

**POPULAR DEMOCRATIC PARTY  
DEVELOPMENT OF THE COMMONWEALTH**

The people of Puerto Rico, in the exercise of their sovereignty, their natural right to self government and their free will as ultimate sources of their political power, hereby reaffirm the validity of the Commonwealth established as an autonomous political body, that is neither colonial or territorial, in permanent union with the United States under a covenant that cannot be invalidated or altered unilaterally and proposes its autonomic development. The relationship between Puerto Rico and the United States will continue to be based on common defense, market and currency and on the irrevocability of the U.S. citizenship, acquired by birth and protected by the U.S. Constitution.

This relationship guarantees the autonomous development of Puerto Rico based on the democratic precept of government with the consent of the governed and the recognition that Puerto Rico is a nation with its own history, idiosyncrasy, culture and Spanish language.

To achieve its maximum economic progress and well-being, the people of Puerto Rico propose to develop Commonwealth retaining all the powers that are not delegated to the United States. Under Puerto Rico's fiscal autonomy, economic development areas will be identified in which joint action can produce jobs and other benefits for both parties, including the flexibility in the use of federal funds, providing that programs of direct aid to individuals will continue as they are present. The Commonwealth will be able to enter into commercial and tax agreements, among others, with other countries, and belong to regional and international entities, consistent with the common interests of defense and security between the United States and Puerto Rico, as agreed to in the covenant.

Once the request for the development of the people of Puerto Rico is approved, a Constituent Assembly will be called to negotiate with the U.S. government the terms and conditions of the covenant, which will include a mechanism to approve the application of legislation approved by the U.S. Congress.

**ARTICLE I – PUERTO RICAN IDENTITY**

**A. PUERTO RICAN NATIONALITY**

Puerto Ricans have a common history, idiosyncrasy, culture and language that constitute a specific nationality separate from that of any other nation.

## **B. PUERTO RICAN CITIZENSHIP**

Persons born in Puerto Rico are Puerto Rican citizens by birth and their Puerto Rican citizenship is transmittable to their descendants as determined by the Commonwealth and would have the rights, privileges and obligations that derive from it.

## **ARTICLE II – BASIS OF THE UNION**

The union between Puerto Rico and the United States will continue to be based on the following fundamental elements determined by Puerto Rico freely and in agreement with the United States:

### **A. COMMON CITIZENSHIP**

People born in Puerto Rico will continue to be citizens of the United States by birth and this citizenship will continue to be protected by the Constitution of the United States and by this Covenant and will not be unilaterally revocable.

### **B. COMMON DEFENSE**

The United States will maintain authority and responsibility over defense matters. This will include: the same responsibility for the defense of Puerto Rico and its people as the United States and its people; denying and limiting military or strategic access to Puerto Rico to any foreign power, maintaining the bases or other military installations currently operating in Puerto Rico as well as the National Guard; stipulating that the case of the Municipality of Vieques will be the object of the highest attention in agreement with the legitimate call of its residents; and, any additional need would be considered and dealt with through specific and separate agreements.

### **C. COMMON CURRENCY**

The U.S. dollar is and will continue to be the currency in Puerto Rico.

### **D. COMMON MARKET**

A common market will continue to exist between Puerto Rico and the United States, by which the free flow of goods and services between the two countries will continue.

## **ARTICLE III – DISTRIBUTION OF POWERS**

### **A. SELF GOVERNMENT**

The Commonwealth emanates from the power of the people to govern themselves, and for that reason, the people of Puerto Rico retain all the powers that have not been delegated to the United States.

### **B. DELEGATION OF POWERS**

The powers related to the Federal laws related to defense, currency, U.S. citizenship, Social Security, Medicare, unemployment insurance, banks and brokerage, Postal Service and the programs for providing social and educational assistance to citizens and veterans are delegated to the United States. In addition, international relations are delegated to the extent consisted with this Covenant.

### **C. SHARED POWERS**

Areas of special cooperation will be identified in which the United States and the Commonwealth will exercise shared powers for the benefit of both people through the process established in Article XII.

## **ARTICLE IV – RIGHTS OF CITIZENS**

### **A. CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHTS**

The U.S. citizens residing in Puerto Rico will be protected by all the rights, privileges and immunities granted by the Constitution of the United States and the Commonwealth.

### **B. ECONOMIC BENEFITS**

The Federal programs that provide social and educational assistance directly to Puerto Rico's residents, such as the Nutritional Assistance Program, Pell Grants and educational loans, among others, will continue and be guided by the applicable Federal and State regulations.

The United States recognizes as acquired rights Federal programs for veterans and Social Security, Medicare, and unemployment insurance benefits for which Puerto Rican workers and employers have made and will continue to make the corresponding Federal contributions.

## **ARTICLE V – ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

### **A. WITH THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA**

To promote Puerto Rico's economic development, and considering the present and future relations between Puerto Rico and the United States, the U.S. commits to provide the Commonwealth an annual block grant adjusted for inflation, so the Government of Puerto Rico can continue to provide social assistance, develop public works and infrastructure, and provide incentives for the creation of jobs and socioeconomic development.

The U.S. and Puerto Rico will identify and agree on areas of economic development in which joint action will produce jobs and other economic benefits for both parties, including the creation of special incentives programs for investment in the islands.

