

# 5<sup>th</sup> FIPA Plenary Assembly

Congress of the Republic of Colombia  
November 19-21, 2006, Bogotá



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## Report

Foro Interparlamentario de las Américas  
Forum Interparlamentar das Américas



Forum interparlementaire des Amériques  
Inter-Parliamentary Forum of the Americas



# Fifth Plenary Assembly Report

Congress of the Republic

Bogotá, Colombia

November 19-21, 2006

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Foro Interparlamentario de las Américas  
Fórum Interparlamentar das Américas



Forum interparlementaire des Amériques  
Inter-Parliamentary Forum of the Americas



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## 1. Introduction

At the kind invitation of the Congress of the Republic of Colombia, the Fifth Plenary Meeting of the Inter-Parliamentary Forum of the Americas (FIPA) was held on November 19, 20 and 21 in Bogotá.

This important event brought together over 80 parliamentarians, who participated as official delegates from 19 countries of the Americas, and two regional parliamentary organisations. (See Appendix I for a list of countries and participating delegates)

At the first plenary session, the Assembly formed three working groups to look at the role of parliamentarians in trade and integration policies, the implementation of poverty reduction strategies, and the fight against drug trafficking respectively. In addition, the Group of Women Parliamentarians of the Americas held their fourth meeting on November 20 and 21.

## 2. Opening Ceremony



The opening ceremony of the Fifth Plenary Meeting took place on Sunday, November 19, 2006 in the elliptical room of the Colombian Chamber of Representatives.

At the start of proceedings, a welcome message was delivered on behalf of the President of the Congress, Senator Dilian Francisca Toro Torres, followed by an address by Senator Nancy Patricia Gutiérrez Castañeda, Colombia's representative on the FIPA Executive Committee. Senator Gutiérrez Castañeda emphasized the benefits of regional interparliamentary cooperation, and the importance

of the topics on the meeting agenda: the fight against poverty, trade and integration, the fight against drug trafficking and gender equality.

Outgoing FIPA President, Canadian senator Céline Hervieux-Payette, thanked the Colombian Congress for its generosity in hosting the event. Noting that this was the fifth anniversary of the organisation, Senator Hervieux-Payette summarized the achievements of the Forum with regard to political, economic and social issues. She then called on member parliaments to rise to three major challenges in the coming years: strengthening the capacity of legislators so as to restore the people's confidence in their legislative institutions, institutionalizing cooperative ties between parliaments (through FIPA) and the Organisation of American States (OAS) and the Inter-American Summits, in order to form a common and continent wide front in the battle against all forms of inequality and poverty in the Americas. Finally, she urged participants to encourage their countries to ratify the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions. (For the speech of the FIPA President, see Appendix 3)

Following the president's speech, Mr. Víctor Rico, guest speaker and representative of the Secretary General of the OAS, addressed participants. As head of the Department of Crisis Prevention and Special Missions, Mr. Rico shared his point of view on democracy in the region, observing that the five-year period following the adoption of the Inter-American Democratic Charter had had an overall positive effect in terms of "electoral" democracy.

Mr. Rico added, however, that this had not translated into an improvement of socioeconomic conditions, resulting in the need to improve democracy and accord greater importance to economic and social rights. He underlined the relevance of the themes of discussion of this Fifth FIPA Plenary Meeting and, in closing, emphasized the role effective regional parliaments can play in reducing democratic deficit.



### **3. First Session of the Plenary Meeting**

The work of the Fifth Plenary Assembly officially began with consideration of the program presented by Senator Hervieux-Payette, FIPA President, and unanimously approved by the Plenary Assembly. (See *program in Annex 2*)

#### *3.1 Election of the Fifth Plenary Meeting Chair*

Senator Hervieux-Payette then presided over the election of the Chair of the Fifth Plenary Meeting. Colombian Senator Nancy Patricia Gutiérrez Castañeda was elected, proposed by Brazil and seconded by Chile.

#### *3.2 FIPA's President's Annual Report*

At the request of Senator Gutiérrez Castañeda, the FIPA President presented the annual report on the work of FIPA and the Executive Committee.

Senator Hervieux-Payette informed delegates that the Mission to Haiti undertaken by the Group of Women Parliamentarians had been greatly successful, allowing for in-depth exchange between the FIPA delegation, dozens of election candidates, and many women's rights organisations. The aim of this mission was to encourage Haitian women to take part in the electoral process as the country prepared for legislative elections in 2006.

The President presented a progress report on the efforts to strengthen relations between FIPA and inter-American institutions. She mentioned her meeting with Foreign Affairs Ministers of the region during the Fourth Summit of the Americas at Mar del Plata and meetings with the Secretary General of the Organisation of American States, José Miguel Insulza, and the President of the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), Luis Alberto Moreno. Senator Hervieux-Payette further indicated that she had had the opportunity to present a report on the



Forum's achievements to the OAS Permanent Council. She also underlined the Executive Committee's efforts to develop a project to strengthen the capacity of legislators in the region. This project will provide legislators with increased opportunity to improve their knowledge and skills in areas related to their functions. (See Appendix 4 for the President's Report)

### *3.3 Formation of the Working Groups*

In her capacity as Chair of the Fifth Plenary Meeting, Senator Gutierrez explained the functioning of the working groups, constituted as follows:

#### **Working Group 1 – Trade and Integration**

*Chair:* Mr. James Bezan, Member of Parliament (Canada)  
*Presenter:* Mr. Paolo Giordano, Integration and Regional Programs Department, Inter-American Development Bank  
*Rapporteur:* Ms. Sandra Ovalle García (Commission Secretary, Senate of Colombia)

#### **Working Group 2 – Poverty Reduction**

*Chair:* Congressman Iván Moreira Barros (Chile)  
*Presenters:* Ms. Ana Lucía Muñoz, Office of the Inter-American Development Bank (Colombia)  
Ms. Amelita Armit, Vice-President, Programs, Parliamentary Centre (Canada)  
*Rapporteur:* Ms. Isabel Jiménez Lozada (Senate of Colombia)

#### **Working Group 3 – Fight against Drug Trafficking**

*Chair:* Senator Sandra Husbands (Barbados)  
*Presenter:* Mr. Sandro Calvani, Representative of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime in Colombia  
*Rapporteur:* Mr. Felipe Ortiz (Commission Secretary, Senate of Colombia)

Senator Gutiérrez also invited all participants, both men and women, to take part in the work sessions of the **Group of Women Parliamentarians of the Americas** to be held the mornings of November 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup>, 2006.

### *3.4 Other Issues*

During the first session of the Plenary Meeting, participants were advised of the nomination procedures for elections to fill the following posts:

- President of FIPA
- President of the Group of Women Parliamentarians of the Americas
- Host country of the Sixth Plenary Meeting
- Member countries of the Executive Committee (one representative for each sub-region)

The Chair reminded participants that a document containing several proposed amendments to FIPA regulations had been distributed to each participant and that these amendments would be examined by the Assembly during its final session.

Participants then joined their respective groups for the three following sessions.

#### **4. Extraordinary Session of the Plenary Meeting**



An extraordinary session of the Plenary Meeting took place on Monday, November 20, 2006, in the Plenary Chamber of the Senate, to honour the presence of the President of the Republic of Colombia, Mr. Álvaro Uribe Vélez.

Taking the floor after speeches by the Chair of the Plenary Meeting, Senator Nancy Patricia Gutiérrez Castañeda and the President of FIPA, Senator Céline Hervieux-Payette, Mr. Uribe addressed each of the themes on the agenda of the Meeting.

The President began by outlining policies implemented by his government to bring Colombia into the world economy, with particular reference to current negotiations for concluding a free trade agreement with the United States of America. He expressed concern for the lagging progress on the Doha Round, especially with regards to agriculture.

Mr. Uribe then shared Colombia's objectives and strategies for poverty reduction, identifying certain programs for improving access to basic education and providing access to credit for small enterprises.

Finally, turning his attention to the problems relating to the production and traffic of drugs in his country, Mr. Uribe decried the damage to the environment resulting from the cultivation of these illicit crops, calling for solidarity among countries of the region and international cooperation to combat drug trafficking.

The session ended with a question period during which there was significant discussion between the president and the legislators present. *(See Appendix 5 for the speech of the President of the Republic)*

#### **5. Final session of the Plenary Meeting**

The final session of the Fifth Plenary Meeting was held on the morning of Tuesday, November 21, 2006, in the plenary chamber of the Colombian Senate.

## *5.1 Reports of the Working Groups*

The chair of each working group presented summaries of their deliberations and submitted the reports and recommendations of their respective groups to the Assembly.

### *5.1.1 Working Group I: Trade and Integration*

The Working Group on Trade and Integration was chaired by Canadian Member of Parliament, James Bezan. The group was composed of 16 parliamentarians from nine countries. During the first session, participants heard a presentation entitled “Pressure of globalisation on trade and integration policies: challenges and possibilities for Latin America and the Caribbean” given by Paolo Giordano, an economist from the Inter-American development Bank (IDB).

Following a period of discussion and debate the group adopted a series of recommendations, which urged governments to continue pursuing the goal of integrating the Americas and to pursue the Doha Round of multilateral negotiations particularly with regard to agriculture. The recommendations called for the adoption of national complementary policies which would allow countries to seize opportunities for access to the international market. Finally, participants recommended the creation of a fund of the Americas to facilitate freer trade and more in-depth integration, and emphasized the importance of implementing trade policies and programs for poverty reduction at the same time.

The report was endorsed by the Plenary Assembly which unanimously adopted the recommendations of the working group. *(See Appendix 6 for the report and recommendations)*

### *5.1.2 Working Group 2: Poverty Reduction*

Chilean Congressman Iván Moreira Barros chaired the Working Group on Poverty Reduction, which was comprised of 38 parliamentarians from 14 countries. The first session began with presentations by two guest lecturers. A presentation by Ana Lucía Muñoz, from the office of the Inter-American Development Bank in Colombia, addressed the issue of poverty and inequality in Latin America and the Caribbean. Amelita Armit from the Parliamentary Centre, a Canadian organisation, delivered a presentation on parliamentary involvement in the poverty reduction strategy process.

Participants then exchanged views which served as a basis for the recommendations formulated by the group. The recommendations urged member countries to improve the efficacy and efficiency of social spending, to prioritize employment and to promote transparency laws for combating corruption. The group also recommended that a work group be formed to examine how the tax burden affects socioeconomic development in the economies of member countries.

These recommendations were unanimously adopted by the Plenary Assembly. *(See Appendix 6 for full report and recommendations)*

### *5.1.3 Working Group 3: The Fight against Drug Trafficking*

The Working Group on the Fight against Drug Trafficking was chaired by Barbadian Senator Sandra Husbands. Thirteen parliamentarians from eight countries participated. Mr. Sandro Calvani, a representative of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) in

Colombia spoke during the first session. During the second and third sessions, participants benefited from the expertise of Rodolfo Llinas, also from the UNODC in Colombia.

Group discussions focused on the economic, social and legal aspects of the fight against drugs. Participants agreed on a series of recommendations emphasising the importance of education and prevention and proposed that an international forum be convened to address the role of the mass media in imparting values that aid the war on drugs. From a legal standpoint, the group recommended that penal legislation be reinforced to address all activities linked to drug trafficking. It also proposed looking into the possibility of creating an international court against drugs. Finally, the working group insisted on the importance of improving the effectiveness of crop substitution programs by taking into account factors such as market access and transportation.

These recommendations were unanimously adopted by the Plenary Assembly, following a minor amendment. *(See Annex 6 for a full report and recommendations)*

#### *5.1.4 Group of Women Parliamentarians of the Americas*



The Group of Women Parliamentarians of the Americas held their fourth annual meeting in the Senate Plenary Chamber. The meeting brought together parliamentarians from twelve countries within the region. As the post of Women's Group President had yet to be filled the first working session was chaired by the Senator Céline Hervieux-Payette. She invited participants to consider several draft proposals which fall within the Group's action plan. She also presided over the election of a new President of the Group of Women parliamentarians of the Americas. Colombian Senator, Cecilia López Montaña was elected unanimously, after being nominated by

Senator Nancy Patricia Gutiérrez Castañeda, also of Colombia.

A second working session, chaired by Senator Cecilia López Montaña, was held in the morning of November 21, 2006, to finalize the action plan of the working group for 2007-2008. Senator López Montaña later presented the work plan to the Plenary Assembly which unanimously recommended that it be adopted.

*(A copy of the "Recommendation for the implementation of the 2007-2008 work plan of the Group of Women Parliamentarians of the Americas" is contained in Appendix 7)*

#### *5.2 Adoption of the Executive Committee Resolutions*

Following examination of the working group reports, the Plenary Assembly reviewed a number of resolutions presented by the FIPA Executive Committee.

### 5.2.1 Resolutions 1-9: Amendments to the FIPA Regulations

At the invitation of the Chair of the Fifth Plenary Meeting, the President of FIPA presented the Plenary Assembly with nine draft resolutions aimed at modifying the *Rules of Procedure of FIPA*. One of the most important amendments entailed modifying the Executive Committee to include the Chairperson of the Group of Women parliamentarians of the Americas and the Past President of FIPA. The draft resolutions were considered as follows:

- *Draft resolution aimed at modifying the FIPA Regulations with a view to supporting the Inter-American Democratic Charter: Adopted.* The representative of the Cuban National Assembly noted that his country was not a signatory to the Inter-American Democratic Charter.
- *Draft resolution aimed at modifying the FIPA Regulations relating to the organization of the Plenary Assembly: Adopted unanimously.*
- *Draft resolution aimed at modifying the FIPA Regulations to make the Group of Women Parliamentarians of the Americas a permanent working group of FIPA: Adopted unanimously following an amendment proposed by the delegation of Trinidad and Tobago.*
- *Draft resolution aimed at modifying the FIPA Regulations relating to the Plenary Assembly: Adopted unanimously.*
- *Draft resolution aimed at modifying the FIPA Regulations relating to the composition, functions and meetings of the Executive Committee of FIPA: Unanimously adopted following an amendment proposed by Trinidad and Tobago.*
- *Draft resolution aimed at modifying the FIPA Regulations relating to the Technical Secretariat: Unanimously adopted.*
- *Draft resolution aimed at modifying the FIPA Regulations relating to Working Groups: Unanimously adopted.*
- *Draft resolution aimed at modifying the FIPA Regulations relating to the rules of procedure of the Plenary Assembly: Unanimously adopted.*
- *Draft resolution to amend the format of the FIPA Regulations: Unanimously adopted.*

(See Appendix 9 for a version of the Rules of FIPA, updated November 21, 2006)

### 5.2.2 Resolution 10: Creation of a Joint FIPA-COPA Working Group

On behalf of the FIPA Executive Committee, Senator Hervieux-Payette presented a draft resolution aimed at creating a Joint Working Group comprising representatives of FIPA and the Parliamentary Confederation of the Americas (COPA).

