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# I

## MISSION ACCOMPLISHED

Thanks to the enthusiastic participation of the member congresses and parliaments of the Parliamentary Confederation of the Americas (COPA), our organization presently has a greater role in the political setting of the Americas. The political and working relationships among its members are intense and have enabled our organization to gain recognition before different international bodies.

During my term of office as President of our organization, several steps were taken to enable COPA to obtain observer status in the Interparliamentary Union (IPU). COPA was given the same role in the Interparliamentary Forum of the Americas (FIPA). The presence of COPA in both these parliamentary institutions confirms its adherence to the already consolidated groups that form part of the rich world of political relations among legislators.

In Mexico, it was considered necessary that COPA be granted legal status by the authorities of Mexico, the country that hosts the Presidency of our organization, given its national legal system. This was possible and this "status" provided more legitimacy to the celebration of both the IV General Assembly of COPA in Ixtapan de la Sal, Mexico, whose achievements are summarized in this report, and the meeting of the Executive Committee of COPA prior to the above-mentioned Assembly.

The Executive Committee showed a sound judgement as it created three regional Secretariats with specific functions: in Quebec, Mexico and Brazil. The work of these Secretariats has been consolidated and has also enabled COPA to take root and to acquire prestige among Latin-American parliamentarians.

As to the achievement of the above goal, I cannot avoid mentioning the usefulness of the missions of promotion and of dissemination of our activities before a great number of members of Canadian Parliamentary Assemblies, notably the meetings at the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, the House of Commons and the Senate of Canada, and especially before the National Assembly of Québec, as well as the personal and institutional contacts with Central-American parliamentarians during the Puebla-Panama Plan Analysis Meeting, which took place in Merida, Mexico, with Parliamentarians from the Caribbean on the occasion of the International Forum for Peace and Development, in Puerto Rico and during the XIX Assembly of the Latin American Parliament (PARLATINO). On this last occasion, before parliamentarians from all over Latin America, the nature, origin and development of COPA's work and the need to establish ties of collaboration with the Parlatino was discussed.

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In this brief report, one cannot ignore the mission carried out in Geneva, Switzerland, before the General Council of the Interparliamentary Union as well as the one carried out in Denver, United States of America, before the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL), the Council of State Governments (CSG) and the National Hispanic Caucus of State Legislators (NHCSL) of the American Union who, through their representatives, now take active part in the work of our parliamentary organization.

On the other hand, COPA's list of members has been enriched with the joining of Aruba and the Netherlands Antilles as permanent members. We are waiting for the European Parliament to reply to our application to obtain observer status in this important organization of the Old Continent.

In spite of the brevity of this report, the range of influence and the political importance of COPA are undoubtedly increasing. Regardless of the fact that many of its legislators have ceased to act as such, due to the political cycles in our countries, COPA is today, from an institutional perspective, an organization that forms part of a number of groups that, from a parliamentarian point of view, are contributing to granting dignity and horizon to political work. I am convinced that in the years to come COPA will have an increasingly relevant role.

I am deeply thankful to all those who have given me their support. The achievements reached would not have been possible without the participation of many parliamentary assemblies and especially the members of the Executive Committee. To them all, I wish to express my gratitude.

For my part, and with great satisfaction, I can say: Mission accomplished.



**LAURA PAVÓN JARAMILLO**

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## II

### Presentation of the meetings

Ixtapan de la Sal, State of Mexico, Mexico, was the venue of the **IV General Assembly of the Parliamentary Confederation of the Americas (COPA)**. This publication collects the documents produced following the closing on November 27, 2002, of the deliberations held by the Parliamentarians of the Americas, and the speeches delivered during the opening ceremony by the Representatives of the National Congress of Mexico, Ms. María Elena Álvarez, Mr. Martí Batres, and Ms. Laura Pavón. The latter, delivered her speech, as well, as President of COPA and of the General Assembly.

Likewise, are included the speeches by Ms. Beatriz Paredes Rangel, Speaker of the Mexican Chamber of Deputies; by Mr. Arturo Montiel, Governor of the State of Mexico, host of the event and, of course, by the President of the United Mexican States, Mr. Vicente Fox Quesada.

A fundamental part of this document is, on the one hand, the Parliamentary Declaration of Ixtapan de la Sal, and, on the other, the recommendations of the Thematic Committees and those of the Network of Women Parliamentarians of the Americas, that synthesize the thoughts and the most sensitive concerns of the participants of the General Assembly.

During the General Assembly and as a complement to its activities, three presentations whose content can be found on the electronic portal of COPA were delivered: *Building Democracy in Mexico*, by the President of the Federal Electoral Board (IFE), Mr. José Woldenberg, *Issues Surrounding Drug Addiction*, by Mr. Guido Belsasso and *Drug Trafficking and Illegal Drug Consumption*, by Mr. Estuardo Mario Bermúdez Molina.

The General Assembly agreed to make some modifications to its ruling statutes, and new members were elected to its Executive Committee, among which the First Vice President, Ms. Jhannett Madriz, President of the Andean Parliament.

The debates, the discussions, the social meetings, the produced documents, the importance of the issues that have been treated, and the cordial and fraternal atmosphere that prevailed during the event reflect, on the one hand, the exceptional maturity of the Continent's political leadership and, on the other hand, the progress reached by the Parliamentarians in the field of understanding and the creation of a consensus concerning vital issues.

The ties of friendship and the capacity for commitment that characterized this General Assembly and the agreements reached, bear witness of the efficiency of COPA and of the importance that Parliaments and Parliamentarians have achieved in the building of a more stable and fair society in the hemisphere.



**PROGRAM OF THE MEETINGS**

***"PARLIAMENTARY STRATEGIES FOR  
PROMOTING EQUITABLE DEVELOPMENT"***

***SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 24***

- 8:00 a.m. ANNUAL MEETING OF THE NETWORK OF WOMEN  
PARLIAMENTARIANS OF THE AMERICAS
- 2:00 p.m. LUNCHEON
- 4:00 p.m. MEETING OF THE COPA EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
- 8:00 p.m. WELCOME COCKTAIL RECEPTION

***MONDAY, NOVEMBER 25***

- 10:00 a.m. OPENING CEREMONY OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE  
IV GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF COPA
- 11:00 a.m. BREAK
- 11:30 a.m. PRESENTATION ON DEMOCRACY  
Speaker: Mr. José Woldenberg, President of the Federal Electoral  
Institute (IFE)
- 1:30 p.m. LUNCHEON

**MONDAY, NOVEMBER 25 (Cont'd.)**

4:30 p.m. START OF PROCEEDINGS OF THE IV GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF COPA

REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT'S OFFICE

- Activities of the previous year
- Assessment of the permanent funding situation
- Permanent thematic working committees

7:00 p.m. CONCERT BY THE SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA OF THE STATE OF MEXICO

8:30 p.m. DINNER

**TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 26**

9:00 a.m. PRESENTATION ON THE PROBLEM OF NARCOTICS AND ADDICTION

Speakers:

- Mr. Guido Belsasso, National Commissioner, National Council against Drug Addictions in the Health Sector of Mexico
- Mr. Estuardo Mario Bermúdez Molina, Attorney specializing in health-related offences

11:00 a.m. WORK SESSIONS OF THE PERMANENT THEMATIC COMMITTEES

1. FTAA, Economy, Trade, Labour and Migration  
Coordinator: Mr. Oswaldo Molestina Zavala (Ecuador)
2. Democracy and Human Rights  
Coordinator: Mr. José Antonio Cabello Gil (Mexico)
3. Education, Culture, Science and Technology  
Coordinator: Mr. Léandre Dion (Quebec)

2:00 p.m. LUNCHEON

4:00 p.m. WORK SESSIONS OF THE PERMANENT THEMATIC COMMITTEES

4. Health and Social Development  
Coordinator: Madam Lyse Leduc (Quebec)
5. Environment and Sustainable Development  
Coordinator: Mr. Fernando Ferro (Brazil)
6. Peace and Public Security  
Coordinator: Mr. Antonio Fas Alzamora (Puerto Rico)

8:00 p.m. MEXICAN DINNER

**WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 27**

9:00 a.m. PLENARY SESSION

CONCLUSIONS OF THE PERMANENT THEMATIC COMMITTEES

1. FTAA, Economy, Trade, Labour and Migration
2. Democracy and Human Right
3. Education, Culture, Science and Technology
4. Health and Social Development
5. Environment and Sustainable Development
6. Peace and Public Security

10:00 a.m. REVIEW OF THE STATUTES

10:30 a.m. ELECTION OF THE NEW EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

11:15 a.m. ADDRESSES

11:30 a.m. CLOSING

12:00 p.m. PRESS CONFERENCE

2:00 p.m. LUNCHEON



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## 4.1 INAUGURAL SPEECHES

### **SPEECH BY MADAM LAURA PAVÓN JARAMILLO PRESIDENT OF THE PARLIAMENTARY CONFEDERATION OF THE AMERICAS AND REPRESENTATIVE OF THE NATIONAL CONGRESS OF MEXICO**

As President of this parliamentary organisation, I am very pleased that this IV General Assembly is being held in my country, and especially in my native land, of which I am the people's representative before the Mexican Congress. I shall take advantage of my first words to convey to all the member parliamentarians from the countries that form part of our organization our warmest welcome to this meeting, whose deliberations and conclusions shall contribute, as I am certain they will, to the strengthening of parliamentary democracy and the building of a better and more solid community of the Americas.

We, the parliamentarians gathered together here today, from countries with different socio-economic conditions, different ideological trends and from different geographical regions of the Continent, are nevertheless guided by a common conviction: Parliamentary life, in spite of the traps of different nature that threaten it everyday, is called to play a leading role in the future of the democratic life of our nations.

Parliament is, perhaps, the most valuable of our States' institutions, to ensure the balance that governance requires in our times, and whose problems are greatly linked to the broader plurality associated with democracy.

For this reason, the transition to democracy in Latin America as of the end of the seventies, has showed us that its consolidation and its success surpass the limits of institutionality and are closely linked to the efficiency of government. It must be clearly taken into account, that government is exercised both by the executive power and by the legislative bodies.

It is convenient to underline the above statement because in many of our countries the inheritance of a somewhat exacerbated presidentialism did not seem to grant the legislative body the legitimacy it deserves and demands in our times.

We demand respect for the house where the laws regulating social life are made. No law or institution can survive when faith in it has died out. Parliament is a political mechanism and it is politics that give sense to legislation.

Civil service is the result of the conciliation of differing interests. This conciliation system may be very complex, but it ensures that the decisions that are taken involve collective values and the public interest.

In the Mexican case, this has been the sense and the spirit of its legislators, especially now that no force has an absolute majority. We have listened to everybody before deliberating. We have also seen this spirit of conciliation in the other countries of the Continent.

Parliamentarians are the strength, the sentiment and the custodians of the people's sovereignty. For this reason, the increasing social dynamic has made Parliament the centre for political discussion, and has allowed parliamentary life to acquire an exceptional dynamism while, at the same time, internationalizing itself.

This phenomenon is not peculiar. Economic integration, that generates globalization, the multiplication of international agreements and the development of economic blocks, leads to the creation of more multilateral institutions, a phenomenon that cannot be ignored by the legislative activities that grant support to the different spheres of socio-economic life.

These processes explain the increasingly frequent meetings of parliamentarians from different regions. The progress reached in the Latin American Parliament, as it has been mentioned here, the achievements of the PARLACEN, of the Andean Parliament, of the Network of Women Parliamentarians of the Americas, for example, or the importance of the meetings of the Interparliamentary Union, that is chaired precisely by a Latin American colleague. There is also the *avant-gardist* role of the European Parliament that keeps integration of that Continent in step.

It is within this context that the Parliamentary Confederation of the Americas (COPA), emerged. Created in Quebec exactly three years after the first Summit of the Americas was held with the aim, as we all know, of creating the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) in 2005.

Against the summit process, in which essentially the executives take part, it was necessary to have a space where parliamentarians could participate as representatives of the people, with regards to the relevant issues that were and still are on the integration agenda.

The purpose, although simple, is not less important: To promote before the executive authorities of our countries the interests and aspirations resulting from the problems and the impact of the continental integration process under way.

During its three General Assemblies, COPA has already succeeded in generating with its parliamentarians, which include the parliaments from unitary States, federal and federated States, free associated States, regional and local States and the parliamentary organizations of the Americas, a synergy that has already taken roots in the Continent's political life.

On this occasion, six subjects for discussion, that are matters of major concern for the parliamentarians of the Continent, were selected. Firstly, the issue of economic integration strictly speaking; the creation of the FTAA, whose advances are undeniable, is still giving rise to many unanswered questions relative to the strategic trend of this dawning community of nations.

While our economies in general have succeeded in promoting the modern sectors of the economy within the globalizing trends, many sectors of the economy and segments of the population have suffered from deterioration and have seen their situation worsen as a result of this process.

It seems urgent that the parliaments in which the people's representation and sovereignty are vested should play a more important role in the deliberations to avoid the making of transitional decisions that do not take into account the debate that should exist within each country. We shall deliberate on this issue.

Secondly, we shall do this by tackling the controversial issue of political representation and the reasons why legislative bodies are subjected to permanent criticism and various challenges.

If the legislative bodies are the main counterweight to the executives, what reforms must they undergo in order to continue defending the needs of the population? Or, how to avoid the fragmentation of representation that is created when citizens get together in smaller or larger movements on the margin of political organizations?

What should prevail? A coalition government or a majority government? Likewise, we will be deliberating on how to strengthen parliamentary institutions within the perspective of achieving a strategy for promoting an equitable development.

Thirdly, we shall take into consideration the education and vocational training issue. Parliaments are deeply concerned about the present economic and trade logic that contributes to the weakening of national cultures to the advantage of a single model.

The acute commercialization of culture and all its undesirable effects seems to be demanding the adoption of a new international legal instrument especially dedicated to cultural diversity.

Fourthly, our attention will be centred on the debate concerning the means available to parliamentarians to improve the supply of health care and the effects that international agreements, especially the FTAA, can have on national public health systems, when, within the framework of the said agreements, the issue being treated is the deregulation of present-day services.

The always important issue of the environment could not be excluded from our deliberations. We, the parliamentarians, are required to find strategies and concrete measures in order to stop the degradation and depredation of natural resources and to create the conditions for sustainable development.

Finally, a priority issue for every country is that of public insecurity. The growth of organized crime in its different manifestations has undermined the trust of individuals and groups in the authority of the State. The battle against public insecurity necessarily has to be done within an international perspective if we wish to really have an influence on its solution.

The Network of Women Parliamentarians, for its part, will examine the strategies relative to the promotion of women, an issue that is considered fundamental to impel development, eradicate inequality and eliminate the barriers that obstruct the full validity of their rights.

Fellow parliamentarians, I would not conclude these few words without thanking all the organizations that have given their support for the holding of this General Assembly.

I thank the Chamber of Deputies of the National Congress of the Union through its Political Coordination Board; the Government of the State of Mexico, our host, and whose Governor, Arturo Montiel Rojas, has put all his determination to welcome our friends as they deserve it.

I hope your stay will be fruitful, pleasant and that the outcome of this IV General Assembly will represent another step toward the strengthening of parliamentary life in the Americas and of the Parliament of the Americas. This is where we are heading to.

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**SPEECH BY MADAM MARÍA ELENA ÁLVAREZ DE VICENCIO  
REPRESENTATIVE OF THE NATIONAL CONGRESS OF MEXICO**

The solution to many of the problems that our peoples are now suffering from cannot be found only within the boundaries of our region. The reality is pushing us more and more toward globalization, and in this irreversible process, regional associations can become a strength for our nations.

The spaces of international relations and collaboration are no longer only established for the executive powers of each country. Parliamentary diplomacy and the relationship between parliaments have become essential to the strengthening of democracy and the defence of human rights.

Mexico forms part of the Parliamentary Confederation of the Americas because we are sure and convinced that it can contribute to the building of countries on the basis of more justice, more dignity, more solidarity, and where the dignity of each and every person is unrestrictedly respected.

This Confederation wishes to unite the parliaments of the Americas, from north to south. The two countries in the north of our America have a level of development that contrasts with that of the rest of the Latin American countries, where economic inequality has kept more than half of their populations beneath the level of poverty, and where the economic benefits and sometimes power are vested in fewer hands.

In spite of such asymmetry, we are sure that the Parliamentary Confederation of the Americas, that is now holding its Fourth General Assembly under the chairmanship of a very capable Mexican woman, has an essence, has a reason to exist and will give beneficial outcomes to all the member countries.

This Confederation has favoured and will continue to favour the discussion and analysis of issues that are fundamental to the political, social and economic development of our countries: migration, environment, sustainable development, employment, health, education, security, and other issues that will be debated during this meeting.

Inter-parliamentary discussions can lead to guidelines, exchanges or future actions in the form of cooperation. These are the challenges and goals that we expect will come to be productive through our cooperation.

Mexico offers its goodwill, Mexico wants to be open to the world as a pluralistic, inclusive, responsible and participative democracy.

To the north of our borders, we have many of our brothers who have had to leave, and for them we demand respect and justice.

To the south of our boundaries, we see in everything the reflections of ourselves, the language, culture, belief, desires, hopes, and we share everyone's struggles because they are ours as well.

Mexico is on its way to achieve development for all; we want to erase the inequalities that offend the dignity of many Mexicans and so many fellow citizens of Latin America.

Mexico wishes to achieve equity between men and women; Mexico wants to take care of its children in order for them to become full citizens.

Yes, we want to reach these goals, but we do not wish to walk the path alone. We want to go along with Latin America and all the Americas with regard to these goals. With them all, we will be part of this Confederation for the cooperation and the consensus.

We will see to it that our Continent lives within a framework of laws, of fair laws, so that each country will fully enjoy its constitutional state, because we are convinced that living in a Constitutional State is the best assurance of our freedom.

Thank you very much.

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**SPEECH BY MR. MARTÍ BATRES GUADARRAMA  
REPRESENTATIVE OF THE NATIONAL CONGRESS OF MEXICO**

We greet this meeting of words and diversity. Parliament is precisely the place for speaking, dissenting and reaching agreements; it represents the plurality of the regions, the social classes, the different ideologies and political projects; it is the representation of the people and the collective expression of national sovereignty.

In democracy, legislative bodies become the centre of the national and regional debate; parliamentarians are also the voices of each State to the world. Moreover, we could say that talks between parliaments lead to a broader and more inclusive relation between States; an international process of integration discussed from within parliaments and between parliamentarians and citizens, is an integration decided from below and it is much more democratic than the ones agreed on without parliamentary participation.

There is no globalization of democracy without parliaments who express different views on integration, development, equity and free trade.

Globalization is a reality of our times, but it is a reality that should be analyzed in a critical manner; it is a process that on the one hand disseminates culture, opens doors to information, and broadens the exercise of political democracy, and on the other hand, it is a process with terrible results: 1,200 million people plunged into extreme poverty; the 50 wealthiest and most powerful men in the world have more wealth than the 50 poorest countries on the planet.

No consensus and only world-wide polarization can be built by concentrating wealth, expanding poverty, intensifying inequality, opening ways to illegal trafficking. A globalization that brings poverty is not admissible.

That is the reason why the process cannot be seen passively; there is no single model or destiny; the content of globalization is a territory under dispute.

As we discuss issues on equitable development and free trade, we reflect a lot on our own recent experiences; for example, the nations of the South, that are less developed, open their borders and markets to huge consortiums from northern countries, but the latter do not open their borders to the southern countries' workforce. There is no free trade here. There is free trade for the merchandise sold by large companies, but there is no free and equitable trade for the people who offer their labour.

When we speak of free trade in the agricultural sector, we face several great inequities: what kind of free trade is that in which pressure is exerted on weaker countries for them to eliminate subsidies to production, while the more powerful countries apply massive subsidies? This is not equitable development.

This confirms that no advances can be made blindly toward a Free Trade Area of the Americas, before carefully revising the different development stages of the countries of the Americas and the possible social impacts. What is lacking in this hemisphere and in the world is equity.

The simple circulation of capital from one country to another does not contribute by itself to the redistribution of wealth in the world; equitable development presupposes the acknowledgement of the inequality that exists from one country to another in order to avoid unequal treatment and to achieve equity.

Parliament is the soul of democracy; but, nowadays, parliamentary democracy is being challenged on different fronts. Some communication media compete with parliaments for the representation of the citizen's voice, and efforts are being made from some private circles to discredit legislative assemblies by qualifying them as spaces for disorder or laxity, with the intention of weakening the public space and strengthening the private one.

It is essential that parliaments restore their vitality by transforming their own integration, uplifting the presence of women, incorporating ethnic and linguistic representations, establishing direct consultation mechanisms with the citizens being represented; but above all, by making decisions to help diminish inequalities. This would bring great prestige to parliaments. Agreements must be reached particularly on measures to increase the budgets for education, productive investment by the State, social security and rural development, while reducing the burden of indebtedness.

Autonomy and integration, employment and ecology, security and human rights, investment and social equity, national identities and universality are the indispensable equilibriums so that inter-American cooperation does not lead us to an unequal integration of the Americas. This is the challenge of the Parliamentary Confederation of the Americas to which we wish great success in its work. Thank you very much for your attention.



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**SPEECH BY MADAM BEATRIZ PAREDES RANGEL  
SPEAKER OF THE CHAMBER OF DEPUTIES OF MEXICO**

How pleasant it is to be sheltered by nature here today where the diversity of the Americas can be expressed in an open manner, not only through words but also through the attitude of generosity of each and everyone who has travelled to be here in Mexico.

Thank you, fellow parliamentarians, for being here, thank you for your the great effort you have made to be here.

It is a honour, President Fox, that you have taken the time to inaugurate this Assembly of COPA.

How pleasant it is that Governor Montiel, surely remembering his times as parliamentarian, like President Fox as well, has given us the honour of being with us and has supported the organizational efforts that such a brilliant and professional woman, Representative Laura Pavón, reliable in all her missions, has made to organize this event.

Mr. President, Mr. Governor, dear friend Enrique Jackson, President of the Senate of the Republic, fellow legislators, members of the Policy Coordination Board of the Chamber of Deputies, Martí Batres, its President, Mr. Rafael Rodríguez Barrera, Coordinator of the Institutional Revolutionary Party's (PRI) parliamentary group; colleagues from the Board of Directors of the Chamber of Deputies, Erick Villanueva, Executive Vice-President, Ms. María Elena Álvarez; representatives of the authorities of the State of Mexico, colleague Aarón Urbina, colleague Abel Villicaña, Hon. Mayor of Ixtapan de la Sal, our host here, Hon. President of the PRI's parliamentary group of the Federal District, María de los Angeles Moreno.

I would like to convey my special greetings to the representatives of the international parliamentary organizations accompanying us, to the Acting President of the Latin American Parliament (PARLATINO), Senator Jorge Pizarro, of Chile, a great friend to Mexicans; to the President of the Andean Parliament, Jhannett Madriz, an outstanding Venezuelan, who is with us today; to the Vice-President of the Central-American Parliament (PARLACEN), many thanks to our Salvadorian friends for being with us. I would like to express my gratitude for the presence of the person who is behind the creation of COPA, Ms. Louise Harel, President of the National Assembly of Québec.

I wish to convey my warmest greetings to my close friend Geraldo Magela, former President of COPA, who came along with a large delegation of Brazilians, whom we also greet with great esteem and to whom we ask to transmit to President Lula the enthusiasm that Latin America has showed toward his victory. And of course, I would like to greet Senator Antonio Fas Alzamora, President of the Senate of Puerto Rico, and the outstanding delegation leaders as well as the delegates from the 24 participating countries.

The other day I had the opportunity to attend the Latin American Summit, where President Fox mentioned what the President of Venezuela had said: "By the way, why are there so many parliamentary organizations; the PARLATINO, FIPA (Interparliamentary Forum of the Americas), COPA, the PARLACEN, the Andean Parliament, the Amazonian Parliament. Those parliamentarians —said the President of Venezuela in his colloquial style— will have to come up with some ways to understand each other, to articulate with one another". I think it is important to share the reasons why there are so many international parliamentary organizations.

Firstly, because in both in the federal as well as in the federated States spheres (COPA is the only parliamentary organization that also welcomes the assemblies of federated States, which is one of the main characteristics that differentiates COPA from other international parliamentary organizations), we, the parliamentarians, have noticed that a great deal of the debates on issues that have an incidence on national and local legislation are being carried out on the international scene, especially the debates on economic and trade issues.

The debate on economic and trade issues has been shifted towards multinational organizations and frequently the decisions made by the executives at the World Trade Organization are much more decisive for the national or local parliamentary debates, because they establish the broad parameters for which local laws have different levels of restrictions.

A new setting has derived, as clearly said here, from globalization, that has led to a series of decisions, linked to supranational definitions, which have an influence on the structural development of our countries.

This reality has led parliamentarians to seek ways to transcend their role of spectators in some cases, and in others cases, of simple "ratifiers" of agreements and treaties.

The fundamental point of the discussion is how we can incorporate institutions that derive from the classic concept of 19<sup>th</sup> or 20<sup>th</sup> century democracy to the reality of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, where the globalization process is at the origin of different levels of tensions and relations between countries and production forces. This is one of the great reasons for the development of Interparliamentary organizations.

