

 **THEMES:** Technology-facilitated gender-based violence, safe digital spaces, gender equality, women's political participation

 **DATE:** November 22, 2024

 **LOCATION:** Panama City, Panama

 **PARTICIPANTS:** More than 90 parliamentarians, parliamentary and government staff, representatives of political parties and civil society, and specialists from international organizations

 **CCO-ORGANIZERS:** National Assembly of Panama, the Ministry of Women of the Republic of Panama, IRI, FONAMUPP and APARLEXPA



This activity aligned with SDGs 5, 10, 16, and 17.



Building Safe, Inclusive, and Violence-Free Digital Spaces

This meeting, held in observance of the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women and the 30th anniversary of the Belém do Pará Convention, aimed to empower women in politics in the digital space. The event explored both the challenges and opportunities of cyberspace, highlighting the dual role of technology as a catalyst for political participation and as a medium that facilitates gender-based digital violence. Additionally, strategies were developed to foster a safe, inclusive, and discrimination-free digital environment within political parties.



AGENDA HIGHLIGHTS

Opening remarks:

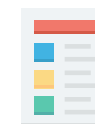
- Member of the National Assembly **Yuzaida Marín** (Panama), president of the Committee on Women, Children, Youth, and Family of the National Assembly and Second Vice-President for Central America of the ParlAmericas Parliamentary Network for Gender Equality
- Her Excellency **Patricia Atkinson**, Ambassador-designate of Canada to Panama
- Her Excellency **Niurka Del Carmen Palacio U.**, Minister of Women of the Republic of Panama and President of the Inter-American Commission of Women

Speakers:

- **Marcela Ríos Tobar**, Director for Latin America and the Caribbean of International IDEA
- **Gloria Camacho**, President of the Committee of Experts (CEVI) of the Follow-up Mechanism to the Belém do Pará Convention (MESECVI) of the Inter-American Commission of Women (CIM-OAS)
- Honourable Representative **Catherine Juvinao Clavijo** (Colombia), First Vice-President for South America of the ParlAmericas Open Parliament Network
- Member of the Chamber of Deputies **Brenda Ogando Campos** (Dominican Republic), President of the Permanent Committee on Gender Equality of the Chamber of Deputies
- **Arelys González**, National President of the Women's Front of *Partido Revolucionario Democrático*
- Former Member of the National Assembly **Ana Giselle Rosas**, Secretary for Women of *Partido Cambio Democrático*
- **Cecilia Caballero**, Representative of the Secretary for Women of *Partido Realizando Metas*
- **Berta García Hangs**, Secretary for Women of *Partido Popular*
- **Linda Loo**, Secretary for Women of *Movimiento Otro Camino*
- **Mireya Montemayor**, Secretary for Women of *Partido Panameñista*
- **Marieta de Paredes**, Deputy Secretary for Women of *Partido Molirena*

Moderators:

- Member of the National Assembly **Grace Hernández** (Panama), Secretary of the Committee on Women, Children, Youth, and Family of the National Assembly
- **Vonetta Sterling**, President of the National Forum of Women of Political Parties (FONAMUPP)
- Former Member of the National Assembly **Corina Cano**, President of the Association of Women Parliamentarians and Former Women Parliamentarians of Panama (APARLEXPAN)



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KEY CONCLUSIONS OF THE MEETING

- Digital violence against women, girls, and adolescents in Latin America and the Caribbean, particularly cyberbullying, verbal abuse, the non-consensual sharing of intimate material, the spread of false information, and other forms of online abuse, has been on the rise in recent years. This violence disproportionately impacts women politicians and journalists and is a significant barrier to both development and human dignity.
- MESECVI is creating an Inter-American Model Law to combat technology-facilitated gender-based violence, with a comprehensive approach covering prevention, support, protection, investigation, prosecution, and redress for acts of violence. The law is being developed with input from experts and various other stakeholders and is expected to serve as a key reference for the region, promoting a coordinated response between States, the private sector, and civil society.
- The vulnerability of women to technology-facilitated political gender-based violence stems from deeply ingrained prejudices and the double standards by which men and women are evaluated in the public sphere. Stereotypes and unequal expectations, reinforced by social norms, amplify scrutiny and harassment of women in leadership positions, limiting their participation and perpetuating structural inequalities. Tackling these prejudices is crucial to creating more inclusive public spaces.
- According to a report by International IDEA, digital gender-based political violence in Latin America is a complex issue that requires the collaboration of State institutions, political parties, media, tech companies, academia, and civil society. Preventing and addressing it requires education, effective legal frameworks, and safe platforms to protect women and promote inclusive political participation.
- Effectively addressing technology-facilitated gender-based violence requires a human rights and gender-based approach focused on data privacy, digital security, and access to justice. Civic education, international cooperation, and collaboration with digital platforms are essential to prevent, report, and address this issue, ensuring a comprehensive and proactive response.



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