



**Foro Interparlamentario de las Américas
Fórum Interparlamentar das Américas**

**Inter-Parliamentary Forum of the Americas
Forum interparlementaire des Amériques**

Report of the Inaugural Meeting

Ottawa, March 7-9, 2001

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REPORT

Introduction

At the invitation of the Parliament of Canada, the Inaugural Meeting of the Inter-Parliamentary Forum of the Americas (FIPA) was held in Ottawa, Canada from March 7 to 9, 2001.

The Inaugural Meeting was opened on Wednesday, March 7, 2001 at a special ceremony held in the Chamber of the House of Commons of Canada. Delegates, accompanying persons, members of the diplomatic corp and other invited guests gathered for this historic event. Mr. Bill Graham, Member of the House of Commons; the Honourable Peter Milliken, Speaker of the House of Commons; the Honourable Daniel Hays, Speaker of the Senate; His Excellency Luigi Einaudi, Assistant Secretary General of the Organization of the American States and the Honourable Herb Gray, Deputy Prime Minister of Canada made remarks.

The Inaugural Meeting was attended by 111 delegates from the national legislatures of 26 member countries of the Organization of American States (*See Appendix 1 for the list of countries and delegates attending*).

The Opening Plenary

The Opening Plenary began on Thursday morning March 8, 2001 in the Chamber of the House of Commons. Mr. Bill Graham welcomed delegates and reviewed the Rules of Conduct for the Meeting as prepared by the Steering Committee.

Mr. Bill Graham was elected the Chair for the Inaugural Meeting of the Inter-Parliamentary Forum of the Americas.

The Chair of the Inaugural Meeting reviewed the draft agenda and the assignments to the three Working Groups.

The delegates considered a motion to constitute the Inter-Parliamentary Forum of the Americas. After a positive and meaningful discussion the meeting unanimously agreed to the motion and to the creation of the FIPA (*See Appendix 2 for the text of the motion*).

The delegates examined the proposed Regulations, as previously considered and recommended by the Steering Committee. The Chair of the Inaugural Meeting advised the meeting that the Steering Committee was proposing additional amendments resulting from its meeting of Wednesday, March 7, 2001. Further consideration of the Regulations was deferred until the Final Plenary Session.

The Working Groups

On Thursday afternoon March 8 and Friday morning March 9, 2001 the delegates attended three working groups which met to discuss a number of subjects under the three themes of

- 1) Strengthening Democracy
- 2) Creating Prosperity
- 3) Realizing Human Potential

Working Group 1 – Strengthening Democracy began its discussions on Thursday afternoon with Senator Antonio Guerra from Colombia in the Chair and the Honourable Sir Curtis Strachan, Speaker of the House of Representatives of Grenada, serving as the Rapporteur. The Thursday afternoon session concentrated solely on Corruption and Good Governance and resulted in the formulation of six recommendations, while Friday morning's session concentrated on Drugs and Crime and resulted in seven recommendations (*For the text of the Report of Working Group 1, with recommendations, see Appendix 3*).

Working Group 2 – Creating Prosperity was chaired by Senator Céline Hervieux-Payette of Canada. Mr. Alvaro Trejos, Chairman of the Costa Rican Foreign Affairs Committee acted as the Rapporteur. In their deliberations, delegates declared their support for the creation of a Free Trade Area of the Americas that effectively contributes to raising the standard of living of their people, improves equality of opportunities and contributes to the better distribution of wealth and democracy. A series of eleven recommendations were agreed to by the Working Group. Delegates also recommended that parliamentarians, as the representatives of the peoples of their countries, play a role in ensuring that economic integration initiatives fulfil the shared aspirations of economic progress and social development (*For the text of the Report of Working Group 2, with recommendations, see Appendix 4*).

Working Group 3 – Realizing Human Potential explored issues such as the importance of eradicating poverty, ensuring adequate education and health care to rural and urban communities and protecting the environment. The Chair of the Working Group, Senator Sylvia Hernández of Mexico, steered the working group through the discussions and guided the group towards its recommendations. Mr. Felipe Michelini of Uruguay, acted as the Rapporteur. The Working Group's recommendations were agreed to in an atmosphere of cooperation. (*For the text of the Report of Working Group 2, with recommendations, see Appendix 4*).

The Final Plenary

The Final Plenary Session of the Inaugural Meeting took place in the Chamber of the House of Commons on Friday afternoon, March 9, 2001. The delegates resumed consideration of the proposed Regulations. After further discussion the meeting unanimously adopted the Regulations which will govern the operations of the Forum (*See Appendix 6 for the text of the Regulations*).

The Rapporteurs of the three Working Groups presented written reports and recommendations to the Final Plenary Session. After further discussion the reports were received and the recommendations were adopted by the Plenary Session.

A proposal from the Delegation of Mexico to reach a basic agreement on parliamentary cooperation, information sharing and financing was presented. It was agreed that the matter be referred to the Executive Committee of further examination.

A resolution was presented by the Delegation of Guatemala requesting that the FIPA express its support for the continuance of democratic government in that country. After discussion the resolution was adopted (*See Appendix 7 for the text of the resolution*).

A resolution from the Delegation of Colombia on the armed conflict enveloping that country was presented. After discussion the resolution was adopted (*See Appendix 8 for the text of the resolution*).

Election of the Executive Committee

The meeting unanimously adopted a motion that Mr. Bill Graham, Member of the House of Commons of Canada be elected the Chair of the Inter-Parliamentary Forum of the Americas.

In accordance with Regulation 2.3 (b), (j) and (k) the following subregional countries were elected to the Executive Committee.

- North America -- Canada for 1 year and Mexico for 2 years
- Central America – Guatemala for 1 year and El Salvador for 2 years
- Caribbean – Grenada for 1 year and Barbados for 2 years
- South America – Colombia for 1 year and Argentina for 2 years

Host of the Next Meeting

The Delegation of Mexico agreed to a proposal that the Congress of Mexico would host the next meeting of the Inter-Parliamentary Forum in 2002. As a consequence and in accordance with Regulation 2.3 (b) Mexico as the host country of the next meeting places a representative on the Executive Committee.

The Delegation of Panama gave notice of its desire to host the meeting in the near future.

