



Recommendation 12

"That the Parliament of Canada seek to establish closer parliamentary ties with the countries of the Americas."

The Government fully supports Recommendation 12, urging the Parliament of Canada to establish closer parliamentary ties with the countries of the Americas. While respecting the primary role that the Parliament of Canada must play in achieving this recommendation, the Government continues to support the Parliament of Canada in this objective. The Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Minister for International Trade have publicly endorsed the importance of parliamentary diplomacy as a tool in advancing Canadian interests abroad.

The Government endorses close parliamentary ties with the Americas through the development of multilateral parliamentary initiatives in the region is the Inter-Parliamentary Forum of the Americas. Canada was a key player in the creation and establishment of this organization. The inaugural meeting was held in Ottawa, Canada, in March 2001. The Inter-Parliamentary Forum of the Americas continues to be the most encouraging mechanism to develop action-oriented parliamentary dialogue. Moreover, the Inter-Parliamentary Forum of the Americas' links to the Organization of American States lend greater credibility and strength to its work. The Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT) and the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) continue to work closely with Senator Céline Hervieux-Payette, President of the Inter-Parliamentary Forum of the Americas, and with John Godfrey, Chair of the Inter-Parliamentary Forum of the Americas Parliamentary Association in the Parliament of Canada, to ensure that Canada continues to be a key player in inter-American inter-parliamentary cooperation.

Bilaterally, the Government encourages the strengthening of relations with all the parliaments of the Americas, particularly in key countries such as the United States, Mexico and Brazil. Congressional liaison offices have been established in the Canadian embassies in these three countries. These offices both initiate and respond to proposals designed to bring about closer parliamentary relations. Aspects of the well-established Canada-United States parliamentary relationship are being examined both by the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade (SCFAIT) and by a task force of Canadian parliamentarians. The Government welcomes this examination and is prepared to assist in that work, as appropriate, in Ottawa and Washington. In a recently intensified bilateral parliamentary relationship with Mexico, the Canadian Embassy is initiating an ambitious plan of visits by several Mexican congressional committees to meet with their Canadian counterparts. The congressional relations unit provides considerable logistical and administrative support to Canadian parliamentary delegations travelling to Mexico.

