



PRESS RELEASE

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Parliamentarians from the English-speaking Caribbean exchange on national experiences adopting a gender-responsive approach to disaster and crisis planning

On Wednesday, September 2, parliamentarians, ministers, and other designated national representatives from across the English-speaking Caribbean participated in a virtual roundtable titled ***Supporting the national adoption of gender-responsive disaster and crisis planning***. Hosted by ParlAmericas, UN Women Multi-Country Office for the Caribbean, and the Parliament of The Bahamas, the focused dialogue encouraged reflections on national experiences in adopting an intersectional approach to disaster and crisis planning that strengthens resilience and ensures that the differentiated needs of all people are met.

The meeting opened with remarks by the organizing partners, who affirmed the importance of the topic at hand. "It is really critical when we are thinking about disasters and, in particular natural hazards, that we think about which ways hazards impact the lives of women, men, boys, and girls differently... We have to try and figure out why so we can better plan. In this way, we see that gender-responsiveness is critical not only to disaster and crisis planning, but also to sustainable development," stated Tonni Brodber, Representative a.i., UN Women MCO-Caribbean.

The Honourable Andy Daniel, Speaker of the House of St. Lucia and member of the ParlAmericas Board of Directors highlighted the role that decision-makers can play in this mission, adding that "As we continue in our leadership functions, we must critically examine how we have been managing the risks posed by the natural hazards and the biological hazards associated with COVID-19 in an inclusive and gender-sensitive manner."

This sentiment was echoed by the Honourable Halson Moultrie (The Bahamas), Speaker of the House of Assembly of The Bahamas and host of the meeting, who said "The goals of our parliament, I suggest, must be to establish a non-adversarial gender-responsive environment to build non-competitive sustainable mechanisms for holistic participation and capacity building. Such mechanisms should include educational programs, technical assistance to countries with identified deficiencies, coordination and psychosocial support, healthcare training, and gender-sensitive protocols and procedures."

Moderator Senator the Honourable Ranard Henfield (The Bahamas) then led the participants through a structured discussion centred on the sharing of key areas of progress and opportunities for further growth in the development and implementation of inclusive disaster and crisis management plans.

The meeting closed with remarks from the Honourable Dr. Mildred Hall-Watson, President of the Senate of The Bahamas. President Hall-Watson provided a summary of promising initiatives exchanged during the meeting that are proactively supporting populations with greater vulnerability across the region and emphasized the importance of further considering how justice delivery and service provision meet women's and other groups' changing needs in crisis situations. She stressed that this meeting must be viewed as the start to a dialogue rather than a conclusion.

This virtual roundtable is the second activity in a collaboration between ParlAmericas and UN Women MCO-Caribbean to support parliaments and national governments in institutionalizing a gender perspective in their disaster and crisis planning; the first of which placed emphasis on [adopting such an approach during the COVID-19 pandemic](#). The lessons from that session and the important insights gleaned from the roundtable dialogue will inform further strategic activities and resources for legislative and governmental action.

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