



**Report of the Canadian Delegation Respecting its
Participations at the 23rd Meeting of the Executive
Committee and the 7th Plenary Assembly**

**Canadian Section of the Inter-Parliamentary Forum
of the Americas (FIPA)**

**Mexico City, Mexico
November 16 to 19, 2010**

Report

The Inter-Parliamentary Forum of the Americas and Canada's involvement

The Inter-Parliamentary Forum of the Americas (FIPA) is an independent network made up of national legislatures that are also members of the Organization of American States (OAS). FIPA members are committed to promoting parliamentary participation in the inter-American system and developing inter-parliamentary dialogue on issues of importance to the hemisphere. FIPA seeks to encourage the sharing of experiences and best practices amongst its members. FIPA works to strengthen the role of legislatures in democratic development, and to promote harmonization of legislation and hemispheric integration as instruments of sustainable and harmonious development in the region.

FIPA was constituted at the Inaugural Meeting hosted by the Parliament of Canada in Ottawa in 2001. The Forum is based on three main bodies, namely: the Plenary Assembly, the Executive Committee and the Technical Secretariat. The Plenary Assembly, which is held annually, represents an information exchange platform where Parliamentarians of the Americas can discuss various themes aiming to foster legislators' role in hemispheric integration, and democratic and economic development. Topics addressed during the Plenary Assemblies are developed and planned by the Executive Committee, which also establishes the agenda of the Plenary Assembly. In addition to these activities, the members of the Executive Committee are also responsible for monitoring projects that are assigned to them by the Assembly. The Executive Committee is headed by a Chair, who is elected every two years and supported by the Technical Secretariat.

Canada has been strongly involved in FIPA since its inception. Senator Hervieux-Payette was the first FIPA President. In 2006, she completed her second term as President. Furthermore, Canada holds one of the two positions reserved for North America on the FIPA Executive Committee. Mr. Hoback (Prince Albert, CPC) has been the head of the Canadian Section of FIPA since April 2010, and he is therefore the representative of Canada on the Executive Committee. He succeeded Mr. Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake, CPC) who assumed this responsibility from April 2006 to March 2010. In addition, the FIPA Technical Secretariat is incorporated in Canada and is based in Ottawa. Canada is also in charge of maintaining the FIPA website. This site plays a key role in FIPA activities as it hosts the Virtual Parliament of the Americas, which allows FIPA's working groups to continue their discussions, as this would be done in a parliamentary chamber or committee room, using electronic communication and support services to overcome physical separation.

Report

23rd Meeting of the Executive Committee

Introduction

The FIPA Executive Committee held its 23rd meeting in Mexico City at the Marriott Reforma Hotel (Maria Felix Room) on 16 November 2010. The meeting was chaired by the FIPA President, Deputy Luiz Carlos Hauly from Brazil. Other participants included:

- Randy Hoback, Member of Parliament of Canada, representing the North American region
- Victor Juliao, Member of the National Assembly of Panama, representing Central America
- Dr. Fuad Kham, Deputy Speaker of the House of Trinidad and Tobago, representing the Caribbean region
- Senator Roger Caballero from Paraguay, in replacement of Senator Alberto Grillon Conigliaro, representing the South American region
- Linda Machuca Moscoso, Member of the National Assembly of Ecuador, President of the Group of Women Parliamentarians of the Americas
- Senator Adriana González Carillo from Mexico, host country of the seventh Plenary Assembly

The main objectives of this Executive Meeting were to:

- refine the organization of the seventh Plenary Assembly;
- consider draft resolutions to be presented by the Executive Committee at the Plenary Assembly;
- review candidacies for positions for which terms were due to expire at the seventh Plenary Assembly; and
- discuss the financial situation of FIPA.

Opening of the Meeting

The FIPA President welcomed the participants to this 23rd meeting of the Executive Committee. He also underlined the presence of Dr. Fuad Kham who attended the Executive Committee for the first time. He regretted the absence of the Senator Alberto Grillon Conigliaro because of political reasons, and the Speaker of the House of Assembly of Saint Lucia, Rosemary Husbands-Mathurin who could not attend due to Hurricane Tomas that hit the Island. He, then, presented the Agenda of the meeting which was approved. The Executive Committee proceeded with the approval of the report of the 22nd meeting of FIPA Executive Committee.

Update on the Preparations of the 7th Plenary Meeting

The floor was given to the Senator Adriana González Carillo whose country hosted the 7th Plenary Assembly. The Senator reviewed the final program of the Plenary Assembly. She gave the list of the delegates (43 parliamentarians) from 11 Countries who registered to the Assembly, although she mentioned that late registrations were not included in this list. The FIPA President then welcomed Senator Hervieux-Payette who joined in by teleconference.

