



## 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 Resolution 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*