



**Report of the Canadian Parliamentary Delegation
respecting its participation at the 22nd Executive Committee
Meeting of the Inter-Parliamentary Forum of the Americas**

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

**Asuncion, Paraguay
June 5, 2010**

Report

Introduction

FIPA held its 22nd Executive Committee meeting in the city of Asuncion, Paraguay, on June 5, 2010. The meeting was hosted by the Senate of Paraguay, represented by Senator Alberto Grillón Conigliaro, Representative of South America to the Executive Committee of FIPA, and chaired by FIPA President Luiz Carlos Haully, Member of the Brazilian Chamber of Deputies. Other participants included: Senator Adriana González Carrillo (Mexico, representative of the host country of the 7th Plenary Meeting), Senator Céline Hervieux-Payette (Canada, former President of FIPA), Randy Hoback, M.P. (Canada, representative of North America), Deputy Víctor Juliao (Panama, representative of Central America), Linda Machuca, Member of the National Assembly of Ecuador (President of the Group of Women Parliamentarians of the Americas) and Rosemary Mathurin, Speaker of the House of Assembly (Saint Lucia, representative of the Caribbean). (See Appendix A for a complete list of participants.)

The main objectives of the meeting were to move forward on preparations for the 7th FIPA Plenary Meeting and the next meeting of the Group of Women Parliamentarians of the Americas; to start planning activities as part of FIPA's new capacity-building program; and to adopt an action plan based on the review of FIPA's communication strategy.

During their stay in Paraguay, FIPA Executive Committee Members were received by the President of the Republic, Fernando Lugo at the Presidential House, *Mburuvicha Roga*.

Opening of the Meeting

The opening ceremony took place in the Senate Chamber of the National Congress. The President of the Paraguayan Senate and Congress, Miguel Carrizosa and the Chair of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, Carlos Lisseras, extended opening remarks on behalf of the Senate and Chamber of Deputies. Both took the opportunity to convey their satisfaction to FIPA representatives for having chosen Paraguay as host country of the 8th Plenary Meeting, to be held in conjunction with the bicentennial of the country in 2011.

They were followed by Senator Alberto Grillón, Representative of Paraguay to the Executive Committee of FIPA, who extended a warm welcome to participants, and by FIPA President Luiz Carlos Haully, who introduced participants in the meeting.

Adoption of the Agenda

President Haully, Chair of the meeting, invited members to consider the draft meeting agenda. The latter was adopted without change.

Changes in the Composition of the Executive Committee

The Chair informed members of the following changes in the composition of the Executive Committee:

Trinidad and Tobago: A parliamentary election took place and the current Executive Committee member, Stanford Callender, did not seek re-election. The position is vacant.

Colombia: Legislative elections took place and the current Executive Committee member, Nancy Patricia Gutiérrez, did not seek re-election to the Congress. The position will become vacant when the new legislature comes into function.

Dominican Republic: Legislative elections took place and the current Executive Committee member, María Estela de la Cruz, did not seek re-election to the Congress. The position will become vacant when the new legislature comes into function.

The Chair indicated that the legislatures of these countries would be asked to designate an alternate member pursuant to article 6.1 e) of the *FIPA Regulations*.

In addition, the Chair informed participants that the Canadian Section of FIPA had elected Mr. Randy Hoback, M.P, as its new Chair at its annual general meeting, and asked that he be designated as the parliamentary delegate of Canada to the FIPA Executive Committee in replacement of outgoing Chair of the Canadian section, Mr. James Bezan, M.P. This request was submitted to the consideration of Executive Committee members, who gave their approval.

A motion was adopted to thank outgoing Executive Committee members for their service.

Finally, the Chair expressed concern regarding the lack of designation of a parliamentary delegate from the Congress of the United States of America, to fill in the Executive Committee position to which it was elected during the 6th Plenary Meeting.

After a discussion, the Executive Committee decided to send a delegation to Washington D.C. in order to meet with the Speaker of the United States House of Representatives.

Approval of the Report of the 21st Executive Committee Meeting

The meeting proceeded with the consideration of the report of the 21st FIPA Executive Committee meeting, held in Panama City, Panama on January 29-30, 2010. The report was approved without any change.

Report on Recent Activities

Mexican representative Adriana González Carrillo reported on the Workshop “The Doha Round: Challenges and Opportunities for the Region”, hosted by the Senate of her country May 20-22. She indicated that there was a high level of participation, with representatives of 16 countries including speakers/presidents of three legislative chambers. She also highlighted the high quality of participating expert speakers.

