



June 2001

COPA MEETING IN QUEBEC CITY

VISIT COPA.QC.CA

Executive Committee

Network of Women

Parliaments of the Americas

Calendars

Links of interest

COPA NEWS

The COPA Executive Committee held a meeting in Quebec City, Canada, this past April 17 to 19, in the days just preceding the Third Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Americas, which took place in the same city. Parliamentarians from some twenty countries took this opportunity to reaffirm that it is essential for them to be involved in the integration processes, and to be able to make their voice heard in the important negotiations that are under way at the hemispheric level.



During the Executive Committee meeting, the parliamentarians worked on the drafting of the organization's permanent constitution, as well as on the development of a permanent financing plan for COPA. Two thematic work sessions were held, one on the strengthening of representative democracy and the other on the negotiations of the Free Trade Area of the Americas, during which the parliamentarians heard five guest speakers. They also drafted the Quebec City Parliamentary Declaration, as well as a Plan of Action through which they made the commitment, in particular, to hold public hearings on the FTAA in the parliaments of the Americas, to become more involved in the FTAA negotiations, to establish a watch over the respect, in each state, of the basic principles of democracy and to develop a parliamentary code of ethics.

The parliamentarians present also took part in certain activities of the Second Peoples' Summit of the Americas, during which they were able to debate, with representatives of civil society, the issues relating to the creation of the FTAA.

During the closing session, the Final Declaration of the Peoples' Summit of the Americas was presented to the parliamentarians. The participants in the Executive Committee meeting also received certain mayors of world heritage cities and historic cities of the Americas, who held an extraordinary meeting in Quebec City on April 17 and 18, 2001, and who presented their Final Declaration to the COPA parliamentarians.

NEWSWORTHY EVENTS

May 17-18

Parlatino Meetings, Sao Paulo, Brazil:
Compilation of the national constitutions of Latin America on the integration process
Procedures for the reporting of human rights violations

June 3-5

XXXI OAS General Assembly, San José, Costa Rica

June 21-22

Presidential Summit and plenary session of the Joint Parliamentary Committee of MERCOSUR, Asunción, Paraguay

July 11-13

1st Summit on Social Debt in Latin America and the Caribbean, Caracas, Venezuela

August 8-11

1st Parlatino Interparliamentary Conference on Economy and Finance, Sao Paulo, Brazil

October 18-21

IInd Parlatino Interparliamentary Conference on Health, Sao Paulo, Brazil



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Your comments

Report of meeting, [Declaration and Plan of Action of the Quebec City meeting](#)

MEETING OF THE NETWORK OF WOMEN PARLIAMENTARIANS OF THE AMERICAS

The Executive Committee of the Network of Women Parliamentarians of the Americas met this past April 16 and 17, one day before the meeting of the COPA Executive Committee. The participants discussed the place of women in the process of economic integration of the Americas and identified the pathways of action open to them in order to participate and to be fully involved in the process.



In the Declaration adopted at the conclusion of their meeting, the women parliamentarians urged the Heads of State and Government of the Americas to create a working group to analyse the socioeconomic effects of the Free Trade Area of the Americas, in particular by studying the living conditions of women. They also agreed to hold information and awareness activities on the FTAA with their respective populations, and more specifically with women. The meeting also provided an opportunity to bring matters up to date on the achievements of the Network and to observe that its creation strengthened the initiative of women parliamentarians and the advancement, in their respective parliaments, of the legislation concerning the living conditions of women.

Report of the meeting and [Declaration of the Executive Committee of the Women's Network](#)

THIRD GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF COPA IN RIO DE JANEIRO

Following the Quebec City meeting, Brazilian federal Representative and COPA President Mr. Geraldo Magela announced that the organization's next General Assembly will be held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, from November 18 to 21, 2001. Program details will be announced in the near future.

THE AMERICAS

THIRD SUMMIT OF HEADS OF STATE AND GOVERNMENT OF THE AMERICAS

At the Third Summit of the Americas, which took place on April 20 to 22, 2001, in Quebec City, Canada, the Heads of State and Government confirmed their intention to create a Free Trade Area of the Americas by 2005. They also adopted a democracy clause, which makes the maintenance of a democratic government a condition for participation in the Summits process, which includes the FTAA negotiations.

The Plan of Action adopted at the Summit puts forward measures fostering the respect of human rights, the rule of law, financial stability, sustainable development and gender equality. Over the next three years, the Inter-American Development Bank and the World Bank will devote 56 billion American dollars to the achievement of these objectives.

