

CONTINENTAL MESSAGE OF PANAMA*
**THE 7th GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE INTER-AMERICAN CONFERENCE ON
SOCIAL SECURITY**

Considering:

That since its foundation it has decided to establish ties of solidarity between Social Security organizations, between men and between the nations of this Continent and in order to find a new inspiration to promote social justice;

That institutions have recognized that nothing should have greater importance for the American peoples than to seek social welfare, so the widest collaboration among countries should be encouraged in order to facilitate the solution of problems that surpass the possibilities of each nation for the development of Social Security;

That the objectives of Social Security in America have been specified, by promoting the understanding between institutions and establishing norms and criteria for the most effective protection of the sectors covered by the system, formulating plans to extend the regime to unincorporated sectors:

That as long as benefits do not protect the majority of the population and are not upheld by a categorically distributive financial mechanism that equitably distributes the regime's burdens and taxes primarily the highest income sectors, our social security systems will not fully comply with their objectives;

That the Conference has acknowledged the importance that the integration of Social Security programmes to the economic planning of the State as expression of the integral development of the American countries;

That the action of international organisations related to Social Security expressed through the procedures provided for the coordination of their activities in the American Continent has contributed to the social policy of the countries;

That despite the work accomplished by the Conference, obstacles persist in most of our countries that have delayed the progress of Social Security and prevented it from effectively spreading to the less developed areas and social sectors of the Continent;

Agrees to:

* "Seguridad Social" Journal, issue 51, *Memoria de Labores*, Vol 1, *Actas y Resoluciones*, May-June 1968, Mexico.

Recognise that the challenges of misery, helplessness, unhealthiness and ignorance remain, making it necessary to attempt new procedures to overcome, as far as possible, the obstacles that oppose the comprehensive attainment of social security in our countries; Acknowledge that the transformation of the classic social insurance regime to the new concept of Social Security is a process that cannot be uniform in the American nations, due to regional conditions and modalities;

Accept that the low income levels of the unprotected population, specifically in rural areas, compels us to find original methods to extend the benefits of the regime;

Assess, in all its importance, the technical studies aimed at incorporating social security programmes into the different national development plans.

Under such considerations and agreements, the Conference

Declares:

That Social Security has a much greater task to complete in the countries of the Americas than it has been able to accomplish to date, to honour the principles that support it and effectively serve the well-being of our peoples, and for this reason the institutions are committed to use the means and resources at their disposal and to strengthen their cooperation, in order to undertake concrete action plans for the coming years, aimed at the following goals:

1. Work at the highest levels of efficiency compatible with the organizational capacity of each country, in order to strengthen the reputation of Social Security and the trust granted to it by the peoples and governments of America.
2. Review, where appropriate, the benefits of American social security, so that they contribute effectively to the economic and social development of our peoples, within the institutional framework that each institution has in a scope of action.
3. Program the benefits of our regimes so that they are not excessively overburdened with the economic weight of the older population and are, in consequence, capable to attend other sectors of the population more extensively, granting children the maximum protection as the most significant expression of human potential.
4. Achieve, in the nearest future, that our Social Security systems overcome the rigid technical courses dictated by the experience of countries with less demographic increase

and greater economic development, in order to be able to take full advantage of the resources available to them in tasks and social investments that cannot be postponed.

5. Undertake an intensive effort so that, in practice, the people protected by the regime enjoy the protection granted by Social Security institutions and so that, within the real possibilities of each country, the coverage of contingencies is increased.

6. Fulfil the right to Social Security of all the inhabitants of the Continent, identifying formulas that go beyond the framework of worker-employer relations and allow everyone, whatever their position, inside or outside the production process, to access the benefits of the regime and be favoured by a national mechanism of social solidarity.

7. Push for the granting of comprehensive Social Security protection to the entire population, not stopping the extension of the regime, even if they have, for now, to be granted to unprotected sectors, in particular to the rural population.

8. Complement the implementation of Social Security in less developed areas with educational programmes and the organisation of the community effort, which expedite the transformation of their cultural patterns and their material conditions of existence.

9. Promote, by all possible means, that our systems fulfil their redistributive function of the national wealth, substantially expanding their geographical and social field of application seeking that the burdens of the regime are proportionally distributed among the entire population, with the help of ordinary tax systems.

10. Achieve that the agencies in charge of planning the economic and social development of our countries grant the highest priority to Social Security programmes, creating evaluation and joint programming committees, and conducting research that is widely disseminated.

11. Coordinate the work conducted by Social Security institutions, not only with those organisations that are in charge of similar tasks, but also with all public agencies that carry out social policy programmes and with fiscal and planning mechanisms, in order to design a general social welfare programme in each country.

12. Participate more actively in the economic and social plans drawn up by international organisations, especially those in the American area. Endeavour that cooperation and technical assistance in the field of Social Security are included in the framework of bilateral and multilateral relations between countries.

13. Commence studies that promote the establishment of supranational social security systems, through which resources from trade relations between nations can be used, in

order to compensate the effort and work of the population of countries that produce raw materials and to fulfil, for their benefit, the principles that inspire all our work.

Thus, it is reaffirmed in Panama that the continental action of the American countries has, among its most important purposes, to update the Bolivarian thinking of the Amphictyony, united by social security, for the achievement of the well-being of our peoples as a peace and social justice goal, founded on the most absolute respect for the dignity of the human person.

Done at Panama, Republic of Panama, on the twenty-second day of February, in the year of one thousand nine hundred and sixty-eight.