But there is another substantial reason in the case of our Continent: the expressions of cultural identity or of territorial identity. The Latin American Parliament emerges as an expression of cultural identity, as a space of vindication for countries having Latin roots; French, Portuguese and Spanish roots that in the civilizing process of more than four centuries constitute what is now Latin America.

This response by Latin American countries to create a multinational space for their parliamentarians, has to do mainly with the difficulty the southern part of our Continent has had to consolidate civil democracies.

There was a time when the Latin American Parliament was a refuge for parliamentarians from throughout Latin America, whose countries had suffered painful coups, and who lived under persecution while struggling to restore democracy.

There are other expressions of regional character with clear identities on the basis of geographical proximity: the Central-American Parliament, which is a fundamental instrument for the integration of the Central-American Isthmus that we salute with great enthusiasm.

The Andean Parliament, that also corresponds to a much more ambitious project, the Andean community and which reflects the circumstances of one of the regions of our America with the most problems, like drug trafficking in some of the countries, especially in Colombia. We salute the great courage our fellow Colombian representative, who has underlined the decision of Colombians to fight drug trafficking by every means available; of course, they can count on our solidarity.

The Amazon Parliament, whose concept is based on the defence of biodiversity and on an environmentalist perspective to protect this world nature reserve. MERCOSUR's Parliament, which is the economic instrument of MERCOSUR's economic commissions to consolidate this strategic project; but the intention is to go beyond the economic and trade aspects in order to be able to achieve further integration.

There are two experiences of continental nature: COPA and FIPA. COPA emerged from a remarkable and enthusiastic initiative by the National Assembly of Québec, with a critical perspective towards the integration process in the Americas, a perspective that has helped us recognize the advantages of hemispheric integration -- and here, I underline what was said by the person who spoke before me, Mr. Batres--, that it must be understood that globalization is not a synonym of uniformity.

COPA values an equitable integration process that requires the acknowledgement of the asymmetries existing in our countries, and reflects not only on the integration models that we have experienced in the hemisphere up to now, but also on other experiences, especially the integration process of the European Economic Community, where the countries with a higher level of development have made the decision to share investments so that the lesser developed European countries may benefit from additional investments in order to rival with the former.

We do not conceive integration as a synonym of subordination; we do not conceive integration as a synonym of the oblivion of asymmetries; we do not conceive integration as an environment where a group of huge multinational companies have at their disposal a very large market, while local corporations don't have any possibilities of endogenous growth and autonomous development to create possibilities for everyone to have a decent life.

FIPA also emerged as a continental organization that takes an active part in the integration processes.

Does this reflect disorder? Not for the Latin American congresses. For our legislative bodies, it has been a great opportunity to participate with a shared strategy on all fronts, and we have been able to build this strategy starting from a dialogue, respect, the identification of common problems and common perspectives.

This shared strategy is what has enabled us to endorse COPA in a more determined manner, to take part in FIPA while protecting our identity and having for the first time, as mentioned before, a Latin American chairing the Interparliamentary Union.

What is the usefulness of this for our citizens? I think that this is the question that must be answered. Of course, it is useful to parliamentarians, because they learn from other countries' experiences, they share legislation, they come to realize that there are problems that are common throughout the Americas.

The process of discrediting legislative assemblies is not only a Mexican issue. There is an assault against legislative bodies, and these have not fully understood the new environment for the active participation of civil society.

We have not been able to modify our discourse efficiently, and since laws are abstract, they have repercussions in the course of time, society does not perceive as directly the benefits of legislation.

Society perceives when it is affected by legislation, but not when it benefits from it, this is part of the natural environment of civilized coexistence.

This is the reason why we need to have all the levels of power as our allies, we need that there be an important globalized effort in favour of democratic institutions.

Another matter that has attracted our attention throughout the Continent is the issue related to the difficulties that democratic institutions and democratic governance suffer in order to take root when there are no real conditions taking into account social needs.

Undoubtedly, poverty and misery affect democracy. Poverty and misery are the breeding ground for the most severe social tensions and for the expression of non-conformity that drive citizens to wonder what is the function of democracy.

Considering that we are living in an environment where the financial guidelines are of universal nature, it is obvious that we need to form a common front. A common front that, in the case of the countries with lesser development perspectives, can create alternatives for negotiating deferred payments of their debt.

Because it is not possible for many of our countries to allocate resources for their development through basic investments, a common front that acts with solidarity when financial crises undermine domestic structures, like in the case of Argentina.

We wish to stress our entire solidarity toward the effort being carried out by the Argentinean people to maintain their institutions, notwithstanding the threat of a financial crisis of great magnitude. And I personally underline, and I want to be frank, President Fox's decision to be in Argentina in a crucial moment for that country, and to express Mexico's solidarity.

But for Mexicans, from the North, from Alaska, where we find the northern lights, to Tierra del Fuego, from those whitish, bright zones, to the most intense-green zones, for the Latin Americans of the Continent, for the thousands and millions of Hispanics and Latin Americans who live in the United States, for the *Latinos* in Canada, for these Latino-American communities scattered all over the Continent, there is a crucial issue related to the integration process, it concerns the defence of our cultural identity.

We are the trade partners of the most powerful country in the world. We are neighbours to the world's most important superpower. At least 90% of our economic activities are linked to the world's most powerful country. But we Mexicans, although we are partners, although we are good neighbours, want to continue to be Mexicans.

For us, integration starts with respect concerning diversity. This is the great contribution of the vision of our Continent: Yes to integration, with full respect of diversity. Yes to integration, with tolerance as a lever of development to overcome asymmetries.

We do not conceive integration as an inevitable destiny where there will be first-class citizens, first-class countries, second-class citizens and second-class countries. It is not a geographical misfortune. Being member of the Continent of the Americas cannot be a geographical misfortune.

Being a sharing member of this generous Continent of nature that opened its doors to immigrants from throughout the world and gave them job opportunities cannot be a geographical misfortune.

It is the Continent of the most important civilizations of Mesoamerica and the Andean region. It is the Continent with the largest water supply that remains on our planet, a place where women are free to walk the street with their face uncovered, a Continent where, thanks to the strength of many democrats, is now a Continent for formal democracy.

Our endeavour is to work for human rights, to establish intelligent alliances with the executives, to struggle to keep public institutions from deterioration without being detrimental to our principles and to our contradictions of political and partisan nature.

One of the endeavours of these regional parliamentary organizations is to raise the excellence of the Americas and to protect the identity of Latin America.

For this reason, as I extend my welcome to you, I wish to conclude, dear friends, by saying, as Octavio Paz once pointed out: "The union of freedom and democracy has been the great achievement of modern societies, a precarious, and fragile achievement, disfigured by a great deal of injustice and horrors. Likewise, it has been an extraordinary achievement that has something accidental or miraculous to it."

“Other civilizations did not know democracy, and in ours, only a few peoples –and only during limited periods of time- have enjoyed free institutions. Freedom is as precious as water and consequently, if we do not store it, it will spill, it will escape, it will evaporate. Let us take care of our freedom.”

The house of freedom is the parliamentarians’ house. Our struggle for freedom, for democracy and for justice shall continue to be the emblem of those who proudly represent the sovereignty of their peoples and the identity of their nations.

Thank you very much.

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**SPEECH BY MR. ARTURO MONTIEL ROJAS  
GOVERNOR OF THE STATE OF MEXICO**

It is for me a special privilege to address myself to President Fox and to such distinguished parliamentarians from the Americas in order to extend the warmest welcome on behalf of the people and the government of the State of Mexico.

I greet all the participants to this IV General Assembly of COPA. I wish you a pleasant stay here in Ixtapan de la Sal. Welcome to Representative Beatriz Paredes, welcome to Senator Enrique Jackson, welcome, of course, to Representative Martí Batres as well as to Representative María Elena Álvarez.

We are very pleased to welcome the members of the National Assembly of Québec, the founders of COPA, and especially its President, Louise Harel.

Mr. Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, Mr. Speaker of the 58<sup>th</sup> Legislature, Mr. Mayor of Ixtapan de la Sal, Ignacio Rubí.

Firstly, I would like to express my recognition to Representative Laura Pavón Jaramillo, President of COPA, for having sent me such an honourable invitation to take part in this meeting and for having proposed the State of Mexico as the venue for this meeting which is an honour for the citizens of this State. Thank you, Laura.

Although of different nature, our countries face old and new problems, both economic as well as social and cultural; some problems are domestic and others are related to global strategies, some have to do with reaching political agreements and others are related to cooperation and development aid.

During the last two decades, the region has experienced notable changes and transformations. Beginning in the eighties, many countries started a complex and painful process to leave behind economic models that were accompanied by a dominant State and authoritarian political traditions.

Progress in the field of democracy is more evident. Practically every country, even with imperfections, enjoys basic political and civil rights, freedom and carries out multiparty elections.

Some countries have reasonably consolidated their democratic regimes and in others, alternation in power is putting in place the foundations for a short-term political transition.

If in the seventies the easy answer was to democratize, and in the eighties, to implement market economic reforms; now there are no easy answers. Perhaps as never before, the question being asked is what to do with Latin America. And some even go beyond this and ask if there is a cure for Latin America.

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There are three great challenges facing us: Strengthening and increasing the quality of democracy and governance, reducing the levels of poverty and inequality that affect the Continent and consolidating economic reforms, with a sense of social equity.

Only 32% of the population from 17 Latin American countries say they are satisfied with the functioning of democracy. This has led to two dangerous phenomena for governance.

On the one hand, the return to political traditions that were believed to be eradicated, and on the other hand, the destruction of options and the weakening of the political parties, which can contribute to the deepening of disillusionment and the abuse of power, and to the throwing overboard of the achievements obtained with great sacrifices and efforts.

The second great challenge to which this forum will dedicate a good deal of its debates is poverty and equity. In 2001, 214 million people, almost 43% of the Latin American population was living in poverty, and among these, 93 million, or 18% were living in conditions of extreme poverty.

If the regional economic contraction occurs this year, as predicted in the most recent United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) social report, poverty will be up 44% and extreme poverty will reach 20%. In other words, at the end of 2002, we will have seven million new poor people in Latin America.

How can this vicious circle be broken? How to design and execute with the present margins of political, economic and social actions that broaden the productive base and maintain the economic discipline, but at the same lead to a progressive redistribution of income, growth that would rapidly increase the standards of living for the most needy people?

This is precisely the third and most urgent challenge in the short term. In the last 15 years, the predominant trend in economic policies throughout the world has been the elimination of barriers toward open international trade.

The attraction of foreign investments, the privatization of public companies and the implementation of fiscal and monetary policies to reorganize public finances.

Latin America has applied these reform packages with determination, in an attempt to achieve economic efficiency, rather than equity. As a consequence of such policies in the nineties, the region was able to attain one digit inflation. The budgetary deficit was reduced from 5% to 2%.

The public foreign debt decreased from 50% of GDP to less than 20%. Trade liberalization drove the tariffs down from 40% to almost 10%.

Foreign investment grew and more than 800 State companies were privatized in our countries up to the end of the nineties. Nevertheless, in terms of economic growth, the reduction of poverty, the redistribution of incomes and the improvement in social conditions, the results have been discouraging.



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What has failed? Up to now, there has been no consensus as to the reasons why the expected results were not achieved. As a matter of fact, without these reforms, the situation would have even been worse; the *per capita* income and production in Latin America would have been lower, while instability would have been greater and poverty and inequality worsened.

We should, therefore, use all the imagination and creativity of the political and governmental leaders to design a new generation of social and economic reforms where the main objective is to increase the individuals' basic capacities; to provide society with productive and educational tools to enable it to overcome its present deficiencies; to increase incomes; to improve the quality of life, to lower poverty and to reach a genuine, equitable and sustainable development.

The new economic policies should include mechanisms to temper market expansions and contractions through a modern system of social protection nets that provides, in times of recession, an income base for the working class, for the middle class as well as for the poor.

These social nets can establish as a priority: to ensure a certain level of employment and fiscal support in order to provide schooling for children and health care for families. However, the chronic vulnerability of the region will continue if the industrial countries' tariffs for products imported from developing countries are four times higher than the tariffs on products coming from other industrialized countries.

So far, the goal of signing the Free Trade Agreement of the Americas in 2005 has a strategic priority, because it would open access to developed markets; it will also enable to structure present international trade in a more balanced manner; to increase the domestic markets of employment and consumption; to reduce migratory movements and to benefit the most needy sectors in Latin America.

I deeply wish that this will be the spirit that animates the discussions of this Parliamentary Conference of the Americas, because the building of a better future for our peoples, to a great extent, is in your hands.

Thank you very much.

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**SPEECH BY MR. VICENTE FOX QUEZADA  
PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED MEXICAN STATES**

We are honoured to welcome you here in Mexico; it is a great pleasure, ladies and gentlemen, parliamentarians of the Americas, to offer you our Mexican style hospitality.

The legislative powers are the pillars of all democratic systems, they are the custodians of the citizens' legal authority and where lies national sovereignty. They also constitute the legitimate environment for social agreement, where democracies define the national project through talks and deliberations.

It is within the legislative powers that both the agreements as well as the disagreements of the different political forces that form contemporary nations are expressed.

During the modern history of the Americas, Congress has played an irreplaceable role in the building of democracy, and today it also has a crucial role in its consolidation.

As in the case of other countries that have decided in favour of democracy to manage their destiny, the transformation that has led Mexico from authoritarian presidentialism to a full balance of powers, would not have been a reality today without the participation of our legislators.

This democratic change, the true change of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, can only be irreversible if it is an outcome of institutional improvement. For this reason, democracy requires, today more than ever, a dynamic and responsible parliamentary life.

Nowadays, citizens expect more from democracy and require institutional structures that avoid the excessive concentration of power. To realize this, it is necessary to promote deep transformations within a framework of co-responsibility and coordination between powers and levels of government.

Citizens demand that there be an agreement between all the political actors, to reach their goals. We, the representatives of a plural unity, have found in co-responsibility the best mean to meet their interests and needs. We continue to promote a climate of understanding; we continue to strengthen the dialogue and the shared responsibility, because this is the only way to create a proper environment to reach agreements.

The myth presupposing that a strong Executive power entails a weak Legislative power and vice versa, must be overcome. In a truly democratic state, each power teams with the others, within a framework of co-responsibility and independence.

Dear friends, the advent of democracy in Mexico, has enabled the Congress of the Union to recover its constitutional condition of autonomous power, whose authority was limited for decades. Now, it has overcome old inertia and its role is essential to the definition of public policies; there are no more legislative decisions subject to the discretion of the Executive or imposed by the decision of a single party.

The intensive, open and unrestricted debate forms part of these times of change, characterized by a correlation of political forces, without a dominant majority.

Even within this complex reality, talks between political actors have been fruitful. Notwithstanding the different reforms pending, in accordance with the Legislative power, the Executive has sent and received 59 proposals in the last two years, of which 65% have been approved with a high level of consensus, and even unanimously.

With the approval of such proposals, we have had important achievements. Nevertheless, there is no time to stop and examine what we have achieved; for this reason we continue trying to reach the necessary agreements with the Legislative Power and the different political actors, in order not to postpone our progress with regard to issues that are important for the development of Mexico.

There is no doubt that respectful and constructive talks, the basis of each democracy, will lead us to the conclusion of the agreements that require the approval of the structural reforms, still pending in our country.

You have arrived in a country that is undergoing a profound stage of change, that is experiencing intensively the inherent expressions, of a dynamic process of democratic consolidation, of separation of powers, of freedom of expression, of intensive social participation, of transparency and rendering, of consolidation of the rule of law and of a strenuous struggle against corruption and impunity.

Justice in the election process has been improving our democracy. Electoral institutions and procedures now evolve autonomously and with impartiality; these events allow for the free and fair competition for power, without having to turn to violence.

We have been able to overcome the risks of conflict, between change and stability present in all transition phase. In this new climate of democracy, we Mexicans are strengthening the close ties we have with all the peoples of the Continent, and in particular with Latin America, although geography has placed us in the north of the Continent, with the centre and the south.

We keep deep ties through language and culture, we are linked to all the peoples of the Americas by a promising future that we should build together. For the good of this future, we are making of Mexico a bridge between peoples, countries, economies and regions.

We are convinced that in a globalized world, the solution to our problems has to come from everyone. Dear parliamentarians, when Bolivar demanded from the legislators of the Angostura Congress to act with a vision of State for the people, and I quote, "a government that gives victory to equality and freedom under the authority of inexorable laws".

Bolivar was being driven by the same energy that we see in the Parliamentary Confederation of the Americas today. I urge you to continue on with this spirit of cooperation and fraternity; I recognize your invaluable work in favour of democracy, and on behalf of the people of Mexico, I praise the decision to hold your IV General Assembly in our country.

I am sure you will have success in your work, and as on previous occasions, this meeting will lead to excellent proposals that we shall take into consideration, in order to overcome together the challenges we face as the peoples of the Americas.

Thank you very much and I wish you all a great success.

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## 4.2 PRESENTATIONS

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### ***BUILDING DEMOCRACY IN MEXICO, PRESENTATION DELIVERED BY MR. JOSÉ WOLDENBERG, PRESIDENT OF THE FEDERAL ELECTORAL BOARD (IFE)***

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My speech today has a twofold purpose, namely to try to put forward six statements on the way in which democratic transition has occurred in Mexico, and to bring to light certain issues which, in my opinion, determine to a large extent the possibilities for democratic consolidation in our country.

Allow me to begin by presenting my analysis of the democratic transition and, as is appropriate in such circumstances, I shall do so within a historical perspective.

Why does the transition process in Mexico already deserve to be described as historical? What was original about it? When did it begin? What was its evolution? What path did it follow? Why was it centred on electoral issues and where does Sunday July 2, 2002, fit within this lengthy period of political change?

I shall deal with these issues in order not only to facilitate the presentation, but finally to present a more precise portrait of the statements that I have just submitted to you.

Firstly, the transition to democracy in Mexico is a historical period. Although this may appear self-evident, the event is not without importance. It is essential to reaffirm this in view of the many other ideas or allusions that have been put forward concerning this process.

The transition is not a preconceived concept or pattern; it is not the project of one group or of one party; it has no privileged stakeholder or single subject; it is not a date, a specific socioeconomic situation, a reform, an episode, much less an election campaign, however great is its importance.

The transition is the sum of all that and more. Democratic transition has to do with a process of a larger scale. Ultimately, it is a modern society that no longer could nor wished to act within the political structure of a hegemonic party.

Mexico has become more complex, different, pluralistic. A single party, a single coalition could no longer represent nor reconcile the interests, projects and activities of a country that was rapidly developing and diversifying.

The transition is, in reality, the history of this reorganization; to find a formula for a modern political life corresponding to the true social modernism of Mexico.

It is a historical process in both senses of the term. First, through its duration in time: a period extending over two decades, during which the struggle and the political changes pushed aside one type of political relations and replaced it with others. The task consisted in replacing the foundations with others of a democratic nature.

Secondly, it is historical because of the originality of its roots, of its form and of its consequences, because Mexico had not previously experienced such a process. No change had ever previously occurred with the explicit objective of bringing into being and strengthening several parties, due to frequent negotiations between the adverse organizations who used the electoral arena as a common forum to measure and display their strengths, and where even the most diametrically opposed stakeholders discreetly agreed to avoid political violence in the country.

This brings me to my second statement. The history of the political struggle in Mexico over the past 25 years may be summarized as follows: a number of political parties, different and very real, run in the elections; in certain elections, they carry a few legislative positions, and in others they obtain positions within the government.

Hence they bring about reforms which give them more rights, guarantees and prerogatives. The parties that are thus strengthened resume their participation in a new political debate guided by a party, theoretician or political figure. It is partly for this reason that we speak of a mechanism. A process that brings into play political energies that contribute to the development of a process that moves forward and grows, like a political, social and cultural snowball.

The beginning of the transition process is marked by strong moments and heroic struggles leading to democracy. It is not because there had not previously been episodes favourable to democracy or electoral reforms and loosening of the authoritarian straitjacket. I place its beginnings in 1977, because the structure of the transition process began to take shape then, that is, a process that goes in the same direction, that consolidates the parties and whose expansion periods took concrete form through the negotiations and electoral reforms.

In 1977, the free expression of organized opinions and their appearance on the electoral scene was first permitted. From a historical point of view, I may say that the platform at the origin of the transition was built upon five pillars. Firstly, political parties were recognized as entities of public interest and the way was opened to their constitutionalization.

Secondly, through conditional registration, the most important political forces of the Mexican left, until then marginalized, were able to participate in the political competition.

Thirdly, Congress was broadened, and plurinominal Representatives were brought in.

Fourthly, for the first time, the State took charge of allocating resources to provide assistance to all political parties.

In fifth place, through their registration with the electoral authorities, the parties were able to take part automatically in the different elections at the federal, federated State and municipal levels.

This was the groundwork upon which our democratization process developed; the reform was a protective shelter possessing a very important characteristic; it was intended not only for the stakeholders who already held a place within the legal system, but precisely for those who had never yet been present.

In their time, these changes, which today may appear insignificant to some, provoked debate, resistance but especially a tremendous public impact. But the purpose of this reform was quite simple, namely, on the one hand, to strengthen the parties already constituted, but also to enable those forces that manifested themselves mainly through social and union action, and even through armed action, to enter the electoral scene.

Bit by bit, one after the other, broad contingents of all ideologies, previously excluded from electoral life, became incorporated within it and broadened its perspective by developing new options or by reinforcing those already in use.

In certain regions of the country in particular, the elections were an increasingly pronounced and evident demonstration of a competition and of a real dispute for government and for legislative positions.

My third statement is the following: Our transition, which developed from the periphery toward the centre, and from the bottom up, was slow but constituted a systematic colonization of the national State by a number of political parties.

To the extent that the transition cannot be understood in terms of a single change or a single election; it required hundreds of processes to arrive at a pluralistic State, and this is how they undermined authoritarianism and changed the practices and even the culture of the period of the hegemonic party.

Let us take a quick glance at this process, which I refer to as the colonization of the State.

In 1977, there were four municipalities governed by parties other than the PRI; in 1988 there were 39, and before July 2, 2000, there were 583, including some of the most prosperous and populous in the country.

Something, it appears, had happened regarding the positions of governors, in municipal councils and in local assemblies.

The elections at the level of the federated States were transformed through a long period of trial and error and attempts at democracy. Over 4,400 election calls over a cyclical period of six years in all municipalities in the country, 64 elections to form local assemblies and 31 elections of governors for a six-year term, in addition to elections in between for the Congress of the Union and for the head of government in the Federal District, were transformed into laboratories where all parties ran for office and where the mechanism of political change strengthened and grew.

The Mexican electoral calendar has proven to be one of the busiest and most variegated in the world, and to be the path from which there has arisen a broad range of democratic novelties: opposition mayors in major cities of the country, governors of different political affiliations, congresses of federated States with different majorities, extraordinarily vigorous parties and citizens well-versed in the use of the vote.

Everything that theory has taught us, all the indisputable indications of democracy, namely divided governments, shared power, electoral victories following a defeat, the resolution of disputes through the courts, alternation, etc., were manifested in the federated States and municipalities, rather than at the national level, to the extent that our transition involved all of these aspects.

For example, there was the arrival of the Communist Party, the election of an opposition governor in 1989, the experience of shared power in dozens of federated States until the victory of the left-wing opposition in the government of the capital.

All of this leads me to my fourth observation. The gradual process of electoral normalization had an even greater or better social, political and cultural impact with tremendous consequences; the real experience of plurality, competition, coexistence and changes of government, political change in short, all of this became a tangible daily reality evident to millions of Mexicans, and thus ceased to be a source of fear.

The Congress of the Union, the local congresses, the municipal councils, were all transformed into assemblies characterized by plurality, arising out of normal electoral processes in coexistence, tension and collaboration.

The real distribution of power ended up being a true school of democracy for millions of people in a country with an authoritarian tradition.

Before the election in 2000, political change had brought into being a new and representative governmental map; in the months leading up to July, the PAN already governed 29.6% of the population in the federated States; the PRI 46.7%, the PRD 20.7%, the Labour Party 0.52% and the Green Party 0.36%. The effects of the elections were felt by the government and hence affected the lives of millions of people.

The concrete distribution of power was a real and observable datum, and furthermore, it was the manifestation of democratic progress in the eyes of the electorate for whom the opposition parties were free to act, the vote being a powerful instrument of political change, and change through the electoral process was possible.

My fifth statement is the following. The Mexican transition, which was strongly focused on the electoral issue, was in reality much more than electoral; Mexico was to discover that the electoral field was much more than a distant and circumscribed reality, because it affects and involves many other fields.

With the support of the electoral processes and due to the existence of increasingly powerful parties, the political landscape and the culture of our country were transformed.

The electoral process constituted periods of expansion of public freedoms, opportunities to express oneself and to criticize openly; through the arrival of representatives from different parties in the House, legislative work and debate were also transformed.

The opposition political parties and their central figures acquired public visibility; the recurrent electoral processes also began to change the parties' strategies. The left especially, and its particular political culture, began a gradual conversion from the concept of Revolution to the concept of legal struggle and reforms.



The academic world also began to change its centres of interest and to include the electoral phenomenon within its priorities to be examined and studied.

