


 **THEMES:** Digital transformation, citizen participation, inclusion

 **DATE:** October 2, 2024

 **LOCATION:** Guatemala City, Guatemala

 **PARTICIPANTS:** More than 75 parliamentary staff and representatives of multilateral organizations in Guatemala

 **HOST:** Congress of the Republic of Guatemala



*This activity aligned with SDGs 5, 9 and 16.*



## Inclusive Citizen Participation: Exploring the Opportunities of Digital Transformation

In this session, parliamentary staff from the Congress of the Republic of Guatemala examined how citizen participation can enhance parliamentary work, considering the opportunities presented by new digital technologies. Various strategies—both traditional and digital—were examined, with contributions from subject matter experts and a representative from Ecuador, who shared their experience in institutionalizing citizen participation in their parliament. The strategies discussed aim to foster interaction between citizens and parliament, thereby strengthening legislative transparency and promoting inclusion in decision-making processes in Guatemala.



## AGENDA HIGHLIGHTS

### Opening remarks:

- Member of Congress **Nery Rodas** (Guatemala), Third Vice-President of the Congress and member of ParlAmericas' Board of Directors
- **Anabella Zavagno**, Deputy Director General of ParlAmericas

### Speakers:

- **Marcela Ríos Tobar**, Regional Director of International IDEA
- **Jaroslav Alburez García** (Guatemala), Director of Protocol and Citizen Services of the Congress of the Republic
- **Marjorie Chávez** (Ecuador), Secretary of International and Interinstitutional Relations of the National Assembly
- **Eduardo Núñez**, Resident Director of the National Democratic Institute (NDI) in Guatemala
- **Jorge Ceballos**, Regional Program Director for Guatemala, El Salvador and Honduras of the International Republican Institute (IRI)
- **Anneliza Tobar Estrada**, Acting Director of the Netherlands Institute for Multiparty Democracy in Guatemala (NIMD)

### KEY CONCLUSIONS OF THE MEETING:

- Digital transformation is key to developing open and modern parliaments. This process not only optimizes efficiency, but it can also strengthen transparency and foster greater citizen inclusion in legislative processes.
- Guatemala aims to turn the digital transformation process into a national project, making it essential to involve all public sectors, private institutions, and citizens.
- The Parliamentary Forum on Digital Transformation of Guatemala promotes laws for the development of digital infrastructure, citizen inclusion, cybersecurity, and the regulation of artificial intelligence and protection against cybercrimes.
- In Latin America and the Caribbean, research by IDEA International indicates a deficit in the rule of law and the full exercise of rights. However, the region also shows strong citizen interest in public and electoral participation, with voter turnout rates exceeding 60%, above the global average.
- The institutionalization of participatory processes that genuinely influence parliamentary decisions is key to ensuring that citizens have an active and ongoing role in legislative work. This helps build a relationship of trust and legitimacy between parliamentarians and the citizens they represent, strengthening the democratic bond and ensuring that the voices of the population are heard and effectively incorporated into decision-making on an ongoing basis.



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