



**Report of the Canadian Parliamentary Delegation
respecting its participation at the Sixth plenary Meeting of
the Inter-Parliamentary Forum of the Americas (FIPA)**

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

**Ottawa, Ontario, Canada
September 12 to 15, 2009**

Report

Introduction

The Sixth Plenary Meeting of the Inter-Parliamentary Forum of the Americas (FIPA) was held in Ottawa from 13–15 September 2009, hosted by the Parliament of Canada. This occasion marks the second time FIPA has held its plenary meetings in Canada; the inaugural Plenary Meeting in 2001 also took place in Ottawa. Over the course of the three-day event, parliamentarians discussed issues and made recommendations on a wide range of issues to take back to their respective Parliaments.

As representatives of the host country, the Canadian Section of FIPA played an instrumental role in the Plenary Meeting. Mr. James Bezan, M.P., head of the Canadian Section, served as the Chair of the Sixth Plenary Meeting. Senator Céline Hervieux-Payette, P.C. chaired the meetings of the Group of Women Parliamentarians of the Americas.

In addition to Mr. Bezan and Senator Hervieux-Payette, a number of Canadian Parliamentarians also participated in the plenary and working group sessions. Attending from the House of Commons were Mr. Mario Silva, Mr. Ed Holder, Mr. Peter Julian, Mr. Pierre Paquette, Ms. Francine Lalonde, Ms. Nicole Demers, Mr. Bruce Hyer, Mr. Larry Miller, Mr. Dean Allison and the Honourable Hedy Fry, P.C. The Senate of Canada was represented by the Senators Raynell Andreychuk, Marcel Prud'homme, P.C., Pierrette Ringuette and Terry Stratton.

FIPA's sixth Plenary Meeting was attended by 80 parliamentarians from 22 countries. Each of the four FIPA sub-regions was represented: North America; Central America; the Caribbean; and South America. Significantly, this meeting marked the first time in FIPA's history that a Parliamentarian from the United States took part in the assembly. Also in attendance were delegations from China and Russia, who participated as observers.

Background: FIPA and Canadian Involvement

FIPA is an independent network of the national legislatures of the member governments of the Organization of American States (OAS). Its goal is to promote parliamentary participation in the inter-American system and to develop inter-parliamentary dialogue on issues of importance to the citizens of the hemisphere. In providing a forum for parliamentarians of the Americas to engage with each other on issues of hemispheric interest, and from which to bring broadly considered recommendations on these issues back to their home legislatures, FIPA works to improve inter-American cooperation and democratic development.

Canada has been strongly involved in FIPA since its inception. Senator Hervieux-Payette was the first FIPA President, acclaimed to that position in 2002. In 2006, she completed her second term as President. Senator Hervieux-Payette continues to be active on FIPA's Executive Committee, occupying the position of past-President of FIPA.

Furthermore, Canada holds one of the two positions reserved for North America on the FIPA Executive Committee. Mr. Bezan, as head of the Canadian Section of FIPA, is

currently Canada's representative on the Executive Committee. At the Sixth Plenary Meeting, the other position on the FIPA Executive Committee was, for the first time, accepted by a representative of the United States.

In addition, the FIPA Technical Secretariat is incorporated in Canada and based in Ottawa, and Canada is instrumental in maintaining the FIPA website. This site also hosts the Virtual Parliament of the Americas, which allows FIPA's working groups to continue their discussions, as is done in a parliamentary chamber or committee room, using electronic communication and support services to overcome physical separation.

First Session of the Plenary Meeting

Following welcoming remarks and the adoption of the draft agenda, the first session of the Plenary Meeting began with the annual report of the FIPA President, the Honourable Luiz Carlos Hauly, Member of the Brazilian Chamber of Deputies. In his presentation, Mr. Hauly talked about the recent Summit of the Americas in Trinidad and Tobago, and the value of increasing participation by parliamentarians at the Summit and other key international fora. He also recognized the recent work of FIPA's Group of Women Parliamentarians at its congress, Towards a Gender-Sensitive Legislative Agenda for Development in the Americas, held in Bogotá, Colombia from 20–21 November 2008. Mr. Hauly then spoke about FIPA's successful program of Trade Knowledge Workshops, noting that another such session will be held in Mexico in March 2010, and gave participants a brief overview of proposed merger talks with the Parliamentary Confederation of the Americas (COPA). Mr. Hauly concluded his speech by reminding those present of the importance of contributing financially to FIPA and of actively participating in its activities, including electronically through the Association's blog and Virtual Parliament.

At the conclusion of Mr. Hauly's report, the floor was opened to the delegates to discuss future business. Speakers from several countries took the opportunity to address the assembly, discussing issues ranging from the domestic political situation in Bolivia to the H1N1 virus. Several delegates expressed their gratitude to Canada and the Canadian Section of FIPA for hosting the Plenary Meeting and commented that there appeared to be genuine enthusiasm among participants to reinvigorate FIPA. Many speakers also spoke about the need to increase cooperation, and to explore ways to strengthen FIPA and integration efforts across the Americas.

The guest speaker at the first session of the Plenary Meeting was Ms. Sheryl Kennedy, Chief Executive Officer of Promontory Financial Group Canada and former Deputy Governor of the Bank of Canada. In her presentation, *After the Crisis: Economic and Financial Reform in the Americas*, she provided an overview of the impact of the economic and financial crisis on the region and the role she saw for parliamentarians in overseeing the recovery. Ms. Kennedy noted that, while the crisis had very real consequences for economic activity, employment and poverty across the region, most countries had withstood the "storm" relatively well. She argued that the crisis should not be seen as an indictment of the market-based economic growth model upon which most countries in the hemisphere rely; rather, it had exposed weaknesses in the model's execution. As the global economy appears to be showing signs of recovery, Ms. Kennedy cautioned those present not to be complacent; there remains important work

for legislators to do in ensuring that the mistakes of the past are not repeated. She called on parliamentarians to take action on financial sector reform and to improve regulatory oversight. She also argued strongly that parliamentarians should avoid giving in to trade protectionism. In her view, globalization is a major contributing factor to the recent strong growth in the world economy; countries need to keep their markets open and avoid the mistakes of the 1930s, when governments exacerbated the effects of a major economic downturn by raising barriers to trade and investment.

