



## **MEETING OF THE COMMITTEE ON THE FTAA, ECONOMY, TRADE, LABOUR, AND MIGRATION OF THE PARLIAMENTARY CONFEDERATION OF THE AMERICAS (COPA)**

### **“THE ROLE OF PARLIAMENTS IN RELATION TO THE FREE TRADE AREA OF THE AMERICAS - FTAA”**

#### **WHEREAS:**

One of the key missions of the Parliamentary Confederation of the Americas (COPA) is to represent, to the governing authorities, the interests and aspirations of the populations of the hemisphere as regards the impacts arising out of the FTAA negotiation process, while contributing to the strengthening of parliamentary democracy and to the creation of a community of the Americas founded on peace, democracy, social justice and gender equality;

The Parliamentary Confederation of the Americas (COPA) includes among its objectives that of promoting peace, tolerance, solidarity, cooperation and integration among the peoples of the hemisphere, the unrestricted respect of sovereignty, and the consolidation of a pluralistic and democratic system of government. For these reasons, it has decided to promote the holding of high-level meetings to provide for broad discussion on the advantages and disadvantages of the FTAA for developing countries;

The democratically elected Heads of State and Government of the Americas, when they gathered in Québec City for the Third Summit, made a commitment regarding hemispheric integration and regarding national and collective responsibility, for the purpose of improving the economic well-being and security of our peoples;

Provision must be made for greater involvement by the parliamentarians of the Americas, as the legitimate representatives of their peoples, to encourage discussion and monitoring of the FTAA negotiations, from the parliamentary viewpoint and from that of civil society.

COPA's 4th General Assembly, held in Ixtapan de la Sal, Mexico, in November 2002, judged that the FTAA text under study gives considerable rights to investors, thereby limiting and placing undesirable conditions on the ability of parliamentarians to enact legislation based on the concerns of their fellow citizens;

At the same meeting, the COPA Assembly recommended that the organization participate actively in the Ministerial Meetings and Summits held by the Heads of State and Government of the Americas, acting through its Executive Committee or, if necessary, in concert with the permanent thematic committee concerned;

At that meeting, the Heads of State and Government of the Americas were urged to set up a transparent negotiation process and, in this respect, to give account to the parliamentary assemblies throughout the process;

The COPA member parliamentarians gathered in Quito on August 27, 28 and 29, 2003, in order to analyse the different angles and viewpoints regarding the FTAA negotiations, and to examine the situation of the sub-regional integration processes under way in the hemisphere;

#### **BE IT RESOLVED:**

**First.** To enjoin COPA to prepare, for the parliaments, a strategy for attendance and active participation in the international FTAA negotiation forums, including a plan for dissemination and for citizen participation, so as to facilitate the consultation process that the parliamentarians should follow with the citizens whom they represent, on the highly important issues of the Second Draft FTAA Agreement and the outlook for the negotiations.

**Second.** To encourage COPA member parliamentarians to broadly disseminate the results of this meeting with the aim of informing parliaments on the status of the negotiations and of demonstrating to them the need to participate in them, and to monitor them more closely, since they are the legitimate representative bodies of the peoples, as regards the evaluation, supervision and monitoring of the negotiations.

**Third.** To seek the support of international technical organizations for the design of a system for the monitoring and examination of the FTAA negotiations, with the aim of providing the negotiators and parliaments with a decision process that corresponds to the interests of the nations that they represent, in accordance with the provisions of the Hemispheric Cooperation Program of the Quito Ministerial Declaration of 2002.

**Fourth.** To call upon the sub-regional integration organizations of Latin America and the Caribbean to refine their plans on an urgent basis in order to be able to move forward with agreements to reinforce a common position among blocks by December 2004, and thus to strengthen their negotiating power in relation to the FTAA.

**Fifth.** To propose to those parliaments which thus far do not have a body or committee responsible for examining the FTAA negotiations, that they create one in order to maintain a participation and monitoring of the negotiations and an exchange of information with their citizens and with the other parliaments of the hemisphere.

