



# YEAR IN HIGHLIGHTS 2019

Photographs: Courtesy of host parliaments, ParlAmericas and partner organizations.

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# ABOUT PARLAMERICAS



ParlAmericas is the institution that promotes **PARLIAMENTARY DIPLOMACY** in the **INTER-AMERICAN SYSTEM**



ParlAmericas is composed of the **35 NATIONAL LEGISLATURES** from North, Central and South America and the Caribbean



ParlAmericas facilitates the exchange of parliamentary **GOOD PRACTICES** and promotes **COOPERATIVE POLITICAL DIALOGUE**



ParlAmericas mainstreams **GENDER EQUALITY** by advocating for women's political empowerment and the application of a gender lens in legislative work



ParlAmericas fosters **OPEN PARLIAMENTS** by advancing the principles of transparency, accountability, citizen participation, ethics and probity



ParlAmericas promotes policies and legislative measures to mitigate and adapt to the effects of **CLIMATE CHANGE**



ParlAmericas works towards strengthening democracy and governance by accompanying **ELECTORAL PROCESSES**



ParlAmericas is headquartered in **OTTAWA, CANADA**



## MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT OF PARLAMERICAS



Dear colleagues,

It is a pleasure to present to you our “Year in Highlights 2019”. During the past year, we continued to facilitate the exchange of parliamentary good practices and promote cooperative political dialogue in the hemisphere, strengthening democratic governance in the parliaments of the region and working decisively in positioning our platforms of work as reference points for the hemisphere on gender equality, open parliament and climate change. Each of these pillars coordinates with and connects regional initiatives with parliaments and partner organizations, uniting our efforts in the development and fulfillment of these agendas.

In the following pages, we will share in detail the activities that we carried out during 2019, which featured the active participation of parliamentarians and parliamentary staff, as well as recognized experts and civil society representatives. In addition, this publication will allow you to learn more about the resources and tools that ParlAmericas has created for its membership, including publications, reports, interactive online toolkits and podcast episodes recorded during our meetings.

This year, we started a project through which ParlAmericas is supporting and accompanying the strengthening of civil society organizations dedicated to women’s political empowerment in Latin America and the Caribbean. Thanks to the Government of Canada, since early 2019, ParlAmericas has been collaborating with the National Forum of Women of Political Parties (FONAMUPP, by its Spanish initials) in Panama, and Caribbean Women in Leadership (CIWiL).

I had the privilege of being appointed President of ParlAmericas during the 49<sup>th</sup> Board of Director’s meeting held this past October. I thank you for your trust and reaffirm my commitment to continue strengthening our institution’s work. I would also like to take this opportunity to recognize, on behalf of myself and my fellow Board members, the importance of the work by Honourable Robert Nault, our previous President (2018-2019), who was dedicated and committed to ParlAmericas not only throughout his term as President, but also during all of the years he was a part of our Board of Directors. It has been an honour to share this journey with him.

I wish to reiterate, with a view to our future, the continued importance of sharing the advances and objectives met in your parliaments to encourage other legislators to participate in ParlAmericas activities.

We will continue to share our institution’s successes in 2020.

Sincerely,

*Elizabeth Cabezas*

**Member of the National Assembly, Ecuador**

President of ParlAmericas

[FOLLOW ME ON TWITTER @ELIZCABEZAS](#)

## OPERATIONS AND FINANCES

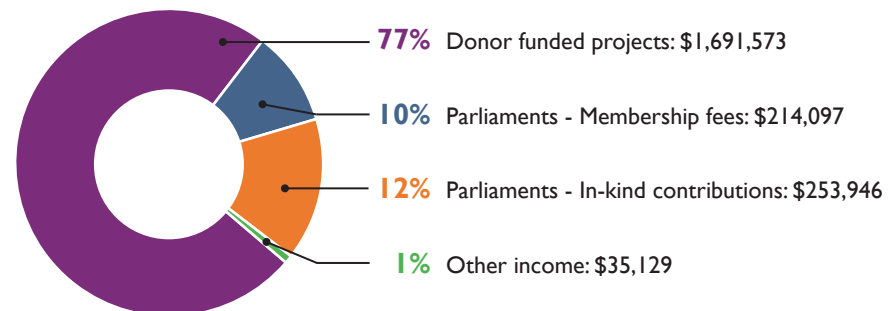
ParlAmericas' operations and activities in the 2019 fiscal year were financed through the support of our member parliaments, our partners and the generous contributions of the Government of Canada through Global Affairs Canada. ParlAmericas wishes to acknowledge with sincere appreciation the invaluable support, expertise, time and travel contributed by member parliaments, individual parliamentarians and partners to ensure the successful implementation of ParlAmericas' programming throughout the year.

**Note:** The in-kind contributions included in ParlAmericas' financial statements are recorded when fair values can be reasonably estimated and supporting documentation is provided by the member parliament. We recognize that the amount shown is a fraction of the overall value of in-kind support provided by member parliaments and partners in the normal course of ParlAmericas' operations. ParlAmericas therefore also tracks and records an indicative value of the total contributions to ParlAmericas' programming.

