

## ***WORK SESSION ON MARGARITA ISLAND***

With the presence of more than 40 delegates from countries throughout the Americas, who are members of the Executive Committee, the 8th Meeting of the Executive Committee of the Parliamentary Confederation of the Americas (COPA), was carried out on Margarita Island, State of Nueva Esparta, Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, from Friday 21 to Sunday 23 of February, 2003.

The Executive Committee of COPA arrived on the Venezuelan Island on Friday, February 21. By that time, technicians, advisers and guests had already arrived in the country to put the finishing touches to the hemispheric meeting. Professionals from COPA's three secretariats located in Mexico, Quebec and Brazil, along with the team from the Andean Parliament, worked on the details for the deliberations of the Executive Committee of this parliamentary political forum, as well as for the meeting of the Network of Women Parliamentarians of the Americas which took place on Saturday, February 22.

Regarding the program of the 8th Meeting of the Executive Committee of COPA, on Friday, February 21, the convened parliamentarians gathered at the Margarita Hilton Hotel where, on the morning of Saturday, February 22, was held the meeting of the Executive Committee of the Network of Women Parliamentarians of the Americas during which the following people participated: the President of the Women's Bank, Ms. Nora Castañeda and the President of the Standing Committee for Women and Family of the National Assembly, Rep. Marelis Pérez. Simultaneously, the coordination meeting of the three secretariats of COPA took place. The first two work sessions of the Executive Committee of COPA were held during the afternoon the same day.

On Sunday, February 23, in the afternoon, the third and fourth work sessions took place. Afterwards the parliamentarians were taken to the Nueva Esparta State's Legislative Council, where the official ceremony was carried out for the transfer of COPA's Presidency for the February 2003 – February 2004 period, that will be chaired by Rep. Jhannett Madriz, current President of the Andean Parliament. As closing ceremony of the event, the Governor's Office of the State of Nueva Esparta and Corpotur offered a dinner with the presentation a musical groups from the region as well as a folkloric show from the State of Lara, where the 5th General Assembly of COPA will take place in the month of November this year.

Finally, the delegations returned to their countries on Monday. It is worth mentioning that that a delegation from the Republic of Ecuador visited on Monday, February 24, the State of Sucre, to accompany Governor Ramón Martínez in an official ceremony to honour the memory of Venezuelan national independence hero, Antonio José de Sucre

## ***DEBATED ISSUES***

Among the important issues debated by the parliamentarians from throughout the Continent, was the elaboration and approval of the annual agenda of the Parliamentary Organization that promotes Inter-American cooperation. As well, COPA issued its political declarations on the current situation in Venezuela, as well as on international conflicts, particularly the Iraqi case. This agenda also underlines the creation of COPA's election observer mission as an institutional mechanism and the reflections concerning the organization's information instrument, COPA Magazine.