

**RAPPORT D'ACTIVITÉ DU PRÉSIDENT  
NOVEMBRE 2010 - SEPTEMBRE 2011  
XI<sup>e</sup> Assemblée générale de la COPA**

**INFORME DE ACTIVIDADES DEL PRESIDENTE  
NOVIEMBRE 2010 - SEPTIEMBRE 2011  
XI<sup>e</sup> Asamblea General de la COPA**

**ACTIVITY REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT  
NOVEMBER 2010 - SEPTEMBER 2011  
XI<sup>th</sup> General Assembly of COPA**

**RELATÓRIO DE ATIVIDADES DO PRESIDENTE  
NOVEMBRO 2010 - SETEMBRO 2011  
XI Assembléia Geral da COPA**

**Mr. Jacques Chagnon  
President of Parliamentary Confederation of the Americas  
President of National Assembly of Quebec**

## A Word from the President



It gives me great pleasure to present this report, which outlines the main activities carried out by the Parliamentary Confederation of the Americas (COPA), under my mandate, since the organization's 10th General Assembly in Mar del Plata, Argentina, in November 2010.

This 14th year of COPA's operations was, for me, an opportunity to work on consolidating the institution and promoting its objectives. Since COPA is a young interparliamentary organization, I think it is important to pursue clear objectives to ensure both its efficiency and its future, thus giving it a stronger voice in the Americas.

First of all, as COPA's president, one of my institutional priorities is to give the six working Committees a major role within the organization. It is why I called upon the chairs of the committees to adhere to the themes of the *2010–2012 Plan of the President* and to bring together their Committees outside of our general assemblies. They answered “present!” and we are beginning to see the fruit of their involvement. As the pillars on which our interparliamentary organization stands, the committees, by their energy, provide the stability we need to meet our objectives and obtain concrete results for our populations.

Second of all, given the need for institutional consolidation, it is essential that we improve the coordination and collaboration between COPA's three secretariats. As such, I have devoted a great deal of effort to reinforcing communication between the secretariats and reactivating our third secretariat so we can provide our members with all the tools they need to participate in our activities.

Moreover, I consider that it is essential to strengthen our organization's role as an advisory body among parliamentary assemblies and executive powers across the continent. Since we equipped ourselves with structures and statutes that allow us to base our work on more solid foundations, we must seize the opportunity to call on regional parliaments, parliamentary assemblies, congresses, interparliamentary organizations of the Americas and their executive authorities in order to promote our activities and disseminate the results of our reflections.

In closing, I plan to pursue these objectives over the upcoming year of my presidency. I would like to make COPA an unparalleled forum for the major issues faced by the Americas. I would like to thank all the members of COPA who are involved in and work towards the development of our organization, because we parliamentarians represent COPA, and it is up to us to give it the status it deserves in this great continent.

**JACQUES CHAGNON**

President of the National Assembly of Québec

## **Overview of the Activities of the Parliamentary Confederation of the Americas for 2010–2011**

### ***10th General Assembly of the Parliamentary Confederation of the Americas***

*Mar del Plata, province of Buenos Aires, Argentina, November 15 to 19, 2010*

Always striving to contribute to inter-American cooperation in an active and responsible manner, COPA held its 10th General Assembly in Mar del Plata, in the province of Buenos Aires, Argentina, from November 15 to 19, 2010. Over the course of the meetings held by the Executive Committee and the General Assembly, during which new members of the Executive Committee were elected, I had the honour of being elected as the organization's president for a two-year term (2010–2012). On this occasion, I presented a thematic *Plan of the President*, which set forth four fundamental social issues, and I invited the organization's parliamentarians to seize the same themes in order to guide COPA's work for the 2010–2012 period. This plan consists of the following four themes:

- reducing child mortality;
- increasing the secondary school graduation rate among people aged 25 or older;
- reducing the gender wage gap; and
- protecting the water resources.

I therefore devoted the first year of my mandate to promoting this *Plan of the President*. I hope the visibility of this document fosters the emergence of partnerships for COPA and incites people to participate in our activities.

### ***Press release***

*December 1, 2010*

I would like to recognize a press release that was issued by the presidency. It mentioned my concerns with regard to the conduct of the first voting round of presidential and legislative elections in Haiti on November 28, 2010. In light of the incidents reported by the media, and by national and international observers, this press release was intended to urge actors to opt for dialogue and pursue Haitian commitment to consolidate democracy in Haiti.