The electoral field began to exercise a power of attraction on very disparate groups, proponents of synarchy, communists, Trotskyists, people of the right and of the left, who entered the electoral arena.

The public debate also took a new direction: government decisions and the exercise of the Presidency ceased to be followed unanimously and were increasingly the subject of debates, questions and even amendments or hindrances on the part of the opposition forces.

It was during this period that perhaps the most important change of all occurred, namely the emergence of veritable citizens, not sceptics, nor underlings, but in fact people who know that their vote enables choices to be made; it was an individual change, but its meaning took on all its importance when it became collective.

The mode of operation of the government was also transformed, for example by the implementation of federalism. Before, governors and mayors had been chosen in the circles of the coalition in power, but once a true fight for these positions had occurred at the elections, the political relations changed and the holders of these positions were no longer answerable to the President, but rather to the voters.

Political relations of an entirely different kind were thus established and put to the test; federalism came to life, and in this new struggle that appeared in the centre, a representative of one party governed, while in the federated States, representatives of other parties governed.

The situation is identical in other spheres and components of the republican edifice; the separation of powers, that aspiration of the 1917 Constitution, took concrete form when the Congress was formed of courageous new political groups that did not content themselves with approving the decisions of the Executive branch.

In this regard, the democratic transition of Mexico brought into action the entire constitutional machinery. We barely see the consequences of this change, of these tensions, so to speak, certain shortcomings of the Constitution.

The political prestige of the country also changed, and increased to the extent that its electoral processes were becoming normalized and a plethora of democratic changes occurred before the entire world.

The political culture also changed during that period. Although 15 years ago, positions as extreme as fraud in the name of the mother country were public and sustainable, today they have become simply unthinkable, or we might even say unachievable.

In this regard, the changes in the electoral field have proven to be the motive force and the means to acquire a much broader democratic learning. It is important to mention this, because we often hear voices criticizing the path followed by Mexican democratization, or that denigrate the results of the transition because of its electoral aspect, but that is false.

A purification of the electoral process and electoral reforms were aspects that were lacking in order to begin a series of political and cultural changes going beyond the electoral arena, and altering the map of representation, the mode of government and the functioning of the State; they instilled dynamics into public freedoms and weakened each of the authoritarian powers.

Due to the elections, Mexico acquired a totally different political system, of a democratic nature.

What is important now, in my opinion, is to go beyond the question of victories, defeats or conflicts arising out of certain economic conditions, and to gain an awareness of the scale of the change that we have achieved. The nature of political power in Mexico has changed and continues to change because the electoral system enables the citizen, through his or her vote, to decide who will govern.

And all of this was possible, essentially, without recourse to violence, within a legal framework, through negotiation and by calling on millions of voters. I do not want to appear overly optimistic, but it seems to me to be important that we, the Mexicans, understand where we stand in political terms.

We have faced one of the secular challenges, namely political democracy; there are many other tasks that await us: the complete instigation of the Rule of Law, independence and effectiveness of the judicial branch; the implementation of the federal pact and especially the creation of material living conditions to give all Mexicans the same opportunities.

These are, without any doubt, more complex tasks that are more distant and arduous than those relating to the electoral structure. The novelty of it is that these tasks were to be accomplished in the democratic framework of a courageously pluralistic country.

My final statement, the sixth, is the simplest. Democratic transition is a change that comes from afar, unprecedented in scale. As I have tried to demonstrate, our collective learning process took decades, and brought in all stakeholders through a particular mechanism of change.

Over a period of 20 years, the country had seen and experimented with periods of alternation at all levels, from the municipal to the federated States and even to presidential change.

That is why, on July 2, 2000, the citizens and parties, the candidates and the media; all the stakeholders, showed a natural civic spirit, as though we had been practicing it all our lives. At the end of the day, the feeling was not one of uncertainty and fear, but rather of confidence.

It would not be possible to grasp the full meaning of this without placing the democratization process in its proper historical perspective. During the 2000 election campaign, no party was short of ideas, means of communication or criticism of its adversaries.

We witnessed major proposals by the government, the ingenious use of advertising tools and low insults; everything was seen in the course of the 164-day confrontation; this was already an election that was no longer oriented toward democracy, but rather that took place within democracy, and that gave life to the constitutional and juridical provisions previously approved, since 1996.

The major parties, the coalitions and their candidates won or lost on an equitable basis. The media, for their part, reported or brought to light each of the errors and successes of the stakeholders during the battle.

The voters attentively followed the unfolding of the campaign and expressed their sovereign will; everyone had adapted to democracy: the citizens, the candidates, the parties, the President of the Republic, the media and the electoral authorities.

Because of its importance, that day, which was both civilized and civilizing, was the foundation of the democratic habits and customs. The legitimacy of the elections was manifested during the campaign, within all significant political groups in Mexico, namely its parties, corporations, unions, civil organizations, business communities, and its media; including those groups which, having relied on violence in another period, explicitly agreed to respect the electoral process.

Hence, alternation did not prove to be the condition for our democracy; rather it demonstrated its existence; but the end of the transition is not the end of politics or of reforms - it is far from the end of politics and reforms and further still from the end of problems within the country; quite the contrary.

Allow me to state four conclusions of this first part:

First, the respect of the vote was the indispensable condition for the process of political change in Mexico.

Second, the elections in 2000 were transparent with regard to their organization, their tools, the monitoring and all the restrictions and measures imposed by law.

Clean elections do not depend on the outcome; regardless of which candidate was victorious, the election would have been equally clean, equally proper and equally legal.

Third, elections, and not violence, have proven to be the true key to political change.

Fourth, in this regard, continuing openness is necessary. Mexico is an extraordinarily lively and changing society; its fundamental unity depends on the credibility, flexibility and openness of its democratic framework.

All groups who, in their time, have chosen other paths, must know that the path of legality, the electoral arena, remains accessible and that they may grow and consolidate themselves within it.

I now come to the second part of my speech, to the challenges of Mexican democracy, both present and future. Despite all the progress that I have tried to share with you and illustrate, in history, there are no ultimate end purposes; when one objective is achieved, other challenges arise.

It is now appropriate to admit in a responsible and imaginative way that democracy brings about new problems, including those that arise from divided governments: shared power, the need for agreements between antagonistic political groups, as well as the uncertainty that accompanies legislative work. In short, the country has transformed itself and this change has brought about a change in the political program.

I shall refer, without going into details, to three issues that, in my opinion, are connected with the birth of and the understanding of the stage that Mexico has reached. First, democratic governability; second, the responsibility of the parties; and third, the state of our democratic culture.

Mexican democracy runs up against various problems that demand the attention of all democratic forces; for example the absence of a majority in Congress. This is no doubt a clear sign of the process of democratization, but one that is a concern for the presidential regime.

When the majority in Congress is lost, there is no mechanism to mitigate the differences and ensure an effective public administration. The parties and their representatives must take charge of forming the majority in a presidential system.

This problem, this novelty that is specific to democracy, had not been expressed nor anticipated beforehand. No protection mechanisms were required when the majority was assured, except that now, it has become indispensable to develop some, to debate them and to conclude agreements in that regard.

I believe it is time to recognize that, whereas we had provided much effort and creative political work in the electoral area, we had not done the same in the governmental area. We were not prepared in the same way to understand, analyse and untangle the new political situation of the authorities of the State.

Moreover, our democratic progress did not take place under vacuum in a laboratory. The debate was structured by two other complex processes that began and moved forward simultaneously during the 1980s; the process of crisis, adaptation and economic restructuring and the redefining of the function and importance of the structures of the State, which were referred to as the reform of the State.

All of this brings a multitude of pressures on the governmental circles and demands a more complete and rigorous reflection process; hence, it is time to admit that Mexico has concentrated overly much on the way of instigating proper representation and a clean and fair electoral race, while in contrast, it has devoted little attention to the conditions of an effective government, in an open economy, equipped with a new institutional character and a democratic basis.

This momentum toward democratization was understandable, but it is increasingly clear that to speak of the future of Mexico necessarily implies speaking of issues relating to the exercise of power and the level of government.

I believe that we must create this intellectual context, and encourage an intelligent change of direction that is necessary in political activity. This is the condition in order that we, Mexicans, may be sure not only of being able to freely choose those who govern us, but also to know that the country will continue to be governable.

The second aspect to which I wish to draw your attention and which bears on the quality of our democracy, has to do with the parties themselves. I believe that one cannot overly emphasize the importance of parties to democratic life, especially in a context in which parties are often subject to continuous criticism by public opinion.

In view of these elements, notwithstanding the criticisms raised against them for various reasons, it may be acknowledged, the contrary not having been proven, that lasting democracy does not exist without parties; they constitute irreplaceable forums of expression, for representation of large groups of citizens and for dealing with their interests, and parties are also the backbone of the modern democratic State.

The party systems are without doubt inseparable from representative democracy; this is a characteristic of contemporary mass societies that are complex and pluralistic, and whose functioning involves regular and permanent electoral processes.

Many authors have studied the importance of parties, as machines that lay down their roots in two directions: within the State, since they work their way into a number of its structures and processes, especially as stakeholders at the centre of the legislative and executive branches, and in society, since they have been transformed into irreplaceable forums for expression and for dealing with the interests of large groups in society.

More to the point, if we take a look at comparative history, we may observe that where democracies have succeeded in maintaining themselves and in lasting, a solid basis of political parties existed.

If we go through this exercise the other way around, that is to examine where democracy has proven fragile, we observe that the desire to replace the instruments of democracy, such as the parties and the plurality that they transmit to parliaments, generally leads to a loss of democracy and of the sovereign right of the citizens to choose those who govern them and represent them; the historical choice is clear to any observer: democracy is founded, gathers strength and reproduces itself at the same time that political parties consolidate themselves.

Without doubt, the parties favour systems that channel and make productive the social plurality, roles that are irreplaceable. A German author, for example, attributes four functions to parties, namely the search for objectives using ideologies and programmes, the grouping together and juxtaposition of social interests, the mobilization and socialization of citizens, the recruitment of elites, and the formation of governments.

As regards Mexico, the parties were indisputable stakeholders of political progress, to the point that the parties are already installed in the machine room of the State; this is why they are increasingly responsible for creating the conditions of a democracy that generates certainties and a shared and practicable national outlook.

The level and tone of the debate as well as the political discussion and the seriousness of the proposals are decisive as regards the quality of democracy, the contours of which take shape day by day.

Thus, nothing will contribute so much to the prestige and consolidation of democracies as the prestige and consolidation of the parties and the rigorousness with which they take care of national problems, and conversely, nothing will do more to undermine democratic life than the discrediting and paralysing of the parties and their inability to provide serious responses to the citizens' expectations.

If we admit that politics is mainly a question of diagnosis and proposals, there cannot be a political structure that is worthy of being organized without ideas, nor a political system that does not nourish itself through serious work, if we wish to be in harmony with the requirements, needs and aspirations of the society where they are expressed.

The quality and rigorousness of political analysis and of the various proposals go against the circumstances and intentions of making the political sphere an inconsequential spectacle.

If, indeed, we succeed in putting ideas, programs and political projects at the centre of the debate and discussion, it will become more difficult to undermine politics and public life.

The quality of democracy lies not in its electoral machine, nor in its rules or procedures; the quality of democracy arises out of the quality and the value of its parties and its politicians, but also out of the context of intellectual rigorousness in which they operate.

I now begin the third and final aspect to which I wish to draw your attention. If we engage in an attentive review of the subjects to be examined in Mexico in terms of political development and civilized coexistence, in terms of possibilities and prerequisites to democratic consolidation, we note the importance now taken on by reflection on political culture and civic practices.

Democracy establishes the central nature of politics as an eminently citizen-based activity, and not as an exclusive responsibility limited to a minority who consider that they represent the people; it means first of all that the citizen recognizes himself or herself as such, that is as the subject of the political sphere and not as the passive object of the public servants.

The development of citizenship that necessarily accompanies democratic transformations is a complex process that encompasses society as a whole, since it depends on the presence of certain conditions that one does not always succeed in bringing together at the same time, and is nourished by them.

If we think of democracy as a way of living that is learned within the family, at school, in social organizations of all kinds, in the media or simply through the testimony of parties or individuals who assume public responsibilities, we must admit that at least in the situation prevailing in Mexico, there exists a vast program dealing with various aspects of the creation and strengthening of civic culture, in order that compliance with the law and tolerance may become a sort of second nature on the part of each citizen.

We undoubtedly possess functional electoral structures, yet our political culture is fragile and, in many cases I believe, anachronistic. Two recent surveys bearing on political culture, carried out separately by the Department of the Interior and by the IFE, present indicators that are scarcely a matter of pride.

In this field, we find what continues to be one of the great paradoxes of our time, but especially, one of the unresolved subjects of the program of the beginning of this century; there is thus reason to wonder whether democracy is possible without politicians, parliamentarians and parties who enjoy popular esteem.

Situations appeared in which the governor of a party and his or her party did not have a majority in the Congress of a federated State; how a governor came to coexist with the mayors of another political affiliation.

This happened from late 1977 until 2000, as a sort of snowball that transformed into an avalanche, so that when we came to the presidential elections of July 2, 2000, the map of political representation in Mexico was fairly pluralistic.

In this regard, I refer to a change that occurred from the bottom up, that is from the municipal level up to the federal executive, and from the States of the Republic toward the centre, because as you are no doubt aware, until 1997 in Mexico, the head of government of the federal capital was appointed by the President himself.

It was from 1997 onward that the head of government of the capital has been elected.

In this regard, I have dealt with the classical characteristics of democracy that we know as being common currency in most countries of the world; that is, as a democracy of a representative, formal political and pluralistic nature.

I believe that this is what Mexico has built in recent years, and I believe that it is no mean achievement, although of course it is by no means idyllic or utopian, and much remains to be done.

As regards the question raised by the Representative of the State of Hidalgo, I have reported on the results of two separate surveys, that is, in no way interrelated, one conducted by the Department of the Interior, and the other by the Federal Electoral Institute.

What does this give us? When we asked the population in which system they preferred to live, the vast majority, over 60%, stated that they preferred to live in a democracy. And I believe that this is a promising result for our country.

However, when we asked these same people to express themselves on different organizations, the army and the church, for example, were well esteemed, yet when they were asked about the parties, representatives and senators, the results were quite low; these are the data.

This is the perception that the citizens have of these organizations and politicians. And I emphasize that it is worrisome, because I am convinced that there is no sustainable democracy without parties, without parliaments and without politicians.

Furthermore, the instruments of democracy are politicians, parties and parliaments.

As a result, we must gain an awareness of the fact that there is a problem here, not to cross our arms, but to adopt a policy which, on the one hand, will aim toward civic education and the understanding of the mechanisms of democracy and which, on the other hand, will of course have the purpose of raising the level of effectiveness, so to speak, of the political parties and parliaments.

I do not believe that the situation, with regard to the outlook on democracy transmitted by these figures, can be attributed only and exclusively to the campaigns and marketing aiming to undermine them; it is among other things a phenomenon that is not limited to Mexico, as one of the guest speakers mentioned in the opening ceremony.

It is a phenomenon that, in my view, extends throughout the hemisphere, or at least throughout Latin America, so that it is an open subject that must be approached by bringing solutions.

Although there is sometimes a relationship of inertia with these figures on democracy, I firmly believe that there is much to be done to try to improve this negative impression and these poor results regarding politicians, parties and parliaments.

The Representative from Ecuador wanted me to speak at greater length on this movement from the periphery toward the centre, and on the role of political parties. I shall continue; perhaps I did not insist enough on these points in my presentation. I believe that in order to build a lasting democracy in our country, and I speak of no other experience than that of Mexico, we had to build both a party system worthy of that name and an open and transparent electoral system at the same time.

I believe that over these past 20 years, Mexico has put into place these two realities, namely a party system and an electoral system. And I believe that they have supported one another. As the elections grew increasingly competitive, the parties transformed themselves into central stakeholders in public life.

And as the importance of the parties grew, the elections became increasingly competitive.

I believe that this type of link between the parties and the elections constitutes, to a large extent, the key to understanding what I call the mechanism of change in our country.

I wish to emphasize that the specific nature of the electoral system in Mexico hinges on the fact that the political parties hold the exclusive privilege, if not to say an outright monopoly, for the soliciting of candidacies. This has no doubt served to strengthen the parties themselves, in view of the fact that, legally, it is only within the parties that one may run for the various positions during popular elections.

This enables me to draw a connection between my response and the remark by the Representative from Brazil, because, in view of this regulatory framework for the activity of parties, in Mexico I do not believe that one party can *a priori* set the number of parties that must compete on the electoral scene.

I believe that we have come to the following situation, and this is an experience and not a model: at each election in our country, new political parties may be registered, provided that they fulfill a series of conditions set out by law, namely to make a declaration of principle, to have a plan of action, a constitution, and a set number of members – 0.13% in relation to the census figures, or about 77,000 members – who must apply in the assemblies of at least 10 federated States, with at least three thousand participants in each.



Or in at least 100 district assemblies with 300 participants in each. For example, there will be three new parties in the next election. There will be 11 of them in total, and there is also a provision for departure; those parties that do not receive at least 2% of the vote lose their registration and their prerogatives.

The law arises out of a premise: who will decide how many parties shall remain? It is the voters, by exercising their vote. If a party receives over 2%, it remains in and obtains certain prerogatives; if it fails to obtain 2%, it leaves the electoral scene and may not take part in the next federal elections.

The number of parties that the citizens have given themselves appears as a sketch, as a perspective, as a direction, and not as a model.

I thank you for your attention, and I wish to thank Representative Laura Pavón for her invitation. I wish you a very pleasant stay in our country.

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**ISSUES SURROUNDING DRUG ADDICTION, PRESENTATION DELIVERED BY MR. GUIDO BELSASSO, NATIONAL COMMISSIONER, THE NATIONAL COUNCIL AGAINST DRUG ADDICTIONS IN THE MEXICAN HEALTH SECTOR**

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In my capacity as the National Commissioner of a health care sector organization called the National Council Against Drug Addictions, I am responsible for drug demand reduction in Mexico. My agency is responsible for developing demand reduction policies.

This morning, in collaboration with my good friend Mr. Mario Estuardo Bermúdez, who is in charge of drug supply reduction, we wish to present a profile of the approach Mexico has taken in the fight against this terrible plague, as well as the strategies implemented by the government of President Fox in this respect.

In Mexico, the question of drug supply reduction concerns more than illicit drugs alone and also embraces all substances that have any impact on the central nervous system and that are likely to create an addiction. We believe that all three things are intertwined: nicotine addiction, alcohol addiction, and addiction to illicit drugs. That is why we have an integrated policy encompassing all three components.

In this presentation, I would like to begin by presenting the epidemiological situation and then move on to the strategies that the government of Mexico has been implementing.

First of all, I will take up the issue of smoking and tobacco, the problem that has caused the greatest harm to the health of my country's population. According to the World Health Organization, smoking is the primary cause of avoidable deaths in the world. There are 13 million active smokers in our country and 48 million passive smokers. Today it has been confirmed that tobacco, nicotine, and the 4,000 toxic substances contained in cigarettes (including more than 68 carcinogens) affect not only the person who smokes but also the people who are in a confined area that is enveloped in the smoke produced by an active user.

Until last year (at the time of the meeting held in Geneva with Ms. Gro Bruntland, the director of the World Health Organization), 4 million people around the planet died annually because of tobacco. Prior to the most recent meeting several weeks ago, this number had increased to 4.9 million victims annually.

In our country, 144 Mexicans die each day because of smoking-related illnesses. According to actuarial calculations we produced, it costs Mexico 29 billion pesos annually to care for patients suffering from smoking-related diseases, ranging from bronchitis to emphysema and cancer. These 29 billion pesos represent ½ of 1% of Mexico's gross domestic product.

Thus, smoking is a very serious public health problem, a very serious problem that the government of Mexico has been tackling relentlessly.

While being a very serious problem in itself, smoking is also a gateway to other addictions, and that is why the Mexican government has been combating it so vigorously.

As you heard while my résumé was being read aloud, I have worked for more than 40 years with addicted patients and in support of public policies in this field in our country. I know very few cases of young people who smoke marijuana, the substance most used by young Mexicans among the various illicit drugs, and who did not also begin their history of substance abuse by smoking.

For us, the gateway to drug addiction is smoking, in contrast with the situation in other countries such as the United States, where the official North American policy is primarily targeted at marijuana. There is no obvious link between both of these policies—that is, the policy against smoking and the policy against marijuana. In our country, this linkage is very clear.

In our country, there is a marked difference between the number of male and female smokers. In epidemiological terms, it is said that a country has achieved maturity in terms of smoking epidemics whenever both sets of data, whenever both columns (those of women and men) are equal.

Canada and the United States are examples in that respect. In our country, fortunately, there is still a major difference in the reports reported for each gender, but these data date to 1998 and have been changing rapidly. We are already processing data from the 2002 survey, a survey that we just finished and in which we observed that the number of female smokers 16 years of age is easily going to double because women's use of all addiction-triggering products—tobacco, alcohol, and illicit drugs—has increased enormously in comparison with men's.

Concerning age, most smokers range in ages from 18 to 29. Although it is indicated here that almost 10% of them are between ages 12 to 17 and that this statistic has even increased according to the last survey, it is nevertheless worth noting one important fact—that is, the changes occurring among these groups are enormous: for one, the age at which young people are smoking, which has been dropping, and, secondly, the number of women smokers, which has been increasing.

I have now presented an overview of these statistics, and at the end of the presentation I will have time to answer your questions or offer comments so that we can, if needed, elaborate on at greater length.

Concerning alcohol use, the epidemiological table is quite clear about the increase in the number of users since 1986. With respect to epidemiological statistics, whenever we speak of use during the previous month, we are referring to people who use a given product constantly and repeatedly.

As we will see further on, the number of women who use this product has also been increasing—and exponentially at that. This phenomenon is worth noting, too, because it will be reflected not only in the problem of tobacco and alcohol use but also in terms of illicit drug use.

As concerns illicit drugs, this chart also shows an increase, primarily with respect to marijuana; in this case, we're referring to use several times over the course of a lifetime—that is, contact with the product does not necessarily go hand in hand with addiction.

And here we have the statistics for 1988-1993 and for 1998. If we had the data already analyzed from the 2002 survey, we would note a couple of significant facts: marijuana continues to be the drug most used; inhaled products have held steady; the use of cocaine, whose use between 1988 and 1998 is particularly interesting, and significant according to this chart, will be even higher yet; hallucinogens have held fairly steady altogether, and, respecting the use of heroin, which appears to be stable on this chart, we have noticed that it has been increasing considerably in the latest statistics.

This chart shows us the situation of the drugs most used by young people in secondary schools and postsecondary institutions in Mexico City.

We can see here, the green line, the most significant of all, has risen by as much as 5.8% in the case of cocaine. Cocaine is a product which, based on its availability and the changes in the way drug traffickers have been marketing their product, is very easy to get hold of in our country.

Eight or nine years ago, we suddenly began to track data about the use of cocaine by very young children among the poorest classes inhabiting the south-eastern region of the country. After studying the phenomenon, we realized that drug dealers, who previously paid cash in order to traffic on the national territory, and corruption, had begun to change their methods and were paying in kind. In other words, payment in packets of coca meant that those who received such pouches had to create an internal market in order to obtain money in exchange for the drug.

But this led us to realize that throughout the entire southeastern region, in the centre, and now throughout the entire Republic—particularly in the big cities but also in smaller cities—the availability and use of cocaine has become widespread.

Mr. Bermudez will speak to us later about an extremely important part of the strategy, because from the point of view of the drug trafficker, there are two problems: one, macro-drug trafficking, an activity against which, in this administration, the office of the Attorney General of the Republic has been working with considerable success, and which, moreover, has attracted international notoriety; secondly, micro-trafficking—that is, the distribution of small quantities, particularly to young people. That, however, is the major subject that Mr. Bermudez will speak to us about.

Concerning the trends in our country, I've already indicated that there has been an increase in the use of alcohol and tobacco among young people and women, a drop in the age at which use begins, and changes concerning drugs and the ways they are managed.

In our country, heroin use is strongest in the northern border region—i.e., along the border with the United States—and this has caused a near-endemic situation over the last several, say eight to ten, years. Recently, however, during the last two years, the problem has intensified and has spread throughout the territory of Mexico.

One of the major factors contributing to this spread of heroin is the phenomenon of migrant Mexicans returning from the United States. Ever-increasing numbers of our compatriots have been coming back from a stay in the United States with an addiction problem.

The addiction is occasionally to alcohol, sometimes to cocaine, and very often to heroin. They return to their community, their addiction continues and forces them to use the heroine that is produced locally in our country. It is a well-known fact that Mexico produces primarily marijuana and heroin, mainly in the coastal area bordering the Pacific mountains.

Furthermore, we are already confronted with cases of the intravenous use of heroin—i.e., in our prisons. In the studies we conducted in border areas prisons, we noted that more than 80% of prisoners are HIV-positive and nearly 100% of them are hepatitis C-positive. As you well know, their situation will degenerate into a cirrhosis strain of hepatitis and ultimately cause their death.

At this time, we are seeing an increase in the use of a blend of cocaine and heroin, injection among teenagers, and the spread of other types of synthetic substances. These substances are produced in laboratories, in contrast with marijuana, heroin, and cocaine, which are taken from either “natural” substrates or from a plant.