**Source:** The following information represents [ParlAmericas' audited financial statements](#) as of September 30, 2019, and the corresponding annual financial report prepared for the ParlAmericas Board of Directors and member parliaments.

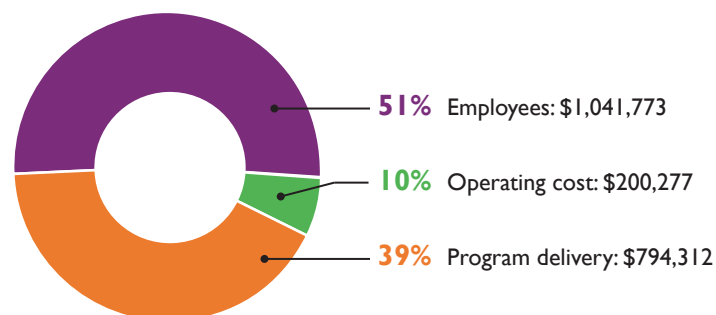
### CONTRIBUTIONS

\$2,194,746



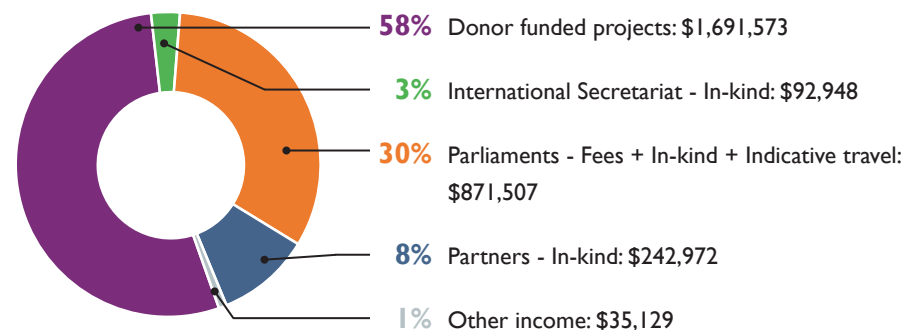
### EXPENDITURES

\$2,036,361



### INDICATIVE VALUE OF TOTAL CONTRIBUTIONS

\$2,934,129



# NATIONAL LEGISLATURES REPRESENTED ON OUR BOARD OF DIRECTORS

## Executive Committee of the Board of Directors

(as of October 2019, 16<sup>th</sup> ParlAmericas Plenary Assembly):

**Elizabeth Cabezas**, President

Member of the National Assembly, Ecuador

**Maya Fernández Allende**, 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice-President and President of the

Parliamentary Network for Gender Equality

Member of the Chamber of Deputies, Chile

**Blanca Ovelar**, 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice-President and President of the Open

Parliament Network

Senator, Paraguay

**Ana Belén Marín**, 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice-President and President of the

Parliamentary Network on Climate Change

Member of the National Assembly, Ecuador

ParlAmericas is run by parliamentarians for parliamentarians, with a Board of Directors composed of 21 seats which currently represent 17 countries from North, South, Central America and the Caribbean. In addition, the Board has ex-officio representation from the Plenary Host, ParlAmericas Immediate Past President, ParlAmericas International Secretariat and the OAS General Secretariat. Each Network is governed by an elected Executive Committee, composed of one President and sub-regional Vice-Presidents representing North, Central and South America and the Caribbean. More information on our Board of Directors and Executive Committees is available in our website: [www.parlamerica.org/en/about/board-ofdirectors.aspx](http://www.parlamerica.org/en/about/board-ofdirectors.aspx)



## PARTNERS

In addition to our member parliaments, over the last year ParlAmericas collaborated with multilateral and civil society organizations with a view to maximizing impacts through complementary programming efforts. We are grateful for their contributions of subject-matter expertise and resources to our project activities and look forward to building on these collaborations in support of strengthened democracy, legislative openness, gender equality and sustainable development in the Americas and the Caribbean.



In April, ParlAmericas and United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) signed a Memorandum of Understanding to reaffirm collaboration efforts to advance the climate agenda in Latin America and the Caribbean. In addition, ParlAmericas was recognized as an official observer organization to the UNFCCC process by the Conference of the Parties (COP) at its 24<sup>th</sup> session held in December 2018. This status and the Memorandum will allow ParlAmericas to formally participate and incorporate parliamentary perspectives in international climate change conferences and deliberations.