Ms. Kennedy concluded her presentation by offering her views on the role that parliamentarians can play in increasing trade and in creating a more stable and prosperous economy. She observed that the countries that have weathered the economic and financial crisis best have been those that have focused their policy efforts in four areas: maintaining a sound fiscal and monetary framework; investing in the public goods needed for growth (especially health, education and infrastructure); moderating economic growth and avoiding speculative bubbles; and ensuring a safe and transparent financial system.

On the last point, Ms. Kennedy emphasized that the development of a sound financial system is critical for economic development and growth; financial market development impacts on the entire economy and thus should be recast as a public development issue. In her view, countries need competent and rigorous enforcement of rules, increased transparency and regulation, and more good governance. In addition, executive compensation should be better aligned with the broad interests of stakeholders.

Following Ms. Kennedy's presentation, delegates were invited to take the floor. Many parliamentarians took the opportunity to ask questions of Ms. Kennedy and to discuss issues such as appropriate domestic economic policies in the face of the crisis, financial sector reform, the need for greater cooperation within the Americas, and the impact of the crisis on the United Nations' Millennium Development Goals.

Opening Session of the Plenary Meeting

With the conclusion of Ms. Kennedy's address and the question period, the opening session of the Plenary Meeting began. The theme of the Plenary Meeting was Prosperity and Cooperation: A New Agenda for the Americas. The session began with welcoming remarks by Senator Marjory Lebreton, P.C., Leader of the Government in the Senate, and Mr. Andrew Scheer, M.P., Deputy Speaker of the House of Commons.

Mr. Bezan and Mr. Haully also addressed the assembled delegates. Both spoke on the theme of prosperity and cooperation in the Americas. Mr. Bezan called attention to the ever-growing economic linkages across the region, which is evident in the 11 intra-hemisphere bilateral and regional trade agreements that had been signed since FIPA's last plenary meeting in 2006. For his part, Mr. Haully spoke of the need to continue to pursue integration and intra-regional cooperation opportunities. He also thanked Canada for its continuing support of FIPA through recent financial contributions from the Canadian International Development Agency.

Participants at the assembly also were given an overview of the Plenary Meeting's Working Groups, their chairs and speakers. The three concurrent working groups

focused on the economic and financial crisis, food security, and international migration and human rights. In addition, two meetings of the Group of Women Parliamentarians of the Americas were scheduled.

The keynote speaker at the opening Plenary Session was His Excellency José Miguel Insulza, Secretary General of the Organization of American States. Secretary General Insulza spoke about the opportunities and challenges in the region, focusing on the importance of democracy-building. He noted that democratic processes and institutions in the region are strengthening and that legislators have an important role to play in developing long-run strategies to improve democracy and transparency. He cautioned that, while Latin America is poised to emerge from the economic crisis relatively well, the aftermath of the crisis, if not properly addressed, could have negative impacts on democratic development in the region. Specifically, Secretary General Insulza stated that the increase in poverty that typically accompanies recessions is a major source of societal stress. Moreover, he noted that the social fallout of a recession takes, on average, twice as long to repair as the economic fallout.

The Secretary General also spoke about some of the challenges the region faces, and focused specifically on the recent military coup in Honduras. He called the coup a setback for the entire region and reminded participants that the coup was unanimously condemned by members of the OAS. He then discussed the lessons that democracies in the region should take from that event, including the need to launch a debate on how best to strengthen and preserve democracies and to ensure wide participation in democratic institutions.

Working Group Sessions

The working group sessions began in the afternoon of 12 September. Parliamentarians registered to attend, and contributed to, any one of the three concurrent sessions according to their area of interest. At the end of the three three-hour working group sessions, each group produced a report and recommendations that were then presented to the entire assembly at the Second Plenary Session. All recommendations resulting from the Working Group sessions are in Appendix I of this report.

The **Working Group on the Financial and Economic Crisis** was chaired by FIPA President Luis Carlos Hauly. It began with a presentation by Ms. Vinita Watson, Executive Director for Canada of the Inter-American Development Bank in Washington, D.C. Ms. Watson's presentation was divided into three parts. She began with an overview of the financial and economic crisis and its effect on Latin America. She then turned her attention to recent global economic developments which suggested that the worst of the crisis may be over and that the global economy may be recovering. The final section of Ms. Watson's presentation focused on the policy opportunities that the crisis presents to the Americas. Specifically, she spoke of the need for the countries of the Americas to work together in areas such as financial regulation, fiscal policy, the re-establishment of capital flows, providing support for intra-regional trade and ensuring measures are taken to avoid trade protectionism.

Following Ms. Watson's presentation, participants began their deliberations. About 30 parliamentarians took part in the dialogue over the course of the three working group sessions. Three general themes emerged from the discussions: financial sector reform,

regulation and oversight; trade, competition and economic integration; and strategies and best practices for ensuring a speedy and sustainable economic recovery.

On the subject of financial sector reform, regulation and oversight, participants discussed the need for transparency in financial services markets as well as for consumer education on the nature and inherent risk of mortgages and financial services instruments. Parliamentarians also debated the merits of establishing an international regulatory system or body in the Americas to help prevent another similar crisis in the future.

