



**Report of the Canadian Parliamentary Delegation respecting  
its participation at the 32<sup>nd</sup> ParlAmericas Meeting of the Board  
of Directors and the 10th Plenary Assembly**

**Canadian Section of ParlAmericas**

**San José, Costa Rica  
August 20-24, 2013**

# Report

## **PARLAMERICAS AND CANADA'S INVOLVEMENT**

ParlAmericas is an independent network made up of national legislatures that are also members of the Organization of American States (OAS). ParlAmericas members are committed to promoting parliamentary participation in the inter-American system and developing inter-parliamentary dialogue on issues of importance to the hemisphere. ParlAmericas seeks to encourage the sharing of experiences and best practices amongst its members, and works to strengthen the role of legislatures in democratic development and promote harmonization of legislation and hemispheric integration as instruments of sustainable and harmonious development in the region.

ParlAmericas was constituted at the Inaugural Meeting hosted by the Parliament of Canada, in Ottawa, in 2001. The organization is made up of three main bodies, namely: the Plenary Assembly, the Board of Directors and the Technical Secretariat. The Plenary Assembly, which meets annually, provides a platform for parliamentarians from the Americas to discuss various themes of common interest to the hemisphere. Topics addressed during the Plenary Assembly are developed and planned by the board of directors, which establishes the agenda of the Plenary Assembly. In addition to these activities, members of the board are responsible for monitoring projects that have been assigned to them by the Assembly. Members may also participate on one of five standing committees; these have mandates which cover a number of topics considered of interest to the board. The board is headed by a Chair, who is elected every two years. Both the board and the Chair receive support from the Technical Secretariat.

Canada has been strongly involved in ParlAmericas since its inception. On 10 September 2011, Mr. Randy Hoback, member from Prince Albert, was elected President of ParlAmericas. Mr. Hoback has also served as the head of the Canadian Section of ParlAmericas since April 2010. He became the second Canadian president of ParlAmericas, following Senator Céline Hervieux-Payette, who held this position from 2001 to 2006. In addition, the ParlAmericas Technical Secretariat is incorporated in Canada and is based in Ottawa. Canada is also in charge of maintaining the ParlAmericas website. This site, upgraded and re-launched in the fall of 2011, plays a key role in the organization's activities, allowing parliamentarians and the general public to access up-to-date resources created by ParlAmericas on a wide range of issues held in common interest by countries of the hemisphere.

## **32nd meeting of the Board of directors**

### **A. Introduction**

The ParlAmericas Board of Directors held its 32<sup>nd</sup> meeting in San José, Costa Rica, at the Hilton Hotel Cariari on 20 and 24 August 2013. The meeting was chaired by Mr. German Alcides Blanco Alvarez, member of the Chamber of Representatives of Columbia. Other participants were:

- Dr. Jennifer Simons, Vice-President of the Group of Women Parliamentarians, and Speaker of the National Assembly of the Parliament of Suriname, representing South America;
- Senator Michael L. MacDonald (Canada), representing North America;
- Senator Miguel Abdon Saguier (Paraguay), representing South America;
- Ms. Maria Jeannette Ruiz Delgado, member of the Legislative Assembly of Costa Rica, representing Central America;
- Mr. Ignacio Urrutia Bonilla, member of the Chamber of Deputies of the National Congress of Chile, representing South America;
- Ms. Adriana Gonzalez Carillo, member of the Chamber of Deputies of Mexico, representing North America;
- Mr. Hugh Buchannan, member of Parliament of Jamaica, representing the Caribbean.

The main objectives of this board of director's meeting were:

- To receive an update from board of directors members and Secretariat staff concerning recent ParlAmericas activities;
- To review and consider the following issues: 2013-2014 ParlAmericas workshop proposals, ParlAmericas fund guidelines, ParlAmericas board composition, and ParlAmericas bank signing authorities;
- To receive an overview of ParlAmericas strategic plans and priorities, and ParlAmericas' work plan; and
- To determine the location and date of the 33<sup>rd</sup> board of directors meeting and the 11<sup>th</sup> Plenary Assembly.

### **B. Opening of the Meeting**

Mr. Blanco opened the session by welcoming the meeting's participants and thanking Ms. Ruiz's work as host. He passed along the regrets of Mr. Hoback and Mr. Victor Juliao who were both unable to attend the meeting as well as the Plenary Assembly. Mr. Blanco also noted the resignation of Ms. Linda Machuco Mascoso from the board as well as from her role as President of the Group of Women Parliamentarians; her achievements in the latter

role were then roundly recognized by the board. Mr. Blanco also welcomed and thanked the ParlAmericas Technical Secretariat staff.

