

“Declaration of the Regional Forum for an Agenda on Early Childhood Development”

November 15 and 16, 2017
Bogotá-Colombia

We, representatives of government, multilateral organizations, civil society organizations and academia, have gathered at this regional meeting for Early Childhood in Bogotá on November 15 and 16, 2017 to support the Regional Agenda on Early Childhood Development in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Considering:

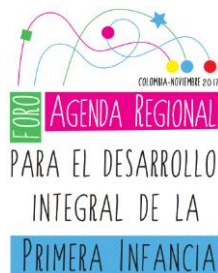
That caring for early childhood is a priority area for the political and social agenda of the States of Latin America and the Caribbean because investing in this fundamental period of life contributes to guaranteeing the rights of children, to the creation of human capital and to generating conditions for the construction of more just, equitable and inclusive societies in the region.

That, although the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean have progressively and steadily devoted efforts and resources to expand coverage and strengthen the quality of services for the care of children under 6 years of age, many challenges remain to guarantee these children their rights and promote their development.

That approval of the Sustainable Development Goals by the member countries of the United Nations sets a global commitment, as well as parameters that guide action in the region.

That the challenges that ensure better conditions for young children require articulation and effective use of the technical and material resources existing in the different countries. Therefore, it is advantageous to agree on a **Regional Agenda** that guides initiatives, allows capitalizing on progress and promotes collaboration on institutional reform processes with the purpose of strengthening and sustaining early childhood policies.

That in this sense, the different sectors (governmental, non-governmental and academic) of the Latin America and the Caribbean countries gathered here today have been working collaboratively since the meeting held in the city of Sao Paulo in 2015, finetuning priority areas and expanding the participation of individuals and organizations. This work has been done with the hope of defining a **Regional Agenda for Early Childhood Development** that can become an instrument for political sustainability in the different countries of the region and facilitate the progress that is required in this area to advance more decisively in guaranteeing the rights of this population.



Agreements:

1st Agreement

Consolidate national policies or plans that adopt a vision of children as individuals with rights, among which development is a key component. These policies or plans must be binding to the various entities and bodies involved and be supported by sustainable investments in the medium- and long-term.

Structure or strengthen spaces or instances of high-level technical and political discussion through which coordination materializes and the intersectoral action necessary to make policies viable is ordered. It is recommended that there be high-level units with political and technical authority, responsible for leading the coordination and articulation between the sectors and with authority over them.

Establish technical cooperation processes between the levels of government existing in each country, aimed at strengthening capacities for the management of this policy at the national and territorial levels.

Finally, strengthen frameworks for financing and budgeting services. For this, it is necessary to adopt frameworks that measure how much is being invested and what the investment should be from a comprehensive care perspective. Likewise, the allocation of resources between programs and initiatives must be carried out to generate the greatest impacts on child development.

2nd Agreement

Strengthen the quality of the management of early childhood development services, ensuring that they are relevant and timely for all early childhood environments and facilities. This requires the establishment of quality verification systems for governmental and non-governmental services for this target population that are based on the expected development of children and define the capacities of the human resources responsible for the care of children and their families as well as the technical, material and infrastructural conditions that guide the sectoral and institutional services (health, education, recreation, social protection, etc.) that must be met by public and private providers.

These systems must include frameworks for monitoring, technical assistance and verification of quality of quality conditions, taking into account the cultural and social characteristics of the target population. It is necessary to monitor compliance with these conditions and implement incentives for those who follow-through and corrective actions for those who do not.

Governments need to build and strengthen the capacity of their technical teams to carry out verification processes and continuous improvement of the quality of services. This requires reliable administrative information and records, effective political and financial commitments, and institutional mechanisms for governance. Similarly, the management of human resources that provide for children and their families must be strengthened.



3rd Agreement

Create collaborative processes to define goals or indicators for early childhood development, with a focus on human rights. To this end, we believe that all the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean should have clear mechanisms for evaluating child development that contemplate its multiple dimensions and allow us to know the changes in and characteristics of children's development. These measuring tools must have national coverage and allow disaggregation of results for the main population groups of interest.

In this regard, it is important that countries develop national assessments as part of a solid institutional infrastructure that ensures the collection and analysis of information on the impact of public policies on early childhood development. At the same time, it would be valuable if such national efforts enabled the possibility of international comparisons, especially within the framework of the Sustainable Development Goals.

4th Agreement

Build and consolidate a socio-political coalition that promotes the priority of integral development in early childhood both at the level of public policies and of citizen commitment. To this end, it is necessary to consolidate collaboration efforts between all interested parties in early childhood development, establishing national spaces in which the authorities of the sectors involved (protection, health, education, culture, among others) meet formally and periodically with allies from civil society, academia, entrepreneurs, the media and communities. The work carried out in these spaces will allow the monitoring of national childhood development policies, plans or strategies and propose ways to strengthen them.

At the same time, it will be necessary to establish, coordinate and strengthen programs for government, international cooperation, academia, the private sector and civil society as well as community organizations focused on the expansion of participation of families to better meet their needs.

The representatives of the governments of the different countries of the Latin American and Caribbean region, of the Multilateral Organizations, of Academia and of the Civil Society subscribe to the following declaration in an original text in Spanish, in the city of Bogotá D.C., on November 16, 2017.