### ***Visit to the Cuban National Assembly***

*La Havane, Cuba, January 2011*

During a trip to Cuba, I visited our colleagues at the Cuban National Assembly to present the *2010–2012 Plan of the President*. I also took advantage of this meeting to invite the Chair of the Committee on Health and Social Protection, Deputy Elsa Rojas Hernández, to preside over a meeting of the Committee on Cuban soil. I also had the opportunity to speak with Mr. Ricardo Alarcón, President of the National Assembly of People's Power of the Republic of Cuba; Deputy Ramón Pez Ferro, Chair of the National Assembly's International Relations Committee; and Deputy Tubal Páez Hernández, member of COPA's Executive Committee, in order to reiterate the importance I place on the participation of Cuban parliamentarians in COPA's work.

As such, through our combined efforts to revitalize working Committees and thanks to the collaboration of Cuban parliamentarians, we are preparing the first meeting of the Committee on Health and Social Protection, to take place outside of the framework of COPA's general assemblies in La Havane, Cuba, on October 27 and 28, 2011.

***Welcoming a COPA delegation as part of the Inter-Parliamentary Conference on the Diversity of Cultural Expressions (CIDEDEC)***

*Québec City, Canada, February 2 and 3, 2011*

On February 2 and 3, 2011, I had the honour of welcoming to Québec City a delegation of COPA parliamentarians who represented the organization as observer at the Inter-Parliamentary Conference on the Diversity of Cultural Expressions. This important meeting was organized by the National Assembly of Québec and the Parliamentary Assembly of La Francophonie, in collaboration with UNESCO. Our First Vice-President, Senator Zulma Gómez, and the Executive Secretary, Deputy Cristina Ruíz Sandoval, joined me in attending these important events which marked the fifth anniversary of UNESCO's adoption of the *Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions*. To those last, was joined a delegation of deputies from the State of Mexico, comprised of deputies Alejandra Gurza, Gabriela Gamboa and Enrique Jacob Rocha.

This event was an opportunity to report on the implementation of the Convention and to raise awareness among participants of the importance of protecting and promoting the cultural sectors in their respective States. The conference led to the "Québec City Declaration on the Commitment of La Francophonie Parliamentarians to Implement the Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions," which reiterated the importance for the States not only to ratify this Convention, but also to adopt legislative texts that promote the diversity of cultural expressions, to ensure the application of such legislation and to monitor trade negotiations that affect culture. This is a very interesting subject for organizations such as COPA, and I hope we will have the opportunity to follow up next year.

Aside from CIDEDEC activities, I had the opportunity to converse with the parliamentarians of the Francophonie and to promote COPA. These various discussions served to consolidate COPA's leadership and strategic positioning within this international organization, and to encourage international interparliamentary dialogue.

***22nd Meeting of the Executive Committee of the Parliamentary Confederation of the Americas***

*Toluca de Lerdo, Mexico, March 8 to 11, 2011*

From March 8 to 11, 2011, the city of Toluca de Lerdo in Mexico hosted the 22nd meeting of the Executive Committee of the Parliamentary Confederation of the Americas (COPA). I had the pleasure of presiding over the meeting, which provided an opportunity to review COPA's activities and prepare upcoming events, such as 11th General Assembly and the 10th Annual Meeting of the Network of Women Parliamentarians of the Americas. More than 30 parliamentarians from 19 countries in the Americas took part in this 22nd Meeting of COPA's Executive Committee. During this meeting, key decisions were made on the organization's consolidation, such as reactivation of the Secretariat of Brazil, budget planning and the adoption of COPA's work schedule for 2011.

In the course of this same mission, and consistent with the objective of improving communications between secretariats, I visited COPA's Mexico secretariat and had a chance to meet with Mr. Manlio Fabio Beltrones Rivera, President of the Republic of Mexico's Senate; Mr. Jorge Carlos Ramírez Marín, President of the Chamber of Deputies of the Union Congress; and Mr. Ernesto Javier Nemer Álvarez, President of the Legislative Assembly of the State of

Mexico. In our talks, I stressed the importance of having a fully functional Secretariat of Mexico and I encouraged them to work together to coordinate the secretariat's work. I also had the honour of meeting Mrs. María Alejandra Barrales Magdaleno, President of the Legislative Assembly for the Federal District, and took advantage of the opportunity to promote COPA and the Network of Women Parliamentarians of the Americas.

### ***124th Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU)***

*Panama City, Panama, April 14 to 20, 2011*

On the occasion of the 124th Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union held in Panama from April 14 to 20, 2011, I was invited, in my capacity as COPA's president, to form a delegation of observers. Also part of the mission were senators Carlos Jiménez Macías and Eduardo Nava Bolaños, both members of the Senate of the Republic of Mexico. The aim of this mission was to represent and promote COPA among the individuals attending this important gathering of parliamentarians from around the world.

As I was unable to attend, Senator Nava was kind enough to read a message on my behalf to the parliamentarians in attendance at the meeting of the Group of Latin America and Caribbean Countries (GRULAC). On the same occasion, Senator Jiménez gave a speech presenting the main objectives of COPA and the major initiatives it has undertaken. The delegation took advantage of this special opportunity to invite the parliamentarians who were on hand to take part in COPA's 11th General Assembly in Québec.

