



#### LOCATION

Santiago, Chile

#### DATE

December 5, 2018

#### PARTICIPANTS

More than 20 parliamentary clerks from 9 countries in Latin America



This activity is aligned with SDG 16

## Meeting of Parliamentary Clerks: Open Parliament Action Plans

[#ParlAmericasOPN](#)

In collaboration with the Congress of Chile, ParlAmericas hosted the Meeting for Parliamentary Clerks: Open Parliament Action Plans, the first of its activities dedicated exclusively to parliamentary clerks responsible for openness initiatives within their parliaments in Latin America. Recognizing the importance of their role and expertise in the coordination, implementation and sustainability of these initiatives, this activity aimed to build ties at an institutional level to facilitate peer exchanges and strengthen open parliament practices.

“The National Congress of Chile, the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate, have chosen the path of transparency many years ago. It is a path that, while having its difficulties, allows us to better fulfill our roles because we are promoting a healthy and participative democracy.”



**Miguel Landeros,**  
Secretary General of the  
Chamber of Deputies of  
Chile

# Welcoming remarks

The meeting opened with welcome remarks offered by **Miguel Landeros** (Chile), Secretary General of the Chamber of Deputies and **Anabella Zavagno**, ParlAmericas Deputy Director. **Rocío Noriega** (Chile), adviser to the Bicameral Group for Transparency of the Congress ([presentation](#) in Spanish) introduced the objectives of the meeting and presented the results of a survey circulated ahead of the meeting to identify the perceptions of participants as well as civil society organizations on the status of open parliament efforts across Latin America.



## OVERVIEW OF PARTICIPANT PERSPECTIVES ON THE STATUS OF OPEN PARLIAMENT INITIATIVES ACROSS LATIN AMERICA

The following table includes the top measures, in relation to the four pillars of Open Parliament, that participants felt worked effectively and those they felt could be improved in their parliaments.

Open Parliament Pillar	Measures that are currently effective	Measures that could be improved
 <p><b>Transparency &amp; Access to Information</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Publication of information on members of parliament, structure and function of parliament, library of parliament research</li> <li>• Parliamentary office responsible for providing information to the public</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Application of the access to information law to the parliament</li> <li>• Livestreaming of parliamentary sessions</li> </ul>
 <p><b>Accountability</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Publication of institutional expenses</li> <li>• Office or instruments to support parliaments' budgetary oversight functions</li> <li>• Mechanisms or spaces that allow civil society to monitor parliamentary expenses</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Digital tools to improve accountability</li> <li>• Reports on parliamentarians' activities (votes, attendance, expenses, meetings, travels, etc.)</li> </ul>
 <p><b>Public Participation</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mechanisms or spaces for in-person participation</li> <li>• Consultations and public audiences</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Law or regulation on citizen participation</li> <li>• Virtual spaces for citizen participation</li> <li>• Whistle blower protection</li> </ul>
 <p><b>Ethics</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Office responsible for ensuring gender equality and preventing discrimination</li> <li>• Code of ethics</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Training for parliamentary clerks on code of ethics</li> <li>• Law or regulation on conflicts of interests for parliamentarians and clerks</li> </ul>

# Session 1: Strategic planning of open parliament action plans and initiatives

The first session addressed the strategic planning of open parliament action plans and initiatives, focusing on the development of monitoring and evaluation frameworks to allow parliaments to better measure and demonstrate the impact of these initiatives on citizens. The session was guided by **Daniel Pefaur**, Director of Studies at the Chilean Council for Transparency (Chile's transparency and access to information enforcement agency) ([presentation](#) in Spanish) who discussed the critical aspects throughout the planning, monitoring and evaluation of public transparency initiatives from both a theoretical and practical

perspective. He also presented the measurement model adopted by the Network on Transparency and Access to Information being used by transparency enforcement agencies across Latin America. This session ended with group work where parliamentary clerks developed a monitoring and evaluation framework for a given open parliament commitment. The framework developed by each group put emphasis on how the commitment impacted citizens, both in quantitative terms as well as qualitative (level of satisfaction).



