<td>71.121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guásimos</td>
<td>Palmira</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>24.302</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Libertad</td>
<td>Capacho de Arriba</td>
<td>154</td>
<td>20.021</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independencia</td>
<td>Capacho de Abajo</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>22.780</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Torbes</td>
<td>San Josecito</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>58.360</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Córdoba</td>
<td>Santa Ana</td>
<td>628</td>
<td>24.398</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td></td>
<td>1.533</td>
<td>551.226</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Commonwealth of the High Andean Valleys**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Municipality</th>
<th>Capital</th>
<th>Area/km²</th>
<th>Population*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jáuregui</td>
<td>La Grita</td>
<td>442</td>
<td>50.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uribante</td>
<td>Pregonero</td>
<td>1.502</td>
<td>25.192</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fco. De Miranda</td>
<td>San José de Bolivar</td>
<td>225</td>
<td>3.853</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sucre</td>
<td>Queniquea</td>
<td>375</td>
<td>12.773</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
José María Vargas | El Cobre | 184 | 8,824
Seboruco | Seboruco | 155 | 7,709
Simón Rodríguez | San Simón | 68 | 2,871
Samuel D. Maldonado | La Tendida | 533 | 14,202
San Judas Tadeo | Umuquena | 254 | 12,622
\textbf{Totales} | | **3,738** | **138,246**

Source: *Census 2001 COMBAR’s Files

\textbf{Commonwealth of Frontier Municipalities*}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Municipality</th>
<th>Capital</th>
<th>Area/km2</th>
<th>Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bolivar</td>
<td>San Antonio</td>
<td>438</td>
<td>44,344</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pedro María Ureña</td>
<td>Ureña</td>
<td>177</td>
<td>28,631</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Junín</td>
<td>Rubio</td>
<td>315</td>
<td>62,576</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rafael Urdaneta</td>
<td>Delicias</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>5,781</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>\textbf{Totales}</td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>1,120</strong></td>
<td><strong>141,332</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: *Census 2001 COMBAR’s Files

\textbf{Scenario Number 3}- The states of Barinas, Portuguesa, Táchira, Mérida, Trujillo and the Autonomist Municipal Alto Apure of the State of Apure, would integrate the Andean and Western Plain of Venezuela.

The territorial extension of the proposed Region and its population is the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of State</th>
<th>Area/km2</th>
<th>Population*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Barinas</td>
<td>35,200</td>
<td>624,508</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portuguesa</td>
<td>15,200</td>
<td>725,740</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Táchira</td>
<td>11,100</td>
<td>992,669</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mérida</td>
<td>11,300</td>
<td>715,268</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trujillo</td>
<td>7,400</td>
<td>608,563</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apure</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Municipio Alto Apure</td>
<td>12,800</td>
<td>87,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>\textbf{Totals}</td>
<td><strong>93,000 Km2</strong></td>
<td><strong>3,753,748</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: *Census 2001 COMBAR’s Files

\textbf{Scenario Number 4}- The territorial area and population of the Andean and Western Plains Region compared with the territorial area and population of Venezuela.

Percentage of the territorial area and population in the selected area:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Areas/ Kmt2</th>
<th>Population*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
Scenario Number 5 - The Andean Community of Nations (Comunidad Andina) is integrated by Venezuela, Colombia, Perú, Ecuador y Bolivia. The data corresponds to each one of the countries that integrate it:

### Population (Thousands of Persons), Period 1980 to 2005*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Bolivia</th>
<th>Colombia</th>
<th>Ecuador</th>
<th>Perú</th>
<th>Venezuela</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>5.355</td>
<td>28.447</td>
<td>7.961</td>
<td>17.324</td>
<td>15.091</td>
<td>74.178</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>8.329</td>
<td>42.321</td>
<td>12.646</td>
<td>25.939</td>
<td>24.170</td>
<td>113.405</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>9.275</td>
<td>46.039</td>
<td>13.798</td>
<td>27.947</td>
<td>26.468</td>
<td>123.527</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: *Population 1980-2005 COMBAR’s Files

