



**Report of the Canadian Parliamentary Delegation  
respecting its participation at the  
Meeting Of The Group of Women Parliamentarians of the  
Americas**

**National Assembly of Ecuador**

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

**Quito, Ecuador  
August 11 and 12, 2010**

# Report

## INTRODUCTION

The Canadian Section of the Inter-Parliamentary Forum of the Americas (FIPA) was invited to send a delegation to the National Assembly of Ecuador, to attend a Meeting of the FIPA Group of Women Parliamentarians, entitled “Women in Power: Challenges for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century”. The Canadian parliamentary delegation was led by the Honourable Céline Hervieux-Payette, Senator, and was accompanied by Ms. Bonnie Crombie, M.P., and Ms. Denise Savoie, M.P. The Secretary to the Delegation was Mr. Leif-Erik Aune.

## THE MEETING

This meeting of the FIPA Group of Women Parliamentarians of the Americas was divided into five plenary sessions, each of which was moderated by a leading expert or community leader. Sessions provided expert presentations, facilitated panel discussions or general discussions involving the assembly.

### Opening Ceremony

The Meeting was opened by His Excellency Rafael Correa Delgado, Constitutional President of the Republic of Ecuador. Welcoming remarks were made by His Excellency Fernando Cordero Cueva, President of the National Assembly of Ecuador. Introductory remarks and observations on the recent work undertaken by the FIPA Group of Women Parliamentarians of the Americas were made by the Honourable Céline Hervieux-Payette, Senator and Member of the Executive Committee of FIPA, Mr. Juan Velásquez, Manager of Operations, United Nations Development Funds for Women (UNIFEM) – Andean Region, and Ms. Linda Machuca Moscoso, Member of the National Assembly of Ecuador and Chair of the Group of Women Parliamentarians of the Americas. Ms. Machuca warmly welcomed the assembly and extended her best wishes for a positive and enriching dialogue over the course of the two-day meeting.

### Session 1—The Situation of Women’s Rights in the Hemisphere: A Critical Look at National Legislations

This session was moderated by Ms. María Estela de la Cruz, Member of the Chamber of Deputies of the Dominican Republic. A presentation was made by Dr. Roxana Arroyo, Researcher at the United Nations Latin American Institute for the Prevention of Crime and Treatment of Offenders and Associate Professor of Latin American Studies. This session focused on legislated requirements for gender equality in elected representation. Several countries in the Americas have passed into law the requirement for a percentage of seats to be reserved for women within their national legislatures. Countries such as Cuba, Argentina and Ecuador are increasing these minimum levels on gradual basis, toward full gender equality. It was argued that participation by women in the political process would not reach full equality without legal measures, as there are structural impediments to participation by women inherent in the political system. Data from the United Nations, the Inter-Parliamentary Union and other sources were reviewed and discussed, providing a quantitative analysis of participation by women in legislatures. It was revealed that the global average percentage of

participation by women in both upper and lower chambers of national legislatures was 19.2%, whereas the average within the region of the Americas was 23.1%. Beyond this, members of the assembly asserted that there were cultural impediments in some regions and countries of the Americas that made women feel generally reluctant to enter politics.

### **Session 2—Women, Politics and Diversity**

This session was moderated by the Honourable Adriana González Carrillo, Senator from Mexico. Discussions were led by Ms. Enoé Uranga, Member of the Chamber of Deputies of Mexico, Ms. Aluki Rojas, Deputy Minister for Inter-Governmental Affairs from the Government of the Territory of Nunavut, Ms. Angela Guimarães, Counselor of the National Youth Council of Brazil, and Ms. Otilia Lux, Member of the Chamber of Deputies of Guatemala. It became apparent, from the presentations and subsequent discussion that experiences varied greatly across the Americas. Canadian delegates observed that a common experience in Latin-American sub-regions was that male-dominance in society had the effect of preventing women from entering politics across all socio-economic and ethnic segments of society.