Report of the Inaugural Meeting

The Plenary Session instructed the Chair, in consultation with the Executive Committee, to prepare the Report of the Inaugural Meeting and that this Report be presented to hemispheric leaders at the Summit of the Americas to be held in Quebec City, Canada in April 2001.

Respectfully submitted,

Bill Graham,
Chair of the Inaugural Meeting

APPENDIX 1

COUNTRIES AND DELEGATES ATTENDING

Argentina

Marcelo Stubrin (Head of Delegation)
Senator Jorge Alfredo Agundez
Senator José Fernando Carbonnel
Edgardo Grosso

Barbados

Senator Jessica Odle
Louis R. Tull, M.P.

Belize

Hon. Elizabeth Zabaneh, President of the Senate
Hon. Sylvia Flores, Speaker of the House of Representatives

Bolivia

Rosario Barriga de Yañez
Jorge Alberto Sensano Zárate
Luis Morgan López Baspineiro

Brazil

Luiz Carlos Hauly
Sérgio Reis
Antonio Feijao
Pedro Valadares
Paulo Gabriel Godinho Delgado

Canada

Senator Céline Hervieux-Payette (Head of Delegation)
Senator Sheila Finestone
Bill Graham, Chair of the Inaugural Meeting
Raymonde Folco
Mac Harb
Francine Lalonde
Yvan Loubier
Pat O'Brien
Denis Paradis
Bernard Patry
Svend Robinson
Stéphan Tremblay
Bryon Wilfert
John Williams

Chile

Senator Sergio Romero
Senator Jorge Pizarro
Carlos Abel Jarpa Wevar

Colombia

Senator Antonio del Cristo Guerra de la Espriella
Senator Guillermo Chavez Cristancho
Nancy Patricia Gutierrez Castañedo

Costa Rica

Alvaro Trejos Fonseca
Ricardo Sancho Chavarría
Rodolfo Salas Salas
Elbert Gómez Céspedes

Dominica

Loreen Bannis Roberts
Ian Douglas

Ecuador

Antonio Posso Salgado
Hugo Moreno Romero
Galo Larenas Serrano

El Salvador

Ruben Orellana (Head of Delegation)
Alfonso Arístides Alvarenga
Manuel Oscar Aparicio
Martha Lilian Coto de Cuéllar
Nelson Funes
Osmín López Escalante
Julio Eduardo Moreno Niños
Miguel Angel Navarrete
Carlos Armando Reyes

Grenada

Hon. Sir Curtis V. Strachan, Speaker of the House of Representatives

Guatemala

Mario Roberto Chang Bravo
Gustavo Ernesto Lang González
Joel Martínez
Giovanni Estrada Zaparolli

Haiti

Senator Gérard Pierre Michel Renard
Danize Alexis
Lyonel Étienne
Kécèd Joseph
Sylveste Lundor

Honduras

Soad Salomon de Facussé
Ramon Adolfo Villeda Bermudez

Jamaica

Hon. Syringa Marshall-Burnett, President of the Senate
Hon. Phyllis Mitchell, Minister of State

Mexico

Senator Silvia Hernández Enríquez (Head of Delegation)
Senator Hector Michel Camarena
Senator Raymundo Cárdenas
Senator Alberto Miguel Martínez Mireles
Senator Cecilia Romero Castillo
Senator María del Carmen Ramírez García
Senator Héctor Osuna Jaime
Silvia Alvarez Bruneliere
Hortencia Aragón
Ildefonso Guajardo Villarreal
Tarcisio Navarrete Montes de Oca
Beatriz Paredes Rangel
Genoveva Domínguez Rodríguez
Gregorio Urias
Raúl Cervantes Andrade
Edwardo Martinez

Nicaragua

Carlos Fonseca Terán
José Damicis Sirias Vargas

Panama

Marco Antonio Ameglio Samudio
Héctor Alemán Estevez
José Isabel Blandón Figueroa
José Ismael Herrera Gonzalez

Peru

Ricardo Marcenaro Frers
Manuel Masias Oyanguren

Saint Lucia

Hon. Hilford Deterville, Speaker of the Senate
Hon. Matthew Roberts, Speaker of the House of Assembly

Suriname

Radjkoemar Randjietsingh (Head of Delegation)
Soedeshchand Jairam
Ronny Legirin Tamsiran

United States of America

Cass Ballenger

Uruguay

Senator Alberto Couriel
Senator Juan Adolfo Singer
Carlos González Alvarez
Felipe Michelini

Venezuela

Leopoldo Pucchi
Rafael Correa Flores
Alfonso Marquina
Abel Oropeza
Danilo Pérez Monagas
Noeli Pocaterra
Desirée Santos Amaral
Amalla Sáez
Néstor López Rodríguez

APPENDIX 2

MOTION TO CONSTITUTE THE INTER-PARLIAMENTARY FORUM OF THE AMERICAS

We, parliamentarians of the Americas gathered here in Ottawa, Canada on March 8, 2001 being dedicated to the establishment of a permanent forum composed of delegations representing the national legislatures of the Member States of the Organization of American States (OAS), and with a purpose of promoting parliamentary participation in the inter-American system and to contributing to inter-parliamentary dialogue ;

Recognizing, that strengthening democracy, creating prosperity and realizing human potential are the hemisphere's most pressing priorities;

Convinced that inter-parliamentary dialogue is essential to hemispheric cooperation and to the achievement of these priorities;

Hereby, resolve to come together to establish the Inter-Parliamentary Forum of the Americas.

Adopted unanimously on March 8, 2001

APPENDIX 3

Working Group 1 Strengthening Democracy

GOOD GOVERNANCE AND CORRUPTION

The Working Group's two sessions were carried out in an atmosphere of cordiality and enthusiasm, with broad participation by the thirty-odd parliamentarians in attendance. In the first session, there was consensus that corruption is a serious systemic problem that undermines the operation and legitimacy of institutions in all the countries. The participants also related their experiences in the fight against corruption, with emphasis on legislation adopted in their countries and other legislative efforts to counter this phenomenon. The Working Group reached the following conclusions on the theme of governance and corruption:

- 1) Political institutions need to be strengthened and made more transparent and independent. There is a need to reduce monopolies and concentrations of power, as well as the degree of discretion of public servants, and to increase the independence and capacity of oversight bodies, especially the judiciary.
- 2) The oversight function of parliament needs to be strengthened, for example, in the monitoring of budgetary implementation. As well, it is important to exercise internal control of parliaments and of government agencies, including agencies that handle significant resources, such as customs administrations and tax-collecting agencies.
- 3) The media and civil-society organizations have a central role to play in combating corruption, mainly as watchdogs over government actions, but they must act responsibly and objectively.
- 4) Education systems have an important role to play in the promotion of ethics and democratic values and practices, as a preventive measure against corruption.
- 5) Given the increasing transnationality of this phenomenon, it is important to achieve inter-parliamentary cooperation for the harmonization of laws against corruption such as the Inter-American Convention against Corruption, and also on the funding of election campaigns and political parties.