The discussion on trade and integration touched on a wide range of topics. These included the need to reduce the costs of conducting trade, provide trade facilitation and capacity-building to poorer countries, and build appropriate transportation infrastructure to facilitate the development of trade linkages. Members also discussed the relationship between trade and poverty alleviation as well as the importance of ensuring that the benefits of trade are shared with the economically disadvantaged.

The need to address the issue of informal-sector employment was also debated. It was noted that informal employment is a major contributor to poverty and income inequality in Latin America. Members discussed steps that could be taken to encourage participation in the formal economy.

On the subject of strategies for overcoming the economic downturn, several parliamentarians shared their best practices for addressing the challenges brought on by the crisis. It was noted, however, that each country in the region is unique and, as such, will require unique mechanisms and strategies for dealing with its specific issues and concerns. Generally speaking, however, most participants favoured the use of fiscal stimulus packages and deficit spending as a means to “kick-start” their domestic economies. Some, however, cautioned against persistent deficit spending, stating that – by doing so – Latin America runs the risk of reverting to an era of hyperinflation and economic destabilization.

The **Working Group on Food Security** was chaired by the Honourable Joan Purcell, President of the Senate of Grenada. The working group session began with three presentations from experts in the area. The first speaker was Juan Carlos Garcia Cebolla, Coordinator of the Project “Initiative Hunger-Free Latin America and the Caribbean,” from the Food and Agriculture Organization’s Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean in Santiago, Chile. In his presentation, Mr. Garcia discussed the role of parliaments in addressing food security issues and identified a number of elements needed to implement a Food and Nutritional Security policy.

The second presenter was Dr. Máximo Torero, Latin America Coordinator and Director of the Markets, Trade and Institutions Division at the International Food Policy Research Institute in Washington, D.C. Dr. Torero observed that the food, energy, financial and climate crises are interrelated, and posited that food security should be viewed not as an isolated issue, but as one closely interconnected with other concerns, especially energy security and political stability.

The final speaker was Dr. Michael Bedoya, Representative of the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation in Agriculture in Canada. Dr. Bedoya discussed strategies to

improve agricultural efficiency and productivity, including – among others – the need to enhance horizontal cooperation among countries as well as to develop and implement appropriate technologies for small-scale producers.

After the three presentations, the floor was opened to participants. The relationship between poverty and access to food became a central point of discussion in the deliberations. Indeed, several participants argued that the issue of food access was more appropriately framed as a poverty issue. It was suggested that government transfer programs be created to supplement incomes and thus to ensure that all citizens had a basic minimum income level and thus access to sufficient food for their needs.

The relationship between debt reduction and food supply was also raised by some participants. Some members called on countries to stop using fiscal surpluses to pay down national debt, arguing that debt-reduction policies are reducing the funds available to provide food to the poor.

Many parliamentarians spoke of the need to ensure that the poorest have access to adequate food and nutrition. They discussed concepts such as the “right to food” and the relationship between that idea and issues such as food aid, food safety and access to water. They proposed solutions such as implementing public policies to provide better health education and food subsidies to the poorest of the poor. School breakfast and lunch programs were identified as effective public policies that can help break the cycle of poverty.

Parliamentarians also discussed issues directly relating to the production of agricultural goods. It was noted that the amount of land available for crop production is decreasing and that high input costs in farming are a growing concern. Some suggested that governments in Latin America should implement policies to enhance and subsidize domestic production as well as provide more support for research.

The **Working Group on Migration and Human Rights** was chaired by Senator Ricardo Garcia Cervantes from Mexico. As with the Working Group on Food Security, the sessions began with three presentations from experts in the field. The first was from Ms. Agueda Marin of the International Organization of Migration. Her key message was that shared responsibility lies at the heart of realizing the human rights of migrants. She spoke about the development of a multi-layered system of international law to ensure the protection of the human rights of migrants, and the steps that countries can take in implementing those rights. In her view, all states have an interest in, and responsibility for, the protection of human rights, whether as a country of origin, a country through which migrants are transiting, or a final destination.

The second presenter was Mr. Mario López-Garelli of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights. Mr. López-Garelli outlined the activities of the IACHR as they relate to migration, and discussed how migration has become an important political issue in the region as the pace and size of migration flows has increased.

Dr. Demetrios G. Papademetriou of the Migration Policy Institute gave a presentation during the second session. He focused his remarks on migration and human rights in the Americas in the context of the financial and economic crisis.

In the discussions that followed, parliamentarians touched upon a wide range of topics related to the issue of human rights and migration. It was noted that discussions on general principles and best practices are beneficial, but that there are unique issues and concerns in each country as well. Participants exchanged their views on the impact of the economic crisis on the flow of people across the Americas, including the effect of the crisis on remittances, and the role that economic growth plays in inducing or dissuading migration. They also discussed the challenges and risks associated with migration, including the dangers facing women and children migrants.

Although distinct from the three concurrent working groups, the **Group of Women Parliamentarians of the Americas** also met on three occasions over the course of the Plenary Meeting. The Group was originally scheduled to hold two meetings, but because of the lively discussions and large number of interlocutors – both female and male parliamentarians – it was decided to hold a third meeting immediately prior to the special presentation on the Influenza A (H1N1) virus.

The first session began with a presentation by Lynn Holowesko, President of the Senate of the Bahamas. Ms. Holowesko spoke about the role of women in the family and in society generally. She talked about the balance of men and women in society and how poverty, war, fragmentation of the family and other issues are threatening that balance. In her view, women have made some progress in trying to restore balance, but that progress has been slow. Moreover, women remain underrepresented in political life and corporate leadership.

Ms. Holowesko argued that women bring different traits to the political arena compared to men. She cited a US survey which noted that women are relatively more likely to exhibit characteristics such as honesty and creativity, while men tend to exhibit traits such as decisiveness and ambition. As such, women have a valuable role to play in politics as they bring different, and complementary, characteristics to the table.