The Draft Resolution was supported by the delegates of Canada and Mexico and was unanimously adopted after being proposed by the delegation of Trinidad and Tobago.

The group will have as its mandate the exchange of information, examination of the most suitable mechanisms for possible integration of the two organisations, and a draft plan of action towards this effect. The resolution also encourages the two organizations to become involved in each other's activities. *(See Appendix 8 for the text of Resolution 10)*

### *5.2.3 Recommendation No. 1: Support for the UNESCO Convention on the Diversity of Cultural Expressions*

The President of FIPA presented the Plenary Assembly with a Draft Recommendation for the ratification and implementation of the Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions, adopted in October 2005 by UNESCO.

The recommendation was unanimously adopted by the Plenary Assembly. *(See Appendix 8 for the text of Recommendation No. 1)*

### *5.3 Election of the FIPA Executive Committee Members for 2006-2008*

The delegations of the sub-regions of FIPA each elected a country to represent them on the Executive Committee from 2006-2008. They are as follows:

- Canada, nominated by Mexico, was re-elected to represent North America.
- Trinidad and Tobago, nominated by Barbados, was elected to succeed Barbados as the representative of the Caribbean.
- Colombia, nominated by Chile was elected to succeed Paraguay as the representative of South America.
- Finally, the Dominican Republic was elected to succeed Honduras as the representative of Central America on the Executive Committee.

*(Appendix 10 contains a list of the members of the Executive Committee for 2006-2007)*

### *5.4 Election of the FIPA President*

The delegation of Chile, supported by Mexico, nominated Brazilian Congressman Luiz Carlos Hauly as the new President of FIPA. Mr. Hauly was elected by acclamation as the President of FIPA for 2006-2008.

In his address to the Plenary, Mr. Hauly first congratulated the outgoing President for the competence which she had displayed in directing the organization over the previous five years. The Brazilian representative noted his long time involvement with FIPA,



first as a member of the Forum’s Inaugural Meeting in 2001, then as a member of the Executive Committee from 2002 to 2005 and as host of the Fourth Plenary Meeting. Noting that he was honoured by the confidence placed in him he declared his determination to face the emerging challenges, particularly the challenge of possibly integrating FIPA and COPA in order to bring about “a united Americas, free of barriers and social inequalities.”

### 5.5 Selection of the Site for the Next Plenary Meeting

The delegation of the Dominican Republic expressed its wish to hold consultations with the Congress with a view to hosting the Sixth Plenary Meeting. The Assembly agreed to await the response of the Congress of the Dominican Republic. Other offers will be considered by the Executive Committee in the event that the Dominican Republic is unable to host the meeting.

### 5.6 Closing Ceremony



The President of the Colombian Congress, Senator Dilian Francisca Toro Torres, addressed participants at the closing ceremony, thanking them for their visit to Colombia on the occasion of the Fifth Plenary Meeting of FIPA.

She reminded participants that the Congress had an important role to play in the economic and social development of their country. She invited the political leaders to make the fight against poverty a cross-cutting theme of their public policy and a responsibility to which lawmakers need to contribute, not only through the enactment of legislation and budgetary inputs, but

especially through constant vigilance with regard to public policy and social investment. She also encouraged the political leaders, both male and female alike, to introduce more public policy aimed at promoting gender equality.

Prior to the adjournment of the Plenary Meeting, Senator Toro Torres chaired a protocol ceremony during which she conferred on the outgoing president of FIPA, Senator Céline Hervieux-Payette, the Order of the Colombian Congress, the Congressional Order of the Great Gold Cross (El Grado de Gran Cruz con Placa de Oro), in recognition of her efforts at bringing about friendship and cooperation among peoples.

Senator Hervieux-Payette, who was deeply touched by the honour bestowed on her, once again thanked the Colombian Congress and Senator Nancy Patricia Gutierrez for the excellent organization of the Meeting and for the exceptional hospitality shown to the participants. The Fifth Plenary Meeting was then officially closed. *(The Closing Statement of the President of the Congress is contained in Appendix 11)*

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Participants at the Fifth Plenary Meeting of FIPA



## 6. Appendices

### 6.1 Appendix 1 – Participating Countries and Delegates

#### DELEGATES

##### President of FIPA

Senator Céline Hervieux-Payette (Canada)

##### Antigua and Barbuda

Senator Gail Christian  
Mr. Lenworth Johnson, M.P.

##### Barbados

Senator Sandra Husbands

##### Bolivia

Deputy Elsa María Guevara Aguirre

##### Brazil

Senator Marcelo Crivella  
Deputy Luiz Carlos Jorge Haully (FIPA President Elect 2006-2008)

##### Canada

Senator Marcel Prud'homme  
Senator Nancy Ruth  
Mr. James Bezan, M.P.  
Mr. Larry Miller, M.P.  
Mr. Mario Silva, M.P.  
Mr. Ljubomir Temelkovski, M.P.

##### Chile

Senator Cristián Monckeberg Bruner  
Senator Sergio Fernando Romero Pizarro  
Senator Adolfo Zaldívar  
Deputy Sergio Andres Correa de la Cerda  
Deputy Fidel Edgardo Espinoza Sandoval  
Deputy Iván Moreira Barros  
Deputy Carlos Olivares  
Deputy Eugenio Tuma Zedán

##### Colombia

Senator Dilian Francisca Toro Torres (President of the Congress)  
Representative Alfredo Cuello (President of the House of Representatives)  
Senator Antonio Guerra  
Senator Nancy Patricia Gutiérrez Castañeda (Chair of the 5th Plenary Meeting)  
Senator Alejandra Moreno Piraquive

Senator Cecilia López Montaña  
Senator Gloria Ramírez  
Senator Martha Lucía Ramírez  
Senator Juan Carlos Restrepo Escobar  
Representative Luis Enrique Dussan López

**Cuba**

Deputy Tubal Páez Hernández

**Dominica**

Mr. Ronald Toulon, M.P.

**El Salvador**

Deputy Carlos Alfredo Castañeda Magaña  
Deputy Jesús Manuel Gutiérrez  
Deputy Julio Cesar Portillo Baquendano

**Ecuador**

Deputy Wilfrido Lucero Bolaños (President of the Congress of Ecuador)  
Deputy Rafael Dávila  
Deputy Myriam Peralta Solorza

**Grenada**

Senator Ingrid Rush

**Haiti**

Deputy Marie Jossie Étienne  
Deputy Ronald Larêche  
Deputy Gérard Théràmène

**Mexico**

Senator Gabriela Aguilar García  
Senator Rene Arce Islas  
Senator Francisco Xavier Berganza Escorza  
Senator Ricardo García Cervantes  
Senator Jorge Andrés Ocejo Moreno  
Senator Rogelio Humberto Rueda Sánchez  
Deputy Margarita Arenas Guzmán  
Deputy Alfonso Othón Bello Pérez  
Deputy Beatriz Pages Rebollar  
Deputy Miguel Angel Peña Sánchez  
Deputy Luis Fernando Rodríguez Ahumada  
Deputy Salvador Ruiz Sánchez  
Deputy Ruth Salgado Zavaleta

**Dominican Republic**

Senator Juan Roberto Rodríguez Hernández  
Deputy Bernardo Colón

Deputy Nancy Altagracia Santos  
Deputy Gladys Sofía Azcona  
Deputy María Estela de la Cruz  
Deputy Juan Maldonado  
Deputy Lupe Nuñez  
Deputy Myrtha Pérez  
Deputy Plutarco Pérez  
Deputy Aridio Reyes  
Deputy Digna Reynoso  
Deputy María Sánchez  
Deputy Gladis Mercedes Soto

**Suriname**

Mrs. Socila Angoelal, M.P.  
Mr. Mahinderkoemar Jogi, M.P.  
Mr. Theodorus Vishnudatt, M.P.

**Trinidad and Tobago**

Senator Danny Montano  
Senator Dana Seetahal  
Mr. Stanford Callender, M.P.  
Mrs. Kamla Persad-Bissessar, M.P.  
Mr. Manohar Ramsaran, M.P.  
Mr. Kenneth Valley, M.P.

**Uruguay**

Senator Susana Elida Dalmás Garcen

**Venezuela**

Deputy Hayden Owando Pirela Sánchez

**SPECIAL OBSERVERS**

**Andean Parliament**

Mr. Luis Duque García (President)

**Parliamentary Confederation of the Americas**

Deputy Maria José Maninha (National Congress of Brazil)  
Mr. Pierre Moreau, M.N.A. (Quebec National Assembly)

**FIPA SECRETARIAT**

Ms. Cora Capurro  
Ms. Emmanuelle Pelletier  
Ms. Sabra Ripley

## 6.2 Appendix 2 – Fifth Plenary Meeting Program



### Fifth Plenary Meeting Congress of Colombia Bogotá, November 19-21, 2006

PROGRAM			
<b>Saturday, November 18, 2006</b>			
Afternoon	Arrival of Participants Transfer from the El Dorado International Airport to Hotel Tequendama Receipt of Documents <i>Hotel Tequendama Intercontinental Bogotá</i>		
4:00 – 6:00 p.m.	Meeting of the Executive Committee of FIPA ( <i>Executive Committee members only</i> ) <i>Hotel Tequendama Intercontinental Bogotá, Salón Bolívar</i>		
7:00 – 9:00 p.m.	Dinner of the Executive Committee of FIPA ( <i>Executive Committee members only</i> ) <i>Restaurant Casa San Isidro, Cerro de Monserrate</i>		
<b>Sunday, November 19, 2006</b>			
10:00 a.m.	Departure from the hotel lobby to the Congress of Colombia		
10:15 – 11:00 a.m.	Registration of Participants and Receipt of Documents <i>Capitolio, first floor (facing the Salón Elíptico)</i>		
11:00 – 11:30 a.m.	<b>Opening Session of the Plenary Meeting</b> <i>Capitolio, Salón Elíptico</i> - Opening Speech <i>The Honourable Senator Nancy Patricia Gutiérrez</i> - Speech of the President of FIPA <i>The Honourable Senator Céline Hervieux-Payette</i>		
11:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.	<b>Guest Speaker</b> - Presentation by the Representative of the Secretary General of the Organization of American States (OAS) <i>Mr. Victor Rico, Director of the OAS Department of Crisis Prevention and Special Missions</i>		
12:00 – 12:15 p.m.	Break		
12:00 – 12:45 p.m.	<b>First Session of the Plenary Meeting</b> <i>Capitolio, Salón Elíptico</i> - Adoption of the Agenda - Election of the Chair of the 5 <sup>th</sup> Plenary Meeting - Annual Report of the President of FIPA - Working Group Set-Up - Consideration of Other Business		
12:45 – 1:00 p.m.	Official Photograph <i>Capitolio stairs</i>		
1:00 – 2:30 p.m.	Lunch - Hosted by the Directing Committee of the Congress of Colombia Presentation "Colombia is Passion" <i>Room: Salón Constitución</i>		
2:30 – 5:30 p.m.	<b>Working Group Sessions</b> - Presentations by Experts and Initiation of Discussions		
	Group 1 Trade and Integration <i>Room: Comisión 1ª Senado Capitolio</i>	Group 2 Poverty Reduction <i>Room: Salón Boyaca Capitolio</i>	Group 3 Drug Trafficking <i>Room: Comisión 2ª Senado Edificio Nuevo del Congreso</i>
Return to the hotel – free time			



Monday, November 20, 2006	
8:30 a.m.	Departure from the hotel lobby (Women's Group participants only)
9:00 – 10:30 a.m.	<b>4<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Group of Women Parliamentarians of the Americas, Session 1</b> (Breakfast will be provided) - Annual report and election of the President <i>Room: Recinto del Senado (Open to all Participants)</i>
10:00 a.m.	Departure from the hotel lobby (All other participants)
10:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.	<b>Working Group Sessions</b> - Continuation of discussions - Preparation of recommendations
12:00 – 1:00 p.m.	<b>Special Session of the Plenary Assembly</b> <i>Capitolio, Recinto del Senado</i> - Speech of the President of the Senate of Colombia <i>The Honourable Senator Dilian Francisca Toro</i> - Speech of the President of the House of Representatives of Colombia <i>The Honourable Representative Alfredo Cuello Baute</i> - Speech of the President of the Republic of Colombia <i>His Excellency Alvaro Uribe Vélez</i>
1:00 – 2:00 p.m.	Lunch - Hosted by the Congress of Colombia <i>Salón de la Constitución</i>
2:00 – 5:30 p.m.	<b>Working Group Sessions</b> - Finalisation of the recommendations - Approval of the final report for presentation to the Plenary Assembly
7:00 p.m.	Departure from the hotel lobby for the reception hosted by the Ambassador of Canada
7:30 – 9:30 p.m.	Reception Hosted by the President of FIPA, the Honourable Céline Hervieux-Payette, and the Ambassador of Canada in Colombia, H.E. Matthew Levin <i>Official Residence, Carrera 12 # 91-24, Bogotá</i>
Tuesday, November 21, 2006	
8:00 a.m.	Departure from the hotel lobby (Women's Group participants only)
8:30 - 9:30 a.m.	<b>4<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Group of Women Parliamentarians of the Americas, Session 2</b> (Breakfast will be provided) - Continuation of discussions and approval of the final report <i>Room: Recinto del Senado (Open to all Participants)</i>
9:00 a.m.	Departure from the hotel lobby (All other participants)
9:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.	<b>2nd Session of the Plenary Meeting</b> <i>Capitolio, Recinto del Senado</i> - Presentation of the Work Group reports and consideration of recommendations - Consideration of amendments proposed to the FIPA Regulations - Election of new Executive Committee Members - Election of the President of FIPA - Election of the Host Country for the 6 <sup>th</sup> Plenary Meeting - Closing
12:00 - 12:30 p.m.	Executive Committee Press Conference <i>Capitolio, Salón Boyaca</i>
12:30 - 2:00 p.m.	Meeting of the new Executive Committee of FIPA <i>Capitolio, Recinto del Senado</i>
2:30 – 5:00 p.m.	Lunch – Hosted by the Congress of Colombia <i>Hotel Tequendama</i> Visit to the National Museum

### *6.3 Appendix 3 – Opening Ceremony Speech*

#### *6.3.1 Speech of the President of FIPA, the Honourable Senator Céline Hervieux-Payette*

*Original: French*

Dear colleagues from the Americas,

It is indeed an honour for me to be here on the occasion of the Fifth Plenary Meeting of the Inter-Parliamentary Forum of the Americas in this country which, itself, offers such a rich spectrum of the cultural, artistic and ancestral diversity of the Americas. I would like to express my sincere thanks to the Congress of Colombia for the welcome extended to us.