RECOMMENDATIONS

On the basis of the various points made by the Group's participants, the following recommendations are proposed:

- 1) Promote in our societies, through the education system, the ethical and moral values that underpin a democratic political culture, with special emphasis on education programs for children and youth.

- 2) Promote the use of the new information and telecommunication technologies to ensure greater transparency in the operation of governmental institutions and in processes for government procurement and for the framing, implementation and evaluation of public policies.
- 3) Adopt and enforce codes of ethics for parliamentarians and for other public servants at all levels. Likewise, urge the media to adopt their own codes of professional ethics.
- 4) Make the necessary decisions to ratify anti-corruption cooperation treaties, especially the Inter-American Convention, and bring national legislation into line with them.
- 5) Harmonize inter-American legislation so as to make viable extradition proceedings against all persons convicted of corruption and fugitives from justice.
- 6) Encourage legislative initiatives that ensure the legality of electoral processes and transparency in the funding of political parties and election campaigns.
- 7) Establish, under FIPA, a permanent anti-corruption working group, taking into account the experiences of other organizations in this field.

Drugs and Crime

The Working Group, after a cordial and well-informed debate on drug trafficking and crime, acknowledged the transnational nature of the drug problem and recognized that it is shared problem with a shared responsibility among the countries in the Hemisphere. The participants related their experiences in their fight against drug trafficking and crime with emphasis on the high social costs that it brings on their countries. The Working Group reached the following conclusions on the theme of drug trafficking and crime:

1. Drug trafficking cannot be solved on solely a national basis but instead international cooperation is essential for combating the problem. In this regard, greater cooperation is needed between supply and demand countries as well as those countries who find themselves in-transit from the supplying country to the consuming country.
2. Multilateral rather than unilateral evaluation mechanisms are the most effective manner to identify and address the problems that exist and to find solutions to them.
3. Measures to combat the drug problem should also include efforts to address societal costs.
4. Alternate development programs are essential for the solution to the drug problem, but there is a need to examine their societal impact as well.
5. The spillover effects on a country due to the pursuit of legitimate drug policies by a neighbouring country are acknowledged and should be addressed on an international basis.

RECOMMENDATIONS

On the basis of the various points made the Group's participants, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. Enhance efforts on an international basis to address the clear link between supply and demand, as it is a shared responsibility among the countries of the Hemisphere.
2. Although strong law enforcement measures are needed to combat the drug problem, emphasize the need to find solutions to the social costs drugs place on a country.
3. Promote greater international cooperation, especially by consumer countries, to ensure the success of alternative development programs for crops, as it is an essential component for the fight against drug trafficking.
4. Harmonize legislation especially in regards to seizures and confiscation of proceeds of money laundering and in the international trafficking of firearms and chemical precursors. Likewise, efforts should be undertaken to ratify and implement the pertinent international agreements that are in place for the combat against drugs.
5. Encourage initiatives to address the spillover effects of drug trafficking on countries due to legitimate policies being undertaken by their neighbour countries and encourage international cooperation among those affected.
6. Recognize that the most effective manner to confront the drug problem is not through unilateral methods, but rather through multilateral evaluation mechanisms conducted by international organizations that encourage mutual confidence, dialogue, cooperation and collaboration.
7. To strengthen, through education at all levels, the principles and values that will discourage the consumption of narcotics and will effectively combat the drug problem and organized crime.

APPENDIX 4

Working Group 2 Creating Prosperity

1. Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA)

We Parliamentarians of the Americas,

Support the creation of a Free Trade Area of the Americas that effectively contributes to raising standards of living of our people, improve equality of opportunities, better the distribution of wealth and democracy.

2. Role of Parliamentarians

Believing that without real and effective participation and support from Parliaments economic integration initiatives cannot fulfill the shared aspiration of economic progress and social development.

We Parliamentarians of the Americas,

Recommend that as representatives of people in the Americas, national legislatures play a key, effective and active role in the negotiations and signature of international trade agreements to enhance understanding and cooperation among our countries.

3. Non-tariff Barriers and agricultural subsidies

Convinced that the FTAA should contribute to the expansion of world trade without raising additional barriers to other countries and avoid the adoption of policies that adversely affect trade in the hemisphere.

We Parliamentarians of the Americas,

Recommend that the FTAA eliminate non-tariff barriers, as well as other measures of equivalent effects which constitute a means of arbitrary or unjustifiable discrimination between countries or a disguised restriction to international trade, in order to prevent protectionist practices and facilitate trade in the hemisphere;

Recommend the elimination of export subsidies and other trade distorting practices that affect agricultural products and derived products.

4. Quality of Life

Certain that the integration of the Americas should not be limited to exclusively commercial aspects but should be regarded as part of a collective effort to improve and strengthen democracy, to reduce poverty and discrimination in the hemisphere and to promote sustainable development;

We Parliamentarians of the Americas,

Recommend that the FTAA be based on a convergence of political, economic and social values and complemented with actions to improve the quality of life of our peoples. This could be achieved through a social charter or parallel labor and environment agreement that enhance social development.

5. Transparency

Noting that transparency in the FTAA negotiations constitutes a crucial element to broaden public understanding and support for the FTAA.

We Parliamentarians of the Americas,

Recommend that to take into account the interest and concerns of different sectors of society FTAA negotiations be conducted in a transparent manner to ensure mutual advantage and increased benefits to all participants of the FTAA, and

Call on our governments to consider making available to Parliamentarians the draft text of the FTAA agreement.

6. Differences in the level of development

Aware of the differences in the level of development and size of the economies in the Hemisphere and the challenges that a process like the FTAA represents to all participating countries;

We Parliamentarians of the Americas,

Recommend that special attention be given to the needs, economic conditions and opportunities of smaller economies, to ensure their full participation in the construction and benefits of the FTAA process, and to increase their level of development.