Synthetic drugs are produced primarily in laboratories. The term refers especially to methamphetamines—including ecstasy, the basic substance.

In the health care sector, one of our major concerns involves the very low awareness among young people of the risk involved in using such substances, whereas the risk is in fact extremely high.

Other types of drugs have been appearing in the United States, primarily GHB and ketamine. GHB is an extremely dangerous substance because it is a methamphetamine, like ecstasy, whereas ecstasy is produced in the form of a small pill.

GHB, on the other hand, is an odourless, colourless, and tasteless liquid—that is, it has the same characteristics as water. Thus, if this substance is poured into water, an alcoholic beverage, or anything at all, the person who drinks it will be unable to detect it.

In the United States, on the other side of the border, reports of deaths, primarily of young women, have been attributed to GHB.

We have encountered only a few cases in Mexico, in the area along the border.

I would like now to speak briefly about the strategy being pursued by the government of Mexico in this area. The organization that manages demand reduction issues, as you see here in the circle, is the National Council on Addictions.

It is an organization that I coordinate and that embraces 14 Departments, including Defence, the Navy, the Interior, the Attorney General of the Republic, as well as another group of members of the President’s cabinet who are concerned by the question

As to the first question, when the President took office two years ago, he recognized that addiction was a major issue, a crucial focus of his government; he reinforced the national council by raising the Commissioner to the rank of Deputy Secretary of Health and by providing this person with extraordinary support, about which I will speak to you later.

Furthermore, this strategy has prompted us to promote the leadership of Councils of State. There is a Council of State similar to the national council in each of the 32 federated States of the Republic. It is chaired by the Governor of the State and administered by the Minister of Health.

In our country, the Department of Health is entirely decentralized. There is a Secretary of Health in each State, who is appointed by the Governor of the State and who is responsible in his State for anti-addiction policies.

The other main component of the current strategy is to bring the question of addictions down to the municipal level. In Mexico, there are approximately 2,500 municipalities, and they hold the key to a nation-wide solution: they are the government authority that is closest to the population. That is why the creation of municipal committees and social networks, about which I will speak to you shortly, is essential to the new strategy designed to create a social safety net from drugs.

Furthermore, within our national strategy, we have developed and strengthened the coordination of infrastructures.

Neuroscience is a field of the greatest importance, and Mexico has clearly been a leader in developing some of its most worthwhile advances. During the last 10 years, our knowledge of how the brain works has progressed by 90%.

Now, as never before in the history of humanity, we have precise knowledge of what portions of the brain are related to addiction. These discoveries have enabled us to develop a series of strategies, including substitute products, such as patches and nicotine gum, products that block brain receptors to substances, and, in what is the most extraordinary development of all, the development of anti-drug vaccines.

How many of you have already heard about vaccines against drugs? Raise your hand. No one. Well, as it so happens, we have made considerable progress in this vein. The vaccine against nicotine is already in the final phase; in one to two years, we will have available to us a vaccine which, if administered to an individual, will protect him or her from the attraction of tobacco or nicotine for six months.

That is, whenever someone smokes a cigarette, this will have absolutely no effect on his or her nervous system and will not create any of the neurotransmitter called dopamine, which produces sensations of well-being and euphoria.

As for products other than tobacco, the methodology is the same. Four research groups in the United States and one group in Mexico are studying an anti-cocaine vaccine and a series of anti-heroin vaccines.

What does all this mean? As a clinical psychiatrist, I see patients who regularly confront me with the problem of relapse. At some point in time, depending on the substance, the patient feels the need to begin using the substance again. This is a physiological process—in other words, a process of the central nervous system that forces the addict to continue using the product.

In the case of tobacco, it takes from ½ hour to an hour; in the case of cocaine, it takes one hour for each line to produce the desired effect among the addicts; heroin-users need a fix four times a day.

In the case of cocaine, once a patient has used up all of his or her reserves of dopamine (the substance that produces euphoria in the brain), a process that can take from 24 to 96 hours, up to three to four weeks can go by before he or she feels a craving for cocaine and need to begin using this substance again.

That is why, previously, I said that cocaine does not create any addiction, because a user who “fills up” (as is said in Mexico) for two or three days will then spend two to four weeks without any desire to use this substance.

Today, we know that the quantity of dopamine will run out and that it takes up to four weeks before it begins to regenerate. In my view, we’re beginning to see the light at the end of the tunnel: we are on the verge of a situation that is going to completely change the approach taken to the care given to addicts in the world.

Whether it occurs in the United States or in Mexico, the first person who manages to develop this product will have contributed enormously to modifying the field of drugs.

Those who, throughout the world, have proposed legalizing drugs because they believe that prevention campaigns have failed will have to change their approach and discourse in reaction to this new strategy, for now we finally have something new that will pave the way to future success.

In Mexico, we have (and I will talk about prevention campaigns later on) one of the most effective demand reduction strategies; furthermore, as a component of this strategy, we have expanded our epidemiological competency by founding a drug observatory in Mexico.

The European Union has an observatory that pools all the information of countries in the European community. It is located in Portugal and is a United Nations organization. In our hemisphere, there are several countries—Columbia, Venezuela, Chile, and others—that have their own observatory, and we are in the process of creating a common observatory for all Latin America.

In Mexico at this time, there is extraordinary support for the epidemiological observatory project.

In fact, the President has indicated that we are going to be a leader in demand reduction. That is why he has made a top priority of this issue in the national policy program. We have made the issue of demand reduction a top priority in terms of bilateral and multilateral relations; we have, as well, made it a basis for strengthening international cooperation—as is witnessed by my Council’s attendance at this forum.

We have promoted and implemented measures designed to assist the public, social, and private sectors as well as the three levels of government: the Federal, the State, and the municipal.

In fact, we in Mexico are convinced that drug demand reduction is not a strategy and responsibility of the government alone, but of the entire community, of all Mexicans.

We are also in the process of expanding the technical know-how of the Council and implementing a virtual information system. This system is a means with which to convey information to the National Council from the State councils and, in turn, to receive information back from them. Now we are going to extend this network to the level of municipal councils so as to have a means of giving talks and providing distance training and briefing sessions.

If, while passing through Mexico City, some of you were interested in seeing how this system operates, I cordially invite you to come to visit the Council.

During the first two years of his term of office, the President has personally chaired the meetings of the National Council on Addictions on four separate occasions. It is the first time an action of this kind has occurred in Mexico and demonstrates the President's commitment to combating substance abuse.

We have drawn up a new internal regulation and are continuing to make demand reduction a component of our international relations.

During the last year, 440,000 preventive measures were conducted in the field, and community participation involved more than 7.4 million people.

As concerns the commitment toward States and co-responsibility in anti-addiction efforts, we have strengthened the State and municipal councils thanks to strategic information and technical expertise used to accomplish this task.

We have reactivated the 32 State councils and developed measures to tackle problems in the initial stages of patients' medical care. We are preparing all physicians in Mexico to diagnose and treat cases of addictions during the initial phase. We are updating epidemiological diagnoses and I've already spoken to you about the 2002 survey conducted in homes.

Furthermore, whereas 25 of Mexico's largest cities were linked up to the disease control system, 50 such cities now convey information to us each month about developments occurring in each of their areas. In addition, we have a series of tools and mechanisms that enable us to keep the epidemiological table up to date

In a project involving the collaboration of the office of the Attorney General of the Republic, we are monitoring the purity and price of drugs in the country's major cities. When crossed with data on the number of admissions in emergency wards, this information allows us to establish the availability of a given drug in this community. If the price and purity drop and, at the same time, the number of admissions increases, then we know that these drugs have become much more available in our country.



Furthermore, we are jointly creating municipal programs. Today, we have programs in almost 40% of the country's municipalities. Mayors change every three years, meaning that in order to strengthen and maintain programs, we created what are called anti-drug social networks. In order to reinforce their work, the efforts of all social forces are pooled—including the contributions of self-help circles such as Alcoholics Anonymous, social groups such as the Rotary and the Lions, groups and associations of fathers, teachers, young people, athletes, etc., as well as cultural organizations.

In that connection, the First Lady of Mexico is in charge of a foundation called *Vamos, México*, which has been given a social action mandate. She has chosen to take charge of two key Department of Health programs, including one dealing with problems of addictions, and she has lent considerable support to the creation of these social networks throughout the entire country.

Jointly with the office of the Attorney General of the Republic and the Department of Security, we are also working with at-risk groups such as Aboriginal groups, marginal groups, and young people, all as part of crime prevention dossiers within the framework of an excellent program. Other such groups include imprisoned immigrant addicts, day workers from the border area, and workers in the maquiladoras, also located in the border area.

All of these at-risk groups—Aboriginals, women, and the others—are key components of current strategies.

Concerning co-responsibility and the common front against addictions, we have, in addition to social networks, a series of tools aimed at the social mobilization. Each company has a joint health and safety commission and these commissions are charged with monitoring occupational health and safety on company premises. In all of the country's joint commissions, we have introduced programs against addictions, alcohol, smoking, and drugs.

Throughout the country, we celebrate the United Nations days; twice a year, with the assistance of young people who are performing their national military service, we conduct anti-drug marches. We have also set up a national network of universities against addictions.

In addition, among the municipal committee programs, we have a program of the Department of Health called *Comunidades Saludables* [Communities in Health]. There is also another program in the municipalities, called *Microregiones de Alta Marginación* [Highly Marginalized Micro-Regions], and an anti-alcohol program targeted at Aboriginal peoples.

As concerns alcohol, we work intensively with Alcoholics Anonymous. During the early part of each year, there is a week during which we talk about task sharing. Last year, we reached more than a half million people.

In Mexico, there is a group of organizations, now more than 33 years old, which are called the Juvenile Integration Centres. Together, these centres constitute a nongovernmental organization that is federally funded at more than 90% and that has 83 units throughout the country. The centres provide assistance and perform prevention and research; it is the operational arm of the Council.

We also have a trust through which we gather funds for supporting anti-addiction programs. In Mexico, we set up a series of smoking cessation clinics (numbering 30 when the current administration took office, and now totalling 150), as well as clinics for alcoholics. For three years now, we have operated a telephone help line that receives an average of 750 calls per day.

We have held a series of workshops; we have an official standard in Mexico respecting the prevention, treatment, and monitoring of addictions; and, throughout the country, we have strengthened the capacity to treat this problem.

In the northern border area, we have conducted experimental treatments using methadone, a heroine substitute, and we're currently conducting a study on buprenorphine, an opiate substitute that "un-hooks" young people from drugs. We operate six prevention programs; I will speak only of the last of these—namely, reading circles based on a book entitled *How to Protect Your Children from Drugs*. I would be delighted to offer this book to anyone who is interested in having a copy of it.

The objective of this book is to gather together four to six families who read this book over a period of two or three weeks; thanks to this process, a social assistance network is started, thus enabling the program to function.

We have published 2.25 million of these books and we have begun early drug abuse detection activities in schools.

Finally, we have become informed about a childhood disorder, called attention deficit disorder with hyperactivity, which is present among approximately 5% of normal children. In statistics for Columbia and Argentina, for example, this figure rises to almost 12% of the population of normal children. These children present three characteristics: they easily lose their concentration at school, they are hyperactive, and they are impulsive. Otherwise, they are intelligent, gifted children who are nevertheless vulnerable to drug use because stimulants—and practically all drugs are stimulants, with the exception of heroin and tranquilizers—alleviate symptoms.

Tobacco, in particular, alleviates the symptoms of attention deficit and hyperactivity, such that these children become extraordinarily vulnerable to tobacco use and, thereafter, to other types of drugs. I know from experience that over 80% of patients having an addiction problem—be this with tobacco, alcohol, or drugs—suffered during their childhood from a undiagnosed, untreated attention deficit disorder.

They become highly vulnerable. All the schools of the country now have a program for early detection of attention deficit disorder; in the process, we have also made progress in combating smoking.

A word about the strategy of the government of Mexico

The main tobacco companies are located in England and the United States. The regulations of both of these countries forbid advertising in the electronic media. In the rest of the world, however, they conduct advertising campaigns in order to boost the number of users and thereby compensate for the market they have lost in the United States and Europe owing to lawsuits, which may bring damages totalling millions of dollars.

Allow me to add a word about advertising. Today, two factors have been clearly shown to contribute to increase in the use of tobacco by younger and younger children. One of them is the price, and Mexican legislators last year began a process aimed at hiking the taxes 60% on black tobacco, the tobacco of the poor in our country.

This year, the lawmakers will repeat this initiative and, in one year's time, taxes will have increased by 110%. According to surveys by the World Bank and the World Health Organization, when combined with a halt to advertising, this high tax approach works best to cut down on the use of tobacco.

In its strategy, Mexico has, first of all, been negotiating an agreement with the tobacco industry whereby the industry itself would limit advertising; we are now, at the same time discussing with the Congress of Mexico about legalizing the process designed to prevent advertising in the electronic media.

Thus, I have given you a nutshell description of what, as you may well imagine, has proven to be a terribly complex problem that has required implementing a battery of measures. This being said, the government of Mexico has taken an active, strong hand in substance abuse issues and programs.

I thank you for your attention.

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**DRUG TRAFFICKING AND ILLEGAL DRUG CONSUMPTION, PRESENTATION  
DELIVERED BY MR. ESTUARDO MARIO BERMÚDEZ MOLINA, ATTORNEY  
SPECIALIZING IN HEALTH-RELATED OFFENCES**

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I appear at this important forum of the Parliamentary Confederation of the Americas as representative of the Attorney General of the Republic and as the Mexican official responsible for the fight against the drug supply; this is a difficult task that is, unfortunately, faced by many of the countries in this Continent.

To speak of drug trafficking and illegal drug consumption is to bring the international community to think about one of the most current and controversial phenomena by which it is threatened: drug trafficking, a criminological reality of huge and complex power, with serious and pernicious effects and, as a result, one of the most serious problems that affect humanity today, preventing its proper development, since this plague respects neither age nor gender, nor race, nationality nor social condition; it degrades the physical and mental health of persons and leads to family and social disintegration. It is a criminal phenomenon that generates important juridical acts of various kinds.

On the one hand, there is the illegal wealth, the tremendous corrupting influence which affects the different social levels as well as the officials in various governmental spheres.

On the other hand, the need for money on the part of consumers leads them to commit offences which, ultimately, causes serious social decomposition, because drugs, like any other consumer item, require producers, distributors, sellers and consumers; but since this involves clandestine activities, they generate on one side coexistence, and on the other side, violence.

We have heard the very interesting presentation by Mr. Guido Belasso, who spoke to us of one component of this problem, namely that of consumption; we shall see the other component, and here I shall try to set out the basic groundwork for governmental action in Mexico to deal with the issue of the supply of drugs.

This social cancer has gone beyond the domestic sphere, and as a result, has demanded the attention and control, in its various manifestations, of international governments and organizations, since despite their efforts, the supply of these illegal products has increased to alarming levels, thus imperilling the independence of States, as well as democracy, the stability of nations, the health and well-being of humanity, and in particular the full development of children and young people, who represent the future of society, while at the same time being its most vulnerable point.

In our country, in view of the fact that addiction to drugs and drug trafficking form part of the same problem, because the first is a *sine qua non* condition for the second, it has been necessary to implement specific strategies that involve departments and agencies of the federal, State and municipal governments, in the fields of health, education, economic social and cultural development, control of the financial system, public security and the administration of justice. In the national drug control program for 2001-2006, we have set out the objectives, strategies and guidelines to follow in this regard, and the Office of the Attorney General of the Republic provides the coordination, follow-up and evaluation.

The overall objective of this national program is to reduce the demand and to fight against the illegal production, trafficking and marketing of drugs, the diverting of chemical precursors, of essential chemical products and of equipment used for the production of synthetic drugs, as well as the commission of related offences such as money laundering and weapons trafficking, according to an approach of total vigilance, which includes efforts provided by public institutions of the three levels of government, and the reinforcement of international cooperation.

The program sets out the position of the government of Mexico in dealing with the problem of drug trafficking in all its procedures and manifestations, on the basis of the specific legislation in each of the Mexican federated States.

The prevention of drug consumption is based on a broad constitutional and legal framework, the goal of which is to guarantee the physical integrity and health of Mexicans; in this regard, the standards aiming to prevent and deal with this problem are implemented through the Department of Health and the departments responsible for related issues, as well as through the federative agencies which collaborate with the Federation in the area of general hygiene.

Furthermore, the prevention of drug cultivation in inclined areas, which for the most part provide similar geographic, social and economic conditions, has been established as an especially important aspect; for this reason, the formulating, implementation and evaluation of the general policy of social development for the fight against poverty has been conferred upon the Department of Social Development, in coordination with the competent authorities and with the federated State and municipal governments, with the goal of discouraging the planting and cultivation of narcotics.

Along the same line of thinking, the Department of Agriculture, Livestock, Rural Development, Fisheries and Food, in coordination with the competent State agencies and authorities, participates in the formulating and implementation of rural development measures and programs, with the goal of raising the standard of living of families that live in rural areas, and thus to gradually reinforce the capacity to respond in order to encourage full development in these areas, and to reduce the opportunities for organizations involved in drug trafficking to drag the rural population into drug cultivation.

Furthermore, in view of the transnationalization of drug trafficking, the law authorizes the federal Executive, through the Department of Foreign Relations, to foster and ensure the coordination of measures outside the country on the part of the agencies and departments of the federal public administration, without affecting the exercise of their respective duties; it may also adopt bilateral or multilateral juridical instruments to strengthen international cooperation on issues relating to reducing demand, operations for the seizing of drugs, and searching for drug dealers, the destruction of illegal crops, the fight against criminal organizations, and international operations and strategies against money laundering and against channels used to divert chemical precursors, and against weapons trafficking.

In the framework of international relations, there is a guarantee of the extraterritorial non-enforcement of laws and a renunciation of the setting up of multinational forces to fight against drugs; for its part, the Department of Finance and Public Credit has established customs standards for control and monitoring of imports and exports of chemical precursors, essential chemical products and equipment used for the production of synthetic drugs, so as to avoid their diversion to clandestine laboratories; this activity is done in coordination with the Office of the Attorney General of the Republic and with the Departments of Health and the Economy.

In order to prevent offences relating to operations carried out using the proceeds of crime, or money laundering, we have a financial intelligence unit, a non-police section which, in carrying out its duties, collaborates with the Public Department of the Federation to obtain, submit and analyse reports of suspect operations, provided by various organizations within the financial system, in order to be able to bring to light money laundering operations; this makes it possible to trigger investigations and to conduct prosecution in cases of illegal actions.

Also, as preventive measures to respond to the requirements of various financial laws, this department has brought in general provisions that require various financial organizations to report relevant information and declare the entry or exit of money across the borders.

Similarly, the Department of Finance and Public Credit is responsible for carrying out simultaneous investigations in coordination with national and international agencies with the aim of providing specialized information exchange and also training for public servants in this area.

The fight against drug trafficking constitutes one of the main objectives of the Office of the Attorney General of the Republic, as the institution responsible for the investigation and prosecution of offences, in order to guarantee the protection of the legal interests and public health established by our Constitution.

It also demands daily efforts on the part of its own staff, and in particular of the specialized section that I direct, responsible for dealing with offences against health, which, unfortunately, frequently place their physical integrity and even their lives in danger.

However, it must be pointed out that the activity of the Public Department of the Federation constitutes only one part of the joint strategies and measures of the federal government of Mexico, since this fight is carried on owing to the real cooperation and concerted action of the local and federal authorities.

Hence, the fight against drug trafficking is carried out along several fronts. We combat the production of narcotics through the coordination of operations of the Specialized Service Responsible for Offences Against Health, which I shall now refer to as FEADS, as it is known in our country, due to its long title. This coordination of the operations of FEADS makes it possible to suppress illegal cultivation throughout the national territory.

Mexico produces two illegal crops in large quantities: marijuana and poppies. This cultivation takes place all along the Pacific Ocean coastline, from the southern States, from Chiapas, through to the area of the furthest State to the north, in view of the fact that this coastal area, which represents the southern part of the State of Sonora, is a region that lends itself very well to this type of cultivation; this region is known, even internationally, as the golden triangle, formed by the States of Sinaloa, Chihuahua and Durango.

Various measures have been used to suppress these crops on the national territory; first, reconnaissance flights. The aviation fleet available to the institution is composed of fixed-wing and rotary-wing aircraft. To begin with, illegal crops are identified in areas that are already perfectly located by means of fixed-wing aircrafts, which find the crop plantations, both marijuana and poppies, in their different production cycles, which are not simultaneous, but rather successive.

Next, we determine the location using coordinates that are transmitted to the officials responsible for the next phase, who must carry out the aerial fumigation of the crops by means of helicopters. One of the herbicides, the use of which is authorized by the World Health Organization, and which we have been applying without interruption in Mexico for the past 16 years, is the herbicide for COAC.

It is said to be less toxic in our environment, that it has no residual effects and that it does not cause any risk for the persons involved either directly or indirectly, in the illegal crop suppression activities; also, it only attacks the leaves, and once it comes into contact with the ground, it loses its power so that it is not damaging to the ecology or to our soil.

The fumigation of these plantations is done by aerial means, or if that is impossible, since sometimes these crops are intermingled and we find marijuana or poppy crops under trees, the eradication is done manually.

The Mexican army assigns 30,000 soldiers to this task, on a daily basis, with all the risks that it involves. It is not the farming population, but rather the drug traffickers, who finance such activity and supervise it, and who resist these measures by the Mexican government in two ways: by shooting at the aircraft, using very powerful weapons, or by attacking the Mexican armed forces.

In areas where these crops are grown, another more sophisticated method is used, depending on the orography, consisting of placing a cable so that when a helicopter passes by, and observes that there is no cable connected with this mechanism, begins its reconnaissance and prepares to fumigate, the cable is pulled on and stretched, with the intention of having it get caught up in the propeller of the aircraft to destabilize it. We have seen many other accidents of this kind.

Another method is simply to leave cables stretched in the crop area to prevent the work of the fumigation helicopter. In such cases, when plantations with this kind of protection are located, the information is transmitted immediately. Coordination is provided with the Mexican army, so that soldiers may manually remove the cables, to clear the way, either for manual destruction of the illegal plantation, or for the work of the fumigation helicopter.

Because of its nature, this type of activity is of course done in groups of two. There is one helicopter that does the fumigation directly, which is a high-risk activity, and in order for the herbicide to be effective, the helicopter must fly only three meters above the highest obstacle. These flights cannot proceed if the wind speed exceeds 18 kilometers per hour. The speed of the aircraft is 30 to 35 kilometers per hour, and it cannot fly if the wind speed prevents it due to its thrust; then it cannot destroy the illegal crops, regardless of the risks to which it is exposed on a daily basis.

After manual or aerial fumigation carried out through the coordination of the operations of FEADS, the next step is verification flights to observe what has been destroyed and to include it in the statistical system which produces a monthly report, in which the results are classified in two groups: institutional work, that of the Office of the Attorney General of the Republic, and work at the national level, to which is added the activities of the other government organizations that participate in this task of illegal crop suppression.

As regards drug transportation and distribution, prevention is done by means of surveillance and seizure activities; this is another activity under the responsibility of the operations coordination section that I direct. These seizures are done through aerial, marine and land-based interventions.

In order to carry out these activities, there is coordination between the Office and the Departments of National Defence, the Navy, Communications and Transportation, and Public Security.

It is in this context that we control the marketing of chemical precursors, essential chemical products and equipment, by means of registers, in coordination with the Departments of Health, of the Economy, and of Finance and Public Credit, so as to prevent their diversion toward clandestine laboratories, to locate the latter and to dismantle them.

As regards the seizure of drugs, there is one of the programs coordinated by the Attorney General of the Republic (AGR) which is highly relevant on account of the size of its staff, because it is the special instrument of the institutions associated with the fight against drug trafficking, and also because of the results obtained.

We refer to the operation known as Guardian, which is a development of the Sellamiento operation. Operation Sellamiento, I am pleased to say, has been taken as a model for aerial seizures by a number of States or countries throughout Latin America, who have observed that this approach has worked in Mexico to the point of dissuading attempts to enter the airspace with drugs, especially from South America, either by means of aircraft with tremendous flight capabilities or with smaller aircraft that stop over in Central American countries.

Operation Guardian, which followed Operation Sellamiento, was implemented right after the events of September 11, 2001 in the United States, which caused a series of immediate reactions, as has already been mentioned here, on the part of the Mexican government, particularly because of the contiguity of our two countries.



This Operation Guardián is carried out at the northern and southern borders of our country as well as along our coastlines; its purpose is to act through seizure operations to prevent the entry of narcotics and psychotropic drugs into the national territory, as well as the diversion of chemical precursors and essential chemical products and their later transfer toward potential markets.

Operation Guardián includes operations of rapid alert that require international cooperation. We receive daily reports at our intelligence centres, from the authorities of other countries, particularly in South America and Central America, regarding any movement of aircraft or vessels that could be suspect, or that include unauthorized trajectories or routes, or that are quite simply the subject of special attention. Colombia, Venezuela, Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia, Brazil, and recently to a greater degree, Panama and Costa Rica, report to us on all these kinds of flights and the possible autonomy of aircraft, or on vessels and their zigzagging or sometimes confused trajectories.