The discussions that followed the presentation touched on a number of subjects, including female participation in political life. Participants shared their opinions on the value that women bring to the political arena, discussed their countries' best practices regarding efforts to increase political involvement by women and talked about strategies to increase the number of women sitting in the region's parliaments. A number of parliamentarians suggested that gender parity should be the ultimate goal in terms of parliamentary representation. Some believed that quotas, which exist in some countries, do not go far enough in addressing the present imbalance between men and women.

Participants also debated issues such as the challenges and barriers facing women who wish to become more active in politics. Some argued that there are no structural barriers in place, while others identified a number of issues they believed are deterring female participation. Several parliamentarians identified what they believed to be specific roles for women in politics: women need to help one another get involved in the political process; they have a responsibility to listen to, and act on behalf of, disadvantaged women; they have a responsibility to promote those not present at the political table; and they can work to make it easier for subsequent generations to get involved in political life.

In its final meeting, in the morning of 15 September, the Group of Women Parliamentarians considered a draft report and recommendations. Following approval of the report and recommendations, the Group proceeded to the election of a new Chair of the Group. Two candidates were nominated. After each addressed the assembled delegates, a vote was held and Linda Machuca Moscoso, representing Ecuador, was declared the winner.

Special Presentation on the H1N1 Virus

Immediately preceding the Second Session of the Plenary Meeting, parliamentarians were given a special presentation on the Influenza A (H1N1) virus by Dr. Luis Gerardo Castellanos, an epidemiologist from the Pan-American Health Organization/World Health Organization (PAHO/WHO). Dr. Gerardo provided a review of the H1N1 situation, including a summary of the spread of the virus in terms of its geographic dispersion, intensity and impact across the hemisphere. He also discussed the known characteristics of the virus, including its transmissibility and resistance to antiviral drugs as well as the most likely at-risk groups. In addition, Dr. Gerardo talked about the upcoming flu season and the uncertainties facing countries in the Americas. He warned delegates that there are many unknowns surrounding H1N1, including the severity of the next outbreak, the possibility of a significant change in the virus and the total number of cases which may require medical services. Dr. Gerardo concluded by discussing strategies for dealing with the anticipated second wave of H1N1. He noted that, while early detection and effective response measures are critical to preventing the spread of H1N1, the PAHO/WHO does not recommend closing borders or restricting travel or trade in response to the virus.

Following his presentation, Dr. Gerardo responded to questions from those present. Questions from parliamentarians focused on issues such as the availability and distribution of vaccines as well as strategies to ensure that the needs of the poor are addressed in governments' H1N1 response strategies.

Second Session of the Plenary Meeting

The final session of the Sixth Plenary Meeting began with the presentation of the working groups' reports and recommendations. The reports and recommendations from the Working Group on the Financial and Economic Crisis, as well as from the Group of Women Parliamentarians, were received and adopted without amendment. In the cases of the recommendations proposed by the Working Group on Migration and Human Rights and the Working Group on Food Security, delegates brought forward some minor additions and modifications. After discussions, changes were made to some of the recommendations from those working groups to reflect the consensus view of the plenary group.

Following discussion of the working groups' reports and recommendations, two draft documents were presented to the assembly for approval. The first of these documents contained nine proposed recommendations concerning Influenza A (H1N1) pandemics in the Americas. The second was a draft recommendation endorsing the Final Statement at the April 2009 Special Parliamentary Dialogue "Engaging Parliaments in the Summits of the Americas' Process," held in Port-of-Spain, Trinidad and Tobago. The Final Statement called for greater participation by parliamentarians in the Summit of the

Americas. After some discussion, these two sets of draft recommendations were adopted by the assembly. The specific proposals contained in those documents are in Appendix II of this report.

The next item on the agenda was a minor adjustment to FIPA regulations regarding the composition of the Executive Committee. In an effort to ensure continuity and corporate memory, since 2006 the immediate-past-President of FIPA has held a position on the FIPA Executive Committee. With the approval of the plenary group, that regulation was amended to include all past Presidents of FIPA.

The assembly then held an unscheduled debate on the subject of whether to issue a statement on behalf of all FIPA member countries regarding the military coup in Honduras earlier in 2009. It was noted during the debate that the FIPA Executive Committee had issued a release in July 2009 condemning the coup. After some deliberation, this release was deemed to represent the views of all those present and was read into the official record of the Plenary Meeting.

The assembly then turned to a series of elections for the upcoming year. The first of these elections was for the position of President of FIPA. Luis Carlos Haully was acclaimed President for a second term. Before elections for other Executive Committee positions could be held, however, parliamentarians addressed the issue of the location of the next plenary meeting. Ecuador and Mexico both offered to host the 2010 plenary meeting and Paraguay offered to host the event in 2011. After some discussion, it was agreed that Mexico will host the 2010 assembly, while Ecuador will hold a special conference and meeting of the Group of Women Parliamentarians that year. Paraguay's offer to host the 2011 plenary meeting was accepted.

The floor was then opened to nominations for new Executive Committee members representing each of FIPA's four sub-regions. The United States was chosen as the new representative of the North American sub-region, marking the first time that country has held a position on the FIPA Executive Committee. St. Lucia was chosen to represent the Caribbean. Paraguay was selected as the new representative for South America, and Panama was nominated to represent Central America. These four countries join Canada (representing North America), the Dominican Republic (Central America), Trinidad and Tobago (the Caribbean) and Colombia (South America) as regional representatives on the Executive Committee.

Following the elections and closing remarks, FIPA's Sixth Plenary Meeting was adjourned.

Conclusion

FIPA's Sixth Plenary Meeting in Ottawa was, by all accounts, a successful event. The assembly was well-attended – parliamentarians from 22 FIPA countries were present, as were members from observer countries Russia and China – and the discussions, both in the Plenary Sessions and the working group meetings, were enthusiastic and well-informed.