Scenario Number 6 - The Midwest Region of the United States is integrated by the following States: Illinois, Wisconsin, Indiana, Ohio and Michigan. Following is the database of these countries:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STATE</th>
<th>AREA/KM2</th>
<th>POPULATION*</th>
<th>CITY</th>
<th>POPULATION**</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ILLINOIS</td>
<td>143.963</td>
<td>12.600.000</td>
<td>Chicago</td>
<td>2.896.016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WISCONSIN</td>
<td>140.673</td>
<td>5.441.196</td>
<td>Madison</td>
<td>208.254</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INDIANA</td>
<td>92.896</td>
<td>6.159.068</td>
<td>Indianapolis</td>
<td>791.926</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OHIO</td>
<td>106.055</td>
<td>11.421.267</td>
<td>Columbus</td>
<td>711.470</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MICHIGAN</td>
<td>147.122</td>
<td>10.050.446</td>
<td>Detroit</td>
<td>951.270</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>630.709</td>
<td>45.671.977</td>
<td></td>
<td>5.558.936</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2002* and 2000**

Scenario Number 7 - The Mountain West Region comprises the States of: Utah, Nevada, Colorado, Idaho, Wyoming and Arizona. The territorial area and population are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STATE</th>
<th>AREA/KM</th>
<th>POPULATION*</th>
<th>CITY</th>
<th>POPULATION**</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>UTAH</td>
<td>212.753</td>
<td>2.233.169</td>
<td>Salt Lake City</td>
<td>181.743</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NEVADA</td>
<td>284.449</td>
<td>2.173.491</td>
<td>Las Vegas</td>
<td>478.434</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
COLORADO | 268,627 | 4,506,542 | Denver | 284,449
IDAHO | 214,315 | 1,341,131 | Boise | 185,787
WYOMING | 251,501 | 498,703 | Cheyenne | 53,011
ARIZONA | 294,315 | 1,321,045 | Phoenix | 1,321,045

**Totals** | **1,525,960** | **12,074,081** | **2,504,469**

*Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2002* and 2000**

**Scenario Number 8** - The cities of Austin, San Antonio, Houston and Dallas in the State of Texas; the Municipalities of Salt Lake City, Provo, Park City, West Valley City and Ogden in the State of Utah; and the cities of Oklahoma City and Tulsa in the State of Oklahoma (United States).

**Scenario Number 9** - Cross border cities between Mexico and the United States:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mexico</th>
<th>United States</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tijuana, Ensenada, Tecate y Playas de Rosario, Baja California</td>
<td>San Diego, California</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mexicali, Baja California</td>
<td>Calexico, California</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>San Luis, Sonora</td>
<td>Yuma, Arizona</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nogales, Sonora</td>
<td>Nogales, Arizona</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Naco, Sonora</td>
<td>Naco, Arizona</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agua Prieta, Sonora</td>
<td>Douglas, Arizona</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Puerto Palomas, Chihuahua</td>
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CHAPTER SEVEN

DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES

The main objective of COMBAR as a proposal to the Section of Venezuelan Studies of Latin American Studies Association is to compare specific scenarios in order to understand the cultural, political, social and economic dynamics as a pilot program on regional, borderland integration and sustainable economic development through examination of all underlying factors, including:

A. **Political Security, Environmental Issues and Military Affairs.**- Exploration into the politics of war (drugs and terror) in an era of democratization; security concerns after 9/11; critical environment and labor issues, immigration and human rights.

B. **Integration and Economic Relations.**- Politics and Realities of NAFTA, CAN, MERCOSUR and CAFTA. FTAA proposal; alternatives to Latin American Sustainable Integration and Economic Development; the new role of organized and non organized labor; keeping up with new technologies and scientific developments.

C. **Social and Cultural Issues.**- Migration and Latino/Latin American Communities in the Western Hemisphere; diversity of culture across borders; media; education; identity and citizenship; religion; indigenous communities and social plights.

The conclusions of this North-South and Iberian dialogue will contribute to develop an alternative **International Agenda** by comparing successful experiences of different cities, regions, borderlands in countries across the Western Hemisphere.

**To this purpose, International Forums offer a relevant opportunity** to:

A. Review the disorganized and chaotic growth of many Latin American cities, regions and borderlands with limited capabilities to deal with the internal social problems and the challenges of globalization to speed up their sustainable economic development and assimilation of new technologies.