Ms. Ruiz also welcomed members of the board. Her comments concerned the prospective large enrolment of delegates in this year's Plenary Assembly (as many as 86 delegates from 24 countries), while also highlighting Costa Rica's achievements in respect of citizen security, democratic stability, and the environment.

Mr. Blanco then presented the Agenda of the meeting, which was approved. The board proceeded with the approval of the report of the 31<sup>st</sup> meeting of the board of directors in Paramaribo, Suriname.

### **C. President's Report**

In Mr. Hoback's absence, Mr. Blanco provided board members with an update of Mr. Hoback's activities for the period of May to August 2013. These included a meeting in Ottawa with the Canadian Minister of Foreign Affairs (Americas and Consular Affairs) on 18 May 2013. At the meeting, a discussion was held in which Mr. Hoback provided the Minister with an overview of the recent activities of ParlAmericas and preparations for the 10<sup>th</sup> Plenary Assembly.

On 21 to 24 May 2013, Mr. Hoback accompanied Canada's Prime Minister the Rt. Hon. Stephen Harper on his visit to Peru and Columbia.

On 30 May 2013, Mr. Hoback hosted a luncheon in honour of a delegation of Chilean parliamentarians who accompanied President Sebastián Piñera on his state visit to Canada. That evening, Mr. Hoback attended a state dinner hosted by Canada's Governor General His Excellency Mr. David Johnston in honour of President Piñera.

On 11 June 2013, Mr. Hoback met with the incoming ambassador of Cuba to Canada, His Excellency Mr. Julio Garmendía Peña. During the meeting, Mr. Hoback briefed the ambassador about the work accomplished by ParlAmericas in order to acquaint him with the organization.

On 13 June 2013, Mr. Hoback held a similar meeting with the incoming ambassador of Mexico to Canada, His Excellency Mr. Francisco Suárez in order to greet the ambassador and brief him about the work accomplished by ParlAmericas and the purpose of the organization.

### **D. Technical Secretariat Report**

The Director General of ParlAmericas, Dr. Gina Hill, provided the board with a report on the activities of the Technical Secretariat. These included, among other things:

- Preparation of Workshop report entitled "Parliaments and Extractive Industries";
- Discussion with the Organization of American States (OAS) regarding a joint project in Central America;
- Preparations for the 10<sup>th</sup> Plenary Assembly, including researching and securing experts;

- Preparations for the Group of Women Parliamentarians gathering in Paramaribo, Suriname, and the drafting the gathering's report;
- Website maintenance and content updates; and
- Financial and administrative management duties.

### **E. Capacity-Building Workshop**

According to the work plan approved by CIDA and the board of directors of ParlAmericas, ParlAmericas had committed to carrying out one capacity-building activity prior to the end of March 2014. Over the last three years, it was noted that in deciding the subject of this type of activity, the Technical Secretariat had relied on the information provided by a needs assessment questionnaire that had been conducted to gather input from 116 parliamentarians and/or staff in all 35 ParlAmericas member countries. It was found through this questionnaire that the greatest interest for a capacity-building course resided in the topic of "Budgetary cycles analysis, approval and oversight."

The Secretariat, as such recommended that, given the high level of interest in this topic and ParlAmericas' interest in increasing the participation among Caribbean members, that a workshop on budget oversight be held in this region. Dr. Hill also noted that World Bank had expressed interest in collaborating as a partner in the workshop. The board discussed the matter concurring in the recommendation.

### **F. Acceptance of Fund Guidelines**

In May 2013, the board of directors approved a funding strategy for ParlAmericas. Resulting from this decision was the need to develop a set of fund guidelines, which would be used in the evaluation of any fund sources. The Technical Secretariat provided the board with copies of a proposed set of guidelines for its consideration. In the discussion concerning these guidelines, certain issues arose such as the need for transparency in the receipt of outside donor funding, the importance of independence of the organization from any donor, and the manner in which some or all donations could, upon their receipt, be communicated to the board. Following the discussion, the board approved of the fund guidelines as proposed by the Technical Secretariat and these were made effective immediately.