While Canada was pleased and honoured to host the Plenary Meeting, it did so in part because no other host country could be found; FIPA had not held a Plenary Meeting since 2006. The Canadian Section of FIPA offered to host the event because of a belief

that it was important for the Association to regain some momentum. In the Canadian Section's view, recapturing momentum was the assembly's greatest success: the engagement and participation of member countries was indicative of a renewed interest in FIPA. There was an appetite amongst the parliamentarians in attendance to exchange ideas and perspectives on current issues as well as to discuss common problems and policy challenges.

Perhaps the greatest evidence of the renewed interest in FIPA came during the second and final Plenary Session. The discussions surrounding the nomination of new Executive Committee members, as well as the selection of a host country for the next plenary meeting, revealed a strong desire from several countries to participate more actively in FIPA activities.

During the election of new Executive Committee members, several countries expressed an interest in participating on the FIPA Executive Committee and, in the case of Central America, a lengthy discussion was required to settle the issue of which country would represent the region on the Executive Committee. More encouraging still was the selection of a host country for the Seventh Plenary Meeting. In the past, the FIPA Executive Committee had solicited countries to host plenary meetings. By contrast, at this meeting there was considerable interest in hosting such an event.

The success of the Sixth Plenary Meeting owes much to the hard work and dedication of many individuals and organizations in Canada. In particular, the Canadian Section of FIPA would like to thank the Parliament of Canada for the use of its facilities as well as Speaker Noël Kinsella of the Senate of Canada and Speaker Peter Milliken of the House of Commons for their involvement in this event. In addition, the Canadian Section would like to thank the Canadian Parliamentary staff, led by Ms. Elizabeth Rody, Chief of Protocol and Director of Conference Services, as well as the Ottawa-based FIPA Secretariat.

Finally, the Canadian Section would like to acknowledge the support provided by analysts from the Library of Parliament, who served as rapporteurs for the working group sessions, as well as staff from the office of the Clerk of the House of Commons, who assisted with the organization of the event and provided valuable support to the Canadian Parliamentarians during the meetings.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Randy Hoback', written in a cursive style.

Mr. Randy Hoback, M.P.
Chair
Canadian Section

of the Inter-Parliamentary Forum
of the Americas (FIPA)



Foro Interparlamentario de las Américas
Fórum Interparlamentar das Américas

FIPA

Inter-Parliamentary Forum of the Americas
Forum interparlementaire des Amériques

**Report of the Canadian Parliamentary Delegation
respecting its participation at the 20th meeting of the
Executive Committee of the Inter-Parliamentary Forum of the
Americas (FIPA)**

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

**Ottawa, Ontario, Canada
September 12, 2009**

Report

Introduction

FIPA held its 20th Executive Committee meeting in Ottawa, Canada on the evening of September 12, 2009, prior to the opening of the Sixth Plenary Meeting, at the Government Conference Centre. The meeting was chaired by FIPA President Luiz Carlos Hauly, Member of the Brazilian Chamber of Deputies, and attended by six other members of the Executive Committee: James Bezan, MP (Canada, representative of North America and the host country of the Sixth Plenary Meeting), Stanford Callender, MP (Trinidad and Tobago, representative of the Caribbean), Senator Ricardo García Cervantes (Mexico, representative of North America), Senator Céline Hervieux-Payette (Canada, past President of FIPA), Deputy Iván Moreira Barros (Chile, representative of South America) and Joan Purcell, President of the Senate of Grenada, who attended in replacement of Senator Ann Peters. *(See Appendix A for a list of participants)*

The objective of the meeting was to review preparations for the 6th Plenary Meeting of FIPA, to consider draft resolutions and recommendations to be submitted by the Executive Committee to the Plenary Assembly and to review vacancies and procedures for elections to take place during the Plenary meeting. An update on the financial situation of FIPA was also provided.

Opening of the Meeting and Adoption of the Agenda

The Chair welcomed participants and thanked Canadian Member of Parliament James Bezan for hosting the meeting.

The draft agenda of the 20th Executive Committee meeting was then submitted for the consideration of participants, who adopted it unanimously.

Approval of the Report of the 19th Executive Committee Meeting

The report of the 19th FIPA Executive Committee meeting, which had taken place on June 24, 2009, in Washington, D.C., was reviewed and approved.

Update on Preparations for the 6th Plenary Meeting

Members were invited to review the final program and draft agenda of the Sixth Plenary Meeting and the list of participating countries and delegates.

Grenadian representative Joan Purcell and Mexican Senator Ricardo García Cervantes took the floor to present the agendas of their respective working groups.

Former FIPA President Céline Hervieux-Payette presented the agenda of the Fifth Meeting of the Group of Women Parliamentarians, explaining that she had accepted to chair that meeting in replacement of the Women's Group President – absent due to other political commitments.

Participants expressed their satisfaction regarding the program's quality and the high relevance of issues to be addressed.

Draft Resolutions and Recommendations to be Presented by the Executive Committee

Following up on what had been agreed upon at the last meeting, the Chair invited delegates to consider the draft resolution and draft recommendations to be submitted to the Plenary Assembly on behalf of the FIPA Executive Committee.

The Draft resolution “Amendment to Article 6.1 of the FIPA Regulations on the Composition of the Executive Committee” and the Draft Recommendation “Outcome of the Special Parliamentary Dialogue held prior to the 5th Summit of the Americas” were adopted by the Executive Committee without discussion.

Members then discussed the Draft recommendation on the Influenza A (H1N1) Pandemics, presented by the Mexican delegate. Member agreed on the importance of making a strong statement of solidarity and cooperation on this major health issue. However, given the lack of clarity in the information circulated through the media on the (H1N1) Pandemic, they decided to keep the possibility of re-opening the draft recommendation until the Pan-American Health Organization/World Health Organization expert invited as guest speaker to the Plenary Meeting could address their concerns.