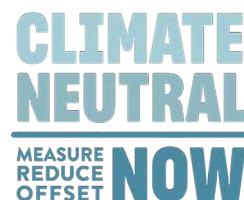


Government of Canada

Gouvernement du Canada



OAS



FORO NACIONAL DE  
MUJERES  
DE PARTIDOS POLÍTICOS



## In 2019 ParlAmericas continued to support two strategic collaboration mechanisms



The **Inter-American Task Force on Women's Empowerment and Leadership** was announced at the 8<sup>th</sup> Summit of the Americas (Peru, April 2018). With the objective of contributing to

regional progress towards SDG 5 (gender equality), the Task Force serves as a coordination mechanism that reinforces commitments and strategies to advance women's empowerment and leadership. The Task Force is composed of key inter-American and international institutions working across sectors and at multiple levels.



The **Open Parliament e-Network (OPeN)** was announced at the 5<sup>th</sup> Open Government Partnership (OGP) Global Summit (Georgia, July 2018). With the objective of contributing to global progress towards

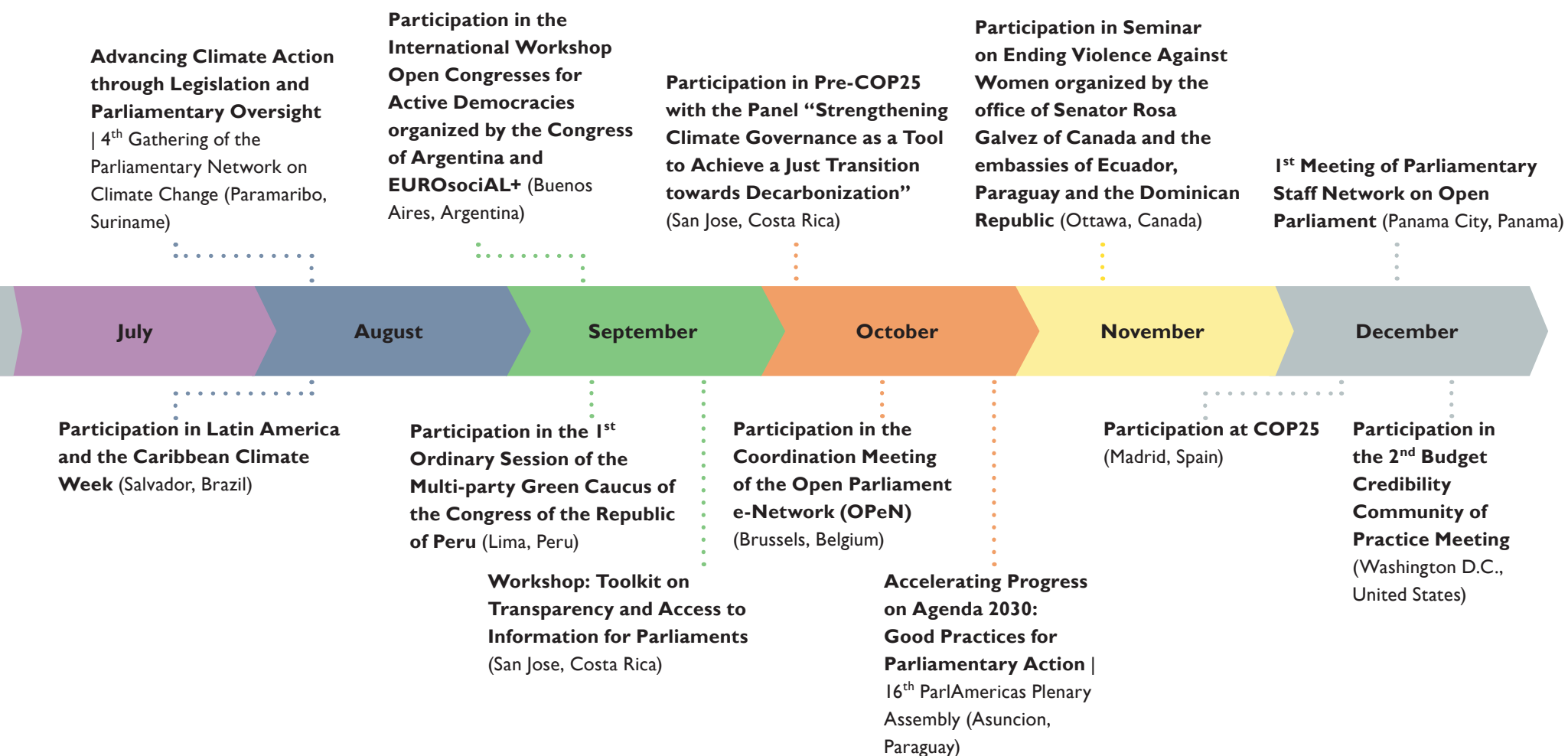
SDG 16 (strong institutions), OPeN provides a platform for legislators who champion the issue of legislative openness through serving on the network's Parliamentary Leadership Council. OPeN builds upon the work of the OGP Legislative Openness Working Group by bringing together leading international organizations that are committed to legislative openness.



# 2019 AT A GLANCE



For detailed individual activity reports as well as our publications please visit the [ParlAmericas](https://www.parlAmericas.org) website.