### **G. Composition of Board Members**

Following a resolution passed at the board of directors meeting in May 2013, Mr. Michel Rathier, Consultant and Associate Member, developed a proposal to modify the composition of the board. The proposal entailed expanding the number of seats on the board from its current format of North America (three seats; three countries), the Caribbean (three seats; 13 countries), Central America (three seats; seven countries), and South America (three seats; 12 countries) to add one additional seat in both the Caribbean and South American sub-regions to bring their totals to four seats on the board, while retaining the seat present numbers for North America and Central America.

The proposal noted that its purpose was to ensure that member parliaments would be more fairly represented while maintaining balance between regions. Reallocating seats between sub-regions was considered inappropriate as it would require taking away a seat from one sub-region to reallocate it to another, which would likely encounter opposition while also violating the principles that inspired the original board composition. A discussion ensued in which the merits of the proposal were weighed. Board members provided their views as to the perceived interest in participation in ParlAmericas and in its board on the part of sub-regions, along with considerations for eligibility to board membership of parliaments such as being in good standing in respect of membership fees paid to the organization. The board resolved to evaluate the matter further and return to the topic at a subsequent board meeting.

#### **H. Items Related to the Conduct of the 10<sup>th</sup> Plenary Assembly**

The final agenda for the 10<sup>th</sup> Plenary Assembly was reviewed and adopted. During the review, Ms. Ruiz provided the board members with information concerning Costa Rica and the history of its national legislature. The rules and procedures for the working groups were discussed, along with the role of the moderators of the working groups. It was noted that the number of working groups had been reduced from four last year (three working groups plus the Group of Women Parliamentarians gathering) to three this year (two working groups plus the Group of Women Parliamentarians gathering) in an effort to, among other things, encourage greater participation across all the working groups.

Further, a review of forthcoming board of directors' vacancies was conducted, along with the procedure for filling these vacancies.

#### **I. Arms Trade Treaty**

Ms. Ruiz proposed to the board that it resolve to recommend to the Plenary Assembly that a motion be passed which recognized the importance of the Arms Trade Treaty recently approved by the United Nations. This proposal was widely agreed to among the board members.

#### **J. Board of Directors Meeting on 24 August 2013**

The board of directors met immediately following the official closing of the 10<sup>th</sup> Plenary Assembly to discuss the remaining items on its agenda. Mr. Blanco welcomed the members of the board, and as there were a large number of new members, the ratification process for their nomination to the board was reviewed. Discussions ensued on a number of items, including: the new ParlAmericas regulations which come into force in October 2013, board of directors committees, the code of conduct for members of the board, the strategic plan of priorities as approved by the board in May 2013, and other general inquiries.

## **Joint OAS/ParlAmericas Workshop**

On 21 August 2013, an all-day workshop entitled “Legislative Activity and New Alternatives in the Fight Against Drugs,” was held at the hotel in San José, Costa Rica. The primary audience for this workshop was Central American legislators, although members of the ParlAmericas board of directors were invited to participate. The workshop featured a series of presentations from experts from the OAS, legislators from the Americas and officials from different countries. The discussions generally surrounded the importance of parliamentarians as decision-makers capable of creating political agreement, and engaging in dialogue to inspire change, in the context of the challenges posed by the rampant influence of drugs and narco-cartels in the Americas. The purpose of the discussions was to enrich the abilities, as legislators, of the participants, as well as to broaden the knowledge of parliamentarians on the issue of narcotics.

## **10th Plenary assembly of parlAmericas**

### **A. Introduction**

The 10<sup>th</sup> Plenary Assembly of ParlAmericas was held in San José, Costa Rica from 21 to 24 August 2013. During the Assembly, two working groups were offered, with each group discussing a separate theme. These themes were: natural resources development; and food security. A further working group organized by the Group of Women Parliamentarians was also offered on the topic of connecting women’s rights to food security. The Plenary Assembly was attended by 86 parliamentarians from 24 countries, which represented each of ParlAmericas’ sub-regions (North America, Central America, the Caribbean and South America). Canada was represented by four parliamentarians:

- Mr. Earl Dreeshen, member from Red Deer and Head of the Delegation;
- Senator Michael MacDonald (Nova Scotia), Vice-Chair of the Canadian Section, board of directors;
- Mr. François Pilon, member from Laval–Les îles; and
- Ms. Lise St. Denis, member from St. Maurice–Champlain.

