



## **Parliamentary Confederation of the Americas Motion for a Resolution by the Committee on Democracy and Peace**

*May 10, 2005*

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At a regular meeting at the 6th General Assembly in Foz do Iguaçu, Brazil, the Committee on Democracy and Peace of the Parliamentary Confederation of the Americas (COPA) agreed to put forward this resolution, taking into account the following considerations:

### **WHEREAS**

1. Most of our countries are fairly young democracies with a deep legacy of authoritarianism that makes them vulnerable to overthrow and a return to the past;
2. The countries in our hemisphere continue to fight to introduce or strengthen the workings of democracy, and in the process must overcome very different and complex obstacles in terms of stability and the ability to govern;
3. The move to democracy has at times been hindered by conflicts, instability, and setbacks, all of which seriously compromise its full achievement;
4. In order for justice—a fundamental element of any democratic system—to be properly administered, the institutions of justice must be improved and strengthened;

5. Lack of respect for minorities has resulted in serious internal problems in each of our countries, which are lacking in the institutions, laws, and mechanisms required to solve them;
6. In the majority of our countries, there exists an enormous democratic deficit that is particularly manifest in the flagrant inequalities observed among our populations, which, unfortunately, continue to worsen;
7. It is therefore of utmost importance to develop and promote appropriate new mechanisms for fostering greater public participation in order to ensure that citizens can play a more decisive role in the social and political life of our countries;
8. Political corruption, far from being eradicated or diminished, is taking on new forms that must be fought head-on by society, governments, and regional parliaments alike;

Therefore,

### **IT IS RESOLVED TO**

1. Consider it the duty of all holders of public office to **promote** legal system reform in our respective countries in a manner that promotes democratic practices, including the universality and secrecy of the vote, national and international electoral monitoring, and the appointment of citizen election officials and independent electoral tribunals;
2. Encourage countries of our hemisphere, through parliamentary groups like COPA, other subregional organizations, and electoral observation missions, to take necessary responsibility for **deciding upon** an appropriate support process that would allow them to take solidary action in crisis situations where human rights are threatened;
3. **Promote** required reforms to the legal systems in our respective countries by fostering the independence of the institutions responsible for administering justice and upholding the independence of the judicial branch;

4. **Advocate** changes to our legal systems to ensure that minorities have sufficient opportunity to play a role and prosper in all areas of human activity, including work, economic, social, political, cultural, and sports pursuits;
5. Act urgently and without fail to **introduce** and **promote** measures to reduce the flagrant economic inequalities in which the majority of our countries' populations live by fostering the creation of wealth from a highly human perspective and guaranteeing state intervention where the simple play of market forces is insufficient to resolve or even promote solutions to situations of injustice;
6. **Incorporate** citizen participation processes into our national laws (participatory budgets, referendums, plebiscites, public initiatives) so that the citizens of our countries can play a greater and more useful role in public affairs;
7. **Strengthen** measures, legal provisions, and institutions to fight corruption, influence-peddling, impunity, and the lack of transparency of our governments so that we can put an end to the wrongs being inflicted upon our peoples.

*Drafted in 2005 in the city of Foz do Iguaçu*