# INTERACTIVE TOOLS

**ParlAmericas has a number of new and enhanced online tools for parliamentarians to access specialized information and resources.**

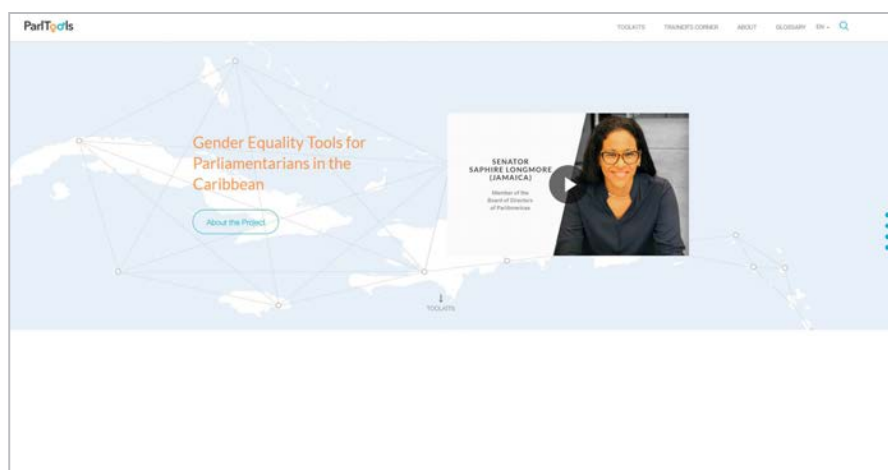
## ParlGenderTools

ParlGenderTools is an online, interactive space for self-guided learning that features toolkits on gender equality issues tailored for parliamentarians in the English-speaking Caribbean. Each toolkit includes specialized resources, data, videos and linkages to relevant international and regional frameworks in order to support parliamentarians in their advocacy and legislative action on prominent gender and development topics. The portal also allows for parliamentarians to share effective practices being applied in their parliament related to toolkit topics, facilitating knowledge exchange across the region. Current toolkits focus on caucuses for gender equality, gender-responsive budgeting and male allies for gender equality. Additional toolkits will continue to be added over time in response to priority issues identified by parliamentarians. The portal is a collaboration with the UN Women Multi-Country Office for the Caribbean. [www.parlgendertools.org](http://www.parlgendertools.org)

## ParlAmericas Podcasts

Find ParlAmericas on [iTunes](#) and [Google Play](#) to listen to podcasts of presentations and panels from past Gatherings and meetings held across the hemisphere. Our podcasts are also available in ParlAmericas' website [www.parlAmericas.org/en/resources/podcasts.aspx](http://www.parlAmericas.org/en/resources/podcasts.aspx)

Our podcast episodes feature presentations by world-renowned experts and prominent political figures, including former President **Michelle Bachelet** (Chile) and Prime Minister **Mia Mottley** (Barbados), on key hemispheric issues like gender equality, climate change, migration, inclusion, transparency and accountability.



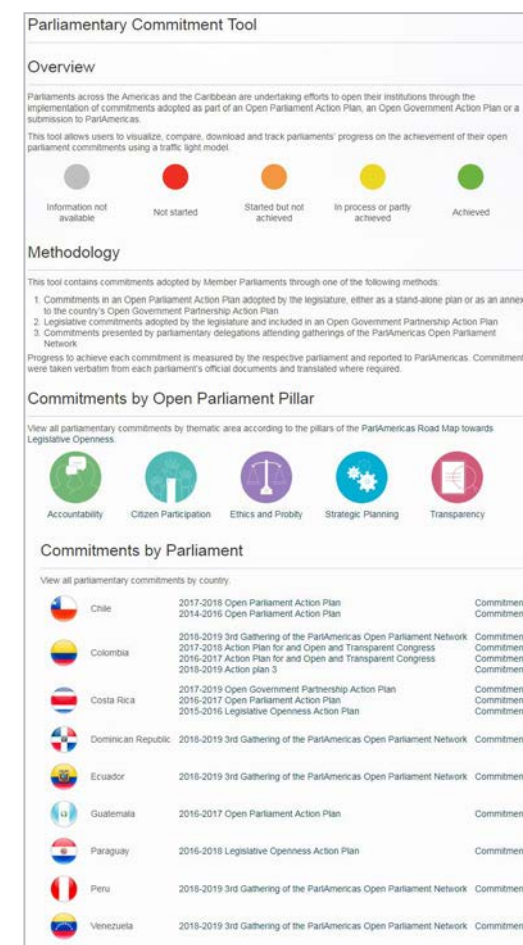
## Open Parliament Portal

The Open Parliament Portal is an online platform designed for parliamentarians, parliamentary staff and parliamentary strengthening practitioners in the Americas and the Caribbean. It provides information on legislative openness and a space to exchange knowledge and experiences from the hemisphere through videos, infographics, presentations and external resources. This portal will include several toolkits developed by ParlAmericas to support the implementation of open parliament principles, organized in accordance with the pillars of ParlAmericas' Road Map towards Legislative Openness: transparency and access to public information, accountability, ethics, and public participation, the first of the toolkits currently available online. It provides useful resources for anyone looking for inspiration or guidance to develop and implement an Open Parliament Action Plan or specific openness initiatives. Features also enable users to share openness practices and mechanisms currently in place within the region as well as consult a glossary defining important concepts. The Open Parliament Portal is currently available in English, Spanish, French and Portuguese. [www.parltools.org/en/](http://www.parltools.org/en/)



