



**Report of the Canadian Parliamentary Delegation to the
Organization of American States (OAS) and the 19th meeting
of the FIPA Executive Committee**

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

**Washington, D.C., United States
June 23 and 24, 2009**

Report

A delegation from the Canadian Section of the Inter-Parliamentary Forum of the Americas (FIPA) attended a meeting with the General Secretariat of the Organization of American States (OAS) on June 23, 2009, and attended the 19th Meeting of the Executive Committee of the Inter-Parliamentary Forum of the Americas (FIPA) on June 24, 2009 in Washington, D.C. The delegation was led by Mr. James Bezan, M.P., and included the Honourable Céline Hervieux-Payette, Senator. Mr. Bezan, as Chair of the Canadian Section, and Senator Hervieux-Payette, as a former President of FIPA, are the Canadian representatives on the FIPA Executive Committee. The delegation was accompanied by Mr. Leif-Erik Aune, Association Secretary.

While the primary purpose of travel to Washington, D.C. was to attend the meeting of the FIPA Executive Committee, the Canadian delegation, along with international members of the FIPA Executive Committee, availed themselves of the opportunity to meet with representatives from the General Secretariat of the OAS. The meeting was attended by the OAS Secretary for External Relations Adam Blackwell, Jane Thery, officer in charge of legislative relations at the OAS Secretariat for External Affairs, and Maria Fernanda Trigo and Ruben Perina of the OAS Secretariat for Political Affairs. FIPA is an independent network of the national legislatures of OAS member states, and actively promotes the role of parliaments in the inter-American system. In addition, FIPA is committed to developing inter-parliamentary dialogue on issues of importance to the hemisphere. In support of this mandate, FIPA and the Canadian Section of FIPA in particular, have maintained a presence at both the General Assemblies of the OAS and the Summits of the Americas.

The 19th Meeting of the FIPA Executive Committee was held on June 24, 2009, at the United States Congress, on the invitation of Mr. Gregory Meeks, Member of the House of Representatives. The Executive Committee met to review and finalize the 6th FIPA Plenary Meeting, which was to be hosted by the Parliament of Canada in Ottawa from September 12-15, 2009. A full report of the meetings on June 23 and 24, 2009 follows.

Introduction

FIPA held its 19th Executive Committee meeting in Washington, D.C., on June 24, 2009, at the Rayburn House Office Building of the United States House of Representatives. The meeting was chaired by FIPA President and Brazilian Deputy Luiz Carlos Hauly, and attended by five other members of the Executive Committee: James Bezan, MP (Canada, representative of North America and 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, former FIPA President) and Deputy Iván Moreira Barros (Chile, representative of South America). United States Representative Gregory Meeks participated in the meeting as special guest. (See *Appendix A for a list of participants*)

The objective of the meeting was to move forward on preparations for the 6th Plenary Meeting of FIPA, to discuss future activities of FIPA's Group of Women Parliamentarians and of the capacity-building for legislators, and to address

administrative matters. The program of activities also included a meeting with the Secretary for External Affairs of the Organization of American States (OAS) and other OAS officials, to discuss concrete means of strengthening cooperation between the two institutions.

Opening of the meeting and approval of the agenda

The FIPA President, Luiz Carlos Hauly welcomed participants and thanked Congressman Gregory Meeks for arranging the use of Congressional facilities for the meeting.

The draft agenda of the 19th Executive Committee meeting was then submitted for the consideration of participants, who adopted it unanimously.

The report of the 18th FIPA Executive Committee meeting, which had taken place on December 18, 2008, in Miami, was reviewed and approved.

Report on Activities

Report on the Participation of FIPA's Women Group in the Training Program for Women Candidates to the Elections in Haiti

The Chair reported on the participation of a delegation of FIPA's Group of Women Parliamentarians of the Americas at the opening of the training program for women candidates put in place by the Parliamentary Centre and the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) in preparation for the 2009-2010 elections in that country.

Mr. Hauly explained that the objective of the legislators' participation was to share with women candidates and members of women organizations practical experiences related to political life and campaigning.

He added that both the organizers and members of the FIPA delegation, which included FIPA Executive Committee member María Estela de la Cruz and Deputy Gladys Sofía Azcona from the Dominican Republic, Deputy Martha Angélica Tagle Martínez, from México and Guatemalan Deputy Otilia Lux de Coti, had agreed on the need to continue providing support to women in politics.

John Wood, Program Manager for Haiti and the Americas at the Parliamentary Centre of Canada, indicated that this had been a very good example of collaboration between FIPA and the Parliamentary Centre and expressed his wish that this collaboration be pursued into a second phase of activities.