It is only through this mechanism that we can alert ourselves and alert the other countries that are possible destinations for these vessels loaded with drugs, in order that they may respond without delay, and owing to this international cooperation approach, this exercise has achieved considerable successes.

In the framework of Operation Guardián, we also trace suspected targets, as well as land and sea transfer activities, conduct patrols in coastal regions within territorial or national heritage areas, and controls of peripheral land-based, marine and aerial elements that support illegal drug trafficking.

I refer here to radar, antennas and clandestine runways where aircraft may land with complete safety.

We also have an entire communications system that is directly linked to a communications system in place throughout the Western Hemisphere, and an intelligence system that enables us to monitor and detect operations that begin in one country and end in another.

The increase in the level of cooperation, which has enabled us to carry out joint activities, sometimes between three countries, has been extraordinary. I recall the case of a piano that was filled with 63 kilos of pure cocaine in Ecuador, which was supposed to travel through Mexico to Miami. The Ecuadorian police and the USA police – in this case the DEA – intervened and finally, in a joint operation, the Mexican police – the Federal Judicial Antidrug Police still existed at that time, and has since been integrated into what finally became the Federal Investigation Agency – through the participation of the three countries, we were able to secure not only the drug shipment, but also its shipper and its receiver. Operations like this are carried out every day.

Information on the national effort concerning locating and transfer is concentrated and systematized within the Drug Control Planning Centre, commonly referred to as CENDRO in our country; it constitutes another area of the Specialized Section responsible for offences against health, and the responsibilities of FEADS, to analyse and obtain data through which to locate the drug traffic routes, the areas where it is concentrated, the identification of criminal organizations and their mode of operation and, on the basis of this information, to prepare investigation activities and prosecution for these types of offences.

CENDRO is our intelligence area, where all the information on drug trafficking is concentrated, and in turn, it disseminates documents so that all the information that it generates may be utilized by the sectors responsible for fighting against drug trafficking, at both the national and international levels.

It is thus an organization that generates intelligence documents to be used by other countries that must deal with the drug trafficking problem.

According to a constitutional provision, thus far, all of this system that I have spoken about is under the exclusive aegis of the Public Department of the Federation, namely the investigation and prosecution for offences related to drug trafficking and related offences.

In order to carry out its work, the Office of the Attorney General of the Republic (AGR), which is part of the Federal Executive, has, as I mentioned, the FEADS, the Specialized Unit on Organized Crime, commonly referred to as the UEDO, the Specialized Unit against money laundering, and the State bureaus.

These units are coordinated among themselves and with other agencies and departments in order to deal fully with this set of issues.

The activity of the Public Department of the Federation in the area of dismantling criminal organizations involved in drug trafficking is done by means of investigations on the structure of the organizations and the identification of their leaders.

The procedure used for the circulation of drugs and the structure of security groups, commonly referred to as hit squads, are fundamental aspects of any system of criminal organization. This is the true criminal organization, that is, organized crime, and not groups that get together from time to time to commit some offence, such as may range from a mere band, casual or temporary, up to a criminal association whose radius of action is fairly limited and narrow.

Instead, we are speaking of known criminal organizations that have existed for several centuries. Unfortunately, they have evolved to the point of imperilling even the existence of certain countries. They are generally known as being the Mafia, a Sicilian organization different from the Cosa Nostra, which was present in Chicago and New York in the 1930s; or the Andr gueta, or the Camorra, which are also Italian organizations. We may also mention the Giacussa or the Chinese Triads, or other organizations that exist, even if we happen to name them incorrectly, as we did in the case of the Russian Mafia. The Mafia comes only from Sicily, and even its heirs, who came to North America, were not able to take on the name Mafia; that is why they created the Cosa Nostra.

These are real criminal organizations that are capable of destabilizing a nation, a country, or of imperilling its survival and its development.

Among the activities of the Public Department of the Federation, we also find investigations on the members of public institutions who protect these organizations.

Organized crime is developed in two ways: either by violence – the hit squads – or by corruption. Corruption is a phenomenon natural to this type of crime. These organizations with their enormous economic power, seek to corrupt members of government organizations whose goal is to fight against them, in all parts of the world where this phenomenon exists.

The resources that they generate are enormous; ultimately, they are criminal businesses whose main and ultimate purpose is huge profits, and they always seek to corrupt the authorities responsible for fighting against them.

Corruption is therefore a phenomenon that is indisputably connected with the operations of organized crime.

In Mexico, investigation is also done against illegal economic activities of the leaders or administrators of criminal organizations, their financial situation and their commercial relations, as well as their moveable and immoveable property.

Evidently, many of them hide behind formal and legal economic activities to try to escape from investigations and to appear as productive citizens that are useful to the community.

Finally, we investigate in geographic areas of influence as well as on any other social or even political activity that members of criminal organizations may engage in.

As is required under Article 16 of our Constitution, all investigations in our country begin following an information laid at one of the administrative units of the Office, as well as following anonymous reports in the framework of the civil reporting system of the FEADS, or through detentions for flagrant offences resulting from the activities of drug eradication and seizure.

Owing to the information gathered, the necessary elements of evidence are brought together to support the exercise of penal justice against the presumed offenders.

Once the judicial authorities give the order to arrest someone and that order is executed, or in the case of those in detention, when the formal sentences of imprisonment are given, the respective procedures are initiated to bring forward or reinforce the evidence leading to the imposition of the appropriate condemnatory sentence.

It must be said that the sentences in the area of drug trafficking and organized crime are significantly heavier. We will see further on that this is in accordance with the recommendations of international organizations, which Mexico has fully implemented, and also that in the case of offences of these kinds, there are no alternative solutions that are worthwhile other than reclusion, nor measures to reduce the penalties during their application.

When, following a previous verification, data have been obtained on a criminal organization involved in drug trafficking, the coordination of investigations at the Specialized Section Responsible for Offences Against Health, the FEADS, brings in the personnel of the UEDO, the Specialized Unit on Organized Crime, for a decision on the relevance of using the special investigation means provided by law in this area, like those existing in Mexico.

In order to intervene in private communications, it is necessary to have the judicial authorization.

In our country, intervention in private communications is not a tool whose use is decided upon by the investigation service, as is the case in other countries.

By approving this law in 1996, our Congress decided, regarding this measure, which is certainly one of the means that exist to fight against this kind of delinquency, but which is not an ordinary crime-fighting measure, that it would be necessary to obtain an express decision from the judicial branch in order to have it authorized.

Other tools available to us are longer periods of detention, namely 96 hours, and house arrest extending up to 90 hours; normally the maximum period of detention is 48 hours, if organized crime is not involved, and the period of house arrest can extend up to 30 days.

As concerns orders of house arrest and short-term detention, the judge must determine within a period of 24 hours whether or not the arrest order applied for is relevant.

The infiltration of agents, which can only be authorized by the Attorney General of the Republic, the offer of rewards for collaboration, protection of witnesses, of victims or of any persons whose involvement in the investigation, whether before or during the penal proceedings, endangers the life or physical integrity.

The legal advantages for the members of criminal organizations who provide information leading to the detention of their leaders.

Similarly, if there is information about possible operations using the proceeds of crime, the assets are confiscated on a preventive basis and the Specialized Unit Against Money Laundering is brought in; they verify the financial situation of the alleged perpetrators and their accomplices, and the reasons for concealing the origin of the funds. For this purpose, the Unit may demand information from the Department of Finance and Public Credit, from the national commissions of Banks and Securities, and Insurance and Guarantees, in order to obtain the elements of evidence sufficient for the arrest of the presumed perpetrators and, if warranted, the confiscation of illegal assets for the benefit of the Attorney and the administration of justice.

In the area of international cooperation, measures are implemented, based on the international conventions that Mexico has signed and ratified, which are under the auspices of the General Assembly of the United Nations, such as the 1961 New York Convention on Narcotic Drugs, amended by the Protocol of 1972, the Convention on Psychotropic Substances of Vienna, 1971, and the United Nations Convention Against the Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances, signed in Vienna in 1988.

These conventions set out mechanisms for the control of drugs and recommend to member countries that they catalogue behaviours relating to the production, distribution, trafficking and marketing of drugs.

These provisions have been repeated in the national legislation, both with regard to health-related offences and in the general Act against organized crime.

This file has required joint ongoing work on the part of the international community, and thus, in June 1998, the United Nations General Assembly issued the political declaration "Guiding Principles of Drug Demand Reduction and Measures to Encourage International Cooperation in the Fight Against the Worldwide Drug Problem" as a complementary provision to raise universal awareness of the need for more energetic measures aiming to combat and to prevent drug addiction and drug trafficking.

The commitments made in that political declaration in 1998, the term of which is set to end next year, have already been respected by Mexico and reflected by legislative changes and national programs to fight against the illegal production, trafficking and illicit consumption of stimulants such as amphetamines and of their precursors.

Legislative progress and national programs against money laundering, measures adopted for the promotion and reinforcement of judicial cooperation, the adoption of new and better programs and strategies to reduce the demand for drugs.

Even though from a legislative point of view, before 1998, there was the Federal Act respecting the Control of Chemical Precursors, essential chemical products and equipment for the manufacturing of capsules, tablets and/or pills (the 1997 Act), and the criminalization in the Federal Penal Code of conduct connected with the diversion, illegal traffic and improper use of products for the manufacturing of synthetic drugs, an Act from 1996, we have now put in place administrative measures of surveillance through the control and registration of exports, imports and products for necessary legal use.

No precursor may enter Mexico, following the verification at sea that we carry out, without prior authorization, in this case given by the Department of Health.

As regards our penal legislation in force, regarding the fight against drug trafficking and the related offences, I refer mainly to money laundering and weapons trafficking, since 1996 we have had the Federal Act Against Organized Crime, which sets out special means of investigation and accusation.

The Acts governing the Mexican financial system are currently being reviewed by various Departments of the federal Executive in order to determine the relevance of proposing measures to our Congress aiming to establish mechanisms of control through which to detect operations set up with funds from illegal sources, in accordance with the recommendations of the international Financial Action Task Force on laundering of capital, the FATF, to which Mexico belongs.

Also, as a means of reaffirming the fight against drug trafficking since 1998, we have adopted 10 treaties, five conventions, nine agreements and two protocols, bilateral and multilateral, in the area of illegal drug consumption and trafficking, chemical precursors and essential chemical products, as well as money laundering and extradition, with countries in Europe and Asia, as well as with countries in our Continent: Colombia, Brazil, Panama, Paraguay, the Oriental Republic of Uruguay and the Dominican Republic.

In respect of national policies and the sovereignty of States, these juridical instruments are considered in Mexico as being the supreme law, for the purposes of Article 133 of our Federal Constitution.

This attitude of the Mexican State of contributing to the fight against the worldwide drug problem was demonstrated in December 2000 through the signing of the United Nations Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime, which as you are aware was signed in Palermo, its objective being to determine ways and means to reinforce and improve national jurisdiction and international cooperation, as well as to establish the groundwork for worldwide action against these groups to prevent them from existing and from growing.

This Palermo Convention, ratified by the Senate of the Republic this past October 23, will necessarily result in a major review of our legislation in this area to examine the relevance of bringing amendments to it.

The lower and upper chambers of our Congress are currently studying the first legislative work grouped into four projects of reform to the Federal Act Against Organized Crime tabled by legislators from the Institutional Revolutionary Party, the National Action Party and the Ecological Green Party of our country.

As concerns international operations for the control of drug trafficking, we must, for example, point out the participation of Mexico within the International Drug Control Conference – Group D, which includes Belize, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and Panama.

Being responsible for the Atlantic operation, which aims to develop and coordinate the information exchange activities within the region, relating to drug trafficking through maritime channels, Mexico drafts reports on assurance and strategic analyses regarding trajectories.

This operation, for which Mexico has been responsible, has established a way of proceeding which was already known, but which has now been fully confirmed, namely the use of launches in a certain island quite close to Nicaragua, where transfers are made from Colombian or South American vessels to much faster launches, known as the Eduard Doño model.

This Atlantic operation has finally served as a model for use at the international level, by the countries of the region that are involved in this activity to counter drug trafficking by sea.

The phenomenon of organized crime, which is no stranger to Mexico, has acquired a great deal of importance in recent years for society, since the peaceful coexistence with citizens is affected, in view of the violence that it exercises against their fundamental rights.

As a result, in our country, in accordance with international commitments, the development of the justice administration institutions has had to adjust itself in order to respond to the dynamic of diversification of illegal activities of criminal groups.

For this reason, in 1995 and 1996, in a special exercise, an inter-institutional group formed of representatives of the federal executive and legislative branches carried out the work necessary for the development of a legislative bill on organized crime.

Indeed, it was then established that the authorities of the Office of the Attorney General of the Republic and those of the Office of the Attorney General of the Federal District, positions that were still subject to appointment by the Executive of the country, jointly with the senators and representatives of the parties represented in our Congress, had to support countries suffering what were already very serious problems relating to organized crime, and in particular drug trafficking.

This Commission, in which we had the opportunity of participating, has travelled to countries such as Colombia, the United States, Italy, France and Spain; and to Italy, particularly to Palermo, to gain an awareness of the tools, strategies and regulations that these countries have had to develop in order to face the problem of organized crime.

Through this work, the federal Executive and all members of the parliamentary factions of the political parties represented in the Congress of the Union will present the legislative bill jointly, in order to finally create the Act Against Organized Crime, like that which was enacted in November 1996, in accordance with the international treaties signed by our country, and according to the principles that govern the Mexican penal legal system and that set the appropriate legal measures for investigations and prosecution of these criminal enterprises.

One of the most momentous debates arising when such a bill is tabled for study by the legislative branch concerns the substantial difference existing between these forms of reaction and that used by the State to fight against ordinary delinquency. But these forms of response are used in all democratic countries that have had to implement them in order to counteract the mode of operations and the effects of organized crime.

No form of response could be considered at present by the international community as more valid and effective than that which is being used here.

In relation to a number of measures, our country has certainly not yet developed concrete procedures such as a witness protection program. In Mexico, we do not yet have mechanisms to change the civil identity of persons or to carry out what is referred to as their "civil death", to give them another identity, as is done in other countries, which sometimes goes even as far as to change their physical identity.

We have not had to deal with such delicate situations, and we probably would not have wished to speak here of what one country in our Continent was forced to do at one point in its judicial history: to resort to faceless attorneys and judges.

We have systems that are now being submitted for study, including four projects presented by the parliamentary groups of our Congress to determine the validity or need for reforms to the current law and the new Federal Act Against Organized Crime.

Notwithstanding the above, on April 30, 1997, on account of various circumstances present within the institution, and here I refer to the Office of the Attorney General of the Republic, instead of concentrating on the activities, mechanisms and tools against organized crime in a single structure as provided by the Act, the Act Against Organized Crime were created: the Specialized Section Responsible for Health-Related Offences, the FEADS; the Specialized Section Against Organized Crime, the UEDO, to combat the same phenomenon.

The UEDO reports directly to the Office of the Attorney General of the Republic, who appoints its chief. The FEADS is under the administration of the Office of the Attorney, and its appointments are made by the Federal Executive, in addition to succeeding the previous National Anti-drug Combat Institute. And in 1998, in the same institution, the Special Unit Against Money Laundering was created.

Evidently, the result is that the investigation and prosecution sections dealing with drug trafficking and money laundering, illegal activities that paradoxically were at the root of the special legislation on organized crime, run up against many obstacles on account of their division into three administrative units.

Despite their coordination, they have not provided the effective results hoped for, and have fallen behind in their work by trying to limit the law to the one area for which each is responsible.

Certain investigations of the Anti-Money Laundering Unit and certain research by the FEADS cannot produce results because they need tools that the Federal Act Against Organized Crime possesses or authorizes. Therefore the UEDO must be called in.

This arrangement is evidently neither practical nor functional, and does not do much to enhance the proper institutional development for fighting against criminal organizations, including drug trafficking rings, which is the largest manifestation of the existence of this type of crime in Mexico.

This is why, after having carefully analysed the structure and operation of the institution, the administration of President Fox, under the responsibility of Mr. Macedo de la Concha, re-examined the need to redefine its duties and realign its component administrative units, and proposed an institutional method that defines its procedures and responsibilities, while providing the unity of direction and operation of the Public Department of the Federation specializing in organized crime, and of its direct auxiliaries, in order to gather together the juridical, human and material resources needed to really work toward the fight against criminal organizations.

The AGR's plan of organizational change provides for the creation of a Specialized Sub-Bureau of Investigation on Organized Crime, which is already known as the SIEDO, in which the existing units are combined to make the maximum use of the legal mechanisms for the benefit of the administration of justice in this general field, since the information obtained from them could be used in other related investigations.

By strengthening the ministerial expertise and policing function, we obtain greater effectiveness in the fight against organized crime and increase the response capacity of the Public Department of the Federation.

This sub-bureau, which in reality corresponds to the modification and merger of the FEADS in its administrative structure, to which are attached the UEDO and the Anti-Money Laundering Unit, will have specialized units in each of the areas of crime thus far dealt with, which are also under study by our Congress and are provided for in the Federal Act Against Organized Crime.



This involves crimes against health, drug trafficking, operations using the proceeds of crime, money laundering, counterfeiting and alteration of money, car-jackings and vehicle theft, terrorism, supply and trafficking of weapons, forcible confinement, trafficking of minors, of persons with no papers, and of organs.

Even if the offences mentioned are of various kinds, experience has brought into evidence their interrelation. In this regard, the sub-bureau will have the following advantages:

The fact of being a single administrative section to fight against organized crime, in which we benefit from the special juridical resources as set out by law in this field.

The possibility of redefining the methods of coordination and control, of increasing the range of elements to be covered and the capacity to respond; to reinforce systematic cooperation; to concentrate operations that may be used in various sectors of the investigation to support the evidence of various offences; to strengthen the strategic jurisdiction of the public department in this area.

Moreover, the creation of this sub-bureau will also strengthen the inter-institutional relations of agencies in all three levels of government, since this will be the only channel for the setting up of cooperation and collaboration mechanisms in this area, at the national as well as the international level, thereby avoiding a dispersal of effort, while ensuring a coordinated reaction to this criminal phenomenon.

This change takes on considerable importance at present; it must give positive results through which the public trust may be regained toward the federal administration of justice, and present a united and organized front against organized crime in its various manifestations, and that will set the necessary groundwork to give coherence to the structure of the institution and to the real objective that has been pursued since 1996 through the Federal Act Against Organized Crime.

Another important challenge faced by the Mexican justice system has already been mentioned here, namely the fight against what is referred to as retail selling, a manifestation of crime that has been affecting society directly since recently, since the drug trade uses different systems and extends its power to the most remote areas, which considerably increases the consumption of drugs in society, a reason for which measures must also be taken against drug retailers; investigations of them could lead to criminal organizations.

In this regard, we have observed that it is the local authorities that first receive information about the presence of what we call "little shelters" in Mexico, or "flop houses", as well as information on small-scale narcotics sellers in schools, town squares, streets, bars and nightclubs.

However, reasons of jurisdiction have been cited for not apprehending these persons.

In our current legal system, article four of the Mexican Constitution provides that health protection is a right and that the Federation and the federated State governments cooperate in the area of general health, in accordance with the decisions of the Congress of the Union; in this regard, we may underline that if the power to legislate to guarantee public health is under exclusive federal jurisdiction, the execution of measures set by law may be assured by the various levels of government.

At present, the General Health Act provides that the federal Executive has jurisdiction in the area of general health, regarding the Program Against Drug Addiction, that is, as we are aware, article 3, section XXI and chapter twenty-three; this is the case of sanitary controls of products and services and their import and export, including the control of narcotics and psychotropic substances, since until now, it has been exclusively up to the federal government to investigate offences against health, particularly of course, the retailing of narcotics, through the Office of the Attorney General of the Republic, and in particular through FEADS.

Hence, the fact that both the federal Executive and that of the various federated States of the Republic are currently carrying on studies aiming to propose to the Congress of the Union, through the reform of the General Health Act, the granting of powers to the governments of the States of the Federation in order to fight this type of crime against health, and their participation in the Anti-Drug Addiction Program.

This proposal is based on the duality of the sociocriminal phenomenon of drugs, namely that the illegal consumption of narcotics and psychotropic substances is only possible if such substances are sold or supplied, hence the reason for also attacking the problem of consumption through the detention of those who sell directly to the drug addict.

This link is indissoluble.

The issue represented by this distribution through retail-level selling and the demand for narcotics, on account of the scale of the problem and the place where it is manifested, will of course be better managed at that level by the governments of the federated States and of the Federal District, if that is what our country's Congress decides.

The power granted should then make it possible in a precise way for the local authorities to establish means of control and sanctions in the area of direct sales and distribution, according to the irreducible premise that it must involve individual doses for consumers of narcotics and psychotropic substances, so that by basing themselves on the subsidiary nature of penal law, they may condemn behaviours that affect the legal interest or public health, but cannot be considered as drug trafficking properly speaking, or as organized crime.

In this case, they must also adopt measures to channel the information on such offences to the Office of the Attorney General of the Republic so that the latter may investigate relations that may exist between these retail-level narcotics sellers and organized crime, if applicable.

By adding to this preventive health-related provisions in programs against drug addiction, we must clearly specify the jurisdiction of the Federation and that of the federated States in order to avoid future jurisdictional conflicts.

The problem of the distribution and retail-level selling of drugs in their communities certainly constitutes one of the major concerns of the municipal and State governments.

We have seen, and we already realize that, normally, jurisdictional conflicts do not occur so much in situations of collaboration, as one might think, but rather when one part of the jurisdiction is granted to the federated States, while giving that offence a local nature in a very concrete situation in which it involves retail-level sellers of individual doses.

Other methods are tried when we have a good idea, and we submit it to the Congress of the Union, or at least we propose it for study, because it is certainly in the interest of both the federal Executive and several of our country's State governments.

The long-term strategy is certainly prevention, both of the demand and of the supply of drugs; however, until we obtain the expected results, we must improve the measures and strategies used to fight and punish the illegal trafficking of narcotics and psychotropic substances, as well as the related offences.

Through this approach, the Mexican government, in the international context, has intensified the fight on all fronts against the problem of drugs and the operational program brought in by the government of President Fox has even deserved, in the words of the Commissioner against drug addiction, international recognition as a sign of approval toward our country and of recognition toward those who have devoted their lives to this task.

As a result, next month, acting through the Office of the Attorney General of the Republic, Mexico will assume the chair of the Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission.

Through the measures against the production of narcotics and psychotropic substances, last year we reached historic quantities in the destruction of illegal crops throughout the national territory. We are pleased to be able to tell you today that this record quantity has also been exceeded this year, and we now possess a new record for the destruction of illegal crops.

Alongside the prosecution of offences against health, we have carried out the necessary investigations to dismantle criminal organizations devoted to this activity by imprisoning and prosecuting the leaders, distributors, hit squads and stand-ins, including former public servants who, taking advantage of their positions or of information available to them, have given them protection.

Since the beginning of the new administration in 2000, we have begun proceedings against 14,500 individuals, who are at the disposal of the authorities. And we have observed, as indicated here, that we have ceased being only a country of transit for drugs destined for our neighbour to the north, the largest consumption market for drugs, and that unfortunately, we have also become a drug-consuming country, where the rate of use increases while the age of drug consumers has decreased.

We have also observed major and worrisome activities of corruption in our country's public security systems, which leads us to deal, on the one hand, with the drug traffickers, properly speaking, and on the other hand, with former public servants who have betrayed the trust of society and of the institutions for their own dishonest interests.

In this way, the Mexican government's fight has been fully concentrated on both the preventive aspects of drug addiction and on the criminal side of drug trafficking and its direct and related results, on the basis of strategies and coordinated measures on the part of the Federation, the States and the municipalities.

This fight is done with the indispensable international cooperation, always within the framework of our legislation, and based on international juridical instruments in the full respect of our sovereignty.

It is the will of this administration to combat firmly and unceasingly against criminal groups devoted to drug trafficking, from bottom to top, using all juridical, human, material and technological resources available to us, while encouraging the participation of citizens.

Even if the results of the fight against drug trafficking are encouraging, we cannot allow ourselves to feel satisfied.

Owing to the public servants who have conferred upon us this fundamental task for the good of Mexican society and the international community, we have the firm conviction that this sustained effort, with the support of the citizens, will make it possible to halt this plague that compromises the fundamental commitment to create the desired conditions for the normal and full development of persons, and for their well-being.

We are convinced that only a joint combat by national societies and governments will make it possible to make appreciable progress.

Isolated efforts will not suffice. The exchanging of ideas and of experience in forums such as this will continually provide encouragement to strengthen international participation in the defence of health, in the peaceful coexistence of citizens.

In this way, the government of the Mexican Republic, through competent public organizations and with the participation of citizens, has reviewed its strategies to deal with the supply and demand for narcotics, while seeking to continually make the constitutional guarantee for public security and health a reality.

Thank you very much for your attention.



**STATUTES OF THE PARLIAMENTARY  
CONFEDERATION OF THE AMERICAS**

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## **TITLE I - NATURE AND OBJECTIVES**

### **CHAPTER I - NATURE**

#### **Section 1**

The Parliamentary Confederation of the Americas is an organization that brings together the congresses and parliamentary assemblies of the unitary, federal, federated and associated States, the regional parliaments and the interparliamentary organizations of the Americas.

