



**9TH ANNUAL MEETING
NETWORK OF WOMEN PARLIAMENTARIANS OF THE AMERICAS**

**REPORT BY THE SECRETARIAT
FOR SEPTEMBER 17, 2009 TO NOVEMBER 16, 2010**

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**MAR DEL PLATA, ARGENTINA
NOVEMBER 16, 2010**

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

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, coordinates communications within the Network (specifically with regard to the organization of annual meetings and Executive Committee meetings), ensures official Network documents¹ are translated and oversees the development and updating of the website.

The Secretariat is responsible for the President's general correspondence relating to Network activities. It drafts letters, responds to requests for information on the Network and sends information to Network Executive Committee members.

The Secretariat is also responsible for updating and developing the Network website (www.feminamericas.org), that is, for

- announcing Network activities
- preparing documents as follow-up to meetings
- developing document databases.

To this end, with the support of a number of the National Assembly of Québec service branches, the Secretariat has 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.*

1. 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 2009–2010 term, the Network of Women Parliamentarians of the Americas Secretariat focused its efforts primarily in the following areas:

- (1) Implementing the President's action plan;
- (2) Developing tools related to the Network's study themes;
- (3) Preparing and following up on annual meetings and Executive Committee meetings in cooperation with the Network President;
- (4) Providing support to the President to represent and promote the Network;
- (5) Drafting a proposal for the revision of the Network's statutes and rules of procedure;
- (6) Managing the Network's website.

1) Implementing the President's action plan

The President's action plan serves to guide the Network's efforts in reaching concrete objectives during the 2008–2009 term. In close cooperation with the Network's President, the Secretariat focused on the development and implementation of an action plan that reflects the President's priorities, taking into account the Network's mission as described in its statutes.

The action plan is therefore divided into three separate sections, one for each of the President's priorities: an education and public awareness campaign on violence against women; the promotion of the Network throughout the Americas; and the development of and follow-up on the work themes identified at the 7th Annual Meeting.

During the 8th Annual Meeting of the Network, the Secretariat oversaw the organization of a round table that enabled parliamentarians from different regions of the Americas and specialists who work directly with women who are victims of violence to exchange views. On that theme, the Secretariat also provided support to the President in distributing information regarding the initiative by the Inter-Parliamentary Union to highlight the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women.

On the work theme concerning the participation of women in politics, the Secretariat took steps, with the approval of the Executive Committee of the Network, to bring about an informal collaboration agreement between the Network and the International Knowledge Network of Women in Politics (iKNOW Politics). iKNOW Politics is an online workspace designed to serve the needs of elected officials, candidates, political party leaders and members, researchers, students and others who are interested in increasing the participation of women in politics. In the short term, this agreement provides for an exchange of hyperlinks between the Network website and iKNOW Politics website, as well as the distribution of information on virtual discussions among Network members. In the long term, other initiatives will be made possible depending on respective needs.

2) Developing tools related to the Network's study themes

The Secretariat of the Network developed a questionnaire for women parliamentarians of the Americas regarding the participation of women in politics, distributed it and then compiled the results. A guide to gathering qualitative data on that work theme was also prepared. The objective of these research tools was to facilitate the drafting of the second part of the report entitled *Changes in Women's Participation in Politics 1999-2009: Situation and Outlook*. The preliminary results will be presented at the 9th Annual Meeting of the Network, and women parliamentarians will be encouraged to fill out the questionnaire in large numbers in order to make the report more representative and broaden its scope.

The Secretariat also created a new section regarding the participation of women in politics on the Network website. The section has already been updated with documents produced by the Network and will continue to be updated regularly with information provided by iKNOW Politics and Network members.

3) Preparing and following up on annual meetings and Executive Committee meetings in cooperation with the Network President

Au cours du mandat 2009 – 2010, le Secrétariat du Réseau a effectué le suivi de la VIII^e Réunion annuelle du Réseau, tenue à Salta, en Argentine, le 16 septembre 2009. Le Secrétariat a aussi travaillé à la préparation, à l'organisation et au suivi de la réunion du Comité exécutif tenue à Querétaro, au Mexique, le 20 juillet 2010.

The Network Secretariat followed up on the 8th Annual Meeting held in Salta, Argentina on September 16, 2009, by drafting and translating the meeting report, translating the documents adopted at the meeting and posting them on the Network/COPA website. The Secretariat also prepared, organized and followed up the Executive Committee meeting held in Queretaro, Mexico on July 20, 2010.

The main tasks performed by the Secretariat included the following:

- Preparing, translating and forwarding meeting invitations and agendas
- Distributing information about the meetings on the Network website and to Executive Committee members
- Preparing all necessary meeting documents
- Drafting and providing translations of the meeting reports

The Secretariat also prepared the Executive Committee meeting and the 9th Annual Meeting of the Network of Women Parliamentarians of the Americas, which are being held in Mar del Plata, Argentina on November 16, 2010. In cooperation with the other COPA secretariats, it drafted and translated the invitation, the 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 website. In addition, the Secretariat coordinated the organization of a round-table discussion on the main theme and oversaw logistical arrangements in cooperation with the hosts of COPA's 9th General Assembly.

4) Providing support to the President to represent and promote the Network

Over the course of the 2009–2010 term:

- The Network Secretariat provided Elsa Rojas Hernández, member of the Network's Executive Committee, with the support she needed to participate in a meeting of women parliamentarians of Latin America and the Caribbean regarding women's participation in politics, which the President asked her to attend as the Network's representative. The meeting was held on April 14 and 15 in Panama. The Secretariat provided Ms. Rojas Hernández with the information and tools she needed to ensure the Network was well represented when she attended the meeting. It also provided her with support to produce an article on this activity, which was published in the May edition of the COPA newsletter.

- The Secretariat also prepared and translated the press releases of the President and ensured they were sent to the members of the Executive Committee and posted on the Network's website.

5) Drafting a proposal for the revision of the Network's statutes and rules of procedure

The Secretariat drafted a proposal for the revision of the Network's statutes and rules of procedure. The objective of this proposal is to update the existing 10-year-old statutes and rules of procedure and to harmonize them with the COPA statutes amended in 2008. A preliminary adoption of the proposal was carried out at the Executive Committee meeting held in Querétaro, Mexico, on July 20, 2010, and more in-depth discussions will take place at the 9th Annual Meeting to be held on November 16, 2010, in Mar del Plata, Argentina.

6) Managing 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 those meetings.