



**7<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL MEETING  
NETWORK OF WOMEN PARLIAMENTARIANS OF THE AMERICAS**

**REPORT BY THE SECRETARIAT  
FOR MAY 30, 2006, TO SEPTEMBER 10, 2008**

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**MEXICO CITY, DF, MEXICO  
SEPTEMBER 10, 2008**

## Role of the Secretariat of the Network of Women Parliamentarians of the Americas

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The Québec Secretariat of the Parliamentary Confederation of the Americas (COPA) also acts as secretariat for the Network of Women Parliamentarians of the Americas. This has been the case since the Network's founding in 1999 by the Québec National Assembly.

The Québec National Assembly provides the Network with a full-time advisor as well as the technical and administrative support of its Interparliamentary and International Relations Directorate.

The Network advisor performs the Secretariat's regular tasks, distributes information, and coordinates communications within the Network (specifically with regard to the organization of annual meetings and executive committee meetings), ensures official Network documents<sup>1</sup> are translated, and oversees the development and updating of the website and databanks.

The Secretariat is responsible for the president's general correspondence relating to Network activities. It must draft letters, respond to requests for information on the Network, and send information to Network Executive Committee members.

The Secretariat is responsible for updating and developing the Network website ([www.feminamericas.org](http://www.feminamericas.org)) by...

- Announcing Network activities
- Preparing documents in followup to meetings
- Developing document databases

To this end, with the support of a number of the National Assembly of Québec service branches, the Secretariat developed specialized electronic document databases on...

- *Gender budget analysis*
- *The impact of the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) on women*
- *Women and migrations in the Americas*
- *The United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and its implementation in the Americas*
- *Human Trafficking in the Americas*

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<sup>1</sup> In accordance with the agreement covering shared responsibility for translation between the COPA secretariats, signed in Porlamar, Isla Margarita, Venezuela, in February 2003.

During the 2006–2008 term, the Network of Women Parliamentarians of the Americas Secretariat focused its efforts primarily in the following areas:

- 1) Implementation of programming related to the Network's main theme
- 2) Development of tools related to the Network's main theme
- 3) Preparation and followup, in cooperation with the Network president, of annual meetings and executive committee meetings
- 4) Providing support to the president to represent and promote the Network
- 5) Management of the Network's website

### **1) Implementation of programming related to the Network's main theme**

The work of the Network of Women Parliamentarians of the Americas during the 2006–2008 period focused mainly on the theme of ***Human Trafficking***. Working in close cooperation with the Network president, the Network Secretariat developed and implemented a program to study the topic with all the attention it deserves. The Secretariat sought constantly to provide parliamentarians with tools to actively fight human trafficking in the course of their duties.

The Secretariat began by coordinating a number of lectures and seminars on human trafficking, taking advantage of every opportunity provided by meetings of the Network's Executive Committee. Experts gave presentations at La Plata in the province of Buenos Aires, Argentina, in November 2006, and in Cancun, Quintana Roo, Mexico, in March 2008, thanks to the valuable cooperation of the meeting hosts.

Furthermore, at the Secretariat's initiative and in close collaboration with the Network president, a seminar on human trafficking was organized in the U.S. city of Los Angeles, California, in June 2007, bringing together parliamentarians and specialists from the region. The seminar provided an opportunity to examine human trafficking within the context of border issues in the southern United States and northern Mexico, where the phenomenon is the subject of considerable concern.

Lastly, as part of the Network's 7th Annual Meeting, the Secretariat coordinated a workshop to conclude work on human trafficking, as approved by the members of the Network Executive Committee. The workshop, led by the designated rapporteur for this topic, allowed parliamentarians from various parts of the Americas to share their experiences related to their legislative initiatives in this area.

The activities gave Network members an opportunity to hear a wide range of experts involved in the fight against human trafficking at various levels (parliamentary, judicial, and within international, civil society, and non-governmental organizations). Members were thus able to gain greater knowledge of the regional challenges related to human trafficking and the means put in place to fight the phenomenon in the countries that hosted the various meetings.

