

In the Quebec City Summit Declaration, Leaders acknowledged that corruption “undermines core democratic values, challenges political stability and economic growth and thus threatens vital interests in our Hemisphere.” This led to the establishment of the Follow-Up Mechanism for the Implementation of the Inter-American Convention Against Corruption. The Follow-Up Mechanism promotes the effective implementation of the Convention, monitors progress made on corruption issues and serves as a forum for the exchange of best practices. The First Round of Review is under way. In February 2003, the Committee of Experts approved the “Report on the Implementation in the Republic of Argentina of the provisions of the Convention selected for review within the framework of the first round”; this document has been published.

In October 2002, the Global Organization of Parliamentarians against Corruption was created. A complementary initiative by Canadian Members of Parliament has created Latin American Parliamentarians Against Corruption. This network, with support from the Canadian International Development Agency, is committed to fighting corruption “from the inside” by supporting strong anti-corruption legislation and holding the governments of participating parliamentarians accountable for their actions.

Parliamentarians Work Together

Before the Quebec City Summit, parliamentarians from throughout the Americas had already been working together to enhance their capacity for contributing to hemispheric civil society. At an Ottawa meeting held in March 2001, they inaugurated the Inter-Parliamentary Forum of the Americas.

Currently chaired by Canada, the Forum has developed a unique voice and plays a key part in the Summit of the Americas process. Parliamentarians are at the centre of the concept of modern governance, which is based on the idea of partnership. They have an important role to play in strengthening democracy by ensuring that hemispheric cooperation will be based on a balanced plan of action that reflects the preoccupations of the citizens of the Americas.

Creating a Civil Society That Spans the Hemisphere

In assuming the Chair of the Summit, Canada understood the importance of engaging citizens in the project of building a community of the Americas. One of the highlights of Canada’s mandate as Chair was the further opening up of the Summit process. The result has been an unprecedented degree of participation by Canadians, along with citizens from throughout the Hemisphere.

The Canadian vision of transparency and engagement is being embraced by our partners in the Summit process. From the Fifth Meeting of Trade Ministers (Toronto, Ontario, 1999), through the General Assembly of the Organization of American States (Windsor, Ontario, 2000) to the Quebec City Summit (2001), the scale of contributions made by civil society organizations has grown strikingly.

With Canada as Chair, the lead-up to Quebec City featured an unprecedented level of dialogue with civil society organizations in Canada and throughout the Hemisphere. As a result, the concerns of these groups were taken into consideration in the development of the Quebec City Summit Plan of Action. Further reflecting our values of engagement and transparency, Canada invited 60 organizations from Canada and the Americas to participate in the Quebec City Summit, at a round table discussion with Foreign Ministers from the Hemisphere. In short, by advocating citizen participation, Canada has been recognized for genuinely helping to change the way the Hemisphere organizes itself.

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