



**PARLIAMENTARY CONFEDERATION OF THE AMERICAS  
7<sup>TH</sup> GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
QUITO, ECUADOR, MAY 29 TO JUNE 2, 2006**

**“QUITO DECLARATION”**

Gathered for the 7<sup>th</sup> General Assembly of the Parliamentary Confederation of the Americas (COPA) in Quito, Ecuador, from May 29 to June 2, 2006, to share points of view and discuss common topics of interest relating to trade agreements and development in the Americas, we, the parliamentarians of the Americas, reaffirm the importance of this forum of political dialog as a valuable tool for building consensus and developing joint strategies so that our peoples can more easily manage the problems and tackle the challenges we share.

This is why, after having analyzed together the commercial free trade agreement talks currently underway as well as the new integration scenarios we have contemplated for a number of years, we have decided to present the following declaration, taking into account the considerations as follows:

**WHEREAS**

**WHEREAS** the Parliamentary Confederation of the Americas (COPA) has evolved into a vital forum of political cooperation in our hemisphere by providing legislative bodies with effective means of mutual communication;

**WHEREAS** COPA's strategic goal is to promote further collaboration with other parliamentary organizations in the Americas for greater cooperation and coordination and to develop our legislative and political strategies for reviewing various elements of our hemispheric program and cementing the role of legislative power in order to strengthen democracy and pursue the goal of integration;

**WHEREAS** we are aware that negotiations to create a Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) have been interrupted and our governments have adopted new strategies for intercontinental integration, which create both opportunities and risks that our Confederation must closely examine;

**WHEREAS**, in the talks between executive authorities regarding free trade and integration agreements, it is crucial that a leading role be played by the parliaments of unitary, federal, federated, and associated states, by regional parliaments, and by interparliamentary organizations in which the people's representation is vested;

**WHEREAS** concrete intervention and involvement by all parliamentary bodies of the hemisphere are key to promoting the aspirations of the citizens we represent;

**WHEREAS** citizen participation in the integration process is crucial in order to legitimize and strengthen democratic institutions and work to reduce the very high levels of poverty;

**WHEREAS** we must work towards developing community-based integration projects to be able to effectively deal with the various crises brought to our attention and, in so doing, help guarantee equity between our peoples and make the weakest economies less vulnerable;

**WHEREAS** we must support the integration processes currently underway in the Americas in order to ensure the harmonious development of a foreign policy that stresses respect for differences and solidarity in the pursuit of our shared interests;

**WHEREAS** globalization or interdependence has underscored the need to strengthen integration blocs and thereby better equip them to confront the effects of market liberalization;

**WHEREAS** trade agreement talks raise issues regarding the safeguarding of the cultural identity of peoples, which our leaders must protect;

**WHEREAS** central to the debate over trade agreements is the whole issue of the type of development our countries wish to pursue, and that this issue must always be looked at from the perspective of equity and social justice for the people we represent;

**WHEREAS** environmental protection must precede all development models in order to ensure sustainable development;

**WHEREAS** we acknowledge the importance of establishing thoroughgoing public youth policies in order to provide our youth with efficient and fair access to the labor market;

**WHEREAS** increasing investment in education is the most effective way to improve living conditions and bring about an equal society concerned about the fair distribution of wealth;

**WHEREAS** cultural diversity is one of the greatest riches of the Americas and its recognition and development strongly contribute to social cohesion and the advancement of our nations;

**WHEREAS** Haiti has demonstrated a real commitment to bolstering its democratic institutions, which must be strengthened to guarantee the country's harmonious economic, political, social, and cultural development;

**WHEREAS** it is essential to promote the adoption of all measures necessary to eliminate human trafficking, which is a grave affront to human dignity;

**WHEREAS** the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and its Optional Protocol are essential instruments in promoting equality between women and men;

**WHEREAS** important recommendations were formulated in April 2006 at the 13<sup>th</sup> Latin American Congress of Sexology and Sexual Education;

***We, the parliamentary members of the Parliamentary Confederation of the Americas (COPA), gathered in Quito, Ecuador, after having deliberated on diverse issues of concern to all parliaments of the hemisphere:***

## DECLARATION

### ARTICLE 1

**UNDERTAKE** to closely study the new objectives established by COPA, taking into account the new integration strategies in place in the Americas;

### ARTICLE 2

**REAFFIRM** our conviction that the success of integration processes depends, among other things, on strengthening community-based integration projects, which are the sole means by which we can take a common stance and thereby safeguard our shared interests;