This year marks FIPA's fifth anniversary, and so this assembly is especially significant to me.

A number of you were elected over the past few months, and are thus participating for the first time in a FIPA assembly. FIPA is an initiative born out of the need felt by legislators from all over the Americas for a meeting place where the voices of the people we represent in the inter-American integration process could be heard.

The initiative was supported by the Organization of American States, which in 2001 facilitated the holding of FIPA's inaugural assembly in Ottawa just days before the Third Summit of the Americas in Quebec City. It was also supported by the heads of state and government of the Americas who, in Quebec City, recognized in their action plan FIPA's potential as a promising instrument for discussion and cooperation at the legislative level.

Seeing so many of you here today, enthusiastic and ready to take up the task begun five years ago is a reward in itself.

Our real reward, however, is seeing how our action has borne fruit:

A year ago, on the occasion of the Fourth Summit of the Americas in Mar del Plata, I was invited to report to the region's foreign ministers on the progress achieved by FIPA from 2001 to 2005.

The meeting was an opportunity to demonstrate to the governments of the western hemisphere that FIPA had kept its promise to be an action-oriented forum, by contributing to progress on the three great thrusts of the Summits' action plan: strengthening democracy, creating prosperity, and realizing human potential.

FIPA's relevance has become obvious not only through our annual assemblies and our discussions via the Virtual Parliament of the Americas, but also through our ability to rise as needed to challenges that have emerged in the hemisphere during this period.

Politically, FIPA has responded to the concern of governments about the growing threat of terrorism by setting up a working group that has met three times to identify a legislative response to the problem of terrorism while respecting human rights. FIPA is one of the strongest promoters of the Inter-American Convention Against Terrorism which today has 21 States Parties and has been ratified by nine parliaments since our last assembly in Brasilia.

We have worked hard to strengthen the principles entrenched in the Democratic Charter, by appealing for respect for democratic institutions on a number of occasions, in Haiti, in Nicaragua and here in Columbia, among other countries.

With regard to economic and trade relations, FIPA has done everything in its power to obtain greater recognition of the role of parliamentarians in the process of hemispheric and regional integration, as intermediaries between local people and governments. These efforts were favourably received by the representatives of some governments, which agreed to hold dialogues with the members of the Executive Committee during the ministerial on the Free Trade Area of the Americas in Miami in 2003.

Aware, however, that economic integration alone will not be enough to improve the standard of living for all the peoples of the Americas, we have also made FIPA a platform for debate and discussion on social policies, and an instrument for promoting equality between men and women. Once again, the results speak for themselves: between 2001 and 2006, the percentage of women in our parliaments has gone from 15.3% to 21.4%, or almost 5 points higher than the world average.

These are examples of FIPA's strength and vitality which in my opinion are attributable to its openness, its flexibility and its capacity to adapt to new challenges which arise.

I'd like to use this opportunity to mention that during this meeting we are going to consider a series of proposed amendments to the governing rules of the Forum. Indeed, these reflect how the organisation has evolved since 2001.

And there are other changes to come. As a matter of fact, today the Forum is adding a new page to its young history: In two days the Plenary Assembly will elect a new president who will bring fresh ideas and new energy to meet the challenges facing us.

I see three major challenges:

- First, we need to devote more effort to strengthening our capacity as legislators and make FIPA an institution for the promotion of learning so as to foster among the peoples of the Americas renewed confidence in their legislative institutions. On that note I hail the representatives of the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) who will be working with our groups over the next two days, lending their expertise to our deliberations.
- Secondly, I think it is necessary to institutionalize cooperative ties between the OAS, the Summit process and FIPA and obtain formal recognition from governments in the region that FIPA is a full-fledged parliamentary organisation working in partnership with the OAS and the Summit process.

During a visit to Washington last April, my colleagues from the Executive Committee and I appeared before the Permanent Council of the OAS to express FIPA's willingness to strengthen these ties. This means that we wish to institutionalize FIPA's participation in inter-American events. It also means that we need to work steadfastly and collaboratively to push regional priorities and defend democracy.

I am delighted by the presence of the delegation from Trinidad and Tobago: as legislators from the country that is hosting the next Summit, in 2009, your support will be crucial for us.

- Finally, the greatest challenge facing all of us who are gathered here is to overcome our differences and to unite the great family of the Americas to which we belong so that we can remove the profound social inequalities characteristic of the region, and enable our populations – men, women and children – to improve their standard of living.

The future of our region depends first and foremost on respect for our differences and understanding that the richness of our continent comes from this diversity expressed through our languages, beliefs, history and our lifestyles.

As a symbol of our goodwill, I call on the legislative assemblies represented here at this Fifth Meeting for a commitment to use all means possible for their countries to ratify and implement the UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions. Saying “no” to standardization, but “yes” to cooperation will guarantee peace in our region.

Over the next few days, you will be called upon to consider three crucial themes: the struggle against narcotics trafficking, complementary policies for a freer system of trade, and strategies for alleviating poverty. Again this year, the programme of work reflects the balance the Forum strives to strike between political, economic and social cooperation.

I urge you to rise to the challenge, and share your ideas and experience and draw on the various viewpoints presented in order to provide, in a spirit of collaboration and collegiality, innovative solutions which will enrich your respective parliaments.

I would be remiss if I failed to express my sincere thanks to the institutions which have contributed to building this Forum through their administrative, technical and financial support: The Organisation of American States, The Parliamentary Centre, The UN Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean and other UN agencies, and the Institute for Connectivity in the Americas, just to name a few. I am particularly grateful to the Government of Canada for its unfailing support during my term as president.

Last but not least, I would like to express sincere thanks to the parliaments of the Americas, to my colleagues on the Executive Committee and to you all for having given me the privilege of serving as president of the organisation over the last five years. Without your engagement, such an undertaking would not have been possible

Senator Nancy Patricia Gutiérrez and dear colleagues from Colombia, we are overwhelmed by your welcome. It is indeed a reflection of the friendship and warmth of the people of Colombia.



*6.4 Appendix 4 – Annual Report of the President of FIPA, the Honourable Senator Céline Hervieux-Payette*

*Original: French*

Dear Colleagues,

Several months have passed since our last meeting in Brasilia. As you know, this period has seen elections to parliaments in more than half of the countries in the region, as well as the holding of a major event of hemispheric importance – the Fourth Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Americas – held in Mar del Plata, Argentina, a little over a year ago.

FIPA's year has reflected these events: despite losing a number of our colleagues on the Executive Committee due to their departure from politics, we have multiplied our efforts to consolidate the role of the Forum within the Inter-American System and have taken steps to equip FIPA with a training network to serve parliamentarians in the region.

**Mission to Haiti and Group of Women Parliamentarians**

Allow me to start with one of the most significant projects that the Forum has undertaken since its founding, the visit I made in September 2005 to Haïti, accompanied by Margarita Stolbizer (then President of the Group of Women Parliamentarians of the Americas,) Yolande Bain-Joseph, Minister and Member of Parliament from Grenada and Senator Silvia Domínguez of Mexico.

The aim of this mission was a simple one: to stimulate the participation of Haitian woman in the electoral process, as both voters and candidates.

Over three days, we had an opportunity to meet, in Port-au-Prince and in the provinces, with dozens of civil society organization representatives, political party leaders, voters and, most importantly, dozens of women from a wide range of parties who were candidates for legislative and municipal elections.

We shared with them both our experiences as women in politics and on our electoral strategies. We also had the opportunity to meet with a group of candidates – the women's network for winning – who, despite their diverse political affiliations, had united in a common cause - that of increasing the role of women in parliament and promoting a joint program based on gender equality.

The electoral process went off smoothly, with women accounting for almost 50% of the votes cast. However, the results of Haiti's recent election (fewer than 3% of the members elected were women) show that there is still along way to go before true equality of power is achieved and that we, as men and women in politics, must redouble our efforts to help our sisters who want to enter politics and achieve success.

The Group of Women Parliamentarians also continued to work on the implementation of the agenda established from the recommendations made during the meetings at the regional forums in Barbados and Buenos Aires and the last meeting in Brasilia. Most notably, a few months ago we launched a "women's mentorship" program to forge links between more experienced parliamentarians and women who have only recently entered politics.

We will have an opportunity to discuss this project further and in greater detail at the two sessions of the Group of Women Parliamentarians of the Americas, in which I would encourage you all, men as well as women, to participate.

### **Building Competences**

Our Executive Committee, which this year consists of representatives of Barbados, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Grenada, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico and Paraguay, has met twice: first in November 2005 in Guatemala City, and then in April 2006 in Washington, DC, where, on an exceptional basis, we were able to use the facilities of the Inter-American Development Bank.

What caught our attention particularly during these meetings was the necessity and the importance of strengthening the skills of parliamentarians in both the North and the South. The figures are alarming: the survey carried out by *LatinoBarometro* in 2005 reported that less than 30% of the population of the countries surveyed had confidence in their elected representatives.

As I have said on many previous occasions: none of us are born parliamentarians. It therefore seems necessary to find ways to strengthen our capacity to effectively discharge the complex duties entrusted to us. With this in mind, in recent months we have been engaged in discussions with the Inter-American Development Bank.

Sergio Diaz Granados, a former representative of this Congress and member of our Executive Committee, first met with the President of the Bank, Luis Alberto Moreno, in November 2005 to apprise him of our interest in strengthening cooperation between the two institutions. I also had the pleasure of meeting Mr. Moreno last March to ask him for the cooperation of the Bank in connection with the General Meeting.

The result of these meetings was that the 14<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Executive Committee was held at the IDB headquarters in Washington, during which we engaged in a frank dialogue with a number of experts working on projects to strengthen legislatures in several regions of the Americas. It is also thanks to Mr. Moreno that we will have the attendance of representatives of the IDB at two of our working groups during the next few days.

It is our hope that, over the next few months, these efforts will culminate in the creation of a training network for parliamentarians of the Americas – an initiative in which there will, I hope, be cooperation between the Inter-American Development Bank, the Parliamentary Centre and other regional institutions.

### **Promotion and Consolidation**

Our efforts to consolidate the role of FIPA as a partner in the inter-American institutions have resulted, of course, in the submission to the heads of State and Government of the recommendations adopted by the Plenary Assembly in Brasilia, in the areas of work and employment – the themes of the fourth Summit.

They are also reflected in the continuing initiatives to strengthen our ties to the Organization of American States, which has been FIPA's partner since its creation.

I thus had the honour of meeting the new Secretary General of the Organization of American States (OAS), José Miguel Insulza, in March to discuss the common aims shared by FIPA and the OAS. I also presented a report on the activities of FIPA to the members of the OAS

Permanent Council in April, in the company of my colleagues of the Executive Committee, in which we reiterated FIPA's desire to be recognized as a front-line partner in implementing hemispheric priorities.

Our actions were well received and I hope that they will result in greater participation by FIPA in future hemispheric events.

### **Administration / Strengthening of the Secretariat**

Lastly, considerable progress has been made in the areas of administration and finance:

In March, the Executive Committee adopted the financial statements of FIPA as a non-profit entity for 2004-2005; these were subsequently approved following an audit.

In the area of funding, the Forum has signed a contribution agreement with the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), which will cover a substantial portion of the operating costs of the Secretariat until September 2007.

We have also received another major contribution, this time from the Parliament of Canada, which has generously agreed to provide FIPA's Technical Secretariat with offices and access to its information technology network.

Several of our member parliaments have also shown us evidence of their support by paying their annual contributions to the Forum. We have received approximately 30% of the total dues, which, I would like to emphasize, are paid in accordance with the resolution on "the inclusion of national legislative assemblies of the Americas in FIPA" (FIPA/PA/2004/RES.1), passed unanimously at the Plenary Assembly meeting in Chile in 2004.

The progress made in this regard has been modest and I would like to call for your support in steering the procedures through your respective parliaments so that your parliament's contribution is paid. To this effect, beginning next month you will receive notices regarding the contribution for the October 2006 to September 2007 period.

The strengthening of FIPA's financial situation has nevertheless allowed the Secretariat to focus on new projects, including the publication of the first issue of *ParlAmericas*, a newsletter covering FIPA activities. Copies of this publication are available here as well as on our website. Each of your parliaments has received or will shortly be receiving copies and we invite all of you to contribute to this publication by telling us of progress made in your parliaments.

The Secretariat is also in the process of evaluating new technological tools to facilitate ongoing interaction between parliamentarians through our website and to modernize the Virtual Parliament of the Americas. Most of our parliaments have made major technological progress in the past five years. In addition to intranet and e-mail services, it is now possible in some parliaments to hold consultations either online or by text messaging.

We see in these new tools great potential in terms of intensifying our communication between plenary sessions. We are nonetheless aware of the technological gulf between the countries of the hemisphere and I would urge you to complete the questionnaire that will be distributed by the Secretariat at your work sessions this afternoon and tomorrow so that we can better assess your information technology and training needs.

## **Conclusion**

As you can see, many projects are under way and I am convinced that new initiatives will emerge from these three days of talks.

In order to implement them efficiently, we need the support of each of your and of your parliaments.

You can give us this support by creating a national FIPA chapter within your own parliament, or by sending a message to the Secretariat confirming your parliament's membership in the Forum. I would also urge each delegation to volunteer to become FIPA's primary contact in its own parliament, so that we can exchange information about our respective activities throughout the year.

On that note, I invite Senator Gutiérrez to retake the floor to summarize the way in which each of the working groups will function and I wish you all a most productive meeting!

*6.5 Appendix 5 - Speech of the President of the Republic of Colombia, His Excellency Álvaro Uribe Vélez*

*Original: Spanish*

You honour Colombia, the City of Bogotá and our Parliament, by holding the Fifth Plenary Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Forum of the Americas here.

First and foremost, let me compliment you on the fact that the Inter-Parliamentary Forum is no longer an occasional event. It has become a regular gathering, a constant struggle, which will bear fruit for the democracies in the Americas. I also wish to thank you for having chosen Colombia as the venue for this meeting.

