

5th Gathering of the ParlAmericas Parliamentary Network on Climate Change

#ParlAmericasCC

TITLE: Addressing Inequalities to Enable Climate Ambition: A Just Transition to Achieve the Paris Agreement

THEMES: Inclusive climate action and sustainable development

DATES: June 4, 15, & 25, 2021

LOCATION: Virtual

PARTICIPANTS: More than 190 parliamentarians, parliamentary staff, civil society and government representatives from 29 countries

HOST: Parliament of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago and the Senate of Mexico



These activities aligned with SDGs 1, 4, 5, 8, 9, 10, 13, and 16.

The 5th PNCC gathering consisted of an inter-parliamentary dialogue, a dialogue with civil society and youth representatives, and a plenary session. These meetings allowed participants to identify legislative strategies to ensure that short and long-term climate plans are developed with an intersectional lens and are compatible with the goals of the Paris Agreement, including promotion of a just transition.

The gathering's sessions built from the understanding that individuals facing inequalities are differentially impacted by climate change, and that it is therefore essential to incorporate intersectional, intercultural, and gender-responsive approaches into climate strategies and legislation. When these are designed in an inclusive way, implementation is less likely to result in any undesirable effects or exacerbate existing inequalities.

The keynote address of the gathering established the link between conserving biodiversity and reducing poverty, and described the urgency to increase the ambition of climate targets and ensure corresponding plans are implemented promptly. It emphasized the value of climate governance and the role that parliamentarians and other stakeholders beyond the ministries of environment play.

Across the various sessions, the participants emphasized the importance of achieving gender-responsive climate policy; promoting public participation in decision making to prevent environmental conflicts and ensure climate action is conducted in a manner that respects human rights; and the creation of decent and clean work for all, with a view to achieving a just transition.

Among the key references and documents presented in the gathering were:

- [Parliaments and the Paris Agreement](#), the draft of the forthcoming ParlAmericas and WFD publication
- [Action for Climate Empowerment](#) (ACE), UNFCCC
- [Declaration on Children, Youth, and Climate Action](#), UNICEF
- [Bill to establish a new target for the Nationally Determined Contribution under the UNFCCC](#), Brazil
- [Net-Zero Emissions Accountability Act](#), Canada
- [Bill to establish a Framework Law on Climate Change](#), Chile



HIGHLIGHTS OF THE SESSIONS

Opening remarks by:

- The Honourable **Bridgid Annisette-George** (Trinidad and Tobago), Speaker of the House of Representatives and Vice-President of ParlAmericas
- Senator **Nancy de la Sierra** (Mexico)
- Senator **Blanca Ovelar** (Paraguay), President of ParlAmericas
- Senator **Yokymma Bethelmy** (Trinidad and Tobago)
- Senator **Beatriz Paredes** (Mexico)

Keynote address by:

- Ambassador **Luis Alfonso de Alba**, Special Envoy of the UN Secretary General for the 2019 Climate Summit

Dialogues moderated by:

- Senator the Honourable **Rosa Galvez** (Canada), Vice-President for North America of the PNCC
- Member of the Legislative Assembly **Paola Vega** (Costa Rica), Vice-President for Central America of the PNCC
- The Honourable **Carolyn Trench-Sandiford** (Belize), President of the Senate

Panel presentations by:

- Dr. **Enrico Botta**, Coordinator for the Green Growth and Global Relations division, OECD
- Ms. **Claudia de Windt**, Founding Partner & CEO, Inter-American Institute on Justice and Sustainability
- Ms. **Samantha Smith**, Director, Just Transition Centre, International Trade Union Confederation
- Mr. **Eduardo Uribe-Botero**, Director, Energy Group of Bogota
- Mr. **Carlos Ruiz-Garvia**, Regional Lead of the Regional Collaboration Centre for Latin America, UNFCCC
- Mr. **Vintura Silva**, Regional Lead of the Regional Collaboration Centre for the Caribbean, UNFCCC
- Mr. **Rafael Jimenez Aybar**, Environmental Democracy Adviser, Westminster Foundation for Democracy
- Senator **Kátia Abreu** (Brazil)
- Member of the Chamber of Deputies **Iván Flores** (Chile)

Closing remarks by:

- Member of Parliament **Marc Serré** (Canada), ParlAmericas Board Member
- Member of the National Assembly **Maritza Espinales** (Nicaragua), ParlAmericas Board Member

