

# Board of Directors

October 2018

ParlAmericas is run by parliamentarians for parliamentarians, with a Board of Directors composed of **23 legislators, representing 18 countries** from North, South, Central America and the Caribbean.

In addition, the Board has ex-officio representation from the ParlAmericas International Secretariat and the OAS General Secretariat.

## EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

### President



**Hon. Robert Nault**  
Member of Parliament, Canada

The Honorable Nault was first elected to Parliament in 1988 and held his riding in every sub-sequent election until 2004. He was appointed Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development (1999 – 2003). During the period 2003-2015 he left politics and began his own consultant agency for different groups such as First Nations, high-tech companies and different public and private-owned organizations, on issues like governance, energy and government relations. Besides ParlAmericas, Mr. Nault belongs to the Canada-China Legislative Association and to the Canadian North Atlantic Treaty Organization Parliamentary Association. In addition, he is Co-Chair of the Canada-Peru Parliamentary Friendship Group and Former Chair of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development.

### Vice-President



**Hon. Elizabeth Cabezas**  
President of the National  
Assembly, Ecuador

The Honourable Cabezas, Member and President of the National Assembly of Ecuador, worked in the Municipality of Quito as director of Citizen Security. From the Ministry of Social Development, she promoted the provision of school uniforms and breakfast in the country's schools. As a councillor in Quito for the period of 2009 - 2013, she led the legalization of more than 300 neighborhoods, which represented the most important process of land legalization in Quito, seeking to ensure a safer and more prosperous city. Ms. Cabezas is an economist and holds a Masters in Management from the University of Catalonia and a diploma in Banking and Finance from the University of the Pacific. In the National Assembly, she promotes issues such as the recovery of capital lost due to corruption; the evaluation and monitoring of problems related to land transportation, transit, and road safety; and care for people with disabilities.

**2<sup>nd</sup> Vice-president and  
President of the  
Parliamentary Network for  
Gender Equality**



**Karina Banfi**, Member of the Chamber of Deputies, Argentina

Ms. Banfi obtained a law degree from the University of Buenos Aires and studied the right to information and human rights at Oxford University and American University. Ms. Banfi is co-founder and former executive secretary of Alianza Regional por la Libre Expresión e Información (Regional Alliance for Free Expression and Information). She was a consultant for the Office of the Special Rapporteur for Freedom of Expression of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR), coordinated regional programs on transparency and governance for the Organization of American States (OAS), and was a member of the expert group that created the Model Inter-American Law on Access to Information.

**2<sup>nd</sup> Vice-president and  
President of the Open  
Parliament Network**



**Blanca Ovelar**, Senator, Paraguay

Senator Ovelar is an elected national senator of Paraguay for the 2018-2023 term. She held the position of Minister of Education and Culture and Coordinator of the Social Cabinet of the Presidency of the Republic from 2002 to 2007. She has also served as Deputy Minister of Education and National Director of Higher Education, in addition to having been a school teacher, a professor, and a researcher at the National University of Asunción. She was a presidential candidate for the Republic of Paraguay for the 2008-2013 term for the Colorado Party and an elected national senator for the 2013-2018 term. She is currently the President of the Open Parliament Network and 2nd Vice-President of the ParlAmericas Board.

**2<sup>nd</sup> Vice-president and  
President of the  
Parliamentary Network  
on Climate Change**



**Javier Ortega**, Member of the National Assembly, Panama

Mr. Ortega was born on September 15, 1960, in the province of Bocas del Toro, Panama. He has a degree in journalism and is a technician in radio communication. He also has a master's degree in higher education. He is currently Member of the National Assembly for the Circuit 8-8 (San Francisco, Rio Abajo, Juan Diaz and Lefevre Park) for the Revolutionary Democratic Party, of which he is a founding member. He is also the representative of Panama to the OCLAE, a student leader, and member of the executive committee of FENASEP and of the National Directory. He was a member of the Secretariat of Youth seven times and in 2014 was chair of the committees on municipal affairs, foreign affairs and trade.

## REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVES

### South America



Hon. **Maya Fernández Allende**,  
President of the Chamber of  
Deputies, Chile

The Honorable Fernández is a biologist, veterinarian, and politician from the Socialist Party of Chile. She was a councillor for the municipality of Ñuñoa for the 2008-2012 period and has been elected a Member of the Chamber of Deputies for districts 21 and 10 of the Metropolitan Region of Santiago for the 2014-2018 and 2018-2022 legislatures, respectively. Ms. Fernández has served as President of the Chamber of Deputies since March 11, 2018. She is also a member of the Women and Equity Committee, the National Defence Committee, and the Sports and Recreation Committee.