B. Empower local, state and regional governments to cope with these issues in the context of international flow of capital, rapid technological and scientific advances in the field of communications, informatics, transportation, robotics, and genetics.

C. Search for a new paradigm that offers better responses to the ongoing proposal of the Free Trade Agreement of the Americas (FTAA) built along the lines of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and the Central American Free
Trade Area (CAFTA RP).

The official version of globalization promoted by countries such as the USA has benefited mainly Multinational Corporations and leading economic forces of the developed countries. In contrast, continents such as Latin America and Africa with their growing population were not able to confront the increase poverty and vulnerability to their natural resources and a dignified quality of life, lagging behind other more developed economies. Antiglobalization forces have identified the damaging impacts of uncontrolled globalization on these populations and societies in the form of employment losses; political and social tension; uncontrollable migration and family disintegration; degradation of the habitat; erosion of civil liberties; anarchic growth of cities and poverty at all levels.

In contrast, the visionary Latin American Integrationist ideals originally proposed by leaders such as Simón Bolivar and Jose Marti are being pursued today by growing sectors and Latin American leaders aimed at:

A. A dignified treatment to the organized and non-organized labor force;

B. Respect for the cultural values and legal structures of each country;

C. Preservation of the region’s historical-cultural patrimony;

D. Preservation and rational handling of water, forest resources and hydrographic river basins with its natural eco-systems of genetic and biological diversity.

E. Acceleration of the processes of Latin American Integration empowering the cities, regions and borderlands through decentralization, so that they can build up independent platforms with solid representation and negotiation capabilities.

F. Assisting cities, regions and borderlands to organize themselves in Commonwealth of Municipalities and Commonwealth of Regions to interact more effectively in the competitive scenarios of global politics.

G. Assisting cities, regions and borderlands to prepare their own “Regional and Borderland Integration and Sustainable Economic Development Plan” and building “Strategic Alliances” on the premise of our Digital-City-Region Proposal.

The search for more equalitarian forms of globalization must take into account the pioneering contributions of entities such as:

1. “Comunidad Andina” CAN
   (Andean Community)

2. Mercado Común del Cono Sur “MERCOSUR”
(Common Market of the South American Cone);

3 **Tratado de Libre Comercio USA Centro América República Dominicana**
   Center American and Dominic Republic Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA DR)

4 **Comunidad del Caribe “CARICOM”**
   (Community of the Caribbean);

5 **Asociación de Estados del Caribe (AEC)**
   (Association of Caribbean States);

6 **“Sistemas de Información de las Cumbres de las Américas ‘SIECA’”**
   (Information System of Summits of the Americas)

7 **Secretaría General Iberoamericana (SEGIB)**
   (Ibero-América General Secretary)

including supporting institutions such as:

1 **Organización Iberoamericana de Cooperación Inter-Municipal (OICI)**
   (Iberian-American Organization for Inter.-Municipal Cooperation)

2 **Asociación Latino Americana de Integración (ALADI)**
   (Latin American Association of Integration)

3 **Instituto para la Integración de la América Latina y el Caribe (INTAL)**
   (Institute for the integration of Latin America and the Caribbean)

4 **Instituto Latinoamericano de Investigaciones Sociales (ILDIS)**
   (Latin American Institute for Social Research)

5 **Organización de Estados Americanos (OEA)**
   (Organization of American States)

6 **Consejo Inter-Americano para el Desarrollo Integral (CIDI)**
   (Inter American Council for Integral Development)

7 **Banco Interamericano de Desarrollo (BID)**
   (Inter-American Development Bank)

8 **Banco Centroamericano de Integración Económica (BCIE)**
   (Central American Bank of Economic Integration)

9 **Secretaría de Integración Económica Centro Americana (SIECA)**
   (Secretary of Central American Economic Integration)

9 **Comisión Económica para la América Latina (CEPAL)**
Along these lines, at the Summit of Sustainable Economic Development held in the city of Santa Cruz, Bolivia in 1996, the presidents agreed to establish as a priority the formulation of an Interamerican Strategy to Promote Public Participation in Decision Making and to extend the scope and spaces for expressing ideas; exchange of information and experiences between governments in their interaction with Civil Society organizations, in the formulation and improvement of programs and policies on Integration and Sustainable Economic Development.

