



**PARLIAMENTARY CONFEDERATION OF THE AMERICAS
7TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY
QUITO, ECUADOR, MAY 29 TO JUNE 3, 2006**

**Committee on Health and Social Protection
June 2, 2006**

Report

Some thirty participants met for the work session of COPA's Permanent Committee on Health and Social Protection to discuss the issue of sexual and reproductive health in the Americas.

Ms. Flor Ríos, Member of the Legislative Assembly of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, acted as chair pro tempore in the absence of Ms. Elsa Rojas, Member of the National Assembly of People's Power of Cuba. Ms. Alba Allende de López, Member of the Chamber of Deputies of the Province of Entre Ríos, Argentina, acted as vice chair.

Ms. Aparecida Gama, President of the Network of Women Parliamentarians of the Americas and Member of the Legislative Assembly of the State of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, presented the recommendations contained in the *Bahia Declaration*, a document stemming from the 13th Latin American Congress on Sexology and Sex Education held in Salvador, Bahia, Brazil from April 19 to 22, 2006, and attended by parliamentarians from Brazil and the United States.

Ms. Flor Ríos, Vice Chair of Women's Rights with the Legislative Assembly of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela's Committee on Family, Women, and Youth, presented a report on the latest developments in health, humanitarian missions to aid women, and political and legal advances with regard to gender equality in her country.

Ms. Flor Ríos then presented the report *Reproductive Health and the Sexual Rights of Women in the Americas* by Ms. Elsa Rojas. The report takes stock of sexual and reproductive health in the Americas and around the world, and looks at Cuba's specific experience¹. Her presentation was followed by a discussion among attendees on the situation in their respective states and on existing or proposed legislation and policies.

¹The report can be consulted on the COPA website at <http://www.copa.qc.ca/index.html>.

The presentation of the report was followed by two main conferences. First, Ms. Ana Guezmes, Technical Support Team Consultant for Latin America and the Caribbean, United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), discussed the role of reproductive health and sexual rights in the reduction of poverty, in relation to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Then, Ms. Natalia Garcia, Representative of the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), made a presentation on the economic development conditions required to achieve the Millennium Development Goals in the Americas (policies and costs, budgeting social expenditures, and legislative programs).

Following the presentations, attendees continued their discussions and examined a draft recommendation on sexual and reproductive rights. After much discussion and a number of amendments, they arrived at a consensus and adopted the appended recommendation.

Lastly, the attendees decided to pursue their discussions on the theme of progress on the Millennium Development Goals and the *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women* (CEDAW) with regard to sexual and reproductive rights, and with a special emphasis on the impact of HIV/AIDS on women. A proposal was also put forth to study health budgets from a gender analysis standpoint.

At the COPA General Assembly plenary session held June 2, 2006, in Quito, Ecuador, the Committee on Health and Social Protection was appointed, in accordance with Section 4 of the By-Laws of the Permanent Thematic Working Committees of COPA:

Chair: Ms. Elsa Rojas, Member of the National Assembly of People's Power of Cuba

Vice Chair: Ms. Flor Ríos, Member of the Legislative Assembly of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela

Rapporteur: Ms. Alba Allende de López, Member of the Chamber of Deputies of the Province of Entre Ríos, Argentina