



**SIXTH PLENARY MEETING OF  
THE INTER-PARLIAMENTARY FORUM OF THE AMERICAS (FIPA)**

OTTAWA, CANADA  
SEPTEMBER 13 TO 15, 2009

**PROSPERITY AND COOPERATION: A NEW AGENDA FOR THE AMERICAS**

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**FINAL REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS**  
**Fifth Meeting of the Group of Women Parliamentarians of the Americas**

*Original: French*

The Group of Women Parliamentarians of the Americas held its fifth meeting on September 13, 14 and 15 2009, in Ottawa, Canada, with the participation of men and women parliamentarians from Argentina, the Bahamas, Bolivia, Brazil, Canada, Colombia, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Grenada, Jamaica, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Saint Lucia, Suriname and Trinidad and Tobago. **The Honourable Céline Hervieux-Payette**, Canadian Senator and former President of FIPA, chaired the working sessions in replacement of Women's Group President Cecilia López, Senator of Colombia.

**PRESENTATION**

The presentation by our guest speaker, **the Honourable Lynn Holowesko, President of the Senate** of the Commonwealth of the Bahamas, highlighted the complementarity of men and women based on such factors as the biological makeup of their brains. She believes that each gender makes a contribution that will lead to an improved balance and optimal political governance in an increasingly complex society.

Ms. Holowesko pointed out that the Parliaments of the Americas are seeing slow progress in achieving equal representation of women, and that some countries have no elected women parliamentarians. She commented on a U.S. survey which found that women who were candidates in an election were likely to have the following characteristics: honesty, intelligence, openness to new ideas, and creativity. Survey respondents described female politicians as being more honest than male politicians.

Ms. Holowesko said that women in politics tend to focus more on educational and health issues. She suggested that women must start taking greater interest in defence, security, justice and the economy.

**DISCUSSIONS**

Several participants shared their opinions on how to eliminate or reduce the disparity in the number of women involved in the political process. Some countries have taken legislative measures regarding the selection of candidates from party lists, or have established quotas.



Young parliamentarians felt that the ideal is parity: nothing less than half the seats.

The majority of participants supported this goal. Some seemed to feel that there was no structural barrier preventing women from running for elected office. One participant was concerned that women's entry into the political arena would be to the detriment of children's education. He stated that women could choose whether to enter the fields of politics or economics, particularly since they make up the majority of students in the universities in many countries.

In terms of policies with a greater impact on women, participants called for the Church and the State to stay in their respective areas of activity, particularly with regard to reproductive technologies and termination of pregnancy.

Several participants expressed the desire for stronger legislation regarding family violence, rape and sexual abuse, and in particular, for increased international cooperation to punish offenders.

Lastly, participants noted that the media play a role in constructing barriers that prevent women from achieving equality in public life and went so far as to discriminate against them in some cases.

According to one participant, women parliamentarians should first develop a network of solidarity among all the women in their country. Women candidates have a responsibility to reach out to the women in their region in order to consult with them and inform them about the political process.

## **ELECTION**

The election of the president of the Group of Women Parliamentarians of the Americas took place during a special session, in the morning of September 15, 2009. Ms. Linda Machuca Moscoso, member of the National Assembly of Ecuador, was elected, succeeding Colombian Senator Cecilia López who had completed her term.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

*Adopted by the Plenary Assembly of FIPA on September 15, 2009*

Based on deliberations held during the Fifth Meeting of the Group of Women Parliamentarians of the Americas, which took place in the framework of the Sixth Plenary Meeting of FIPA in Ottawa, Canada, September 13-15, 2009,

THE FIPA PLENARY ASSEMBLY makes the following recommendations:

1. That legislative measures be implemented to ensure equal representation of men and women in the Parliaments of the Americas.
2. That women parliamentarians in the Americas participate fully in the legislative process, moving beyond social and educational issues to deal with matters involving the economy, defence, security, etc.
3. That the Parliaments of the Americas work together to ensure that persons who commit crimes such as rape, sexual abuse, criminal acts of family violence, etc., face sanctions when they cross borders.



4. That women parliamentarians take responsibility for ensuring the participation of women in their regions, and for establishing solidarity networks.
5. Recognizing the importance of the Congress of Parliamentarians “Towards a Gender-Sensitive Legislative Agenda for Development in the Americas”, held by the Group of Women Parliamentarians of the Americas in Bogotá, Colombia on November 20-21, 2008, the Plenary Assembly:
  - a) Endorses the recommendations adopted by parliamentarians gathered at the Congress “Towards a Gender-Sensitive Legislative Agenda for Development in the Americas” annexed to the present recommendation; and
  - b) Encourages FIPA Member Parliaments to report on progress made in the implementation of these recommendations at the next Plenary Meeting of FIPA.