## **2) Development of tools related to the Network's main theme**

The Secretariat made a number of reference documents available to parliamentarians providing information for their work to fight human trafficking. When the topic was first introduced, the Secretariat produced a discussion paper on human trafficking in the Americas and worldwide, including information on the main legal and standard-setting instruments in place and suggestions to guide parliamentarians in their reflections. The paper was accompanied by tables showing the ratification status of related international conventions and related protocols in the countries of the Americas. The tables were regularly updated over the past two years. The Secretariat also ensured that the discussion paper and updates were available in the organization's four official languages.

The Secretariat also designed and set up a new document databank. The databank **TRAFICAS – Human trafficking in the Americas** will be unveiled at the Network's 7<sup>th</sup> Annual meeting. It encompasses reports on the subject, numerous studies catalogued by theme, action guides, the main international and inter-American standard-setting and legal instruments covering human trafficking, and an inventory of the principal national laws on human trafficking in effect in the nations of the Americas. It is a precious source of information providing references in the organization's four official languages.

**TRAFICAS** is the fifth document databank developed by the Secretariat of the Network of Women Parliamentarians of the Americas since 2003.

## **3) Preparation and followup, in cooperation with the Network president, of annual meetings and executive committee meetings**

The Network Secretariat followed up on the 6<sup>th</sup> Annual meeting held in Quito, Ecuador, on May 30, 2006, by drafting and translating the meeting report, translating the documents adopted at the meeting, and posting them on the Network/COPA website.

During the 2006–2008 term, the Secretariat prepared and organized executive committee meetings, working in close cooperation with the Network president and the hosts of the meetings held in La Plata (Province of Buenos Aires), Argentina, on November 23, 2006, Los Angeles, USA, on June 22, 2007, and Cancun (Quintana Roo), Mexico, on March 14, 2008. The main tasks performed by the Secretariat included the following:

- Preparation, translation, and forwarding of meeting invitations and agendas
- Distribution of information about the meetings through the Network website and to Executive Committee members
- Preparation of all necessary meeting documents
- Drafting and providing translations of the meeting reports

The Secretariat also prepared the 7th annual meeting of the Network of Women Parliamentarians of the Americas which is being held in Mexico City, DF, Mexico on September 10, 2008. It drafted and translated the invitation, agenda, and other meeting documents. To ensure the meeting was properly promoted, the Secretariat, in cooperation with the COPA Executive Secretariat, coordinated the forwarding of annual meeting invitations by email and regular mail to authorities at every parliament and interparliamentary organization in the Americas. It also took care of posting and updating information about the meeting on the Network's website. In addition, the Secretariat coordinated the organization of the workshop concluding the work on the main theme, provided support to the various speakers, and oversaw logistical arrangements in cooperation with the hosts of COPA's 8th General Assembly.

#### **4) Providing support to the president to represent and promote the Network**

During the 2006-2008 term, the Network Secretariat provided support to the president as she represented and promoted the Network at the following events:

- Annual meeting of the National Conference of State Legislatures, in Boston in August 2007, and in New Orleans in July 2008
- Forum of Women Parliamentarians of the Americas, in Zacatecas, Mexico, in September 2007

In addition, the Secretariat coordinated communications between the president and these organizations and provided the president with all the information and tools required to effectively represent the Network.

The Secretariat also helped the Network president by drafting, translating, and forwarding an article promoting the Network of Women Parliamentarians of the Americas among women members of the legislative assemblies throughout the United States. This article appeared in the Spring/Summer 2007 issue of the e-newsletter of the Women's Legislative Network of the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL).

Furthermore, the Secretariat helped the president to prepare a journal listing the main actions undertaken by the Network during her term (2005–2008) and including documents drafted by members of the executive committee. The Secretariat compiled the information for this document and coordinated translation and revision of the texts in the organization's four official languages.

#### **5) Management of the Network's website**

The Secretariat is in charge of regularly updating the *Feminamericas* website, where it announces the various meetings and posts official documents stemming from these meetings. It also created a section of the site featuring documents dealing with the theme of human trafficking. This section, which is updated on a regular basis, provides access to the **TRAFICAS** databank, the discussion paper, and a host of documents on Network activities revolving around this theme ([www.feminamericas.org](http://www.feminamericas.org)).