Sources :

http://198.103.104.118/minpub/Publication.asp?FileSpec=/Min_Pub_Docs/104174.htm

<http://www.dfait-maeci.gc.ca>

TRADE MINISTERS DEAL WITH TRANSPARENCY AND DIFFERENCES IN LEVEL OF DEVELOPMENT

At their meeting in Buenos Aires on April 7, the Trade ministers of the Americas came to the decision to make public the preliminary draft of the FTAA agreement.

They also adopted certain measures, according to which differences in level of development and in the size of the economies of the region will be taken into consideration in the negotiations. Thus, the Trade Negotiations Committee will have to formulate guidelines by November 2001, for the negotiation groups, in order to define ways of applying the treatment of the differences in the levels of development and the size of economies.

Source: http://www.ftaa-alca.org/ministerials/BAMIN_e.asp

THE PEOPLES' SUMMIT OPPOSES THE PROJECT OF A FREE TRADE AREA OF THE AMERICAS

At the conclusion of the Second Peoples' Summit of the Americas, held in Quebec City this past April 16 to 20, the participants representing a large number of civil society organizations issued a Final Declaration in which they stated their opposition to the project of a Free Trade Area of the Americas. According to them, the Heads of State and Government have made several commitments, since 1994, to improve the living conditions of the populations of the hemisphere, but have not kept their promises. Only the negotiations on the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) have moved forward. They describe this project as racist, sexist, inequitable and destructive of the environment.

The participants in the Peoples' Summit propose to build new pathways of hemispheric integration based on democracy, equality, solidarity, the respect of human rights and the environment. They also demand the primacy of human rights and of collective rights over trade agreements; the full respect of fundamental labour rights; states that promote the common good, and that are able to intervene actively to ensure the production and distribution of wealth; socially productive and ecologically responsible investment; fair trade; and democratic mechanisms for the adoption of any eventual agreement, including its ratification by referendum.

Source: <http://www.sommetdespeuples.org/>

WOMEN AND POLITICAL POWER IN THE AMERICAS

During the Third Summit of the Americas, the Women's Leadership Conference of the Americas (WLCA) issued a report on women and political power in the Americas. According to the WLCA, the number of women holding decision-making positions in politics is a concrete indicator of the countries' will to fulfil their commitments toward equity between men and women.

The report presents the performance of 24 countries of the hemisphere. Although the

participation of women in politics has considerably improved throughout the Americas, it remains below the levels of participation achieved in Scandinavia, and below the minimum level of representation of 30% set by the United Nations. The report maintains that the improvement of performance depends in particular on the willingness of Heads of State and Government to appoint more women to ministerial positions.

The WLCA has the objective of ensuring that women's issues are debated in the context of the Summits process. Its actions resulted in having these issues placed on the agenda of the First Summit of the Americas in Miami, in 1994.

Source : **Women and Power in the Americas: A Report Card**, www.iadialog.org

PARLIAMENTARY NEWSBRIEF

FINANCING OF ELECTION CAMPAIGNS

The federal Senate of Argentina is currently working on developing a project to reform the financing and transparency of election campaigns. The project under study aims to create an electoral verification mechanism and to limit private contributions to political parties, as well as the duration of election campaigns. A similar electoral reform project was also proposed by the *Partido por la Democracia* of the House of Representatives of Chile, aiming more particularly to achieve a balance between the maximum level of expenses permitted and a minimum level of funds available for each candidate.

Several countries of the Americas have already adopted provisions on the financing and control of expenditures in their electoral codes. However, these provisions do not all include independent mechanisms of monitoring and control, or precise limits on financing. It should be kept in mind that the parliamentarians participating at the last COPA General Assembly, held in Puerto Rico in July 2000, had made a commitment to encourage, within their respective assemblies, the adoption and enforcement of strict rules to supervise the financing of political parties and election campaigns, and to ensure that these measures are submitted to independent control mechanisms.

Sources: www.parlamentario.com (16/05/01), www.emol.com (10/05/01)

WHAT IS THE COPA?

The Parliamentary Confederation of the Americas is a forum that brings together the assemblies of the unitary, federal, federated and associated States, regional parliaments and interparliamentary organizations of the Americas. An initiative of parliamentarians, the Confederation fosters dialogue on issues related to inter-American cooperation and in particular, to the Summits of Heads of State and Government of the Americas and the process of creation of the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA). It aims to reinforce parliamentary democracy and to create a new synergy between the legislative leaders of the Americas.