These decisions were ratified and expressed in:

1. In the Quebec Plan of Action corresponding to the Third Summit of the Americas that took place in the city of Quebec (Canada) in April 2001.

2. Direct reference in the Inter-American Democratic Charter (IDC) to the promotion of principles and practices for strengthening the democratic culture in the hemisphere and enhancing public participation at all levels of Society.

3. The creation of a Special Commission in the Inter-American Summit of the Organization of American States (OAS), named: Commission of Participation of Civil Society, for the purpose of maintaining a clear, transparent and permanent interaction between Civil Society Organizations and the political organs of the Organization of American States (OAS).
There are rooted a tradition in Latin American legislation to consider the Municipality as the primary entity of the State structure, provided with autonomous authority to organize itself into Metropolitan Districts, Commonwealths of Municipalities, Consortiums, Strategic Alliances, and other associative modalities with both government and Civil Society Organizations of common and complementary interests.

In the same manner, the inter-municipal cooperation and solidarity of Civil Society Organizations in the making of government decisions highlights the values of an authentic participative democracy in the search of solutions to the:

A. Anarchic growth of urban squatters in cities.
B. Problems of critical poverty and public health;
C. Degradation of hydrographic river basins and illegal forest exploitations.
D. Irreversible damages to the environment through contamination and destruction of eco-systems.
E. Urban criminality, terrorism and personal insecurity.
F. Informality of the regional economy and urban problems.
G. Corruption, family disintegration, unemployment and subsequent social conflicts.

The existence of institutional voids or gaps in the organization of the State restricts communication, coordination and participation between public organizations responsible for the elaboration of a viable “Sustainable Regional and Borderland Economic Development Plan and speed up integration processes.”

Furthermore, there is a urgency to address the deep embedded cultural, political, autocratic and bureaucratic restraints in the process of transferring competences from central governments to state, municipal governments and Civil Society Organizations.

In this regard, COMBAR and the Colombian-Venezuelan Cross Border Regional Assembly submitted a proposal to its members (1998) presenting:

1. The need to work out a Common Agenda on Regional and Cross Border Integration and Sustainable Economic Development with the consensus of the Legislative Councils of the States of Barinas, Portuguesa, Táchira, Mérida, Trujillo and the Autonomous Municipality of Alto Apure, (Apure State).

2. Proposals for incorporation of universities, particularly research centers outreach programs, urban planning, public administration, community affairs and public
policy along with the promotion of Commonwealths of Municipalities in the cross-border integration framework...

3 Strengthening of cross-border Legislative Council’s Permanent Commission, providing them with a functional and flexible Strategic Planning Unit to improve their capacity to solve issues for the protection and rational management of water and forest resources on both sides of the Táchira and Pamplonita River Basins.

1 Strengthening of the organizational structure of the Pro-Development Committee of the State of Barinas (COMBAR) to fulfill the requirements of its mission statement and objectives as stated in this presentation that was submitted at:

✓ the City Futures International Conference in Chicago organized by the College of Urban Planning and Public Affairs (CUPPA) of the University of Chicago at Chicago and the European Urban Research Association (EURA) (July 8-10, 2004); and at

✓ the Cross Border Conference: U.S. Latin American Relations in the 21st Century promoted by the University of San Francisco, San Francisco, California and the Iberian Consular Corps of Northern California.

✓ The LINEAE TERRARUM, International Borders Conference that will take place in El Paso, Texas, (March 27 and March 30 2006); Ciudad Juárez (March 28,2006) and Las Cruces, New Mexico (March 29, 2006) organized by the University of Texas, El Paso; the New Mexico State University, Las Cruces, New México; El Colegio de la Frontera Norte y la Universidad de Ciudad Juárez both in Ciudad Juárez, Chihuahua (Mexico).

