



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

COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

**Quito, Ecuador
June 1, 2006**

At this fourth working session of the Committee on Democracy and Peace of COPA, which brought together some twenty parliamentarians of the Americas, the chairman of the Committee, Mr. Éric R. Mercier, Member of the National Assembly of Québec, commenced proceedings by inviting the participants to introduce themselves and subsequently proceeded with the adoption of the meeting's agenda.

In compliance with the strategic plan for 2005-2006 that was adopted by the Executive Committee of COPA in August 2005, the Committee on Democracy and Peace took the initiative to conduct a monitoring of the political crisis situations in the Americas. The vice-president of the Committee, Ms. Maria Elena D'Andrea, Member of the Chamber of Deputies of the province of San Luis, was invited to present her report on the political situation prevailing in Bolivia, Ecuador and Haiti.

The presentation of this report aimed to contribute to the committee's discussions and to help the parliamentarians in determining their position with regard to questions relating to the strengthening and promotion of democracy and the Rule of Law.

The address delivered by Ms. D'Andrea was followed by a discussion period and by the presentation and adoption of a draft recommendation on Haiti in which the COPA parliamentarians congratulate the Haitian people for the seriousness and sense of civic duty they showed in the course of the 2006 elections and urge the international community, with the new government, to work towards developing a long-term plan for the economic, social and political development of the country as well as for the strengthening of government institutions.

Subsequently, the chairman of the Committee invited Mr. Simon Pachano, professor at the Latin-American Faculty of Social Sciences (FLACSO), to speak about current electoral processes in the Americas, and more specifically in the Andean region. Mr. Pachano identified six problems that could interfere with the consolidation of democracy in this region: 1) the rise of authoritarian populism; 2) the increase in citizen insecurity; 3) corruption; 4) drug trafficking; 5) the increase in legal insecurity; and 6) the emergence of new citizen demands.

At the request of the Executive Committee of COPA, participants were then invited to discuss a draft resolution, submitted by the Venezuelan delegation, concerning "the necessity to strengthen standards that aim to ensure the coexistence of the States of the Americas on the basis of the principles set out in the COPA statutes". The time allotted for this debate having elapsed without the participants reaching consensus on the draft resolution, the chairman of the committee referred the document to a select committee that was able to produce wording that was acceptable to all.

The chairman of the Committee presented the main conclusions and recommendations of the COPA electoral observation mission that took place during the anticipated general elections in Bolivia in December 2005. On the same occasion, Mr. Mercier tabled the "COPA Electoral Observers' Guide" prepared by the Secretariat of the committee in collaboration with the Chief Electoral Officer of Québec. This guide, which complies with the "Regulation on the COPA Electoral Observation Missions", will henceforth be given to all COPA mission members to provide them with the proper tools and prepare them as adequately as possible for the role of electoral observer. The chairman of the Committee also invited the parliamentarians to take part in large numbers in the two subsequent electoral observation missions that will be organized in 2006, namely in Mexico (July 2, 2006) and in Nicaragua (November 5, 2006).

Lastly, Ms. Francine Barry, assistant to the Chief Electoral Officer of Québec and expert on electoral matters, was invited to chair a workshop on the preparation and conduct of an electoral observation mission. Ms. Barry provided the parliamentarians in attendance with pertinent and useful tools in anticipation of future COPA electoral observation missions.