

PRESS RELEASE

For immediate communication

May 15, 2020

OPeN hosts a webinar on Parliaments and Pandemics: Going virtual and staying open in the COVID-19 era

On Friday, May 8, the webinar “Parliaments and Pandemics: Going virtual and staying open in the COVID-19 era” was held within the framework of the [Open Response + Open Recovery Digital Forum](#) of the Open Government Partnership (OGP). The event was organized by [OPeN \(Open Parliament e-Network\)](#) composed of [Directorio Legislativo](#), [National Democratic Institute](#), [ParlAmericas](#), [Westminster Foundation for Democracy](#), the [OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights](#) and the [Latin American Network for Legislative Transparency](#).

The session was moderated by María Baron, Global Director of Directorio Legislativo and included panelists from across the world: Marc Serré, Member of the Canadian Parliament and ParlAmericas Board Member; Marta González Vázquez, Member of Spanish Congress of Deputies; Leonardo Barbosa, Secretary General of the Brazilian Chamber of Deputies and Sammy Obeng, Executive Director of the Parliamentary Network Africa (PNAfrica). The discussion allowed for an in-depth analysis on how parliaments around the world are adapting their practices to continue their work while respecting the current social distancing guidelines. It also considered the tools and strategies used in different countries to not only keep parliaments in operation during the crisis, but also ensure that their work continues to take place in an open and transparent manner. Panelists highlighted how openness, transparency and innovation can help institutions become more resilient and better prepared to face new challenges, such as those brought forward by the COVID-19 pandemic. This is critical as it enables legislatures to carry on with their functions at a time where their roles of representation, legislation and oversight are crucial to the balance of powers and to ensure accountability and the effective protection of the vulnerable sectors of society, all while providing an agile and timely response to the difficult situation that society is facing.

This dialogue was the first of the "The 2020 Conversation on Open Parliament", a series of seminars that will cover a variety of topics in the coming months to explore how parliaments are responding to the challenges before them. Watch the webinar here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GlrVWbt1wxQ>

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The [Open Parliament e-Network \(OPeN\)](#) is a consortium of international and civil society organizations composed of ParlAmericas, National Democratic Institute, Latin American Legislative Transparency Network, Westminster Foundation for Democracy, Directorio Legislativo and the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) that have come together to coordinate global efforts to advance legislative openness and contribute to global progress towards Sustainable Development Goal 16 to build strong institutions.