“When we plan open parliament commitments, we have to consider how they will be measured. It’s neither a marginal task nor an afterthought, it is part of the complete process and we must dedicate ourselves to this work.” to the various activities.”



**Daniel Pefaur**, Director of Studies, Council for Transparency of Chile

## Session 2: public innovation and effective communication strategies

Session two discussed public innovation and effective communication strategies for the adoption of open parliament initiatives and was moderated by **Dolores Martínez** (Argentina), Director of the Modernization Program in the Chamber of Deputies. **Alejandro Barros**, Senior Consultant at the Centre for Public Affairs of the University of Chile ([presentation](#) in Spanish) discussed barriers to innovation in the public sector, strategies to modify organizational structures to enable innovative thinking as well as tools and processes that can facilitate innovations. **Giovanna Peñaflor**, Managing Director of IMASEN ([presentation](#) in Spanish) provided guidance on how to develop an effective institutional communications strategy which can be applied in the context of Open Parliament Action Plans. At the end of the session, participants worked in small groups to identify solutions to common challenges related to public innovation and communications.



“Having more data doesn’t mean that you know how to interpret it. Giving more information is not sufficient [...] when we are working on improving transparency, we have to not only publish the information (like actions or expenses) but also communicate their value and importance. In addition, our communications strategy needs to create arguments that are strong enough to become alternatives to the messages that the media may publish.”



**Giovanna Peñaflor**,  
Managing Director of  
IMASEN



**Alejandro Barros**, Senior  
Consultant at the Centre for Public  
Affairs of the University of Chile

“Innovation takes place in collaborative environments where there is dialogue and co-creation, not in hierarchical settings. [...] Most innovative processes need a leadership guru, someone who is able to convene and gather different people with different ideas to create this change.”



# Open dialogue and reflections

The meeting provided an opportunity for participants from [Argentina](#), [Brazil](#), [Chile](#), [Colombia](#), [Costa Rica](#), [Ecuador](#), [El Salvador](#), [Paraguay](#) and [Peru](#) to present a report on their parliament's advances towards building open parliaments through action plans and other initiatives. Priorities, key results and challenges were highlighted in these presentations.

The meeting ended with an open dialogue and reflections by officials who expressed their wish for a more formal mechanism to be established to facilitate the participation of parliamentary clerks within the ParlAmericas Open Parliament Network, through both in-person and online means, and in both activities exclusive to clerks as well as in meetings with parliamentarians and civil society. This discussion was followed by concluding remarks from **Luis Rojas** (Chile), Deputy Secretary General of the Chamber of Deputies.

The logo for Canada, featuring the word "Canada" in a serif font with a small Canadian flag to the right of the letter 'a'.

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## ACTION POINTS

The following points of action were highlighted in conversations during the meeting:

1. Encourage the use of a multidisciplinary approach in the work of parliamentary clerks to facilitate the adoption of new mechanisms and practices.
2. Encourage annual meetings and frequent in-person and online activities, such as webinars on specific issues, to support open parliament processes.
3. Share experiences among parliaments from across the Americas and the Caribbean, and from other regions, such as Europe and Africa.
4. Engage parliamentary staff working on information technology in legislative openness efforts.
5. Explore opportunities for support from international organizations in order to strengthen these activities and benefit from the contributions of different experts.
6. Promote progressive advances towards the open parliament pillars – transparency, accountability, public participation and ethics – in order to achieve concrete results.
7. Encourage the continuous engagement of more parliamentarians in open parliament processes, as they are the actors who provide support for these processes.



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ParlAmericas facilitates the exchange of parliamentary **BEST PRACTICES AND** promotes **COOPERATIVE POLITICAL DIALOGUE**



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ParlAmericas is headquartered in **OTTAWA, CANADA**

International Secretariat of ParlAmericas

710—150 Wellington St., Ottawa, Ontario, K1P 5A4 Canada

Telephone: +1 (613) 594-5222 | Fax: +1 (613) 594-4766

[www.parlAmericas.org](http://www.parlAmericas.org) | [info@parlAmericas.org](mailto:info@parlAmericas.org)

