



PRESS RELEASE

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ParlAmericas held its 17th Plenary Assembly entitled *Towards a Circular Economy*, gathering parliamentarians from the Americas and the Caribbean to analyze the implementation of circular economic models within the context of post-pandemic recovery processes in the hemisphere

With the support of the Legislative Assembly of Costa Rica as host parliament, ParlAmericas held its 17th Plenary Assembly on November 13, 16, 20, and 27, which involved a series of virtual activities devoted to the circular economy—a systemic approach to sustainable development designed to benefit society, the environment, and the economy.

The 17th Plenary Assembly gathered parliamentarians from 26 countries of the Americas and the Caribbean to assess, alongside subject-matter experts, the importance of the circular economy and its pertinence in the economic recovery processes needed to overcome the serious socioeconomic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic across the region.

As is customary, the opening plenary session included the presentation of accountability reports from the ParlAmericas Board of Directors. This year, annual reports by the President of ParlAmericas, as well as the three network presidents, were presented via video, with subtitles in every official ParlAmericas language. These were shared with member parliaments and published on the ParlAmericas website and on social media on Friday, November 13.

The working session held in English and French on Monday, November 16, included welcoming remarks from Member of the National Assembly Elizabeth Cabezas (Ecuador), President of ParlAmericas, Member of the Legislative Assembly María Inés Solís (Costa Rica), also a member of the ParlAmericas Board of Directors, and the Speaker of the House of Representatives of Trinidad and Tobago, the Honourable Bridgid Annisette-George, member of the ParlAmericas Board of Directors. In addition, Senator Rosa Gálvez (Canada), Vice-President of the ParlAmericas Parliamentary Network on Climate Change for North America, moderated the session, which included the participation of content experts Mr. David Oswald, Founder and President of Design + Environment, and Ms. Virginia Rose Losada, Specialist in Sustainable Enterprise Development and Job Creation for the International Labour Organization (ILO). A subsequent discussion was held between legislators, parliamentary staff, and other participants who exchanged ideas and projects on the circular economy and posed questions to the panelists. Lastly, Senator Ranard

Henfield (The Bahamas), Vice-President of the ParlAmericas Open Parliament Network for the Caribbean, closed the working session.

At the working session in Spanish and Portuguese held on November 20, Member of the Legislative Assembly Paola Vega (Costa Rica) welcomed the participants along with Member of the National Assembly Cabezas, who also participated as a panelist in her role as author of the Circular Economy bill of the National Assembly of Ecuador. Mr. Luis Yáñez of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean moderated the meeting, which included the participation of specialists Ms. Adriana Zacarías, Head and Global Coordinator of Global Opportunities for SDGs and Regional Coordinator of Resource Efficiency at the United Nations Environment Programme for Latin America and the Caribbean, and Ms. Ana Belén Sánchez, Regional Green Jobs Specialist for the ILO. Parliamentarians, parliamentary staff, and young representatives of civil society organizations then participated in an exchange on initiatives and projects related to the circular economy. Senator Silvia Giacoppo (Argentina), member of the ParlAmericas Board of Directors, concluded the working session.

The closing plenary session held on Friday, November 27, included welcoming remarks by Vice-President of the Legislative Assembly Jorge Luis Fonseca (Costa Rica) and host of the 17th ParlAmericas Plenary Assembly, and by Member of the National Assembly Elizabeth Cabezas (Ecuador), President of ParlAmericas. There was a subsequent round of presentations by country moderated by Member of the Legislative Assembly María Inés Solís (Costa Rica); each parliament designated a legislator to share the progress made by their parliament in the transition towards a circular economy and a sustainable and equitable economic recovery. After the presentations, the Declaration of the Plenary Assembly was read and then adopted by the attending parliamentarians.

To conclude the plenary session, Ms. Alisha Todd, Director General of ParlAmericas, announced the results of the elections in which candidates were elected by acclamation. The outgoing President of ParlAmericas, Member of the National Assembly Elizabeth Cabezas (Ecuador) made a closing speech that highlighted various achievements by the organization during her tenure as president over the past year and wished much success to the President-elect, Senator Blanca Ovelar (Paraguay). Senator Ovelar, in turn, praised the leadership shown by Member of the National Assembly Cabezas and expressed her commitment towards continuing the institution's promotion of parliamentary diplomacy in the inter-American system.

Regarding the pertinence of assessing alternative economic models, Member of the National Assembly Elizabeth Cabezas (Ecuador), outgoing President of ParlAmericas, noted, "The circular economy benefits society, businesses, and the environment; it offers viable and sustainable alternatives for creating economic, social, and natural capital, and for reducing its impact on people and the environment."

Vice-President of the Legislative Assembly José Luis Fonseca (Costa Rica), host of the meeting, stated, "We must understand that the traditional economy, based on the consumption of finite resources, needs to transition towards a sustainable model based on the well-being of society,

on an economy that can allow us to regenerate the goods and services we produce; that's the great challenge we're facing."

Speaker of the House of Representatives of Trinidad and Tobago, the Honourable Bridgid Annisette-George, Vice-President-elect of ParlAmericas, highlighted, "This year, due to the pandemic, humanity's connection with nature is clearer than ever, making it crucial to repair this relationship. The circular economy provides a new model by which we can break the connection between economic growth and environmental damage."

In her closing statement, Senator Blanca Ovelar (Paraguay), President-elect of ParlAmericas, noted, "The pandemic has brought to the forefront the pressing need for high-level political action from States, and especially from parliaments."

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