



COMMITTEE ON DEMOCRACY AND PEACE OF THE PARLIAMENTARY CONFEDERATION OF THE AMERICAS (COPA)

**6th COPA General Assembly
Foz do Iguaçu, Brazil, May 10, 2005**

Committee Meeting Minutes

Some forty parliamentarians took part in this third meeting of the Committee on Democracy and Peace presided by Mr. Cabello Gil, deputy of the Union Congress of the United Mexican States.

Two speakers were invited to this work session. Their presentations were followed by speeches by a number of participants, then discussion leading to the adoption of a final recommendation.

First, Ms. **Lúcia Fronza Crepez of the Political Movement for Unity** discussed the relationship between democracy and peace, emphasizing what must be done to build a peaceful international system.

In her view, peace is the result of a long political process that presupposes group action based on the principle of fellowship.

A prerequisite to peace is the establishment of fair and equitable relations between countries. To this end, international law must be overhauled. She proposes three ways of promoting solidarity between peoples:

- By strengthening international organizations with a universal mission, primarily those in the United Nations system
- By democratizing international financial organizations such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund
- By redefining peace so it is not limited to the absence of war, as peace is not possible in situations where minority rights are not respected or hunger is endemic

Mr. **Luís Antonio Bitencourt of the Woodrow Wilson International Center** spoke about the reciprocal reinforcement of peace, integration, and democratization processes. He underscored the often unpredictable positive effects these processes can have on each other, citing as examples the creation of the European Union, German reunification, and the establishment of Mercosur.

He then shared his experiences in countries where democracy was instituted in difficult conditions, such as East Timor and Tadjikistan. In this respect, he stressed the importance of parliamentarians, who play a key role in shaping a given democratic system.

In conclusion, he emphasized the need to continue discussion on integration.

A number of participating parliamentarians then gave short talks:

- Bolivian deputy Marleny Paredes presented a declaration on the political situation in her country, stressing the role of the Aymara and Quechua peoples.
- Mr. Landázuri, deputy of the National Congress of Ecuador and first vice president of COPA, presented an analysis of the political situation in Ecuador, detailing the conditions necessary for strengthening democracy, i.e., citizen participation, economic growth, and the redistribution of wealth, particularly through public education. He explained the fall of President Gutierrez due to his inability to follow through on campaign promises and unconstitutional attempt to modify the composition of the Supreme Court.
- Mr. Ivan Valente, deputy of the Federal Congress of Brazil, submitted a parliamentary petition to attendees calling for their participation in managing the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, a proposal that reflected the first speaker's concerns.
- A guest Italian senator also agreed with the first speaker and reported on efforts to establish friendly relations between parliamentarians of various Italian and world political parties.
- Brazilian deputy Nilson Mourão then presented a historic analysis of the development of democracy. In his view, the emergence of a unipolar world dominated by neoliberalism is a threat to democracy. In response, he suggests returning to the basic concept of democracy—public participation. He also suggests promoting the emergence of a multipolar world where Europe would play a key role.
- Mr. Valente took the floor again to reaffirm that democracy is not solely dependent on political institutions and that social inequalities and substantial foreign debt are preventing governments from reinvesting in education and health, thereby creating an obstacle to democracy. He then contended that democracy cannot work properly if economic powers influence political life through the media or political party financing.

A discussion period then followed to rework the committee recommendation into a text reflecting a consensus viewpoint.