



PRESS RELEASE

For immediate publication

Ottawa, July 22, 2020

ParlAmericas co-organises virtual meeting on gender-responsiveness and disaster resilience during the COVID-19 crisis

Today, ParlAmericas held a virtual meeting in collaboration with the UN Women Multi-Country Office - Caribbean and the Parliament of Saint Lucia on the subject of building resilience during the COVID-19 crisis from gender equality and sustainable development perspectives. The meeting brought together more than 85 parliamentarians, government and parliamentary officials, and civil society organisations from ParlAmericas' anglophone membership.

The meeting's agenda included presentations on good practices as well as emerging data and new literature that can support legislators and policymakers in their decision-making during COVID-19.

The presenters were Ms. Elizabeth Riley from the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA); Angie Dazé from the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD); Massimiliano Tozzi from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) EnGenDER project; and Mr. Jack Hardcastle from the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA), who shared a toolkit tailored for parliamentarians from small states to inform their work on Climate Change. In addition, representatives from ParlAmericas and the UN Women MCO presented new publications about responding to the COVID-19 crisis, including an analysis of [legislative responses from a gender equality perspective](#) and [gender-transformative hurricane resilience](#).

Following the presentations, the meeting participants engaged in dialogue and exchanged information about actions being taken in their countries to mitigate the socio-economic consequences of COVID-19 and build back better. This included discussion of proactive measures aimed at addressing the double threat of hurricane season in the Caribbean in the context of the pandemic.

In her introductory remarks, Ms. Tonni Ann Brodber, Representative of the UN Women Multi-Country Office - Caribbean highlighted the importance of multi-sector partnerships for work on these themes in the region. She observed, "For UN Women, like our sister agencies and our partners in this initiative we have had to adapt our humanitarian response to manage the impact of COVID-19 taking into account the different but equally important needs of women and men, girls and boys. The good news is adaptation for us was determining the new way of working, which has made us more resilient. The content of our work has not changed that much because what we do is at the core of sustainable development and achieving the SDGs. Planning, preparing, and mitigating against disasters taking into account the lived realities of men, women, boys, and girls is gender-transformative programming."

Speaker of the House of Assembly of Saint Lucia the Honourable Andy Daniel then gave opening remarks in his role as host and Caribbean Vice-President of the ParlAmericas Network on Climate Change. He stressed, “As Caribbean islands are particularly vulnerable to the effects of climate change and disasters resulting from natural hazards, our countries undertake thorough planning every hurricane season to ensure we have all of the necessary precautions in place to protect our people. The added challenge of COVID-19 means thoughtful preparation is even more essential. We must be sure that we are considerate of the diverse needs of our population so that everyone remains safe and well.”

Through a video, President of ParlAmericas Elizabeth Cabezas, Member of the National Assembly of Ecuador, greeted the meeting’s delegates. Ms. Cabezas affirmed that “ParlAmericas believes deeply in the importance of examining all issues from the perspectives of gender equality and sustainability. This meeting provides space for a critical, collaborative dialogue among various actors in the region on how to take action in the face of disasters of many kinds in a way that is informed by the needs of women and vulnerable groups, and is inclusive in its design and implementation.”

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