### South America



Hon. **Jennifer Simons**, Speaker  
of the National Assembly,  
Suriname

The Honorable Simons, a member of the House of Parliament in Suriname, first entered politics in 1996 as a representative of the National Democratic Party and has since been elected four times to Parliament. She has served as the Speaker of the House since 2010. Her compassion for people motivated her to study medicine, and she has been active as a practitioner (MD), university lecturer, and public health policymaker. In addition, she has vast experience in educational innovation and development, which includes the founding of EDUCONS, an NGO promoting information and communications technology. She also introduced distance education to Suriname. After becoming Speaker of the House, Dr. Simons initiated the Institutional Strengthening Program for Parliament and the Association of Parliamentarians for the Development of Children and Youth. She is considered a national icon for independent women, as she is an inspiring visionary and firm believer in self-determination and life-long learning.

### South America



**Germán Alcides Blanco Álvarez**,  
Representative, Colombia

Mr. Blanco is an attorney by profession and holds a master's degree in Governance from Medellín University. His areas of expertise are civil service, political culture, and human rights. He has also specialized in social management (IADB), as well as in leadership and democracy (State of Israel). He is former director of EDATEL (Empresa de Telecomunicaciones de Colombia) and of Seguro Social Antioquia. Representative during the 2001-2004 and 2004-2007 periods, he also chaired the Departmental Assembly in 2006. He is currently a representative for Antioquia at the Colombian Chamber of Representatives (2010-2014 term). Member of the ParlAmericas Executive Board since 2010, as well as member of the conservative departmental board (2008-2012), president of the Investigation and Prosecution Commission of the Chamber of Representatives (2011-2012), and member of the Colombia-Spain-Japan Parliamentary Friendship Group. Former member and former president of the conservative departmental board (2005-2008 and 2009-2010, respectively).

## South America



**Cecilia Chacón**, Member of Congress, Peru

Ms. Chacón has chaired the Regional Chamber of Tourism and the Association of Hotels and Restaurants of Cajamarca. She was elected a Member of the Congress of the Republic in 2006 in representation of the same region. She was also First Vice-President of the Congress of the Republic for the 2009-2010 term. She has subsequently been re-elected as a Member of Congress for the Fuerza 2011 and Fuerza Popular parties for the 2011-2016 and 2016-2021 periods, respectively. Ms. Chacón has served as president of the Committee on Energy and Mines, the Committee on Women and Families, and the Committee on the Budget and General Accounts of the Republic.

## South America



**Ana Belén Marín**, Member of the National Assembly, Ecuador

Ms. Marín Aguirre is an engineer specializing in socioeconomic development and the environment. She has more than 10 years of experience in the public sector, having served as director of the Ministry of Environment and director and undersecretary of the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, Aquaculture and Fisheries. She is currently a Member of the National Assembly of Ecuador, centring her political and technical experience in forestry, agriculture, livestock, mining and the environment. In addition to being a member of the ParlAmericas Board, she is the alternate Vice-President for South America of the Climate Change Network – ParlAmericas for the period of 2017-2019.

## Central America



**Mariela Vega**, Member of the National Assembly, Panama

Ms. Vega has a degree in Law and Political Science from the University of Panama. She worked for 13 years in the Ministry of External Affairs, as a legal advisor for the Consul of Panama in Miami, and subsequently as State Defender before the Inter-American System of Human Rights of the Organization of American States (OAS) and Representative of Panama for the United Nations in the Annual report of the States. Currently she is a member of the National Assembly of the Republic of Panama, for the Cambio Democrático party for the electoral circuits 7-2 (Los Santos, Macaracas, Tonosí).

## Central America



**Maritza del Socorro Espinales,**  
Member of the National  
Assembly, Nicaragua

Ms. Espinales is a departmental Member of the National Assembly for the FSLN and is currently the 1st Vice-President of the National Assembly of Nicaragua. She is a librarian by training and studied at the Central American University (UCA). Ms. Espinales is a promoter of human rights, prioritizing the defense of education as a fundamental right, the promotion of gender equality, and the empowerment of women in decision-making. She also serves as a union leader in the university sector. She is a member of the committee for Education, Culture, Sports and Social Media and the committee on the Modernization of the National Assembly.

## Central America



**Cristina Cornejo,** Member of the  
Legislative Assembly, El Salvador

Ms. Cornejo is the Member of the Legislative Assembly for the constituency of Libertad and is Third Secretary on the executive committee of the Legislative Assembly for the 2018-2021 period. She currently works on the commissions on electoral and constitutional reform, and legislation and constitutional points. In addition to being a member of the ParlAmericas Board, she is Vice-President for Central America of the Parliamentary Network for Gender Equality for the 2018-2020 period.

