



**DURING THE PRESENTATION OF THE EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT REPORT, ALAS  
OBTAINS THE COMMITMENT OF LATIN AMERICAN COUNTRIES TOWARDS EARLY  
CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT FROM THE SUMMIT 2010**

**Estoril, Portugal, November 30, 2009** – ALAS received the support of the President of Argentina, Cristina Fernández, who will chair the XX Iberoamerican Summit in 2010, to include Early Childhood Development in the Agenda of this diplomatic event. In a press conference that took place today, November 30<sup>th</sup>, in the frame of the XIX Iberoamerican Summit of Chiefs of State and Government, the President accepted Shakira's petition to contribute to change the history and destiny of the children of the region, by setting the topic of children between 0 and 6 and the one of early education as the core topic of her forthcoming Summit.

“Early education is to human life what a foundation is to a building; if the foundations are not built strong enough, we will be always repairing it. This is how for decades the Governments in Latin America have been spending billions, rather than investing, repairing and finding temporary solutions to foundation problems. Why not invest since now in the foundation of our future: our children in their first 6 years of life, which is when their brain and basic functions develop”, declared the Colombian singer who is founder and activist of ALAS together with fellow Latin American artists such as Alejandro Sanz and Fernando Olvera from the Mexican group Maná, among others.

The press conference was the scenario in which the Regional Alliance for Early Childhood Development was presented, and where the Presidents of Chile, Colombia, Mexico, Panama and Argentina joined Shakira and Jeffrey Sachs, Director of the Earth Institute at Columbia University, in the search of ways that lead to the universal coverage of education, nutrition, and attention to health for children between 0 and 6 years old. The ECD Report was presented as the first product of this alliance and as a first step to accomplish this goal as it is an overview of the state of early childhood in the region.

The Mexican President Felipe Calderón ratified his country's support to ALAS Foundation and assured, modifying a Mexican popular saying that “Every child should come with a medical insurance under his arm”. By the other hand, Álvaro Uribe, President of Colombia, spoke about his country's efforts towards early childhood through the Colombian Institute of Family Welfare (ICBF for its acronym in Spanish) and the Community Mothers Program.

The President of Chile Michelle Bachelet concluded by saying, “I am convinced that investing in our children is fundamental from the ethical, social, and even economical point of view. Every resource invested in our children is what will allow us to make a difference”.

In front of an audience of international media, ALAS and the Secretary general of Iberoamerican Secretariat, Enrique Iglesias, sign the agreement to promote the early childhood component of the program “Educational Goals 2021: the Education we want for the Generation of the Bicentenaries”, which seeks to achieve universal coverage in education by 2021.

This way, Early Childhood Development gained prominence among the Latin American Presidents, and constitutes a promise for the region's human, social and economical development.

Access to images of the meeting: <ftp://agenciazero.net>  
user: fundacionalas , pass:shakira