The President proceeded with the choice of substitutes for chairing Working Group 1 on Preparation and Response to Natural Disasters and Emergency Situations, and Working Group 2 on Regional Security and Transnational Crime. This was required because formerly selected Chairs could not honour their commitments. The Speaker of the House of Assembly of Saint Lucia, Rosemary Husbands-Mathurin could not attend the 7th Plenary Assembly in consequence of Hurricane Tomas that hit the Island and Senator Alberto Grillon Conigliaro from Paraguay was also absent. It was eventually agreed that Working Group 1 would be chaired by Victor Juliao, Member of the National Assembly of Panama, and Working Group 2 by Senator Roger Caballero from Paraguay. It was reaffirmed that Working Group 3 would be chaired by Randy Hoback, Member of Parliament of Canada, and the Group of Women Parliamentarians of the Americas would be chaired by Linda Machuca Moscoso, Member of the National Assembly of Ecuador.

The FIPA President reminded the different Chairs of the rules of procedures they had to follow to ensure good conduct of the working sessions.

Draft Resolution to be Presented at the Plenary Assembly

The Members of the Committee discussed the United States' participation at the Executive Committee level. According to the Members, the U.S. participation was discontinued despite being elected at the sixth Plenary Assembly as representative of the North American region along with Canada. The Members proposed to replace the United States by Mexico as representative of the North American region for the remaining year of the two-year term due to expire at the 8th Plenary Assembly.

They agreed to submit this recommendation for approval at the opening session of the 7th Plenary Assembly on 17 November 2010.

Review of Candidacies and Procedures of Elections

The FIPA President informed the Members that four positions of Representatives at the Executive Committee were due to expire at the 7th Plenary Assembly, namely:

- Canada as the representative of North America;
- Dominican Republic as the representative of Central America;
- Trinidad and Tobago as the representative of the Caribbean; and
- Colombia as the representative of South America.

He also informed the Members that the following terms will expire at the 8th Plenary Assembly:

- U.S.A. for the North America region;
- Panama for the Central America region;
- Saint-Lucia for the Caribbean region;
- Paraguay for the South America region;
- Ecuador as the Chair of the Group of Women Parliamentarians of the Americas; and
- Brazil as the President of FIPA.

The President reminded the country representatives who wished to submit their candidacy to inform the resource person, and that the election would take place in accordance with article 6.1 of FIPA regulations.

The President also asked the countries that wanted to present their candidacy to host the 9th Plenary Meeting in 2012 to submit their application to Gina Hill, Executive Secretary and Program Officer of FIPA. Panama expressed its interest to do so. The election that took place later was conducted according to article 5.2 of FIPA regulations.

Financial Issues of the Inter-Parliamentary Forum of the Americas

Ms. Gina Hill presented to FIPA the actual revenues and expenses for the period starting on 1 October 2009 and ending on 30 September 2010. The Organization generated revenues that were \$5,912 below the budget forecasts. The total expenses, however, were inferior to the budget forecasts (\$405,190 instead of \$452,154) what allowed the Organization to show an actual surplus of \$43,900.

She informed the Members that FIPA will be audited at the end of 2010. She also indicated that the organization should be self-financed and sustainable for the next 2–3 years. In order to achieve this goal, some changes will be required and additional funds will be sought.

The FIPA President took this opportunity to remind Members that they should pay their contributions on time. Some Members wanted to know if the Organization has a strong fee collection system that would facilitate the efficient collection of contributions. They argued that discontinued payments could result in communication inconsistencies. Ms. Gina Hill replied that a follow-up has been made but they have not received any answers from countries who have defaulted, and the Organization does not have the ability to apply retaliations to encourage payments.

The 7th plenary assembly of the inter-parliamentary forum of the Americas

Introduction

The 7th Plenary Assembly of the FIPA was held in Mexico City from 17 to 19 November 2010, and hosted by the Parliament of Mexico. This year had a dual signification for Mexico as it marked the bicentenary anniversary of Mexico's independence, and the centennial anniversary of the Mexican Revolution, which was celebrated on 20 November, and to which FIPA delegates had the privilege to attend.

The opening session of the 7th Plenary Assembly took place in the Patio Central of the Senate of Mexico. For this occasion, several dignitaries gave their opening remarks including:

- Senator Adriana González Carrillo, Representative of Mexico in the Executive Committee of FIPA
- Deputy Jorge Carlos Ramírez Marín, President of the Chamber of Deputies of Mexico
- Senator Manilio Fabio Beltrones Rivera, President of the Senate of Mexico
- Deputy Luiz Carlos Hauly, Member of the Chamber of Deputies of Brazil and Chair of FIPA

In their remarks, dignitaries reminded parliamentarians of the importance to attend the working group sessions on Preparation and Response to Natural Disasters, Emergency Situations, Regional Security and Transnational crime, and Participation of Civil Society in the Strengthening of Democracy. They also highlighted the key role that parliamentarians play in overcoming those challenges and the importance of having fruitful discussions on the abovementioned topics. The ceremony ended by the declaration of the official opening of the 7th Plenary Assembly of the FIPA.