Local Development

On October 11th, 1996 meeting at San Cristóbal, Táchira, and the Táchira Union of Mayors including 28 municipalities decided:

To Demand from Central and State government its constitutional rights to:

- promote their own Sustainable Municipal Economic Development;

- accelerate the decentralization process from Central and State Government to Municipalities.

- to improve the channels of communication and coordination with State and National government institutions with programs and projects in their jurisdiction;

- Strengthen regional relationships both public and private to attend the
challenges of governance and the key priorities of economic, social and cultural development;

- Incorporate new technologies to improve the efficiency of their constitutional mandate.

**Commonwealth of Municipalities:**

- To Advance in the creation of Commonwealth of Municipalities as stated in the Organic Law of Municipal Regimes applied to areas such as:
  - Community and Economic Development;
  - Strengthening Community Institutions
  - Tourism and Artisanship;
  - Informal Economy;
  - Labor and Community Issues;
  - Urban and Rural Planning;
  - Public Transportation;
  - Recycle of Waste and Garbage Disposal;
  - Water Resources and Environment Protection;
  - Intra-Regional, Regional and Cross-Border Relations

**ALSO** on April 4th 1994, the Fondo de Promoción Regional del Estado Táchira” (Organization of Regional Promotion of the State of Táchira), COMBAR’s affiliate, produced the document: *Solidarity of the New Metropolitan San Cristóbal Act* signed by the candidates for the Mayor’s position of San Cristóbal, State of Táchira (Venezuela) and distinguished personalities, highlighting reiterating:

1. The role that Municipalities and Organized Civil Society should play to jointly achieve the goals of the Integral Economic Development of the State of Tachira in general and the Metropolitan Municipality of San Cristóbal in particular.

2. The introduction of conceptual, structural and functional reforms geared toward equipping Municipalities with an appropriate capacity to react to the revolutionary changes shaking most countries worldwide, and replacing decadent and obsolete frameworks and cultural attitudes in the new economic, social and technological environment.

3. The divorce of the majority of regional public and private institutions from the new economic and social realities around them; the absence of public policies focused on the well-being and quality of life of people; and the lack of a global-futuristic political vision of needed infrastructure and economic development projects to successfully compete in the unpredictable and volatile international markets.

**COMBAR is seeking** to overcoming cultural and other obstacles, which conflict with
this Declaration of Principles and its goals of strengthening democratic institutions linked to a Sustainable Regional and Borderland Economic Development Plan focused on family, regional and borderland integration.

The proposed pilot project is based on the following premises:

I. AUTHENTIC PARTICIPATIVE DEMOCRACY

a) The proper exercise of an authentic participative democracy focused on citizens and their families is a premise sine qua non to achieve Sustainable Regional and Economic Development of Cities, Commonweath of Municipalities, regions and cross-border territories integration.

b) The Statutory Law of the Municipal Regime confers powers to Municipalities in matters of government with advantages compared with other structures of government power. Due to the proximity of municipalities to citizens within their boundaries, they have the opportunity to orchestrate efficient and effective mechanisms of communication, coordination and community relationships; develop strategic alliances with base organizations and be part of a Commonwealth of Municipalities.

c) The City Council acts as the sounding board of constituents and reflects the composition and legitimacy with provisions to maintain a permanent dialogue with all Productive Sectors and Civil society organizations; it exercises accountability; enacts progress reports on government programs and projects; and acts as liaison with Legislative Councils on issues pertaining to Sustainable Regional Economic Development and borderland integration, sanctioning appropriate legislation to govern the Commonwealth of Municipalities.

d) The Sustainable Regional Economic Development and Borderland integration Master Plan constitutes the Navigational Chart for:

1. Establishing Municipal, Commonwealth and Regional and Borderland Priorities;

2. Undertaking governance and management responsibilities;

3. Creating efficient channels of communication and coordination in the planning and implementation of programs and projects shared with state, regional, national government agencies, Productive Sector and Non Government Organizations (NGO’s).

