



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

**Committee on the Environment and Sustainable Development**

**Report**

Chair: Senator **Dudley Lucia**, Netherlands Antilles  
Spokesperson: Deputy **Efraín Villanueva Arcos**, Mexico

Gathered to discuss “The Impact of Trade Agreements on Environmental Protection and the Adoption of Policies Aimed at Ensuring Sustainable Development,” the Committee began its work by meeting with the following persons:

- Ms. **Lorena San Román**, Vice President for Latin America, Green Acres Environmental Services
- Mr. **Robert Hofstede**, Regional Coordinator, World Conservation Union (IUNC) Program
- Mr. **Miguel Solanes**, ECLAC Regional Advisor, Water Fees and Regulated Utilities
- Mr. **José Sandoval**, Deputy, Vice President of the Conference of Members of Congress and Legislative Assemblies of Mexican States.

The following points were raised by participants in their comments and interactions with committee members:

- Each country must adopt a national sustainable development strategy to ensure that economic development is carried out in a socially responsible manner and that future generations still have access to natural resources and a relatively intact environment.
- Parliamentarians must ensure that the national, provincial, state, and local laws they adopt or improve can serve as tools to ensure the enforcement of policies regarding the environment and development.
- Environmental issues were virtually ignored in talks to create a Free Trade Agreement of the Americas due to antagonistic positions founded in part on protectionism and market access on one the hand and on the structure of costs and competition on the other. We must remedy this situation.
- Reference was made to a study of the integration process underway in the Americas whose main conclusions are as follows:
  - o Successful hemispheric integration will require new structures geared to sustainable development.
  - o The debate over reconciling trade with environmental protection needs to evolve.

- Latin America's parliamentary sector needs to be better aware and informed of international, regional and subregional agreements regarding the environment. This is why COPA, in addition to taking advantage of UNEP's initiative on world environmental citizenship, must support the idea of creating a virtual training center in the region on the environment and sustainable development in order to devise a legal framework capable of assisting countries in the creation of their own laws and regulations in these matters.
- One of the Millennium Development Goals approved by the United Nations was ensuring environmental sustainability. It is our duty to take action on four points:
  - o Biodiversity preservation
  - o Social justice in environmental management
  - o Integrated management of environmental resources
  - o Governing in an environmentally conscious manner through legislation and agreements aimed at healthy environmental management
- In order to increase scientific understanding of biodiversity, the Andean Parliament is preparing to launch the Andean Institute on Biodiversity to serve the Andean Community.
- It has been suggested that all countries that are signatories to trade agreements and who do not yet have legislation in place aimed at the protection of the environment seek to reinforce their legal frameworks in order to avoid conflicts between international investors and human populations using public property for their own subsistence, because we must consider illegal all use of public property for private financial gain. In order for mediation and arbitration tribunals to effectively deal with current conflicts, all countries will have to have a reliable, transparent appeal system based on legal principles existing in other countries and international and regional conventions and agreements on the environment.
- Special attention must be paid to macroeconomic policies, which can just as easily be devastating as beneficial for natural resources.
- More importance must be placed on natural resources in Latin America by providing society with environmental protection services, meaning legislation will be needed. Environmental surveillance and impact assessment will have to be improved.
- Parliamentary representatives must review Action 21, bring pressure to bear for local Action 21 plans to be drawn up, and pay more attention to ethical aspects.
- Furthermore, in order to reinforce the concept of an ecologically sustainable environment and the ethical principles that must guide the use and management of the environment, greater environmental education efforts fundamentally focused on the needs of future generations will be needed.