



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 the 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, human rights and international law, with the aim of not only legislating in function of 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.