### ***Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development***

*Asunción, Paraguay, May 12 to 14, 2011*

I'm pleased to announce that, for the first time ever, a meeting of a COPA working Committee took place outside of the General Assembly for the purpose of discussing a critical theme in the Americas: "The protection of water resources". The Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development met in Asunción, Paraguay, from May 12 to 14, 2011, at the invitation of Mrs. Zulma Gómez, COPA's First Vice-President, and Deputy Caritina Saénz Vargas, who is also the committee's acting president. Due to my election as President of the National Assembly of Québec just prior to the event, I designated another parliamentarian from the National Assembly to represent me at this important meeting, which definitely met my objective to promote and encourage COPA's Committees to be more dynamic.

### ***Telephone conversations with the President de National Union of State Legislatures of Brazil (UNALE)***

*December 2010 and February 2011*

### ***UNALE Annual Conference***

*Florianópolis, State of Santa Catarina, Brazil, May 18 and 19, 2011*

With a view to count, as soon as possible, on three functional and dynamic secretariats working cohesively with one another, I contacted UNALE's president, Mr. Alencar da Silveira Junior. Over the course of two official telephone conversations, I wanted to inquire about UNALE's willingness to resume the activities of the Secretariat of Brazil. The revival of the Secretariat of Brazil is part of an action strategy that aims to underscore the importance of the tasks carried out by the organization's secretariats and the need to be able to count on this key COPA partner to ensure communications with our Portuguese-speaking colleagues.

At the conclusion of these conversations, Mr. Silveira said he was very interested in renewing the partnership between UNALE and COPA and expressed his desire to get together with us at UNALE's 15th Annual Conference, which finally took place in Florianópolis, Brazil, on May 18 and 19, 2011. This actually provided us with an opportunity to continue our negotiations on resuming the activities of the Secretariat of Brazil with UNALE's leading stakeholders, including the new president, Mr. José Luis Schafer.

***COPA's electoral observation mission***

*State of Mexico, Mexico, June 29 to July 4, 2011*

In response to an invitation from the Electoral Institute of the State of Mexico, a delegation of COPA partners witnessed the election for governor of the State of Mexico. This was the twelfth mission organized by COPA since adopting its *Regulations on electoral observation missions* in May 2005 and the first mission in a federated state, thereby demonstrating the importance that COPA attaches to all its members.

Upon arrival, the COPA delegation held important meetings with the various key actors involved. In order to find out about the election process and the situation prevailing in the state and the country on the eve of the election, the parliamentarians met two candidates from the political parties, along with the state's election officials and representatives of civil society organizations.

Delegation members were impressed by the civic spirit and commitment displayed by citizens as well as by the work done by election staff during the election process. They also underscored the respect demonstrated by the inhabitants of the State of Mexico on election day for their institutions and the peaceful manner in which the elections took place.

***COPA's 11th General Assembly and the 10th Annual Meeting of the Network of Women Parliamentarians of the Americas***

*Québec City, Canada, September 6 to 9, 2011*

Upon returning from Mar del Plata, I began preparing COPA's 11th General Assembly. While keeping abreast of other COPA activities, I have spent the past few months working on this major initiative that is the general assembly to be hosted by the National Assembly of Québec—14 years after hosting the first ever COPA meeting in September 1997.

I am therefore very pleased and honoured to preside over this important meeting of parliamentarians from the Americas. Organized under the theme "Parliaments of the Americas: Present!", this 11th General Assembly provides an opportunity to strengthen and consolidate parliamentary diplomacy in the Americas, while examining the four fundamental issues outlined in the *2010-2012 Plan of the President*. The General Assembly's program will enable the continuation of work already begun by the six standing committees and the staging of the 10th Annual Meeting of the Network of Women Parliamentarians of the Americas. Through various conferences, debates and discussions on our legislative experiences and public policy making, we will examine strategic issues with a view to helping improve the quality of life for men and women on our continent. This major event in Québec will also bring together the executive committees of COPA and of the Network of Women Parliamentarians of the Americas.

### ***Revamping of the COPA Web site***

In closing, I would like to mention that I worked closely with the Québec secretariat so we could move forward with overhauling the Web site of COPA and the Network of Women Parliamentarians of the Americas in an effort to make it more interactive and user-friendly. I invite you to visit the site for information on our meetings and activities.

In the information technology era, a Web site is an extremely important tool for enhancing the visibility of our organization and for distributing information. It is also an excellent way to promote COPA and its activities while providing our members with the documentation they need to participate fully in our meetings.

[www.copa.qc.ca](http://www.copa.qc.ca)

[www.feminamericas.org](http://www.feminamericas.org)