## Parliamentary Commitment Tool

The Parliamentary Commitment Tool is an online space that allows users to visualize, compare, download and track parliaments' progress towards the achievement of their open parliament commitments. It includes commitments presented by parliamentary delegations at the annual Gatherings of the ParlAmericas Open Parliament Network as well as those included in Open Parliament Action Plans and legislative commitments in Open Government Action Plans presented to the Open Government Partnership. Commitments can be explored by countries and by open parliament pillars: transparency and access to information, accountability, public participation and ethics. Progress towards each commitment is reported by parliaments and displayed through a traffic light system, along with a description of the actions that have been completed to date and links to additional information. This tool showcases the significant efforts undertaken by parliaments across our hemisphere to strengthen their institutions, encourages the adoption of new commitments to promote openness and serves as guidance by providing examples and ideas of new initiatives. The Parliamentary Commitment Tool is available in Spanish, English, French and Portuguese. [www.parlamerica.org/en/open-parliament/parl-comm-tracker](http://www.parlamerica.org/en/open-parliament/parl-comm-tracker)



# RESOURCES AND PUBLICATIONS

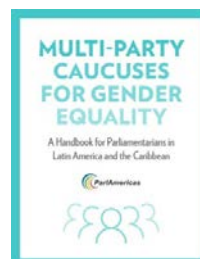
ParlAmericas creates specialized resources for parliamentarians that align with topics addressed by each of its networks and its activities. These materials are made available at our meetings and through our website.

## GENDER

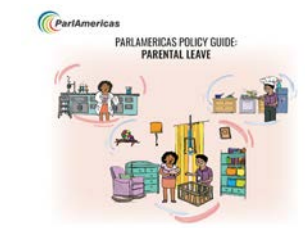
### Promoting Women's Candidacies



### Multi-Party Caucuses for Gender Equality



### ParlAmericas Policy Guide: Parental Leave



## OPEN PARLIAMENT

### Road Map Towards Legislative Openness



### Strengthening Accountability through Fiscal Openness: A Toolkit for Parliamentarians in the Americas and the Caribbean



### Citizen Participation in the Legislative Process

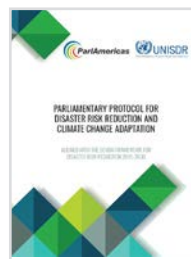


## CLIMATE CHANGE & SUSTAINABILITY DEVELOPMENT

### Parliament's Role In Implementing the Sustainable Development Goals



### Parliamentary Protocol for Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Change Adaptation



### Consultative Guide on Green Parliaments: Action to Promote Sustainable Practices Within Parliaments



## 16<sup>TH</sup> PLENARY ASSEMBLY

#ParlAmericas2019 #ParlAmericasSDG

**THEME:** Accelerating Progress on Agenda 2030: Good Practices for Parliamentary Action

**DATE:** October 30 - November 1, 2019

**LOCATION:** Asuncion, Paraguay

**PARTICIPANTS:** More than 70 parliamentarians, parliamentary staff, experts and civil society representatives from 21 countries



*This activity is aligned with the 17 Sustainable Development Goals*

The 16<sup>th</sup> ParlAmericas Plenary Assembly, **hosted by the Chamber of Senators of Paraguay**, brought together parliamentarians, parliamentary staff, experts and civil society representatives to discuss strategies and good practices that can be applied to strengthen the important role that parliaments play in accelerating progress and increasing ambition to achieve the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The Plenary Assembly opened with welcome remarks from Senator **Patrick Kemper** (Paraguay), Host of the Plenary Assembly, Member of the



National Assembly **Ana Belén Marín** (Ecuador), 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice-President of ParlAmericas and President of the ParlAmericas Parliamentary Network on Climate Change and Senator **Blanca Ovelar** (Paraguay), 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice-President of ParlAmericas and President of the ParlAmericas Open Parliament Network. The inaugural session was attended by United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) country representatives from the Americas and the Caribbean, and the keynote address was delivered by **Achim Steiner**, Administrator of the UNDP, who outlined critical steps that parliaments can take to

spur the transformational change needed to reach the SDGs and leave no one behind.

The Opening Session was followed by a series of working sessions where delegates heard from subject matter specialists and fellow parliamentarians about existing mechanisms and good practices as well as strategies and the role of parliaments in contributing and monitoring progress to implement the SDGs. Participants exchanged experiences on how their parliaments have organized themselves to better support the 2030 Agenda and discussed the importance of gender equality, as an essential

condition for achieving the 17 SDGs. Finally, they explored opportunities for partnerships and collaboration to strengthen their contribution to a more sustainable future. This culminated in a Final Plenary Session with the adoption of the meeting Declaration.