**The Honourable Céline Hervieux-Payette**

**Senator of Canada**

Chair of the Fifth Meeting of the Group of Women Parliamentarians of the Americas

**PARTICIPANTS**

Argentina	Susana Mercedes Canela, Member of the Chamber of Deputies
The Bahamas	Lynn Holowesko, President of the Senate
Bolivia	María Silvia Baldomar, Senator Guido Guardia Flores, Senator
Brazil	Eduardo Azeredo, Senator Luiz Carlos Hauly, Member of the Chamber of Deputies Antonio Carlos Mendez Thame, Member of the Chamber of Deputies
Canada	Pierrette Ringuette, Senator
Colombia	Gloria Inés Ramírez, Senator
Dominican Republic	Josefa Castillo, Member of the Chamber of Deputies Mauro Piña Bello, Member of the Chamber of Deputies Diputado Gilberto Serulle, Member of the Chamber of Deputies
Ecuador	Lídice Vanesa Larrea Viteri, Member of the National Assembly Linda Machuca Moscoso, Member of the National Assembly
Grenada	Joan Purcell, President of the Senate George Prime, Senator Roland Bhola, Member of Parliament
Jamaica	Shahine Robinson, Member of Parliament
Mexico	Adriana González Carrillo, Senator
Panama	Iracema Ayarza de Dale, Member of the National Assembly Dana Castañeda, Member of the National Assembly Tito Rodríguez, Member of the National Assembly
Paraguay	Carlos Roger Caballero Fioro, Senator Alberto Grillón Conigliaro, Senator Amancio López Irala, Senator



Peru	Eduardo Espinoza Ramos, Congressman Karina Juliza Beteta Rubín, Congresswoman
Saint Lucia	Rosemary Husbands-Mathurin, Speaker of the House of Assembly
Suriname	August Bado, Member of Parliament Frankel Brewster, Member of Parliament Ortwin Cairo, Member of Parliament Soedeshchand Jairam, Member of Parliament Chanderdath Tilakdharie, Member of Parliament
Trinidad and Tobago	Adesh Nanan, Senator

**Annex:**

**TOWARDS A GENDER-SENSITIVE LEGISLATIVE AGENDA FOR DEVELOPMENT IN THE  
AMERICAS  
Bogotá, Colombia, November 20-21, 2008**

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**RECOMMENDATIONS**

*Original: Spanish<sup>1</sup>*

We, women and men parliamentarians of the Americas meeting for the Congress "Towards a Gender-Sensitive Legislative Agenda for Development in the Americas" on 20 and 21 November 2008 in Bogotá, Colombia, make the following recommendations to be presented to our respective parliaments:

**Economic policies and gender**

- Initiate the process of building an action plan to ensure that parliaments in the Americas have a greater say in development issues and that the latter take gender equity into account.
- Incorporate gender perspective as a central and cross-cutting aspect in the formulation of public budgets for the central, regional and local sectors<sup>2</sup> to ensure that they are balanced and sustainable and that they do not turn into isolated programs and projects that are marginal or subsidiary.
- Recognize when negotiating trade agreements the need to make visible and fairly remunerate women's work so that it translates into formal jobs and the consequent guarantees of protection and social security.

**International crisis, development and gender: implications for the Americas**

- The global crisis is hitting women hard, but crises can also lead to opportunities; therefore, creative work must therefore be pursued so that in the new order that must be established—not by touching up the current order but with sweeping changes that are based on a comprehensive, inclusive and sustainable vision—gender inequality and many other inequalities that exist today are overcome.
- Adopt new criteria for establishing countries' economic competitiveness, ensuring that this does not involve unstable income and new forms of exploitation.
- Redefine the relationship between productive and reproductive labour so that women and men play a leading role in both areas.

**Social policies, gender and development**

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<sup>1</sup> Note of the Secretariat: The text that follows is a revised translation of Congress recommendations.

<sup>2</sup> Note of the Secretariat: Or, as appropriate, at the national/federal, provincial/state and municipal levels.



- Take a social rights—and especially gender—approach in the design of social policies, taking into account that this presents a window of opportunity or framework suitable for dialogue on social and gender issues.
- Recognize the following advantages of having a gender focus in social policy: (i) Coherence in the values between legislation and reality; (ii) Institutional sustainability of the legislative, executive and judiciary branches; (iii) Increased social and political legitimacy; and (iv) Improved social policies, because this allows existing discrimination to be detected and corrected.
- Human rights must be recognized in social policy as they are in criminal policy.

**Environmental sustainability and gender**

- Develop new paradigms for environmental sustainability and gender.
- Take into account the culture and dignity of indigenous peoples in sustainable development.
- Do a gender audit on investments made for the sustainability of natural resources.

**Democracy, political and electoral reforms and gender**

- Promote linkage between the legislative area and grassroots organizations to ensure compliance with the quota law.
- To raise the awareness of the media in order to make visible the political participation of women and transform gender stereotypes.
- Propose public financing of political participation that favours the inclusion of women.

**Cecilia López Montaña**  
Senator of Colombia  
President of FIPA's Group of Women  
Parliamentarians of the Americas

**Céline Hervieux-Payette**  
Senator of Canada  
Former President, FIPA

**Juana Laverde Castañeda**, Rapporteur