7. Dispute Settlement

Recognizing the value of an agreement with clear, stable, transparent and binding rules, including negotiated mechanisms for dispute settlement;

We Parliamentarians of the Americas,

Recommend that to increase and broaden the benefits of the FTAA a fair, transparent and effective mechanism for dispute settlement be established to settle disputes among FTAA countries.

8. WTO and Regional Agreements

Cognizant of the important role of bilateral and sub-regional agreements in the integration process of the hemisphere and of our commitment to the global, rules based trading system under the WTO;

We Parliamentarians of the Americas,

Recommend that the FTAA coexist with bilateral and sub-regional agreements and be consistent with the rules and disciplines of the WTO.

9. Cultural Diversity

Realizing the growing importance of cultural diversity and identity in an increasingly globalized world and that cultural diversity is integral to social cohesion, human development, peaceful coexistence, democratic participation, citizen engagement, and the prosperity of societies;

Aware that the preservation of cultural heritage and its creative use in social and economic development is an important component of sustainable development and is essential in building participation, prosperity and security for the people of the Americas:

We Parliamentarians of the Americas,

Recommend to protect and promote the unique role that cultural goods and services play in the identity and diversity of society and the lives of individuals;

Call on the communities of the Americas to work together to encourage national and international dialogue toward action in support of culture as a fundamental element of human life in the 21st century.

10. Debt Reduction

Whereas debt reduction of unsustainable debt levels is essential for poor countries to be able to share in the promise of increased prosperity that is the *raison d'être* of free-trade agreements;

We Parliamentarians of the Americas,

Recommend to any governments, that in case of major disaster, a special fund should be erected to help in the reconstruction of essential services to the population affected and a temporary relief of debt repayment should be awarded;

Recommend that the developed countries of the Western Hemisphere continue to pursue initiatives targeted at the developing countries in the Hemisphere as a means of allowing all countries to fully share in the benefits of a Free Trade Area of the Americas.

Consider necessary to seek alternative ways of negotiating debt reduction for developing countries through multiple mechanisms, such as exchange of debt for natural resources or social development, in order to support better financial conditions and protection of the environment.

11. Financing Development

Recognizing the importance of identifying additional sources of financing and support for development, based on accessible conditions to countries, and to promote the development of disadvantaged regions and social groups in order to bridge the gap between rich and poor regions;

We Parliamentarians of the Americas

Recommend the creation of a compensation fund or other mechanism that promotes direct investment and makes the integration process viable.

Acknowledging that migration of workers is a problem that may arise due to the lack of opportunities in their country of origin;

We Parliamentarians of the Americas

Recommend immigration policies from developed countries that fully respect human rights allowing flexible transit of people.

APPENDIX 5

Working Group 3 Realizing Human Potential

Background Considerations

There was broad consensus at the meeting that the aim of government authorities, and especially of the legislative powers in the hemisphere, should be to eradicate poverty on the continent in its ethical, political and social ramifications.

The poverty and marginalization imposed on millions of citizens violates the dignity inherent in every human being. This situation is especially serious in the case of women, children, seniors, indigenous communities, rural populations and marginal urban concentrations.

Furthermore, there is broad agreement that the parliamentarians of the Americas should work together to reduce poverty and its impact, without losing sight of the fact that it is not only the fault of material elements.

Accordingly, improving the quality of life of our peoples is directly related to sustained efforts to combat poverty, increase education and strengthen cultures, generate employment in adequate conditions in a framework of acceptable minimum levels of food, health, housing and clothing for the whole population.

Moreover, the creation of prosperity will be reflected in the achievement of a new generation of workers with higher levels of schooling to gain access to better opportunities and higher incomes.

The condition of poverty is often the result of a multiplicity of factors, and there is often a close relationship between unstable political systems and weak institutions, along with endemic corruption, inequity in the redistribution of wealth, deterioration of the terms of trade and situations of poverty, linked to nonrespect for economic, social and cultural rights.

International cooperation based on the mutual interest of states, coupled with processes of integration, such as free-trade initiatives, must lead to improvement of economic competitiveness, especially in less-developed countries, without forgetting that the aim must be to improve the people's quality of life.

Finally, the focal point and aim of all public policy must be the welfare of the people. Elected representatives of the people, congresses and parliaments of the Americas, as well as FIPA, should see that this goal is achieved.

Likewise, poverty is closely related to deterioration of the environment. Economic-development policies should be harmonized with care of the environment within the framework of sustainable-development policies.

Failure to achieve anti-poverty goals will have a negative repercussion on the environment.

In fact, poverty leads to irrational use of resources in order to meet the basic needs of the poorest populations.

Infrastructure works, territorial organization and transportation contribute to the quality of life and must contribute to sustainable development.

Depletion of a nation's natural heritage affects not only the country in which this takes place but also mankind as a whole, since future generations will not be able to benefit from these natural goods exhausted by irrational use.

It is necessary to encourage the involvement of civil society in matters related to sustainable development and the environment. This requires political efforts that lead to public awareness and training and education on environmental issues. Such efforts should be promoted not only at all levels of government, but also at all levels of civil society.

Preservation of the environment is a common theme of mankind, and national and international policies must include penalties and incentives that reward discipline in preservation of the environment.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In the light of these considerations, we make the following recommendations:

1. We commit ourselves to proposing bold, concrete and effective initiatives in the search for solutions to the problem of poverty. We will work to optimize the efficiency of the oversight role of the administration and of the executive power; and we will take decisive action to promote a frontal assault on poverty, using, for example, a better and more suitable budgetary allotment aimed at social equity.
2. We will work to strengthen the role of the political parties, civil society and the local levels in the search for solutions that address the structural and endemic causes of poverty.
3. We will promote well-rounded development based on equity and social inclusiveness which, while recognizing cultural diversity, overcomes conditions that entrench and reproduce situations of poverty as well as economies dependent on a single product, by establishing specific policies and programs for each vulnerable sector, zone or population.
4. We recognize that, at the national level, parliamentarians can play a decisive role, increasing opportunities for poor and marginalized people through legal mechanisms that enable less-favored sectors to take advantage of new economic opportunities and to overcome the lack of connections, information, knowledge or credit. The key to reducing poverty in the Americas is overcoming the high level of injustice. Accordingly, we commit ourselves to strengthening institutional relations at the international level, and to exchanging knowledge and experience in the struggle to reduce poverty.