Elections to take place during the 6th Plenary Meeting

Members were invited to review the procedures for elections and FIPA Executive Committee positions becoming vacant. In their discussion, they insisted on the importance of electing Executive Committee representatives strongly committed to strengthening the Forum and, equally important, of selecting a host country firmly committed to hosting the next plenary meeting in 2010.

Financial Issues

Update on the financial situation of FIPA

The Executive Secretary presented FIPA’s provisional financial report for the October 1, 2008- June 30, 2009 period and reported on the status of regular fees received from member parliaments.

The representative of Canada then informed participants that the proposal submitted by FIPA and the Parliamentary Centre of Canada to the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) for the provision of five-year funding for FIPA activities had finally received CIDA’s approval. Members applauded this new development.

Discussion on the issue of regular fees for observers

Following up on the discussion held at the last Executive Committee meeting, the representative of Mexico presented the result of his research on fees charged by various parliamentary organizations to observers. He noted that most organizations do not have a regular fee for observers but accept voluntary contributions.

After discussing the available options, members decided by consensus that, instead of having a regular fee, observer countries who wish to attend the annual Plenary meeting would be asked to pay a registration fee per participant.

2010 Trade Workshop

The Mexican representative informed participants that the Mexican Senate would hold the next FIPA trade workshop March 11-13, 2010.

Other Business

Outgoing Executive Committee and Technical Secretariat representatives took the floor to say a few words on the opportunity of their last meeting. They were warmly thanked for their contribution to FIPA.

Closing

No other issue having been raised, the Chair declared the 20th FIPA Executive Committee Meeting closed.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Randy Hoback', written in a cursive style.

Mr. Randy Hoback, M.P.

Chair

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

Conference Costs

ASSOCIATION	Canadian Section of the Inter-Parliamentary Forum of the Americas (FIPA)
ACTIVITY	Sixth Plenary Meeting & 20th Meeting of the Executive Committee of the Inter-Parliamentary Forum of the Americas (FIPA)
DESTINATION	Ottawa, Ontario, Canada
DATES	September 12-15, 2009
DELEGATION	
SENATE	Hon. Raynell Andreychuk, Senator Hon. Céline Hervieux-Payette, Senator Hon. Marcel Prud'homme, Senator Hon. Pierette Ringuette, Senator Hon. Terrance Stratton
HOUSE OF COMMONS	Mr. James Bezan, M.P. Mr. Dean Allison, M.P. Ms. Nicole Demers, M.P. Ms. Hedy Fry, M.P. Mr. Ed Holder, M.P. Mr. Bruce Hyer, M.P. Mr. Peter Julian, M.P. Ms. Francine Lalonde, M.P. Mr. Larry Miller, M.P. Mr. Pierre Paquette, M.P. Mr. Mario Silva, M.P.
STAFF	Ms. Elizabeth Rody, Conference Director Ms. Kelly-Ann Benoit, Conference Secretariat Ms. Juliana Cavallero, Conference Secretariat Ms. Manon Champagne, Conference Secretariat Ms. Cynara Corbin, Conference Secretariat

Ms. Élise Desmarais, Conference Secretariat
Ms. Danielle Gougeon, Conference Secretariat
Mr. Terry Guillon, Conference Secretariat
Ms. Nathalie Labelle, Conference Secretariat
Ms. Rachel Marks, Conference Secretariat
Ms. Catherine Mathieu, Conference Secretariat
Ms. Lynn Pigeon, Conference Secretariat
Mr. Luc Prévost, Conference Secretariat
Ms. June Dewetering, Library of Parliament Chief Analyst
Ms. Julie Cool, Library of Parliament Analyst
Ms. Sandra Elgersma, Library of Parliament Analyst
Mr. Jean-Denis Fréchette, Library of Parliament Analyst
Mr. Michael Holden, Library of Parliament Analyst
Mr. Leif-Erik Aune, Association Secretary

PROFESSIONAL SERVICES	\$ 4,011.48
ADMINISTRATION	\$ 26,307.77
PROTOCOL AND HOSPITALITY	\$ 62,410.83
LOGISTICS	\$ 49,861.19
TRANSPORTATION	\$ 9,892.50
ACCOMODATION	\$ 4,201.79
TOTAL	\$ 156,685.56

APPENDIX I

Recommendations Adopted by the Plenary Assembly Based on the Deliberations of the Assembly Working Groups

Source: http://www.e-fipa.org/Plenaries/Ottawa2009/Ottawa_en_docs.html.

Recommendations from the Working Group on the Financial and Economic Crisis

1. That countries in the Americas should make every effort to promote economic integration and cooperation across the region. This integration should include increased cooperation in trade, infrastructure development, innovation and technology, and financial services regulation.
2. That FIPA member countries should explore the possibility of harmonizing legislation concerning investment rules, conditions, and transparency across the hemisphere to ensure sustainable development and to ensure that the benefits of investment are shared by all. No country should fail to attract foreign direct investment because investment rules are more lax elsewhere.
3. That FIPA member countries should make every effort to work together towards a satisfactory conclusion to the ongoing Doha Development Round of multilateral trade negotiations at the World Trade Organization (WTO). At the same time member countries should work to strengthen trade within the region, and to eliminate tariffs and protectionist measures across the Americas.
4. That FIPA member countries should ensure that they act in a fiscally responsible manner. In the short term, temporary deficit spending can be an appropriate countercyclical policy response to economic downturns. However, based on their past experience, countries in the Americas should avoid returning to the practice of persistent annual deficits over the long term.
5. That the countercyclical policies implemented by countries in the Americas should aim to preserve salaries and employment across the region, respecting national laws while also promoting international standards for working conditions such as those contained in the conventions of the ILO.
6. That, given the importance of a strong central bank in building trust in financial markets, FIPA member countries should work to preserve the autonomy of their central banks and federal reserve agencies.
7. That FIPA member countries should be encouraged to review their legislation in an effort to strengthen institutions dealing with control and oversight of financial institutions and their products, as well as rating agencies, to avoid speculative measures, conflicts of interest and lack of transparency in decision making in capital markets.
8. That FIPA member countries should implement public policies to encourage, as part of public-private alliances, the activation or creation of productive units that will create formal employment in a manner that promotes sustainable development. At the same time, FIPA countries should also promote policies, incentives and programs that will result in the greatest possible development of small and micro enterprises, ensuring their participation and competitiveness in internal and external markets.

