

## PRESS RELEASE

*For immediate publication*

March 17, 2021

### **The President of ParlAmericas participates in the high-level panel on health and the economy during the Forum of the Countries of Latin America and the Caribbean on Sustainable Development**

On March 17, 2021, Senator Blanca Ovelar (Paraguay), President of ParlAmericas, participated as a panellist in the fourth meeting of the Forum of the Countries of Latin America and the Caribbean on Sustainable Development, organized by the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC). She joined specialists, government officials, and representatives of civil society to share their experiences in a round table discussion on the topic of "[Health and the economy – a false dichotomy?](#)".

The objective of the panel was to reflect on the responses of the region's countries to the COVID-19 pandemic, the strengthening of health systems and emergency social protection programs, and the sustainability of these measures in a context of limited fiscal space and rising debt in the region, as well as difficulties in procuring, distributing and administering vaccines.

The dialogue highlighted various perspectives including the importance of ensuring the health of society as the basis for a strong economy and the critical role that interregional cooperation plays in achieving a fair distribution of vaccines. The panellists also commented on the urgency of addressing climate change, loss of biodiversity, and environmental degradation to prevent the appearance or reappearance of zoonotic diseases and reduce their prevalence and intensity, in order to avert a major crisis through a green and inclusive economic recovery. Finally, participants commented on the need to build resilience and adequately prepare for a future pandemic, by installing anticipatory governance.

In her remarks, Senator Ovelar underscored that "the role of the legislative powers in this context of a health, economic and social crisis is fundamental to make public policy decisions that are based on evidence and that respond to the public's needs. As parliamentarians, we have the crucial role of exercising political control over government responses to COVID-19, and evaluating and passing emergency legislation that allocates national funds to meet the needs of the populations we represent. We also have the responsibility to promote transparency around global and national measures related to COVID-19, a key aspect in maintaining the public's trust in the government's actions to address the pandemic, and in ensuring that citizens receive the information they need."

To learn more about the work of ParlAmericas, visit [www.parlAmericas.org](http://www.parlAmericas.org) and follow @ParlAmericas on social media.