Report on the Special Parliamentary Dialogue held in the framework of the 5th Summit of the Americas

Member of Parliament Stanford Callender presented a report of the Special Parliamentary Dialogue on the Fifth Summit of the Americas held on April 16, 2009, at the Parliament of the Trinidad and Tobago in Port-of-Spain.

He indicated that the Parliament of Trinidad and Tobago was pleased with the results and the interactive debate that had taken place during the event, which had brought together over 45 participants representing the parliaments and governments of Barbados, Brazil, Canada, Colombia, Ecuador, Grenada, Haiti, Paraguay, the United

States of the America and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, as well as the Organization of American States and the Global Organisation of Parliamentarians against Corruption. He added that a final statement had been adopted by participating parliamentarians as a result of the event (available on the FIPA web site at www.e-fipa.org).

The Chair echoed Stanford Callender's comments in saying that the dialogue had been very fruitful.

Report on Activities of the Canadian Section: Observation Mission to the 39th OAS General Assembly and Mission to Peru

Member of Parliament James Bezan made a brief report on activities implemented by the Canadian Section of FIPA in 2009, including a visit to Peru and a bilateral workshop on trade issues with Peruvian legislators, and a mission to observe the proceedings of the 39th Regular Session of the OAS General Assembly.

He encouraged fellow Executive Committee members to organize similar initiatives at the bilateral or sub-regional level in order to promote FIPA.

Discussion

The reports led to a discussion on means to raise the profile of FIPA among legislatures of the region. It was proposed that Committee members organize more bilateral or sub-regional activities, such as the Canada-Peru bilateral workshop, and visits to legislatures of less active countries.

The Chair committed to visiting the legislatures of Southern Cone countries.

Discussion on the United States Participation

US Congressman Gregory Meeks (Democrat - New York), chair of the recently formed OAS caucus at the House of Representatives, joined Executive Committee members for a discussion on US participation in FIPA. He said that there was great interest of his fellow US parliamentarians in inter-American affairs coming out of the Fifth Summit of the Americas. He indicated that the US participation in the Sixth FIPA Plenary Meeting would depend on the House schedule and committed to follow-up on this matter.

Executive Committee welcomed warmly this interest of the United States in inter-American affairs and in the multilateral approach.

Representative Albio Sires (democrat – New Jersey) made a brief appearance at the meeting to greet FIPA representatives.

Preparations for the Sixth FIPA Plenary Meeting

Update on Preparations and Presentation of the Preliminary Program

The Canadian representative provided an update on preparations for the Sixth Plenary Meeting of FIPA, to take place in Ottawa, Canada, September 13-15, 2009. He reported, in particular, that Canadian Minister of State for Foreign Affairs for the Americas, Peter Kent, had confirmed his participation in the opening ceremony.

He invited members to choose an overarching theme for the meeting and to consider a list of proposed keynote speakers.

Members agreed on the proposal to invite economist Sheryl Kennedy, former Deputy Governor of the Bank of Canada, as keynote speaker.

Considering the risk that a second, and possibly more harmful – wave of Influenza A (H1N1) may arise in coming months, members also agreed to invite the World Health Organization to present a report on this issue as part of the Plenary Meeting's program.

Presentation of Thematic Agendas for Working Groups

Executive Committee members then proceeded with the review of thematic agendas and programs for each working group.

Economic and Financial Crisis

It was agreed that Senator Nancy Patricia Gutiérrez, Representative of South America to the Executive Committee of FIPA, coordinate this work group.

Food Security

It was proposed that the working group be coordinated by a representative of the Caribbean region. Given the possibility that the representative of Trinidad and Tobago might not be able to attend the meeting due to the budget process in his parliament, it was proposed to ask the representative of Grenada if she was willing to coordinate the work group.

International Migrations and Human Rights

The working group coordinator, Mexican Senator Ricardo García Cervantes, Representative of North America to FIPA, presented the agenda and a list of proposed speakers.

Guidelines for Chairs of Working Groups and Rules of Procedures

The guidelines for chairs of working groups and the rules of procedures were approved by the Executive Committee.

Coordinators of working groups were asked to proceed with invitations to experts.

Fifth Meeting of the Group of Women Parliamentarians of the Americas

The draft program of Fifth Meeting of the Group of Women Parliamentarians of the Americas, to be held during the FIPA Plenary Meeting, was reviewed by members. Members agreed to hold the two meeting sessions on September 13 and 14 instead of September 14 and 15, as the original dates posed logistical challenges. It was proposed that a Speaker of Parliament be invited to make a presentation during the meeting.

