

DECLARATION

12th Gathering of the ParlAmericas Parliamentary Network for Gender Equality
Designing inclusive futures in partnership with youth
September 23 and 25 and October 2, 2020 | Online meetings

Parliamentarians from 25 countries of the Americas and the Caribbean met online with youth leaders from diverse backgrounds on September 23 and 25 and October 2, 2020, with the support of the Congress of Colombia and the Parliament of Grenada, on the occasion of the 12th Gathering of the ParlAmericas Parliamentary Network for Gender Equality titled *Designing inclusive futures in partnership with youth*.

The Gathering provided a space for productive exchanges between the participants in relation to issues that are of special relevance to the hemisphere, such as the importance of intergenerational dialogue, the promotion of youth and women's transformational leadership, the future of work and STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) careers, the prevention of gender-based violence in all its forms, paid and unpaid care work, youth-friendly comprehensive health services, and the effects of climate change and disasters.

The discussions showed that phenomena such as demographic changes; renewed citizen demands expressed through social movements; economic, social, and cultural transformations produced by technology; and the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic have produced a complex environment that poses serious challenges, particularly for young people in the Americas and the Caribbean, which must be analyzed from a gender equality perspective.

Considering the above and,

WHEREAS:

1. The youth population in the Americas and the Caribbean has reached a record number of 160 million people between the ages of 15 and 24 years, whose well-being will be seriously affected by phenomena such as the COVID-19 pandemic and the effects of climate change;
2. The perspectives and priorities of women and youth are an integral part of countries' political, economic, and social development, yet they are often overlooked in the design of public policy and in lawmaking; furthermore, young people are generally underrepresented in leadership positions and decision-making spaces;

The countries convened were: Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Bahamas, Barbados, Bolivia, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Grenada, Guatemala, Guyana, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Peru, Saint Lucia, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, and Uruguay.

3. There has been significant progress in the region due to legal frameworks and laws that are aimed at promoting the social and political inclusion of young people, seeking their substantive participation in education, innovation, and entrepreneurship programs;
4. There exist regional and international conventions, agreements, and programs for promoting the political and social inclusion of young people and advocating for their rights, such as the Sustainable Development Goals, the Ibero-American Convention on Young People's Rights, the Declaration of Paramaribo on the Future of Youth in the Caribbean Community, the UN Economic and Social Council Youth Forum, UN Women's Generation Equality movement, and the UN Major Group for Children and Youth, among others;
5. Young people -especially young women and youth from different traditionally marginalized and historically disadvantaged groups such as those living in situations of poverty, persons with disabilities, Indigenous and Afro-descendant peoples, Indo-descendants and indentured-descendants peoples, members of the LGBTI community, and displaced persons and migrants, among others- often experience difficulties in exercising their rights, including the right to education and decent work, affordable and decent housing, health, particularly sexual and reproductive health, and civic participation;
6. In recent years, the growing activism and social and political movements led by the hemisphere's youth have been essential in denouncing inequalities exacerbated by racism and other forms of systemic discrimination; as well as in putting relevant issues on the public agenda, such as femicide, the deconstruction of harmful gender roles, inclusion and respect for diversity, and the struggle against the effects of climate change;
7. It is imperative to expand spaces for the substantial participation of youth in the economic, political, social, and cultural development of our countries, recognizing their leadership, talents, perspectives, and contributions as essential to building more democratic societies and more inclusive institutions;
8. The socioeconomic crisis caused by COVID-19 has affected young people, particularly young women, exacerbating the fragility of social protection systems and persistent problems, such as youth unemployment, domestic and intimate partner violence, school dropout, mental ill-health, and adolescent pregnancy;
9. The serious effects of climate change and disaster risks require increasingly ambitious actions that take into account the various contributions made by young people, as they will be the next generations to face the effects caused by climate inaction;
10. The troubling persistence of gender-based violence in the region requires not only legislative solutions but also educational programs to eliminate the cultural patterns and norms that normalize violent behaviour against women and minority groups, including harassment and gender-based violence on social media;

11. The imminent and profound transformations of the labour market caused by technological advances will have impacts on girls, boys, and young people that must be adequately addressed through actions such as education programs designed to meet the challenges of a dynamic labour market;
12. For the labour market of the future, it is necessary to promote education in STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) careers, noting that women are far below the national averages for these careers;
13. The growing importance of the care economy, as shown by the COVID-19 pandemic, in which the additional and usually unpaid work disproportionately affects women, requires the adoption of a series of measures including actions aimed at promoting shared responsibility for care and domestic work and the adoption of comprehensive parental leave policies and flexible working arrangements;
14. As parliamentarians, we have a responsibility to foster the political participation of young people, promoting their membership in political parties, strengthening ties with youth organizations of all kinds, and encouraging their inclusion in legislative work spaces;
15. Proactive intergenerational dialogue and collaboration are essential for building the democratic consensus required to shape inclusive societies that leverage both the experiences and knowledge of older generations and those of young people in their struggles for equality and human rights.

We commit to:

1. Advocate within our parties on the need to establish favourable conditions for young women and youth participation through measures promoting their recruitment and substantial participation in leadership positions, such as youth quotas and mentoring programs, and the incorporation of their needs and perspectives in statutes and programmatic documents.
2. Promote exchanges within the region and hemisphere on good practices in matters of public policy for women and youth and action plans to address specific issues, such as inclusion, political participation, and the eradication of gender violence.
3. Incorporate initiatives and good practices to make our parliaments more open to young people and their organizations through, for example, training programs to increase the political participation of young women leaders and youth parliaments or committees in charge of mainstreaming these perspectives in bills -- and by providing more spaces for the voices of young parliamentarians to be heard.
4. Promote the drafting and approval of youth laws in countries where such laws still do not exist or update existing ones based on the diversity, needs, and aspirations of young people, and allocate

the necessary budget for their implementation, insisting on the need to collect disaggregated data and statistical information on youth.

5. Promote intergenerational dialogue through democratic and participatory spaces in which the voices of different groups are heard and taken into account in legislative work.
6. Take urgent measures against the various effects of the COVID-19 pandemic with special focus on the main issues affecting young women and men, making available funding for innovative solutions driven by the creativity of young people.
7. Advocate for the importance of developing public policies specifically designed for Afro-descendants, Indo-descendants, indentured-descendants, and Indigenous women and youth, which meet their needs and recognize the historic inequalities they have faced.
8. Incorporate the knowledge and experiences of youth organizations participating in the struggle against the effects of climate change in legislation and in international negotiations on the matter, such as the Conference of the Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Change Climate.
9. Urge the ministries of education, or their equivalents, to develop programs and campaigns promoting the importance of entrepreneurship and education in STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) and Information and Communications Technologies (ICTs), with a special focus on girls.
10. Request that the relevant public agencies quantify care work through time-use surveys that inform innovative legislative initiatives acknowledging the state's responsibility to ensure that paid and unpaid care work is carried out under equitable and decent conditions, with special attention to women living in poverty.

Adopted on October 2, 2020