



PRESS RELEASE

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ParlAmericas and the Parliament of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago hosted a workshop for parliamentarians and parliamentary staff on circular economy

On April 6th ParlAmericas and the Parliament of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago hosted a meeting titled “Towards a Circular Economy: A Workshop for Parliamentarians and Parliamentary Staff of Trinidad and Tobago” to explore strategies for parliament to inclusively support and promote the transition towards a circular economic model at a national level, and simultaneously contribute to a green and future focused economic recovery post-COVID-19.

The honourable **Bridgid Annisette-George** (Trinidad and Tobago), Speaker of the House of Representatives and Vice-President of ParlAmericas offered welcoming remarks, highlighting the opportunities that a circular economy presents to advance a sustainable development: “A circular economy not only stimulates greener economic growth, but when implemented through an intersectional lens can promote gender equality, by namely providing financial support to community projects and ventures of the youth and women that promote circularity. In this way we also empower our citizens as agents of change in the transition towards circularity, as we all work together to support a societal shift away from wasteful consumption patterns and towards the sustainable consumption and production practices recommended in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.”

The workshop featured a series of circular economy specialists who presented on the manner in which a circular lens can be applied to a variety of sectors, such as waste management, trade, energy, agriculture, tourism and transport, and encourage synergy between them; the importance of gathering data to monitor the implementation of circular economy policies; the progress made thus far and opportunities for Trinidad and Tobago to further their transition towards circularity; the benefits of regional collaboration; and how to better engage the community on these topics. The specialists included: **Vanessa Esslinger**, Circular Economy Specialist & Coordination of the Circular Economy Coalition for Latin America and the Caribbean; **David Oswald**, Founder and President, DE Design + Environment Inc., FRCGS (Fellow of the Royal Canadian Geographic Society), and Associate Faculty, Royal Roads University; **Dr. Sherwyn Millette**, Sustainability Consultant at the College of Science, Technology and Applied Arts of

Trinidad and Tobago; and **Sian Cuffy-Young**, Waste management Educator, Trainer and the founder and CEO of Siel Environment Services Limited.

Senator **Anthony Vieira** (Trinidad and Tobago), Vice-President for the Caribbean of the ParlAmericas Parliamentary Network on Climate Change, moderated the workshop's panel discussion. The panel was followed by an interactive section, "Words into Action", which had participants discuss the opportunities and challenges of integrating a circular economy in Trinidad and Tobago, by using a SWOT analysis which also applied a legislative approach and intersectional lens. During the meeting, Senator Vieira noted the role of parliament in this undertaking: "It has been said, and I agree, that there's no such thing as 'away'. When we throw something away, it must go somewhere. Unfortunately, we have a culture of littering, polluting, and throwing away which is wasteful, irresponsible, and counter productive. The circular economy model- which encourages reuse and recycling- offers a proactive approach to stop littering and take greater responsibility for our environment. It recognizes that waste is only waste if we waste it. We need a national strategy, and related regulatory frameworks, geared towards a circular economy. The Parliament has a key role in supporting the advancement and integration of a circular economic model through legislative, oversight, and budgetary functions to prevent litter, reduce landfill pollution, keep our waters clean, and generally save the environment for the benefit and well being of all."

The meeting concluded with closing remarks by the Honourable **Christine Kangaloo** (Trinidad and Tobago), President of the Senate, in which she reflected on the value of the meeting: "Today's workshop presented us with a two-fold opportunity: to listen to the learning from the experts on this subject and to hear first-hand about their experiences, and then, to collectively discuss with them and amongst ourselves how, together as Parliamentarians, we can integrate circular economic models in Trinidad and Tobago"

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