Vacant Positions and Rules of Procedures for Elections

The Chair invited delegates to consider the list of positions becoming vacant, i.e. the presidency of FIPA, the presidency of the Group of Women Parliamentarians, one representative for each sub-region (Caribbean, North, South and Central America) and the representative of the host country of the next Plenary meeting.

The FIPA President and the Chair of the Group of Women Parliamentarians of the Americas were asked to inform the Executive Committee of their intention to run for a second mandate by August 1, 2009.

Members discussed possible host countries for the next Plenary Meeting. They decided to consult countries which had shown interest in hosting a FIPA Plenary Meeting in the past before considering other options.

Finally, the Executive Committee adopted the rules of procedures for elections.

Draft Resolutions and Recommendations to be presented by the Executive Committee

The Executive Committee agreed to submit to the Plenary Assembly draft recommendations or resolutions on the following matters:

- A draft resolution amending the FIPA regulations in order to allow all former presidents of FIPA to sit on the Executive Committee provided that they meet the criteria to do so;
- A draft recommendation on the Influenza A (H1N1) Pandemics;
- A draft recommendation to adopt the final statement of the Special Parliamentary Dialogue on the Fifth Summit of the Americas.

Communication Plan and Blog

The Canadian representative reported that he had hosted a reception with diplomatic missions of countries of the Americas in Ottawa to inform them of the coming Plenary Meeting. The FIPA President committed to undertake a similar activity in Brazil. The Technical Secretariat was asked to send a “reminder” invitation to member parliaments along with an updated program.

Cora Capurro, FIPA’s Communications and Public Relations Officer, proposed to use FIPA blog (accessible at www.e-fipa.org) to start sharing ideas on thematic issues to be addressed at the Plenary Meeting.

Administrative matters

Meeting of the Board of Directors of the FIPA Corporation

Canadian senator Céline Hervieux-Payette, Chair of the FIPA Board of Directors, was given the floor to chair the meeting of the Board of Directors of the FIPA Corporation. Board Members were presented with the audited financial statement of FIPA for the financial year ended on September 30, 2008, which they reviewed and adopted.

Annual General Meeting of Executive Members of the FIPA Corporation

The Chair of the Board of Directors then opened the Annual General Meeting of the Executive Members of the FIPA Corporation. Executive members received the auditors’ report for the financial year ended on September 30, 2008 and designated the auditors for the financial year ending on September 30, 2009.

Meeting of the Board of Directors of the FIPA Corporation

Another meeting of the Board of Directors of the FIPA Corporation was then held during which the remuneration of the auditors for the year ending on September 30, 2009 was decided, and a draft financial report covering the first half of the financial year was presented.

There was also a discussion on the renewal of the Memorandum of Understanding between FIPA and the Parliamentary Centre of Canada, represented by John Wood.

Funding Strategy 2009-2014

Following an update on negotiations between FIPA, the Parliamentary Centre and the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) by the Canadian delegate, members discussed ways to strengthen the financial sustainability of the Forum.

Members generally agreed that it would not be realistic to raise the regular fees of member parliaments at this point, especially considering the fact that there is another parliamentary organization fulfilling a similar mandate in the hemisphere. They also agreed that the Forum's consolidation should be the priority.

The possibility of imposing a fee on observers was considered. Members decided to study the issue further in order to come up with a recommendation at the next FIPA Executive Committee meeting.

The former FIPA President indicated that she would take advantage of the parliamentary recess to do a more comprehensive review of other sources of funding available, including foundations, as agreed at the last Executive Committee meeting.

Relations with Inter-American institutions and Summit of the Americas' Process

As discussed during the meeting held with the OAS Secretary for External Affairs Adam Blackwell (*see Appendix B for a summary of the meeting*) members agreed to undertake the negotiation of a cooperation agreement with the OAS.

It was stressed that the first pre-Summit Parliamentary Dialogue had been an important step for the insertion of FIPA in inter-American affairs.

Joint Work Group between FIPA and COPA

Members resolved to resume the discussions with the Parliamentary Confederation of the Americas regarding a possible integration after COPA and FIPA have held their respective annual meetings.

Group of Women Parliamentarians of the Americas

Members were invited to review the Parliamentary Centre's proposal regarding the participation of members of the Group of Women Parliamentarians in the second phase of the training program for women candidates to the 2009-2010 elections in Haiti.

Capacity-Building Program for Legislators

Preparations of the Next Regional Trade Workshop

Mexican delegate Ricardo García Cervantes formally offered, on behalf of the Mexican Senate, to host the next FIPA regional trade workshop. The Executive Committee welcomed the offer.