A detailed [report](#) about this meeting can be accessed on the ParlAmericas website.



*The SDGs constitute the largest strategic matrix we have, to guarantee the progress of our countries, they guide us to promote public policies to transparent our actions and thus contribute to the well-being of our citizens. It is urgent to incorporate the SDGs into a strategic plan that, with accurate analysis and quantifiable evaluations, allows us to assess the achievements and correct misdirection.*



Senator **Patrick Kemper** (Paraguay),  
Host of the 16<sup>th</sup> Plenary Assembly



*Costa Rica was the first country in the world to sign a national pact for the SDGs, where the executive, legislative, judicial, electoral tribunal, autonomous institutions and the 81 municipalities of the country were involved. The pact implies an institutional architecture of follow-up from a Technical Committee of the SDGs to a National Forum of the SDGs and a High-Level Council of the SDGs was also created, which is chaired by the President of the Republic.*



Member of the Legislative Assembly  
**Nielsen Pérez** (Costa Rica)



## TRAINING SESSION

A training session on “Monitoring Progress towards SDGs through Public Spending” was facilitated by Dr. **Helaina Gaspard**, Director of Governance and Institutions at the Institute for Fiscal Studies and Democracy (IFSD) at the University of Ottawa, presentation on the margins of the 16<sup>th</sup> Plenary Assembly. Her intervention invited participants to consider public funds as a lens to evaluate governments’ policy priorities and results, and to strengthen fiscal scrutiny practices to better oversee progress on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

The workshop provided participants with an overview of how the national budget process is an important avenue through which parliaments can monitor and evaluate progress towards the SDGs, since it is the main policy instrument that identifies annual revenue expectations and spending priorities.

The workshop included a panel discussion which provided a more in depth look at parliamentary offices that have been developing tools to assist parliamentarians in scrutinizing budget proposals, program allocations and execution, and help them understand their impact on their country’s progress towards achieving the SDGs.

*As the elected representatives of the people, parliamentarians are in a unique position to drive forward a process of “localization” that translates global goals into nationally relevant commitments reflective of the views, interests and aspirations of a diverse range of constituents ... In effectively representing their constituents’ views and working to keeping the executive power accountable, parliamentarians are invaluable partners in ensuring the inclusive, participatory and transparent governance that underpins the 2030 Agenda.*



**Achim Steiner**, Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)





*Open Parliament is an essential pillar on which the organization's action is affirmed to regain citizen confidence in the political sector. Parliaments are in interdiction, the political class is viewed with distrust, and we need to regain the value of politics and reconnect it with its essential goal which is the common good. Open parliament is an irreversible trend in the world, and with its work, ParlAmericas helps our region to build and develop a true parliamentary opening.*



Senator **Blanca Ovelar** (Paraguay), President of the OPN

## DECLARATION

The Plenary Assembly concluded with the reading of the [declaration](#) by Senator **Amado Florentín** (Paraguay), which was adopted by the delegations of each parliament represented.

It recognized that parliamentarians have a critical role to play in achieving the SDGs which are an urgent call to action by all countries, recognizing that the principles of inclusion and leaving no one behind must go hand-in-hand with strategies that improve health and education, reduce inequality and spur economic growth, all while continuing the fight against climate. The declaration included the following commitments:

- Effectively advancing the 2030 Agenda and the implementation of all SDGs through the exercise of our lawmaking, oversight, budget allocation and representation functions, as well as within internal parliamentary processes;
- Scrutinizing resources allocated to the achievement of the SDGs – including international development funds – to ensure that they produce sustainable and impactful results, as measured through the national adaptation of SDG indicators;
- Establishing new and strengthening existing mechanisms to improve citizen participation in decision making process related to the implementation of the SDGs, and ensuring that those who are most impacted by current unsustainable social, environmental and economic practices can voice their needs and contribute to the development of solutions;
- Taking concrete measures to reinforce collaboration with national and local governments, as well as with oversight institutions to contribute to the development, adoption and monitoring of national frameworks and plans to successfully implement the 2030 Agenda;
- Continuing to strengthen the capacity of our parliaments to ensure that frameworks, mechanisms, processes and strategic plans that address the 2030 Agenda and its Goals are established and effectively support the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the SDGs.





## MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE PARLAMERICAS PARLIAMENTARY NETWORK FOR GENDER EQUALITY



Dear colleagues,

This year has presented new challenges and difficult events in our countries. As parliamentarians, it is more important than ever that we ensure appropriate responses and respect for human rights for all. In this context, gender equality and women's empowerment are fundamental as we seek to redress the economic and social disparities that exist in our countries. Without a gender perspective, we will not be able to tackle these challenges nor achieve sustainable development.