FIPA's Plenary Assembly was attended by 45 parliamentarians from 12 countries, which represented each of the four FIPA sub-regions (North-America; Central America, the Caribbean and South America). Canada was represented by seven parliamentarians:

- M.P. Randy Hoback (Prince Albert, CPC), Head of the Canadian delegation and Chair of the working group session on the Participation of Civil Society in the Strengthening of Democracy
- Hon. Terry Stratton, Senator (CPC)
- M.P. Nicole Demers (Laval, BQ)
- M.P. Earl Dreeshen (Red Deer, CPC)
- M.P. Peter Julian (Burnaby—New Westminster, NDP)
- M.P. Lawrence MacAulay (Cardigan, Lib)
- M.P. Bev Shipley (Lambton—Kent—Middlesex, CPC)

First Session of the Plenary Assembly

The first session of the 7th Plenary Assembly began with the approval of the provisional order of the day. This was followed with the election of Senator Adriana González Carrillo, Representative of Mexico in the Executive Committee of FIPA, as President of the seventh Plenary Assembly.

The President of FIPA, Deputy Luiz Carlos Hauly, proceeded with the presentation of FIPA 2009–2010 annual report. He took this opportunity to mention the success of the Workshop on the “Doha Round: Challenges and Opportunities for the Region” that was hosted by the Senate of Mexico in May 2009. He pointed out the successful meeting of

the Group of Women Parliamentarians of the Americas in August 2010 that focussed on the Rights of Women in a Political and Legislative Framework. He proceeded with the FIPA delegation participation in the 40th Regular Session of the General Assembly of the Organization of American States in Lima, Peru, from 6 to 8 June 2010. FIPA activities during 2009–2010 were also marked by the Contribution Agreement between CIDA (Canadian International Development Agency), FIPA and the Parliamentary Centre of Canada. This agreement, signed in January 2010, aims to support FIPA in areas such as the development of training programs and the elaboration of a strategy to achieve financial sustainability. In parallel, a Memorandum of Understanding with the Canadian Parliamentary Centre was signed in order to define the relationship between the two organizations. The President also announced the conduct of needs assessment within some member countries of FIPA. Based on the outcomes of this assessment, the Executive Committee agreed to undertake an activity aiming to monitor the budget process and the transparency of public accounts in a near future. During the 2009–2010 period, FIPA carried out a review of its communication strategy which led to the proposition of an action plan. One of the objectives of this plan is to enable the Technical Secretariat to overcome challenges pertaining to information management, evolution of information technology and its effect on communications (i.e., social networks, wikis, podcasts, Blackberries and iPhones). The Deputy Luiz Carlos Haully also reminded member countries of the importance to pay their contributions as these funds are essential to FIPA's work. Moreover, he indicated that under the FIPA Contribution Agreement with CIDA, FIPA will undertake a review of its financial strategy, including the re-examination of the current fee collection structure. The President highlighted the work of the Executive Committee in the preparation of the seventh Plenary Assembly as well as in the oversight of financial and outreach activities aimed to increase FIPA's presence in inter-American systems. In this regard, he highlighted his participation in the First Forum of the Parliamentary Front against Hunger in March 2010, M.P. Randy Hoback's participation in a trade mission to the Congress of Argentina in March 2010, and the congresswoman Linda Machuca Moscoso's participation in two events on behalf of the Group of Women Parliamentarians of the Americas. The President of FIPA ended his presentation of FIPA 2009–2010 annual report by mentioning recent changes within the Technical Secretariat, notably the hiring of a Program Assistant, the new Communications Officer and the new Executive Secretary and Program Officer.

Following Deputy Luiz Carlos Haully's presentation, the resolution proposed by the Executive Committee was adopted by the FIPA Plenary Assembly on 17 November 2010. The resolution reads as follows:

- Recognizing the importance of North American Leadership in the furthering of the objectives of FIPA at the international level, and on the Executive Committee of FIPA; and
- Given the absence of the United States of America from the Executive Committee and other FIPA activities, despite being elected at the last Plenary Assembly;
- The Plenary Assembly of FIPA:

- RESOLVES to co-opt Mexico to fill the seat left vacant by the USA for the remaining year of the two year term, to expire at the 8th Plenary Assembly of FIPA.

At this first session, Dr. Roberto Newell, Director of the Mexican Institute for Competitiveness A.C., was invited as a guest speaker on the theme “Challenges for the Americas.” In his presentation, Dr. Newell put the emphasis on the situation of the global economy, the fundamental structure of the world economy and implications for the OAS Member states.

Dr. Newell reminded the causes of the financial crisis that hit the United States in 2007 and which led to an economic crisis in several countries in the world. This crisis has entailed an increase in the unemployment rate, a decrease in the middle class income as well as a decline in household spending. The combination of these factors has led to a drop of the U.S. import demand from countries such as Mexico. It is therefore important for those export countries to pinpoint new markets where economic growth can be observed. According to Dr. Newell, European countries and Japan should not be considered as growing economies as Europe is facing significant public debts resulting from its economy recovery plan and an aging population. As to Japan, the country has never come out of its 1998 financial crisis. He rather advised to consider new emergent economies such as BRIC (Brazil, Russia, India and China) countries, Indonesia and Turkey. These countries are characterized by large populations and an important middle class. However, to capitalize on these market opportunities, some challenges need to be addressed. With regards to import countries, BRIC countries need to open their markets as much as possible; China needs to revise its monetary policy as the country controls its money by purchasing a large amount of foreign currencies. Mexico and other countries of the Americas that are interested in exporting into emergent markets need to go through substantial transformation by investing in human education, infrastructure and by building stable institutions.