4. Inducing universities and Non Government Organizations (NGO’s) to engage in the promotion of Sustainable Regional and Borderland Economic Development Planning and to participate vigorously in Municipal and regional research, events, and workshops as well as preparation of the vital human resources to fulfill the requirements of this “Master Plan or Navigational Chart.”
Preparing Ordinances, decrees, resolutions and other legal documents to validate the new Municipal government actions, within the framework of the:

1. “Digital-Global-City-Region Proposal”
   - “Society of Cities, Regions and Borderlands”;
   - “Latin American Integration Processes”;
   - “Authentic Participative Democracy”
   - “Cumbres Iberoamericanas de Jefes de Estado”
   - “Cumbre de las Américas”
   - “Foros Sociales Mundiales”

II. STRENGTHENING MUNICIPAL, REGIONAL AND BORDERLAND INSTITUTIONS

a) It should be Public State policy the strengthening of both public and private Municipal institutions as fundamental pillars of a Legitimate Democratic Systems, particularly the formation of human resources in all government functions: mayors, councilmen, legislators, entrepreneurs and Civil Society leaders as multiplying agents of local and regional cultural values and traditions in the context of the challenges of the New Millennium.

b) Municipalities, Associations of Mayors, City Councils, State Legislators, Universities and Regional Promotional Organizations must favor the formation of strategic alliances, Commonwealths of Municipalities, consortiums, partnerships and other associative forms with the Productive Sector and Non Government Organizations (NGO’s), organized and non organized labor related to Sustainable Regional Economic Development, intra-regional and cross-border integration.

c) Metropolitan Municipalities Commonwealth of Municipalities; Associations of Mayors and Associations of City Councils will strengthen their skills and negotiating capacities in regional, national and international scenarios on subjects such as:

1. Globalization, Strategic Thinking and Planning;

2. Sustainable Regional Economic Development, Tourism, International Trade and Investment;

3. Urban Planning, Transportation and Public Utilities;

4. Environmental Protection, Hydrographic River Basins, Water Resources and Forest Resources management;

5. Exchanges of experiences with other cities and regions on governance, management, accountability and assimilation of new technologies.
Supporting documentation that rests in COMBAR’s files compatible are compatible with the agenda of LINEAE TERRARUM and should be considered to be part of this Declaration of Principles in the opportune evaluation and follow-up in the promotion of the findings of the papers presented at this International Conference, urging the institutional follow to the papers and conclusions achieved in this event.

III. PROMOTION OF SUSTAINABLE REGIONAL AND BORDERLAND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

a) The Municipalities will press to accelerate the processes established by legal mandate for the decentralization and transference of competencies from central government to States and Municipalities for their direct management and/or through the figure of Commonwealth of Municipalities.

b) The Municipalities will resume their role in the Inter-institutional coordination of National and Regional Government plans, programs and projects; such as: the participation in decision and policy making by other government institutions with vested interests in their jurisdiction connected to the Principal Priorities outlined in the following numeral.

c) The preparation of a viable Agenda by Objectives for its immediate application based on:

1. **TOURISM**, as the spearhead of the processes of intraregional, inter-regional associations and strategic alliances pursuing regional-border and international integration in order to materialize the proposed **Society of Sister Regions** through the joint action of selected scenarios in the Western Hemisphere willing to participate in our proposal.

2. Protection and rational handling of **Regional Hydrographic River Basins** hydraulic resources, preservation of eco-systems of biological diversity; handling and rational management of forests, land usage, water resources and status of land entitlements.

3. The promotion of **integrated systems of agro-alimentary chains** based on specific commodities that offer higher comparative and competitive advantages in national and international markets.

Intimately related to the three priorities are:

- The design of new and creative Regional Public Policies to confront the economical, social, cultural, environmental and technological challenges at the level of Municipalities, States and Regions in the context of the New Realities of the Second Millennium.

- The search for a **New Model of Regional and Borderland Integration**
and Sustainable Economic Development that highlights the moral, humanistic, cultural-historical values and the quality of family life and environment in the process of transformation of the City and Region that We Have into the City and Region that We All Want.
References

COMBAR’s Files 1969-2004 The paper is based mainly on COMBAR’s documents, institutional contacts and personal experiences since its foundation up to date.


HAMBLETON, Robin. 2003 “Globalism and Local Democracy” – Challenge and Change in Europe and North America, Edited by Robin Hambleton, Hank V. Savitch and Murray Stewart. PALGRAVE MACMILLAN


