



**11th GENERAL ASSEMBLY
PARLIAMENTARY CONFEDERATION OF THE AMERICAS
QUÉBEC CITY, CANADA
SEPTEMBER 6 to 9, 2011**

Committee on Economy, Trade, Labour, Competitiveness and Trading Blocs

Resolution

WE, the parliamentarians of the Americas, gathered in Québec City, Canada for the 11th General Assembly of the Parliamentary Confederation of the Americas:

ACKNOWLEDGE the issue of youths aged 14 to 29 living on our continent unemployed and no longer pursuing their studies—an issue directly related to the school dropout rate;

POINT OUT that in Latin America alone, 38 million youths are in this situation; most come from families who abandoned or overprotected them, and they are more likely to experience violence, crime, teenage pregnancy, addiction and a lack of training opportunities;

RECOGNIZE the lack of job openings and training in several countries across the continents, particularly in terms of high school and post-secondary education;

ARE CONCERNED about the likelihood of these youths falling prey to criminal groups, given that adult sentencing is more severe than sentences imposed on minors;

POINT OUT that involvement of women in street gangs and criminal organizations has increased 15 to 25 percent and that far too many women are relegated to household duties and raising children, their own as well as the children of family members or other close relatives;

ADD that 24% of youths who are unemployed and no longer studying live in destitution while 19% live in utter poverty, and that only 10% live in a household with a total income equivalent to one-fifth of the wealthiest segment of the population;

EMPHASIZE the fact that to date, in Latin America, only a handful of nations have implemented programs aimed at resolving this issue and reducing its occurrence.

WE UNDERTAKE TO:

FIRSTLY, in light of the current situation of youths across the continents, we, the member legislators of the Parliamentary Confederation of the Americas, pledge to urgently adopt laws establishing policies and programs to encourage adolescents to remain in an occupation in order to reduce the number of youths of this generation who are unemployed and who have dropped out of school.

SECONDLY, we ask our governments to improve the quality of education and ensure that high-school education is integrated into basic education in every country and State on our continents.

THIRDLY, we invite legislators across the continents to provide young women with more relevant information on opportunities for personal development, and we ask them to propose and advocate programs that factor in gender and age.

FOURTHLY, we urge private sector businesses and public organizations to create jobs for young university graduates, since many unemployed youths no longer pursuing studies have post-secondary qualifications.

FIFTHLY, we recommend that the Committee on Economy, Trade, Labour, Competitiveness and Trading Blocs and the Committee on Education, Culture, Science and Technology continue to address the issue at hand and that the legislators of COPA member countries convey their experience with regard to programs and activities implemented to reduce the occurrence of this issue. Moreover, we have decided to organize a joint working session to promote laws offering advantages such as tax incentives to businesses hiring inexperienced youths and recent graduates (first job program).

Prepared in Québec City, Canada, September 2011