Responding to the priorities identified by our membership, the work of the ParlAmericas Parliamentary Network for Gender Equality (PNGE) during the past months has focused on subjects related to women's employment and political rights. For example, our annual meeting, organized in collaboration with the Senate of Mexico, delved into the care economy, legal reforms to promote inclusive economic empowerment, laws and policies to prevent workplace sexual harassment, and women in the future of work. With the support of specialists, we exchanged good practices and legislative strategies regarding these important subjects.

Through our exchanges, we built alliances, tools and knowledge that contribute in a sustainable way to the development of legislation and effective initiatives that serve our populations. The PNGE advocates for the recognition of the multiple dimensions of inequality and analysis of how vulnerabilities and needs vary among different sectors of society. The forthcoming publications and tools developed by the PNGE will be based on these principles and the learning outcomes of the activities conducted, creating guidelines to put into practice in our countries.

Furthermore, the work of the PNGE throughout the year reflected our longstanding commitment to the strengthening of collaboration with other partners committed to gender equality, which is necessary to ensure the sustainability of our efforts. We continue to be an active institutional member of the Inter-American Task Force on Women's Empowerment and Leadership, and our project with civil society organizations continues to be fruitful and beneficial for all involved.

The leadership of the members of the PNGE Executive Committee and of the parliamentarians who participate in our activities has turned the Network into the innovative and forward-looking space that it is. I would like to sincerely thank you for your contributions and commitment.

I am looking forward to the opportunity to continue progressing in our collective mission in the coming year.

Sincerely,

*Maya Fernández Allende*

**Member of the Chamber of Deputies, Chile  
President of the Parliamentary Network for Gender Equality**

 [FOLLOW ME ON TWITTER @MAYAHERNANDEZA](https://twitter.com/MAYAHERNANDEZA)

# 11<sup>TH</sup> GATHERING OF THE PARLIAMENTARY NETWORK FOR GENDER EQUALITY

## #ParlAmericasGEN

**THEME:** Achieving Balance in the World of Work

**LOCATION:** Mexico City, Mexico

**DATE:** June 18-20, 2019

**PARTICIPANTS:** More than 70 parliamentarians, parliamentary staff and representatives of civil society and multilateral organizations from 22 countries



*This activity is aligned with SDGs 5 and 8*

The 11<sup>th</sup> gathering of the ParlAmericas Parliamentary Network for Gender Equality (PNGE), **hosted by the Senate of the Republic of Mexico**, brought together parliamentarians from across the Americas and the Caribbean to exchange with specialists and other stakeholders about strategies to advance gender equality and women's labour and economic rights. Under the theme of Achieving Balance in the World of Work, the gathering's working sessions highlighted the ways parliamentarians can contribute to achieving greater recognition of women's roles as economic agents, and to reducing legal and cultural barriers to women's entry and full participation in the labour force.



The gathering was officially inaugurated by Senator **Antares Vázquez Alatorre** (Mexico), Member of the ParlAmericas Board of Directors and the gathering's host; and by Member of Parliament the Honourable **Robert Nault** (Canada), President of ParlAmericas.

The inauguration was followed by a series of working sessions in which participants dialogued on good practices and the experiences of their countries. Discussions explored different methods of reducing the barriers to women's entry and full

contribution of their talents to the workforce, with themes including: the gendered dimensions of care work, the gaps in legislation for economic empowerment, preparing the workforce for the realities of the future, and addressing and preventing sexual harassment in the workplace. Roundtable work centered on the importance of comprehensive gender-disaggregated data for decision making on these and other related issues.

A detailed [report](#) about this meeting can be accessed on the ParlAmericas website.

*We have made important advances in the congresses of each of our countries, but we still have much to advance and many things to share. We have been hearing about good legislative practices from a number of congresses from our continent, and I believe that we need to continue dialoguing in order to construct a common path for the equality of women.*



Senator **Antares Vázquez Alatorre**  
(Mexico), Host of the gathering and Member  
of the ParlAmericas Board of Directors

*In alignment with the Network's strategic plan, our recent work is centred in three concrete areas: women's political empowerment, women's economic empowerment, and ending gender-based violence. These essential and interconnected themes are evident in the work that we carried out and in the agendas that we advocate for.*



Member of the Legislative Assembly **Cristina Cornejo**  
(El Salvador), Vice-President of the PNGE for Central  
America and Member of the ParlAmericas Board of Directors

## TRAINING SESSION

Within the framework of the gathering, workshops on [preventing and addressing sexual harassment in the workplace](#) were carried out separately in Spanish and English; these sessions examined the problem of workplace sexual harassment as an obstacle to human rights and gender equality. The session in Spanish was delivered by **Lucía Martelotte**, Deputy Executive Director, [Latin American Team for Justice and Gender](#) (ELA, in Spanish), and the [English session](#) was delivered by **Haran Ramkaransingh**, Director of Legal Services, [Equal Opportunity Commission](#) (EOC) of Trinidad and Tobago.