I am enormously grateful to each of you for having come to our country, to Senator Céline Hervieux-Payette, President of this Forum, for her keen interest, and to Senator Nancy Patricia Gutiérrez Castañeda for her great enthusiasm. She has committed her best efforts to make this assembly here in Colombia a success.

Madam President Céline Hervieux-Payette has addressed the issues of trade, inequities in the Americas, micro enterprise financing and illegal drugs.

My presentation will consist of two parts: First, I will share my views on these issues and then I would like to engage you in an active dialogue to exchange concerns since I know that, as parliamentarians, you prefer discussing rather than just listening to magisterial speeches.

As far as trade is concerned, let me say, Madam President and distinguished parliamentarians, that in the last few years Colombia has been making steady efforts to join the global economy. Five years ago there were almost no chances of an agreement between the Andean Community and MERCOSUR. Now such an agreement is a fact, and fully in force. I regard it as an important step toward continental integration.

Some Andean countries, namely Peru and Colombia, have furthered their negotiations with the United States. Peru has already signed an agreement, while Colombia will be doing so on November 22nd - in two days' time. Both agreements are pending ratification by the relevant Congresses.

The Colombian Constitution further requires a review of the agreement by the Colombian Constitutional Court — the highest body entrusted with enforcing the Constitution, to ensure its constitutionality.

For the moment, we have been struggling for the United States Congress and its Executive Branch to approve the extension of trade preferences to Bolivia, Ecuador, Peru and Colombia.

This was the very purpose of my two-day visit to the United States last week. In the course of it, I once more requested the American Executive Branch and Congress to extend said preferences, since they have helped our countries significantly.

They have proven particularly useful if we think, for example, of the 100,000 workers of El Alto - in the vicinity of La Paz airport, in Bolivia - all of whose product is sold in the United States market, where it is largely thanks to said preferences that it is competitive.

They are also necessary for many Peruvian export activities; for a significant portion of Peruvian agricultural exports; to grow the textile industry in Peru.

They are necessary for the Ecuadorian export basket, with the exception of oil. They are necessary for four thousand Colombian export products.

We have told the United States that our region needs those preferences, and that they are fair, not only because they make up for our great efforts against drug-trafficking, but also because they help us to enter the United States market and somehow tip the scales to strike a balance.

Some things are not as they first appear. At first glance, the trade balance between Colombia and the United States appears to be tilted in favour of Colombia. Indeed, there are Colombian exports for USD 9 billion and imports from the United States for a little over USD 6 billion. However, if we deduct oil exports, declining exports in the case of Colombia, the balance becomes negative. If coal is also deducted, the difference is much bigger. Hence, when we request these preferences and the free trade agreement to access the United States market, we also do so in an attempt to have the opportunity to achieve a fairer balance.

We would also be happy if our fellow Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela could join us in this process to of accessing the United States market and taking part in free trade, and also to take part in these efforts to obtain the trade preferences. We have always addressed this issue in a spirit of fraternity and caution.

Except for Panama, fellow Central American countries have signed and ratified the free trade agreement with the United States, with the ratification by Costa Rica still pending. We are concerned about Central American, Andean and South American countries executing this agreement with the United States, because South American countries will eventually sign it and we want equal trade opportunities and a two-way access to markets for both Central America and the Andean Community.

This is why we have been working since last February to further this agreement among three Central American countries - Honduras, El Salvador and Guatemala - and Colombia. We hope this may also be extended to our fellow Andean nations. The Trade Agreement between Colombia and Chile will be signed next Monday in Santiago, and another agreement between the Andean Community and Chile is currently being discussed. We consider this a very important development.

We are seeking an agreement with our fellow Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela that will substitute the standards that, within the Andean Community, have governed the trade relationship between Colombia and Venezuela.

This morning I was informed of the following (an example of how this is positive for everyone): there has been a quantum leap in the number of vehicles manufactured in Colombia, which has increased from 60,000 - 66,000 in previous years to around 180,000 - 200,000 this year. A huge leap!

The Andean Community has been very dynamic this year in this arena. For instance, the Toyota plant in Venezuela supplying the Colombian market has sold off its stock and has been urged to import Toyota vehicles from Thailand to meet the demand from the Colombian market. This shows how, if duly encouraged, trade makes our economies highly dynamic.

Why not make unilateral preferences permanent? The reasons are two-fold: Firstly, these unilateral preferences do not include all products that can be potentially exported by our

economies. They are restrictive and exclude many items. Secondly, investors do not invest when permanent access to markets is uncertain. If they see that some preferences have been granted unilaterally for a four-year period, extended by a year, they feel that access to markets is quite uncertain and therefore decide to halt investment activities, as investment decisions rely on that.

Hence we are seeking a temporary extension of preferences in the United States while striving for a permanent solution, which is access to the North American market through the trade agreement.

And something similar is happening with Europe. Two years ago we renewed the European preferences for 10 years, a short period when it comes to such complex issues. Peru, Ecuador, Bolivia and Colombia are currently exploring alternatives to enter into a first agreement with Europe that should lead us to a permanent agreement with the European Union. We would like our fellow nation, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, to be part of this agreement at some point in future.

My distinguished continental parliamentarians, we do not consider trade an ideological issue, but rather a practical matter, a matter of market access, with manifold benefits.

Firstly, it attracts investments. China is praised the world over as a leader in attracting direct foreign investment. During the past 15-17 years it has received in the range of 54 billion to 67 billion dollars per year by way of investments. All this is because it has successfully managed to access almost all world markets. This aspect is worth underscoring, since we link market access to the possibility of attracting direct foreign investments.

Indeed, Colombia's situation as regards direct foreign investment has improved and investments are increasing. Last year we received 5.4 billion dollars worth of net investments. The figure for this year is about 6 billion. There are also many distributors in various sectors of the economy, but access to markets is prerequisite for all this to happen.

Investment becomes a necessary factor when we think of generating quality employment with access to social security benefits, and also for sustained economic expansion, all of which will enable the Government to raise the necessary revenues to overcome social backwardness, alleviate poverty and fund equitable development.

These agreements are highly beneficial to consumers. While they assist investors and exporters, they are also helpful for consumers because as these markets open it is possible to obtain products coming from the countries that are parties to the agreement at better prices and of better quality than those sold domestically.

In sum, this is a win-win situation. We have witnessed a great expansion of the Andean economy thanks to the growth of the so-called "inter-Andean trade".

To us, market access and the integration of peoples have no ideological boundaries. We have respect for continental diversity; witness to this is the fact that we have finalized negotiations with the Republic of Cuba, with which we now have a trade agreement in place.

We also hope to further our relations with Canada, Madam President. Four years ago, two years ago, we addressed this issue with past Prime Ministers but we reached a deadlock. We have retaken discussions with the current Prime Minister and today a Colombian-Canadian mixed commission is looking into the matter. It would be great to have a trade agreement being between Canada and the Andean countries in the short term!

We find these agreements are very important for workers, not only because they provide opportunities for better jobs with social security benefits, but also because in the social covenants included in these agreements each country demands full respect for labour obligations from its counterpart. If a country fails to comply with said obligations, then other signatories may exercise their right to punish the member country that has breached labour provisions.

Our workforces are safeguarded by constitutional charters, legal developments, justices, governments, collective hiring; however, the social covenants included in the agreements also contribute to their protection.

Therefore, Madam President, we regard economic integration as a source of significant social opportunities.

Now then, there are some sectors at risk. Last Saturday, near the city of Cartagena, more specifically in Arjona, a town in the district of Bolívar, we held a community council meeting on the agricultural sector, within which there are sub-sectors that are also at risk. This cannot pass unnoticed.

Colombia is paving the way to materially increase the resources necessary to make the agricultural sector more competitive, to transform existing sectors and to develop new ones. To this end, the Colombian Parliament has committed its best efforts and it is about to pass a law called "Agro: Safe Income".

It is also worth noting that in many cases we have been faced with the need to resort to bilateral solutions for want of them on the multilateral front.

We wish to share our concern about the lack of results at the Doha Round. It is high time industrialized countries decided not only to eliminate subsidies to agricultural exports, but also to foodstuff production.

Should the Doha Round resolve this, it would also mean the solution to many of the issues that have been hindering multilateral integration. In the absence of multilateral solutions, many countries have to resort to bilateral agreements. By way of example, what should Colombia do if we cannot reach a bilateral agreement to enter the United States market and have to content ourselves with preferences that discourage investors? Ideally, the solution would be multilateral agreements. These are not in place, however, so we are forced to explore bilateral alternatives.

You are right, Madam President, in sharing your concern about inequity, poverty and unequal distribution of income in the Americas.

Four years ago, poverty in Colombia amounted to 60 per cent of the population. Last year this figure dropped to 51%, and the new administration is committed to reducing it to 35%. Our long-term perspective is to have reduced poverty to a level not exceeding 15% by the year 2019.

For the first time ever, the Gini Coefficient, a measure of income inequality, is starting to show some slight improvement in our country.

A constant feature underlying the significant legislative platform that is being furthered in this Congress is the willingness to help our economy grow to 6%, to contribute to going beyond our goals in poverty reduction and to assist in the construction of equality.

Our goals are very ambitious. For the coming four-year period we intend to provide basic education to all children, to make enormous strides in preschool education, to ensure all people



enjoy health care benefits, as well as to make significant progress in the areas of drinking water and basic sanitation.

We believe that growth, poverty alleviation and the construction of equality should go hand in hand.

Our continent has always gone to extremes: In the '60s there was a doctrine that advocated the stimulation of economic growth, arguing that improved income distribution would spontaneously follow suit. It failed.

Then, in subsequent decades, it was said that the answer lay in distribution, so the back was turned on growth. The result? Distribution, if any, of poverty.

We believe that growth, poverty alleviation and the distribution of income should go hand in hand.

President Hervieux-Payette has also addressed the issue of micro enterprise lending. The whole continent has a great potential. One way to overcome exclusion is to give this traditionally excluded sector access to funding sources.

During our first term of office 1.8 million Colombian micro entrepreneurs received loans; the micro credit portfolio grew from 736 billion to 3 trillion Colombian pesos.

Here in Bogotá, we are starting tomorrow the second phase of what we call the “micro credit revolution”, i.e. a plan known as Banca de Oportunidades (“Opportunity Banking”).

What is it aimed at? Reaching to out excluded sectors, to those who are most vulnerable, to those who find it difficult to access lending, who had to seek financial resources in the black market. The idea is to provide them with more opportunities at lower interest rates, more opportunities of economic prosperity, and to help them break free from their dependence on the black financial market.

Tomorrow we are starting with one thousand vulnerable, displaced families of Bogotá that for the first time ever will receive a formal loan, and with 300 graduates from the “Sistema Nacional de Aprendizaje” (National Education System).

The first group is formed by extremely poor families that have been grouped by the Government under a project of education subsidies called “Familias en Acción” (Families in Action) and that are now entering the second phase —the credit granting phase to develop production projects.

Tomorrow we are also reaching out to another vulnerable sector, but for a different reason: newly graduate students in the field of techniques and technology who are not likely to have access to credit sources because they are too young and have just finished their studies.

The whole Colombian public and private financial sector, cooperatives and foundations, and a core institution that has grown much in Colombia, the “Fondo de Garantías” (Guarantee Fund), are committed to this initiative.

In Colombia there are two national guarantee funds: one for micro enterprises in general, and another one for the agricultural sector. Many Colombian departments have a guarantee fund already.

So, we are granting loans to extremely poor though socially organized sectors. Social organization is very important for those who receive micro credit. We are also assisting sectors

that are not in extreme poverty, that need financing but do not have ready access to it on account of their youth and the fact that they are new graduates.

All these people have undergone a preparatory stage and have someone to guide them through the credit request process and afterwards.

For instance, each family receiving a loan tomorrow has received some form of training through the “Servicio Nacional de Empleo” (National Employment Service), which could also be provided by the various foundations in the private sector.

The institution providing the training introduces the family to the Bank that will grant the loan and undertakes to assist it all the way until repayment, while the guarantee fund provides the collateral.

We have carefully designed this institutional microfinance project and now, starting tomorrow, we have a responsibility to show regular results so that we can reach out to the poorest sectors of the population.

We have recently issued an executive order creating the “corresponsales no bancarios” (non-banking correspondents). Opening a bank branch in the popular areas of our big cities or in remote rural areas is almost impossible.

Insecurity made all this difficult in the past. Nowadays insecurity has decreased, but traditional banking is still very expensive. Opening a bank office in a rural Colombian community faces not only the problem of violence, but also the risks associated with costs and the lack of technology. An expensive office, buildings, etc. were needed.

What is, then, the role of the “non-banking correspondents” that will start operating in Colombia in coming weeks? These offer the possibility to reach out through a simple bank office with a sound technology support to the poorest boroughs in big cities and to rural communities.

They work like this: A bank enters into an agreement with a church, school, drugstore, small shop, Community Action Group, and then opens a non-banking correspondent institution there. These are simple offices; they are no longer the magnificent buildings we used to have. However, they are supplied with a modern technological support to allow communication with the bank that serves those customers.

We trust these mechanisms will enable us to present Colombians and our fellow countries in the Americas with a significant development in terms of popular credit financing.

I fully share your concerns, Madam President. I have enthusiastically embraced this cause in Colombia since this is the only way to make it succeed. We hope that the Colombian financial sector can show the country at large that there is social equity in this field.

I do not know, Honourable Senator Nancy Patricia, if any of the distinguished delegates that are here today would like to come with us tomorrow to El Tunal, where we will be granting the first loans under the new popular credit scheme, “Banca de Oportunidades”.

I will ask Alicia Arango, the Presidency private secretary, to make the necessary arrangements. It will be a great honour and pleasure to share with you this scheme we are launching tomorrow in a poor area of Bogotá city.

Finally, Madam President, let me address your last concern, illegal drugs, which have been a scourge to our country.

Colombia is vigorously engaging in fumigation and manual eradication efforts, and in promoting alternative crops. It is making every endeavour to seize illegally raised monies and extradite criminals.

Assisted by the USA, we are fumigating some 160,000 hectares this year. This also entails a huge effort at a domestic level. In two days' time we will have manually eradicated drug crops from 40,000 hectares.

This program started at a larger scale only last year, with 31,200 hectares. This is therefore the second year in a row and the acreage is growing. Next year we intend to eradicate at least 50,000. Forty thousand this year; fifty thousand the next.

We have asked the European Union to assist in this eradication endeavour. The United States is most instrumental but we need the EU - and we hope Canada as well - to contribute to this undertaking. The manual eradication program does not face the objections that are sometimes raised against the fumigation scheme.

