



PARLIAMENTARY CONFEDERATION OF THE AMERICAS
Committee on the Environment and Sustainable Development
May 13th 2011

Resolution:

We, the parliamentarians of the Americas gathered on the occasion of the **second ordinary meeting of the Committee on the Environment and Sustainable Development of the Parliamentary Confederation of the Americas (COPA) in Asunción, Paraguay,**

Aware of the importance of moving toward a more sustainable America in order to encourage greater environmental awareness and thus strengthen citizen involvement and commitment, and of the exigency of promoting responsible media coverage in light of the media's considerable influence in modern society;

Acknowledging that environmental education at an early age is essential to changing attitudes toward conservation and sustainable development, and that the dissemination of information is necessary in order to foster a sense of environmental responsibility throughout our continent;

Aware that access to safe drinking water is one of the most serious problems facing humanity today and that water management must be regarded as essential to surmounting the challenges ahead;

Reacting to the damaging effects of climate change observed around the globe, which threaten energy, transport, infrastructure and food security, by calling for the prevention of shortages of goods and services;

Highlighting the importance of their legislative work and especially of the role they can play in guiding the development of an aid scheme based on broader interparliamentary collaboration in water management and more seamless environmental legislation;

Convinced that climate change will have a long-term global impact and that it must be addressed in a responsible manner, and wishing to help shape legislation to support pro-sustainable development public policy;

The Committee on the Environment and Sustainable Development deemed it appropriate to adopt the following:

RESOLUTIONS

Propose dedicated legislation to support our governments in observing and implementing international agreements on lowering contaminant emissions that affect water quality in our regions;

Review our climate change-related legislation and develop a prevention-focused regulatory framework in addition to encouraging more active participation in international events on climate change;

Assess and raise awareness of the progress made in protecting the environment on the legislative front;

Reaffirm our commitment, as legislators of the Americas, to heighten our collaboration and involvement in water resource conservation by promoting **dedicated water legislation** that will create appropriate mechanisms for regional bulk water supply, drainage and sewage treatment services, and ensure that the services delivered are high-quality, effective and guaranteed;

Exhort the governments to work hand in hand with the legislative bodies to lay the groundwork for a comprehensive strategy that truly makes improving access to water a priority. In this respect, it is **vital that the constitutions of the countries of the Americas be updated or overhauled** to entrench the **right to water and a healthy environment as an individual guarantee**, in light of **the right to water as recognized by the United Nation's Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights**;

Call on the governments to encourage public and media participation in order to face the global water crisis together;

Undertake to introduce specific initiatives to include environmental education in the school curricula in order to equip future generations with concrete tools that will help them understand what conservation and the wise use of natural resources mean, and act accordingly;

Exhort COPA member legislators to recognize the importance of supporting political action aimed at improving services and water management so that constitutional reforms to

recognize access to safe drinking water as a basic human right will translate into real change, and to define the penalties to be imposed on those who violate that right;

Reinforce existing normative frameworks for environmental certification in our countries to prevent businesses from evading their responsibilities as regards preserving the environment;

Assume responsibility for legislating on natural resource conservation while remaining mindful of the fact that human health and development are just as important as the environment;

Press the governments to put solutions in place to encourage water efficiency and promote water harvesting and recycling as positive steps in responding to the global water crisis. Such solutions should include wastewater management and disposal regulation to reduce the transfer of contaminants to rural areas, for the welfare of all of society;

Promote regulatory frameworks aimed at protecting watershed quality and reversing watershed degradation due to human intervention;

Encourage efforts to improve the quality, quantity and balanced availability of water supply services and foster greater commitment toward the preservation of this vital resource through concrete public policies;

Promote public and private investment in research and development to spawn new technologies to reduce water consumption in farm, industrial and domestic systems and to collect accurate data on existing water resources.