



**PERMANENT COPA COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION,
CULTURE, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY**

RECOMMENDATION

**Foz do Iguaçu, Brazil
May 10, 2005**

WHEREAS the heads of state and government of the Americas, at the conclusion of the Québec Summit in 2001, declared that they considered cultural diversity to be a source of great wealth for our societies and that respect for and value of this diversity must be a cohesive factor that strengthens the social fabric and development of our nations;

WHEREAS the Declaration of Cartagena de Indias, the product of the First Inter-American Meeting of Ministers of Culture and Highest Appropriate Authorities in July 2002, recognized the need for greater inter-American cooperation to maximize the benefits of globalization and mitigate its negative effects on the preservation and promotion of cultural diversity in the Americas, and proposed the creation of an Inter-American Committee on Culture and an Inter-American Cultural Policy Observatory;

WHEREAS the Inter-American Committee on Culture, whose goal is to coordinate the implementation of inter-American ministerial dialogue on matters of culture and fulfill the mandates of the Summit of the Americas and inter-American meetings of ministers of culture and highest appropriate authorities, held its first meeting in Mexico in September 2003;

WHEREAS the heads of state and government of the Americas reasserted at the conclusion of the Special Summit in Monterrey in 2004 that the cultural diversity that characterizes the Americas greatly enriches our societies and that the cultural development and social cohesion of our countries are enhanced through respect for and appreciation of our cultural diversity;

WHEREAS the Declaration of Mexico, the product of the Second Inter-American Meeting of Ministers of Culture and Highest Appropriate Authorities in August 2004, commended UNESCO's efforts in support of cultural diversity, notably the Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity and the resolution adopted unanimously at UNESCO's 32nd General Conference to draw up a preliminary draft of an international convention on the protection of cultural diversity, and that the ministers have undertaken to foster dialog in this regard;

WHEREAS cultural goods and services play an essential role in the identity and plurality of a society and the wellbeing of its members;

WHEREAS bilateral inter-American agreements have been negotiated and signed since FTAA negotiations have slowed down and the 5th Ministerial Conference of the World Trade Organization (WTO) in Cancún ended in failure, and these agreements compromise the ability of states to adopt measures to support their cultural policies and national cultural industries;

WHEREAS bilateral inter-American agreements have been negotiated and signed since FTAA negotiations geared down and the 5th Ministerial Conference of the World Trade Organization (WTO) in Cancún ended in failure, and these agreements compromise the ability of states to adopt measures to support their cultural policies and national cultural industries;

WHEREAS including exemption clauses for the cultural sector in certain trade agreements remains a valid “defense” strategy but is not enough to support the principles of respect and preservation of cultural diversity;

WE, the representatives of the congresses and parliamentary assemblies of unitary, federal, federated, and associated states, regional parliaments, and interparliamentary organizations, gathered in Foz do Iguaçu, Brazil, for the Sixth General Assembly of the Parliamentary Confederation of the Americas:

REITERATE that cultural diversity is a source of great wealth for our societies and that respect for and value of this diversity contribute to social cohesion and the development of our nations;

REASSERT the right of states and governments to maintain, establish, and develop culture and cultural diversity support policies, in respect of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Pact on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, and in a spirit of openness to other cultures around the world;

INVITE the heads of state and government of the Americas to promote initiatives that foster cultural exchange between all their peoples with respect for their individual identities;

URGE the heads of state and government of the Americas to abstain under the current conditions from all World Trade Organization (WTO) commitments to liberalize cultural goods and services in order to avoid compromising cultural diversity promotion and support instruments;

URGE the heads of state and government of the Americas once again to abstain from trade liberalization agreements affecting culture in negotiations for the Free Trade Area of the Americas;

APPLAUD the United Nations’ (UN) initiative to declare May 21 the “World Day for Cultural Diversity for Dialog and Development”;

UNDERTAKE to participate in the activities of inter-American cultural institutions, namely the Inter-American Committee on Culture and the Inter-American Cultural Policy Observatory;

UNDERTAKE to ensure that the commitments made at inter-American meetings on culture and education have tangible results and that all initiatives by inter-American government bodies respect the state's prerogative to legislate in the fields of culture and education;

ASK the COPA president to forward this recommendation to UNESCO and all national and international organizations involved or interested in the issue of cultural diversity.

Éric R. Mercier

Member of the Quebec National Assembly for Charlesbourg
Chair of the Parliamentary Confederation of the Americas (COPA)
Permanent Working Committee on Education, Culture, Science and Technology