



#### THEME

Partnerships to Transform Gender Relations

#### DATE

January 24-25, 2018

#### LOCATION

Kingston, Jamaica

#### PARTICIPANTS

60 parliamentarians, government and parliamentary staff, and representatives of international agencies and civil society organizations from 10 countries

## INTER-PARLIAMENTARY MEETING ON GENDER EQUALITY

### #ParlAmericasGender

This activity organized by the ParlAmericas Parliamentary Network for Gender Equality<sup>1</sup> was hosted by the Parliament of Jamaica in collaboration with the Bureau of Gender Affairs. It convened legislators from the Anglophone Caribbean and Canada along with civil society activists and practitioners, researchers, parliamentary staff, and government representatives in a series of working sessions that examined how multi-sector collaborations can foster positive cultural and legal change. ParlAmericas' Director General, **Alisha Todd**, facilitated the dialogues and working sessions of the meeting, drawing on the expertise of these diverse stakeholders to highlight good practices and strategies for building alliances that advance the gender equality agenda.

The meeting opened with welcoming remarks by Senator Dr. **Saphire Longmore** (Jamaica), member of the ParlAmericas Board of Directors; and by **Denzil Thorpe**, Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Culture, Gender, Entertainment and Sport (Jamaica), who stood in for the meeting's host, Minister **Olivia Grange** (Jamaica). The keynote address was delivered by **Sheila Roseau**, Deputy Regional Director of the Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean of the [United Nations Population Fund](#) (UNFPA).

<sup>1</sup>Formerly known as the Group of Women Parliamentarians



This activity aligned  
with SDGs 5 and 16



**OLIVIA GRANGE**  
(Jamaica), Minister of Culture, Gender, Entertainment and Sport and Host of the Meeting

*“Gender equality is about ensuring that men and women equally enjoy the socially valued goods, opportunities, resources, and rewards. I am very happy to welcome all our delegates to Jamaica and I look forward to our discussions and the impact that they will have on our societies.”*



Senator Dr. **SAPHIRE LONGMORE**  
(Jamaica), Member of the Board of Directors of ParlAmericas

*“This gathering deliberately centres culture and social norms in the conversations about tackling gender inequalities through our legislative functions. The ParlAmericas Parliamentary Network for Gender Equality is an important forum for knowledge sharing in these areas.”*

*“I encourage you to ride the wave of energy that has come from talking about inequality in its most overt and pervasive forms. Let us work together to take off the blinders which shield all other forms of gender inequality from seeing the public light. This need not amount to mere ‘naming and shaming,’ but the building of ally networks, the emergence of collaborative spaces for learning and sharing, and the articulation of efforts to make our society a more just, harmonious and equitable one, where all have the opportunity to participate and live in peace and freedom.”*

*“The decisions of our parliaments will be affected if they do not benefit from the vast experiences, dreams, aspirations, and ideas of the women who make up half of our population. Therefore, we all have an interest and a role in the movement to create real gender equality in our respective countries. Real gender equality will translate into gains for all of us.”*

**SHEILA ROSEAU**, Deputy Regional Director of the Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)



**DENZIL THORPE** (Jamaica), Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Culture, Gender, Entertainment and Sport



Find ParlAmericas on [iTunes](#) and [Google Play](#) to listen to podcasts of the keynote address and some of the expert presentations, as well as presentations from past gatherings held across the hemisphere.

The first session, “Comprehensive approaches to address gender inequality,” focused on national policies and action plans. The expert speaker for this session, **Patricia Mohammed**, professor at the [Institute for Gender and Development Studies](#) (IGDS) at the University of the West Indies (UWI), St. Augustine Campus, drew on the concept of “metricizing” gender for state actions and interventions in the Caribbean. She outlined some of the complexities of developing frameworks around gender, and possible blueprints to guide policy development through coalitions. In the discussion that followed the [presentation](#), participants were invited to consider the roles parliaments can play in advocating for gender equality policies and plans, and in ensuring inclusive consultations and monitoring of outcomes. Joint select committees and working across party lines were identified as powerful mechanisms for advancing these efforts.

*“A sound understanding of gender, tools of gender analysis, the history of feminism and women’s struggle and experience in the field of activism, and outreach are the best qualifications for crafting a gender policy.”*

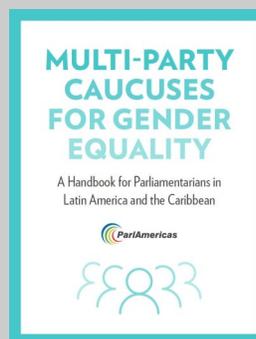
**PATRICIA MOHAMMED**, Professor of Gender and Cultural Studies, Institute for Gender and Development Studies (IGDS), University of the West Indies (UWI) - St. Augustine campus



Professor Mohammed outlined six prerequisites that create an enabling environment for the gender policy-making process:

1. Signed conventions and agreements that inform all policies, including the [Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women](#) (CEDAW), the [Convention of Belém do Pará](#), and the [Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action](#)
2. Resources for the process, including funding from UN agencies
3. Identification of national machinery charged with the responsibility of oversight and implementation
4. Wide-ranging consultation with actors including relevant ministries, civil society, and professional experts
5. Selection of an appropriate consultant team
6. Rallying of parliamentary support

### New publication on gender caucuses



During this meeting, ParlAmericas presented [Multi-Party Caucuses for Gender Equality: A Handbook for Parliamentarians](#) which includes a [strategic planning tool](#) to support the establishment of caucuses aimed at fostering cross-party collaboration in parliament for gender mainstreaming and women’s political empowerment.