At the end of Dr. Newell’s presentation, delegates were invited to take the floor. Discussions revolved around the financial sector reform, productivity of the Americas and financial policy to implement in order to overcome the actual crisis.

Working Group Sessions

In the afternoon of 17 November 2010, Parliamentarians were invited to register to attend, and to contribute to any of the three concurrent sessions according to their area of interest. On 18 November 2010, the sessions ended by the finalization of the resolutions that had to be submitted during the second session of the Plenary Assembly scheduled on 19 November 2010. The resolutions resulting from the working group sessions are available in the Appendix A of this report.

Working Group on Preparation and Response to Natural Disaster and Emergency Situations

The Working Group on Preparation and Response to Natural Disaster and Emergency Situations met in the headquarters of the Mexican Congress, in Mexico City. The delegates from Panama, Chile, Trinidad and Tobago, Canada, Brazil and Haiti attended

this session that was chaired by the Panamanian Deputy Victor Juliao. The objectives of this working group were the following:

- Analyze the impact of disasters and emergency situations in the Americas, and their implications on the decrease or increase of the vulnerability factor, which affects preparedness, response and recovery capacity from emergency situations and disasters caused by both human beings and nature.
- Identify the means by which the countries of the Americas can work jointly to develop cooperation and coordination mechanisms, and to overcome the challenges resulting from any type of disaster and/or emergency.

In order to achieve these objectives, the Working Group heard the presentations of two experts: Mr. Ricardo Mena, Head of the Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean of the United Nations International Strategy for the Reduction of Disaster (UNISDR), and Mr. Jeremy Collymore, Executive Director, Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA).

Mr. Mena began his presentation on disasters from a development point of view. He emphasized the impact of climate change, the adaptation to and reduction of disaster risks, and actions that must be taken to overcome these issues.

He described the negative impact of climate change in terms of increased desertification, decrease of the GDP and decline of the production of hydraulic energy. He reminded how climate change affects Latin America and the Caribbean through the loss of employment, reduction in income, food insecurity, extended droughts as well as effects on health.

He explained why disasters are a concern for country development. Their potential impact on development projects makes it difficult to achieve the United Nations Millennium Development Objectives. However, he acknowledged that disasters can also offer opportunities for development. Indeed, they enable the identification of highly vulnerable zones, the rebuilding of affected zones in a safer manner, and the allocation of resources for natural disasters.

He pointed out that the Hyogo Framework for Action adopted by the United Nations World Conference on Natural Disaster Reduction in 2005 established a series of priority actions such as making disaster reduction a priority, taking appropriate measures to reduce identified risks, developing a greater understanding and awareness, and being well prepared to respond to disasters.

Mr. Mena highlighted that in order to overcome the issues related to natural disasters and climate change governments need to become involved in the mitigation of the impacts of these two phenomena. Governments need to develop more robust mechanisms to improve their accountability, and include disaster risk management in their budget. In addition to raising awareness among decision makers, there is a need to increase dialogue with donating countries in order to mobilize resources, and to develop a common position that could be taken in Cancún on December 2010.

The second speaker, Mr. Collymore, devoted his presentation to climate change and its repercussions in the Americas. He also addressed the economic and social implications

of natural disasters (hurricanes, droughts, earthquakes, floods and mud slides). He mentioned the global humanitarian reform mechanism in which the United Nations put emphasis on financial predictability, and advised that each country have a response to natural disasters.

Mr. Collymore recommended, among other things:

- the reinforcement or development of national risk policy and strategies;
- the exploration of investment opportunities in infrastructure, social services and natural resources to reduce countries' vulnerability to natural disasters;
- the establishment of a FIPA's support program for cases of disaster;
- the establishment of a monitoring process; and
- the creation of a network to identify risks of natural disasters.

After the presentations, the discussions focused on experience exchange on the management of natural disasters such as storms, floods, droughts, hurricanes and earthquakes. Delegates debated on the possibility to draft a prevention plan that would also include appropriate information to deal with natural disasters. The participants highlighted the use of communication to raise risk awareness among the population and the international community. They also considered the need to ensure that public policies have sufficient resources to cope with natural disasters. Parliamentarians mentioned that when laws are established, risk must be considered as a fundamental element, and penalties must be applied to offenders.

Working Group on Regional Security and Transnational Crime

The Working Group on Regional Security and Transnational Crime met in the Diego Rivera II Room at the Marriot Hotel in Mexico City. Delegates were from Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Dominica, Ecuador, Mexico, and Paraguay. The session was chaired by the Senator Carlos Roger Caballero of Paraguay. Participants pursued the following objectives:

- analyzing the impact of transnational crime in the Americas and its implications with respect to safety and development of the region;
- identifying the challenges of this phenomenon;
- pondering on the role played by interested Parties at both national and regional levels; and
- evaluating the measures and actions to be taken.

In order to achieve those objectives, the Working Group heard the presentations of two experts: Mr. Gerardo Rodríguez Sánchez Lara, Collective Member for the Analysis of Security with Democracy, and Dr. Athanasios Hristoulas, Professor, Department of International Affairs, Technological Institute of Mexico (ITAM in Spanish).