Recommendations from the Working Group on Food Security

1. Childhood malnutrition can have negative long-term effects on the future development of countries. Therefore, it is recommended that greater emphasis be put on food and nutritional education programs when food aid is delivered.
2. It is imperative that the cycle of malnutrition-hunger-poverty be broken; food aid alone is not sufficient, and nor is it sustainable. Therefore, it is recommended that programs aimed at building capacity and creating economic opportunities for the population - both individually and collectively - be increasingly considered by countries that deliver food assistance. Furthermore, the purchase of local food should be promoted when food aid is delivered.
3. Food security is a complex issue which includes many factors – notably socioeconomic and cultural aspects – that require a specific and common approach. Therefore, it is recommended that a cross-sectoral approach, based on institutional efforts to coordinate the different efforts that affect food and nutritional security, be at the centre of public policies.
4. Access to safe water, like access to safe food, should become a human right. Therefore, it is recommended that the provision of safe water be promoted. It is also recommended that minimum food safety standards be put in place, provided they do not become an undue burden for producers.
5. Governments and Parliaments have a role to play, notably by approving adequate budgets for food programs. Therefore, it is recommended that FIPA Member Parliaments establish adequate institutional frameworks, strengthen the structure of their public agencies and set short, medium and long-term goals aimed at delivering sustainable support programs, including farm credit and crop insurance.
6. Furthermore, the Inter-Parliamentary Forum of the Americas (FIPA) should seek the promotion and establishment of a Parliamentary Front against Hunger in each Member Parliament, which is needed to advance a development and food security policy that is both sustainable and equitable for all.
7. Action, by both governments and Parliaments, is one element of the solution; small and young farmers are also important stakeholders, and are part of the strategy to fight hunger and poverty. Therefore, it is recommended that initiatives which would empower young and small farmers as well as family farmers should always be part of governments' strategies and programs; these measures should include extension services, adaptation, technology and innovation, with a focus on the education of rural young farmers and their families.
8. Furthermore, empowering farmers also results in a better relationship with local markets. Therefore, it is recommended that efforts be pursued by various agencies and governments involved in economic development. These efforts include the development of local co-ops and farmer associations through local and/or regional agricultural processing designed to enable producers to participate in the value chain.

9. The right to food is an important but not always well-understood concept despite wide acceptance of the notion as a basic human right. Therefore it is recommended that this concept be explained better to all populations and include relevant concepts and information prepared by such groups as the Food and Agriculture Organization. In ensuring the right to safe food, it is important to recognize the impacts of climate change on agricultural production, the need for sustainable food production and the requirement to use scarce water resources responsibly.
10. Trade remains an important component of economic development. It is recommended that the World Trade Organization objectives of reducing trade barriers and increasing market access be the main focus of all countries.
11. There is evidence of a significant relationship among political unrest, food prices and food security. Similarly, there is evidence of a link between the current energy crisis and the current competition for land and water. As a result, it is recommended that food security at the country and regional levels be assured and that fair competition in the development of bio-fuel, based on "basic grains," be pursued. Furthermore, it is recommended that investment in research and development and in second-generation bio-fuels be pursued.
12. Reduced market volatility could be achieved by a humanitarian minimum reserve and by safeguard mechanisms to minimize speculative behaviour affecting various markets. In order to prevent excessive speculation, it is recommended that stronger regulatory mechanisms be implemented by all countries.
13. There is a need to improve and increase access, by the operators of small and medium-sized farms, to appropriate price information about their commodities. Therefore, it is recommended that countries find ways to improve their agricultural product price systems and increase their access to market information through the use of information and communication technologies, such as cellular phones.
14. It is recommended that the FIPA work with member Parliaments to ensure that all technical cooperation and available resources are used better, including horizontal collaboration among the countries of the Americas.

Recommendations from the Working Group on International Migrations and Human Rights

1. That FIPA member parliaments promote greater dialogue with the executive branches of their States with the aim of harmonizing the legislation with a comprehensive public immigration policy characterized by being dignified, legal, orderly, safe and respectful of human rights.
2. That FIPA member parliaments strengthen political dialogue among legislative branches to determine the specific realities and needs of each region, and to seek proposals for joint solutions between countries of origin, transit and destination that promote flows that are dignified, legal, orderly, safe and respectful of human rights.
3. That FIPA member parliaments promote actions that:
 - a. Combat human trafficking;
 - b. Promote peace and reduce violence in border regions;
 - c. Condemn and prevent xenophobia and discrimination against migrants;
 - d. Establish minimum standards for the protection and health of migrants in detention and the deportation of migrants, and ensure family unity, consular protection and due process;
 - e. Strengthen the integration of migrants into host communities;
 - f. Call upon all countries in the international system to sign, accede to and comply with treaties on human rights and human mobility.
4. That FIPA member parliaments, through FIPA, request that the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) support the legislative branches of the region in organizing activities to promote the existing legal instruments on human rights and migration.
5. That FIPA member parliaments organize, through FIPA and with support from the International Organization for Migration (IOM), regional training workshops on the issue of human trafficking in order to promote best practices and legislation against it.

