

2000 Committee Report entitled *The Free Trade Area of the Americas: Towards a Hemispheric Agreement in the Canadian Interest*. In March 2001, the Ministers of Foreign Affairs and International Trade jointly appeared before the Committee to review preparations for the Summit of the Americas in Quebec City. In addition, both Ministers addressed the Summit of the Americas as part of their respective testimonies before the Committee on their Supplementary Estimates.

The Government was pleased to facilitate the participation of many parliamentarians, including members of the Committee, in some events of the Summit of the Americas. This provided the opportunity for parliamentarians to exchange views and build links with key representatives from the hemisphere and to familiarize themselves with the Summit of the Americas process.

SUPPORTING THE INTER-PARLIAMENTARY FORUM OF THE AMERICAS

(RECOMMENDATION 5)

“THE COMMITTEE RECOMMENDS THAT THE GOVERNMENT OF CANADA ACTIVELY SUPPORT THE ROLE OF THE INTER-PARLIAMENTARY FORUM OF THE AMERICAS (FIPA), AS REFERRED TO IN THE PLAN OF ACTION, AND TAKE ALL NECESSARY STEPS TO ENSURE THAT PARLIAMENTARY CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT ON THESE ISSUES IS DEEPENED.”

The Government supports this recommendation. The Government is convinced that FIPA is advantageously placed to play a leadership role in promoting parliamentary cooperation within the Americas.

FIPA was created in March 2000 pursuant to a resolution adopted by the OAS in 1998 to create a parliamentary association at the national level that would accompany the cooperation process of the hemisphere. The Parliament of Canada, supported by the Government, played a lead role in the launching of the Forum, which was inaugurated at a meeting held in Ottawa in March 2001.

The Heads of State and Government, gathered at the Third Summit of the Americas, endorsed FIPA in the 2001 *Plan of Action*, saying they would "Encourage cooperation and exchange of experiences and parliamentary best practices between national legislators of the Hemisphere, while respecting the separation and balance of powers, through bilateral, subregional and hemispheric vehicles such as the FIPA."