



**PROCEEDINGS  
MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE  
PARLIAMENTARY CONFEDERATION OF THE AMERICAS**

**MARGARITA SUITES HILTON HOTEL  
PORLAMAR, MARGARITA ISLAND  
BOLIVARIAN REPUBLIC OF VENEZUELA  
FEBRUARY 21, 22 23 AND 24, 2003**

***REPORT***

The VI<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Executive Committee of the Parliamentary Confederation of the Americas, took place in Porlamar, Margarita Island, Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, on February 21, 22, 23 and 24, 2003. This meeting was attended by representatives of the Congresses and Parliamentary Assemblies of: The Netherlands Antilles, Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, El Salvador, Honduras, Mexico, Peru, Puerto Rico, Quebec, Surinam, Uruguay, Venezuela, representations of MERCOSUR, PARLANDINO, PARLACEN, the Indigenous Parliament, and the Latin-American Parliament, as well as outstanding national authorities, who discussed the following agenda:

1. Opening session.
2. By-laws regulating the committees.
3. Conditions to carry out electoral observation missions.
4. What is the state of the FTAA negotiations (College of the Americas – COLAM)?
5. Responsibilities in the elaboration and distribution of “COPA Magazine”.
6. Political position of COPA vis-à-vis international conflicts: Iraq, Venezuela.
7. Place, date and theme of the Fifth General Assembly of COPA.
8. Swearing-in ceremony and transmission of the Presidency.
9. Closing ceremony.

***Saturday, February 22, 2003***

1. Setting up of Working Teams and First Work Session

The welcome speech at the opening ceremony was delivered by the President of COPA, Rep. Laura Pavón Jaramillo, by the First Vice-President of COPA and President of the Andean Parliament, Rep. Madríz Sotillo, who, in her capacity as President of the Organizing Committee of the meeting, invited all the participants to a welcoming cocktail, at the swimming pool of the Margarita Suites Hilton Hotel.

**Sunday, February 23, 2003**

## **Second Work Session**

### 2. Addition to the Statutes in order to insert the By-laws regulating the functioning of the committees and the By-laws project.

It has been decided that regarding the vote, the committees will make their decisions rather by consensus. Likewise, it has been considered useful to establish exactly who the members of the different thematic committees are, by means of an article specifically defined for this purpose. This proposal was approved unanimously.

Likewise, there has been a modification to article 1 of the By-laws, to state that this article would include aspects regarding the participation objectives and ties between specialized parliamentarians vis-à-vis related themes, since this article and particularly article 10 refer to the decision making process.

On the other hand, a proposal has been submitted to draw up article 6, which would read as follows: “ *The committees shall produce reports on issues relating to their areas of jurisdiction, and shall present recommendations, motions or opinions to the General Assembly for discussion and approval* ”.

The new By-laws were approved unanimously

### 3. Conditions to carry out electoral observation missions.

Firstly, it has been decided that the implementation of an electoral observation program would take into account the Inter-American Democratic Charter approved by the OAS Assembly on September 11, 2001. It has been also determined that the composition of the electoral observation missions will be mixed. They will be formed by parliamentarians and election experts, in a total proportion of twelve members.

The functions of the electoral observers will be as follows: application processing, preparation of parliamentarians who will be observers, coordination and distribution of information, observation follow-up, elaboration of conclusions and implementation of the electoral observation mission.

The Committee on Democracy and Human Rights of COPA has been chosen to elaborate a training and accompanying strategy for parliamentarians. For this reason, a training program for the electoral observer will be implemented, and the parameters and procedures that the observer shall follow before, during and after the election observation mission.

Likewise, some of the tasks of COPA's Technical Secretariats are as follows: 1. To inform the parliamentarians of the Americas of the considerations related to the organization and the implementation of electoral observation missions in the Americas. 2. To offer a training course in electoral observation within the framework of the General Assembly of COPA, that will take place at the end of the year 2003. 3. The Committee on Democracy and Human Rights shall be informed of the mandate it has been given to analyze any proposal and to recommend the actions deemed proper to implement the electoral observation mission program of COPA.

It has been agreed on that the responsibility of the observation missions should be assumed exclusively by COPA. In this context, the missions must be carried out by parliamentarians chosen by COPA from the different regions and who will be officially authorized by the Confederation to carry out electoral observation with the support of experts, who will prepare the press file of the candidates and inform of the previous development of the campaigns, etc., so that as soon as the observation mission arrives, the parliamentarians will be the ones officially responsible for dealing with the election tribunals and with the national electoral boards on behalf of COPA.