Similarly, FIPA President Luiz Carlos Hauly spoke about his participation in the First Forum of the Parliamentary Front against Hunger, organized by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) in São Paulo, Brazil in March 2010. He acknowledged the decision to create a committee conformed by the representatives of the parliamentary organizations which comprise the Parliamentary Front, including FIPA.

Furthermore, the Chair of the Women's Group and Ecuadorian parliamentarian, Linda Machuca, reported on her participation in the Meeting of Experts on Women's Political Participation (Panama City, Panama, April 2010) and in the seminar "Fighting Violence against Women: From Legislation to Effective Application" (Cuenca, Ecuador, April 2010). She explained that both events were useful for networking, and as a learning experience. She added that she took these opportunities to ask parliamentarians to fill out a survey in order to identify priority areas for the Women's Group.

Finally, Canadian representative Randy Hoback, M.P., informed that a delegation of the Canadian Section of FIPA participated in a trade mission at the Congress of Argentina in March 2010. He stressed out the usefulness of bilateral visits as a tool to promote FIPA.

2010 FIPA Work Plan

Preparations for the 7th Plenary Meeting

Program and Agenda

Mexican Senator Adriana González Carrillo was given the floor to speak about preparations for the 7th Plenary Meeting. She invited Executive Committee members to review the draft program and agenda available in their binders. She noted that the meeting would take place on November 17, 18 and 19 and that participants would be invited to participate in the centennial celebrations of the Mexican Revolution on November 20.

The Chair then invited delegates to review the backgrounders prepared on each selected thematic area:

Working Group 1: Preparedness and Response to Natural Disasters and Emergency Situations;

Working Group 2: Regional Security and Transnational Crime; and

Working Group 3: The Role of Civil Society in Democracy Strengthening.

The Chair opened the floor for discussion. Members generally agreed with the approach suggested for each topic in the backgrounders. While discussing the agenda of Working Group 1, participants suggested that issues such as the management of donated funds after natural disasters, as well as the management of man-made disasters, be also addressed.

The Executive Committee was invited to select a coordinator for each working group. It was agreed that Working Group 1 would be coordinated by the representative of Saint Lucia, Speaker Rosemary Mathurin, while Paraguayan Senator Alberto Grillón and Canadian Member of Parliament Randy Hoback, would be responsible for Working Groups 2 and 3, respectively.

The President of the Group of Women Parliamentarians reminded participants that the Women's Group would also meet during the Plenary Meeting, and that the agenda and guest speakers for these sessions would be defined based on the surveys and on the results of the upcoming Women's Group Meeting in Quito, Ecuador.

Draft Resolutions to be presented by the Executive Committee

The Chair then invited members to discuss draft resolutions/recommendations to be submitted to the Plenary Assembly by the Executive Committee.

The Executive Secretary was given the floor to speak on the issue of observer contributions, following up on the recommendation made at the last meeting to introduce a regular fee for permanent observers. She explained that, considering the number of countries who qualify as permanent observers under article 4.a) of the FIPA Regulations, a regular fee for observers would represent an administrative burden unlikely to produce expected results since most observer countries are not active. Taking these factors into account, the Executive Committee agreed, following discussion, to stick to the option of imposing a registration fee for observers that wish to participate in FIPA events. They further decided that the registration fee should be proportional to each country's size and economic weight.

Three other issues were raised as possible subjects of pronouncements at the November Plenary Meeting: Israel's May 31 forcible boarding of a boat bringing aid to the Gaza Strip; the oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico, and; the Arizona immigration law. Recognizing the seriousness of these issues, members decided, in the first case, to wait until the United Nations investigation of these events is completed, and in the other two, to monitor the evolution of the situation – before taking a decision on the matter.

Rules of Procedures for Working Groups

Draft rules of procedures for working groups to be formed by the Plenary Assembly were submitted to the consideration of the Committee. They were approved without change.

Rules of Procedures for Elections

Draft rules of procedures for elections to take place during the 7th Plenary Meeting were submitted to the consideration of Executive Committee members, and approved without change.

Other issues related to the 7th Plenary Meeting

The representative of Panama, Víctor Juliao, conveyed the interest of his country to host the 9th Plenary Meeting of FIPA in 2012. This proposal was well received by Executive Committee members, who asked that a formal offer be made at the next Plenary Meeting, during which the selection of host countries for following years would take place.

