



PRESS RELEASE

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ParlAmericas held the 6th Gathering of the Open Parliament Network titled “Integrity Matters: Building Stronger Democracies”

With the support of the Chamber of Senators of Paraguay as host parliament, ParlAmericas held the 6th Gathering of the Open Parliament Network (OPN) on March 9, 15 and 22 with a series of virtual activities designed to address the issue of public integrity.

The gathering brought together parliamentarians, parliamentary staff, and representatives of youth and civil society organizations from the Americas and the Caribbean to discuss public integrity, recognizing its importance not only in preventing and fighting corruption, but as one of the fundamental pillars of democratic governance.

The event opened with a parliamentary dialogue session with youth and civil society representatives held on March 9. The session featured a keynote address by Daniel Ortega Nieto, Senior Governance Specialist at the World Bank. The event also included a dialogue titled “Leading with Integrity: Joint Actions in the Public Interest,” which was moderated by the Honourable René Cormier (Canada), Senator and Vice-President for North America of the ParlAmericas Open Parliament Network, with the participation of Senator Jorge Querey Rojas (Paraguay), rapporteur of the Special Committee for Open Parliament; the Honourable Juan Edghill (Guyana), Minister of Public Works; Karina Kalpschtrej, Director of Institutional Strengthening at Poder Ciudadano; Svenja Bonnecke, member of Chile Transparente and Coordinator of the SANCUS project; Elvis Radamés Acosta, youth representative of the Leading with Integrity Program of Espacio Cívico, Panama; and David Salmon, member of the Jamaican Youth Parliament.

In addition, the inter-parliamentary dialogue session took place on March 15. It included the keynote panel “New Challenges and Trends in Advancing Public Integrity,” with the participation of René Fernández Bobadilla, Minister Executive Secretary of the National Anticorruption Secretariat of Paraguay; Julio Bacio Terracino, Head of the OECD Public Sector Integrity Division; and Radivoje Grujic, Democratic Governance Officer at the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights. The session was moderated by the Honourable Bridgid Annisette-George (Trinidad and Tobago), Speaker of the House of Representatives and Vice-President of ParlAmericas. Two working groups were also organized: one dedicated to conflicts of interest and another to public integrity systems.

The final activity, the plenary session was held on March 22, featuring a keynote address titled “Strengthening Public Integrity for Democratic Governance” by Delia Ferreira, Chair of Transparency International. The session was moderated by the Honourable Joseph Isaac (Dominica), Speaker of the House of Assembly and ParlAmericas Board Member. During the session, Senator Blanca Ovelar (Paraguay), President of ParlAmericas, officially launched the [Road Map towards Legislative](#)

[Openness 2.0](#), and Lotte Geunis, Open Parliament Consultant at the Open Government Partnership, presented the [Memorandum on Parliamentary Engagement of that organization](#).

The plenary session also included a presentation of the results of the open parliament commitments adopted at the 5th Gathering of the ParlAmericas Open Parliament Network, as well as progress reports on actions to promote legislative openness. The Honourable Reginald Farley (Barbados), President of the Senate, moderated the presentations of the participating parliamentary delegations.

Thereafter, Senator Hermelinda Alvarenga de Ortega (Paraguay), Second Vice-President of the Chamber of Senators of the Republic of Paraguay, read the [declaration](#) of the 6th Gathering of the ParlAmericas Open Parliament Network. Afterwards, Senator Javier Macaya (Chile), President of the OPN, shared his final thoughts, highlighting the importance of integrity in the context of the institutional efforts made by the region's parliaments to strengthen legislative openness. In her closing remarks, Director General of ParlAmericas Alisha Todd announced the election by acclamation of the Honourable Reginald Farley (Barbados), President of the Senate, to fill the vacant seat for the Caribbean on the OPN Executive Committee.

In reference to the importance of creating a culture of integrity, Senator Blanca Ovelar (Paraguay), President of ParlAmericas, noted that “it is an essential condition, not only for fighting corruption—a complex phenomenon that is unfortunately prevalent and has profound effects—but also for strengthening good governance, creating more productive economies and promoting more inclusive societies.”

With regard to the event, Senator Javier Macaya (Chile), President of the ParlAmericas OPN, stated that “we dedicated the 6th Gathering of the ParlAmericas Open Parliament Network to addressing the importance of integrity, recognizing its close relationship with the principles of legislative openness and its relevance as a fundamental pillar of democratic governance.”

For her part, Senator Hermelinda Alvarenga de Ortega (Paraguay) mentioned that “we have had the opportunity to learn about new perspectives and good practices for strengthening codes of conduct in parliament, particularly with regard to conflicts of interest. It is important to recognize the significant progress made in areas such as accountability, transparency and access to information.”

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