In the following session, “Effective strategies for engaging men,” **Humberto Carolo**, Executive Director of [White Ribbon](#), joined the meeting virtually to **present** the Canadian organization’s focus areas, programs, and campaigns. One example was “[Men of Quality](#),” an initiative in which the organization partners with the Toronto Maple Leafs hockey team to ask men and boys to lead by example and challenge sexism, homophobia, transphobia, and racism. **Patrick Prendergast**, Acting Director of the UWI Mona Western Jamaica campus, provided an overview of stereotypes and patterns of socialization that can influence men’s disengagement from gender dialogues in the Caribbean context. The session revealed a spectrum of challenges and opportunities to redefine traditional masculinities, gender roles, and power relations that uphold patriarchy. The expert presentations stimulated frank conversations and new ways of thinking about normative gender relations and privileges. Participants contributed perspectives on effective entry points for inspiring men’s engagement, such as sports teams, public spaces where men congregate, and male-only gatherings facilitated by gender equality specialists.



**HUMBERTO CAROLO**,  
Executive Director,  
White Ribbon

*“We believe that the solution to addressing gender-based violence and gender inequality needs to involve men. Men need to be involved in prevention, raising awareness, changing social norms, and modelling positive behaviour. But we have to do this in the field of women’s rights. We cannot lose sight of the ultimate goal of men’s engagement in gender equality: the promotion of gender equality and the transformation of harmful aspects of masculinity.”*

*“What we need to do is lift up those who are actually participating in the process and doing what is right. I think that’s where we need to start... Let’s highlight [where the work is being done] as examples of how we can make a difference.”*



**PATRICK PRENDERGAST**,  
Acting Director, UWI - Mona  
Western Jamaica campus

### Online Toolkit “Male Allies for Gender Equality”

In collaboration with UN Women – Multi-Country Office - Caribbean, ParlAmericas developed a learning portal for parliamentarians to advance gender equality in the Anglophone Caribbean. The first [toolkit](#) is dedicated to men’s participation in this agenda; it contains resources on the importance of men’s involvement and practical ways to take action as an ally in parliament and in everyday life. In the toolkit, parliamentarians can find relevant videos, downloadable handouts, pop-up definitions, quizzes, and a forum to submit Best Practices.



The third session, “Media and cultural agents,” was moderated by broadcaster and mass communications specialist **Elaine Wint**. Sistren Theatre Collective’s director **Lana Finikin** first presented on their acclaimed work employing creative methodologies to raise awareness and advocate for gender and social justice in accessible ways in Jamaica and around the world. For example, Sistren has used the arts as a tool to conduct outreach in marginalized communities by performing in public spaces and engaging in conversation with those who watch. Sistren also shares women’s experiences on policy issues; for instance, the group performed in a parliamentary session dedicated to reviewing legislation on abortion access. The next case study was [WMW-Jamaica](#), presented by Executive Director **Patricia Phillips**. She shared how the organization uses advocacy, research, and training to fulfill their mission of promoting gender awareness and equality in the media and wider society. One successful project highlighted was [PowHerHouse](#), which draws on various mediums of communication to support women in

claiming their right to leadership and space in the media. Discussions on the power of the arts, entertainment, and media as vehicles to unpack harmful norms and share testimony of lived experiences followed the presentations.

Sistren Theatre Collective demonstrated their educational techniques on the second day of the meeting, opening the session “Advancing legislative reforms for workplace equality: Critical moments for change” with an interactive skit. Afterwards, expert speaker **Rose-Marie Antoine**, professor and Dean of the Faculty of Law at UWI, St. Augustine Campus, provided an overview of legal measures to address sexual harassment, with examples of clauses that can strengthen protection for victims, such as third party reporting and class action cases. She also discussed the importance of “intersectionality,” which prompts consideration of the ways racism and classism can lead to overlapping social vulnerabilities for some women and men.

To conclude the first day of the meeting, High Commissioner Laurie Peters gave special remarks on partnerships for gender equality in Jamaica, making reference to Canada’s [Feminist International Assistance Policy](#) which shapes projects underway in the Caribbean region.