There are most interesting cases, however. A year ago the decision was made to manually eradicate drug crops from National Parks. And do you know what happened? Between policemen and eradicators over 20 people were killed by terrorists in the Macarena National Park.

We therefore decided, in order to protect the lives of eradicators, to turn to fumigation to eliminate drug crops in this National Park. We were reluctant since manual eradication was our first choice, but the cruel terrorist action left us no choice.

We have also committed our best efforts to developing alternative crops, but the best of them is overall economic development. Sustained economic growth at 6% would be the single biggest alternative crop to the drug issue in Colombia.

Colombia has a total area of 1,164,000 square kilometres, 578,000 of which are still rainforests. We are one of the wealthiest nations worldwide in terms of biodiversity and fresh water availability vis-à-vis the size of our territory. Drugs are therefore our biggest foe.

The Colombian rainforest, actually an extension of the Amazonian one, is a biodiversity reservoir for all mankind; but drugs have already destroyed 2 million hectares.

We have devised a program called "Familias Guardabosques" (Ranger Families) consisting of 43,000 families that have undertaken to maintain a drug-free area, to protect recovered areas. In areas where land is not subject to erosion, these families engage in legal economic activities and receive Government support amounting to approximately 1,500-2,000 dollars a year. As noted, the program consists of 43,000 families, but we have asked Europe, the world at large, to assist us so that we can reach 100,000 families and hence more successfully and quickly beat this scourge.

Drugs are a discussion topic at many forums, where fumigation is alleged to cause several environmental problems. It is drugs that are at the root of these problems, not fumigation. Aquatic fauna in the Putumayo River, which separates Colombia from Ecuador and Peru, is on the decline not on account of drug eradication and destruction, but of drug crops in the first place.

The first thing they do when planting drugs is to fell the trees, causing major environmental damage, soil erosion, run off from the Amazon rain carries this run off to the waters, causing

sediment to settle in river beds; and the chemical precursors used in drug processing poison the forest and water courses.

Let me claim here what I generally contend when speaking to younger generations here in Colombia: we need to get rid of the traditional approach to the drug problem and take a new stance instead: we have to consider drugs an enemy to the environment.

The destruction of two million hectares of rainforest, the damage caused to aquatic fauna and Amazonian flora have taught us, albeit the hard way, how detrimental drugs may be to the environmental balance in a country like Colombia and in the world at large, not to mention its connection to terrorism. You all know of our efforts to fight this problem. Today Colombia is a safer, nicer country, but there is still a long way to go, and this struggle would be made easier should we manage to completely eradicate drugs.

Hence we ask our fellow nations, all peoples worldwide, to sympathize with our cause.

Terrorism has no friends, no borders, no allies; terrorism lies, deceits. If it cannot kidnap here, it will move somewhere else.

Is blackmailing no longer possible in a given country? Another will do just fine.

Is drug production hindered here? It will shift elsewhere.

If successful, the battle we are fighting today in Colombia will benefit our neighbouring nations and the world at large.

Our fight for security is rooted in the democratic system, and this differentiates it from the fight in times of military rules.

Other countries in the Americas have raised the flag of security to uphold military regimes. Here in Colombia security is based on democracy, unlike the Doctrine of National Security, which brings the sourest memories of human rights violations, of curtailed public freedom and right of dissent.

Two elections have taken place in Colombia this year, namely the one to appoint new congressmen and the presidential election. They have been the most threatened, albeit internationally recognized as the most peaceful in history. All opposition speakers, advocates of the various political trends, friends of Government, of Congress, traveled the country and campaigned in an environment of absolute security. It was a wonderful process.

Still, guerrilla groups in certain regions threatened those willing to vote for the President's re-election, but we trust that as we move forward in the field of Democratic Security there will no longer be paramilitary or guerrilla groups intimidating voters.

Aware of your permanent parliamentary vocation, I now remain available to entertain your questions and address any concerns you may have. Let me conclude by deeply thanking you for coming to Colombia and by saying that we are honoured to have been selected to host this Fifth FIPA Assembly.

Thank you very much

## 6.6 Appendix 6 – Working Group Reports and Recommendations

### 6.6.1 Working Group No.1: Trade and Integration

Original: Spanish

## FINAL REPORT Working Group No. 1: Trade and Integration



Canadian Member of Parliament James Bezan presided over the group. Mr. Paolo Giordano, an expert and representative of the Integration and Regional Programmes Department at the Inter-American Development Bank gave a presentation entitled “*The Pressure of Globalization on Trade and Integration Policies: Challenges and Opportunities for Latin America*”.

The objective of the workshop was to provide a general perspective on some of the key trends that will shape the worldwide competition facing countries of the Americas the immediate future, focusing on the following aspects:

- Repercussions of the emergence of China and India on Latin America and the Caribbean.
- Regional and worldwide integration of Latin America at the start of the 21st century.
- Winners and losers in trade and integration: the role of complementary policies.
- Aid for trade: development cooperation for the transition to freer trade.
- The role of international institutions in providing aid for trade.
- Conclusion and policy recommendations.

In the debates that ensued, the following positions were voiced by the different countries:

- The commercial challenge posed by China and India should be regarded not as a threat, but as an opportunity.
- There is concern about the external effects, such as depreciation of the dollar.
- There is great concern about the security policy in the United States with regard to construction of the wall along the border with Mexico.
- The importance and need for integration in order to emerge from underdevelopment.
- The importance of the integration agenda of the Americas was emphasized.

- The importance of regional agreements was noted, but fundamentally the integration of the American and Caribbean countries.
- Trade integration is a way to achieve equity and reduce poverty.
- Adapting the European integration model to the needs of the Americas and the Caribbean.
- There is great concern about the energy and fuel crisis — prices, lack of prevention, and failure to comply with the rules of the game.
- In a world of treaties, those who stand still fall behind.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

*Adopted by the Plenary Assembly of FIPA on November 21, 2006*

1. It is important to continue to pursue the integration agenda of the Americas, urging FIPA member countries to reach a hemispheric agreement in which all bilateral agreements converge.
2. WTO members are urged to resume multilateral trade negotiations to conclude the Doha Development Round, particularly regarding opening up agricultural markets.
3. All barriers to international trade must be eliminated, including tariffs or subsidies that distort international commerce. At the same time, the capacity of countries to support the most sensitive sectors must be preserved.
4. In the search for further integration, all barriers among FIPA member countries that violate human rights and deny people freedom of movement must be brought down.
5. Complementary domestic policies intended to take advantage of opportunities for international insertion should be encouraged, particularly policies on infrastructure, education, State modernization, rural, agricultural and fishery development, and science and technology.
6. Policies that favour energy integration should be created, taking into account the challenges related to non-renewable resources and the opportunities offered by renewable resources such as bio-energy, wind energy and other sources.
7. Mechanisms should be created to protect intellectual property, free competition and abolish counterfeiting.
8. Work is needed on sustainable development programmes, and programmes to alleviate poverty and improve living conditions should be created.
9. FIPA member countries are urged to consider that the emergence of China and India means policies to deal with global competition must be formulated without delay. FIPA members are requested to organize a dialogue with these countries on this issue.
10. A fund with enough resources to facilitate the transition to a freer system of trade and further integration should be established for the countries of the Americas and the

Caribbean, particularly to facilitate connectivity in the region, infrastructure development (air, land and maritime transport), and the promotion of small and medium-sized businesses, in line with the WTO “Aid for Trade” initiative.

11. Continuous dialogue should be sought between FIPA members and the United States, encouraging that country’s active participation in FIPA.
12. It is recommended that social issues be debated to achieve the wellbeing of our peoples.
13. It is recommended that FIPA members submit these recommendations to their respective parliaments and executive branches, that they work together with their own FIPA national executive representatives to ensure specific progress towards their implementation, and that the chairpersons of each FIPA national chapter report on the progress achieved by their countries at the next FIPA Plenary Meeting.

**James Bezan**  
 Canadian Member of Parliament  
 Chair of Working Group No.1

**Sandra Ovalle García**  
 Rapporteur

## **PARTICIPANTS**

Antigua and Barbuda	Senator Gail Christian Mr. Lenworth Johnson, M.P.
Bolivia	Deputy Elsa María Guevara Aguirre
Brazil	Senator Marcelo Crivella Deputy Luiz Carlos Haully
Canada	Mr. Ljubomir Temelkovski, M.P.
Chile	Senator Sergio Fernando Romero Pizarro Deputy Eugenio Tuma Zedán
Colombia	Senator Antonio Guerra Senator Alejandra Moreno Piraquive
Mexico	Senator Jorge Andrés Ocejo Moreno Deputy Miguel Angel Peña Sánchez Deputy Luis Fernando Rodríguez Ahumada
Suriname	Mr. Theodorus Vishnudatt, M.P.
Trinidad and Tobago	Mr. Manohar Ramsaran, M.P. Mr. Kenneth Valley, M.P.

## 6.6.2 Working Group No.2: Poverty Reduction

*Original: Spanish*

### FINAL REPORT Working Group No. 2: Poverty Reduction



The work group held its first session on November 19, 2006 during the 5<sup>th</sup> Plenary Meeting of the Inter-Parliamentary Forum of the Americas (FIPA). It convened in the Boyacá Room of the Colombian Congress in Bogotá D.C. (Colombia) with Members of Parliament and Senators from Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Cuba, Dominica, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Haiti, Mexico, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, Uruguay, and Venezuela. All of which are FIPA member countries.

Chilean Congressman Iván Alejandro Moreira Barros, Member of the FIPA Executive Committee, presided over the work group. Presentations were

given by Ana Lucía Muñoz, of the Colombian Inter-American Development Bank Country Office (IDB), and Amelita Armit, Vice-President, Programs, of the Parliamentary Centre (Canada).

Congressman Moreira noted that the fight against poverty must begin with awareness aimed at providing more equal opportunities for development and at giving people what they need to emerge from poverty. The Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) forecasts a drop in poverty in Latin America thanks to good economic performance. However, along with this growth, there is also increased inequality. Proposals on the following topics should be implemented:

- i) Strengthen and improve cooperation
- ii) More effective distribution policies
- iii) Tax incentives to avoid tax evasion through the informal market
- iv) Avoiding capital flight and the lack of domestic investment
- v) Promotion of national output
- vi) Globalisation
- vii) Cultural convergence

“Let us not merely continue to give people food, but teach them how to achieve a better life through their own efforts,” stressed the congressman.

In her presentation entitled “Poverty and Inequality in Latin America and the Caribbean”, Dr. Muñoz indicated that joint FIPA and IDB action provides technical input that gives the



region's parliamentarians analytical resources to fight poverty and inequality. Poverty is greatest in countries with low per-capita income, which are also the ones most in debt. Abject urban poverty is rising, and teenage pregnancy among the poor is a factor in the inter-generational transmission of poverty. Indigenous people comprise 10% of the total population, and 25% of them are poor. Access to education, health and job markets is unequal, and this leads to violence.

Mrs. Armit, of the Parliamentary Centre, gave a presentation on "Strengthening Parliamentary Involvement in the Poverty Reduction Strategy Process". The Parliamentary Centre is a Canadian organization devoted to improving the effectiveness of representative assemblies and governance mechanisms worldwide, and which supports democratic institutions in Africa, Asia, the Americas, Eastern Europe and the Middle East. Tools offered by the Centre to assist parliaments in the fight against poverty include: holding legislative hearings, working with parliamentary groups with specific interests in different areas, improving legislative relations with the executive and civil society, and promoting the sharing of expertise and experience among parliaments.

## **DEBATE**

During their discussions participants addressed the sensitive issue of poverty and applied it to the situation in each country. The fight against poverty is an issue of concern to FIPA member countries and to developing countries in general.

Representatives participated actively in the work session and agreed, among other points, on the need for social policies that respond to economic crises, as well as a genuine social architecture.

The following points emerged:

- In Latin America, those who live below the poverty line are indigenous or female household heads. Poverty must be fought through national programmes or NGOs. Latin American countries must coordinate their efforts, rather than having each country work independently.
- Poverty has declined, but there has been no improvement in income distribution.
- The economy grows and poverty increases.
- Poverty in Latin America is growing less than in Africa, but it has not declined. A radical shift in social strategy is needed. The employment issue has not been resolved, even though increased employment is the best social policy.
- There is no equality of opportunity in Latin America; eight million people in Latin America live in extreme poverty.
- The rule of law must be reinforced.

Special mention was made of the situation in Haiti. All member countries expressed a political willingness for their governments to intercede in the fight against poverty and corruption.

Senator Nancy Patricia Gutiérrez of Colombia posed two open questions for the work group during the session on November 20, 2006:

- Growth in and of itself does not eliminate poverty. Jobs must be created. What is the connection between the two in the fight against poverty?
- The tax burden counters private investment that creates jobs. Taxes should be paid by those with more resources.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

*Adopted by the Plenary Assembly of FIPA on November 21, 2006*

The Plenary Assembly recommends the following:

1. Consolidate growth strategies.
2. Make social spending more effective (by determining who should be given priority).
3. Favour international cooperation among member countries.
4. Work on a political component to poverty reduction. There also needs to be an economic component involving higher taxes for individuals with higher incomes. Economic policies must also have a social component. Employment must be a priority if social transformation is to be achieved.
5. Promote universal education and eliminate illiteracy.
6. Reduce infant morbidity.
7. Assure a healthy environment.
8. Provide training in new job areas.
9. Exchange information on programmes that have proven successful in some countries.
10. Invest in science and technology.
11. Reduce the phenomenon of migration.
12. As lawmakers, find a way to implement the resolutions and initiatives presented by the work groups in our own countries in such a way that they become a binding force.
13. As an ethical imperative for the region, ensure State resources fulfill their mission by fighting corruption and encouraging parliamentarians to propose transparency laws in their countries.
14. Create a work group devoted exclusively to studying how the tax burden affects socio-economic development in the economies of the member countries. The group's mission would be to conduct a study to establish principles and find alternatives that provide a fair and impartial tax system to ensure social development and create jobs by increasing the production and wealth of each member State.

