



**PARLIAMENTARY CONFEDERATION OF THE AMERICAS  
11<sup>th</sup> GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
QUÉBEC CITY, CANADA  
SEPTEMBER 6 TO 9, 2011**

**Committee on Democracy and Peace  
Thursday, September 8, 2011, 9 a.m. to 12 p.m.**

**2010–2011 activity report and  
2011–2012 action plan**

**1. Pursue the theme: “The contribution of parliaments to democracy: draft benchmarks for the parliaments of the Americas”**

During the special General Assembly of COPA held in Querétaro, Mexico, in July 2010, the document “The Contribution of Parliaments to Democracy: Draft Benchmarks for the Parliaments of the Americas” was presented to members of COPA’s Committee on Democracy and Peace. This COPA initiative falls within a broader reflection process that aims to identify the issues of democracy in parliaments. Through this document, parliaments that are members of COPA can base their thinking on a series of benchmarks they will adopt to evaluate the level of democracy in their operations.

During the 10<sup>th</sup> COPA General Assembly held in Mar del Plata, Argentina, in November 2010, parliamentarians of the Americas were asked to study this question in the company of an expert from the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs, following the adoption of benchmarks for parliamentary democracy at the 11<sup>th</sup> COPA General Assembly, to be held in Québec City, from September 6 to 9, 2011. During the year, parliamentarians will be invited to conduct an evaluation of their own parliamentary assembly. The Secretariat of the Committee is committed to developing a self-evaluation tool for the parliaments of the Americas at the beginning of 2012.

In order to follow-up with this issue, the Committee established the following schedule:

- 11<sup>th</sup> General Assembly: Workshop for an in-depth study of the document “The Contribution of Parliaments to Democracy: Draft Benchmarks for the Parliaments of the Americas” (organized in partnership with the United Nations Development Programme), and adoption of the document;
- Between the 11<sup>th</sup> and the 12<sup>th</sup> General Assembly: Development of a self-evaluation process for parliaments of the Americas and a meeting/workshop on this topic;

- 12<sup>th</sup> General Assembly: Round table of parliamentarians of the Americas on the self-evaluation processes begun locally, to draft a report on the topic.

## **2. Implementation of recommendations from the 2005–2011 report of COPA’s Electoral Observation Mission Program**

During the 10<sup>th</sup> General Assembly of COPA held in Mar del Plata, Argentina, the Committee agreed to produce a report on the organization’s Electoral Observation Mission Program. After six years of existence, the program is feeling the pressures of its popularity combined with its limited means. The objective of the report is to make recommendations to consolidate the credibility and ensure the sustainability of the program so that the expertise developed by COPA in this area will be maintained and reinforced.

The report includes 12 recommendations that will be submitted to the members of the Committee and the plenary session of the 11<sup>th</sup> General Assembly of COPA. In the coming year, the Committee intends to implement the recommendations, in cooperation with the Executive Committee of COPA. A progress report will be presented at the 12<sup>th</sup> General Assembly of COPA.

## **3. Continued implementation of COPA’s electoral observation missions (EOM) program**

COPA’s electoral observation mission program was instituted in 2005. Since then, 12 missions have been conducted under the supervision of the Committee on Democracy and Peace, the last of which was for the election for the Governor of the State of Mexico in July 2011. To pursue the program’s implementation, the following activities are proposed for 2011–2012:

- Dissemination of the report on the mission conducted in the State of Mexico in July 2011.

According to the criteria set out in the “By-Laws of COPA Electoral Observation Missions,” adopted in 2005 in Brazil and amended in 2009 in Argentina, the Committee on Democracy and Peace will recommend organizing electoral observation missions for the following democratic exercises:

- presidential election in the Dominican Republic on May 16, 2012;
- presidential and legislative elections in Mexico on July 1, 2012.

## **4. A meeting of the Committee on Democracy and Peace between the two General Assemblies and direct support to parliamentarians who take part in the Committee’s projects**

With its electoral observation missions and the many critical areas they address, the COPA’s Committee on Democracy and Peace wants to substantially step up the pace of its activities in the coming years. Its intention to offer a dynamic forum for exchange for parliamentarians of the Americas reflects the will of COPA president Jacques Chagnon to stimulate the work of committees in our inter-parliamentary organization. To this end, the Committee on Democracy and Peace intends to organize a meeting before the next General Assembly to delve further into the issue of benchmarks for parliamentary democracy in the Americas and re-examine the question of political party financing on the continents.

In the same vein, the Committee will put in place a support system for parliamentarians who want to monitor these issues in their respective assemblies. This support from the president, backed by the Secretariat, could lead to an ongoing, regular exchange with the parliamentarians concerned via email, phone or other means so as to ensure progress is made in the work, to compile a list of the problems encountered and to develop diverse paths to solutions.

## **5. Re-examination of the theme: “The financing of political parties in the Americas”**

During the General Assembly held in Mexico in September 2008, the parliamentarians of the Americas recommended that the Committee on Democracy and Peace “draft a report setting out the main systems of political party financing and electoral spending controls in the Americas and organize a seminar on the issue to allow parliamentarians to share their experiences.”<sup>1</sup>

During the 9<sup>th</sup> General Assembly, held in Salta, Argentina, in 2009, a comparative analysis chart on political party financing was presented. Then, during the special General Assembly held in Mexico in July 2010, a reminder was issued about the importance of parliamentarians participating in this report. The sample of information gathered is insufficient to draft a report that meets the needs of parliamentarians.

To respond favourably to the recommendation made in 2008 in Mexico, the Committee established the following schedule:

- Between the 11<sup>th</sup> and the 12<sup>th</sup> General Assembly: Organize a seminar on this theme, during which parliamentarians will be invited to share their experience and the prevailing practices in political party financing in their countries;
- 12<sup>th</sup> General Assembly: presentation and tabling of the final report on political party financing and position statement.

## **6. Monitoring of crises in the Americas**

The Committee on Democracy and Peace also has the mandate of monitoring political crises in the Americas.

During the next year, the Committee intends to continue to monitor and study questions related to democracy and the constitutional state. The parliamentarians of the COPA are also invited to submit themes for study.

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<sup>1</sup> Parliamentary Confederation of the Americas, *Recommendation on the standards governing political party financing and electoral spending controls in force in the Americas*, Mexico City, 8<sup>th</sup> General Assembly of COPA, September 10 to 13, 2008.

## **Committee on Democracy and Peace**

### **Work Schedule**

#### **1. 11<sup>th</sup> General Assembly**

**Location:** Québec City, Canada

**Date:** Thursday, September 8, 2011

**Content:**

1. Adoption of the document on benchmarks for parliamentary democracy
2. Monitoring the EOM program: Adoption of the report
3. Recommendations on future electoral observation missions

#### **2. Committee Meeting / Workshop**

**Location:** to be determined

**Date:** 2012

**Content:**

1. Presentations on the self-evaluation tool on parliamentary democracy benchmarks
2. Round table on political party financing

#### **3. 12<sup>th</sup> General Assembly**

**Location:** Asunción, Paraguay

**Date:** to be determined

**Content:**

1. Round table of parliamentarians of the Americas on the self-evaluation process for parliaments regarding COPA democracy benchmarks
2. Presentation and submission of the final report on the political party financing and position statement
3. Follow-up on recommendations on the EOM program
4. Follow-up on the EOM program

#### **4. Electoral observation missions 2010–2011**

**Dominican Republic:** Presidential election on May 16, 2012

**Mexico:** General elections on July 1, 2012