



**PARLIAMENTARY CONFEDERATION OF THE AMERICAS
6TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY
Foz do Iguaçu – Brazil
May 6 to 11, 2005**

Final Declaration of Foz de Iguaçu

WHEREAS the liberalization and greater fluidity of global financial markets over the past years have caused a deterioration of the living conditions in a number of countries and, in certain economies, the concentration of wealth as well as inequality and social exclusion;

WHEREAS the current global economy provokes migratory movement due to people's desire to find a place where they can be integrated and included in social and economic development, and for many people finding a job in another country is the only hope to achieve decent living conditions;

WHEREAS migrations are currently transforming the global labor market, and economic immigration over the past decade has been four times higher than the global population growth rate, reaching a total of 175 million economic migrants;

WHEREAS migratory movement can make a positive contribution to the future of humanity and economic and social development by allowing countries with a labor surplus and low productivity rates to enter into partnerships with countries with higher productivity rates but smaller populations;

WHEREAS international migration highlights the importance of rethinking the world based not on economic competitiveness or closed borders, but rather universal citizenship, solidarity, and humanitarianism;

WHEREAS the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families, adopted by the UN in 1990, protects the fundamental rights of migrant workers and members of their families living abroad, regardless their legal status;

WHEREAS education is a decisive factor in socioeconomic development by increasing worker productivity and improving their ability to enter the labor market;

WHEREAS for societies with high rates of poverty and an unequal distribution of income, access to quality education is vital to improving living conditions, and the most effective way to fairly redistribute wealth is to guarantee ongoing investment in public education;

WHEREAS the parliamentary electoral observation missions conducted in the Americas are necessary and constitute a fundamental mechanism for preserving and advancing democracy in the hemisphere and effectively enshrining and protecting human rights;

WHEREAS the monitoring and analysis of elections in the Americas are crucial to improving and safeguarding national electoral systems and improving the effectiveness of international rule of law, and aim to protect the integrity and legitimacy of elections in the Americas;

WHEREAS guaranteeing universal suffrage constitutes a social and political insertion mechanism necessary to strengthen democracy in the Americas, and the equal and fair participation of citizens must be protected from any abuse of economic or political power;

WHEREAS the participation of the parliamentary assemblies of all state bodies in the Americas is necessary and fundamental in order for the citizens of the Americas to express their aspirations;

WHEREAS at the international level many states and governments are calling for a convention clearly centered on protecting the diversity of cultural content and artistic expression;

WHEREAS the heads of state and governments of the Americas reasserted at the end 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 and appreciation for our cultural diversity;

WHEREAS bilateral inter-American agreements have been formalized since negotiations for the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) hit an impasse 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 a large portion of the population of the Americas is of African descent, and that the majority of persons of African descent live in poverty as well as social and political exclusion, notably women and children;

WHEREAS the Forum of Black Parliamentarians, which met at the 6th COPA General Assembly, opened a valuable channel for visibility, discussion, and exchange on the situation of people of African descent;

WHEREAS the consolidation of a universal justice system that complements national systems represents an ideal, and the International Criminal Tribunal (ICT) plays a role in indicting people responsible for serious crimes against international peace and security;

WHEREAS COPA adopted resolutions on Haiti in March 2004 in Brasilia and September 2004 in San Juan, Puerto Rico, and that the social, political, and economic situation has evolved since the approval of the report presented in Havana, Cuba, on March 5, 2005, by the delegation that visited Haiti from November 12 to 15, 2004, in a good offices mission;

WE, the 203 parliamentarians and representatives of the parliamentary assemblies of the unitary, federated, and associated states of 25 countries of the Americas, gathered in Foz do Iguaçu, Brazil:

REQUEST that the countries of the Americas draft a comprehensive agreement on migration policies in order to fully respect the rights of migrants, particularly women and children;

REASSERT that human rights apply to migrants and must be respected at all times, in all circumstances, and in all places, and that these rights are inalienable before, during, and even after their emigration or return home;

URGE countries to make human values and rights, the free movement of people for residency and work, and individual and social rights priorities in trade and economic agreements;

REQUEST that countries develop policies and laws that meet the needs of displaced persons;

REQUEST that countries that have not yet done so ratify or comply with the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and the Members of their Families, adopted in 1990;

REQUEST that the COPA Committee on Human Rights, Aboriginal Peoples, and Citizen Security examine all possible means of eradicating the social evil of child pornography and report its findings to the General Assembly;

SUPPORT the Ministerial Declaration of Miami in its entirety, which redefines negotiation criteria for the creation of the Free Trade Area of the Americas;

UNDERTAKE to play a more active role in the debate on the current and future situation of people of African descent, notably by recommending the integration of parliamentarians and experts of African descent in COPA assemblies and other bodies and directing the Executive Committee to consider all appropriate means of achieving this objective;

URGE the parliaments in the region to approve laws that contribute to the promotion of racial equality;

UNDERTAKE to raise awareness among national statistics organizations of the importance of including questions on ethnic or racial origin in censuses, annual reports, and quality-of-life studies;

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

URGE the heads of state and government of the Americas to recognize that, under current conditions, the preservation of cultural diversity requires abstaining from all commitments at the World Trade Organization (WTO) and for the Free Trade Area of the Americas on the liberalization of cultural goods and services to avoid compromising cultural diversity promotion and support instruments;

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

ENCOURAGE governments that have not already done so to comply with and ratify the ICT Rome Statutes and also urge parliaments to make the necessary changes to their national legislation to promote avenues of cooperation with this international penal justice organization;

CONDEMN vehemently all acts of violence of any kind and for any reason that threaten the human rights and safety of the Haitian population and recommend wide-scale national dialogue that is open, frank, democratic, and transparent to develop a peaceful, sustainable solution to the crisis, and urge national governments and parliaments to help strengthen democracy and promote full political stabilization and socioeconomic recovery in Haiti;

CALL ON the governments working at the UN to find a solution to the Haitian crisis to make the necessary financial resources available to rebuild the country in order to provide the material conditions needed to prevent unemployment, hunger, misery, and the lack of adequate infrastructures from impeding the development of a democratic process that will resolve the political crisis in Haiti;

REITERATE the importance of asserting the vitality of the four official languages of COPA and their special contribution to enriching and promoting cultural diversity in the Americas;

RECOMMEND that hemispheric interparliamentary dialogue take place at a single organization, and as such bring the Inter-Parliamentary Forum of the Americas (IPFA) and the Parliamentary Confederation of the Americas (COPA) closer, and direct the Executive Committee to consider all appropriate means of achieving this objective;

DIRECT the COPA president to forward a copy of this resolution to the congresses and parliamentary assemblies of the Americas, as well as all international organizations involved or interested, to ensure the resolution is taken into account and provided the appropriate followup.

Foz do Iguaçu, May 11, 2005