**Iván Alejandro Moreira Barros**  
Deputy, Chamber of Deputies of Chile  
Chair of Working Group No. 2

**Isabel Cristina Jiménez Losada**  
Rapporteur

## **PARTICIPANTS**

Canada	Senator Nancy Ruth Mr. Mario Silva, M.P.
Chile	Senator Adolfo Zaldívar Deputy Sergio Correa Deputy Fidel Edgardo Espinoza Sandoval Deputy Cristián Monckeberg Bruner
Colombia	Senator Nancy Patricia Gutiérrez Castañeda Senator Cecilia López Montaña
Cuba	Deputy Tubal Páez Hernández
Dominica	Mr. Ronald Toulon, M.P.
El Salvador	Deputy Jesús Gutiérrez Deputy Julio Cesar Portillo Baquendano
Grenada	Senator Ingrid Rush
Haiti	Deputy Marie Jossie Étienne Pierre Deputy Gérard Théràmène
Mexico	Senator Gabriela Aguilar García Senator Rogelio Humberto Rueda Sánchez Deputy Margarita Arenas Guzman Deputy Alfonso Othón Bello Pérez Deputy Salvador Ruiz Sánchez
Dominican Republic	Senator Roberto Rodríguez Deputy Gladys Sofía Azcola Deputy Bernardo Colón Deputy María Estela de la Cruz Deputy Juan Maldonado Deputy Lupe Nuñez Deputy Mirtha Pérez Deputy Plutarco Pérez Deputy Aridio Reyes Deputy Digna Reynoso Deputy María Sánchez Deputy Gladis Soto

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Suriname	Mrs. Socila Angoelal, M.P. Mr. Mahinderkoemar Jogi, M.P.
Trinidad and Tobago	Senator Danny Montano Kamla Persad-Bissessar, M.P.
Uruguay	Senator Susana Elida Dalmás Garcen
Venezuela	Deputy Hayden Owando Pirela Sánchez

### 6.6.3 Working Group No.3: Fight against Drug Trafficking

Original: Spanish

## FINAL REPORT Working Group No. 3: Fight against Drug Trafficking

The Working Group on the Fight against Drug Trafficking met in the city of Bogotá (Colombia) on November 19 and 20, in the context of the Fifth Meeting of the Inter-Parliamentary Forum of the Americas (FIPA). Sessions were held at the seat of the Colombian Congress and the Colombian Senate Committee on Foreign Policy and National Defence. Delegates from eight countries of the Americas attended.



Senator Sandra Husbands from Barbados presided over the work group. The rapporteur was Mr. Felipe Ortiz, General Secretary of the Colombian Senate Committee on Foreign Policy and National Defence.

To open the session, the Chairwoman of the Working Group gave a general presentation on the topic and explained the rules to be followed during the meeting. She then turned the floor over to Mr. Sandro Calvani, an expert on the issue and a representative of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC).

Mr. Calvani spoke about recent developments regarding the illicit drug problem in the Americas and referred to the 2006 world report on drugs, which shows that approximately 200 million people consumed drugs during the past year. This is an increase of 15 million over the previous year.

1. In the case of opium and heroin, planted areas dropped. In Latin America, the reduction was significant, thanks to government action in countries such as Colombia and Mexico. Shipment of these drugs to the United States also fell from 7% to 4%.
2. Areas planted in coca in Colombia have declined, but not in Peru or Bolivia. Cocaine production has remained stable, and the traffic is being combated, particularly by Colombia, which registers the greatest number of seizures.
3. Amphetamine-type stimulants (ATS), primarily “ecstasy,” are still being produced in Europe. Production has stabilized due to the cooperation laws. Traffic in these stimulants is being combated fiercely, and many tons have been seized. However, nearly 26 million people the world over continue to consume such stimulants.

4. Cannabis or marijuana is the most produced, trafficked and consumed drug worldwide. The global trend is toward increased use and trafficking.

Alternative development is a control strategy intended to reduce or eliminate the supply of drugs derived from illicitly grown plants.

The governments of Colombia, Peru and Bolivia have used their own resources to adopt alternative development measures, improving and creating conditions for investment in areas where illicit crops are grown.

## **DEBATE**

The parliamentarians actively participated in debates held during the work sessions, exchanging different ideas. The following topics were addressed:

### **I. Legal drugs: tobacco and alcohol**

Various countries have implemented restrictions on consumption of these substances, particularly tobacco use in public places and alcohol consumption by minors. It was also noted that consumption of these drugs is severely frowned on by society.

In addition, a correlation is noted between legal and illegal drug use and crime, as well as between drug consumption and HIV/AIDS.

### **II. Illegal drugs: cannabis, cocaine, heroin and opiates, amphetamine stimulants**

At the start of this discussion, several countries indicated that more resources should be devoted to preventing drug use. This makes a great deal of sense, since the hemispheric strategy to combat drugs recognizes that demand encourages drug production and trafficking. This approach requires implementation of education programmes at the school, family, community and penal levels, as well as youth and gender-oriented programmes and for unprotected ethnic groups, among others.

#### **1. Economics**

##### **a. Economic development in developing countries**

There is a correlation between a country's economic underdevelopment and the potential for proliferation of illicit drugs. Such countries are vulnerable to corruption and to becoming transshipment points.

All of this underscores the need for international rethinking of the current economic model, since it impedes countries' economic growth. International trade must be supported. Trade agreements must be struck that promote economic development, as well as access to markets for the products of developing countries, fair prices, and fair-trade rules or standards that take into account the realities of each country.

It was suggested that the agricultural sectors in some countries have been hit hard by difficulties in exporting their products. It was requested that the model be amended, so as not to affect the agricultural sector in the developing countries of the Americas.

The group expressed a need to reinforce infrastructure in producing countries in order to prevent drug traffickers from using the agricultural sector for production purposes. It was proposed that the developed countries earmark resources to help producing countries.

It was suggested that farm subsidies in consuming countries be directed to peasant farmers in producing countries.

b. Alternative production

Alternative production is presented as a challenge rather than a solution to the total eradication of illicit crops. This means a joint continental initiative is needed to promote alternative crops in areas affected by drug trafficking.

i. Crop-substitution strategy: subsidies

An effort is needed to obtain certification, seals and labels that will facilitate access to international markets.

**2. Social action and education**

a. Educational programmes for young people to prevent consumption: programme agreed upon internationally in the Americas

A hemispheric commitment is called for to support the educational reforms needed to prevent drug consumption, as was explained in case of the Netherlands.

b. Mass media programmes using resources from seized goods and property

The development of programmes to redistribute seized property is a priority continent-wide as a means of funding anti-drug and social development programmes.

**3. Legal and security issues**

a. International court against drugs

The working group sees an inter-American court as an effective way to strengthen the inter-American war on drugs.

b. Continental legislation to combat drug trafficking

i. Legislation to combat money laundering

It was stressed that international legislation to control the flow of assets through the financial system needs to be reinforced and that more severe penalties and police action are required in this area.

ii. Legislation on interdiction

Legislative programmes to counter drug trafficking need to be reinforced by the competent bodies in each country, using either OAS instruments or those of a new body.

c. The fight against corruption

There is a strong correlation between drug trafficking and corruption. This is why corruption should be subject to greater control throughout the Americas.

d. International support for interdiction (transshipment)

The countries regarded as transit points for drug traffickers expressed a need for support from more developed countries to carry out interdiction.

e. Judicial cooperation and information exchange to fight crime.

## Conclusions

To be effective, alternative development requires that States guarantee government presence and security conditions in areas where it is implemented.

To reduce the scale of the problem and lessen its impact on the economy, countries with large areas of illicit crops must consolidate their national policies and make the changes needed to facilitate implementation of alternative programmes. These reforms must create a better climate for investment and the sale of agricultural products from regions where alternative development strategies are applied.

Alternative development programmes will not achieve their objectives without active and effective support from local and national authorities, and the international community. Consequently, these bodies must be involved in a coordinated manner to support implementation of social and economic policies that allow products from alternative-development areas to gain access to markets.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

*Adopted by the FIPA Plenary Assembly on November 21, 2006*

### ECONOMIC RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Parliamentarians are urged to work actively in their own countries and on the international scene in the interest of multilateral trade agreements that seek to change the economic status quo.
2. Countries must work internally to obtain the necessary funding and resources to establish crop-substitution and job-promotion programmes. Such programmes will make it possible to reduce social inequalities.
3. To increase the likelihood of success of crop-substitution programmes and prevent recidivism, they should encompass training, food security, transport and access to markets.

### SOCIAL RECOMMENDATIONS:

4. Considering that demand is a powerful stimulant to production, recognized by the anti-drug strategy in the hemisphere, it is recommended that educational programmes be developed at the school, family and community levels, as well as gender and ethnic oriented, and youth programmes to impart new values that prevent drug consumption.



5. It is also recommended that the mass media be careful about using images that create false icons and that encourage violence and consumption of narcotics. The media's responsibility and active involvement in the fight against drug trafficking and the creation of conditions that prevent violence and hallucinogenic substance abuse are encouraged.
6. It is recommended that an international forum be convened to address the mass media's role in imparting values that aid the war on drugs.
7. It is recommended that parliamentarians try to reform the education system to strengthen the teaching of values and non-use of these harmful substances.
8. Parliamentarians should participate more actively in the discussion on social values and more effectively promote the International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Drug Trafficking.

#### LEGAL AND SECURITY RECOMMENDATIONS

9. Parliamentarians should encourage countries and negotiate with them to update their laws, as well as seek alignment in such standards similar to what Latin America tried to achieve at the end of the last century. In this uniform legislation, activities such as illicit drug trafficking, money laundering, corruption and transshipment of illicit drugs should be regarded as crimes. For consumption cases, we firmly recommend the punishment be gradual.
10. Parliamentarians will promote and attempt to convene a meeting with the OAS and the UN to discuss creating an inter-American or international court against drugs, as well as an agency responsible for interdiction.
11. It is suggested that an effort be made to reinforce and increase international support for countries forced to wage war on drugs and to deal with money laundering, corruption and transshipment.
12. It is recommended that FIPA parliaments promote the United Nations plan for the fight against drugs in their countries.

**Mrs. Sandra Husbands**  
 Senator of Barbados  
 Chair of Working Group No.3

**Felipe Ortiz**  
 Rapporteur

#### PARTICIPANTS

Canada	Senator Marcel Prud'homme Mr. Larry Miller, M.P.
Chile	Deputy Carlos Olivares
El Salvador	Deputy Carlos Alfredo Castañeda Magaña
Ecuador	Deputy Myriam Peralta Solorzano

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Haiti	Deputy Ronald Larêche
Mexico	Senator Rene Arce Islas
	Senator Francisco Berganza
	Senator Ricardo García Cervantes
	Deputy Beatriz Pages Rebollar
	Deputy Ruth Zavaleta
Trinidad and Tobago	Senator Dana Seetahal
	Mr. Stanford Callender, M.P.

6.7 *Appendix 7 – Recommendation of the Group of Women Parliamentarians of the Americas*

**4th Meeting of the Group of Women Parliamentarians of the Americas**

November 20-21, 2006

**Recommendation to carry out the 2007-2008 work plan of the group of women parliamentarians of the Americas**

*Adopted by the FIPA Plenary Assembly on November 21, 2006*

TAKING INTO ACCOUNT the goals stated in the *Group of Women Parliamentarians of the Americas Action Plan 2005-2007*, adopted by the Executive Committee and based on the recommendations made at the 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting of the Group of Women Parliamentarians, during the 4<sup>th</sup> Plenary Meeting in Brasilia, Brazil.

The Plenary Assembly recommends that:

1. The Group of Women Parliamentarians, under the guidance of the Chair and with the support of the FIPA Technical Secretariat, implement the 2007-2008 Work Plan, attached in Appendix 1.

**Céline Hervieux-Payette**  
 Senator of Canada

**Cecilia López Montaña**  
 Senator of Colombia

Co-Chairs, 4th Meeting of the Group of Women Parliamentarians of the Americas

**PARTICIPANTS**

Antigua and Barbuda	Senator Gail Christian
Barbados	Senator Sandra Husbands
Bolivia	Deputy Elsa María Guevara Aguirre
Canada	Senator Nancy Ruth
Colombia	Senator Nancy Patricia Gutiérrez Castañeda
	Senator Marta Lucía Ramírez de Rincón
	Senator Gloria Inés Ramírez Rios
Dominican Republic	
Écuador	Deputy Myriam Peralta Solorzano

Report  
5th Plenary Assembly  
Bogotá, Colombia, November 19-21, 2006  
FIPA/PA/2006/REP/e/rev.1

Grenada	Senator Ingrid Rush
Haiti	Deputy Marie Jossie Étienne
Mexico	Senator Gabriela Aguilar García Deputy Margarita Arenas Guzman
Suriname	Deputy Socila Angoelal
Uruguay	Senator Susana Elida Dalmás Garcen

## Appendix 1: Work Plan 2007-2008

Elaborating on the themes outlined in the *Group of Women Parliamentarians of the Americas 2005-2007 Action Plan* the FIPA Secretariat, in consultation with the Executive Committee, has developed 5 potential projects to be carried out by the Group of Women Parliamentarians, with the support of the FIPA Secretariat, in 2007-2008.

Projects 1-4 draw on 2 of the 4 themes identified in the 2005-2007 Action Plan: *Encouraging the involvement of women in politics through engagement and education*; and *building the capacity of men and women parliamentarians to implement international human rights conventions, with special emphasis given to the question of gender*. Project 5 is based on a new theme, identified by the Group of Women Parliamentarians during the 5<sup>th</sup> FIPA Plenary Meeting: *Actions to obtain democratic gender equity*.

### 1) Experience and Advice Sharing through the Online Work Group

#### ***2005-2007 Action Plan Theme 1: Encouraging the Involvement of Women in Politics through Engagement and Education***

In the interest of gathering inspirational material from women parliamentarians that can be shared with women leaders of our region, and with the hope of creating stronger connections between members of the Group of Women Parliamentarians, the FIPA Secretariat proposes to invite women parliamentarians of the Americas to submit one page write ups on topics that could be used to inspire, encourage and assist women to become involved in politics.

Material submitted will be shared with the rest of the Online Group of Women Parliamentarians, thereby strengthening ties between working Group members.

The FIPA Secretariat would undertake to consolidate submissions and produce documents, in English, French, Portuguese and Spanish, which could be posted on the FIPA Website and Virtual Parliament, included in an issue of the FIPA Newsletter *ParlAmericas*, and shared with civil society groups and the general public throughout the region in the interest of reaching as many leaders as possible. The Secretariat will also explore new means of sharing information through the use of information communication technology tools such as blogs and chats.

