

PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

Panama City, December 2, 2019

Latin American parliamentary staff meet in Panama to exchange experiences and best practices of open parliament

Parliamentary staff of several Latin American countries will meet in Panama City, Panama, on December 4 and 5, for the 1st Meeting of the Parliamentary Staff Network on Open Parliament.

The Open Parliament Network (OPN) is a space where parliamentarians promote legislative openness by strengthening transparency and access to public information, accountability, citizen participation, and ethics and probity. It encourages the adoption of action plans, commitments and initiatives developed in close collaboration with civil society and citizens through co-creation processes that address these issues. Parliamentary staff play an important role in the implementation of these measures, in addition to supporting their sustainability and institutionalization. For this reason, a Network of parliamentary staff who are implementing open parliament initiatives was established within the OPN.

During this meeting, parliamentary staff will exchange experiences in the implementation of measures that promote legislative openness, including strategies to strengthen parliamentary services offered to citizens, improve parliamentary accountability, facilitate citizen participation in the legislative process and contribute to a toolkit on legislative transparency.

"I am honored to welcome parliamentary staff from Latin American parliaments to Panama on this remarkable occasion, to foster an exchange of experiences on the implementation of initiatives that promote legislative openness," said Member of the National Assembly Fernando Arce (Panama), member of the ParlAmericas Board of Directors.

Member of the National Assembly Elizabeth Cabezas (Ecuador), President of ParlAmericas, further emphasized that *"Advancing legislative openness is crucial, since it contributes to the legitimacy of the political system and confidence in democratic institutions. This agenda is very important for ParlAmericas as it also provides tools to fight corruption and it is critical to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals of the 2030 Agenda."*

Senator Blanca Ovelar (Paraguay), President of the ParlAmericas Open Parliament Network (OPN) elaborated on the importance of this meeting: *"Parliamentary staff play a fundamental role in the effective implementation and sustainability of action plans, commitments and initiatives to ensure greater transparency, accountability, citizen participation and ethics in parliaments. The ParlAmericas Open Parliament Network agreed to establish a space where they could also share their experiences and learn about good practices in order to continue the great work they do."*

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On Thursday, December 5 at 3:30 pm, an international panel on the progress of legislative openness in the Americas will take place in the Carlos "Titi" Alvarado Auditorium of the National Assembly of Panama. This activity is open to the public and will also be used as an opportunity to officially launch the Parliamentary Staff Network on Open Parliament. To attend, please write to Ms. María Gabriela Grael, Director of the International Relations Unit at Mgraell@asamblea.gob.pa.

For more information, as well as updates on this activity we invite you to consult the [agenda](#) (in Spanish) and follow us on social media with the hashtag #ParlAmericasOPN.