FIPA Capacity-Building Program

The Parliamentary Centre's Senior Adviser in parliamentary development, John Wood, was invited to present the results of the needs assessments conducted by the Centre as part of the new capacity-building program to be developed by FIPA and the Centre, with funding from the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA).

Mr. Wood summarized the assessment's findings, which are based on interviews made with parliamentarians, staff and other stakeholders in Ecuador, Guatemala, Jamaica, Panama, Saint Lucia and Washington, D.C., and on responses to an online survey

submitted to parliaments of the hemisphere. He noted the poor level of response to the latter, and proposed that further efforts be made in order to gather information from at least one representative in each member parliament. He also invited members to consider proposals of activities in order to start the program's implementation during the current year.

Members congratulated the Parliamentary Centre representative on the work accomplished and highlighted the importance of this program to strengthen parliamentary institutions. They agreed that efforts to collect information in countries that have not responded so far be pursued – using a shorter version of the questionnaire – in parallel with the start of the program.

In terms of priorities for the initial year of the program, the Executive Committee agreed that an activity on parliamentary oversight, particularly as it relates to control of the budget process and transparency of public accounts, would be most useful and that such activity could take place sometime between August and November.

Meeting of the Group of Women Parliamentarians of the Americas

Ecuadorian Representative Linda Machuca, President of the Group of Women Parliamentarians of the Americas, took the floor to report on preparations for the meeting of the Group of Women Parliamentarians of the Americas. She indicated that the event, hosted by the National Assembly of Ecuador and originally scheduled in July, had been postponed to August of 2010. She informed members that a gender specialist had been contracted with CIDA funds to assist in the event organization and provide support to the Women's Group, and that the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) had also agreed to provide some financial support.

Ms. Machuca then presented the meeting's agenda, drafted based on prior recommendations of the Women's Group and taking into account the results of the survey distributed among its network. The presentation was followed by a discussion about possible guest speakers.

The Chair thanked the Women's Group President for her presentation and for efforts dedicated to organizing this event.

Participation of FIPA in the Inter-American Agenda

The Chair declared that a FIPA delegation would participate in the 40th Regular Session of the General Assembly of the Organization of American States (OAS) in Lima, Peru, June 6-8. Furthermore, he noted that the delegation's agenda included a meeting with OAS Secretary General José Miguel Insulza.

In preparation for that meeting, the Chair recalled that the FIPA Technical Secretariat had not heard back from the OAS Secretariat regarding the signature of a general cooperation agreement between the two organizations in spite of follow-up efforts. The Chair also suggested that this opportunity could be used to propose the idea of organizing a joint FIPA-OAS meeting of Speakers/Presidents of parliamentary chambers of the Americas, in the months leading to the next Summit of the Americas, following up on earlier conversations with the OAS. Executive Committee members agreed with the suggestion.

Revision of the Communications' Strategy

FIPA's communication officer, Elena Sosa Lerín, was invited to present her review of the communication strategy and proposed action plan. She commented that, while the strategy adopted in 2005 had had some success, particularly with the introduction of a quarterly newsletter, it had not managed to address some of the ongoing challenges faced by the Technical Secretariat, such as the management of information in four languages, technological inconveniences and time constraints need to strengthen collaborative networks. These difficulties, she added, were magnified by quick changes in technology and their effect in communications (social networks, wikis, podcasts, Blackberries, iPhones, etc.).

For these reasons, she explained, the 2010 proposed strategy focuses on the website's modernization, and, particularly, on the implementation of a Content Management System (CMS) and new image for the site. This new system, she specified, would help better integrate communications within its policy operations and enable FIPA to meet website industry standards. She further explained that a call for proposals had been made in order to identify the most cost-efficient CSM solution and that the FIPA Technical Secretariat was currently in the process of assessing proposals received.

In addition to the CSM implementation, Sosa Lerín proposed that the following measures be taken:

- To introduce an e-newsletter to complement the paper version of *ParlAmericas* and reduce printing and mailing costs;
- To make use of social networking tools to strengthen dialogue among FIPA members;
- To introduce new information material such as media kits and information booklets;
- To increase the participation of FIPA representatives in events relevant to the organizations' mandate (especially when costs are covered by hosts);
- To pursue efforts to engage with permanent staff in member parliaments, and other stakeholders including regional donor organizations;
- To monitor results of the strategy and adjust it as necessary.

The Executive Committee welcomed the proposed action plan and expressed its wish to see the CMS implemented within the shortest possible time. The Executive Secretary indicated that in the interest of moving fast, she would inform the Board of Directors of the overall cost of the system as soon as possible in order to obtain approval for the project start.