Key takeaways from the inter-parliamentary dialogue (June 4)

- 1) Individuals who are subject to inequalities due to diverse demographic characteristics are differentially impacted by climate change, making it essential to incorporate intersectional strategies and legislation. This will help to ensure that they are inclusive and prevent implementation from having any undesirable effects that may exacerbate these inequalities.
- 2) There is a need to transform current production and consumption patterns towards more sustainable and socially just options that favour low-carbon and circular economies. As green technologies emerge or become more popular, they will continue to consume certain natural resources. It is therefore important that, for example, extractive sectors, have resource efficient and sustainability protocols in place.
- 3) The benefits of a transition from economies dependent on unsustainable industries towards a green economy should be shared widely, alongside solutions to support the countries, regions, communities, industries, and particularly the workers - formal and informal - who will be impacted by these transformations.
- 4) A just transition must not only consider the needs of those who will lose their jobs, but also the impact it will have on communities dependent on unsustainable industries. This will be a challenge for the communities in the hemisphere that depend on extractive industries.
- 5) It is important that regional and local perspectives are considered when developing legislation or overseeing policies in a way that recognizes the socio-economic and cultural particularities of each context, which in some cases may require decentralized solutions.
- 6) A just transition will require a strengthening of welfare policies to support those who will be affected by these transformations towards green economies.

- 7) Gender perspectives should be integrated in the design of policies and legislation to support a just transition and measures to promote women's participation in new green jobs by promoting, for example, their education in STEM fields.
- 8) It will also be essential to raise labour standards in jobs where women are often over-represented, such as those related to the care economy, as initiatives to support green and sustainable development should aim to increase everyone's standards of living, not only those involved in environmentally friendly industries.
- 9) One of the essential mechanisms to ensure a just and inclusive transition is to establish a social dialogue between governments, the private sector, workers, and Indigenous peoples, where applicable, based on the recognition of workers' human and labour rights. Parliamentarians can facilitate such a dialogue through the legislative process and call on their governments to do so as they develop climate plans and legislation.
- 10) Parliamentarians have a role in monitoring the implementation of international climate commitments made by their governments, e.g., by advocating for increased ambition in Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and ensuring that these include provisions to support a just transition, are gender responsive, and support the needs of vulnerable populations.

Key takeaways from the parliamentary dialogue with civil society and youth representatives (June 15), organized with the support of the Regional UNFCCC and UNICEF Offices for Latin America and the Caribbean

- 1) The empowerment of the public is fundamental for climate action, as supported by the concept of ACE which refers to Art. 6 of the UNFCCC and Art. 12 of the

Paris Agreement to promote the understanding and capacity of all members of society to enhance their commitment to climate action through the strengthening of public policies in: education, training, public awareness, public participation, public access to information, and international cooperation.

- 2) Climate plans need to include people with disabilities; a dimension often overlooked when it comes to inclusive climate action.
- 3) Gender approaches should be integrated into climate plans and legislation, such as providing access to sexual and reproductive health in the context of extreme weather events.
- 4) Environmental education should be incorporated and/or strengthened in education legislation, as well as in the national or regional curricula for elementary and secondary education.
- 5) Capacity-building sessions on climate and environmental issues are valuable tools to fortify parliamentarians' effective representation of citizens on these matters, and to advance this agenda.
- 6) Open government, access to information, and transparency in the context of the fight against the effects of climate change is essential to re-gain the public's trust in political institutions and better inform the general public on the environmental issues that the country is facing and the manner in which the government is addressing them.
- 7) Participatory spaces should be systematically offered to young people in decision making processes on climate issues, in which their perspectives are meaningfully listened to and incorporated. The [Declaration on Children, Youth and Climate Action](#) promotes and recognizes the agency and leadership capacity of children and youth in relation to climate change.



The Honourable BRIGID ANNISSETTE-GEORGE (Trinidad and Tobago), Speaker of the House of Representatives , Vice-President of ParlAmericas, and co-host of the gathering

As we are compelled to move forward towards production and consumption models that favour resilient, low-emission economies, let us foster democratic and inclusive spaces for our citizens to meaningfully participate in the discussions and decisions to change course.



Senator BLANCA OVELAR (Paraguay), President of ParlAmericas

We have fostered spaces for dialogue with civil society organizations, especially environmental and youth-led organizations, with the understanding that citizen participation is imperative for the development of climate policies and plans that respond to the needs of the population, especially historically marginalized groups.