5. We affirm that FIPA should be an instrument for exchanging experiences and capacities as well as a forum for group thinking, using the modern technological means to assume a proactive approach to the reduction and eradication of poverty and to encourage the governments of the Americas to establish public policies for sustainable development, with the support of international organizations.

Likewise, we commit ourselves to promoting cooperation between national governments and international agencies, with a view to exchanging replicable experiences in environmental matters and creating effective legal and regulatory frameworks.

6. We commit ourselves to promoting quality education that is relevant and equitable, and that promotes values and respect for the cultural identity of peoples.

APPENDIX 6

INTER-PARLIAMENTARY FORUM OF THE AMERICAS

REGULATIONS

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INTER-PARLIAMENTARY FORUM OF THE AMERICAS

REGULATIONS

The *Inter-Parliamentary Forum of the Americas (FIPA)* is governed by the rules and procedures set out in these Regulations:

Chapter I

NATURE AND OBJECTIVES

1. Nature

The Inter-Parliamentary Forum of the Americas (FIPA) is an independent network composed of the national legislatures of the member States of the Organization of American States (OAS), whose purpose is to promote parliamentary participation in the inter-American system and to contribute to inter-parliamentary dialogue in dealing with issues on the hemispheric agenda, pursuant to Resolution 1673/99 of the OAS General Assembly.

2. Objectives

The Inter-Parliamentary Forum of the Americas has the following objectives:

- (a) To contribute to the development of inter-parliamentary dialogue in dealing with issues on the hemispheric agenda.
- (b) To increase the sharing of experiences, dialogue, and inter-parliamentary cooperation on issues of common interest to the member States.
- (c) To help strengthen the role of the legislative branch in democracy and in the promotion and defence of democracy and human rights
- (d) To promote the harmonization of legislation and development of legislation among member States.
- (e) To contribute to the process of integration as one of the most appropriate instruments for sustainable and harmonious development in the hemisphere.

Chapter II

COMPOSITION

- (a) The FIPA comprises the national legislatures of the OAS member States.

- (b) The national legislatures in States with credited OAS observer status will be considered Permanent Observers of the FIPA. The observer states may also be invited to attend Plenary Meetings of the FIPA.
- (c) The subregional and special parliaments in the hemisphere may be considered Special Observers to the FIPA. The special observer members may also be invited to attend Plenary Meetings of the FIPA.
- (d) The Plenary Meeting may confer, upon request, special observer status on parliaments or congresses in other hemispheres, as well as international agencies whose objectives and principles are consistent with those of the FIPA.

Chapter III

ORGANIZATION AND FUNCTIONING

1. Organization

- (a) The FIPA will meet at least once a year.
- (b) The Plenary Meeting shall determine which parliament will host the next Plenary Meeting based on invitations offered.
- (c) The country hosting the Plenary Meeting and the Technical Support Secretariat will make the necessary preliminary arrangements for the meeting, including coordinating the tentative agenda of the meeting in consultation with the Executive Committee.
- (d) The cost of organizing each meeting will be borne by the host parliament.
- (e) The participants will be responsible for the expenses incurred to attend the event.

2. Structure

The Inter-Parliamentary Forum of the Americas will consist of five bodies: a Plenary Meeting, a Chair, an Executive Committee, a Technical Secretariat, and Working Groups.

2.1. Plenary Meeting

The Plenary Meeting is the FIPA's highest body and will meet every year. The host country's parliament will make the necessary arrangements for the meeting in consultation with the Executive Committee and with the help of the Technical Secretariat.

- (a) Delegations will be composed of representatives of national legislatures of the OAS member states; be chosen by the accredited national parliament or congress; have up to five members of parliament / congress (this limit does not apply to the host parliament), and; that insofar as possible delegations should represent diverse political parties / groups in each participating legislature, shall have representatives of both chambers in bicameral legislatures and should have female participation.
- (b) The agenda of the Plenary Meeting shall be approved by the Plenary recommendation of the Executive Committee.

- (c) The Plenary Meeting shall make their recommendations on the hemispheric agenda known to the OAS General Assembly, the Presidential Summits of the Americas, the National Legislatures of the Organization's Member States, and other such bodies as the Plenary Meeting should decide to inform.

2.2. Chair of the Plenary Meeting

The Chair of the Plenary Meeting shall be a member of the host parliament and will be elected by the Plenary Meeting.

2.3. Executive Committee

The Executive Committee shall be responsible for carrying out the activities entrusted to it by the FIPA Plenary Meeting.

- (a) The members of the Executive Committee shall be active members of their respective national parliaments.
- (b) The Executive Committee shall be composed of the Chair of the FIPA, one representative from each of the subregions and one representative of the country hosting the next Plenary Meeting.
- (c) The Plenary Meeting shall elect a Chair to represent the FIPA and to serve as Chair of the Executive Committee. The Chair shall be elected for a period of two years and may be reelected only once.
- (d) Meetings of the Executive Committee shall be presided over by the Chair of the FIPA.
- (e) The Executive Committee may consider requests to have supplementary items added to the agenda.
- (f) The Executive Committee shall meet at least once a year, and shall provide support to the country hosting the Plenary Meeting.
- (g) If the Chair resigns, dies, or becomes ineligible to occupy the position because he/she is no longer a member of parliament, the Executive Committee shall elect an interim Chair as a temporary replacement until the next meeting of the Plenary.
- (h) If any member of the Executive Committee becomes unable to carry out his/her duties because of resignation, death, or loss of status as a member of the parliament, legislature, or congress of his/her country, the national delegation to which such member belongs shall appoint an alternate member to serve out the remainder of the term until the next Plenary Meeting.
- (i) The member countries of the Executive Committee may be reappointed.
- (j) For purposes of observing a balance in regional representation, the hemisphere shall be divided into the following four subregions:

- North America: The United States, Canada, and Mexico.
 - Central America: Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, Panama and the Dominican Republic.
 - Caribbean: Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Cuba, Dominica, Haiti, Jamaica, Belize, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, Suriname, Guyana, the Bahamas, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Grenada and Trinidad and Tobago.
 - South America: Colombia, Bolivia, Peru, Ecuador, Venezuela, Paraguay, Uruguay, Chile, Argentina and Brazil.
- (k) Each subregion shall be free to decide on the method of its choice for electing members to the Executive Committee.
- (l) Each member of the Executive Committee shall serve for a period of two years, subject to the following conditions:
- One half of the members of the Committee will stand for reelection every year.
 - The term of a member of the Executive Committee who represents the country hosting the Plenary Meeting shall run from the month after the previous annual meeting until the month of the year in which the Plenary Meeting takes place in that country.