Recommendations from the Fifth Meeting of the Group of Women Parliamentarians

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 recommendation 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.

APPENDIX II

- **Recommendations Proposed and Adopted at the Final Plenary Meeting**
- **The Recommendation regarding Special Parliamentary Dialogue**
- **The Recommendations regarding the Influenza A (H1N1) pandemic**

Source: http://www.e-fipa.org/Plenaries/Ottawa2009/Ottawa_en_docs.html.

RECOMMENDATION

Outcome of the Special Parliamentary Dialogue held prior to the the 5th Summit of Heads of States and Governments of the Americas

Original: English

Adopted by the FIPA Plenary Assembly on September 15, 2009

RECOGNIZING the importance of the pre-Summit Special Parliamentary Dialogue held by the Parliament of Trinidad and Tobago and the Inter-Parliamentary Forum of the Americas (FIPA) on April 16, 2009 and the adoption of a final statement;

THE PLENARY ASSEMBLY OF FIPA:

1. ENDORSES the Final Statement adopted by parliamentarians gathered at the Special Parliamentary Dialogue, annexed to the present recommendation;
2. RECOMMENDS that similar parliamentary dialogues be held as part as regular pre-Summit activities held in the framework of future summits of Heads of States and governments of the Americas.

Annex:

Special Parliamentary Dialogue “Engaging Parliaments in the Summits of the Americas’ Process”

Parliament of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago

Port-of-Spain, Trinidad & Tobago

April 16, 2009

FINAL STATEMENT

Original: English

Adopted on April 16, 2009

We, Parliamentarians, gathered at the Special Parliamentary Dialogue hosted by the Parliament of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago and FIPA on April 16, 2009 in Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago:

1. Encourage partnership between parliamentarians and the Executive branch in the implementation of the Declaration of Commitment of Port of Spain, to be adopted by Heads of States and governments of the Americas at the Fifth Summit.
2. Encourage governments to recognize the great diversity of the various countries of the hemisphere in the implementation of the Declaration.
3. Assert that increased parliamentary participation in the Summits of the Americas’ Process will lead to accountability and greater transparency.
4. Call on governments to ensure that the Organization of the American States will be supported financially in order to monitor the implementation of the Summit Declaration and carry out the mandates entrusted to it.
5. Express our will to participate on a continual basis in the Summit of the Americas’ Process through FIPA.

**Recommendation
The Influenza A (H1N1) Pandemic**

Original: Spanish

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

Considering that globalization has developed profound ties in the world, facilitating the exchange of people, goods and services, and indirectly, it also has increased the possibility of transmitting diseases;

Conscious that a pandemic could endanger the health systems of States, with significant impact in their social and economic systems;

Recognizing the global preparedness system for pandemics of the World Health Organization and the mechanisms established by the new International Health Regulations (IHR) (2005), adopted by all WHO Member States, whose objective is the early detection of events that may constitute a public health emergency of international concern, and the application of national and international responses;

Convinced of the importance that all countries in the Hemisphere comply with IHR (2005) and that, through the strengthening of national systems of alert and response, countries comply with the obligation of notifying to the Pan-American Health Organization (PAHO) and the WHO, through the National Focal Points of the IHR in each country, about any public health event of international concern, particularly those related with an extreme potential for spreading;

Observing the effectiveness of the mechanism of early and detailed communications about a potential public health emergency, established by Mexico, the US and Canada under the auspices of the Security and Prosperity Partnership of North America, which allowed for the identification in laboratories of the US and Canada the pandemic virus H1N1 2009, and alert the international community;

Acknowledging that the full compliance by Mexico on notifying to the WHO/PAHO the number of cases identified and deceased, at the beginning and during the development of the pandemic of the H1N1 2009 virus, brought benefits to the world sanitary system, regardless the possible negative consequences to its economy;

Recognizing the need to promote transparency and international cooperation in sanitary matters;

Taking into account that the pandemic caused by the H1N1 virus will continue in the coming months, as the virus continues to spread in vulnerable populations;

Informed by the WHO/PAHO that the impact of the pandemic could deepen in the coming months, caused by a larger number of infected persons, and that the existence of a high number of severely ill patients will demand an increase in health services thus pressuring further the sanitary systems, and that such pressure could congest the units of intensive care, in detriment of other patients that may demand such care for other diseases;

Aware of the perils those vulnerable groups and other minorities face, and that a vaccine will not be available in enough quantities to cover all the populations in all States;

THE PLENARY ASSEMBLY OF FIPA:

1. RECOMMENDS FIPA Member Parliaments to strengthen, through legislation and increased budgets, the health sector so as to face pandemics like the current H1N1 virus, and guarantee the responsible use of recommended and effective resources including antiviral drugs;
2. ENCOURAGES FIPA Member Parliaments to protect the vulnerable groups through the necessary legal mechanisms to assure their access to the appropriate medical services;
3. CALLS on FIPA Member Parliaments to actively participate in education campaigns so as to prevent and mitigate any outbreaks or pandemics;
4. APPEALS to the media of the region to publicize the important role of preventive measures, and to promote the fair management of the resources available;
5. ENCOURAGES FIPA Member Parliaments to promote in their states the development of early warning systems with neighboring States, and to rigorously comply with IHR-2005 and related mechanisms and systems of surveillance to keep the commitments of the General Assembly of the WHO;
6. ENCOURAGES international financial institutions, such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, to provide compensation on a priority basis to countries that notify in a timely manner potential events of public health of international concern;
7. APPEALS FIPA Member Parliaments to commit themselves in promoting, as long as the WHO so recommends, the non-discrimination of travelers and in ensuring that the transportation of people and goods is not limited unnecessarily, so as to encourage the notification of epidemiological events that could threaten the international public health;