Mr. Rodríguez began his presentation by mentioning that the security agenda in Latin America is very complex due to the regional, geopolitical, economic and social diversity observed throughout the continent. Although there are still certain territorial disputes in the region, there is a minimal chance that Latin America will witness an inter-State war. The proliferation of civil wars in Central America has had a profound effect within the

national societies. It is clear for governments that repressions and general violence are no longer viable and that the nations of Latin America are not willing to resume them at the cost of their development. In addition, the regionalization phenomenon has allowed countries to find greater benefits in cooperation for development.

However, some threats remain and Mr. Rodríguez proposed to divide them into traditional, intermediate and expanded agendas.

Traditional agenda: These are threats that come from abroad or from inside, and that put government institutions at risk of armed revolutionary movements or coups. The ways these threats are dealt with can be broken down into military intervention, territorial dispute, internal armed movement or weapons proliferation.

Intermediate agenda: These threats are an attack against a State but also directly affect society and demand a great amount of financial and human resources through the establishment of national police and armed forces. Intermediate threats affect citizens and include drug trafficking, transnational organized crime, terrorism, and disorderly borders and migration.

Expanded agenda: This type of threats affects the population and involves the subsidiary participation of the armed forces. The impact of such threats can be broken down into social vulnerabilities, refugees and internally displaced persons, natural disasters and pandemics, and economic insecurity.

These different threats and their impacts show that not only the State but also the citizenry must be protected, and that the spectrum of threats should be expanded to include other aspects of human life, such as social, political and economic development. In the last two decades, regional mechanisms for political coordination and dialogue have been strengthened, which has helped enhance confidence and cooperation in security and defence matters.

The second speaker, Dr. Hristoulas, began his presentation by stating that the end of the Cold War gave way to an important transition in the nature and development of international relationships. The threat of territorial conflict has diminished considerably, with the exception of Costa Rica and Nicaragua, but there are other threats such as organized crime and ideological threats. The loss of security, as it is the case in Mexico, reveals a failed State for years now. States must reform, reinforce and legitimize their policy, accountability, and public sector management in order to exercise good governance. In particular, they must ensure that their security forces are well-equipped, educated, and trained. Security agents must be accountable for their actions. They must also work within an efficient organizational structure and leadership.

Dr. Hristoulas ended his presentation by making three recommendations to ensure successful regional support or cooperation on security issues.

- Donating countries must ensure that authorities maintain their autonomy regarding fund allocation and project evaluation.
- Countries should keep in mind that security issues can only be resolved over a long period of time. Therefore, a long-term vision is necessary although this could generate some challenges due to relative short electoral cycles.

- Countries must establish a regional program with a strategic vision. The police, the judicial system, and the penitentiary system must be reformed concurrently, and solutions must be implemented in Mexico and the rest of the region.

The participants discussed a wide range of issues related to regional security and transnational crime. It appeared that countries have different experiences of drug trafficking and organized crime. Countries such as Chile mentioned that they have legalized drug use provided that they are for personal consumption. Parliamentarians agreed that there should be a broad cooperation in the fight against transnational crime. The confiscation of property and the vulnerability of young people involved in organized crime due to a lack of opportunities in their countries were also addressed.

Working Group on the Participation of Civil Society in the Strengthening of Democracy

The Working Group on the Participation of Civil Society in the Strengthening of Democracy met in the room Rufino Tamayo at the Marriot Hotel in Mexico City. Delegates attending this session were from Brazil, Canada, Chile, Ecuador, Mexico and Paraguay.

Mr. Randy Hoback, Member of Parliament of Canada, chaired the working group which pursued the following objectives:

- defining the role of civil society in the strengthening of democracy;
- sharing the best democratic practices, and working together to seek better alternatives; and
- finding out ways of combining government priorities with those of the civil society.

To learn about ways to achieve those objectives, the Working Group heard presentations from two experts, namely Dr. Philip Oxhorn, Professor and Founding Director of McGill University's Institute for the Study of International Development, and Mr. Koebel Price, Senior Advisor to the Citizen Participation Program at the National Democratic Institute (NDI). A brief overview of their presentations and subsequent discussions follow.

Mr. Price opened the floor by describing the NDI. He stated that he has been working in 125 countries and commented on his involvement with various international political actors. One of the guiding principles behind the creation of this Institute was to ensure that all voices of civil society can be heard. Accountability plays a key role in the credibility of society.

He indicated that there is a need to build political space such as forums that would essentially focus on monitoring and where civil society would play a major role. He explained that in his view, organizations are still the best way to give a voice to individuals who should be heard by the legislators. These organizations should collaborate with legislators to verify the results of democratic processes. He added that civil society groups are starting to have an impact on parliaments through law adoption. However, he noted that the danger with this practice is that organizations may be co -

opted by political parties and may end up advocating interests that are different from their initial mandate.

Following his presentation, the floor was opened for discussions enabling participants to ask questions and express their concerns. The M.P. Nicole Demers, from Canada, wanted to understand why Mr. Obama after being elected President of the United States, could not deliver his pre-election messages. Mr. Price replied that he had often heard this question and briefly said that expectations were very high and that many people were excited about changes rather than policy.