### **Session 3—Assessing the Application of Positive Actions to Improve Women’s Participation**

This session was moderated by Ms. Karina Beteta Rubín, Member of the Congress of Peru. Presentations were made by Ms. Annunciatta Valdéz, President of the Foundation Equity and Development and Regional Sub-Director of Participación Ciudadana of Ecuador, Ms. Gina Godoy, Member of the National Assembly of Ecuador, and Ms. Cecilia Ayllón Quintero, Member of the Chamber of Deputies of Bolivia. This session presented the countries of Ecuador and Bolivia as case studies for sharing best practices. Discussions following the presentations brought to light systemic differences in the approaches of countries to take positive action toward increasing the participation by women in politics. Many countries allow political candidates to receive funds from sources that would be illegal in the Canadian context. While the practice legally limiting election spending is enshrined in Canadian legislation, it was seen as a wrongful deterrent to the entry by women candidates. Other meeting participants took issue with the practice of using public funds to subsidize the participation of political parties. Ultimately, laws on access to the political process varied greatly from country to country, and this in turn was seen to yield an impact to the participation by women.

### **Session 4—Exercising Power: The Experience of a Woman Politician**

This session was moderated by Ms. María Paula Romo, Member of the National Assembly of Ecuador. A presentation was made by the Honourable María Cristina Perceval, former Senator from Argentina. Ms. Perceval shared her experiences from her time in politics and invited the assembly to engage in follow-up discussion, focusing on differences and similarities of life in politics over the last 20 years.

## **Session 5—Women in Politics and the Media: A Troubled Relationship?**

This session was moderated by the Honourable Rosemary Mathurin, Speaker of the House of Assembly of Saint Lucia. This general discussion session was introduced by Ms. Cecilia Medina, Professor of Social Communication at the University of Central Ecuador. Focusing on the effects of media in constructing the image of women, the assembly generally agreed that media was a powerful tool that was invaluable to advancing the cause of gender equality. However, it was also noted that mainstream views of women in society paid less than adequate deference to deserving attributes.

### **Closing Session and Final Remarks**

Ms. Linda Machuca Moscoso, Member of the National Assembly of Ecuador and Chair of the Group of Women Parliamentarians of the Americas presented closing remarks and thanked the meeting organizers, guest speakers and the meeting participants. Her final remarks reflected on the importance of continued conscious efforts by all parliaments to increase the representation of women. She further encouraged parliaments to continue supporting forums for discussion and exchange.

The participants were invited to approve a list of recommendations that were noted throughout the two-day Congress. A report of eleven recommendations was produced and is presented in the annex. The participants were invited to present the report in their respective parliaments. They were also encouraged to use this list as an action plan and follow-up strategy in their parliaments to measure the progress on the inclusion of gender-based initiatives.

### **CONCLUSION**

This visit provided an excellent opportunity for the Canadian Section of FIPA to actively participate, with counterparts of many countries of the Americas, in discussions on gender equality in legislation, a subject of common interest. The Canadian Section also felt that the activity allowed the participant to make contact with her counterparts in the Parliaments of several countries to exchange ideas and perspectives on other issues.

It was agreed that increasing participation by women in legislatures was important to ensuring that elected representatives accurately reflect the full diversity of constituencies. Despite gains in participation by women over the course of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, the assembly concluded that more work must be done in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century to overcome what appears to be a level of stagnation in the pursuit of full gender equality.

Finally, the Canadian delegation would like to thank the Technical Secretariat of the Inter-Parliamentary Forum of the Americas and the National Assembly of Ecuador for their tremendous work in ensuring the success of the event.

Respectfully submitted,

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

## Travel Costs

<b>ASSOCIATION</b>	Canadian Section of the Inter-Parliamentary Forum of the Americas (FIPA)
<b>ACTIVITY</b>	Meeting Of The Group of Women Parliamentarians of the Americas
<b>DESTINATION</b>	Quito, Ecuador
<b>DATES</b>	August 11 and 12, 2010
<b>DELEGATION</b>	
SENATE	Hon. Céline Hervieux-Payette, Senator
HOUSE OF COMMONS	Ms. Bonnie Crombia, M.P. Ms. Denise Savoie, M.P.
STAFF	Mr. Leif-Erik Aune, Secretary
<b>TRANSPORTATION</b>	<b>\$ 11,778</b>
<b>ACCOMMODATION</b>	<b>\$ 1,268</b>
<b>HOSPITALITY</b>	<b>\$ 103</b>
<b>PER DIEMS</b>	<b>\$ 740</b>
<b>OFFICIAL GIFTS</b>	<b>\$ 319</b>
<b>MISCELLANEOUS FEES</b>	<b>\$ 280</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 12,299</b>