



RESOLUTION RESPECTING ELECTORAL OBSERVATION MISSIONS

Meeting of the Executive Committee of the Parliamentary Confederation of the Americas (COPA)

Brasília, Brazil, March 22 to 26, 2004

The members of the Executive Committee of the Parliamentary Confederation of the Americas (COPA), meeting in Brasília, Brazil, cognizant of the significance of the process of democratic transition that the majority of our countries are experiencing and the risk of regression into authoritarianism, fully intend to make known their position in the present resolution:

WHEREAS:

1. Democracy is a value fundamental to the coexistence of all peoples;
2. One of the principal missions of the Parliamentary Confederation of the Americas (COPA) is to contribute to strengthening parliamentary democracy and constructing a community of the Americas based on peace and social justice;
3. COPA has always encouraged strengthening the rule of law and respect for human rights;
4. COPA recognizes that political rights are considered by the political community as fundamental rights and as manifestations of the will of the public in favour of the election of the leaders of societies;
5. Political rights are considered to be fundamental human rights, as they enable individuals to play a decisive role in the election process and in the process of renewing public authority;
6. Electoral observation is a means of fostering credible electoral processes and ensuring, through the election of representatives who have received popular legitimacy, greater respect for human rights;
7. Democracy is a type of political system that requires ongoing support and efforts in order to solidify its structure and processes;
8. Social inequalities discourage an environment that is conducive to consolidating democracy

In light of the preceding, the Executive Committee of the Parliamentary Confederation of the Americas hereby resolves to:

RESOLUTION:

1. Prompt our governments to advocate a progressive form of good governance aimed at gathering, handling, and incorporating the requirements of citizens into governmental action, promoting such requirements as criteria for action based on collective utility.
2. Make the parliaments of our countries aware of the significance of the process of reforming the government as a means of achieving good governance, in particular by establishing effective institutions of checks and balances that will enable parliamentarians, the elected representatives of the citizens of the Americas, to maintain effective control over executive authority.
3. Notify the parliaments of the Americas that the core of reform rests not only upon the effectiveness of government, but also on the protection accorded to the minorities of society and, above all, on the establishment of a set of checks on potential excesses of public authority by means of the full and unrestricted exercise of human, individual, and social rights.
4. Promote the expansion of the bases of citizen participation by implementing broader forms of consultation processes and by avoiding despotic and clientelist practices.
5. Encourage efforts to bring citizens closer to the electoral processes and the institutions responsible for such processes.
6. Promote and support programs that civil society organizations put in place to encourage electoral observation, civic education, and government reform.
7. Ensure, during the conduct of electoral observation missions, that the host country authorize and facilitate the travels of observers over the entire national territory and, to that end, request from the electoral authority with whom they are accredited all relevant information from the perspective of facilitating their activities.
8. Implement a Parliamentarian Electoral Observer Program under the auspices of COPA, to be governed by a by-law to that effect adopted by the Permanent Working Thematic Committee on Democracy and Peace and the Executive Committee of COPA.