Whenever COPA is mentioned in any of the following provisions, it shall mean the Parliamentary Confederation of the Americas

### **CHAPTER II - OBJECTIVES**

#### **Section 2**

An initiative of the parliamentarians of the Americas, COPA fosters dialogue on issues related to inter-American cooperation and hemispheric integration, in particular respecting the projects and mechanisms stemming from the Summits of the Heads of State and Government of the Americas. COPA contributes to the strengthening of parliamentary democracy and to the building of a community of the Americas founded on the respect for dignity and human rights, peace, democracy, solidarity between peoples, social justice and gender equity.

COPA shall pursue the following objectives:

- I.- Promoting the interests and aspirations of the populations of the hemisphere regarding the issues and impacts of hemispheric economic integration before the executive bodies of the Americas;
- II.- Monitoring the progress of the initiatives and orientations agreed upon at the Summits of the Americas and to keep the congresses, parliamentary assemblies and governments of the Americas informed of related developments;
- III.- Developing and reinforcing the congresses' and parliamentary assemblies' means of action in the framework of hemispheric integration;
- IV.- Disseminating, to all members of the congresses and parliamentary assemblies of the Americas, the laws, regulations and means of action put in place to solve the problems with which the populations of the Americas are confronted, as well as comparative analyses of these public policies;
- V.- Fostering the creation of a synergetic relationship and permanent communication between the members of the different congresses, parliamentary assemblies, regional parliaments and interparliamentary organizations of the hemisphere;

- VI.- Promoting the implementation of public policies having an impact on the causes and effects of poverty in the countries of the Americas confronted with this problem.

### **CHAPITRE III - SCOPE OF POWERS**

#### **Section 3**

COPA recognizes and supports the sovereignty of the unitary, federal, federated and associated States of the Americas. The recommendations and statutes of COPA shall not have precedence or go against the constitutions or laws of the unitary, federal, federated and associated States of the Americas.

### **TITLE II - MEMBERS**

#### **CHAPTER I - ADMISSION, RIGHTS AND OBLIGATIONS**

#### **Section 4**

The congresses and parliamentary assemblies of the unitary, federal, federated and associated States, the regional parliaments and the interparliamentary organizations of the Americas are members of COPA.

#### **Section 5**

The Executive Committee shall have jurisdiction over decisions to admit the congresses and parliamentary assemblies of unitary, federal, federated and associated States, the regional parliaments and the interparliamentary organizations of the hemisphere.

#### **Section 6**

The rights of the members of COPA are as follows:

- I.- Taking the floor during the General Assembly;
- II.- Taking part in the Executive Committee in accordance with the procedure prescribed in these Statutes;
- III.- Exercising its right to take the floor on all decisions concerning COPA;
- IV.- Exercising any other right stemming from these Statutes.

#### **Section 7**

The obligations of the members of COPA are as follows:

- I.- Attending the proceedings of the General Assembly;
- II.- Providing an annual contribution for defraying the expenses of COPA, the amount of which shall be determined by the Executive Committee;

- III.- Assuming the responsibilities conferred by the exercise of a position on the Executive Committee;
- IV.- Discharging any other obligation stemming from the decisions of the General Assembly and the Executive Committee as well as the provisions of these Statutes.

## **CHAPTER II - PARTICIPATING PARLIAMENTARIANS**

### **Section 8**

In order to be a participating parliamentarian of COPA, one must be a parliamentarian currently in office.

## **TITLE III - ORGANIZATION**

### **CHAPTER I - STRUCTURE**

### **Section 9**

COPA is composed of the following bodies:

- I.- General Assembly;
- II.- Executive Committee;
- III.- Network of Women Parliamentarians;
- IV.- Permanent thematic working committees;
- V.- Secretariats.

### **CHAPTER II - GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

### **Section 10**

The General Assembly, supreme decision-making body of COPA, shall be composed of the delegations of the congresses and parliamentary assemblies of the unitary, federal, federated and associated States, the regional parliaments and the interparliamentary organizations of the Americas. Its functions shall include:

- I.- Debating issues connected with the fields of interest of COPA;
- II.- Approving, on a consensus basis, recommendations expressing the views of COPA;
- III.- Confirming the appointment of members of the Executive Committee;

- IV.- Electing, from among the members of the Executive Committee, upon a motion of the Executive Committee, the President, the First Vice-President and the Regional Vice-Presidents; and electing, upon a motion of the Executive Committee, the Treasurer;
- V.- Adopting the budget of COPA and the proportional contributions from congresses, parliamentary assemblies, regional parliaments and interparliamentary organizations, upon recommendation by the Executive Committee;
- VI.- Amending the Statutes of the organization, upon a motion of the Executive Committee;
- VII.- Ratifying any agreement or convention concluded between COPA and other organizations;
- VIII.- Discharging any other function conferred on it by these Statutes.

**Section 11**

The competent authorities of each congress and parliamentary assembly of the unitary, federal, federated and associated States, regional parliament and interparliamentary organization of the Americas shall determine the composition of their delegation in compliance with the criteria established in these Statutes.

**Section 12**

The delegations participating in the General Assemblies must respect the principles of gender equity and political pluralism.

**Section 13**

The host congress or parliamentary assembly shall decide, with the approval of the Executive Committee, on the size of the delegations.

Any observer accredited by the Executive Committee may attend the deliberations of the General Assembly.

**Section 14**

The General Assembly shall meet preferably every 18 months at the invitation of a congress or a parliamentary assembly of the Americas.

**Section 15**

The Executive Committee and the host congress or parliamentary assembly shall jointly set the date and place of the General Assembly and of the meeting of the Executive Committee.

**Section 16**

The General Assembly shall adopt its recommendations by consensus.

In the event that a consensus cannot be reached, any question may be resolved by means of a qualified vote of two thirds of the delegations present.

Each of the delegations present shall be entitled to one vote.

In the event that a delegation does not agree, it shall have the right to have its opposite opinion be recorded.

**Section 17**

Each delegation shall inform its congress or parliamentary assembly of the recommendations adopted by the General Assembly; if applicable, it shall also inform the relevant bodies of the State that it represents, its government and civil society of such recommendations. It shall see to the promotion of the implementation thereof.

**CHAPTER III - EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

**Section 18**

The organizational and administrative activities of COPA are the responsibility of the Executive Committee, which shall consist of:

- I.- The President, the First Vice-President, the Vice-Presidents, the Treasurer and Ex-Presidents of who hold parliamentary office;
- II.- One parliamentarian per parliament for the unitary and federal States;
- III.- One parliamentarian from one of the congresses or parliamentary assemblies of the federated and associated States, for each federation, if those congresses or assemblies are not otherwise represented by an interparliamentary organization on the Executive Committee;
- IV.- One parliamentarian per regional parliament and one per interparliamentary organization;
- V.- The President of the Network of Women Parliamentarians of the Americas and one other parliamentarian member of the Network of Women Parliamentarians of the Americas;
- VI.- One parliamentarian from the host congress or parliamentary assembly of the next General Assembly, if this host congress or parliamentary assembly is not otherwise represented on the Executive Committee;
- VII.- One parliamentarian of the first provincial interparliamentary organization associated with COPA.

VIII.- One parliamentarian from the first host parliamentary assembly;

**Section 19**

The members of the Executive Committee shall officially take office at the end of the General Assembly during which their appointment was confirmed and their term of office shall expire at the end of the General Assembly following that of their appointment.

**Section 20**

The competent authorities of the congresses and parliamentary assemblies of the unitary, federal, federated and associated States, the regional parliaments and the interparliamentary organizations of the Americas that have a seat on the Executive Committee shall appoint the parliamentarian or parliamentarians that represent them.

**Section 21**

In the event of the death, resignation, incapacity or departure from parliamentary office of a member of the Executive Committee, the competent authorities of the congress or parliamentary assembly that he or she represents shall designate a replacement, subject to sections 28, 31 and 35.

**Section 22**

The Executive Committee may hold regular meetings and special sessions, always subject to previous notice. Regular meetings shall be preferably held once a year, and, if applicable, prior to the General Assembly.

The Executive Committee shall hold a special session whenever its President deems it necessary, or whenever 25% of its members request such a session of the President in writing.

In an emergency situation, the Executive Committee's special sessions may be held, if the President and Vice-Presidents decide so, by conference call or by any other means of telecommunication.

**Section 23**

A quorum shall be attained when at least 10 members of the Executive Committee are present at a meeting.

Any observer accredited by the Executive Committee may attend the deliberations of the Executive Committee.

**Section 24**

The attributions of the Executive Committee shall include the following:

- I.- Exercising the powers conferred by the General Assembly, preferably by consensus, and taking charge of the execution of its decisions;
- II.- Determining the place, date and agenda of the General Assemblies jointly with the host congress or parliamentary assembly;
- III.- Adopting the rules of procedure of the General Assembly;
- IV.- Recommending the adoption of the budget of COPA and the proportional contributions from congresses, parliamentary assemblies, regional parliaments and interparliamentary organizations;
- V.- Creating permanent thematic working committees and establishing the number and areas of jurisdiction thereof;
- VI.- Deciding on the admission of the congresses and parliamentary assemblies of unitary, federal, federated and associated States, the regional parliaments and the interparliamentary organizations of the Americas;
- VII.- Approving the list of organizations invited as observers to the General Assembly and to the meetings of the Executive Committee;
- VIII.- Deciding on the organization, by COPA, of any other interparliamentary event;
- IX.- Submitting to the General Assembly any motion that it deems useful to the efficient operation of COPA;
- X.- Making decisions *ad referendum* on behalf of the General Assembly during special or emergency situations;
- XI.- Proposing to the General Assembly draft amendments to the Statutes;
- XII.- Proposing to the General Assembly the candidates to the offices of President, First Vice-President, Regional Vice-Presidents and Treasurer;
- XIII.- Approving, upon a motion of the President, the financial statements of the Organisation;
- XIV.- Discharging any other function conferred on it by these Statutes.

## **CHAPTER IV - PRESIDENCY**

### **Section 25**

The presidency of COPA shall be assumed by a parliamentarian from the host congress or parliamentary assembly of the next General Assembly, subject to section 28.

### **Section 26**

The duties of the President shall include the following:

- I.- Convening, opening and chairing the deliberations of the General Assembly;
- II.- Convening and chairing the meetings of the Executive Committee;
- III.- Taking charge of representing COPA;
- IV.- Ensuring compliance with the organization's Statutes and deciding on any issue that is not set out under the Statutes;
- V.- Supervising the Secretariats;
- VI.- Appointing the necessary personnel for the organization of the General Assembly;
- VII.- Presenting the Organization's financial statement to the Executive Committee;
- VIII.- Proposing the agendas of the General Assembly and the Executive Committee meetings.

### **Section 27**

The President shall take office at the end of the General Assembly during which his or her appointment was confirmed by the General Assembly and shall have a period of not more than 90 days to take office.

His or her term of office shall expire at the end of the General Assembly following that of his or her appointment.

The President shall not be re-elected.

The President may not hold more than one position simultaneously on the Executive Committee.

### **Section 28**

In the event of the death, resignation, incapacity or departure from parliamentary office of the President, he or she shall be replaced on a *pro tempore* basis by the First Vice-President.



In the event of the death, resignation or incapacity of the *pro tempore* President, the Executive Committee shall elect a new President from among its Vice-Presidents.

The new President shall, if applicable, assume the duties of that position for the remainder of the existing term of office.

## **CHAPTER V - FIRST VICE-PRESIDENCY**

### **Section 29**

The First Vice-President shall assist the President in his or her duties.

### **Section 30**

The First Vice-President shall officially take office at the end of the General Assembly during which he or she was elected.

His or her term of office shall expire at the end of the General Assembly following that of his or her election and shall not be renewable.

The First Vice-President may not hold more than one position simultaneously on the Executive Committee.

### **Section 31**

In the event of the death, resignation, incapacity or departure from parliamentary office of the First Vice-President, the Executive Committee, as soon as its first meeting, shall elect a new First Vice-President, from among its Vice-Presidents.

## **CHAPTER VI - VICE-PRESIDENCIES**

### **Section 32**

COPA shall have six Vice-Presidents. Five of the vice-presidencies shall be conferred upon representatives from each of the regions of the Americas, namely: North America, Central America, the Caribbean, the Andean region and the Southern Cone; the sixth falls to the President of the Network of Women Parliamentarians of the Americas.

In the event that a region has no representative on the Executive Committee, the Executive Committee may designate the Regional Vice-President on a *pro tempore* basis.

**Section 33**

The duties of the Vice-Presidents shall include the following:

- I.- Assisting the President and the First Vice-President of COPA in carrying out their duties;
- II.- Representing COPA and coordinating the work performed in their respective regions;
- III.- Discharging any other function conferred on them by these statutes.

**Section 34**

The Regional Vice-Presidents shall officially take office at the end of the General Assembly during which they were elected.

Their terms of office shall expire at the end of the General Assembly following that of their election and shall be renewable only once.

The Vice-Presidents may not hold more than one position simultaneously on the Executive Committee.

**Section 35**

In the event of the death, resignation, incapacity or departure from parliamentary office of a Regional Vice-President, the Executive Committee of COPA shall elect a new Regional Vice-President from among the members of the Executive Committee.

**CHAPTER VII - TREASURERSHIP**

**Section 36**

The Treasurer shall be a parliamentarian coming from the territory where is located the Executive Secretariat of COPA.

**Section 37**

The duties of the Treasurer shall be to:

- I.- Present a draft budget to the Executive Committee and inform the Executive Committee on its implementation;
- II.- Perform bookkeeping and maintain the accounting records required to implement the budget;
- III.- Present the financial statement to the General Assembly, after its approval by the Executive Committee.

**Section 38**

The Treasurer shall officially take office at the end of the General Assembly during which he or she was elected. His or her term of office shall expire at the end of the General Assembly following that of his or her election and shall be renewable.

**CHAPTER VIII - SECRETARIATS**

**Section 39**

COPA is endowed with three Secretariat units located in Mexico, Brazil and Quebec. The Secretariat of Mexico shall act as Executive Secretariat of the Organisation.

**CHAPTER IX - THE NETWORK OF WOMEN PARLIAMENTARIANS**

**Section 40**

The Network of Women Parliamentarians shall be an autonomous body with respect to the decisions of concern to it. Its objectives shall be to make progress in the quest for gender equity, and to preserve the gains achieved by women as well as the respect that States must grant their rights.

The Network shall be an integral part of COPA, and shall play a guiding role with respect to women's issues or programs relating to women.

**TITLE IV - VARIOUS PROVISIONS**

**Section 41**

The official languages of COPA shall be: Spanish, English, Portuguese and French.

**TITLE V - MODIFICATION OF THE STATUTES**

**Section 42**

Any motion to amend the Statutes must be submitted in writing at least one month before a General Assembly to the Presidency through the Executive Secretariat, which shall immediately transmit it to the members of the Executive Committee. The examination of such a motion to amend shall be entered automatically on the agenda of the next Executive Committee meeting.

After having studied the recommendation issued by the Executive Committee, the General Assembly shall pronounce itself on each motion, preferably by consensus.

In the event that a consensus cannot be reached, a qualified vote of two thirds of the delegations present shall allow a motion to amend to be adopted.

Each delegation present has the right to one vote.

**Section 43**

The Statutes of COPA shall enter into force on the day following their approval by the General Assembly.



## **PARLIAMENTARY DECLARATION OF IXTAPAN DE LA SAL, MEXICO**

### **IV General Assembly of the Parliamentary Confederation of the Americas (COPA)**

**November 24 to 27, 2002**

*WHEREAS* the deliberations and conclusions of the previous General Assemblies of COPA, held in Quebec, Puerto Rico and Río de Janeiro;

*WHEREAS* the content of the Quito Ministerial Declaration, of November 1, 2002;

*WHEREAS* the Declaration of principles of the first Summit of the Heads of State and Government of the Americas that establishes a partnership for development and prosperity whose three components are democracy, free trade and sustained development;

*WHEREAS* in most of the countries of the hemisphere, the integration process, within the globalization framework, has generated positive effects, but at the same time, has contributed to marginalization, to the rupture in the productive structures and, especially, to the deterioration of the agricultural sector;

*WHEREAS* the current economic integration raises an enormous challenge to States and Governments, who are concerned about cultural diversity which is an inestimable heritage for humanity;

*WHEREAS* the current ecological problems and their interrelation with social problems throughout the past century are the result of the industrial expansion, the increase in social explosion and the emergence of the consumer society;

*WHEREAS* the congresses, parliaments and assemblies, in which political representation is essentially expressed, are the targets of permanent criticism and many questionings;

*WHEREAS* the role of the legislative bodies of the unitary, federal, federated and associated States, of the regional parliaments and the interparliamentary organisations, in which the people's representation is vested, should be much more important in the negotiations carried out on issues regarding free trade agreements;

*WHEREAS* within the framework of integration processes, education and vocational training are indispensable to ensure strong democratic institutions development, the elimination of poverty and the reduction of criminality;

*WHEREAS* the process of integration may limit the capacity of States to offer public health care services and to guarantee access for all to medication;

*WHEREAS* the current enormous concern about public security in the hemisphere, due to the increase in criminal activities and its effects on social peace and stability, which are necessary to strengthen a Continental project based on development and prosperity;

*WHEREAS* the Parliamentary Confederation of the Americas, as an open and pluralistic forum dedicated to the discussion of political problems regarding the Americas, is deeply concerned about the building of a stable, democratic and just hemisphere;

*WE, member parliamentarians of COPA, gathered in Ixtapan de la Sal, State of Mexico, Mexico, after having extensively deliberated on several specific issues that have been a source of concern to all the legislative bodies of the hemisphere:*

*REAFFIRM* our deepest interest in the fulfilment of the objectives set out at the Summit of the Americas towards the creation of an equitable integrated economic market of the countries of the hemisphere;

*UNDERLINE* the need that this integration process be taken into account not only from an economic perspective, but that it should take into account the need to counteract production and consumption models that affect the environment and hinder the development of small and medium-size businesses;

*DEMAND* that our governments intensify the fight against poverty and marginalization, and further the respect of cultural diversity that should be promoted through international agreements and instruments whose approval must precede the creation of the Free Trade Area of the Americas;

*URGE* the members of the executive bodies of our countries to allocate more resources to the functioning of the health care systems and to prevent international trade norms from restricting the States' capacity to offer better health care services;

*RECOMMEND* that, within our parliamentary assemblies, be promoted the adoption of a proposition to support the "hemispheric cooperation program", whose objective is to allow the less resourceful countries to take a more active part in the negotiations of the Free Trade Agreement of the Americas;

*URGE* the allocation of a minimum of 6% of GDP for the education sector and to maintain a progressive increase while taking into account the conditions and needs of each country;

*AFFIRM* that it is indispensable to assure the recognition on the international scene, and particularly in the Americas, of the role of Parliaments in supporting and promoting culture through legislation and other means of parliamentary action;

*RATIFY* our conviction that it is important that all the Governments of the Americas sign adherence to the Kyoto Protocol;

*REQUIRE* that the local governments apply the Agenda 21;

*DEMAND* as well that our governments intensify the struggle against poverty in all its forms and implement education policies to make the population aware of the significance of protecting the environment, as well as of applying technology to improve the quality of life;

*REAFFIRM* the importance of the premise "Nothing is agreed until everything is agreed", meaning to say that if the demands that make the process equitable are not met, the coming into effect of the FTAA cannot prosper;

*STATE* that to bridge the democratic gap and for the parliaments of the Americas to exercise their power, it is necessary that the parliamentary representatives be admitted to the debates regarding the FTAA negotiations, through the recognition of the Parliamentary Confederation of the Americas (COPA) and its specialized organizations. If this were not to happen, the national congresses that form part of COPA would not be sufficiently informed to ratify trade agreements;

*DEMAND* the immediate elimination of all subsidies and protectionist measures used by some countries, that seriously distort the trade of agricultural products to the detriment of the less developed countries;

*RECOGNIZE* that there will be no true integration between unequal countries, unless compensatory measures are established to overcome the existing asymmetries between the different countries. Integration is not synonym of domination, but rather cooperation, balanced and harmonious development between the different peoples of the Americas;

*REAFFIRM* our decision to continue fighting against all forms of discrimination and violence against women anywhere in the world;

*DEMAND* that be guaranteed and provided legal protection to women while working fervently so that constitutional precepts, treaties, agreements and current laws that keep watch, protect, and promote the human rights of women and that pursue gender equity be respected and that be promoted, as well, laws that prevent, penalise and eradicate violence against women;

*RECOMMEND* that a forum on fiscal policy be carried out to analyze the convenience and the possibility of harmonizing tax regulations in order to coordinate macroeconomic policies in the region, since this aspect of the integration is essential to its success;

*DECLARE* that it is necessary to implement public safety policies in each country on the basis of a broad international cooperation, to promote a better institutional development and a more efficient struggle against criminal activities;

*INSIST* that the legislative bodies implement the reforms improving their functioning in order to be better able to face the criticisms they are subject of;

*URGE* our respective Assemblies to take a more active part in the monitoring of the negotiations and decisions taken by the Heads of State and Government of the Americas within the framework of the Summits.

This declaration, as well, is composed of the recommendations adopted *in extenso* by the six thematic committees and the Network of Women Parliamentarians of the Americas which held meetings during the IV General Assembly of COPA.





**COMMITTEE ON THE FTAA, ECONOMY, TRADE, LABOUR AND MIGRATION**

***RECOMMENDATION ON ECONOMIC INTEGRATION IN THE LIGHT OF THE FTAA***

*TAKING* into account the Quito Ministerial Declaration, of November 1, 2002, following the Hemisphere Trade Ministerial Meeting;

*BEARING* in mind the Continental Parliamentary Meeting on the FTAA and the role of Parliamentarians from the region as well as the Quito Declaration that emerged from that meeting;

*DEEPLY CONVINCED* that the people's representation entrusted to the parliaments shall, in this case, legitimize the negotiations being carried out and taking into account the debates at the Parliamentary Summit on Continental Integration, that took place recently in Brasilia, Brazil;

*WHEREAS* that free trade agreements grant important rights to investors, while limiting and conditioning in an undesirable manner the capacity of parliamentarians to legislate in accordance with the concerns of their fellow citizens;

*AWARE* that the various integration agreements have not led to a sufficiently productive transformation to promote a more equitable development for our peoples;

*CONCERNED* that up to now, the export dynamics of goods and services in certain countries as a result of the current trade agreements, has not enabled the integration of production chains and incorporated sectors from different origins to the benefits of the integration process;

*RECOGNIZING* the role that foreign investment has played as an external financial source, and deeply concerned about the dramatic increase in mergers and acquisitions of the productive heritage of national economies;

*TAKING INTO CONSIDERATION* that in all the different forums, the agricultural issue has been a matter of anguish and concern, owing to the enormous drop in Latin American exports of these products, and that it has not been possible to make the agricultural sector competitive due to the high subsidies applied by other countries;

*WE, parliamentarians of COPA:*

*REAFFIRM* the importance of the premise “Nothing is agreed until everything is agreed”, meaning to say that if the demands that make the process equitable are not met, the coming into effect of the FTAA cannot prosper;

*SUGGEST* that a point of agreement be submitted to approval in our congresses to support the “hemispheric cooperation program”, whose goal is to enable those countries with insufficient resources to properly take part in the negotiations;

*STATE* that to bridge the democratic gap and for the parliaments of the Americas to exercise their power, it is necessary that the parliamentary representatives be admitted to the debates regarding the FTAA negotiations, through the recognition of the Parliamentary Confederation of the Americas (COPA) and its specialized organizations. If this were not to happen, the national congresses that form part of COPA would not be sufficiently informed to ratify trade agreements;

*DEMAND* the immediate elimination of all subsidies and protectionist measures used by some countries, that seriously distort the trade of agricultural products to the detriment of the less developed countries;

*RECOGNIZE* that there will no true integration between unequal countries, unless compensatory measures are established to overcome the existing asymmetries between the different countries. Integration is not synonym of domination, but rather cooperation, balanced and harmonious development between the different peoples of the Americas;

*DECLARE* that the parliamentary institutions are precisely the most fitting entities to collect the concerns of society and to function as a bridge between society and the integration process negotiators;

*RECOMMEND* that during the ministerial meetings and on occasion of the Summits of the Heads of State and Government of the Americas, COPA call a meeting of its Executive Committee or of the Permanent Thematic Committee involved;

*URGE* the executive branches of our countries to design an industrial policy to promote the creation of productive chains to incorporate small businesses into the integration process;

*URGE* the Heads of State and Government of the Americas to establish a transparent negotiation process and, for this purpose, accounts should be rendered before the parliamentary authorities during the whole process;

*CONSIDER* that no resort to negotiations regarding subsidies and other protectionist barriers should be used in instances outside the framework in which the FTAA negotiations are being carried out, since this would not lead to a transparent process;

*RECOMMEND* that a forum on fiscal policy be carried out to analyze the convenience and the possibility of harmonizing tax regulations to coordinate macroeconomic policies in the region;

*RECOMMEND* that the Permanent Committee on the FTAA, Economy, Trade, Labour and Migration examine the European integration process as well as the North American Free Trade Agreement, specifically the content of Chapter XI, and that the results be given to COPA's member parliamentarians;

*URGE* that integration efforts respect other aspects of our reality, and not only the economic issues. Integration is justified when it increases the exports of each country that adheres, having as a direct result economic and social benefits for the population, among them the creation of productive jobs that prevent social exclusion and marginalization and the migration that derives from this;

*CALL UPON* the Heads of State and Government of the Americas to exert pressure on developed countries during the different forums, to urge the latter to lift tariff and non-tariff barriers and subsidies to exports, since this leads to inequitable treatments between the different countries that take part in the integration process.