### **B. Official Inauguration and Welcome Reception**

On 21 August 2013, delegates were transported from the hotel to the Legislative Assembly of Costa Rica for the Official Inauguration and Welcome Reception. Welcoming remarks were provided by speakers who included the Hon. Luis Fernando Mendoza Jiménez, Speaker of the Legislative Assembly of Costa Rica; Ms. Maria Jeannette Ruiz Delgado; Mr. German Alcides Blanco Alvarez; and Mr. Randy Hoback, President of ParlAmericas, who, although absent, gave his remarks via a recorded video.

Ms. Ruiz provided the delegates with an overview of the structure of the government of Costa Rica, along with information concerning the format and agenda of the 10<sup>th</sup> Plenary Assembly. Mr. Hoback noted that this year’s Plenary Assembly marked a milestone for the organization, provided comments on its continued evolution, and underlined the relevance and importance of the work of ParlAmericas as an open, equitable and ethical

inter-parliamentary organization. Mr. Blanco commented that the large turnout at this year's assembly was indicative of the success ParlAmericas was achieving as an attractive forum for parliamentarians seeking to discuss issues of mutual importance in the hemisphere. Speaker Jimenez provided the delegates with wide-ranging comments on a number of topics including the importance of the Plenary Assembly's workshop topics (food security, natural resource development, and the relationship and access to both for women in particular), development of social or human capital, democratic institutions, and the environment.

### **C. Meeting with the Canadian Ambassador to Costa Rica**

On 22 August 2013, the Canadian delegation met with Ms. Wendy Drukier, Ambassador of Canada to Costa Rica, along with members of the Embassy, for a working breakfast at the hotel in San José, Costa Rica.

The strong and productive bilateral relationship between Canada and Costa Rica was discussed, including economic and trade matters. Other issues of note which arose during the discussion included: the forthcoming presidential election in Costa Rica; domestic security and safety; free trade zones located within the country and their role; issues of interest related to certain neighbouring countries; and general miscellaneous issues of note in Costa Rica.

### **D. First Session of the Plenary Assembly**

The first session of the 10<sup>th</sup> Plenary Assembly began with the election of Ms. Ruiz as President for the Plenary Assembly. In her opening remarks, Ms. Ruiz offered delegates a warm welcome and underlined the importance of the topics to be discussed by the working groups, noting that full and equal participation of all delegates would produce optimal recommendations.

The regulations for the conduct of the Plenary Assembly, along with the agenda, were reviewed and accepted.

In Mr. Hoback's absence, Mr. Blanco, read the annual report of the President of ParlAmericas for 2012-2013. Highlights of this report included a two-day regional workshop for parliamentarians on the topic of Parliaments and extractive industries held in Bogota, Columbia. It was attended by 17 parliamentarians from seven countries. The workshop itself was facilitated by Revenue Watch, a non-profit policy institute. It was noted that the report and recommendations produced by this workshop was available on the ParlAmericas website. Mr. Hoback's report also noted that, following the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding with the OAS, that organization and ParlAmericas had been exploring opportunities to collaborate on programing initiatives for parliamentarians. The report also contained information concerning the Group of Women Parliamentarians Gathering held in Suriname, along with the 30<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup> Board of Directors Meetings. Lastly, Mr. Hoback's report discussed operations and finances, noting that the project funding currently provided for by the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) was set to expire in December 2014 and that new funding sources were being sought to maintain the organization's activities. In that respect, the importance of each member country paying its association dues was underscored.



Ms. Ruiz presented the resolutions and recommendations proposed by the board of directors at the meeting held on 20 August 2013 to the Plenary Assembly. A resolution to communicate the importance of the Arms Trade Treaty recently approved by the United Nations was passed by the assembly. The nomination process for vacant positions on the board of directors was explained to the assembly by Dr. Gina Hill. Lastly, the working groups for the 10<sup>th</sup> Plenary Assembly were established and the chairs of these groups were approved by the assembly.

### **E. Keynote Address**

Dr. Ricardo Rapallo, a Food Security Officer at the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations made a presentation to the assembly concerning food security in the hemisphere. He began by outlining the problem of hunger and malnutrition which affects approximately 49 million people in Latin and South America. High among the concerns related malnutrition was its effect on brain development of infants. A correlation also existed between the higher levels of education of a mother and lower levels of malnutrition of her children. Dr. Rapallo then noted that obesity also represented a hemispheric health problem. Obesity was, in his view, related to diets high in processed foods and sedentary lifestyles. It was explained to the assembly that the problem of food security was a complex one, involving not only access to safe and nutritious food, but was also tied in with access to drinking water, health care, the environment and political stability. Dr. Rapallo concluded by raising the role that parliamentarians can play to ensure greater food security for citizens, as many aspects of the issue remained in the domain of public policy.

