



## **Network of Women Parliamentarians of the Americas**

### **PROPOSAL FOR NETWORK ACTION STRATEGIES FOR THE PERIOD 2009–2014**

#### **1. *Description and Objectives of the Network***

The Network of Women Parliamentarians of the Americas is a forum open to all of the continent's women legislators. Established in 1999, the Network is part of the Parliamentary Confederation of the Americas (COPA), an organization that has been bringing together the congresses and parliamentary assemblies of the unitary, federal and federated States, the regional Parliaments and the interparliamentary organizations of the Americas since 1997. Within the Parliaments of the Americas, the Network fosters dialogue on issues related to the advancement of women in order to promote gender equity, peace and human development as well as the involvement of women in the decision-making processes of our societies.

The objectives of the Network are :

- to encourage the representation and action of women in the Parliaments of the Americas, to foster experience-sharing among them, and to promote solidarity among women in general;
- to ensure that both men and women parliamentarians take into consideration the rights and demands of women, from the viewpoint of the defence of human rights and a better distribution of wealth; and
- to support the participation of women in the Parliaments of the Americas and to create communication mechanisms for the activities of women parliamentarians.

The Network holds an Annual Meeting, ideally during COPA's General Assembly. The Network works closely with COPA while acting independently for the organization of its own events. The headquarters of the Network Secretariat is at the Québec National Assembly.

## 2. Action Strategies

The first action strategies of the Network were set out in the form of an action plan adopted in 2003. This ambitious plan identified 10 fields of activity in which the organization would invest its efforts and attention. Over the last five years, the Network has achieved several of the objectives set in 2003, including organizing thematic seminars, developing the [www.feminamericas.org](http://www.feminamericas.org) website and reinforcing ties and communications between women parliamentarians of the Americas. As it enters 2009, the Network hopes to update its action strategies so they better reflect its current role as the preferred forum for dialogue and debate among women legislators.

### 2.1 Priority Areas for the Network:

The Network acts in three priority areas that were selected to maximize results in connection with the objectives mentioned above :

#### A) Positioning the Network as a key actor in the Americas with respect to women's issues

*Creating a dynamic forum for sharing ideas and taking positions that is representative of the American continent*

##### Recommended Actions

- Strengthening the Network by urging women parliamentarians from the greatest possible number of parliamentary assemblies in the unitary, federal and federated States, the regional Parliaments and the interparliamentary organizations of the Americas to participate more actively in its activities
- Adopting resolutions on the issues taken up by the Network that reflect the solidarity and consensus existing among the women parliamentarians of the Americas
- Following up on the positions taken by the Network by sending the adopted resolutions to the parliamentary assemblies of the continent and the international organizations concerned
- Developing more sustained relations with local, national and international media covering the activities of the Network in order to increase its visibility
- Spearheading and revitalizing COPA's Committee on Health and Social Protection

#### B) Continually providing parliamentarians with tools on the work themes examined by the Network

*Strengthening the expertise of Network members in the mechanisms and issues associated with the work themes under consideration so they can become effective agents for change within their societies*

##### Recommended Actions

- Organizing workshops on work themes selected by the Network, in collaboration with parliamentary assemblies, government and non-government bodies, the academic community and civil society, as education activities for parliamentarians

- Continuing to develop document data banks
- Systematizing and updating information and posting it on the Network's website
- Having parliamentary rapporteurs report on current and previous work themes at an Annual Assembly or a meeting of the Executive Committee
- Developing research partnerships with the university and academic communities

**C) Promoting the individual and collective leadership of members**

*Reinforcing the Network's ability to act as a catalyst and consensus-maker for the implementation of the most effective means of fostering the advancement of women*

*Recommended Actions*

- Asking members to present and table the resolutions adopted by the Network in their respective parliamentary assemblies with a view to initiating discussion, debate and legislation
- Sharing in the success of women parliamentarians in influencing legislation, and discussing the challenges they have faced
- Promoting discussion forums on the different parliamentary realities of members of the Network with a view to mutual support and training
- Encouraging Network members to hold leadership positions within their assemblies