

THEMES: Sustainable development, gender equality

DATE: August 8, 2024

LOCATION: Virtual

PARTICIPANTS: More than 40 parliamentarians, parliamentary staff, governmental staff, and representatives of civil society and multilateral organizations

ORGANIZING PARTNER: UN Women Multi-Country Office for the Caribbean and Caribbean Women in Leadership (CIWiL)



This activity aligned with SDGs 1, 2, 3, 4, 8, 10, 13, 16, and 17.



Tying the Threads Together: Parliamentary Actions to Advance International Agreements on the SIDS and Gender Equality

This virtual meeting brought together parliamentarians and other stakeholders from the Caribbean in follow up to the 4th International Conference on Small Island Developing States and its Gender Equality Forum, recognizing the critical role of parliamentarians in implementing the international agreements adopted by their countries and ensuring that the commitments made translate into tangible benefits for their populations. Discussions focused on concrete actions parliamentarians can take to support the achievement of select gender equality and sustainable development frameworks: the SIDS agenda, the Bridgetown Initiative 3.0, and the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. The importance of collaboration between parliamentarians and civil society to advance gender equality and sustainable development goals and strategies to support peace and sustainability across the region were further areas of focus.



AGENDA HIGHLIGHTS

Opening remarks:

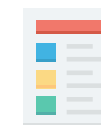
- The Honourable Senator Dr. **Joyelle Clarke** (Saint Kitts and Nevis), Minister of Sustainable Development, Environment, Climate Action and Constituency Empowerment

Speakers:

- **Tonni Brodber**, Representative of the UN Women Multi-Country Office for the Caribbean
- **Hazel Brandy-Williams**, Vice-President of CIWIL
- **Dieudonne Luma Etienne** (Haiti), Former Senator
- **Nyaradzayi Gumbonzvanda**, Deputy Executive Director of UN Women

Moderator:

- The Honourable **Alincia Williams Grant** (Antigua and Barbuda), President of the Senate
- **Alisha Todd**, Director General of ParlAmericas



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KEY CONSIDERATIONS FROM THE MEETING:

- *International human rights treaties* (like [CEDAW](#)) are binding agreements that create obligations State parties must fulfill. *Political declarations* (like the Beijing Declaration and SIDS Agreements) are not binding but signal the signatories' prioritization of the issue.
- International agreements focused on the SIDS and climate change have evolved over time. A current focus is on strengthening their considerations for *people* in addition to the *planet*. Further information on people-centred dimensions of sustainable development can be drawn from international frameworks that address these topics more comprehensively.
 - For example, as the [Antigua and Barbuda Agenda for SIDS \(ABAS\)](#) recognizes in paragraph 10 that gender equality and women's empowerment play a transformative role in economic growth, the [Beijing Declaration](#) can be looked to for information on advancing women's rights and promoting gender equality in order to realize that transformative impact.
- Specific areas for parliamentary attention include: providing oversight to government action on gender equality and sustainable development, raising the gender dimensions of issues when reviewing and debating laws and policies, advocating for laws and programs that facilitate everyone's ability to thrive (e.g. [parental leave](#) and [child care](#)), and ensuring that national budgets invest in these initiatives.
- A critical first step is appreciating the interconnections between gender equality and sustainable development. In practice, this means assessing how proposed actions on [development issues will differently impact women, men, girls and boys](#) and how they will contribute to climate resilience, and then making decisions accordingly.
- Parliamentary engagement with constituents, youth and civil society organizations strengthen efforts to advance gender equality and sustainable development. Carrying out consultations, clear and transparent communications, and strategic use of social media can all support these goals.

This meeting was rescheduled from its original date due to the passage of Hurricane Beryl. Presenters offered their thoughts to the populations impacted and highlighted that the context of increasing, stronger, and more unpredictable hurricane seasons further amplified the necessity of action to bolster sustainability and resilience in the region.

COUNTRIES REPRESENTED



Antigua and Barbuda



Guyana



Saint Vincent and the Grenadines



Barbados



Haiti



Sint Maarten



Belize



Mexico



Suriname



Canada



Saint Kitts and Nevis



The Bahamas



Dominica



Saint Lucia



Trinidad and Tobago

ORGANIZING PARTNERS



UN Women Multi-Country
Office for the Caribbean



Caribbean Women in Leadership

Caribbean Women in
Leadership (CIWiL)



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