*“This is an exciting time to be involved in policymaking. Now, more than ever across the world, we see that gender equality is moving from a conversation toward a committed action-oriented agenda. As they say in Jamaica – ‘time come!’ The time has indeed come, and your comprehensive and stimulating workshops are one very important indicator of the shifts that are taking place.”*



**LAURIE PETERS,**  
High Commissioner  
of Canada to  
Jamaica and the  
Bahamas

*“Media policy is an area we have paid special attention to over the years... within this space, we have been involved in workshops, targeting young people, and lobbying the national broadcasting corporation, which resulted in a [Children’s Code for Programming](#).”*



**PATRICIA PHILLIPS,**  
Executive Director,  
WMW-Jamaica



**LANA FINIKIN,**  
Executive Director,  
Sistren Theatre  
Collective

*“In Sistren’s work, we don’t do fiction, we do facts. It’s our own personal experiences and the women’s own personal experiences that they are using to portray [the issues] and get persons to buy into the process.”*

*"I see law as a social engineer and catalyst for change... Sometimes you put the law there first in order to make people aware. Other times, the law is the end product. Often in our societies, on these issues the law is ahead because there are groups and NGOs working hard, but other people aren't there yet. Sometimes the law can be that force."*



**ROSE-MARIE ANTOINE**,  
Dean of the Faculty of  
Law, UWI - St.  
Augustine campus



**JOYCE MURRAY** (Canada),  
Member of Parliament  
and Parliamentary  
Secretary to the President  
of the Treasury Board

*"It's not just legislation that makes a difference: from the Prime Minister's signals right down to recognitions of wrong and public commitment to correct it, that's also powerful. But legislation has a special role because that embeds some of these concepts in our legal structure."*

*"We've had [#LifeinLeggings](#), [#MeToo](#), and post-Harvey Weinstein, and so a lot has been said and a lot more information is out there, and there are a lot of expectations. And so with expectations, it means the bill has to match what the contextual reality is, what the region is saying, and what the international scene is saying."*



**SHARON COBURN  
ROBINSON**, Acting  
Senior Director,  
Bureau of Gender  
Affairs of Jamaica



**VELMA NEWTON**, Regional  
Project Director for the  
IMPACT Justice Project and  
former parliamentarian  
(Barbados)

*"The showpiece, I believe, of our legislation is that in an appendix we have provided a sexual harassment policy... When the legislation is finalized, we will make sure that that policy is circulated throughout the region and countries can take what they want from it, or countries may choose to reproduce it in full."*

Professor Antoine's presentation was followed by a panel on bills or projects currently being put forward to address sexual harassment. **Sharon Robinson**, Acting Senior Director of the Bureau of Gender Affairs of Jamaica, shared information about the sexual harassment legislation under review in Jamaica on behalf of Minister Grange. She explained that some of the efforts in line with the proposed bill have been around awareness raising on what constitutes sexual harassment, as well as what does not constitute sexual harassment. **Joyce Murray** (Canada), Member of Parliament and Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Treasury Board, presented on [Bill C-65](#), an act to amend the Canada Labour Code with respect to harassment and violence. If passed into law, it would affect all federally-regulated workplaces, including parliament. She also discussed initiatives such as the Gender-Based Analysis "Plus" (GBA+) course, which is mandatory for senior officials and most parliamentary staff in Canada, and can also be [accessed online](#) by the general public. Finally, **Velma Newton**, Regional Project Director of [IMPACT Justice](#), explained the IMPACT Justice Model Sexual Harassment Bill which updates CARICOM model legislation and has undergone consultations across the region. The session then moved to Q&A, with the panellists sharing further insight and technical details of the various initiatives to draft and socialize legislation on sexual harassment.



## PARLIAMENTS IN ATTENDANCE



ANTIGUA AND  
BARBUDA



THE BAHAMAS



BELIZE



CANADA



GUYANA



JAMAICA

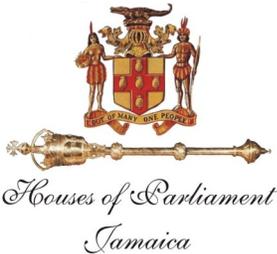


SAINT KITTS  
AND NEVIS



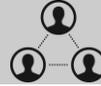
SAINT LUCIA

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# Canada

## PARLAMERICAS



ParlAmericas is the institution that promotes **PARLIAMENTARY DIPLOMACY** in the **INTER-AMERICAN SYSTEM**



ParlAmericas is composed of **35 NATIONAL LEGISLATURES** of North, Central and South America and the Caribbean



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



ParlAmericas mainstreams **GENDER EQUALITY** by advocating for women's political empowerment and the application of a gender lens in legislative work



ParlAmericas fosters **OPEN PARLIAMENTS** by advancing the principles of transparency, accountability, citizen participation, ethics and probity



ParlAmericas promotes policies and legislative measures to mitigate and adapt to the effects of **CLIMATE CHANGE**



ParlAmericas works towards strengthening democracy and governance by accompanying **ELECTORAL PROCESSES**



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)