## **COMMITTEE ON DEMOCRACY AND HUMAN RIGHTS**

### ***RECOMMENDATION ON THE ISSUE OF POLITICAL REPRESENTATION, DEMOCRACY AND HUMAN RIGHTS***

*AWARE* that the congresses, parliaments and assemblies, in which political representation is essentially expressed, independently from the fulfilment of their tasks, are the target of permanent criticism and many questionings;

*TAKING INTO ACCOUNT* the importance of the media in modern societies and in the creation of social awareness; and the need for its impartiality and objectivity;

*WHEREAS* representative democracy is experiencing difficulties due to increasing plurality and the fragmentation of parties in contemporary democracies;

*WHEREAS* coalition governments in Parliaments are replacing those of majority;

*TAKING INTO ACCOUNT* that it is necessary to reconcile the participation of society and its organizations with the country's political and social life and the leading role of political parties;

*WHEREAS* the equality of men and women in political participation constitutes the fundamental principles of democracy and of the respect of human rights;

*WHEREAS* there can be no democracy without social justice, equity, sovereignty and active participation of society;

*WHEREAS* ethics and transparency are vital qualities to the consolidation of parliaments and democracy;

*WE, parliamentarians of COPA:*

*DECLARE* that it is necessary to strengthen the role of legislative bodies, as a counterweight to the power of the State, particularly at the Executive level;

*CALL UPON* the Heads of State and Government of the Americas to respect the rules of democratic coexistence and to grant the legislative bodies of their countries their due importance;

*URGE* the members of the legislative bodies to seek mechanisms to renovate and strengthen their action and, therefore, democratic life;

*WARN* of the increasing danger of political representation depending on private supports, that distort the social purpose of the public function;

*DECLARE* that it is necessary that legislative assemblies carry out information diffusion activities, and take more advantage of the media's influence to inform about the scope of representation and the tasks and work carried out by parliamentarians;

*DECLARE* that equity and equality in the participation of women and men constitute one of the main goals of our organization;

*COMMIT OURSELVES* to carry out an education mission in our respective parliaments, regarding democracy, in favour of human rights and international law, with the aim of not only legislating according to the human being, but also to make citizens aware, especially the young generations, of the political, economic and social reality of a democratic State and of the functioning of its parliamentary institutions;

*ACCEPT* to foster the reorganization of the rules regulating the financing of political parties and election campaigns in our respective countries, in order to make these processes more transparent and equitable;

*UNDERTAKE* to make the processes of ratification of international agreements, treaties and covenants more transparent, to favour the imputability of the federal and federated parliaments in their areas of institutional competence, as well as to request complete and timely information from our States' Executives, during the negotiation processes of treaties in inter-governmental meetings, in order to see to it that these treaties do not violate sovereignty or any obligation at any level. This requirement acquires outstanding importance in the current negotiation process of the Free Trade Area of the Americas;

*UNDERTAKE* to firmly ensure the respect of democracy and human rights in the Americas, and we commit ourselves to exchange information to be well informed about the situation that these issues face in our countries and in the Americas;

*UNDERTAKE* to formally denounce any interruption of the democratic order and any flagrant violation of human rights in the hemisphere. In so doing, we ratify the position of the Executive Committee of COPA, adopted in the month of May, on the abduction of Senator Ingrid Betancourt, the problem affecting the community of Vieques, as well as with respect to the Democratic Charter of the Organization of American States pertaining to the events that occurred last April in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela.



## COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION, CULTURE, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

### ***RECOMMENDATION ON EDUCATION***

*WHEREAS* at the second meeting of the Ministers of Education of the hemisphere, the Ministers emphasized the importance of education as a tool for attaining peace, eradicating poverty, and combating terrorism;

*WHEREAS* education is a national responsibility of States;

*WHEREAS* cooperation between the States of the hemisphere in the area of education enables us to develop closer ties in respect of our values;

*WHEREAS* an appropriate level of basic education guarantees strong democratic institutions, development, the elimination of poverty and the reduction of criminality;

*WHEREAS* vocational and technical education is a fundamental right of workers and is essential today for obtaining a decent job;

*WHEREAS* progress remains to be accomplished in the Americas concerning universal access to education, literacy, and the improvement of vocational and technical education;

*WE, parliamentarians of the Americas:*

*URGE* the Heads of State and Government of the Americas to guarantee the allocation of a minimum of 6% of GDP for the education sector and to maintain a progressive increase while taking into account the conditions and needs of each country;

*URGE* the Heads of State and Government of the Americas to exclude the education sector from trade negotiations leading to the creation of the FTAA;

*ASSERT* that education is a tool which makes it possible to preserve national identity and the social cohesion of a people.



## COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION, CULTURE, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

### *RECOMMENDATION ON CULTURAL DIVERSITY*

*WHEREAS* the process of economic integration in the Americas poses a challenge to States and governments that have made cultural diversity a leading priority, which is an inestimable heritage for humanity;

*WHEREAS* the citizenries of the Americas have a vital interest in promoting and affirming cultural diversity;

*WHEREAS* cultural works are more than mere merchandise;

*WHEREAS* the proliferation of networks and means of communication, which have been made possible by the new technologies, opens outstanding prospects for the international dissemination of cultural works and for encounters and dialogue between cultures;

*WHEREAS* it is necessary to undertake sufficient actions of solidarity in order to promote equitable cultural exchanges among all the countries of the Americas;

*WE, parliamentarians of COPA:*

*CONFIRM* the right of States to freely define and implement their own cultural policies and to undertake measures of support in the cultural domain;

*AFFIRM* that it is necessary to protect the intellectual property rights of creators;

*AFFIRM* that it is indispensable to assure recognition on the international scene, and particularly in the Americas, of the role of Parliaments in supporting and promoting culture through legislation and other means of parliamentary action;

*AFFIRM* that the best method for promoting and affirming cultural diversity is the adoption of an international convention or instrument covering cultural diversity;

*DEMAND* from the Heads of State and Government of the Americas that they exclude committing to trade liberalization agreements affecting the cultural sector in negotiations concerning the creation of a Free Trade Area of the Americas.



## COMMITTEE ON HEALTH AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

### *RECOMMENDATION*

*WHEREAS* the Heads of State and Government of the Americas at the Miami Summit adopted a commitment “to work to improve access to quality healthcare”;

*WHEREAS* the Heads of State and Government of the Americas at the Santiago Summit adopted a commitment “to work to improve the availability, accessibility and quality of medications and vaccines”;

*WHEREAS*, according to the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), nearly one-fourth of the population of the Americas does not have permanent access to healthcare;

*WHEREAS* nearly half the population of Latin America and the Caribbean is not covered by health insurance;

*WHEREAS* poor women living outside large urban centers have an unacceptable maternal mortality rate, a reality that takes a heavy human and social toll on our societies;

*WHEREAS* healthcare for the most poor is the responsibility of public health systems, and our States need enough leeway to establish health programs to improve the living conditions of our fellow citizens;

*WHEREAS* in 2001, only 1.4% of the loans disbursed by the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) were devoted to health;

*REITERATING* the commitment adopted at the first Parliamentary Conference of the Americas (COPA) in Quebec City in September 1997, reiterated at the second COPA General Assembly (Puerto Rico, July 2000) and the third COPA General Assembly (Rio de Janeiro, November 2001), “to work to improve the quality of health services and to increase public access to those services, so that every person may benefit from the best possible state of physical, mental, and social health, as stated in the United Nations Declaration on the Right to Development”;



*WE, the women and men representatives of congresses and parliamentary assemblies of the unitary, federal, federated, and associated States, regional parliaments, and interparliamentary organizations of the Americas meeting in Ixtapan de la Sal for the fourth COPA General Assembly:*

*URGE* our Heads of State and Government to devote more resources to the healthcare systems operating under our governments;

*DEMAND* that more IDB resources be allocated to projects aimed at improving healthcare;

*URGE* our governments to invite parliamentarians to join national delegations at meetings of the governing bodies of inter-American organizations in the healthcare field and agree to delegate representatives from the COPA Permanent Committee on Health and Social Development to attend these meetings;

*- Pioneering initiatives*

*UNDERTAKE* to share, notably through the work of the COPA Permanent Committee on Health and Social Development, pioneering initiatives that we can promote within our assemblies and before our governments;

*UNDERTAKE* to promote, within our respective States, the concept of *a set of basic services* in order to ensure universal access to healthcare;

*UNDERTAKE* to use new technologies for training front-line workers and spreading knowledge to improve the quality of basic healthcare;

*INVITE* parliaments to legislate to fight alcoholism and drug abuse, which cause diseases and considerable social costs;

*ASK* that our States guarantee access to health care for the elderly, taking into account the ageing of the population and the growth of degenerative diseases;

*UNDERTAKE* to define a patent registration policy which, without causing harm to pharmaceutical companies with regard to fundamental research, will make it possible to reduce the costs of medication for underprivileged populations;

*UNDERTAKE* to recognize mental health as an important component of public health, and invite our respective States to devote sufficient resources to it;

*UNDERTAKE*, as legislators, to defend the public and universal nature of our health care systems, and to approve no law or policy that would aim to privatize them, thereby depriving the most underprivileged citizens of the care to which they are entitled, since although the private sector may be permitted to play a role under the control of the public sector, we affirm that health is primarily the responsibility of States;

*UNDERTAKE* to guarantee the improvement of vocational training in the field of health;

*URGE* the Heads of State and Government to protect and ensure the rights of children who are the victims of forms of illegal trade, such as drug trafficking and child prostitution;

*- Health and international trade regulations*

*AFFIRM* that the regulations governing international trade must not limit the ability of States to offer and protect public healthcare services and to guarantee universal access to medication;

*- Women's health*

*UNDERTAKE* to make our colleagues and Heads of State and Government aware of the importance that all births occur under the supervision of trained professionals in order to decrease infant and maternal mortality rates;

*UNDERTAKE* to promote measures to improve the health of mothers and newborns, such as genetic screening for prenatal risks, programs to prevent underweight births, family planning, and breastfeeding, family planning programs and measures to protect women's health;

*UNDERTAKE* to ensure that the appropriate authorities in our respective States improve systems for collecting data on women's health.



## COMMITTEE ON THE ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

### *RECOMMENDATION*

*WHEREAS* the current ecological problems and their interrelation with social problems throughout the past century are the result of the industrial expansion, the increase in social explosion and the emergence of the consumer society;

*RECOGNIZING* that environmental matters, as everything pertaining to governmental actions, require information, awareness and the participation of the entire population;

*RECOGNIZING* that it is necessary to oppose at the international level the production and consumption models that affect the environment and restrict human development;

*TAKING INTO ACCOUNT* the agreements reached during the Río World Summit, the Kyoto Agreements, and the evaluation of the proposals that arose from the Johannesburg World Summit;

*WE, parliamentarians of COPA:*

*DEMAND* the recognition of sustainable development as the fundamental axis of all public policy;

*REQUIRE* the strengthening of a social leading role capable of generating environmental justice, as the equivalent of social justice;

*DEMAND* that sustainable agricultural policies with emphasis on family, community and medium-scale production be implemented;

*DECLARE* that environmental legislation shall encourage sustainable agriculture;

*DECLARE* that water is a resource belonging to humanity and it is essential to life and, therefore, the State is responsible for promoting its availability in a sustainable manner;

*ASSUME* the commitment to create the normative framework for the States to lead an ecological restructuring of the industrial sector;

*DEMAND* that our governments promote ecotourism combined with conservation, environmental education and the economic development of local communities;

*PROPOSE* that encouragement be given to the development of renewable energy sources, conservation and rationalization of energy consumption, as well as the production of technologies to reduce energy consumption;

*WILL INITIATE* a debate at the continental level on the uniformity of the legislation pertaining to biodiversity, the struggle against biological piracy and the establishment of a bioethical code to ensure national integrity, as well as the establishment of cooperation policies (technology and environment) to enable the building of an efficient environmental community, that respects life, the rational use of resources and sustainable development;

*RATIFY* our conviction that it is important that all the Governments of the Americas sign adherence to the Kyoto Protocol;

*REQUIRE* that the local governments apply the Agenda 21;

*DEMAND* that our governments intensify the struggle against poverty in all its forms and implement education policies to make the population aware of the significance of protecting the environment, as well as of applying technology to improve the quality of life.



## COMMITTEE ON PEACE AND PUBLIC SECURITY

### *RECOMMENDATION*

*WHEREAS* organized crime, terrorism, kidnapping of human beings, trafficking of drugs, vital organs and arms have dramatically increased in every country;

*WHEREAS* insecurity and violence are the consequences of inequality, hunger and the violation of human rights;

*WHEREAS* the shortage of rehabilitation programs for people in confinement in the penitentiary system of some countries throughout the Americas and the permanent existence of situations involving the flagrant violation of human rights, condemning prisoners to the most unfair and severe indignity;

*WHEREAS* there are no sufficient mechanisms to bring to a halt this terrible situation in many of our countries, due to the considerable increase in the number of young offenders;

*WHEREAS* public security issues are related to national security, and the sovereignty of nations is threatened by the increase in criminal activities;

*WHEREAS* it is necessary, in the legislative aspect, to modify many laws and strengthen the legal framework to prevent criminal activities;

*WHEREAS* most of our countries have young populations that are more easily prone to antisocial conducts;

IN CONSEQUENCE WHEREOF:

*The General Assembly of the Parliamentary Confederation of the Americas (COPA) hereby agrees to:*

1. *DECLARE* that it is necessary to implement public safety policies in each country on the basis of a broad international cooperation;
2. *STRESS* that a better institutional development and a more efficient struggle are indispensable to favour the creation of citizens' councils to work along with the authorities;

3. It is necessary, in order to ensure the rehabilitation and social integration of prisoners, to consolidate programs that involve psycho-social and educational components as part of the rehabilitation;
4. As a rehabilitation measure, in the case of minor offences, young people should be offered alternative programs based on community services, that at the same time foster reintegration into the community;
5. *URGE* our governments to establish transparent justice administration models with constant reporting and indicators;
6. *CALL UPON* our governments to carry out prevention actions that, among others, include the strengthening of values.

This Recommendation shall come into effect immediately after its approval.

*Given this day, November 27, 2002, in the city of Ixtapan de la Sal, United Mexican States.*

*Presented by the Plenary of the Committee on Peace and Public Security of COPA.*



## COMMITTEE ON PEACE AND PUBLIC SECURITY

### RECOMMENDATION

*“To recommend to the Congresses and Parliamentary Assemblies of the Unitary, Federal and Federated, and associated States, the Regional Parliaments and the Interparliamentary Organizations of the Americas that are part of COPA, to approve legislation adopting a regulating code to prevent child abduction and to prevent children from getting lost in public and private buildings”;*

*WHEREAS* COPA is a permanent and autonomous forum that brings together the Congresses and Parliamentary Assemblies of the Unitary, Federal and Federated, and associated States, the Regional Parliaments and the Interparliamentary Organizations of the Americas;

*WHEREAS* among the attributions of the Parliamentary Confederation of the Americas is the fostering of integration, where the members’ decisions are consistent with the principles and objectives of the collective well-being and the quality of life throughout the Americas;

*WHEREAS* the "Code Adam" is a protocol that can be used as a preventive tool against the abduction and disappearance of minors in certain public buildings and commercial establishments throughout the region, and which is being implemented in Puerto Rico and in the United States of America;

*WHEREAS* the said protocol received its name in memory of Adam Walsh, a six-year old child who was murdered after having been kidnapped in 1981, in a shopping mall in the State of Florida, United States of America, an event that brought to the attention of the world the horror of child abduction;

*WHEREAS* the “Code Adam” has shown to be highly successful as a tool to prevent all abduction attempts, when an alert situation referring to the “Code Adam” has been triggered in a commercial establishment, and it is still being implemented in stores throughout the United States of America and Puerto Rico, with the help of the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children, whose headquarters is in Virginia, United States of America;

IN CONSEQUENCE WHEREOF:

*The General Assembly of the Parliamentary Confederation of the Americas hereby agrees to:*

Recommend to the Congresses and Parliamentary Assemblies of the Unitary, Federal and Federated, and associated States, the Regional Parliaments and the Interparliamentary Organizations of the Americas that form part of COPA, to approve legislation adopting the procedures of the Code Adam protocol to be implemented in public and private buildings, which are detailed below.

PROCEDURES FOR NOTIFICATION AND SEARCH. The chief, director, commission or committee shall order his or her employees to help any father, mother or guardian whose child has gone missing in a public or private building, by implementing and carrying into effect procedures, among which the following:

1. **OBTAINING THE CHILD'S DETAILED DESCRIPTION.** When a father, mother or guardian notifies any employee of a public or private building that his or her son or daughter has gone missing, the said employee shall ask the father, mother or guardian for a detailed description of the minor, including his or her name, age, eye and hair colour, height, weight and the description of the child's clothes, especially the shoes he or she is wearing,

The employee shall:

- a) alert the appointed employees through a rapid and effective means of communication that the "Code Adam" has been activated;
  - b) provide a detailed description of the child, according to the information provided by the father, mother or guardian; and
  - c) provide the telephone number or the extension where the alert was launched.
2. **IDENTIFICATION OF THE MINOR.** The employee shall accompany the father, mother or guardian of the minor to the main entrance of the public or private building for him or her to help identify the child, while the appointed employees interrupt their regular task to help search for the child.
  3. **MONITORING OF EXIT DOORS.** The employees appointed by the chief or the director or by the above-mentioned commission or committee, will guard all the building's exits to ensure that the minor does not leave the building without his or her father, mother or guardian.
  4. **BUILDING'S EXIT.** Every person that leaves the public or private building through any of its exits, accompanied by a child, will be required to take the main door previously designated by the chief, director, commission or committee mentioned in section c previously. If once there, an individual insists on leaving the public or private building, he or she will be authorized to do so once it has been assured that the minor accompanying him or her is not the one being searched for, and once the father, mother or guardian presents an identification accepted by the Government.
  5. **LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCY AND PUBLIC ORDER.** If the child is not found during the search, the local law enforcement and public order agency shall be notified of this situation. After the "Code Adam" has been activated, the appointed employees will continue to search throughout the building, and 2 or more of them, as deemed necessary, will be assigned to each floor to ensure that the minor is not there. The search will include all parking areas used by the building. No other employee will be obliged to take part in the search.
  6. **EXTENDED NOTIFICATION.** If the minor is not found within a period of 10 minutes, the appointed employee will call the emergency telephone number and inform the local security and emergency personnel of the situation so that they be sent to the scene immediately. He or she will also notify the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children.



7. REPORT. Once the protocol has been completed, the appointed employees shall inform the above-mentioned chief, director, commission or committee and the other appointed employees that the "Code Adam" has ended. The above-mentioned chief, director, commission or committee shall prepare a report on the event, which shall be kept on file for at least 3 years.

This Recommendation shall come into effect immediately after its approval.

*Given this day, November 27, 2002, in the city of Ixtapan de la Sal, United Mexican States.*

*Proposed by:*

*Senator Antonio J. Fas Alzamora  
Vice-president, Caribbean Region  
President of the Senate, Free Associated State of Puerto Rico*



## COMMITTEE ON PEACE AND PUBLIC SECURITY

### RECOMMENDATION

*To express the adherence of the Parliamentary Confederation of the Americas, to the principles stated in "The Puerto Rico Declaration: Connecting the New Humanity", approved as a result of the International Conference on Peace and Development: "Peace in Peacetime", held in San Juan, Puerto Rico and to recommend to the Congresses and Parliamentary Assemblies of the Unitary, Federal and Federated, and associated States, the Regional Parliaments and the Interparliamentary Organizations of the Americas that form part of COPA to support the said principles.*

WHEREAS last August 12, 13 and 14, the Conference on Peace and Development: "Peace in Peacetime" was held. This conference convened by the Senate of the Free Associated State of Puerto Rico and the Arias Foundation for Peace and Human Progress, gathered in Puerto Rico a diverse group of individuals, linked together only by their common concern for the present course of humanity;

WHEREAS in this meeting the following panelists and speakers took part: Sila M. Calderón, Governor of the Free Associated State of Puerto Rico; Antonio J. Fas Alzamora, President of the Senate of Puerto Rico; Oscar Arias, 1987 Nobel Peace Prize Winner, Costa Rica; Franklin Chang, astronaut, Costa Rica/USA; Deepak Chopra, doctor and mystic thinker, India / USA; Fernando Gaitán, Colombian scriptwriter and journalist; Theresa Chastain, American economist; Luis F. Coss, Puerto Rican journalist; Lloyd Dumas, American journalist; Wilfredo Estrada, Puerto Rican religious leader; Alda Facio, Costa Rican human rights activist; Maneka Gandhi, parliamentarian from India; Baltazar Garzón, Spanish investigating judge; Ashok Khosla, physician and social activist from India; Mario Lubetkin, Director of "International Press Service", Uruguay; Ricky Martin, Puerto Rican singer and actor; Antonio Martorell, Puerto Rican plastic artist; Sister Mary Ann McGiven, American peace activist; Jacobo Morales, Puerto Rican filmmaker; Sarah Ozacky-Lazar, Director of the Arab/Israeli Center for Peace, Israel; Silverio Pérez, Puerto Rican comedian; Ernesto Sabato, Argentinian writer; Roberto Savio, founder of "Inter Press Service", Italy; José R. Santori, Puerto Rican sport commentator; Roberto Schawartz, Pakistani economist; Juan A. Vera, Puerto Rican religious leader; Carol Wacey, American political and media analyst; Betty Williams, 1967 Nobel Peace Prize Winner, Ireland; Fernando Picó S. J., Puerto Rican Historian; Danny Rivera, Puerto Rican singer, and Gregory Marín, Vice-President, Soka Gakkai Int.- USA;

*WHEREAS* the participants were also addressed to by the president of the Central American Parliament (PARLACEN), Hon. Rodrigo Samayoa, the President of the Parliamentary Confederation of the Americas (COPA), Hon. Laura Pavón Jaramillo, and the Secretary General of the Latin-American Parliament (PARLATINO), Hon. Jorge Pizarro Soto;

*WHEREAS* these men and women, leaders in the fields of sciences, arts, politics, civil rights, combatants against violence in its different forms, conservationists, in short, all of them humanists, reflected, along with the participating public, on the peace crisis, development and the illusory models that influence us;

*WHEREAS* as a result of the Conference, the “ Puerto Rico Declaration: Connecting the New Humanity”, was approved as a commitment to the most noble ambitions of the human beings gathered from all humanist and religious traditions and which underline the value of life. Among the principles of human coexistence formulated in this declaration, is the overcoming of our indifference toward the human grief, that causes poverty, neglect, malnutrition, social and political inequality, as well as that of opposing military practices that affect the enjoyment of a plentiful life and human rights;

*WHEREAS*, the Parliamentary Confederation of the Americas, by determining that the principles contained in the “Puerto Rico Declaration: Connecting the New Humanity” are consistent with our aspirations in terms of concern for education, hope in justice, devotion for a valiant, hardworking and peaceful life; faithfulness in human life’s values beyond social standings, racial differences and economic interests; and the hope for a better world, adopts this Declaration as policy of the Parliamentary Confederation of the Americas;

IN CONSEQUENCE WHEREOF:

*The General Assembly of the Parliamentary Confederation of the Americas (COPA) hereby agrees to:*

1. *EXPRESS* the adherence of COPA to the principles stated in the “Puerto Rico Declaration: Connecting the New Humanity” and its support to all the efforts leading to the promotion of this Declaration in the member countries of the Confederation;
2. *ADOPT* as guiding system in its deliberations and formulation of public policies and laws, the principles listed and outlined in the “Puerto Rico Declaration: Connecting the New Humanity”, that forms part of this recommendation;
3. *URGE* the governments, parliaments and all the sectors of arts, sciences, religion, education, media, corporations, non-governmental organizations, and the grassroots community organizations in the countries of the Americas to adopt and to abide by the principles outlined in the “Puerto Rico Declaration: Connecting the New Humanity”, and to creatively develop and apply the vision of a sustainable way of life at the community, national, regional and global levels;

4. *URGE* the education system, both private and public, in the countries that form part of COPA, to promote these principles and the text of the "Puerto Rico Declaration: Connecting the New Humanity", among the student population, to strengthen respect for life, equality and social justice, as universal principles to achieve peace.

This Recommendation shall come into effect immediately after its approval.

