

Recommendation on the fight against illegal drug trafficking

**Second General Assembly of the Parliamentary Conference of the Americas
Río Grande, Puerto Rico, July 19 to 23, 2000**

WHEREAS the illegal drug trade and the related criminal activities threaten the societies, economies and democratic institutions of the Americas by imperiling the ethical values upon which they are based, and constitute major obstacles to sustainable human development and to economic development;

WHEREAS organized crime, including that related to illegal drug trafficking, is a cross-border problem that is developing at an alarming rate in the hemisphere, and that requires increased and more effective cooperation among all States of the Americas;

WHEREAS the consumption and production of illegal drugs in the America generate enormous social costs, and the various forms of violence related to their illegal nature compromise the security of the entire population;

We, the women and men representatives of the parliamentary assemblies of the unitary, federal and federated States, regional Parliaments and interparliamentary organizations of the Americas:

AGREE to equip ourselves with complete and up-to-date social and medical information enabling us to analyse the respective costs and benefits associated both with the complete prohibition of consuming drugs, and with their complete or partial legalization;

COMMIT OURSELVES to conduct the follow-up on the problem of illicit drug trafficking and on the international conventions and agreements that will be or already have been signed, in order to assess their impact on reducing the production, on the trafficking and on the consumption of drugs, throughout the Americas and within each country;

AGREE to continue our efforts to ensure the implementation, within our respective institutions and countries, of the regional and international conventions and agreements dealing with the fight against drug trafficking, which a number of countries of the Americas have already endorsed;

EXPRESS THE WISH that the awareness of the populations throughout the Americas be increased concerning the ramifications of illegal drug trafficking and of the related criminal activities, as well as concerning their devastating effects on human development and on the economic development of the populations;

AGREE to foster greater harmonization of legislation, and to contribute to eliminating the excessive administrative burden in government administrations in order to fight with increasing effectiveness against all forms of crime related to drug trafficking in the Americas;

AGREE to assess the use of drugs for medical purposes as a means of preventing recidivism and to avoid criminal behaviours;

URGE and recommend to the Heads of State and Government of the Americas to increase inter-American cooperation in order to reduce the production and consumption of illegal drugs, including chemical precursors, to eliminate illicit drug trafficking and money laundering, as well as to severely sanction individuals, organizations and legal entities found guilty of these criminal activities, in the respect of the principles of territorial sovereignty and shared responsibility;

AGREE to foster the participation of the Parliamentary Conference of the Americas (COPA) in international forums debating the issue of the fight against drug trafficking, while committing ourselves to inform all parliamentarians of the Americas of the progress of the discussions under way aiming to achieve the objectives set out in the previous paragraphs.