### **F. Working Group Sessions**

On 22 and 23 August 2013, parliamentarians were invited to attend and contribute to one of two concurrent working groups, according to their areas of interest. The first group looked at natural resources development in the Americas. The second group focused on food security. In addition to these two groups, the Group of Women Parliamentarians met twice to discuss connecting women's rights to food security. A summary of the discussions that took place in each group is presented below. The resolutions resulting from the working group sessions are also presented in Appendix A of this report.

The working group on natural resources development was chaired by Mr. Ignacio Urrutia Bonilla, member of the Chamber of Deputies of the National Congress of Chile. Focus points for this working group were:

- energy efficiency and renewable energy resources;
- regional management and sustainable livelihoods;
- land use dynamics and biodiversity; and
- natural resources policy and governance.

The working group's discussions were facilitated by Mr. Carlos Manuel Rodriguez (Costa Rica) and by Ms. Gleyse Peiter (Brazil). Mr. Rodriguez made a presentation to the working group about how changes to Costa Rica's environmental approach in the 1990s led to a number of economic and quality of life benefits for the country. Formerly the Minister of Environment and Energy of Costa Rica, Mr. Rodriguez noted that during the period from the 1940s to the 1990s, Costa Rica had depleted much of the country's forest cover. The forest was viewed as non-productive and policies existed which encouraged de-forestation (forest was removed and crops were planted in its place). A change occurred in the 1990s when the national departments of mines, energy and waters were brought together with the department of the environment. An eco-service market was created whereby a tax on fuels of 3.6% was introduced and the money raised was transferred to owners of forest. The benefit to Costa Rica has been increased forest cover, carbon sequestration, bio-diversity and eco-tourism (the most valuable industry in Costa Rica's economy). This policy also provided monetary assistance to aboriginal groups who, though only constituting 1% of Costa Rica's population, are the country's largest land owners.

Ms. Peiter's presentation provided the working group with information on how climate change disproportionately affected vulnerable populations. She noted that while the potential effects of climate change remained uncertain, it nevertheless made sense to take preventive action as a precaution in order to mitigate such effects. Her presentation covered a number of points, namely that: decreases in food yields led to volatility in the price of food while also hurting small farmers; the present level of global human population created a host of challenges that would require adaptations on the part of humans; climate change and immigration were increasingly linked; and that national legislatures had an important role to play to ensure secure access to food and potable water to their citizens.

The working group on food security was chaired by Mr. Hugh Buchannan, member of Parliament of Jamaica. Its objectives were to:

- problems, progress, limitations and innovations in the area of food safety;
- foodborne diseases and public health in the region;
- national plans of action in emergency situations; and
- successful experiences in anti-hunger programs.

Leading the discussion of this working group were two subject-matter specialists: Ms. Xaviera Cabada Barron (Mexico) and Dr. Hugo Melgar-Quinonez (Canada). Ms. Cabada described the food security situation in Mexico, noting that 70% of the country's population suffered from some form of food insecurity. 70% of Mexico's adult population was either overweight or obese (14 million Mexicans suffer from Type 2 diabetes) while more than 1.5 million children under the age of five suffer from chronic malnutrition. Her presentation set out that an important cause of the obesity problem in Mexico was soft drink and processed food consumption, which had risen drastically between 1984 and 1998, while the consumption of meat, milk and fruits and vegetables all declined precipitously during that same period. Ms. Cabada provided the working group with a number of suggestions to change unhealthy eating patterns including healthy food choices at schools, better labelling on food products, a prohibition on targeting children with advertisements, and

greater support toward agriculture and availability of healthy foods. Dr. Melgar-Quinonez's presentation began by setting out the international conventions related to food security. At a United Nations world food summit in 1996, food security was defined as physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food for all people at all times. His presentation also touched on food security measurement methods and discussed trends in terms of the various aspects of food security around the world, including hunger in developing nations, dietary analysis, obesity, and early childhood development. Dr. Melgar-Quinonez concluded by noting that food security remained a complex and multidimensional phenomenon, and stressed the importance of shared integrated food security analysis in order to best formulate policies and evaluate their impact.