## Central America



**María Inés Solís,** Member of the  
Legislative Assembly, Costa Rica

Ms. Solís holds a Bachelor's degree in Marketing Communications and a Master's degree in Business Administration. She has served as First Secretary in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Worship; Costa Rica's Director for Expo Shanghai, China; Logistics Manager in the Ministry of Foreign Trade; and Protocol Assistant in the Office of the President of the Republic of Costa Rica. Currently, Ms. Solís is a Member of the Legislative Assembly for the political party Unidad Social Cristiana and serves as Vice President on the legislature's executive committee. She is a member of the Legal Affairs, International Relations, and Foreign Trade Committees, the Second Plenary Committee with Legislative Power, and the Committee for the Province of Alajuela.

## Caribbean



**Gladys López Bejerano,**  
Member of the National  
Assembly, Cuba

Ms. López Bejerano, Member of the National Assembly of Cuba, received a Bachelor's degree in nuclear physics and serves as the Director of the Center for Radiation Hygiene. She worked in the Budget Unit for the Construction of the Center for Nuclear Investigations and the Center for Radiation Protection and Hygiene, where she held various responsibilities. She is currently on the panel of experts of the Nuclear Branch Program of Cuba and an expert at the International Atomic Energy Agency. She is a delegate of the Fifth Congress of the Party, representing the municipality of Cotorro.

## Caribbean



**Hon. Andy Daniel,**  
President of the House of  
Assembly, Saint Lucia

The Honorable Daniel worked at the Saint Lucia Development Bank and then proceeded to study law at the Holborn College, London. He returned to St. Lucia in 1999 where he was called to the bar. He immediately commenced private practice until he was appointed as a Magistrate. He was one of the founders of Youth for the Development of his community (Youf-Doc), Treasurer of the National Youth Council, as well as President of the Students Branch of the National Youth Council. He served as leader of the opposition in the Senate and as a candidate for Dennery North Constituency. He is currently the Speaker of the House of Assembly of Saint Lucia and an executive member of the ruling United Workers Party (UWP).

## Caribbean



**Hon. Bridgid Annisette-George,**  
Speaker of House of  
Representatives, Trinidad and  
Tobago

The Honorable Annisette-George first entered Parliament as a Senator and Attorney General on November 8, 2007, and thus became the third woman to hold this post in the history of Trinidad and Tobago. An alumnus of St. Joseph's Convent, Port-of-Spain, Mrs. Annisette-George is also a graduate of the University of the West Indies, having obtained her Bachelor of Law from that institution in 1981. Before taking up the portfolio of Attorney General, Mrs. Annisette-George was the sole practitioner at Messrs. G.R. Annisette & Co. Mrs. Annisette-George has held a wide variety of positions in both the private and public sector including Commissioner of the Securities and Exchange Commission of Trinidad and Tobago (2003), Chairman of the Diego Martin Regional Corporation (1999-2003) and associate tutor/lecturer at the Hugh Wooding Law School.

## Caribbean



**Juliet Cuthbert-Flynn**, Member of Parliament, Jamaica

Mrs. Cuthbert-Flynn is an accomplished Olympian, and most recently politician. She is a 5 time Olympian and double Olympic Silver medallist. She has served as board member for the Sports Development Foundation, Insport and the Disciplinary Panel of the Jamaica Anti Doping Commission. She has been an advocate for the rights of athletes and championed a case for all national athletes to receive health insurance. Mrs Cuthbert-Flynn currently serves her country in the capacity of Member of Parliament for West Rural St Andrew and is an advocate for the review of the anti-abortion laws to allow women safe and respectable options of terminating pregnancies under specific circumstances.

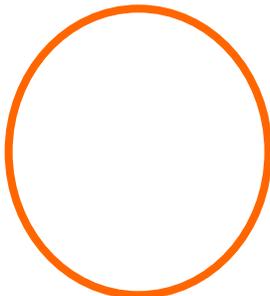
## Caribbean



Hon. **Arthur E. Holder**, Speaker of the House of Assembly, Barbados

The Honorable Holder is a teacher, social worker, lawyer, and politician. As a trained social worker, Speaker Holder has served as a local consultant for the United Nations International Drug Control Programme for targeted efforts to eradicate drug use. As an attorney, Speaker Holder has done significant pro-bono work on behalf of juveniles brought before the Criminal Courts, and uses such opportunities to counsel the youth and their families. Currently, he is the Speaker of the House of Assembly and a member of the Barbados Labour Party team.