In addition to proposed measures, Executive Committee members decided to launch a contest for the design of a new FIPA logo as part of the modernization of FIPA's image. The FIPA Technical Secretariat was also asked not to wait until information is translated into all FIPA languages before making it available on the website in order to reduce delays.

Administrative and Financial Matters

Special Meeting of the Board of Directors of the FIPA Corporation

FIPA President Luiz Carlos Hauly invited the President of the FIPA Corporation, Canadian Senator Céline Hervieux-Payette, to take the floor to chair the Special Meeting of the FIPA Corporation Board of Directors. Among other items, directors approved the minutes of their last meeting and convoked a special meeting of Executive Members of the Corporation.

Special General Meeting of Executive Committee Members of the FIPA Corporation

A special meeting of Executive members of FIPA was held under the chairmanship of Corporation President Céline Hervieux-Payette. Executive Committee members elected two new Board members, that is, Mr. Randy Hoback, Member of the Canadian Parliament, and Rosemary Mathurin, Speaker of the House of Assembly of Saint Lucia.

Special Meeting of the Board of Directors of the FIPA Corporation

The FIPA Corporation President then called a meeting of the new Board of Directors of the Corporation. Director Randy Hoback was appointed to represent FIPA on the steering committee of the new CIDA-financed project in replacement of former Chair of the Canadian Section of FIPA, James Bezan.

A provisional financial report for the period October 1, 2010 – March 31, 2010 was presented.

Other Business

Date and Location of the 23rd FIPA Executive Committee Meeting

The Chair proposed that the 23rd Meeting of the Executive Committee be held in Mexico City on November 16 (the day prior to the start of the Plenary Meeting) and suggested that members keep in touch via other means if a decision needed to be taken before then.

Members agreed to the proposal.

Closing

Since no other issue was raised, the Chair declared the 22nd FIPA Executive Committee Meeting closed. Both, the Senate of Paraguay and Senator Alberto Grillón were warmly thanked for the hospitality.

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	22 nd Meeting of the Executive Committee of the Inter-Parliamentary Forum of the Americas
DESTINATION	Asuncion, Paraguay
DATES	June 5, 2010
DELEGATION	
SENATE	The Honourable Céline Hervieux-Payette, Senator
HOUSE OF COMMONS	Mr. Randy Hoback, M.P.
STAFF	Mr. Leif-Erik Aune, Association Secretary
TRANSPORTATION	\$ 21,326.00
ACCOMMODATION	\$ 912.44
PER DIEMS	\$ 733.19
OFFICIAL GIFTS	\$ 55.00
TOTAL	\$ 23,026.63

Appendices

Appendix A: List of Participants

MEMBERS OF EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

FIPA President

Deputy Luiz Carlos Hauly (BRAZIL)

North America

Randy Hoback, M.P. (CANADA)

Central America

Deputy Víctor Juliao III (PANAMA)

South America

Senator Alberto Grillón Conigliaro (PARAGUAY – Host of the 22nd Executive Committee Meeting))

Caribbean

Rosemary Mathurin, Speaker of the House of Assembly (SAINT LUCIA)

Former President

Senator Céline Hervieux-Payette (CANADA)

President of the Group of Women Parliamentarians of the Americas

Linda Machuca Moscoso, Member of the National Assembly (ECUADOR)

OTHER PARTICIPANTS

Leif-Erik Aune (Parliament of Canada)

Luis María Duarte (Senate of Paraguay)

Amauri Escudero (Chamber of Deputies of Brazil)

Stella Frutos (Senate of Paraguay)

David Orozco (Senate of Mexico)

Walter Vera (Senate of Paraguay)

John Wood (Parliamentary Centre of Canada)

FIPA TECHNICAL SECRETARIAT

Emmanuelle Pelletier (Executive Secretary)

Elena Sosa Lerín (Program Officer, Communications)

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)

Trinidad and Tobago: Vacant

United States of Americas: Vacant

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North America

Randy Hoback, M.P. (CANADA)

Central America

Deputy Víctor Juliao III (PANAMA)

South America

Senator Alberto Grillón Conigliaro (PARAGUAY – Host of the 22nd Executive Committee Meeting)

Caribbean

Rosemary Mathurin, Speaker of the House of Assembly (SAINT LUCIA)

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EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT

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

Trinidad and Tobago: Vacant

United States of Americas: Vacant