#### 4. What is the state of the FTAA negotiations?

At this point of the meeting's agenda, the College of the Americas sent a virtual speech by Professor Dorval Brunelle, of the University of Quebec in Montreal (UQAM), in which he expounded to the participants the principal developments of the FTAA negotiations.

Likewise, Mr. Léandre Dion, Member of the National Assembly of Québec, briefed the audience on the position that some countries have taken vis-à-vis the integration process, showing the great damage they can cause by assuming a position contrary to the process. On the other hand, he stated that other countries are trying to reach early bilateral agreements with the United States to improve their situation before the regional integration process is implemented.

#### 5. Responsibilities in the elaboration and distribution of "COPA Magazine"

As to COPA Magazine, it was suggested that more information about COPA should be transmitted in the content of the magazine. This means that an increase in participation from parliamentarians writing articles of interest regarding the views of the parliamentarians of the Americas is expected.

#### 6. Political Position of COPA vis-à-vis international conflicts: Iraq, Venezuela

The political position of COPA regarding the two international conflicts that are drawing the world's attention, the situation of Iraq and the situation of Venezuela, led to two resolutions and one declaration, which are attached hereto:

**MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE C O P A**

**MARGARITA ISLAND, VENEZUELA  
21 - 24 FEBRUARY 2003**

***RESOLUTION ON IRAQ***

*WHEREAS* the intention of Parliamentarians to promote the use of peaceful means to foster dialogue and negotiation to solve world conflicts,

*WHEREAS* the struggle against terrorism, by groups or by States, that affects everyone, should rely on political, diplomatic and economic measures and not on military actions,

*WHEREAS* in many countries world-wide there has been mass social expressions of condemnation of the war,

*WHEREAS* in accordance with international law, States should abstain from threatening with the use of force,

*WHEREAS* the Security Council has not authorized the use of force on Iraq,

*WHEREAS* a war of great magnitude would affect the already difficult political situation,

*WHEREAS* unilateral actions taken with disregard for popular will and sentiment, will turn against those who have taken them,

*THE MEMBERS OF COPA* urge the Government of the United States to respect the sentiment that the international community has expressed on this matter and that more emphasis be placed on diplomatic measures instead of military actions in order to avoid war. In the meantime, we ask the international community to see to it that weapons of mass destruction be eliminated by Iraq, in accordance with the United Nations Security Council's resolution 14/41.

We issue an appeal for the destruction of all the biological, chemical and nuclear weapons that exist in every country, and that this be carried out under the control of the UN.

Finally, we reaffirm our intention to promote peace, unconditional respect for human rights, and respect for the self-determination of peoples. This is the requirement for the development of peoples and for achieving world harmony.

Margarita Island Venezuela, February 23, 2003.

## **MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE C O P A**

**MARGARITA ISLAND, VENEZUELA  
21 - 24 FEBRUARY 2003**

### ***RESOLUTION ON VENEZUELA***

*REITERATING* our stances expressed in the Executive Committee's resolutions of May 2002 in Mexico City on the situation of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, as well as in the Working Committee on Democracy and Human Rights of the General Assembly of COPA, in November 2002.

*WHEREAS* the Parliamentary Confederation of the Americas has opted in favour of non-intervention and the self-determination of peoples as fundamental principles of international law, and recognizes and supports the respect of constitutional order and the promotion of democracy, and in our capacity as members of its EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE, and as legitimate representatives of our peoples, and concerned about the political situation that affects our sister Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, we have agreed on the following Resolution that seeks support for the people, the constitutional order and the established powers, contributing to the national and international efforts that are being made toward a peaceful and democratic solution that respects human rights, the Executive Committee of the Parliamentary Confederation of the Americas:

#### **HEREBY AGREES**

1. To express its unrestricted support to the Venezuelan people, to its institutionality manifested in its open desire to resolve the crisis, by appealing to peace and the established constitutional mechanisms. We urge the use of dialog as a valid mechanism to reach agreements.
2. To welcome the presence of former United States President and Nobel prize winner, Jimmy Carter; the Secretary General of the OAS, Dr. César Gaviria; and the "Friends of Venezuela" group members for their role as facilitators in the search of a peaceful and constitutional solution to the Venezuelan political crisis, by creating the conditions for the strengthening of the Table of talks, negotiations and agreements. We urge the fulfilment of the commitments stipulated in the document signed by the parties in conflict, which is known as the "Agreements for peace, democracy and non-violence", and whose content we unanimously support.
3. To appeal for the support of the principle of self-determination of peoples, since the solution to the crisis shall respond to the sovereign decision of the Venezuelan people.
4. To thank the Andean Parliament and the State of Nueva Esparta, for their hospitality in carrying out this event.