Assessment of Training Needs

John Wood, of the Parliamentary Centre of Canada, reminded the Committee that an important part of the funds requested to CIDA by FIPA and the Parliamentary Centre would be dedicated to developing a more comprehensive capacity-building program for

parliamentarians of the region. He indicated that the Parliamentary Centre would undertake an assessment to ensure that the program developed is relevant to actual needs of parliamentarians. He requested the collaboration of Executive Committee members in that process.

Closing

No other issue having been raised, the Chair declared the 19th 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)

Travel Costs

ASSOCIATION	Canadian Section of the Inter-Parliamentary Forum of the Americas (FIPA)
ACTIVITY	Meetings at the Organization of American States and 19 th Meeting of the Executive Committee of the Inter-Parliamentary Forum of the Americas
DESTINATION	Washington, D.C., United States
DATES	June 23 and 24, 2009
DELEGATION	
SENATE	The Honourable Céline Hervieux-Payette, Senator
HOUSE OF COMMONS	Mr. James Bezan, M.P.
STAFF	Mr. Leif-Erik Aune Association Secretary
TRANSPORTATION	\$ 8,011.23
ACCOMMODATION	\$ 583.62
HOSPITALITY	\$ 0
PER DIEMS	\$ 583.59
OFFICIAL GIFTS	\$ 40.00
MISCELLANEOUS / REGISTRATION FEES	\$ 20.99
TOTAL	\$ 9,239.43

Appendices

Appendix A: List of Participants

MEMBERS OF EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

FIPA President

Deputy Luiz Carlos Hauly (BRAZIL)

North America

James Bezan, MP (CANADA/host country of the Sixth Plenary Meeting)

Senator Ricardo García Cervantes (MEXICO)

South America

Deputy Iván Moreira Barros (CHILE)

Caribbean

Stanford Callender, Member of Parliament (TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO)

Former President

Senator Céline Hervieux-Payette (CANADA)

OTHER GUESTS

Representative Gregory Meeks (UNITED STATES OF AMERICA)

Leif-Erik Aune (Parliament of Canada)

Karla Mendoza Alcántara (Senate of Mexico)

Elizabeth Rody (Parliament of Canada)

Pablo Serrano (Senate of Mexico)

John Wood (Parliamentary Centre, Canada)

FIPA TECHNICAL SECRETARIAT

Cora Capurro (Communications and Public Relations Officer)

Emmanuelle Pelletier (Executive Secretary)

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT

Deputy María Estela de la Cruz (Representative of Central America, DOMINICAN REPUBLIC)

Senator Nancy Patricia Gutiérrez (Representative of South America, COLOMBIA)

Senator Cecilia López (Chair of the Group of Women Parliamentarians of the Americas, COLOMBIA)

Senator Ann Peters (Representative of the Caribbean, GRENADA)

Guatemala: Vacant

Appendix B: Report of the Meeting with the OAS held on June 23, 2009

The FIPA Executive Committee participated in a meeting with OAS officials on June 23, 2009 at OAS headquarters. The meeting was attended by the OAS Secretary for External Relations, Adam Blackwell, Jane Thery, officer in charge of legislative relations at the Secretariat for External Affairs, and Maria Fernanda Trigo and Ruben Perina of the Secretariat for Political Affairs.

Adam Blackwell started the meeting by providing FIPA Representatives an overview of the OAS work, which he described as including four pillars: (1) the political dialogue, which takes place not only at the Permanent Council but also through summits of the Americas and related ministerial meetings; (2) the establishment of hemispheric standards, in areas such as trade, education, electoral processes, civil registries and human rights; (3) the effort made in “minimizing gaps” through capacity-building programs, scholarships and other cooperation programs, and; (4) the administration of the OAS structure, including the management of the Secretary General office and the coordination of twelve hemispheric organizations.

Ms. Thery and Mr. Perina provided further details on the work already undertaken by the OAS with legislatures (for example with the Forum of Speakers of Central American Parliaments), which focuses on the one hand on modernizing legislative institutions and on the other, on developing parliamentary cooperation.

In the discussion that followed, FIPA representatives stressed the importance that legislatures be part of this OAS effort, should it be in furthering political dialogue or in building hemispheric standards through legislation.

The Secretary for External Affairs proposed to proceed with the signature of a general cooperation agreement in order to formalize the relation between the OAS and FIPA. In reference to FIPA’s request for a special status to the OAS, Ambassador Blackwell explained that existing rules gave the host country of the General Assembly the authority to manage invitations, thus making clear that the signature of an agreement would not mean an automatic invitation to OAS activities.

Executive Committee members welcomed the proposal of signing a cooperation agreement with the OAS and requested the FIPA Technical Secretariat to work on a draft agreement along with the OAS Secretariat for External Affairs.