

As a product of this collaboration, Latin America's income has grown at rates approaching, and in recent years attaining, the overall targets we and our neighbors set in 1961 at Punta del Este. Behind these higher rates of growth lie the new roads, schools, power facilities, and other types of infrastructure to which our capital and our knowledge have so importantly contributed. Behind them, too, lie the people and resources of the Latin American countries themselves, increasingly dedicated to the tasks of development. And, finally, what must never be underestimated, the higher rates of growth reflect the growing sophistication and understanding of our neighbors in matters of public policy, and a manifest determination to use public policy to shape and improve their own destinies. This is resulting, for example, in reduced rates of inflation, in stronger fiscal and budgetary performance and in more rational monetary and foreign exchange rate systems. All of these improvements are vital to the achievement of adequate rates of economic development.

But encouraging as these trends may be, the plain fact is that the progress remains too slow. There remains much unfinished and urgent business. I am convinced that our friends in the hemisphere are themselves determined to move on to major new efforts. And as they move, we must move with them lest this opportunity be lost at a crucial juncture in the history of the Western Hemisphere.

Now, what is this opportunity?

At Buenos Aires, the Foreign Ministers reached broad agreement on a six-point agenda which, if realized in a program of action, could together with ongoing efforts bring this hemisphere into a new era of unity and progress:

1. Latin American economic integration and industrial development. The economic integration of Latin America will be a long, complex, and difficult task. It is nevertheless apparent to me that the Latin American governments, with our support, are determined to make a strong effort to form a common market over the next decade. This is a decision of historic proportions—probably the most important made since these countries became independent.

2. Multinational action for infrastructure projects. The success of economic integration in Latin America will depend in part upon the adequacy of infrastructure facilities to link the regions and economies of the continent even more closely together. As part of the integration process, Latin American countries will join in multinational action for the development of the power facilities, transportation, telecommunications networks, and river basins which will provide these vital links.

3. Measure to improve international trade conditions for Latin America. As the committee knows, this is a subject of great importance to the Latin Americans. We expect the Presidents to consider what all of us might do to expand and improve trade conditions for Latin America, including the reduction of existing discrimination against Latin American exports to the rest of the world.

4. Modernization of rural life and increased agricultural productivity. Here it is intended to develop improved agricultural programs. The Latin American countries have agreed at Buenos Aires to a set of guidelines for progress in agriculture and to periodic CIAP