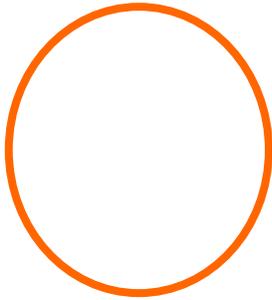
## North America



**Canada**

To be designated.

## North America



Mexico

To be designated.

## EX OFFICIO MEMBERS

### Host Parliament– 16th Plenary Assembly



**Patrick Kemper**, Senator,  
Paraguay

Senator Kemper holds a Bachelor's degree in Business Administration and Management from American University, a Master's degree in Financial Management from the University of Barcelona-Spain / EAE Business School, and a Master's degree in Strategic Governance and Political Communication from George Washington University. He was elected Senator of the Republic of Paraguay for the period 2018-2023. He is also the 1st Vice-President of the political party Hagamos. Senator Kemper currently serves as President of the Committee on Economics, Cooperativism, Development and Latin American Economic Integration, Vice-President of the Open Parliament Committee, Rapporteur for the Finance and Budget Committee, and is an active member of the following committees: Legislation, Codification, Justice and Work, and the Fight to Prevent and End Drug Trafficking.

### ParlAmericas International Secretariat



**Alisha Todd**, Director General,  
ParlAmericas

Ms. Alisha Todd joined ParlAmericas in March 2014, bringing her expertise and enthusiasm for promoting democratic principles and strengthening governance institutions. Prior to joining ParlAmericas, Alisha specialized in designing and implementing international democracy, governance, humanitarian, and security sector programming with an Ottawa-based NGO. Alisha has extensive experience in developing innovative programming, strengthening relationships, and building partnerships with international and regional stakeholders. Alisha's passion for the Americas started in her teens; having on occasion lived, worked and traveled throughout the region. She speaks English, French, Portuguese, and Spanish and is a graduate from the University of Toronto's Trinity College, specializing in International Relations and Latin American Studies.

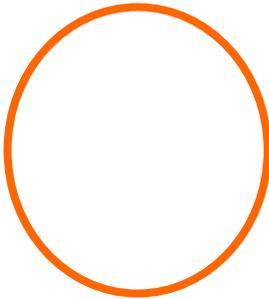
## Organization of American States



**Francisco Guerrero**, Secretary for Strengthening Democracy, OAS

Mr. Guerrero is the Secretary for Strengthening Democracy of the Organization of American States (OAS) since June, 2015. He has held several positions in the public sector, like Senior Director at the Social Studies and Public Opinion Centre (CESOP) at the Mexican Chamber of Deputies; Chief of Staff for the President of Mexican Senate; National Sub-commissioner at the National Medical Arbitration Commission (Conamed); Head of International Affairs Office and Chief of Staff both at the Secretariat of Labour and Social Welfare, and also served as Chair of the General Coordination for Affiliated Workers at the Institute for Security and Social Services for State Workers (ISSSTE).

## Immediate Past-President



**Vacant**

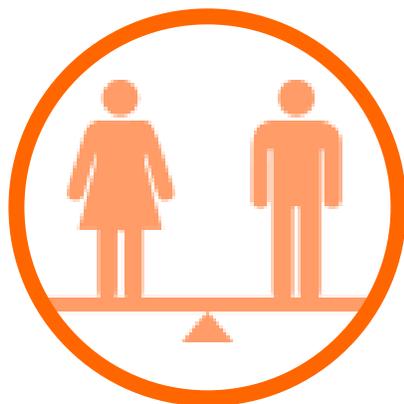
## EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE – Parliamentary Network for Gender Equality

The ParlAmericas Parliamentary Network for Gender Equality (PNGE) promotes women’s political leadership and gender mainstreaming in the agendas and operations of the national legislatures of the Americas and the Caribbean.

Since its creation in 2003, the Network (formerly known as the Group of Women Parliamentarians) has carried out activities and initiatives that bring together legislators from across the hemisphere for the exchange of knowledge and good practices to advance women’s rights and gender equality. Through its inter-parliamentary gatherings, the Network has addressed topics of shared importance such as women’s economic empowerment, ending gender-based political violence, electoral reforms to promote women’s candidacies, gender-sensitive media and communications, and parliamentary caucuses for gender equality, among others. The outcomes of these activities also inform the development of specialized resources and online communities for parliamentarians.

The Network for Gender Equality is committed to creating diverse and inclusive working spaces, encouraging the participation of male allies, and collaborating with women’s organizations and social movements towards shared objectives.

