



**PARLIAMENTARY CONFEDERATION OF THE AMERICAS
13th GENERAL ASSEMBLY
ASUNCIÓN, PARAGUAY
NOVEMBER 3-5, 2014**

**Committee on Democracy and Peace
2013–2014 Activity Report and 2014–2015 Work Plan**

1. 2013–2014 Activity Report of the Committee on Democracy and Peace

1.1. Electoral observation mission program

At the request of the Committee on Democracy and Peace, the Québec Secretariat produced an assessment of the COPA Electoral Observation Mission (EOM) Program and tabled the document when the Committee met in Santa Fe, Argentina, on April 12-13, 2012.

After the assessment's 12 recommendations were adopted, the Québec Secretariat set about implementing them. To date, the vast majority of the recommendations have been fully or partially implemented. Some involve modifying the By-laws of COPA Electoral Observation Missions. These changes must be approved first by the Committee members, then by the COPA Executive Committee. The reform of the By-laws was introduced as part of this General Assembly.

Following the 12th COPA General Assembly held in Brasilia from October 13 to 16, 2013, the Committee adopted a recommendation to send an electoral observation mission to Colombia for the first round of the May 25, 2014 presidential election. The Québec Secretariat, in collaboration with the COPA President, took various steps to obtain an invitation from Colombian electoral authorities, so that an international, multi-party delegation of parliamentarian observers of the Americas could be sent to Colombia. Since the electoral authorities failed to reply, the mission did not take place.

1.2. Meeting of the Committee on Democracy and Peace, Paramaribo, Suriname, January 29-February 1, 2014

The secretariat responsible for the Committee organized a meeting of the Committee on Democracy and Peace and the Committee on Health and Social Protection in Paramaribo, Suriname, from January 29 to February 1, 2014. Since an insufficient number of registrations had been received by January 8, 2014, the event was postponed.

The secretariat continued its research on the themes being addressed by COPA's Committee on Democracy and Peace, namely, the Arms Trade Treaty, electoral legislation in the Americas and the *Self-Assessment Tool for Use by the Parliaments of the Americas*.

To access the self-assessment tool, interested parliaments should go to COPA's website at www.copa.qc.ca.

1.3. Meeting of the Committee on Democracy and Peace, Asunción, Paraguay, November 4, 2014

As provided for in the 2013-2014 Work Plan, the Committee continued studying the Arms Trade Treaty theme. To prepare the content of the Committee meeting for this General Assembly, the Committee Secretariat continued its research and analysis of the theme, working with Ms. Lucía Cónsoli, Regional Coordinator for the Arms Project in Latin America and the Caribbean of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC).

To help parliamentarians gain better knowledge of this theme, Ms. Cónsoli's presentation will focus more specifically on the various international legal instruments governing the arms trade. Her presentation will also provide parliamentarians with tools, including sample arms trade legislation.

1.4. Administrative collaboration with the Department of Electoral Cooperation and Observation (DECO) of the Organization of American States (OAS)

In early 2014, the Committee and DECO wrote to one another to devise a common work plan. Among other things, the plan called for DECO to provide an expert on electoral legislation. However, the theme could not be addressed, as the Committee's meeting, scheduled for January 29-February 1, 2014 in Suriname, was postponed.

The Committee Secretariat stayed in touch with DECO experts to prepare the next meeting to study the theme, and to share electoral observation information.

2. 2014–2015 Work Plan of the Committee on Democracy and Peace

2.1. Workshop on electoral legislation in the Americas

It has been proposed that a workshop for parliamentarians be held on the subject of electoral legislation in the Americas at the Committee's next annual meeting, given the need for closer collaboration between the OAS and COPA with regard to electoral observation.

OAS experts would be invited to give a training session on electoral legislation in the Americas and potential improvements to it, based on the OAS's experience in electoral matters and on the recommendations contained in the electoral observation mission reports.

Given that electoral legislation has a number of sub-domains, the Committee will focus on the role that communications media play in election campaigns and the regulations governing them.

2.2. Ongoing implementation of COPA's EOM assessment

The Committee Chair and Secretariat agree to continue implementing the 12 recommendations contained in COPA's assessment of its EOM program and to report on the subject at the Committee's next annual meeting.

2.3. Recommendations regarding the next electoral observation mission

In accordance with the criteria set out in the report on COPA's electoral observation missions submitted at the Executive Committee meeting held in Mexico City in 2006, the Committee on Democracy and Peace recommends that an electoral observation mission be deployed for the following exercise in democracy:

- Mexican legislative elections, June 7, 2015.

2.4. Promotion of self-assessment tool

The Committee Chair and Secretariat will continue promoting the *Self-Assessment Tool for Use by the Parliaments of the Americas* and urge parliamentarians to do likewise in their respective parliamentary assemblies. Parliamentarians are free to report to the Committee on their own parliaments.

Parliamentarians are encouraged to contact the Committee Secretariat for assistance in carrying out the exercise or for additional information.

2.5. Crisis watch in the Americas

One of the Committee's mandates is to monitor political crises in the Americas.

The Committee intends to continue its monitoring activities over the next year and to study all issues relating to democracy and to the state of law. COPA parliamentarians are also invited to submit themes for the Committee to study.

APPENDIX

Committee on Democracy and Peace work schedule

1. 13th General Assembly

Location: Asunción, Paraguay

Date: Tuesday, November 4, 2014

Content:

- Theme: *Arms Trade Treaty and the Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing of Firearms* – Speaker: Lucía Gómez Cónsoli, Latin American Firearms Regional Coordinator for the United Nations
- Presentation and adoption of the resolution on the normative framework governing the regional and international arms trade
- Recommendation on the next electoral observation mission

2. 14th General Assembly

Location: to be determined

Date: to be determined

Content:

- Workshop on electoral legislation

3. 2014-2015 Electoral observation mission

Mexico: legislative elections, June 7, 2015