The Deputy Mauricio Rands, from Brazil, talked about the crisis of representative democracy and the development of a participatory democracy with institutions that met daily and value-based expectations.

The congresswoman Linda Machuca Moscoso, from Ecuador, stated that it was civil society that thwarted an attempted coup in her country by spontaneously coming to the rescue of the President. She commented that this was an example of a non-organized society expression that should not be forgotten.

The second speaker, Mr. Oxhorn, started his presentation by indicating that democratization and civil society took root in Chile because society became organized. He said that today Latin America is more democratic, despite some challenges, and that there has been a confidence to move forward. However, democratic institutions that must be seen as a solution are often considered to be a hindrance to progress.

He stated that the government's lack of confidence is a problem for good governance and for the representativeness of civil society. Its role is sometimes questionable, and this can make the difference.

He mentioned that legislators must develop a new type of collaboration where citizens and State play a proactive role. To this end, political leaders should decentralize participation and establish joint working relationships. He also indicated that civil society must be the driving force for democracy, and therefore the key is to create more institutional spaces with greater transparency.

The floor was then given to parliamentarians who exchanged ideas, views and experiences about participation of civil society in the strengthening of democracy; this exchange was based on national and personal perspectives. They agreed that every country has different examples on these issues, but it is essential to focus on common points. Parliamentarians discussed how much progress each country has made so far, and the context that has made this progress possible.

Group of Women Parliamentarians of the Americas

Although distinct from the three concurrent working groups mentioned above, the Group of Women had the mandate to exchange on the discrimination faced by indigenous and Afro-descendant women in the Americas. The session, chaired by the congresswoman, Linda Machuca Moscoso, was attended by parliamentarians from Canada, Chile, Dominica, Ecuador, Haiti, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay and Trinidad and Tobago. As for the three other working groups, the group of women met on 17–18 November 2010 and presented their resolutions for approval on 19 November 2010 during the second

session of the Plenary Assembly. These resolutions are available in the Appendix B of this report.

The session started with the speaker, Gloria Young, Director of the Centre of Studies and Competences in Gender in Panama. Her presentation was about Progress, Difficulties and Challenges with respect to Political and Electoral Participation of Afro-Caribbean Women.

Ms. Young remarked that the historical relationship of women with respect to their gender, due to their ethnic-racial origin, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, disabilities or the rural or urban environment in which they live, has been the subject of many studies. International bodies have recognized the inequality in which many populations such as black women live, which constitutes a significant political development. Ms. Young noted that international tools play an important role in human development, which includes Afro-Caribbean and indigenous women. It is important to mention that since 1948, when the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide was approved, which gave birth in 1963 to the Declaration on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination, a series of international legal actions has been carried. These actions have promoted the creation and strengthening of ethnic women networks at the international level.

However, despite this international support, some challenges remain. Indeed, the speaker noted that to achieve personal and political empowerment, both Afro-Caribbean and indigenous women must not only have the same leadership abilities as any other leader but they must also deal with racial stereotypes.

Despite the presence of these challenges, women can still seize opportunities. Indeed, it is important to know that a new political culture is being imposed. While for many years the male protagonists of political power imposed authoritarian, centralist and captive economic policies that have deprived the democratic system, people now need a new leadership style. Another type of politician is required if democracy is to be strengthened and expanded in countries. There are great opportunities for women in this area. Women know more than anyone how to call people to dialogue and how to listen. Women call upon people to join in their projects and, in general, try not to feel resentment. Women are prone to forgiveness (which is different from forgetting), and for that reason, they feel freer to call their opponents to the table for work or dialogue.

Following this presentation, the congresswoman, Linda Machuca Moscoso, took the floor and reported on the meeting that was held in Quito, Ecuador, on 11–12 August 2010. She also mentioned the publication of a book containing the proceedings of this event as well as the Quito Declaration. Details on this book and on the Quito Declaration can be consulted on FIPA's website.

Participants in this session had the opportunity to discuss issues related to the current situation of women's participation in politics, family issues that they face, as well as the issue of confidence in their abilities and rights to act as political representatives of men and women.

Second Session of the Plenary Assembly

The second session commenced with the presentation of the resolutions of the different working groups (see appendixes A and B). Their recommendations were fully received and adopted by the Assembly without amendments.

The Ecuador delegation presented a resolution that was unscheduled. However, the Assembly agreed to receive it, and adopted it. The resolution reads as follows:

CONSIDERING:

That the International Community and, accordingly, intergovernmental and international organizations, have spoken out against the detestable attack against democracy that took place on September 30th in the Republic of Ecuador;

That in a special and timely manner, the OAS Permanent Council, while condemning those events and offering its support to Constitutional President Rafael Correa Delgado, made a strong appeal to the law enforcement personnel, as well as to the political and social sectors to avoid exacerbating a situation of political instability, threatening the democratic order, peace and public security;

That the Interparliamentary Forum of the Americas, through its President Luiz Carlos Hauly and in a timely manner, condemned the violence and anarchy and stated its support for the National Assembly and the constitutional Government;

RESOLVES:

To strongly reject any act or situation created in the countries of the Americas with a view to forcibly imposing the powers that be or illegitimate governments.