**Sixth.** To create, within the framework of COPA, interparliamentary committees to represent the regions of North America, Central America, the Caribbean, the Andes and the countries of MERCOSUR, in order to improve the implementation of the participation strategies indicated in this resolution. In this regard, the agreement concluded between the Joint Parliamentary Committee of MERCOSUR and the Andean Parliament, for the creation of a permanent liaison mechanism between those two organizations, is acknowledged.

**Seventh.** To recall the necessity of including, in the FTAA, affirmative action clauses allowing for the adoption of development policies that will be reflected in a balanced agreement, and the need to take into account asymmetric aspects and differences in the levels of economic development of the countries.

**Eighth.** To ask the parliaments to include the treatment of the issue of gender equality in all FTAA negotiation processes, so as to contribute to solving the problems of poverty. The same applies to the marginalization of indigenous peoples and other vulnerable groups, for whom standards must be observed which recognize this situation.

**Ninth.** To encourage the governments to provide all information relating to the FTAA negotiation process in a timely manner, so as to facilitate the active participation of parliaments.

**Tenth.** To ask COPA for a study of the effects of the public foreign debt on the ability to finance the economic and social development programs of the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean that are necessary to facilitate fair and dignified inclusion, in solidarity, in the free trade process.

**Eleventh.** To propose an agreement through which the international financial community, that holds the foreign debt of Latin America and the Caribbean, devote a portion of that debt to the financing of the economic and social development programs of our countries, programs which are necessary for the creation of an economic and social investment capacity liable to guarantee greater well-being and to increase the ability of our countries to take up the challenges that they face.

**Twelfth.** To insist that the negotiation process make room for both the respect and the preservation of cultural diversity, which constitutes an inestimable wealth of heritage for humanity, as practical issues forming part of the negotiations; by giving priority to education and job training to guarantee the strengthening of democratic institutions, the elimination of poverty and the reduction of delinquency; according to a social and ecological vision in which there is agreement on the need to combat modes of production and consumption that harm the environment and delay the development of small and medium businesses.

**Thirteenth.** To ask the parliaments to include the theme of science and technology as a fundamental component of the negotiations with the aim of changing the conditions that foster the competitiveness and productivity of the countries, thus giving them the possibility to better integrate at the global level. Furthermore, to verify the potential effects of applying additional intellectual property rules, in developing countries, on the economic and social rights of the peoples.

**Fourteenth.** To examine closely the limitations on the ability of parliaments to enact legislation that could diverge from the FTAA agreements, particularly as regards the link between the state and foreign investors, expropriations, environmental standards, the treatment given to vulnerable groups, the development of policies to encourage the implementation of initiatives aimed at minorities and the questioning of decisions handed down by the national judiciary systems, as well as by a dispute settlement organization and by private arbitration mechanisms.

**Fifteenth.** To recommend to the parliaments and regional integration organizations that they take into account, in particular, the effect of the FTAA standards on the following issues :

- a. subsidies aimed toward agriculture;
- b. consumer protection;
- c. conservation of resources threatened with extinction, beginning with the respect of the ecological balance of our hemisphere;
- d. maintaining public order, health and the fundamental interests of society;
- e. maintaining the power of direct taxation;
- f. control of access to domestic resources of which there are limited reserves;
- g. prevention of the loss of sovereignty.

**Sixteenth.** To formally solicit the participation of COPA in the Parliamentary Conference on the WTO, which is being organized by the Inter-Parliamentary Union in Cancún, in September 2003, with the aim of making known the common vision of the members of this organization as regards the FTAA negotiation process, and to present this resolution at the Ministerial Meeting which will be held in Miami in November, 2003.

**Seventeenth.** To consider giving all democratic states in the hemisphere, without exclusion, the opportunity to participate in the FTAA negotiation process.

**Eighteenth.** To acknowledge the efforts made by the National Congress of the Republic of Ecuador, the Andean Parliament, and COPA, for the organization of this meeting, and to thank the people of Ecuador for their hospitality.

For broadcast and publication.

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