Possible topics for submission could be (please circle preference):

- a) Stories to Inspire: How I came to be a women parliamentarian
- b) A Beginners Guide: Three Tips I would Give to a Woman Considering Entering Politics
- c) Why was it worth it? What did I accomplish?
- d) Other \_\_\_\_\_

## **2) International Women's Week Outreach Project – Connecting with Women Leaders**

### ***2005-2007 Action Plan Theme 1: Encouraging the Involvement of Women in Politics through Engagement and Education***

In concert with international women's week, the first week in March, the FIPA Secretariat proposes to work with women parliamentarians of the Americas to coordinate outreach programs designed to encourage the involvement of women leaders in politics through engagement and education. Parliamentarians involved in the project could participate in one or two education and engagement outreach projects:

1. Participating women parliamentarians will work to identify women who are active in their communities and who may have a potential interest in politics, inviting 1-3 women to join them in their offices, commissions, sessions and parliaments for a day in order to provide exposure to the realities of parliamentary life, create connections between women parliamentarians and women community leaders, and encourage more women to enter politics.
2. Participating women parliamentarians may also arrange to visit schools, community groups, women's organizations, etc. in their area to share their experiences as women in parliament and to talk about how to become involved in politics.

In order to create value added to this project the FIPA Secretariat will:

- Coordinate and document projects being implemented across the Americas.
- Provide support including promotional material and information to be distributed to participants regarding women in politics.
- Assist participating women parliamentarians to raise awareness in the wider population through the media by:
  - Working to create a region wide media buzz regarding women in politics
  - Assisting participating parliamentarians in the creation of press releases for their individual involvement
  - Distribute information regarding the project to parliaments, civil society groups, academic and governmental institutions across the Americas through an issue of ParlAmericas dedicated to women in Parliament in the region.

## **3) Mentorship Program**

### ***2005-2007 Action Plan Theme 1: Encouraging the Involvement of Women in Politics through Engagement and Education***

Inspired by the Mission to Haiti undertaken by FIPA's Women's Group, in which women parliamentarians from North America, South America and the Caribbean met with Haitian women interested in pursuing politics, the Secretariat proposes to develop a list of experienced women parliamentarians interested in volunteering as mentors for:

- a) Women newly elected to parliament
- b) Women leaders interested in entering politics

The list would be advertised on the FIPA Website, and distributed to parliaments and/or civil society groups, academic institutions and governmental bureaus across the Americas, inviting interested women to contact the Secretariat in order to be matched with a mentor.

**4) Workshop on the Implementation of CEDAW**

***2005-2007 Action Plan Theme 2: Building the Capacity of Men and Women Parliamentarians to implement International Human Rights Conventions, with Special Emphasis given to the Question of Gender***

In the interest of assisting parliamentarians to implement international human rights conventions related to the question of gender equity the FIPA Secretariat proposes to collaborate with a host parliament and organizations such as the World Bank Institute, the Parliamentary Centre, the Inter-American Development Bank, the Organization of American States and others to organize a workshop at the regional level, focusing on building the knowledge base of parliamentarians regarding the existing international convention and enhancing the capacity of parliamentarians to implement relevant conventions within their own parliaments.

The workshop would provide an opportunity for both men and women parliamentarians interested in the implementation of international human rights conventions to network with organizations familiar with the convention and to network and share best practices and lessons learned with their colleagues from across the region.

The FIPA Secretariat will provide value added to the project by ensuring that information regarding existing conventions is available through the Virtual Parliament of the Americas and that the Online Group of Women Parliamentarians is fully utilized to distribute information related to international human rights conventions and connect parliamentarians interested in the subject.

**5) Workshop in Bolivia regarding gender equity advances in that country**

***New Theme: Actions to obtain democratic gender equity***

In the interest of learning more about the advances made in Bolivia in the field of gender equity, and with the intent of expanding the knowledge base of women parliamentarians regarding methods for obtaining democratic gender equity, the Chair of the Group of Women Parliamentarians proposes to organize a workshop in Bolivia, inviting women parliamentarians from across the region to study the question.

*6.8 Appendix 8 - Recommendation and resolution presented by the Executive Committee*

*6.8.1 Resolution 10: Creation of a joint work group between FIPA and COPA*

FIPA/PA/2006/RES.10

*Adopted by the FIPA Plenary Assembly on November 21, 2006*

CONSIDERING the recommendation of the Executive Committee of the Inter-Parliamentary Forum of the Americas (FIPA), which met in a special session with representatives from the Parliamentary Confederation of the Americas (COPA) on November 21 in Bogotá, Colombia,

THE PLENARY ASSEMBLY RESOLVES TO:

1. Form a joint work group with COPA to examine the possibility of FIPA and COPA joining forces, most notably to:
  - exchange information;
  - examine the most appropriate structures for a possible integration of the two organizations;
  - propose an action plan to this end;
  - invite each other to the respective activities of both organizations over the year to come.
  
2. Have the work group report back to the Plenary Assembly at its next meeting.



*6.8.2 Recommendation 1: Support for the UNESCO Convention on the Diversity of Cultural Expressions*

FIPA/PA/2006/REC.1

*Adopted by the FIPA Plenary Assembly on November 21, 2006*

CONSIDERING, as expressed in the declaration issued by the heads of State and governments of the Americas at the Third Summit of the Americas, and reiterated by the ministers and senior officials responsible for cultural affairs in the Americas at their third meeting in Montreal on November 13–15, 2006, that cultural diversity is a source of wealth for our societies, and that respect and appreciation for this diversity should be a factor of cohesion that strengthens the social fabric and development of our nations;

RECOGNIZING that the protection and promotion of cultural diversity constitutes a regional priority and that support from the legislative branch is fundamental to both these efforts; and

TAKING INTO ACCOUNT the recommendation of the FIPA Executive Committee, gathered for a special session on November 19 in Bogotá, Colombia;

THE PLENARY ASSEMBLY RECOMMENDS THAT:

1. National legislative assemblies of the Americas be requested to undertake steps, pursuant to the rules and regulations prevailing in their respective States, so that their State might become Party, as soon as possible, to the Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions adopted by UNESCO in October 2005;
2. The governments of the Americas be requested to adopt policies to implement the UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions.

## 6.9 Appendix 9 - FIPA Regulations as of November 21, 2006

The *Inter-Parliamentary Forum of the Americas (FIPA)* is governed by the rules and procedures set out in these *Regulations*.

### *Chapter I: Nature and Objectives*

#### **1. Nature**

The Inter-Parliamentary Forum of the Americas (FIPA) is an independent network composed of the national legislatures of the member states of the Organization of American States (OAS), whose purpose is to promote parliamentary participation in the inter-American system and to contribute to inter-parliamentary dialogue in dealing with issues on the hemispheric agenda, pursuant to Resolution 1673/99 of the OAS General Assembly.

In fulfilling its purpose, FIPA supports the principles set forth in the Inter-American Democratic Charter.

#### **2. Objectives**

The Inter-Parliamentary Forum of the Americas has the following objectives:

- a) To contribute to the development of inter-parliamentary dialogue in dealing with issues on the hemispheric agenda.
- b) To increase the sharing of experiences, dialogue, and inter-parliamentary cooperation on issues of common interest to the member states.
- c) To help strengthen the role of the legislative branch in democracy, and in the promotion and defense of democracy and human rights.
- d) To promote the harmonization of legislation and development of legislation among member states.
- e) To contribute to the process of integration as one of the most appropriate instruments for sustainable and harmonious development in the hemisphere.

## *Chapter II: Composition*

### **3. Members**

- a) FIPA is comprised of the national legislatures of the OAS member states.

### **4. Observers**

- a) The national legislatures in states with credited OAS observer status will be considered permanent observers of FIPA. The observer states may also be invited to attend plenary meetings of FIPA.
- b) The sub-regional and special parliaments in the hemisphere may be considered special observers to FIPA. The special observers may also be invited to attend Plenary meetings of FIPA.
- c) The Plenary Assembly may confer, upon request, special observer status on parliaments or congresses in other hemispheres, as well as international agencies whose objectives and principles are consistent with those of FIPA.

## *Chapter III: Organs*

The Inter-Parliamentary Forum of the Americas will consist of four bodies: a Plenary Assembly, an Executive Committee, a Technical Secretariat, and working groups, including the Group of Women Parliamentarians of the Americas.

### **5. Plenary Assembly**

The Plenary Assembly is FIPA's highest body, composed of the delegations accredited by FIPA member legislatures.

#### **5.1 Functions**

- a) The Plenary Assembly shall elect the President of FIPA at the plenary meeting, to represent FIPA and serve as Chair of the Executive Committee. The President shall be elected for a period of two years and may be re-elected only once.
- b) The Plenary Assembly shall establish working groups on the recommendation of the Executive Committee to examine specific matters or specific tasks or projects.

- c) The Plenary Assembly shall issue recommendations and resolutions. The former shall be pronouncements on topics of political or general interest and the latter shall relate to institutional actions. The said recommendations and resolutions shall be submitted to the Plenary Assembly as proposals from the Executive Committee, from the working groups, or from the delegates.
- d) The Plenary Assembly shall make its recommendations and resolutions known to the OAS General Assembly, the presidential summits of the Americas, FIPA member legislatures, and other such bodies as the Plenary Assembly should decide to inform.

## **5.2 Meetings**

- a) The Plenary Assembly shall meet every year.
- b) The Plenary Assembly shall determine which parliament will host the next plenary meeting based on invitations received.
- c) Delegations will be composed of representatives of national legislatures of the OAS member states; be chosen by the accredited national parliament or congress; have up to twelve (12) members of parliament/congress (this limit does not apply to the host parliament), and; insofar as possible, delegations should represent the diverse political parties/groups in each participating legislature, shall have representatives of both chambers in bicameral legislatures and should have female participation.
- d) The Chair of the Plenary Meeting shall be a member of the host parliament and will be elected by the Plenary Assembly.
- e) The host country's parliament will make the necessary arrangements for the meeting in consultation with the Executive Committee and with the support of the Technical Secretariat.
- f) The cost of organizing the Plenary Meeting will be borne by the host parliament.
- g) The agenda of the Plenary Meeting shall be approved by the Plenary Assembly on the recommendation of the Executive Committee.
- h) Member parliaments will be responsible for the expenses incurred to attend the event.

## **6. Executive Committee**

The Executive Committee shall be responsible for carrying out the activities entrusted to it by the FIPA Plenary Assembly. The Executive Committee may request the support of the Technical Secretariat and other organizations in dealing with issues on FIPA's agenda.

## 6.1 Composition

- a) The representatives of the Executive Committee shall be active members of their respective national parliaments and shall not simultaneously hold office as cabinet ministers in the executive branch of their state.
- b) The Executive Committee shall be composed of:
  - *The President of FIPA;*
  - *Two representatives from each of the sub-regions listed under 6.1g);*
  - *One representative of the country hosting the next plenary meeting;*
  - *The President of the Group of Women Parliamentarians of the Americas;*
  - *The immediate past-President of FIPA.*
- c) If the President resigns, dies, or becomes ineligible to occupy the position because he/she is no longer a member of parliament or is appointed as cabinet minister in the executive branch of his/her state, the Executive Committee shall elect one of its members as an interim President until the next meeting of the Plenary Assembly.
- d) The national legislature of each country elected as member of the Executive Committee shall be required to provide, by written communication to the President, the name of the parliamentary delegate who shall serve as its member on the Executive Committee, within 30 days following that country's election to the Executive Committee. This delegate shall serve on the Executive Committee, subject to paragraph (e), for the entire term.
- e) If any member of the Executive Committee becomes unable to carry out his/her duties because of resignation, death, or loss of status as a member of the legislature of his/her country, or because he/she is appointed as cabinet minister in the executive branch of his/her state, the national legislature to which such member belongs shall appoint an alternate member to serve out the remainder of the term until the next plenary meeting.
- f) The member countries of the Executive Committee may be re-elected.
- g) For purposes of observing a balance in regional representation, the hemisphere shall be divided into the following four sub-regions:
  - *North America:* Canada, Mexico and the United States.
  - *Central America:* Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, and Panama.

- *Caribbean*: Antigua and Barbuda, the Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Cuba, Dominica, Guyana, Grenada, Haiti, Jamaica, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, and Trinidad and Tobago.
  - *South America*: Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay and Venezuela.
- h) Each sub-region shall be free to decide on the method of its choice for electing the member countries which will represent it on the Executive Committee.
- i) Each member of the Executive Committee shall serve for a period of two years, subject to the following conditions:
- One of the two member countries representing a sub-region to the Committee will stand for re-election every year at the Plenary Meeting.
  - The term of a member of the Executive Committee who represents the country hosting the Plenary Meeting shall run from the month after the previous annual meeting until the month of the year in which the plenary meeting takes place in that country.

## **6.2 Functions**

- a) The Executive Committee may submit recommendations to the Plenary Assembly with respect to items on the hemispheric agenda or with respect to the administrative policy of FIPA.
- b) The Executive Committee shall coordinate, in conjunction with the host country of the plenary meeting and the Technical Secretariat, the draft agenda and the Plenary Meeting timetable for discussing and dealing with matters considered necessary for the meeting.
- c) The Executive Committee shall advise the host country of the Plenary Meeting on matters considered important for the meeting.
- d) The Executive Committee shall receive requests from any legislature or international agency to participate as special observers to FIPA, and shall submit recommendations on such requests at the next meeting of the Plenary Assembly.
- e) The Executive Committee shall monitor the implementation of the Plenary Assembly recommendations, with the support of the Technical Secretariat and member legislatures.
- f) When the Plenary Assembly is not in session, the Executive Committee may issue statements on any issue or situation of hemispheric interest it considers urgent.

### **6.3 Meetings**

- a) Meetings of the Executive Committee shall be presided over by the President of FIPA.
- b) The Executive Committee shall meet at least once a year.
- c) The costs of organizing the meeting shall be borne by the host parliament.

## **7. Technical Secretariat**

### **7.1 Functions**

The Technical Secretariat shall have the following functions:

- a) To provide technical assistance to the President of FIPA, the Executive Committee, and other members of FIPA in implementing the recommendations of the Plenary Assembly.
- b) To collaborate with the working groups to prepare documentation, conduct research, and pursue the other matters on which it is to report.
- c) To report annually to the Executive Committee on work and activities completed during the year. This report will be forwarded to the Plenary Assembly for approval.
- d) To coordinate the organization and conduct of the Plenary Meeting with the Executive Committee and the host country.
- e) To serve as secretariat for plenary meetings.
- f) To take and record the minutes and process documentation emanating from the Plenary Assembly, the Executive Committee, and the working groups.
- g) To administer and update the FIPA Web page.
- h) To serve as FIPA's institutional memory.
- i) To conduct, at the request of national legislatures and with the approval of the Executive Committee, comparative studies and projects on legislative harmonization.
- j) To keep national legislatures informed of the status of ratification of international treaties and agreements.
- k) To implement and coordinate an inter-parliamentary network.
- l) To inform the Permanent Council of the OAS on the activities of FIPA.

