



## PRESS RELEASE

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### **ParlAmericas participates in the First Virtual Congress of the Youth Assembly of Panama**

The First Virtual Congress of the Youth Assembly of Panama was held on October 27, 28, and 29, 2020 and was organized by the National Directorate for the Promotion of Citizen Participation of the National Assembly of Panama, with the support of ParlAmericas and the National Forum of Women in Political Parties (FONAMUPP, in Spanish). The congress gathered more than 250 members and former members of the Youth Assembly of Panama for a series of presentations by national and international speakers on subjects related to citizen participation, youth leadership, and adopting a gender perspective within parliamentary institutions and civil society organizations.

On the first day of the event, Tuesday, October 27, Member of the National Assembly Ana Belén Marín (Ecuador), President of the ParlAmericas Parliamentary Network on Climate Change, sent a video greeting to the members of the Youth Assembly of Panama, emphasizing the importance of youth participation in key areas such as climate change and the promotion of gender equality. In her message, Ms. Marín encouraged the Youth Assembly to “engage in politics to serve, so that the voices that aren't being heard can be heard.”

Afterwards, Emilio Rodríguez, Gender Equality and Youth Program Officer for ParlAmericas, moderated a panel interviewing Selva Montealegre, an expert in diversity and inclusion and youth activist, on the importance of gender mainstreaming across institutions and organizations, with a focus on youth-led organizations.

On the second day of the event, Wednesday, October 28, Member of Congress Arlette Contreras (Peru) sent a video greeting to the members of the Youth Assembly of Panama and spoke of her own experience as a young parliamentarian, sharing her story on how her involvement in women's rights activism led her to participate in politics. Ms. Contreras stated, “It is very important that the struggle for women's rights be prioritized by the State. That is why I have been promoting a women's agenda at the Congress of the Republic.”

On the last day of the event, Thursday, October 29, Honourable Representative Juan Carlos Losada (Colombia) expressed his support for the members of the Youth Assembly of Panama in a video that stressed the essential role of youth in our countries' development, noting that, in his case, it was environmental activism that motivated him to get involved in politics. Representative Losada called upon “all of our continent's youth, so that their participation can bring about the transformations we desire for Latin America.”

Subsequently, Natalí Casanova, Open Parliament Senior Program Officer for ParlAmericas, moderated a panel interviewing Emerson Salguero, director of the Guatemalan organization *Involúcrate*, which organizes programs and activities that promote youth involvement in politics. The interview addressed



issues related to citizen participation and political activism, highlighting the importance of ensuring that these efforts be inclusive and egalitarian.

For further information on the work carried out by ParlAmericas, visit [www.parlamericas.org](http://www.parlamericas.org) and follow @ParlAmericas on social media.