Ambassador LUIS ALFONSO DE ALBA, Special Envoy of the UN Secretary General for the 2019 Climate Summit

Parliamentarians have a limited space to participate in the COPs, it is something that should be reviewed; parliamentarians should be allowed to have a greater incidence in the decision-making process than they currently have. Regarding the transformation of a development model, I do not see a single parliamentary issue that is not relevant in the fight against climate change.



President of the Senate EDUARDO RAMÍREZ (Mexico), co-host of the gathering

The urgent fight against the effects of climate change requires that legislators incorporate intersectional and gender-responsive approaches into our parliamentary work ... to ensure that climate plans and just transition processes toward resilient, zero-emission economies meet their needs and do not exacerbate existing inequalities.



Senator the Honourable ROSA GALVEZ (Canada), Incoming President of the PNCC

Our defence and adaptation facing climate change has a direct link with the two other pillars of ParlAmericas: open parliament and gender equality. As every government in the world is raising their climate ambition and promising billions of dollars to fund climate solutions, we need transparency, accountability, and proper management more than ever.

Executive of the Parliamentary Network on Climate Change

Following the elections held during the plenary session of the gathering, the Executive Committee of the PNCC now consists of:

President

- The Honourable **Rosa Galvez**, Senator (Canada)

Vice-President - North America

- Senator **Raúl Bolaños-Cacho Cué** (Mexico)

Vice-President - The Caribbean

- Senator **Anthony Vieira** (Trinidad and Tobago)

Vice-President - Central America

- Member of the Legislative Assembly **Paola Vega Rodríguez** (Costa Rica)

First Vice-President - South America

- Member of the National Assembly **Luis Bruno Segovia Mejía** (Ecuador)

Second Vice-President - South America

- Member of the National Assembly **Radjendrekoeamar Debie** (Suriname)



Declaration

The gathering's plenary session (June 25) concluded with a reading of the [declaration](#). Among the commitments adopted by the convened parliamentary delegations are:

- To ensure follow-up and political oversight of the design and implementation of the binding commitments signed by our governments in the Paris Agreement and in the NDCs, making certain that they have the necessary budget allocation and ensuring that they are ambitious, developed in a participatory manner, include plans for a just transition, and take into consideration the impacts on different population groups.
- To incorporate intersectional, intergenerational, intercultural, and gender approaches into legislative work to ensure that environmental and climate policies and plans are inclusive and respond to the multiple inequalities that affect the most vulnerable populations in a way that complies with the spirit of the 2030 Agenda of leaving no one behind and ensures that the costs and benefits associated with the policies are equitably shared.
- Promote the implementation of the Action for Climate Empowerment (ACE) approach, fostering the creation of spaces for citizen participation in the discussion of issues related to the fight against the effects of climate change, ensuring legal frameworks for access to information on climate change, and urging our governments to strengthen education and public awareness on climate change and its effects.
- To foster the integration of gender and human rights perspectives in climate plans and include just transition strategies that contain measures to raise labour standards for jobs in which women are often overrepresented, such as those in the care economy.



The complete agendas (June [4](#), [15](#), [25](#)) [press release](#), video-recording [playlist](#), podcast of the [inter-parliamentary dialogue](#) and [keynote presentation](#), and [presentations](#) from this activity can be accessed on the ParlAmericas website.

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ParlAmericas is the institution that promotes **PARLIAMENTARY DIPLOMACY** in the **INTER-AMERICAN SYSTEM**



ParlAmericas mainstreams **GENDER EQUALITY** by advocating for women's political empowerment and the application of a gender lens in legislative work



ParlAmericas works towards strengthening democracy and governance by accompanying **ELECTORAL PROCESSES**



ParlAmericas is composed of the **35 NATIONAL LEGISLATURES** of the countries of North, Central and South America and the Caribbean



ParlAmericas fosters **OPEN PARLIAMENTS** by advancing the principles of transparency, accountability, citizen participation, ethics and probity



ParlAmericas organizes consultations and builds **MULTI-STAKEHOLDER PARTNERSHIPS** with young leaders and civil society organizations



ParlAmericas facilitates the exchange of parliamentary **GOOD PRACTICES** and promotes **COOPERATIVE POLITICAL DIALOGUE** in pursuit of the Sustainable Development Goals



ParlAmericas promotes policies and legislative measures to mitigate and adapt to the effects of **CLIMATE CHANGE**



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