### ARTICLE 3

**ASK** our respective governments to take the appropriate social measures to ensure the most vulnerable segments of society truly have the means to successfully meet the challenges posed by globalization;

### ARTICLE 4

**REITERATE** our support for fair talks that take a community-based approach to international integration so as to ensure respect for the autonomy of all parties and facilitate the signing of flexible agreements that reflect the principles of solidarity, cooperation, and complementarity, with the aim of correcting asymmetries;

### ARTICLE 5

**ACKNOWLEDGE** the right to self-determination of all peoples and to noninterference and nonintervention in a state's internal affairs;

### ARTICLE 6

**STRESS** the need to develop and implement support programs for the production sectors that will be affected by the coming into force of trade agreements or treaties;

### ARTICLE 7

**CALL ON** the trade authorities of countries that subsidize their agricultural sectors to reconsider their position on these generous subsidies, which hinder the interests of Latin American producers;

### ARTICLE 8

**BELIEVE** it is crucial to develop and implement programs aimed at modernizing industry and attracting investment in order to help the production sector compete successfully in a broader economic context;

#### **ARTICLE 9**

**STRESS** the need to ensure the integration process is not seen from an economic standpoint only given that the process must acknowledge the need to break with production and consumption models that harm the environment and the development of small and medium-size businesses;

#### **ARTICLE 10**

**UNDERTAKE** to carefully study the models of development in place in our states to ensure that the environment is the only approach used to ensure sustainable development for our peoples;

#### **ARTICLE 11**

**REAFFIRM** the importance that all governments in the hemisphere support the Kyoto Protocol;

#### **ARTICLE 12**

**URGE** the leaders of our respective countries' parliaments to provide the resources needed to ensure healthcare and education systems work properly, while preventing international trade regulations from limiting the ability of states to provide the best public health services possible in these sectors and ensuring the effective labor force integration of youth;

#### **ARTICLE 13**

**BELIEVE** our countries will not truly be integrated as long as we do not take the mitigating steps necessary to remedy existing asymmetries;

#### **ARTICLE 14**

**AFFIRM** that it is necessary for each country to adopt public security policies that stress large-scale international cooperation in order to spur institutional development and fight criminality more effectively;

#### **ARTICLE 15**

**INVITE** the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to strengthen international human rights protection in order to guarantee recognition as refugees for victims of this scourge in the Americas;

#### **ARTICLE 16**

**UNDERTAKE** to ensure that our respective parliaments ratify the Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions, adopted by UNESCO in October 2005, as soon as possible;

#### **ARTICLE 17**

**ACKNOWLEDGE** the efforts made in Haiti to strengthen its democratic institutions and call on political authorities in this country and the international community to establish a true national dialog between the various factions of Haitian society to resolve conflicts and eradicate the violence afflicting the Haitian people;

#### **ARTICLE 18**

**ENCOURAGE** the Andean Parliament to continue promoting dialog and cooperation in support of the Andean regional integration process;

#### **ARTICLE 19**

**REAFFIRM** the importance of taking the steps necessary to strengthen COPA, including the signing of cooperation agreements with other regional and subregional interparliamentary organizations, the active participation of all parliaments in the Americas, and the dissemination in our respective states of COPA's successes in achieving its objectives and work in promoting hemispheric cohabitation;

#### **ARTICLE 20**

**REITERATE** the need to promote official dialog with the Interparliamentary Forum of the Americas (FIPA) with a view to creating a single organization in the Americas responsible for interparliamentary dialog and **WILL ATTEND** the meeting taking place on July 12 in Bogotá between the two organizations' steering committees, which will be an excellent opportunity to progress on these matters;

#### **ARTICLE 21**

**WELCOME** the recommendations and resolutions of the Network of Women Parliamentarians of the Americas meeting in Quito at this 7<sup>th</sup> COPA General Assembly;

#### **ARTICLE 22**

**UNDERTAKE** to incorporate into our countries' legislation severe punishments for the abominable crimes of human trafficking and human organ and tissue harvesting for commercial gain;

#### **ARTICLE 23**

**UNDERTAKE** to take every appropriate action to support the implementation of recommendations in the *Bahia Declaration*;

#### **ARTICLE 24**

**ASSIGN** COPA's president the task of forwarding a copy of this resolution to the congresses and parliamentary assemblies of the Americas and to any relevant or interested international organization so that this final declaration can be taken into consideration and win the support it deserves.

**Adopted in Quito, Ecuador, on June 2, 2006**