



**Report of the Canadian Parliamentary Delegation
Parliamentary Forum on the Margins of the Summit of the
Americas**

Canadian Section of ParlAmericas

Cartagena, Colombia

April 10 – 13, 2012

Report

A delegation representing the Canadian Section of ParlAmericas attended the Interparliamentary Meeting of the Americas, entitled “The Parliamentary Vision of the Summit of the Americas”, held on April 11, 2012 at the margins of the 6th Summit of Heads of States and Governments of the Americas, in Cartagena, Colombia. The delegation also held private meetings with representatives of the Andean Parliament on April 12, 2012. The delegation was led by the Honourable Michael L. MacDonald, Senator, and was accompanied by the Honourable Jim Munson, Senator, Mr. Earl Dreeshen, M.P., and was assisted by Mr. Leif-Erik Aune, Association Secretary.

Interparliamentary Meeting of the Americas

The Summits of the Americas are institutionalized gatherings of the heads of state and government of the Western Hemisphere where leaders discuss common policy issues, affirm shared values and commit to concerted actions at the national and regional level to address continuing and new challenges faced in the Americas. As such, the Summits process garners both a high profile and high levels of engagement by social actors, including non-governmental organizations, civil society and parliamentary assemblies.

The Interparliamentary Meeting at the margins of the Summit was hosted and organized by the Andean Parliament, which extended an invitation to representatives of ParlAmericas to attend and participate in the proceedings. The Andean Parliament is the parliamentary assembly of the Andean Community of Nations, which is presently comprised of Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador and Peru as full members. As part of an ongoing Strategic Plan to increase its relevance in the Western Hemisphere, ParlAmericas has endeavoured to engage other regional interparliamentary organizations in the Americas, with a view to participating in a growing number of interparliamentary conferences, workshops and meetings. The Interparliamentary Meeting of the Americas provided an ideal intersection between the established practice of sending Canadian parliamentary delegations to Summits of the Americas, and the new practice of engaging regional interparliamentary organizations toward raising awareness of ParlAmericas and expanding its network.

The Meeting provided the Canadian delegation with the opportunities of reuniting with new and old ParlAmericas colleagues, of meeting new colleagues through the Andean Parliament and other participating organizations, and of addressing the role of parliaments in the Summit of the Americas process.

Opening Session

The meeting began with opening remarks by leading representatives of inter-parliamentary and inter-governmental organizations. Ms. Gloria Florez Schneider, Representative of the Andean Parliament, welcomed the assembly and congratulated the parliamentarians assembled on the high turnout. Opening remarks were also presented by Mr. Randy Hoback, President of ParlAmericas, the Honourable Manolo Pichardo, Speaker of the Central American Parliament, and the Honourable Juan Manuel Corzo, Speaker of the Congress of Colombia. Lastly, Mr. Socorro Ramirez, Coordinator of the Social Actors Forum of the Summit of the Americas, thanked the

Andean Parliament for organizing the Meeting, and noted the importance parliamentary assemblies have as leading democratic institutions.

Panel Session

Following the Opening Session, the parliamentarians participated in a panel discussion, moderated by Ms. Gloria Florez Schneider, entitled, “A Parliamentary Vision for the Summit of the Americas: Sharing Opinions on the Draft Joint Statement.” At the outset of the session, a draft declaration was distributed to all participants, however the document was available in Spanish only and an English version was prepared for some participants.

The Statement addressed two main issues, namely, of establishing a space for high level political Interparliamentary dialogue within the Summits framework, and of formally engaging parliaments in negotiations on the Summit Declarations, toward enshrining a parliamentary pillar of the Summit of the Americas.

Ms. Florez considered the Joint Statement to be a “road map” for parliaments of the Americas toward assuming greater prominence at Summits of the Americas, and an opportunity to express a commitment to democracy and parliamentary harmonization in all possible fora.

Individual parliamentarians and representatives of parliamentary organizations took turns addressing the themes of the Draft Joint Statement, and participants expressed a general agreement that the Summits process needed to better support and engage democratic institutions by formally including parliaments and elected representatives. The Canadian delegation, having late received English copies of the Draft Joint Statement, studied the provisions of the document and refrained from comment.

Meeting with Representatives of the Andean Parliament

On April 12, 2012, the Delegation met with representatives of the Andean Parliament to discuss the visions, objectives, programs and projects of both organizations, and to discuss the possibility for future collaboration.

The Andean Community is an organization of currently four countries – Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador and Peru. Its history dates to the signing of the Cartagena Agreement in 1969. At that time, the membership also included Chile, which withdrew in 1976; Venezuela was a member from 1973 to 2006. The Andean Community describes itself as a group of countries which are “linked together by a shared past, a varied geography and a wide cultural and natural diversity, enhanced by common objectives and goals.” Associate member countries include Chile, Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay; Spain has been granted observer status.

The Andean Parliament is the deliberative body of the Andean Integration System (AIS), which is the series of institutions and bodies working to deepen Andean integration. The Andean Parliament was created in 1979, and its founding treaty entered into force in 1984. Its permanent headquarters are in Bogota, Colombia. The aims of the Andean Parliament “are to promote the nations’ participation in the process of Latin American integration, strengthen the democratic system, and contribute to international peace and justice and free self-determination for nations.”

As stipulated in its treaty documents, the Andean Parliament holds two regular meetings each year, the place, date and duration of which are decided at the previous year's sessions. According to a study of international parliamentary assemblies, the Andean Parliament's deliberations result in "decisions, agreements, declarations and recommendations, which have to be passed by an absolute majority of the members, and are immediately forwarded to governments."

The same study notes that, in order to promote its aims, the Andean Parliament undertakes a number of functions, such as suggesting changes to the programs and structure of the Andean Integration System; submitting suggestions for the standard-setting activities of the AIS in areas of common interest; promoting the harmonization of legislation of member states; undertaking a supervisory role with regards to senior officials of the Andean Community; as well as promoting the establishment and operation of research and training institutions.

Selected examples of recent activities of the Andean Parliament include:

- Participating in tributes on International Women's Day;
- Calling for the end of discrimination against foreign workers; and
- Organizing a roundtable on trade tools for South America.

Respectfully submitted,

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

Travel Costs

ASSOCIATION	Canadian Section of ParlAmericas
ACTIVITY	Parliamentary Forum on the Margins of the Summit of the Americas
DESTINATION	Cartagena, Colombia
DATES	April 10 – 13, 2012
DELEGATION	
SENATE	
	Hon. Jim Munson, Senator
	Hon. Michael L. MacDonald, Senator
HOUSE OF COMMONS	
	Mr. Earl Dreeshen, M.P.
STAFF	
	Mr. Leif-Erik Aune, Executive Secretary
TRANSPORTATION	\$ 15,602.89
ACCOMMODATION	\$ 2,375.49
HOSPITALITY	\$ 2,084.250
PER DIEMS	\$ 774.27
OFFICIAL GIFTS	\$ 0
MISCELLANEOUS / REGISTRATION FEES	\$ 758.96
TOTAL	\$ 21,595.86