To support the President of the Republic of Ecuador Rafael Correa Delgado, legitimate and democratically elected.

To promote an environment of dialogue with neighboring countries of the Americas so as to jointly influence the maintenance of democracy and peace in each and every country.

The Assembly then turned to a series of elections to name countries that will represent each of the four FIPA sub-regions: North-America; Central America, the Caribbean and South America, as terms expired at the seventh Plenary Meeting. The results of the elections were the following:

- Panama represents Central America;
- Haiti represents the Caribbean;
- Colombia represents South America; and
- Canada was re-elected to represent North America.

The second session of the Plenary Assembly ended with the selection of the country that will host the ninth Plenary Assembly. It was agreed that Panama will host the ninth

Plenary Assembly in 2012 and it was reminded that Paraguay will host the next Plenary Assembly, to be held in 2011, in the city of Asunción.

Conclusion

The attendance record to the seventh Plenary Meeting was below expectations; indeed in 2009, 22 FIPA countries were present compared to 13 countries in 2010. Despite this relatively low participation, parliamentarians who attended the seventh Plenary Assembly were pleased to have the opportunity to discuss the themes that were covered by the different working groups. At the end of the different sessions, they were able to establish relevant resolutions that were approved by the Assembly without amendments.

This seventh Plenary Assembly was also characterized by a renewed interest in the future of FIPA. While the Forum was unable to hold Plenary Assemblies between 2006 and 2008, the Association seems to regain some momentum with the organization of the sixth and seventh Plenary Assemblies, and the schedule of the eighth and ninth Plenary Assemblies. Moreover, several countries expressed their interest in participating on the FIPA Executive Committee.

Although the success of the seventh Plenary Meeting owes much to the hard work and dedication of many individuals and organizations in Mexico, the Canadian Section would like to acknowledge the support provided by the Secretariat of the Association as well as the Technical Secretariat of FIPA. The Canadian section would also like to acknowledge the support of the Association advisor and the other analysts from the Library of Parliament who assisted in drafting support documents and in providing on-site support to the Canadian delegation in Mexico.

Respectfully submitted,

Randy Hoback, M.P.
Chair, Canadian Section of the Inter-Parliamentary Forum
of the Americas (FIPA)

Travel Costs

ASSOCIATION	Canadian Section of the Inter-Parliamentary Forum of the Americas (FIPA)
ACTIVITY	23rd Meeting of the Executive Committee and the 7th Plenary Assembly
DESTINATION	Mexico City, Mexico
DATES	November 16-19, 2010
DELEGATION	
SENATE	Hon. Terrance Stratton, Senator
HOUSE OF COMMONS	Mr. Randy Hoback, M.P. Mr. Bev Shipley, M.P. Mr. Earl Dreeshen, M.P. Hon. Lawrence MacAulay, M.P. Ms. Nicole Demers, M.P. Mr. Peter Julian, M.P.
STAFF	Ms. Aïcha Coulibaly, Analyst Mr. Leif-Erik Aune, Secretary
TRANSPORTATION	\$ 10,750.65
ACCOMMODATION	\$ 2,722.38
HOSPITALITY	\$ 11.18
PER DIEMS	\$ 1,235.90
OFFICIAL GIFTS	\$ 604.74
MISCELLANEOUS FEES	\$ 241.55
TOTAL	\$ <u>15,566.40</u>

APPENDIX A – RESOLUTIONS OF THE THREE WORKING GROUP SESSIONS

Resolutions of the Working Group on Preparation and Response to Natural Disaster and Emergency Situations

1. FIPA should encourage the parliaments of member nations to make educational programs available to their citizens. Such programs will raise awareness of risks and prepare the procedures to minimize the risks and effects of natural and man-made disasters as well as other emergency situations.
2. FIPA should encourage parliamentarians to ensure a reduced risk of disasters, which should be included in the planning of development programs as a national priority.
3. Parliaments should ensure that construction codes, standards and norms are appropriate in order to deal with the natural and man-made threats in member countries.
4. Revised budgets should take the risk variable into account and guarantee that important buildings such as hospitals and schools comply with the safety standards set out in 2(a).
5. Parliaments should ensure that their governments conduct an environmental impact assessment that includes natural and man-made hazards in development projects.
6. FIPA should encourage the parliaments of member countries to adopt policies that take into account the lessons learned from previous disasters.
7. FIPA should encourage the parliaments of member countries to create monitoring committees to ensure that resources and mechanisms are adopted to respond to technical and decentralized needs in order to meet the demands of the member country.
8. Existing laws on disaster management should be reviewed and re-evaluated to ensure that they refer to disaster risk reduction as well as adaptation to climate change.

Resolutions of the Working Group on Regional Security and Transnational Crime

1. That the fight against organized transnational crime, especially drug trafficking, requires cooperation between States, which must be developed while respecting their sovereignty as a fundamental principle.
2. FIPA must recognize that transnational crime is a threat to the nations because it gives rise to other criminal activities, for example: money laundering, weapons trafficking, human trafficking, and organ trafficking, etc.; and we must deal with this with the same commitment.
3. State authorities must draft codes that professionalize the exercise of a public authority that is competent and transparent, with appropriate monitoring and accountability.