### **B. INTERNATIONAL**

The Commonwealth will have control over international trade and will establish a policy to promote its maximum economic development. To that effect, it will have the capacity to enter into commercial and tax agreements, among others, with other countries, consistent with the common interests of the defense and security of Puerto Rico and the United States.

The Commonwealth will be able to enter into international agreements and belong to regional and international organizations consistent with the common interests of the defense and security of Puerto Rico and the United States.

The United States commits to support the participation or membership of Puerto Rico in the agreements and organizations to which this article refers.

## **ARTICLE VI – FEDERAL LANDS**

The Government of the United States will transfer to Puerto Rico the lands that now it has in Puerto Rico with the exception of those lands that are used for common defense or that are necessary to exercise the powers delegated in this Covenant.

## **ARTICLE VII – AREAS OF SPECIAL COOPERATION**

Puerto Rico and the United States will establish other areas of special cooperation intended to guarantee the quality of life of Puerto Ricans and to continue nourishing from the collective experiences of institutional and local development of both peoples. For the sake of an orderly and calm future and development in harmony with the cultural, spiritual, psychological, and economic nature of both peoples, Puerto Rico and the United States commit to jointly determine strategies to: control drug trafficking; regulate communications; protect the borders from illegal immigration; protect the environment and recognize guarantees of mutual benefit consistent with international rules; promote a new basis for cooperation between workers and management; deal with natural disasters; share technological advances in the sectors of agriculture, medicine, pharmacology, criminal justice, and other disciplines in the areas of Natural and Social Sciences and Humanities.

## **ARTICLE VIII – FEDERAL COURT**

The Federal Court will have jurisdiction over matters that arise from: provisions of the Constitution of the United States and of the Federal laws that apply to Puerto Rico consistent with this Covenant and not in violation with the laws of the Constitution of Puerto Rico. Spanish and English will be the official languages of that court.

## **ARTICLE IX – RESOLVING DISPUTES**

### **A. NEGOTIATION COMMITTEE**

Any controversy about the interpretation of this Covenant will be resolved through negotiations between the parties to this Covenant, that is the United States and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico. In all negotiations, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico will be represented by a negotiating committee of three (3) members appointed by the governor and confirmed by seventy-five percent (75%) of each of the two (2) legislative houses of Puerto Rico.

At least, two (2) of the three (3) members of the committee should believe in the political philosophy described in this Covenant, that is, be Commonwealthers. In the same manner, the United States of America will be represented by a committee of three (3) members appointed by the President of the United States.

#### **B. COMMISSION TO RESOLVE DISPUTES**

If it is not possible to resolve a controversy through a negotiation between the parties, the controversy will be submitted to the Commission to Resolve Disputes. This commission will have five (5) members, two (2) appointed by the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, two (2) appointed by the United States of America and a fifth member appointed by majority of these four (4). The five (5) members will select a chairman from their membership.

Decisions of this Commission in disputes between the Governments of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico and the United States of America regarding the interpretation of this Covenant will be final and firm.

#### **ARTICLE X – LEGALITY**

The agreement between the people of Puerto Rico and the government of the United States of America will have the force recognized by the constitutional and international rights in force as a bilateral covenant that recognizes rights and delegates powers, based on mutual consent, that cannot be unilaterally renounced or altered.

#### **ARTICLE XI – SYMBOLS**

The symbols, flags and hymns of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico will continue to be as at present.

#### **ARTICLE XII – OTHER INTERNATIONAL ASPECTS**

The Commonwealth of Puerto Rico will retain the authority to ratify cultural, educational, scientific and sports agreements.

### **ARTICLE XIII – NEGOTIATION**

- a. Once this development proposal is approved by the people of Puerto Rico, a Constituent Assembly will be called that will negotiate with the Government of the United States the terms and conditions of the association between Puerto Rico and the United States and the specific drafting of such agreement on behalf of the people of Puerto Rico. This Constituent Assembly will not be able to adopt proposals that undermine or cancel the mandate expressed by the people of Puerto Rico or that undermines the precepts of common citizenship, market, currency and defense, or against the Puerto Rican national identity.
- b. The Constituent Assembly will design and propose to the Government of the United States a mechanism for a specific agreement regarding the application of legislation approved by the Congress of the United States after the adoption of the covenant and that the people of Puerto Rico wish to have extended to Puerto Rico. The people of Puerto Rico will elect a Resident Commissioner who will represent Puerto Rico before the Government of the United States and who will be considered a Member of the U.S. House of Representatives for purposes of all legislative matters that have to do with Puerto Rico, but whose role will also be extended to representing Puerto Rico before the Executive Branch of the United States.
- c. The main political parties of Puerto Rico will be represented in the Constituent Assembly and will be able to nominate candidates to be part of the assembly.
- d. The Covenant will take effect after it has been negotiated and approved by the Government of the United States and the Constituent Assembly, and it has been approved by the people of Puerto Rico in a referendum called for that purpose.
- e. Any change to the terms of this Covenant will have to be approved by the people of Puerto Rico in a special vote conducted consistent with its democratic processes and institutions.
- f. The Constituent Assembly will not have authority to alter, modify, amend, and/or change the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico.

**Approved by the Governing Board of the Popular Democratic Party  
On October 15, 1998**