The Working Group of the Group of Women Parliamentarians met twice in conjunction with the 10<sup>th</sup> Plenary Assembly, drawing a high level of participation on the part of delegates. The group "Connecting women's rights to food security" was presided over by Dr. Jennifer Simons, Vice-President of the Group of Women Parliamentarians, and Speaker of the National Assembly of the Parliament of Suriname. Its points of focus were:

- gender dimensions of natural resources management;
- strategic gender-based analysis and planning in resource development;
- women and sustainable food security; and
- Identifying potential government policies to protect women and support them in an economic downturn.

Participants in this Working Group heard a presentation from Dr. Cristina Tirado (Brazil) and from Ms. Guadalupe Valdez, member of the Chamber of Deputies of the Dominican Republic. Dr. Tirado's presentation discussed strategies to enhance women's leadership to address food security, safety and nutrition in the context of global climate change. She provided information on the potential effects of projected climate change on health; crop, livestock and forestry production; and water and temperature stresses. Dr. Tirado noted that climate change will disproportionately affect the most vulnerable populations, in particular the women. She indicated the price of basic food staples would continue to rise, leading to further malnutrition issues, especially for children. Dr. Tirado also discussed the various forms of discrimination encountered by women, including being disadvantaged in inheritance and ownership of land and property; having limited access to capital and education; and being paid lower salaries for identical work as men. Strategies to ameliorate the position of women in disadvantaged situations included outreach and education, school feeding programs, access to social protection and safety nets, as well as equal access to resources. Ms. Valdez's presentation focussed on women's rights to food security as a parliamentary issue. She noted that the issue of inequality in politics between the genders was a consequence of inequality within society, families and cultures in general. Clear political commitments were required to recognize the rights of women, to break down the barriers which act to marginalize women, and to foster greater participation of women in decision-making processes. Ms. Valdez indicated that approaches to ensuring women's rights to food security needed to be multisectoral, focussed not only on food production but also on access to education, social services, and employment, while remaining mindful of environmental impacts and of sustainable development.

## **G. Second Session of the Plenary Assembly**

The second session of the 10<sup>th</sup> Plenary Assembly began with an announcement of the new countries selected, by acclamation, to fill positions on the board of directors. Positions on the board are allotted to each of the four ParlAmericas sub-regions, namely North America, Central America, the Caribbean and South America. The countries selected to fill positions on the board were:

- Mexico, representing North America;
- Dominican Republic and Bahamas, representing the Caribbean; and
- Costa Rica and Guatemala, representing Central America

Elections were then held using secret ballots to select Brazil and Argentina as the countries to represent South America on the board. Also, a vote was held for the position of 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President and President of the Group of Women Parliamentarians, which Dr. Simons won.

The session continued with the presentation of the recommendations by the chairs of each working group (see Appendix A). These recommendations were fully received and adopted by the Assembly, without amendments.

Delegates from Chile also offered to be hosts of the 11<sup>th</sup> Plenary Assembly, scheduled for late summer 2014.

Closing remarks were offered by Mr. Blanco, in which he offered his thanks to the chairs of the working groups for their focused and efficient efforts; to the subject-matter experts; to the delegates; to the staff and Technical Secretariat; and to the translators. He noted that the event had been a success, with one of the largest turnouts ever, if not the largest.

Respectfully submitted,

Mr. Earl Dreeshen, M.P.  
Head of Delegation  
Canadian Section of ParlAmericas

## **APPENDIX A**

### **WORKING GROUP RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **A. Working Group 1 – Natural Resources Development**

1. Including a gender-based approach in the law-making processes, and rendering women more visible in environmental policies and laws;
2. Developing land management plans that include a regulatory framework for mining operations which are consistent with environmental protection practices and standards;
3. Developing organic farming policies, and agro-ecological farming and native seed promotion techniques to offset climate change, and warning about the use of toxic agrochemicals;
4. Recommending that each country's tax scheme be revised in order to establish that any royalties resulting from mining and natural resource development operations should be sufficient, and that they should be allocated to soil and natural resource recovery; and
5. Further strengthening the role of, and the financial contributions to, the Amazon Cooperation Treaty Organization, so that it may contribute to sustainable development, to social inclusion and to the preservation of flora through the implementation of joint policies for the economically sustainable development and protection of the ecosystem.