4. The fight against organized crime and drug trafficking is not only an issue of security, but also of education and health. The nations should make efforts to prevent the use and abuse of drugs. Preventive health and rehabilitation, as well as appropriate education, are key tools that must be reinforced in order to create new generations with responsible and ethical conduct.
5. Preventive and corrective standards and programs on transnational crimes must be drafted in each of FIPA's member States to observe successful normative practices that can be proposed or implemented in each.
6. National State functions – legislation, governance and justice – must be firm, coherent and efficient in the fight against crime in order to achieve regional security, that is to say, the relevant actions to deal with crime.
7. Corruption is a crime that threatens the security of the nations and feeds transnational crime; governments should therefore fight it head-on, taking all possible measures and actions to eliminate it.

Resolutions of the Working Group on the Participation of Civil Society in the Strengthening of Democracy

1. As FIPA parliamentarians, we urge our governments to conduct a full diagnosis of the existing barriers to citizen participation, especially in regard to under-represented groups. This should include a survey to show what countries have legislation promoting citizen participation. Once complete, the survey should be made public.
2. In order to promote democratic participation, societies of the Americas have to create a political environment conducive to participation. Therefore, there is a challenge to develop a civic culture.
3. Governments and parliaments must promote participation processes, which involve mechanisms of consultation, debate, and decision-making by citizens. In addition, governments need to improve their capacity to deliver those services and policies most urgently required by their citizens.
4. To encourage the societies' openness to civic participation, we should reform the education system to include civic education in the curriculum. We should also involve the media, private businesses, organized labour and other significant institutions in this process.
5. As FIPA parliamentarians, we encourage best practices and full transparency, openness and responsibility among the governments of the Americas. In particular, there should be a focus on developing the appropriate institutional mechanisms specifically designed to achieve these goals.
6. As FIPA parliamentarians, we urge our governments to implement all possible measures to encourage democratic participation in the Americas, providing considerable support to the poor and underprivileged young people in our hemisphere.
7. In order to encourage the various sectors of our societies to participate, we should adopt mechanisms for engaging with marginalized groups, including, but not limited

to, women, youth, ethnic minorities, indigenous peoples/nations, people with disabilities, gays and lesbians, and senior citizens. This participation should not be limited to formal or institutionalized organizations, but rather it must include citizen initiatives and independent social movements.

8. To ensure participation in all sectors, especially that of poor young people, we must consider the need for more equality and inclusiveness in our societies.
9. FIPA should sponsor workshops to educate parliamentarians about new information technologies and their political significance, so they can reach young people.
10. FIPA should sponsor workshops on civic engagement and its importance for democracy.
11. As FIPA parliamentarians, we urge each of our parliaments to annually organize a week to discuss citizen participation.
12. As FIPA parliamentarians, we commit to encouraging all governments to create a full spectrum of citizen recourse mechanisms for cases of misuse of power or authority.
13. In order to strengthen citizen participation and support the preservation of peace and democracy in the states of the Americas, FIPA should set up a solidarity commission for timely support to countries that are threatened by democracy.

APPENDIX B – RESOLUTIONS OF THE Group of Women Parliamentarians of the Americas

Create a network of political women to support and assist those who participated in the past, and who are participating today in popular election forums with a view to designing empowerment strategies, starting by removing obstacles to effective electoral participation and taking advantage of the political capital accumulated by women who have served in parliament.

Organize, through FIPA, an international school of political training to build skills among women parliamentarians in order to achieve quality parliamentary work from a gender perspective, in which women parliamentarians develop the skills necessary to draft bills of law that have an impact on their countries and on the to monitor those bills, and to design methods for effective communication with voters, the development of messages, work with the media and other relevant issues of parliamentary development.

Request that at future events, the agenda of the Group of Women Parliamentarians of the Americas establish equal importance for the analysis of gender issues in parliamentary meetings, particularly in regard to time management, methodology and promotion of participation.

Update the issues to be discussed at the Women's Meetings, going beyond situational analysis to focus on proposals and strategies.

Implement actions so that the FIPA Women's Group can establish a closer relationship with other related parliamentary organizations.

Fully subscribe the content of the Quito Declaration issued by the Group of Women Parliamentarians in August 2010.

Supervise the implementation of public policies instituted by our countries that contribute to reconciling domestic and unpaid work with work in public spaces.

Promote new educational practices in our countries so that new generations change their practices and the roles that have been exclusively assigned to women.

Organize other activities in addition to the annual meeting of the FIPA Women's Group in the different countries.

Build and strengthen the relationships between women parliamentarians in the Americas and networks of Afro-Caribbean, Afro-Latin American and Diaspora women, as well as with networks of indigenous women, in order to discuss, exchange and evaluate the situation of discrimination, violation of human rights, poverty and cultural subordination experienced by women in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Develop follow-up actions for commitments and recommendations assumed by the participants in the parliamentary group.