The Executive Committee shall have the following functions:

1. The Executive Committee may submit recommendations to the Plenary Meeting with respect to items on the hemispheric agenda that the FIPA wishes to discuss or with respect to the administrative policy of the FIPA.
2. The Executive Committee shall coordinate, in conjunction with the host country of the Plenary Meeting and the Technical Support Secretariat, the draft agenda and the Plenary Meeting's timetable for discussing/dealing with the matters considered necessary for the meeting.
3. The Executive Committee shall advise the Plenary Meeting host country on matters considered important for the meeting.
4. The Executive Committee shall accept requests from any country to participate as Observers at the Forum, and shall submit recommendations on such requests at the next meeting of the Plenary.

2.4. Technical Secretariat

The Technical Secretariat shall provide technical assistance to the Chair, the Executive Committee, and other members of the FIPA in the implementation of the Plenary Meeting's decisions and on the

follow-up of the recommendations. The Secretariat shall also assist the host country in organizing the Plenary Meeting and serve as the FIPA's institutional memory.

- (a) The Technical Secretariat shall have the following functions:
1. To provide technical assistance to the Chair of the FIPA, the Executive Committee, and other members of the FIPA in implementing the recommendations of the Plenary Meeting.
 2. To collaborate with the working groups to prepare documentation, conduct research, and pursue the other matters on which it is to report.
 3. To report annually to the Executive Committee on the work and activities completed during the year. This report will be forwarded to the Plenary Meeting for approval.
 4. To coordinate the organization and conduct of the meeting with the Executive Committee and the host country.
 5. To serve as secretariat for Plenary Meetings.
 6. To take and record the minutes and process documentation emanating from the Plenary, the Executive Committee, and the Working Groups.
 7. To administer and update the FIPA web page.
 8. To serve as FIPA's institutional memory.
 9. To conduct, at the request of national legislatures, comparative studies and projects on legislative harmonization.
 10. To keep national legislatures informed of the status of ratification of international treaties and agreements.
 11. To implement and coordinate an interparliamentary network.
 12. To inform the Permanent Council on Forum activities.
- (b) In order to carry out these functions, the Technical Secretariat will receive ongoing technical and logistical support from the Unit for the Promotion of Democracy (UPD) of the Organization of American States.

Adopted on March 9, 2001 in Ottawa, Canada

2.5. Working Groups

The Working Groups may be established by the Plenary Meeting on the recommendation of the Executive Committee or a member legislature to examine specific matters or carry out tasks such as drafting a joint communiqué at the end of the annual meeting or specific projects requested by the

Executive Committee. Such groups, when they are in session, shall establish their own priorities. Upon conclusion of their deliberations, they shall report to the Plenary Meeting. Such reports on their work may be presented orally or in writing to the Plenary Meeting.

- (a) The Plenary Meeting may establish Working Groups.
- (b) The Plenary Meeting shall establish a Working Group in charge of drafting joint communiqués for consideration, approval and distribution at the end of the Plenary Meeting.
- (c) In their sessions, the Working Groups will establish their own priorities. When their discussions have concluded, they will report back to the Plenary.
- (d) The reports of the Executive Committee and the Working Groups may be presented orally or in writing to the Plenary Meeting.
- (e) Working Groups that meet outside the dates of the Plenary Meeting may meet via teleconferencing, the Internet or any other electronic means.

3. Procedures

- (a) The Chair of the FIPA will preside over the election of the Chair of the Plenary Meeting.
- (b) The Chair of the Meeting shall direct the work, ensuring that the rules are observed. Also, he/she shall open, adjourn and close the sessions, announce the results and declare the meeting closed.
- (c) If necessary, the Chair of the meeting may select or appoint alternate members to lead some sessions or Working Groups during the Plenary Meeting.
- (d) In giving the floor to participating delegates, the Chair of the meeting shall be guided by the terms of these FIPA Regulations.
- (e) The recommendations of the FIPA shall be approved by a majority consensus in the Plenary Meeting or Working Groups.
- (f) Each national delegation shall have two votes in the event that a recommendation or other matter require delegations to vote.
- (g) The Technical Secretariat shall request parliamentary delegates to submit papers or draft resolutions for discussion in the Plenary Meeting by a determined date.
- (h) Papers and draft resolutions shall be circulated to the participants in advance of the Plenary Meeting.
- (i) A participating delegate may address the Meeting only with the Chair's consent.
- (j) A participating delegate, with the Chair's consent, may speak on any matter on the agenda.
- (k) All matters not covered by these Regulations shall be decided by the Chair, acting on the recommendation of the Executive Committee.

APPENDIX 7

DECLARATION OF SUPPORT FOR THE DEMOCRATIC AND CONSTITUTIONAL GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF GUATEMALA

The delegates of the national legislatures represented in the Inter-Parliamentary Forum of the Americas (FIPA), currently being held in Ottawa, Canada:

Mindful that democratic processes must be strengthened to the utmost, particularly as instruments for the integration of the Western Hemisphere;

Reaffirm our firm conviction that the sovereign will of the people, as reflected in free elections, must be respected as the cornerstone for human development and peaceful coexistence;

We hereby resolve:

To express our support for the constitutional government of President Alfonso Portillo and the institutions that form part of the judicial framework of the Republic of Guatemala.

To repudiate any attempt to destabilize Guatemalan democracy, which will lead inexorably to instability throughout the Americas.

To urge the Guatemalan people to continue the democratization process which has as its sole objective attainment of the common good over private interests.

