

Strategic Plan

Parliamentary Confederation of the Americas (COPA)

2004-2005

INTRODUCTION

Given the importance of the VI General Assembly of COPA to be held in Brazil in November 2004, we must consider the series of factors discussed below.

We must work together to make this COPA project possible. The main challenges are 1) ill-defined COPA programming, which means we must first draw up a list of legal and administrative requirements, and 2) the need for a critical overview of the political issues.

Other challenges include COPA's current disorganization, the lack of accurate information on political contacts in each country, and parliamentarian and parliament membership levels.

Field work will be necessary to strengthen COPA. Specifically, each secretariat must draw up a list of contacts and assess the participation level within each country.

Now more than ever, COPA must be a political and parliamentary forum for discussion of the major issues that will influence the future of the Americas, including active participation in Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) negotiations and the formation of interest groups on parliamentary topics.

We must work to remedy the situation, particularly by forging ties with organizations similar to our own, including FIPA¹ and PARLATINO², in order to create partnerships and spur discussions focused on the same political objectives.

Parliamentarians must participate in interim events and the General Assembly in order to better understand the organization as well as share information with various segments of society on issues involving foreign policy and the creation of FTAA.

To this end, COPA must become more open and form study groups in cooperation with universities and international organizations that focus on parliamentary issues, thereby expanding its field of action to new avenues, particularly in the sociocultural arena.

By fostering discussion and policy-making on issues such as the FTAA negotiation process, the Mercosur Parliament, and the Parliament of the Americas, we will make room for innovative proposals to advance COPA.

Another key challenge for COPA is funding, an area that has always been overlooked and now requires active attention.

We must establish a rate structure, in accordance with the document already in force, for the dues required of parliamentary organizations, houses of representatives, and assemblies of national and federated states and provinces, as well as associated interparliamentary organizations.

We must implement a fairly objective funding policy to ensure the organization is both strong and respected in the future. Parliamentarians must take an active role in this initiative.

Another COPA aim is to integrate parliamentarians from associated countries, starting with electoral observation in countries within the hemisphere.

¹Inter-Parliamentary Forum of the Americas

²Latin American Parliament

We are still at the initial stages and must draw up guidelines and a travel schedule for COPA members. Electoral observation is an important service we offer to democracies of the Americas.

TRAVEL SCHEDULE

We must be very careful in developing our schedule of missions, since missions tie in with activities of some to concern all parliamentarians of the Americas, such as Mercosur and FTAA.

Below is a list of events for an international schedule aimed at actively involving and integrating COPA in these key forums.

APRIL - Inter-Parliamentary Forum of the Americas meeting, Santiago de Chile, Chile

APRIL - Inter-Parliamentary Union meeting, Mexico City, Mexico

MAY - Network of Women Parliamentarians of the Americas - COPA meeting, Puerto Rico

JUNE - FTAA Negotiating Committee meeting, Panama City, Panama

JULY - NCSL meeting, Salt Lake City, United States

AUGUST - FTAA Negotiating Committee meeting, Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago

SEPTEMBER - Southern Cone - COPA meeting

DISCUSSION WITH PARTNERS

4.1 BRAZIL

We must maintain close ties with the following parliamentary organizations and the executive branch in order to expand our institutional relations while strengthening our ties with the Ministry of Foreign Relations:

- HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES AND FEDERAL SENATE
- FEDERAL GOVERNMENT: MEETING AND CONTACT WITH PRESIDENT OF BRAZIL
- MINISTRY OF FOREIGN RELATIONS, STATE GOVERNMENTS, AND GOVERNMENT CORPORATIONS

4.2 MERCOSUR

Re-establishing relations with the Uruguay and Paraguay parliaments is crucial, given the absence of representatives from these two countries at recent COPA events.

As Mercosur Parliament discussions intensify, we must establish contacts with parliamentarians of these countries and tell them about COPA.

It goes without saying that Chile and Bolivia also deserve our attention. These two countries have remained outside COPA discussions. They should be better informed of COPA activities.

4.3 FTAA NEGOTIATION MEETINGS AND MEETINGS IN THE REGIONS

As indicated in the travel schedule section above, two FTAA negotiation meetings are already slated for 2004.

They will take place in Panama City, Panama, and Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago, and will be an excellent opportunity to meet with parliamentarians from Central American countries and the Caribbean.

4.4 WORK CONFERENCES WITH PARTNERS

Productive permanent relationships must be established with international UN³ organizations including PAHO⁴, ILO⁵, CELA⁶, UNESCO⁷, and CIESPAL⁸, as well as non-governmental organizations active internationally.

³United Nations

⁴Pan American Health Organization

⁵International Labor Organization

⁶Center for Latino, Latin American, and Caribbean Studies

⁷United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization

⁸International Center for Higher Studies in Journalism for Latin America

COPA SECRETARIATS

Secretariat of Information and Communications—URGENT

We must immediately set up a structure within COPA to produce and disseminate information to the public (through the media) and to promote COPA initiatives and concerns.

The priorities of this communication structure will include developing and implementing a Website through the secretariats of Brazil and Canada. Among other things, this will enable us to create an information agency to publicize activities on the COPA work schedule.

The Website will highlight COPA's planning and executive capacity while providing parliamentarians of other countries access to this information.

Initially, the Website content will be in Portuguese and Spanish (through the Secretariat of Brazil). The Secretariat of Québec will handle translation into French and English.

This communication structure will be used to develop a database for parliamentarians and distribute journalistic content such as press releases, media kits, an interview schedule, live interviews, and newsletters.