## **7.2 Secretariat Staff**

- a) In order to carry out these functions the Technical Secretariat shall be composed of an Executive Secretary, who shall serve as secretary to the Executive Committee, and other staff as deemed appropriate.
- b) The Executive Secretary shall be appointed by the Executive Committee on recommendation of the FIPA President. The Executive Secretary shall be responsible for the appointment of other Secretariat staff, with the approval of the FIPA President.

## **8. Working Groups**

- a) The working groups shall be established by the Plenary Assembly on the recommendation of the Executive Committee to examine specific matters or to carry out specific tasks, or projects.
- b) The working groups shall establish their own priorities during their meetings. When they have concluded their discussions they shall report back to the Plenary Assembly.
- c) The reports of the working groups may be presented orally or in writing at the Plenary Meeting.
- d) Working groups that meet outside the dates of the Plenary Meeting may meet via teleconferencing, the Internet or any other electronic means.

## **9. Group of Women Parliamentarians of the Americas**

The Group of Women Parliamentarians of the Americas is a permanent working group of FIPA.

### **9.1 Functions**

- a) To strengthen the leadership of female politicians through ongoing regional exchange actions.
- b) To promote the creation of conditions for equal opportunities, prioritizing the fight against poverty and the elimination of employment discrimination.
- c) To strengthen democracies in the countries of the Americas in an effort to achieve respect for human rights and conditions that promote equitable and sustainable social development.
- d) To promote the creation of mechanisms that encourage the participation of women in politics.



- e) To strengthen the active participation by women at all FIPA meetings, incorporating a gender perspective into each of the topics analyzed by the organization.

## **9.2 Meetings**

- a) The Group of Women Parliamentarians of the Americas shall meet at least once a year, in conjunction with the Plenary meeting and, while in session, shall establish its own priorities.
- b) All Plenary meeting delegates committed to promoting the Group's objectives shall be entitled to be members of the Group and to participate in its debates.
- c) The Group of Women Parliamentarians of the Americas shall elect its president at a meeting held in conjunction with the Plenary meeting, among the delegates of member parliaments attending the meeting. The election shall be presided over by a woman parliamentarian member of the host legislature. Each national delegation attending the meeting shall have two votes. The President of the Group of Women Parliamentarians shall be elected for a period of two years, with one opportunity for re-election.
- d) The President of the Group of Women Parliamentarians shall serve on the Executive Committee of FIPA. The President shall also be responsible for the implementation of the Group's work plan with the support of the Technical Secretariat and of member legislatures.

## *Chapter IV: Financing*

### **10. Financing**

The annual budget for the permanent operation of FIPA will be covered by the regular fees of each of its members, additional voluntary contributions from its members, funds from external cooperation and special donations.

- a) The Executive Committee will determine the regular fees for each of the member parliaments on the basis of the contribution each country makes to the OAS and will submit it to the Plenary Assembly for approval.
- b) Member parliaments that are able to do so may make additional voluntary contributions to the general budget of the organization.
- c) FIPA may arrange for non-repayable financing from international organizations or cooperation agencies to meet the need for operating funds or to carry out special projects. The Plenary Assembly will be notified of all funds received under this heading.

- d) FIPA may arrange for and accept any type of contribution, or public or private donation, that does not compromise its freedom of decision and action. The Plenary Assembly will be notified of all funds received under this heading.

## *Chapter V: Procedures*

### **11. Plenary Meeting Procedures**

- a) The President of FIPA will preside over the election of the Chair of the Plenary Meeting.
- b) The Chair of the meeting shall direct the work, ensuring that the rules are observed. Also, he/she shall open, adjourn and close the sessions, announce the results and declare the meeting closed.
- c) If necessary, the Chair of the meeting may select or appoint alternate members to lead some sessions or working groups during the Plenary Meeting.
- d) In giving the floor to participating delegates, the Chair of the meeting shall be guided by the terms of these FIPA Regulations.
- e) The Plenary Assembly may approve the inclusion of a new agenda item prior to the adoption of the agenda if it has the support of the majority of the votes. New agenda items may include draft recommendations or resolutions submitted by delegates for consideration by the Plenary Assembly. The author of the proposal shall have two minutes to present it verbally to the Plenary Assembly
- f) Any request to include a new agenda item submitted after the agenda has been adopted shall be referred to the Executive Committee for urgent consideration. The Executive Committee shall recommend the inclusion of the item on the agenda if it considers the topic urgent. In the latter case, the author of the proposal shall have two minutes to present it verbally to the Plenary Assembly.
- g) The recommendations and resolutions shall be approved by a simple majority vote of the delegates present, with the exception of amendments to the Regulations, which shall require the approval of two thirds of the votes.
- h) Each national delegation shall have two votes in the event that a recommendation or other matter requires delegations to vote.
- i) A participating delegate may address the meeting only with the Chair's consent.
- j) A participating delegate, with the consent of the Chair of the Plenary Meeting, may speak on any matter on the agenda.

- k) All matters not covered by these Regulations shall be decided by the Chair of the Plenary Meeting, acting on the recommendation of the Executive Committee.

*Adopted on March 9, 2001, in Ottawa, Canada*  
*Amended on March 14, 2002, in Mexico City, Mexico*  
*Amended on April 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2004, in Valparaiso, Chile*  
*Amended on November 21<sup>st</sup>, 2006 in Bogotá, Colombia*

## 6.10 Appendix 10 - Executive Committee Composition

### FIPA Executive Committee Members for 2006-2007

Position	Name of the parliamentary delegate	Country	Tenure
<b>Presidency</b>	Deputy Luiz Carlos Hauly	Brazil	2006 to 2008
<b>North America</b>	Senator Ricardo García Cervantes	Mexico	2005 to 2007
	Mr. James Bezan, M.P.	Canada	2006 to 2008
<b>Central America</b>	Deputy Gudy Rivera Estrada	Guatemala	2005 to 2007
	Deputy María Estela de la Cruz	Dominican Republic	2006 to 2008
<b>Caribbean</b>	Senator Brenda Hood	Grenada	2005 to 2007
	Mr. Stanford Callender, M.P.	Trinidad and Tobago	2006 to 2008
<b>South America</b>	Deputy Iván Moreira Barros	Chile	2005 to 2007
	Senator Nancy Patricia Gutiérrez Castañeda	Colombia	2006 to 2008
<b>Plenary Meeting Host Country</b>	TBC	TBC	2006 to 2007
<b>Chair of the Group of Women Parliamentarians of the Americas</b>	Senator Cecilia López Montaña	Colombia	2006 to 2008
<b>Ex-President of FIPA</b>	Senator Céline Hervieux-Payette	Canada	2006 to 2008
<b>Executive Secretary : Emmanuelle Pelletier</b>			

## *6.11 Appendix 11 - Speech at the Closing Ceremony*

### *6.11.1 Speech of the Speaker of the Senate of Colombia, the Honourable Dilian Francisca Toro Torres*

*Original: Spanish*

As President of the Senate of Colombia, I am honoured to close this Fifth Plenary Meeting of the Inter-Parliamentary Forum of the Americas — FIPA. In recent years, FIPA has become the top forum for parliaments in the Americas to share initiatives and experiences on legislative development; engage in an intense, ongoing dialogue to strengthen our democracies and the relationships among our countries, and join efforts in the fight against shared scourges such as terrorism, poverty and social inequity.

We are gathered here today to close the Fifth FIPA Meeting, the first ever held in Colombia, a country that, like no other, has long suffered from the issues that have always been addressed by FIPA's working agenda. For over forty years we have endured a domestic conflict that has nowadays unfortunately turned into terrorism. We have also suffered from the phenomenon of drug-trafficking, currently a source of funding for violence and a noxious element detrimental to our economic development.

Despite this, and against all odds, the Colombian government and peoples have successfully managed to preserve democratic institutions and keep people's hope for a better future alive.

In my capacity as President of the Senate of Colombia and on behalf of our peoples, let me pay tribute to all parliamentary delegates to this Forum for coming to a country that, in spite of all difficulties, is deeply committed to honouring freedom, wellbeing, the quest for peace, peaceful cohabitation and, last but not least, the self-determination of peoples.

#### THE INTER-PARLIAMENTARY AGENDA

Let me now share with you a few thoughts about the issues addressed by the working groups of this Assembly.

#### TRADE AND INTEGRATION

Trade and integration are paramount for the development of our countries. The question is: What role must Congresses of the Americas play in order to ensure that trade and integration favour our economies?

The first thing we should understand is that trade and integration are not ends in themselves, but the means to an end. They are useful tools in promoting economies that promote the creation of productive employment and wellbeing.

In this sense, Congresses should direct their efforts towards the legislative construction and development of their domestic agendas in order to improve their countries' competitiveness and productivity conditions.

Free trade agreements, which implement integration, are like "having a tiger in a cage". That is to say, a tiger whose teeth can be removed, who can be put to sleep or tamed in order to prevent it from attacking or injuring us. Now then, the domestic agenda we develop in our countries should enable us to so "tame the tiger" under conditions that favour our economies,

our competitiveness and, naturally, the generation of employment. The extent to which we let the tiger be a danger is up to us.

In the same vein, the Colombian Congress, for instance, has been working on the development of a domestic agenda that — in the face of a potential free trade agreement with the United States — enables us to compete favourably and on an equal footing with one of the soundest economies in the region.

For the domestic agenda to be legitimate and in tune with reality, our Congress has been leading county-wide forums to identify the realities, strengths and weaknesses of various regional production activities.

This is why I believe that Congresses of the Americas have a responsibility to open the doors to production sectors so that, without intermediaries, they can work together to build a domestic agenda that will enable each of our countries to enter into fair competition and improve their production systems in order to ensure and guarantee that trade and integration lead to the generation of employment and to the wellbeing of our peoples.

## POVERTY REDUCTION

Certainly, we leaders of the Americas face great challenges in our effort to overcome one of the worst scourges of our societies: Poverty.

This is such an important issue that it should motivate all Latin American leaders and become a ubiquitous and permanent item in the Inter-Parliamentary Forum agenda. “Ubiquitous” because there can be no such thing as a public policy or issue that does not have the defeat of poverty as its objective and aim. As I mentioned, trade and integration are futile unless they are used to eradicate poverty by creating jobs and seeing to our people’s welfare. And “permanent” because we must propose concrete tasks that may require not only legislative input but also follow-up and control activities, which make up one of the most significant roles of the contemporary congress: political control.

The Inter-Parliamentary Forum should begin a process whereby each Congress in the Americas sets up a “social investment observatory” intended to provide parliamentarians in each country with the outcomes and a detailed report on the way in which governments manage public budgets allocated to social investment. In this struggle to mitigate poverty, congresses cannot restrict their role to developing legislative policies and merely approving government budgets and public investments. We must proactively monitor such investment and exert determinate and firm political control whenever governments fail to achieve the objective of alleviating poverty through the management of their budgets.

As one of the conclusions and concrete tasks resulting from FIPA’s Fifth Plenary Meeting, I propose the creation of a “social observatory” in all Congresses so that we legislators from the Americas can follow up on the social investment in our own countries to verify its efficiency and effectiveness in reducing poverty.

## WOMEN PARLAMENTARIANS

Last August 7<sup>th</sup>, as President of the Senate, I had the great honour of being the first woman in the history of Colombia to administer the oath of office to the President of the Republic. As a result I feel morally obliged to look briefly at the involvement of women in politics and, of course, at one of the discussion topics of this Fifth Meeting: women parliamentarians.

We should ask ourselves the following question: Is it useful to have more women involved in politics? Without hesitation, my answer is “Yes!” It is not only useful but also necessary. I believe we can make a special contribution in a variety of fields: in business, family and public service. The focus should not only be on the number of women involved in public issues, but on their occupation of many new spaces.

No single country can reach its potential unless it is with the resolute involvement of the majority. In Colombia, for instance, women account for 52% — i.e. a majority — of the population.

We women in the Americas cannot content ourselves with anything but full citizenship. Only when some political leaders stop treating us like significant minorities, feeling they are generous to do so much, and begin to enjoy progressive, open minds will we have achieved a significant step forward.

We should not ask ourselves whether more women should be involved in politics but, rather, whether the current trend, which triggers discussions in forums like this one, is an irreversible trend or simply fashion. Of course, some people may fantasize or hope that all this will not last, but have we reached a point of no return? I definitely think so. Countries in the Americas are undergoing a cultural change process that, sooner or later, I certainly believe will lead us to accept this new reality. It is not without reason that Anthony Giddens states that “women’s emancipation is the biggest revolution of the 20th century”. Full integration of women into the political, corporate and academic arenas, and into the labour market, shows the consensus we have reached on an ever-inclusive and egalitarian society.

However, the key issue in this scenario, esteemed parliamentarians of the Americas, is not the increasing number of women engaged in politics, but the development of an increasing number of public policies that contribute to fostering gender equity. By these I mean policies aimed at bridging gaps in terms of equal opportunities for women, an area where the true face of discrimination becomes apparent. What matters is not whether policies are made by men or women, but the fact that said policies, which guide the actual Government’s course of action, promote a truly egalitarian society. To use a medical expression, we might say that “the issue is not the bottle but the medicine itself.”

When it comes to the public policies promoted by Congresses through laws and public control, it is not a matter of quantity, but of quality. It is essential that laws and political controls have as objective the furthering of public policies ensuring an egalitarian society. We may certainly be a minority in our own Congresses, but this situation should not mean that parliamentarians legislate using discriminatory criteria.

How can we manage to legislate using equitable criteria? I would like to share our experience with you: In Colombia we have created the “women’s caucus”. This new caucus is free from any partisan or ideological bias and is responsible for ensuring that all policies promoted by the Congress through laws and political control are aimed at developing and safeguarding men and women’s rights equally. Likewise, we have been insisting that this “gender caucus” we have set up in Congress becoming a fixture for any woman taking part in a government entity.

Women parliamentarians of the Americas, I call upon you to champion the creation of a “gender caucus” in your own Congresses so that politics in our continent is conceived in the light of equality.

Let me conclude by renewing faith in democracy, in our congresses and parliaments, as they represent the legitimacy of our peoples, faith in women parliamentarians, and in the future of our dearest Americas region. Welcome to Colombia!

Thank you.



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