



**PARLIAMENTARY CONFEDERATION OF THE AMERICAS
11TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY
Québec City, Canada
September 6-9, 2011**

Québec Declaration

We, the members of the Parliamentary Confederation of the Americas (COPA), gathered in Québec City from September 6 to 9, 2011, on the invitation of Jacques Chagnon, President of COPA and President of the National Assembly of Québec, on the occasion of the 11th General Assembly:

1. **CONSIDERING** the steadfast commitment of COPA to democracy, to respect for Rule of Law, respect for dignity and human rights, peace, solidarity and integration between peoples, social justice and gender equality;
2. **RECALLING** that COPA is the only interparliamentary organization that brings together the congresses and parliamentary assemblies of the unitary, federal, federated and associated States, the regional parliaments and the interparliamentary organizations of the Americas;
3. **CONSIDERING** the parliamentarians' political legitimacy as elected representatives and therefore, bearers of the aspirations of the populations;
4. **RECALLING** the role of Parliaments as legislators and overseers of government action;
5. **RECALLING** that interparliamentary relations, while strengthening synergy between elected representatives, foster the proposal of solutions to various societal problems, with a view to inspiring the decisions and choices of parliamentarians and influencing governments;
6. **CONSIDERING** that economic integration in the Americas pose environmental, social and cultural challenges;
7. **MINDFUL** of the current challenges facing societies within the Americas with respect to citizen security and human rights;
8. **DEPLORING** that significant inequalities continue to prevail in the Americas, as revealed in the first *Regional Human Development Report for Latin America and the Caribbean*, published by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in 2010 and in *Growing Unequal?*, a report published by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) in October 2008;
9. **RECOGNIZING** that sustainable development is the best form of development for the Americas and that the implementation of its underlying principles includes environmental, economic, social and cultural dimensions;
10. **CONVINCED** that the cultural and linguistic diversity that prevails in the Americas contributes to the mutual enrichment of peoples and their representatives;

11. **INTEGRATING** our actions into the framework of the *Regional Millennium Goals* and the objectives of the *Action Plan* proposed by the President of COPA, mainly those aimed at reducing child mortality, eradicating extreme poverty and hunger, promoting gender equality and empowering women, ensuring access to safe drinking water, achieving universal primary education and ensuring environmental sustainability;

Reiterate the importance of bringing regional and national parliamentarians together to discuss and take a stand on issues that have an impact on populations within the Americas, and, for that purpose, undertake to:

12. **IMPROVE** in a sustained manner the democratic operation of parliaments, particularly by applying the democratic criteria approved by COPA and holding training sessions to broaden the expertise of parliamentarians;
13. **CONTRIBUTE** to consolidating democracy by supporting the development of COPA's electoral observation mission program in accordance with the recommendations made in its 2005-2011 report;
14. **FOSTER** the systematic holding of meetings of the permanent thematic working committees and Network of Women Parliamentarians in between general assemblies in order to study specific themes in greater depth and find the best solutions to challenges that transcend our borders;
15. **ENSURE** the integration of sustainable development in the political and legislative actions of parliaments and in COPA activities;
16. **FOLLOW UP** on regional and national public policy in areas related to the themes proposed by the President of COPA and the *Regional Millennium Goals*, and encourage our respective governments to work toward reaching those goals by 2015, mainly to:
 - 16.1. fight school dropout;
 - 16.2. reduce gender wage gap;
 - 16.3. reduce child mortality;
 - 16.4. ensure access to safe drinking water;
 - 16.5. apply integrated water resource management;
 - 16.6. ensure greater access to education for aboriginal peoples.
17. **PROMOTE** cultural diversity among our citizens and governments, particularly by contributing to the implementation of the 2005 *UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions*;
18. **WORK** toward ensuring gender equality, a principle recognized under the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, both in our legislative frameworks and in the conception and implementation of public policies;
19. **ENSURE** a rigorous, continuous follow-up of the proceedings, resolutions and reports produced in the wake of general assemblies and meetings of the permanent thematic working committees and the Network of Women Parliamentarians; present and promote them within the governments, legislative assemblies, regional parliaments and civil society organizations as well as at the Summit of the Americas;
20. **SUBMIT** this Final Declaration along with the resolutions adopted during this General Assembly for the consideration of the heads of state during the 6th Summit of the Americas to be held in Colombia on April 14-15, 2012;
21. **PROMOTE** COPA and encourage the strong mobilization of parliamentarians from all regions and all Parliaments of the Americas.