Adopted on March 9, 2001

APPENDIX 8

RESOLUTION SUBMITTED BY THE COLOMBIAN DELEGATION ON THE ARMED CONFLICT IN COLOMBIA

We, the parliamentarians meeting in Ottawa, Canada, at the Inter-Parliamentary Forum of the Americas, hereby declare our solidarity with the Colombian people in recognition of their efforts to find a political solution to the armed conflict enveloping that country. In keeping with our role, we offer the FIPA as a possible international forum in which the various parties to that conflict may meet for dialogue, peaceful exchanges and achievement of the understanding necessary to halt the severe acts of violence to which Colombian civil society is being subjected.

Adopted on March 9, 2001

REPORT

**STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING
September 14 and 15, 2000
Ottawa, Canada**

INTER-PARLIAMENTARY FORUM OF THE AMERICAS

STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING September 14 and 15, 2000 Ottawa, Canada

REPORT OF THE STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING

The First Steering Committee Meeting of the Inter-Parliamentary Forum of the Americas (FIPA) was held in Ottawa, Canada from September 14 to 15, 2000.

Participants from five countries attended the meeting. (*See Appendix I for the list of the participants*).

The meeting was held in an atmosphere of friendship and cooperation.

1. Opening Proceedings

The Steering Committee meeting was opened by the Canadian Co-Chairs.

2. Dates, Location and Program for the Inaugural Meeting of the Inter-Parliamentary Forum of the Americas

At the invitation of the Parliament of Canada, it was agreed that the Inaugural Meeting of the Inter-Parliamentary Forum of the Americas will be held from March 7 to 9, 2001 in Ottawa, Ontario, Canada.

The Steering Committee agreed to the following schedule in preparation for the Inaugural Meeting.

- 1) By the end of October, 2000 the official invitations will be sent out from the Parliament of Canada to the Parliaments / Congresses of all OAS Member States.
- 2) The names of the delegates selected be submitted to the host country by January 1st, 2001.
- 3) All theme papers, draft resolutions and written comments from member countries will be forwarded to the host country by January 1st, 2001. These documents will be distributed to participating countries.
- 4) The next meeting of the Steering Committee will be held in Valparaiso, Chile in early January, 2001.

3. Organizational Matters

The Steering Committee considered organizational matters and agreed to make the following recommendations:

- That delegations be composed of representatives of national legislatures of the OAS member states; be chosen by the accredited national parliament or congress; have up to five members of parliament / congress (this limit does not apply to the host parliament), and; that insofar as possible delegations should represent diverse political parties / groups in each participating legislature, shall have representatives of both chambers in bicameral legislatures and should have female participation.
- That the plenary sessions of the Inaugural Meeting be televised and that the media have access to the plenary sessions and working groups.

4. Constitution and Composition of FIPA, Rules of Procedure and the Nature of the Relationship between FIPA and the OAS.

- The Steering Committee examined the document “Organization and Rules of Procedure for the Inter-Parliamentary Forum of the Americas (FIPA)” prepared by the Unit for the Promotion of Democracy (UPD) of the OAS, and agreed that the Canadian Co-Chairs prepare a revised version of the UPD document as discussed at the meeting.
- The Steering Committee also agreed that it continue its examination of the UPD document, and that a recommendation, to be presented to the Inaugural Meeting, be made following its next meeting.

5. Agenda for the Inaugural Meeting

The Steering Committee considered discussion topics for the draft agenda for the Inaugural Meeting.

After discussion, the Steering Committee agreed to a draft agenda (*See Appendix II*), which will be finalized at its January 2001 meeting.

Attest this 15th day of September, 2000 at Ottawa, Canada.

Bill Graham, M.P.
Co-Chair
House of Commons of Canada

Hon. Céline Hervieux-Payette, P.C.
Co-Chair
The Senate of Canada

APPENDIX I

MEETING PARTICIPANTS

CANADA

Hon. Céline Hervieux-Payette, Senator

Mr. Bill Graham, M.P.

Mr. Richard Rumas, Meeting Secretary

CHILE

Senator Sergio Romero

Mr. Joaquin Palma

COLOMBIA

Senator Antonio Guerra

Mr. Julio Restrepo

COSTA RICA

Mr. Emanuel Ajoy Chan

Mr. Horacio Alvarado

GRENADA

Sir Curtis Strachan, Speaker

UNITED STATES

(Regrettably unable to attend)

APPENDIX II

DRAFT OF THE AGENDA FOR THE INAUGURAL MEETING

Opening Plenary Session

Organizational Matters

- Election of the Conference Chair and Deputy Chairs.
- Constitution and Composition of FIPA and the Rules of Procedure (to include the Nature of the Relationship between FIPA and the OAS).

Working Groups

Working Group 1 – Strengthening Democracy

- Corruption and Good Governance
- Participatory Democracy
- Drugs and Crime

Working Group 2 – Creating Prosperity

- Economic Integration and the FTAA
- Debt Relief

Working Group 3 – Realizing Human Potential

- Poverty Reduction
- Education and Health
- Aging Populations
- Environmental Protection

Final Plenary

- Reports from Working groups
- Adoption of resolutions
- Election of the Executive Committee
- Dates and location of next meeting of FIPA.

REPORT

**STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING
January 16 and 17, 2001
Valparaiso, Chile**

INTER-PARLIAMENTARY FORUM OF THE AMERICAS

STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING January 16 and 17, 2001 Valparaiso, Chile

REPORT OF THE STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING

The Second Steering Committee Meeting of the Inter-Parliamentary Forum of the Americas (FIPA) was held in Valparaiso, Chile from January 16 to 17, 2001.

Participants from five countries attended the meeting. (*See Appendix I for the list of the participants*).

The meeting was held in an atmosphere of friendship and cooperation.

1. Opening Proceedings

The Steering Committee meeting was opened by the Canadian Co-Chairs.

2. Update on the Arrangements for the Inaugural Meeting of the Inter-Parliamentary Forum of the Americas

The Canadian delegation provided an update on the arrangements, including the program of activities for the Inaugural Meeting.

3. Rules of Procedure

The Steering Committee reviewed the proposed Rules of Procedure as amended at the Steering Committee Meeting held in Ottawa in September 2000.

It was unanimously agreed,-That the draft Rules of Procedure be recommended for adoption at the Plenary Session of the Inter-Parliamentary Forum of the Americas to be held in Ottawa, Canada from March 7 to 9, 2001.