Porlamar, Margarita Island, February 23, 2003

## **MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE C O P A**

**MARGARITA ISLAND, VENEZUELA  
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### ***MARGARITA DECLARATION FOR PEACE, TOLERANCE AND THE INTEGRATION BETWEEN THE COUNTRIES OF THE AMERICAS***

#### ***WHEREAS***

The objectives of the PARLIAMENTARY CONFEDERATION OF THE AMERICAS (COPA) are to promote peace, tolerance, solidarity, cooperation and integration between the peoples of the Continent; to ensure full respect of their sovereignty and the consolidation of their pluralistic and democratic system of government;

One of the principal missions of the Parliamentary Confederation of the Americas is to represent, before the executive authorities of the Americas, the interests and aspirations of the peoples of the Continent regarding the issues and impacts resulting from their integration process; likewise, it is to contribute to the strengthening of parliamentary democracy and to the building of a Community of the Americas on the basis of peace, democracy, social justice and gender equity;

The democratically elected Heads of State and Government of the Americas, who met in Québec City during the Third Summit of the Americas, made the commitment toward hemispheric integration and national and collective responsibility in order to improve the economic well-being and the security of our peoples;

They likewise reaffirmed their commitment to preserve peace and security through the effective use of the hemispheric means provided for peaceful dispute settlement and the adoption of measures promoting trust and security;

They reaffirmed, at the same meeting, their commitment to fully support the principles that prohibit countries from resorting to threats or to the use of force, in accordance with international law;

We, the Parliamentarians of the Parliamentary Confederation of the Americas, have witnessed with great concern the consequences of the escalation of violence and terrorism and have realized that the risks of a large-scale world conflict would affect the difficult political situation and would cause economic, political and social harm to the entire population;

The Venezuelan situation may lead to the intervention of international interests, and the manner by which it is settled will have profound repercussions in the region;

It is the exclusive responsibility of Venezuelans to resolve the situation which the Venezuelan people and government are currently experiencing; COPA wishes that the parties in conflict may rapidly find a way to re-establish peace in this brother country;

The necessary consensus for a military attack against Iraq has not been reached within the Security Council;

***WE HEREBY AGREE***

1. To strongly condemn attacks against the civilian population, in accordance with the principles of international humanitarian law.
2. To repudiate those acts of violence that cause losses of human lives, and threaten the peace, the integration and the cooperation of the peoples of the Americas.
3. To seek solidarity from the International Community for the countries of the Americas that are victims of domestic and international terrorism.
4. To urge the people of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, as well its authorities, to reach, through dialogue and the respect of differences, an understanding leading to a broad national agreement whose objective shall be the strengthening of democracy, the respect of institutions and the peaceful coexistence of the people.
5. To urge all organizations working to promote democracy to support the efforts of the Table of Dialogue, Negotiation and Agreements.
6. To urge the authorities of the Iraqi government to cooperate with the missions of the United Nations Organization and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).
7. To remind in a respectful manner the Heads of State and Government, and more specifically the government of the United States, of the existence of diplomatic means and instruments in international law that oppose the improper use of force.
8. To transmit the present Declaration to the congresses and parliamentary assemblies of the unitary, federal, federated and associated States, regional parliaments and interparliamentary organizations of the Americas, as well as to Their Excellencies the Presidents of the Republics that take part in the Parliamentary Confederation of the Americas.

Margarita Island, Venezuela, February 23, 2003

7. Place, date and theme of the Fifth General Assembly of the COPA

The Fifth General Assembly of the COPA, will be held in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, at the end of November 2003, and its main theme will be the proposal to create the Parliament of the Americas.

8. Swearing-in ceremony and transmission of the Presidency

The swearing-in ceremony and the transmission of the Presidency was carried out at the Legislative Council of the State of Nueva Esparta – Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela.

9. Closing Ceremony

The closing ceremony was organized by the State of Nueva Esparta of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, along with the Tourism Corporation of this State. As well, among its distinguished guests, the ceremony was attended by the First Lady of the State of Lara, Mrs. Milagros de Reyes, who presented handicraft exhibitions and typical folkloric dances of the region.