The Network is governed by an elected Executive Committee, composed of the President (who also serves as 2nd Vice-President on ParlAmericas’ Board of Directors) and four sub-regional Vice-Presidents representing North, Central, and South America, and the Caribbean.



### **Karina Banfi**

President

Member of the Chamber of Deputies, Argentina

### **Mobina Jaffer**

Vice-President - North America

Senator, Canada

### **Norma Cristina Cornejo**

Vice-President - Central America

Member of the Legislative Assembly, El Salvador

### **Chester Humphrey**

Vice-President - Caribbean

President of the Senate, Grenada

### **Karina Arteaga**

Vice-President - South America

Member of the National Assembly, Ecuador

### **Marcela Sabat**

Alternate Vice-President - South America

Member of the Chamber of Deputies, Chile

### **Delsa Solórzano**

Observer

Member of the National Assembly, Venezuela

### **Lisane Thirsk**

Program Manager, Gender Equality

ParlAmericas

## EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE – Open Parliament Network

The ParlAmericas Open Parliament Network (OPN) promotes legislative openness through efforts to increase transparency and access to public information, strengthen the accountability of democratic institutions, promote the participation of citizens in legislative decision-making, and ensure a culture of ethical behaviour and probity in the national legislatures of the Americas and the Caribbean.

Since its integration in ParlAmericas in 2015, the Network (formerly known as Inter-American Parliamentary Network on Transparency, Access to Public Information, and Probity), provides workshops, facilitates peer to peer exchanges and produces tools for legislators with the ultimate objective of combating corruption, enhancing public trust and strengthening our democratic institutions, to build peaceful and inclusive societies that provide access to justice for all and boast of effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels, in support of [Sustainable Development Goal 16](#). The outcomes of these activities also inform the development of specialized resources and online communities for parliamentarians.

The Network is governed by an elected Executive Committee, composed of the President (who also serves as 2nd Vice-President on ParlAmericas' Board of Directors) and four sub-regional Vice-Presidents representing North, Central, and South America, and the Caribbean.



**Blanca Ovelar**

President  
Senator, Paraguay

**Randy Boissonnault**

Vice-President - North America  
Member of Parliament, Canada

**Marvin Orellana**

Vice-President - Central America  
Member of Parliament, Guatemala

**Saphire Longmore**

Vice-President - Caribbean  
Senator, Jamaica

**Javier Macaya Danús**

Vice President - South America  
Member of the Chamber of Deputies, Chile

**Andrés García Zuccardi**

Alternate Vice-President - South America  
Senator, Colombia

**Williams Dávila**

Observer  
Member of the National Assembly, Venezuela

**Emilie Lemieux**

Program Manager, Open Parliament  
ParlAmericas

## EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE – Parliamentary Network on Climate Change

The ParlAmericas Parliamentary Network on Climate Change (PNCC) was created in 2016 with the objective of promoting parliamentary diplomacy on climate action within parliaments, aligned with existing international frameworks that work towards combating climate change and achieving sustainable development. The PNCC fosters knowledge exchanges between parliamentarians, expert practitioners, civil society and other stakeholders on effective practices for climate change mitigation and adaptation through workshops, dialogues and the creation of specialized resources.

The work of the PNCC encourages cooperation between parliaments and government agencies in the development and implementation of innovative policies to combat climate change. Recent topics of focus include renewable energy, disaster risk reduction, and climate financing concepts such as loss and damage, carbon pricing and markets, as well as the importance of integrating gender into climate action and raising ambition within the Nationally Determined Contributions to meet the Paris Agreement goals and attain the Sustainable Development Goals. .

The Network is governed by an elected Executive Committee, composed of the President, and sub-regional Vice-Presidencies representing North, Central, and South America, and the Caribbean.



### **Javier Ortega**

President

Member of the National Assembly, Panama

### **Dan Ruimy**

Vice President - North America

Member of Parliament, Canada

### **Sofia Hernández**

Vice President - Central America

Member of Congress, Guatemala

### **Andy Daniel**

Vice President - Caribbean

Speaker of the House of Assembly, Saint Lucia

### **Jennifer Simons**

Vice President - South America

Speaker of the National Assembly, Suriname

### **Ana Belén Marín**

Alternate Vice President - South America

Member of the National Assembly, Ecuador

### **David Osorio**

Program Manager, Parliaments

ParlAmericas

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# PARLAMERICAS



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



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



ParlAmericas facilitates the exchange of parliamentary **GOOD PRACTICES** and promotes **COOPERATIVE POLITICAL DIALOGUE**



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



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



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



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



ParlAmericas is headquartered in **OTTAWA, CANADA**