*Given this day, November 27, 2002, in the city of Ixtapan de la Sal, United Mexican States.*

*Proposed by:*

*Senator Antonio J. Fas Alzamora,  
Vice-president, Caribbean Region  
President of the Senate, Free Associated State of Puerto Rico*



## COMMITTEE ON PEACE AND PUBLIC SECURITY

### **RECOMMENDATION**

*“Support to the people of Puerto Rico in their demand for the US Navy to cease military manoeuvres on Vieques Island.”*

#### **WHEREAS:**

COPA is a permanent and autonomous forum that brings together the Congresses and Parliamentary Assemblies of the Unitary, Federal and Federated, and associated States, the Regional Parliaments and the Interparliamentary Organizations of the Americas;

The close relations of friendship and brotherhood between the peoples of the Americas and Puerto Rico, as well as the shared goals towards full respect and recognition of human rights, especially the inalienable right to life and health of their respective peoples;

The people of Vieques, the society of Puerto Rico and the international community have condemned the military exercises carried out by the Navy of the United States of America, due to their disastrous effect on its environment, health, economy and security, significantly hampering the quality of the life of the island's inhabitants;

The constant violation of human rights on Vieques Island, as a result of the military manoeuvres, has caused confrontations with the loss of human lives;

#### **IN CONSEQUENCE WHEREOF:**

*The General Assembly of the Parliamentary Confederation of the Americas (COPA) hereby agrees to:*

1. **ACCEPT** the recommendation made by the Executive Committee of COPA, through a resolution approved on May 3, 2002, in Mexico City, D. F., United Mexican States, in support of the demand for peace and justice for Vieques, Puerto Rico;
2. **CONDEMN** all practices that, anywhere throughout the world, infringe human rights, especially, the right to life, the right to health, the right to a healthy environment, the right to security and economic well-being;

3. *URGE*, in a respectful manner and with respect towards its sovereignty, the Government of the United States of America to comply with its commitment and the agreement to close down that Naval Base in 2003, and in the meantime, to cease all military exercises on the Island-Municipality of Vieques, Puerto Rico, which are being carried out by the Navy, in flagrant violation of human rights, and whose harmful consequences are being directly suffered by the population of this municipality.

The General Assembly, by virtue of the authority bestowed upon it by the statutes, has declared its solidarity with the population of Vieques and the People of Puerto Rico in their struggle for the ceasing of military exercises in that region and for the restoration of peace and security for this population.

A copy of this Recommendation will be sent to the President of the United States of America, to the Governor of the Free Associated State of Puerto Rico and to the media.

This Recommendation shall come into effect immediately after its approval.

*Given this day, November 27, 2002, in the city of Ixtapan de la Sal, United Mexican States.*

*Proposed by:*

*Senator Antonio J. Fas Alzamora  
Vice-president, COPA, Caribbean Region  
President, Committee on Peace and Public Security  
President of the Senate, Free Associated State of Puerto Rico*



### **III ANNUAL MEETING OF THE NETWORK OF WOMEN PARLIAMENTARIANS OF THE AMERICAS**

**Ixtapan de la Sal, Mexico, November 24, 2002**

#### ***REPORT***

Approximately 50 women parliamentarians from some twenty countries took part in the III Annual Meeting of the Network of Women Parliamentarians of the Americas, on November 24, 2002, in Ixtapan de la Sal, Mexico. During this meeting, the participants:

1. Were given updates on regional activities: each representative on the Executive Committee reported on progress made in her respective region, regional parliamentary assembly or interparliamentary organization regarding legislation concerning women, or any other initiative of interest to the Network. While several participants were pleased with the actual increase in the number of women in positions of power, many of them nevertheless mentioned their concern about the importance of fostering greater participation by women in political life in their countries, particularly through the promotion or adoption of quota legislation.

The members of the Executive Committee in turn described the legislation and measures adopted to foster the advancement of women and to protect their rights. Several examples were given to the Assembly in order to illustrate the initiatives that have been put in place to eliminate violence against women and gender discrimination, sexual tourism exploiting women and children, and the trafficking of persons. Some participants mentioned seminars held in their region or country, analysing the rights of women workers and migration problems, but also the effects of the Free Trade Area of the Americas and its impacts on women. Finally, we also heard about measures and laws that made it possible to influence the development of budgets with a gender focus in certain countries.

2. Were given a report of the Network's activities since the last meeting of the Executive Committee, held in Mexico City in May 2002. The President, Lyse Leduc, spoke of the recommendations adopted at that meeting. Concerning that which denounced the kidnapping of the candidate for the presidency of the Republic of Colombia, Ingrid Bétancourt, on February 23, 2002, who is still being detained, Ms. Leduc informed the members that the National Assembly of Québec has unanimously adopted a motion in the House, denouncing this kidnapping, and brought a copy of the motion to the Colombian Embassy. Ms. Leduc took the opportunity to encourage the members of the Network to have similar motions adopted in their respective assemblies.

A demonstration was given by live projection on-line from the documentary bank, which can now be consulted on the COPA web site under the title Network of Women Parliamentarians at the address [www.copa.qc.ca](http://www.copa.qc.ca). This project from the plan of action put forward by the Executive Committee makes it possible to consult on-line various legislative bills on the status of women. The parliamentarians present were asked to send to the secretariat any texts, documents or legislative bills that could contribute to the improvement of the documentary bank.

Concerning the traineeship project for young women in various parliamentary assemblies, it should be recalled that this program aims to enable female students to familiarize themselves with the legislative processes and to interest them in considering a political career. In view of the problems experienced by the partner organization in following the steps set out in the schedule for implementing the theoretical component of the program, the Executive Committee decided to maintain the traineeship project in a modified form emphasizing the practical component, and to continue the research leading toward the implementation of a theoretical component. This practical traineeship will be implemented by the Assemblies on an independent basis, but the Network will provide models of similar programs in order to facilitate the implementation in other parliaments.

A recommendation was passed unanimously to the effect that the Executive Committee of the Network of Women Parliamentarians of the Americas would take steps to obtain, for the Network, observer status at the Meeting of Women Parliamentarians of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), much like the status that has been granted to COPA.

3. Participated in a thematic workshop on gender-specific budgets given by Ms. Semil Esim, economist at the *International Center for Research on Women*, based in Washington. Ms. Esim is an expert in this area, and has done research in Latin America and developed programs to foster the taking into account of gender-related aspects in budgets in various countries and organizations. She explained how budgets can influence public spending, taking into account its impact on men and women, and illustrated the mechanisms and instruments necessary to bring in such national strategies. The discussion that followed, between many participants and the guest speaker, was chaired by Ms. Ileana Rogel, Representative of the Legislative Assembly of El Salvador.
4. Adopted, following the workshop, a recommendation on gender-specific budgets. The essential part of the recommendation urges the Heads of State and Government of the Americas to measure the scale of the disadvantages to women and of the persistent inequality between the sexes, and to apply the commitments, recommendations and plans of action arising out of international conferences, connected with issues between men and women



The recommendation suggests taking means to set up programs, strategies and initiatives for budgets, as well as to analyse their public policies and budgetary processes, taking into account gender-specific approach allowing women and men to have equal access to opportunities, to property, to resources and to services. In addition, she recommended including in the training of parliamentarians, of parliamentary staff and of committee chairs, not only this approach, but also that of increasing the number of women in these committees.

A request was formulated to the effect that a specific recommendation adopting the same principles be sent to the political parties in order for them to develop their party platforms and make a commitment in their election campaigns to promote and adopt budgets developed according to the gender-specific approach. It would appear that each member of the Network will have to do the follow-up with her respective political party.

5. Took notice of the following proposals:

Ms. Elisa Carca, representative of the Southern Cone, presented the *Buenos Aires Declaration* which was adopted at the regional meeting of the Southern Cone members of the Women's Network on November 4, 2002. By signing this declaration, the parliamentarians present made a commitment to honour their political mandate by defending the poorest sectors of society. The General Assembly of the Women's Network took notice of the Declaration and adopted the conclusion which demands that COPA as well as other institutional organizations of the region take measures that are not mere statements, but real commitments toward the respect of the rights of women and children.

Ms. Nidia Díaz, representative of the Central American Parliament, presented a declaration underlining the Day against violence against women, on November 25. It was proposed that this declaration be presented before the COPA General Assembly the following day, by the President, Ms. Laura Pavón.

Ms. Velda González de Modestti, Vice-President of the Senate of Puerto Rico, also presented a recommendation to denounce the violations of the fundamental rights of women and to show disapproval of the death sentences pronounced against Nigerian women when they are single mothers. This recommendation was presented and supported by the Network.

Ms. Fatima Houda-Pepin, of the Québec Section of the Women's Network presented a recommendation aiming to support Afghan women, and particularly Dr. Sima Samar, former Deputy Prime Minister of the transitional Afghan government, who is currently waging a courageous struggle to fight violence against women in Afghanistan, and who is striving to have a human rights committee created for that purpose. The recommendation was supported by the Network.

A request for the Network of Women Parliamentarians to delegate an official observer to the elections in El Salvador on March 16, 2003, was sent by the political party Frente Farabundo Martí para la Liberación Nacional (FMLN). It was proposed that the Executive Committee be mandated to make a decision concerning this request.

6. Elected by acclamation their new Executive Committee, which is now composed of:

**President:**

Ms. Ileana Rogel, Representative of the Legislative Assembly of El Salvador

**Regional representatives:**

***North America***

Ms. Maria Elena Chapa, Representative of the Mexican Federal Congress

Ms. Deborah Hudson, Representative of the Delaware House of Representatives, United States of America

***Central America***

Ms. Antonieta Botto Handal de Fernández, Representative of the National Congress of Honduras

***Caribbean***

Ms. Velda González de Modesti, Vice-President of the Senate of Puerto Rico

Ms. Ruth Jeanette Wijdenbosch, Vice-President of the National Assembly of Suriname

***Andean Region***

Ms. Iris María Valera Rangel, Representative of the National Assembly of Venezuela

***Southern Cone***

Ms. Elisa Carca, Senator of the Province of Buenos Aires, Argentina

Ms. Araceli Lemos, Representative of the Legislative Assembly of the State of Pará, Brazil

**Interparliamentary organizations and regional parliaments:**

Ms. Adela Muñoz de Liendo, Representative of the Andean Parliament

Ms. Nidia Díaz, Representative of the Central American Parliament

Ms. Andriana Coirini, Representative of the Parliamentary Union of Mercosur

**Ex-President**

Ms. Lyse Leduc (1999-2002), Member of the National Assembly of Québec

It is important to take note that the President of the Network of Women Parliamentarian of the Americas, Ms. Ileana Rogel, holds de facto one of the six vice-presidencies of COPA.

At the meeting of the new Executive Committee which was held November 25, 2002, Ms. Velda González de Modestti, Vice-President of the Senate of Puerto Rico, was elected second representative of the Network of Women Parliamentarians of the Americas on the Executive Committee of COPA.



**III ANNUAL MEETING OF THE  
NETWORK OF WOMEN PARLIAMENTARIANS OF THE AMERICAS**

**Ixtapan de la Sal, Mexico, November 24, 2002**

***RECOMMENDATION CONCERNING GENDER-SPECIFIC BUDGETS***

At its annual meeting on November 24, 2002, in Ixtapan de la Sal, Mexico, the Network of Women Parliamentarians of the Americas,

*NOTING* that the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995 issued a call for gender issues to be taken into consideration in budget decisions and policies;

*NOTING* that women assume nearly all responsibilities relative to reproduction, child rearing, health care, and the family, which are underestimated and underappreciated;

*NOTING* that the failure to recognize the many contributions of women to national development perpetuates discrimination and gender inequality while reinforcing obstacles to the right of women to equal access to economic goods and services; and

*WHEREAS* local and national budgets are tools for determining people's access to goods, resources, and services;

*WHEREAS* budget and resource allocation reflects priority areas for action, and when the said budgets are unable to meet the needs and demands of the poor and of women, this calls into question the true commitment toward achieving objectives and creating programs centered on equality and equity, such as eliminating violence toward women, as well as providing proper services to support the unpaid labor of women and promoting equal opportunities for women in the economy;

*WHEREAS* the establishment of a gender-specific budget can be key to alleviating discrimination and inequality, as well as promoting the more effective use of public resources;

*WHEREAS* gender-specific budgets are one of the tools public authorities can use to act on their commitments toward gender equality and human development;

*WHEREAS* gender-specific budget initiatives are appropriate at a time when more attention is being paid to decentralization, the effective administration of public affairs, and people's right to information;

*WE, the women of parliamentary assemblies of the unitary, federal, federated and associated States, regional parliaments, and interparliamentary organizations of the Americas meeting in Ixtapan de la Sal for the III Annual Meeting of the Network of Women Parliamentarians, agree to:*

*URGE* the Heads of State and Government of the Americas to gauge the extent of disadvantages for women and remaining gender inequality;

*URGE* the Heads of State and Government of the Americas to take the necessary steps to implement the gender-related commitments, recommendations, and action plans stemming from international conferences;

*RECOMMEND* that the training of parliamentarians, parliamentary staff, and committee chairpersons include public policy and budget analysis from a gender standpoint;

*RECOMMEND* that parliaments become aware of the need to account equally for the concerns of men and women in the budget process and in public policy development, such that all parliament and government decisions pay equal attention to the concerns of both genders;

*RECOMMEND* the increase and inclusion of women in committees where budget repartition is decided;

*CALL* for all parliaments and governments of the Americas to establish gender-specific budget programs, strategies, and initiatives to give women and men fair and equal access to opportunities, goods, resources, and services;

*URGE* all parliaments and governments of the Americas to evaluate all their policies and budgets from the standpoint of their discriminatory impact on individuals of both genders and to develop the state budget based on the principle and results of this comparative gender analysis, such that fiscal policy better meets the needs of women.



**III ANNUAL MEETING OF THE  
NETWORK OF WOMEN PARLIAMENTARIANS OF THE AMERICAS**

**Ixtapan de la Sal, Mexico, November 24, 2002**

***RECOMMENDATION ON THE MEETING OF WOMEN  
PARLIAMENTARIANS OF THE INTERPARLIAMENTARY UNION***

*NOTING* that the Interparliamentary Union (IPU) is the world's largest interparliamentary organization; and

*WHEREAS* in 1978, women took the initiative to create within the IPU an informal group of women parliamentarians in order to influence IPU programs and policies;

*WHEREAS* since 1986, women parliamentarians of the IPU have been meeting to decide on strategies for making their views and concerns known at IPU annual conference;

*WHEREAS* in 1999 new provisions were added to the IPU statutes, officially recognizing the Meeting of Women Parliamentarians and its Coordinating Committee;

*WHEREAS* COPA recently obtained observer status with the Interparliamentary Union;

*WHEREAS* the Network of Women Parliamentarians of the Americas and the Meeting of Women Parliamentarians of the IPU share common objectives;

*WE, the women representatives of parliamentary assemblies of the unitary, federal, federated, and associated states, regional parliaments, and interparliamentary organizations of the Americas meeting in Ixtapan de la Sal for the III Annual Meeting of the Network of Women Parliamentarians:*

*AGREE* that the Executive Committee of the Network of Women Parliamentarians of the Americas shall undertake steps to obtain observer status for the Network with the Meeting of Women Parliamentarians of the IPU.



**III ANNUAL MEETING OF THE  
NETWORK OF WOMEN PARLIAMENTARIANS OF THE AMERICAS**

**Ixtapan de la Sal, Mexico, November 24, 2002**

***RECOMMENDATION ON THE RECOGNITION OF  
THE RIGHTS OF AFGHAN WOMEN***

*WHEREAS* the political context in Afghanistan is such that women have suffered for more than two decades under the Taliban regime and continue to suffer under the current regime;

*WHEREAS* Dr. Sima Samar, former Deputy Prime Minister of the transitional Afghan government, is currently waging a courageous struggle to fight violence against women in Afghanistan, and is seeking to have a human rights committee created for that purpose;

*WE, members of the Network of Women Parliamentarians of the Americas:*

*SUPPORT* Dr. Sima Samar and all women Afghan activists, who are risking their lives to work toward the recognition of the rights of Afghan women and toward the establishment of democracy in Afghanistan.



**III ANNUAL MEETING OF THE  
THE NETWORK OF WOMEN PARLIAMENTARIANS OF THE AMERICAS**

**Ixtapan de la Sal, Mexico, November 24, 2002**

***RECOMMENDATION ON THE RIGHTS OF NIGERIAN WOMEN***

To condemn the death sentences by stoning issued against Nigerian women and to demand that the Government and the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria revise the legal structures and the public policies of that country that undermine human rights and deprive Nigerian women of their civil and political rights, and that they abide by the international agreements on human rights and for the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women;

*WHEREAS* all men and women are born free and equal in dignity and rights and, therefore, all governments shall ensure for their constituent members the free enjoyment of human rights and fundamental rights, on the basis of equality of man and woman, and regardless of their civil status or condition;

*WHEREAS* even though Nigeria is one of the signatory countries of the "Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women", in the State of Katsina, Nigeria, the *Sharia Law*, a traditional statute accepted by the Islamic sector called "Wahabi", that permits the imposing of cruel, oppressive and discriminatory sentences against women, is still being applied;

*WHEREAS* in accordance with the *Sharia Law*, on Friday, the 22<sup>nd</sup> of March 2002, a tribunal of the State of Katsina, Nigeria, issued a death sentence by stoning against citizen Amina Lawal, after her having confessed that she had given birth to a baby girl while she was divorced. She was then imposed that sentence, meaning that she would be buried to the neck, for the people to stone her head until she dies;

*WHEREAS* citizens Ahmadu Ibrahim and Fatima Usman have also been victims of this horrendous and repulsive sentence, that is now pending appeal; and Sofiya Hussein, also sentenced to death by stoning, was amazingly spared this year from such a sentence;

*WHEREAS* the *Sharia Law* constitutes a burden that for centuries has violated Nigerian women's human rights and fundamental rights, and although Amina Lawal's sentence was recently suspended, following the strong protests and criticism by the international community, the Government of Nigeria has made no commitment to pressure for a change in the predominantly Muslim States;



*WHEREAS* the Government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria should take urgent positive actions towards the definitive eradication of the punishment by stoning in all the States of that country, as well as the abolition and elimination of all laws, practices, policies, and restrictive measures that deprive Nigerian women of their human, civil and political rights.

IN CONSEQUENCE WHERE OF:

*The Network of Women Parliamentarians of the Americas agrees:*

*FIRST* To categorically condemn death sentences by stoning issued against Nigerian women, as well as all forms of torture, mistreatment, oppression, deprivation or discrimination against women, regardless of where it occurs;

*SECOND* To demand that the Government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria see to it that the legal structures of that country, responsible for limiting Nigerian women's human, civil and political rights are revised, and that all public policies and exclusion or restriction policies based on sex, that annul or obstruct human development and women participation in the political, social and economic activities, be abolished and eradicated;

*THIRD* That a copy of this Resolution, translated into English, will be sent to the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, Hon. Olusegun Obasanjo to each House of the National Assembly; to the Delegate of the Federal Republic of Nigeria to the United Nations; to the leaders of the political parties, Alliance for Democracy (AD), Aljajii Adamu Abdulkadir and People's Democratic Party (PDP), Audu Ogbeh; to the Secretariat of Amnesty International; and to the international press for its general release.

*At the Annual Meeting of the Network of Women Parliamentarians of the Americas, that took place in Ixtapan de la Sal, Mexico, 24<sup>th</sup> of November 2002.*

*Velda González de Modestti  
Vice-president of Senate of the Free Associated State of Puerto Rico*



**III ANNUAL MEETING OF THE  
NETWORK OF WOMEN PARLIAMENTARIANS OF THE AMERICAS**

**Ixtapan de la Sal, Mexico, November 24, 2002**

***DECLARATION ON THE WOMEN NON-VIOLENCE DAY***

The Network of Women Parliamentarians of the Americas, on November 25, 2002, International Women Non-Violence Day, hereby declares:

1. Its firm decision to continue struggling against all forms of discrimination and violence toward women anywhere worldwide;
2. The need to ensure and grant women legal security, while working fervently to enforce the constitutional precepts, treaties, agreements and laws currently in force, that look after, protect and promote women's human rights and seek gender equity, as well as to promote laws to prevent, penalize and eradicate violence against women;
3. Solidarity with all women who suffer or are being victims of violence, while waiting for the silence to break.

*Declaration read at the General Assembly of COPA  
Ixtapan de la Sal, November 25, 2002*

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## ***BUENOS AIRES DECLARATION***

### **ADOPTED DURING THE SOUTHERN CONE PREPARATORY MEETING FOR THE III ANNUAL MEETING OF THE NETWORK OF WOMEN PARLIAMENTARIANS OF THE AMERICAS**

During the last two decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the countries of the Southern Cone were characterized by a common particularity: the restoration of Democracy.

Following the long-lasting dictatorships that brought disastrous consequences on human rights, we have recovered a system of government that should ensure the defense of these rights, as well as of the region's economic and social wealth.

But the restored democracy, with different nuances in each country, has not been able to prevent the most negative effects caused by globalization, that has been economically beneficial for the first-world countries, that take advantage of the weakness of our incipient system to put their own interests before those of others.

Within this context, we have increased our foreign debt, our technological dependence, and we have therefore weakened those hopes built up by the people who believed that democracy would open the gates to the enjoyment of the universal rights to education, work, health, housing, etc. These hopes have been betrayed, to the extent of jeopardizing the legitimately elected representatives and institutions.

The world's democratic powers can successfully implement for their inhabitants fair wealth-sharing policies with strong social content. But, to the contrary, these same countries impose on us drastic social adjustments and dangerously contribute to the system's loss of prestige, and have besides become accomplices to authoritarian attitudes that, sooner or later, jeopardize the free expression of citizens through coups d'État and/or by supporting corrupted regimes.

We, as women, have become politically militant in large scale towards democracy, from within the political parties or other institutions with strong social content, that defend human rights in general and women's rights in particular.

We are appalled by the way how the quality of life of our people has been worsening day by day, and how the hopes of a better future for every citizen, but especially for women, are being threatened. This is added to the fact that women are lending their shoulders to bear the obligations that the State once bore for a long time and should continue to bear. Such obligations should not be left out under the pretext that more and more adjustments are needed to be carried out, because this situation will surely affect the most dispossessed.

Considering the danger that democratic institutions may be weakened, we, the women parliamentarians from the Southern Cone, feel that we have the obligation to honour the obligations that we were elected for, to defend the system by granting it the necessary tools to ensure that the weakest, the most marginalized and voiceless members of society be granted their rights, so that their interests are taken into account when the legislation is being made, by putting ourselves in the place of each and everyone of them.

Putting ourselves in the place of each woman is a way of recognizing her right to reproductive health care, her right to education, her right to work and decent housing, her right to food provision for herself and for her children, her right to live free from sexual and family violence, her right to the consumption of drinking water and the cultivation of the land, and in conclusion, her right to a decent life.

Therefore, we, the women parliamentarians and the representatives of parliamentary organizations and NGOs from Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Paraguay and Uruguay, met in Buenos Aires within the framework of the Meeting of the Parliamentary Confederation of the Americas (COPA), reaffirm the following statement:

That stable democracy in our countries is not and will not be in full effect unless women have access to power at all State levels, i.e., the Executive, the Legislative, and the Judicial Powers by means of "positive actions" to rectify thousands of years of patriarchal culture. Likewise, no full effect will be given to human rights unless all women's fundamental human rights are duly recognized, as stipulated in the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women.

That economic policies, commercial treaties, and labour and migration policies should respect the self-determination of the people, without impositions that hinder economic and human development; that all integration policy should take into account specific public policies for women through the implementation of macroeconomic measures that involve the gender perspective, as well as the rectification of the labour conditions that do not recognize for women the same conditions, equal and fair remuneration as those accorded to men.

That we should respect the different forms of the cultural expressions deeply rooted in our territories, as long as those cultures do not violate the rights of women and children; that education should involve new curricular approaches to rectify the discriminatory stereotypes, such as the fact that the development of science and technology cannot be based on the lack of recognition of women's interests.

We demand the implementation of public policies accompanied by the respective budget allocations to carry out sexual and reproductive health programs, in order to prevent the increase in maternal mortality rate, clandestine abortion, teenage pregnancy, increase in sexually transmitted diseases and HIV, and to eradicate complicity with all types of corporations that threaten these policies.

That we also demand the implementation of public policies to improve the quality of life of women within the framework of social development to ensure their having access to decent housing, their having the role as housewife valued as a contribution to the GDP, access to retirement, all this being a social response to their needs towards alternatives for their personal development independently of their role as mother and wife.

That due to the permanent pollution of water, the indiscriminate predatory fishing in our waters by foreign powers, the uncontrolled soil exploitation, deforestation, etc., we demand that the governments assume their responsibility for defending the rights of the people whose quality of life is being diminished on a daily basis in benefit of local and foreign corporations that take our Continent as a raw material "provision ground", exhausting our food and energy reserves, and especially, our human resources reserves.

That peace amongst the peoples is fundamental to the economic development of the region, as well as to the security of its inhabitants, but peace does not exist and will not exist unless women from our region enjoy peace and security, unless there is a halt to their suffering from gender violence, regardless of race, education, economic, religious, and social distinction.

This vulnerability gets deeper and deeper due to the economic and social crisis in the region, and women become more exposed to sexual and domestic violence, sexual harassment at work, traffic in women and young girls/boys for sexual exploitation through prostitution and/or pornography, and any other class of violence that hinders their integral personal development.

On the basis of the above statement, we demand that both the COPA as well as other regional institutional authorities take tangible measures and not only make mere statements in favour of Women's Human Rights and Children's Rights.

BUENOS AIRES, November 4, 2002

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