ORGANIZATION

As the Secretariat of Brazil has become the Secretariat of the Presidency, we must discuss the next steps with Mexico and Québec. A meeting must be held in March or April 2004 in Brazil to settle this matter.

MAILINGS—INFORMATION FLOW

We must send out the documents from the November 2003 event in Venezuela and establish a fast and efficient system for circulating information via email, mail, and the *COPA Magazine*.

This is a major challenge for COPA because it is a presidential responsibility, and information must be more accessible to parliamentarians so that they may form an opinion on the organization's work.

MAILING LIST

The main communication tool of any organization is an up-to-date mailing list for regularly sending news or notices to members. We must work with the other secretariats to develop a reliable list.

This and the preceding activities will help us establish a routine for circulating information and news, which will allow our network to grow.

ADMINISTRATIVE ISSUES

FUNDRAISING

Fundraising is the most important strategic planning issue, since funding keeps the organization going and will determine our course of action when Ms Maninha becomes president in February 2004.

We are planning a series of visits to state governors to promote COPA and the November 2004 General Assembly.

The Paraná state governor has submitted an initial proposal to hold the event in the town of Foz do Iguaçu, which would cut costs and make sponsorships easier to obtain. The governor is excited about organizing this event of international significance.

We also suggest seeking funding from government corporations, legislative assemblies, international organizations, and the federal government of Brazil.

This could be done by individuals or businesses, or by parliamentarians and their government contacts, in order to promote the General Assembly while simultaneously raising funds.

Discussion of this issue is open and must be expanded to generate more than one option and lead to a final agreement on organizing this momentous international event.

COST ESTIMATE—EARMARKING OF FUNDS

A Management Committee must be created to go over the basic plan and suggest different ways of earmarking funds.

A more detailed analysis of the estimates presented will help us determine the scope of future expenses, reassess our finances, and perform quarterly updates in order to develop a realistic budget.

This issue must be discussed further by the COPA Management Committee to be formed by the president.

Since we will be relying on funding from government corporations, state governments, the federal government, and the house of representatives, we must carefully control spending and define how funds are to be used.

As mentioned above, the COPA Secretariat has done this satisfactorily for two years, with its accounts being certified by the House of Representatives.

Concurrent to the Management Committee meeting, an awareness-raising seminar will be held with the media including journalists from various countries, primarily from the Southern Cone, given its geographic proximity. This should boost interest in the General Assembly and foster greater sympathy and more beneficial use of COPA documentation.

Journalists specializing in international event coverage and international news agency correspondents will be invited to the General Assembly. Workshops, round tables, and presentations should help attract the attention of media bigwigs.

COPA experts and parliamentarians, including those already present for the Management Committee meeting, would also be invited as speakers.

As necessary, the Management Committee must prepare a report of actual and future spending.

COPA/BRAZIL GENERAL ASSEMBLY

As mentioned above, the first step is to gather resources and form a working group to set up the conference.

To illustrate the complexity of conference organization, below is a list of important steps that must be considered to ensure a successful event.

PHASE I—January to May 2004

This is the current phase, i.e., strategic planning and identification of all steps involved in organizing the COPA General Assembly.

We must hold a meeting of COPA's secretariats and Executive Committee to formalize the General Assembly and begin organizing.

We will start by putting a specialized firm under contract to handle all graphic design and communications (main event theme, posters, leaflets, invitations, and General Assembly documentation).

Also during this phase, we will visit the selected event venue and hotels, and make initial contact with potential service providers.

We will also have to negotiate with local hotels and service providers to obtain attractive rates for parliamentarians who participate in the event.

June to September 2004

This is the official start of activities with the formation of the “war room” and preparation of event promotional materials.

A strategic meeting must be held in Brasilia/Foz do Iguaçu to determine the next steps and discuss General Assembly themes.

At this stage, we will have already determined the main General Assembly theme and the event preparation schedule.

PHASE II—Starting September 1, 2004

This is the most critical phase, as the countdown will have already begun and we will be sending out documentation and official event correspondence.

During this step, we will send out invitations and promotional materials. At this time, we will also follow up with legislative assemblies and parliamentarians to gauge the level of participation.

We will begin initial registration, discuss themes, and republicize event information through the media.

We must revisit the event venue and strengthen ties with the organizing staff and State of Paraná partners

Invitations to authorities and international parliamentarians must already have been handled and, if needed, we must work with the state government protocol office in the event that dignitaries will be attending.

Conference preparation will occur in three steps:

- 1) Technical coordination: Oversee logistics and structural development, i.e., negotiate with service providers, build relationships, and report expenses
- 2) Political coordination: Discuss General Assembly thrusts with the Executive Committee and build relationships with political authorities
- 3) Event coordination: Check with other partners to be sure everyone is on the same page

We estimate that this phase will last until November 1, 2004.

PHASE III—November 2004 to April 2005

During this period, we must satisfactorily complete work on the participant arrival process, hotel check-in, transfers, and optional and social programming.

Participant kits and conference materials must be sent to the event venue, and we will work together with the partners.

BASIC GOODS AND SERVICES

- Meeting hall with a capacity of 660 available for three days
- Simultaneous interpretation team into English, French, Spanish, and Portuguese
- Translators, ceremony guides, and bilingual transcribers
- Coffee breaks for participants
- Conference materials including paper, pens, folders, and documents
- Lunch for all parliamentarians
- Recreational activities reflecting the folklore of Brazil and the region
- Accommodation for special guests
- Logistics involving security and transfers for distinguished guests and high-ranking leaders
- Estimate of additional costs with event logistics specialists