#### **B. Working Group 2 – Food Security**

In light of the irrefutable and conclusive evidence of a worrying trend developing in the countries of our Hemisphere, and of the increase in serious problems such as undernourishment, malnutrition, obesity, diabetes and other chronic diseases, all of which are associated with poor and distorted eating habits, and have become serious public health issues in all of our countries, we urge men and women parliamentarians and ParlAmericas member Parliaments to reassert our commitment to food and nutrition security, as well as to seriously engage in, or continue the necessary discussions within our Legislatures, in order to enact and further strengthen new and existing legal instruments that will allow us to directly address the roots of these evils by exercising our oversight role over the policies implemented by our Executive branches. Our suggestions, which are the result of our concerns and of the discussions held at this forum, should also be extended to all integration processes that are currently developing in Latin America and the Caribbean.

We recommend:

1. Encouraging a massive and ongoing awareness-raising campaign that promotes healthy lifestyles and eating habits, in line with people's dietary requirements, and which provides information on non-advisable foods;
2. Promoting, protecting and respecting women's and infants' right to breastfeeding, in accordance with recommendations issued by the World Health Organization;
3. Establishing regulations to prevent the sale and advertising of unhealthy foods and products at public schools, and providing for the availability of and ensuring access to drinking water, so that the right to food may be guaranteed;
4. Developing mechanisms to implement family, school and community agriculture programmes that promote the production of safe and healthy foods, with the additional support of scientific research centres that are committed to developing knowledge that may in turn be applied to further strengthening food and nutrition security;
5. Promoting the participation in, and implementation of, the Codex Alimentarius, which provides for food safety, ingredient regulation, the trade in excessively processed food (junk food), and correct and understandable food labelling, with a view to preventing the import and trade of poor-quality products; and
6. Promoting food and nutrition security as a high priority for states, in all our respective Parliaments, further underscoring the need for budget allocations that will guarantee the implementation of policies and programs designed to fight hunger and food insecurity.

**C. Working Group (Group of Women Parliamentarians Gathering)  
Recommendations on Food Security and Women's Rights**

1. Reaffirming our political commitment to the fight against hunger and the Right to Food by fostering regulatory frameworks that promote human rights, with a special focus on the role that women play in the fight against hunger and in food and nutrition security. Promoting a multi-sectoral, cross-cutting inclusion approach in fields including, but not limited to, labour, health, education, climate change, environment and social security;
2. Promoting the drafting of legislative and oversight agendas that deal with the Right to Food, nutrition and food security, and as well as the development of regulatory frameworks on food in schools, peasant and family farm agriculture, access to land, climate change, advertising and the media, universal birth registration, and gender-sensitive budgets that guarantee women's sexual and reproductive rights as far as their social, cultural and political dimensions are concerned;

3. Encouraging Governments to invest in information gathering and in the development of indicators that will allow public policymakers to guarantee women's rights as they relate to food and nutrition security;
4. Fostering strategic alliances between the Group of Women Parliamentarians of ParlAmericas and the Parliamentary Front against Hunger in Latin America and the Caribbean in order to promote the inclusion of human rights in the legislative agenda of the Americas, with a special focus on women's rights and on the Right to Food; and
5. Encouraging national agreements among all three branches of Government that favour gender equality, with a view to promoting legal systems that may ensure non-discrimination against women in the administration of justice, women's full exercise of their rights and protection thereof, as well as food and nutrition security.

## Travel Costs

<b>ASSOCIATION</b>	Canadian Section of ParlAmericas
<b>ACTIVITY</b>	32 <sup>nd</sup> ParlAmericas Meeting of the Board of Directors and the 10 <sup>th</sup> Plenary Assembly
<b>DESTINATION</b>	San José, Costa Rica
<b>DATES</b>	August 20-24, 2013
<b>DELEGATION</b>	
SENATE	Hon. Michael L. MacDonald, Senator
HOUSE OF COMMONS	Mr. Earl Dreeshen, M.P. Mr. François Pilon, M.P. Ms. Lise St-Denis, M.P.
STAFF	Ms. Guyanne L. Desforges, Association Secretary Mr. Andre Barnes, Association Analyst
<b>TRANSPORTATION</b>	<b>\$20,540.27</b>
<b>ACCOMMODATION</b>	<b>\$ 4,308.87</b>
<b>HOSPITALITY</b>	<b>\$ 0</b>
<b>PER DIEMS</b>	<b>\$ 1,621.21</b>
<b>OFFICIAL GIFTS</b>	<b>\$ 172.00</b>
<b>MISCELLANEOUS / REGISTRATION FEES</b>	<b>\$ 0</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$26,642.35</b>