4. Agenda for the Inaugural Meeting

The Steering Committee considered the discussion topics for the draft agenda, for the Inaugural Meeting, as proposed at its First Meeting.

After discussion and review, the Steering Committee agreed to a final draft agenda (*See Appendix II*).

5. Rules of Conduct for Working Groups

The Steering Committee considered Rules of Conduct for the Working Groups and agreed to the following:

- That each agenda theme/subject be introduced by the Chair of the Working Group for no more than five (5) minutes.
- That interventions per delegate be limited to three (3) minutes.
- That the Working Groups may make recommendations to the Plenary Session.
- That Rapporteurs be allowed five (5) minutes to summarize the discussion items, and that the Rapporteurs prepare reports to the Final Plenary Meeting.

6. Other Matters

The Steering Committee agreed that as the Forum has not yet been constituted that all requests for Observer status be deferred and that the status of official guests be dealt with by the Steering Committee as required.

The Steering Committee considered an offer of assistance from the Unit for the Promotion of Democracy (UPD) of the Organization of American States and agreed to the following:

- That the UPD be requested to provide papers on issues related to the draft agenda and to subject matters before FIPA and the Summit, and that the UPD be requested to provide resources persons to the Working Groups at the Inaugural Meeting.

It was agreed,--That the Chair of the Inaugural Meeting in collaboration with the Steering Committee designate the Chairs and Rapporteurs for the three (3) Working Groups for the Inaugural Meeting.

7. Next Meeting of the Steering Committee

The Steering Committee agreed to meet again at 11:00 a.m. on Wednesday, March 7, 2001 in Ottawa, Canada

Attest this 17th day of January 2001 at Valparaiso, Chile.

Bill Graham, M.P.
Co-Chair
House of Commons of Canada

Hon. Céline Hervieux-Payette, P.C.
Co-Chair
The Senate of Canada

APPENDIX I

MEETING PARTICIPANTS

CANADA

Hon. Céline Hervieux-Payette, Senator

Mr. Bill Graham, M.P.

Mr. Richard Rumas, Meeting Secretary

CHILE

Senator Sergio Romero

Mr. Joaquin Palma

COLOMBIA

Senator Antonio Guerra

COSTA RICA

Mr. Alvaro Trejos

GRENADA

(Regrettably unable to attend)

UNITED STATES

Mr. Amo Houghton

APPENDIX II

DRAFT OF THE AGENDA FOR THE INAUGURAL MEETING

Opening Plenary Session

Organizational Matters

- Election of the Conference Chair.
- Constitution and Composition of FIPA and the adoption of the Rules of Procedure.

Working Groups

Working Group 1 – Strengthening Democracy

- Corruption and Good Governance
- Drugs and Crime

Working Group 2 – Creating Prosperity

- Economic Integration and the FTAA
- Debt Relief

Working Group 3 – Realizing Human Potential

- Poverty Reduction and Health
- Environmental Protection

Final Plenary

- Reports from Working Groups
- Adoption of recommendations
- Election of the Executive Committee
- Dates and location of next meeting of FIPA.

January, 2001

REPORT

**STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING
March 7, 2001
Ottawa, Canada**

INTER-PARLIAMENTARY FORUM OF THE AMERICAS

STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING

March 7, 2001
Ottawa, Canada

REPORT OF THE STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING

The Third Steering Committee Meeting of the Inter-Parliamentary Forum of the Americas (FIPA) was held in Ottawa, Canada on March 7, 2001.

Participants from five countries attended the meeting. (*See Appendix I for the list of the participants*).

The meeting was held in an atmosphere of friendship and cooperation.

1. Opening Proceedings

The Steering Committee meeting was opened by the Canadian Co-Chairs.

2. Update on the Arrangements for the Inaugural Meeting of the Inter-Parliamentary Forum of the Americas

The Canadian delegation provided a final update on the arrangements for the Inaugural Meeting.

3. Agenda for the Inaugural Meeting

The Steering Committee reviewed the draft agenda for the Inaugural Meeting.

After discussion and review, the Steering Committee agreed to a final draft agenda (*See Appendix II*).

4. Working Group Assignments

The Steering Committee reviewed the assignments to the Working Groups. It was noted that a Chair and a Rapporteur were still required for Working Group 3. It was agreed, that the Co-Chair, Mr. Bill Graham, would approach a number of delegations in order to fill the vacancies.

5. Amendments to the Draft Regulations

The Steering Committee reviewed the draft regulations and agreed to recommend the following amendments to the Plenary Meeting:

In Chapter III

1. Organization

- (a) The FIPA will meet at least once a year.
- (b) The Plenary Meeting shall determine which parliament will host the next Plenary Meeting based on invitations offered.

2.3 Executive Committee

- (b) The Executive Committee shall be composed of the Chair of the FIPA two representatives from each of the subregions and one representative of the country hosting the next Plenary Meeting. Subregional representatives may nominate an alternate if they are unable to attend a meeting of the Executive Committee.

Attest this 7th day of March 2001 at Ottawa, Canada.

Bill Graham, M.P.
Co-Chair
House of Commons of Canada

Hon. Céline Hervieux-Payette, P.C.
Co-Chair
The Senate of Canada

APPENDIX I

MEETING PARTICIPANTS

CANADA

Hon. Céline Hervieux-Payette, Senator

Mr. Bill Graham, M.P.

Mr. Richard Rumas, Meeting Secretary

CHILE

Senator Sergio Romero

COLOMBIA

Senator Antonio Guerra

COSTA RICA

Mr. Alvaro Trejos

GRENADA

Sir Curtis Strachan

UNITED STATES

(Regrettably unable to attend)

APPENDIX II

DRAFT OF THE AGENDA FOR THE INAUGURAL MEETING

Opening Plenary Session

Organizational Matters

- Election of the Conference Chair.
- Constitution and Composition of FIPA and the adoption of the Rules of Procedure.

Working Groups

Working Group 1 – Strengthening Democracy

- Corruption and Good Governance
- Drugs and Crime

Working Group 2 – Creating Prosperity

- Economic Integration and the FTAA
- Debt Relief

Working Group 3 – Realizing Human Potential

- Poverty Reduction and Health
- Environmental Protection

Final Plenary

- Reports from Working Groups
- Adoption of recommendations
- Election of the Executive Committee
- Dates and location of next meeting of FIPA.

March, 2001