The sessions provided an overview of the relevant legal principles, and they examined different types of national laws that address sexual harassment, drawing on examples from the respective subregions convened. The sessions also encouraged participants to consider how the good practices discussed could inform the development of protocols for the prevention of sexual harassment in parliaments.



## DECLARATION

The 11th gathering of the PNGE concluded with the reading of the [declaration](#) by Senator **Vázquez Alatorre**, accompanied by the Honourable **Robert Nault**. Among the commitments adopted by the convened parliamentary delegations was to further advance women's empowerment in the labour force and build more gender-balanced future for our region. Highlights include:

- Reviewing the status of international conventions for gender equality in the labour force, including ILO conventions pending ratification and taking steps to harmonize our countries' legislation in line with our States' agreements;
- Identifying provisions in our national laws that are directly or indirectly discriminatory to women in the world of work, and consulting with women's organizations to close this gap;
- Advocating for the generation and use of gender-disaggregated data for all legislative decision-making;
- Taking steps to strengthen social protection systems, ensuring that they are guided by principles of universality, co-responsibility and gender equality;
- Initiating or supporting actions to institutionalize an anti-sexual harassment policy that is appropriate for our parliaments.



*We already have the methods for measuring [care work]... so that is what we need to do. To be able to say to women: 'You have the right, you have the recognition.' But it is time to give it value. So now we move from a simple quantification of care work to putting it in law so that it forms part of the procurement and partition of justice.*



Senator **Verónica Camino Farjat** (Mexico)



*Today in Grenada under the labour code, brought by force of activities of the trade union movement, domestic work is defined in law in terms of payments to be paid, the hours of work, and the right to annual paid vacation leave. That area of care work is also covered by our social security legislation... Employers are compelled to make contributions to the national social security system for retirement, sick leave and other benefits for women who provide care work and domestic workers.*



President of the Senate **Chester Humphrey** (Grenada),  
Vice-President of the PNGE for the Caribbean

## WOMEN'S POLITICAL LEADERSHIP PROJECT



In 2018, ParlAmericas launched a project to promote women's political leadership in Latin America and the Caribbean. The project aims to support multi-partisan women's organizations in their delivery of programming that builds environments which enables women's leadership in politics and other sectors where they are underrepresented. The project's activities also strengthen the institutional capacities of these organizations as they fulfill their work in collaboration with national parliaments, gender bureaux, multilaterals, and other regional and local civil society organizations.

Through this project, ParlAmericas is currently accompanying the [Caribbean Women in Leadership](#) (CIWiL) and the [National Forum of Women in Political Parties](#) (FONAMUPP) in Panama. The joint initiatives carried out with these organizations build on the successes of ParlAmericas' work on gender mainstreaming and civil society engagement.

Project activities include:

- Workshops to encourage and support electoral candidacies by women;
- Leadership initiatives with young women;
- The facilitation of knowledge exchanges and meetings; and
- The development of communications, advocacy and fundraising tools and systems for the sustainability of activities beyond the project's duration.



FORO NACIONAL DE  
MUJERES  
DE PARTIDOS POLÍTICOS



The Forum of Women in Political Parties (FONAMUPP) of Panama is a non-governmental, non-profit organization with the objective of promoting the political participation of Panamanian women with equal opportunities and conditions. FONAMUPP has been active for 25 years and has played a strong role in advocating for electoral reforms in favour of parity.

In the words of FONAMUPP's training beneficiaries:

“Before I didn't have the knowledge to get up and speak in public, for example, how to give a speech. Now it's not just a matter of having overcome fear, it's the fluid way of speaking to an audience. Much of this has to do with FONAMUPP.”

“Before the women were passive and didn't dare to participate in politics. However after receiving the trainings, the women put themselves forward, spoke, shared their opinions and want to move forward because they feel they are supported by an organization.”

“Personally, I think the trainings have impacted me by making me a person with political value. I'm now much more sure of myself; we have developed a series of traits such as courage.”

### Summary of 2019 activities

- 5 chapter strengthening meetings
- 1 working session on communications
- 1 working session with the women's arms of political parties
- 150+ women beneficiaries of project activities





Caribbean Women in Leadership

Caribbean Women in Leadership (CIWiL) is a non-political, multi-partisan and independent institution established to monitor, strengthen and increase women's political participation and leadership in the region. CIWiL aims to create a sustainable, effective and efficient women's leadership base, and to achieve gender equality through advocacy, networking, research and capacity building.

In the words of CIWiL's training beneficiaries:

"I appreciate the knowledge on how to be a leader – and not just a leader, but a transformational one."

"I found all the topics useful and they will help to equip me for my political journey. I feel a sense of courage emerging."

"It motivated me to the point where I now know that it is possible. It provided information that I would not be privy to had I not attended this workshop."

### Summary of 2019 activities

- 4 workshops for prospective women candidates
- 1 working session on chapter building and youth engagement
- 2 national chapters established
- 100+ women beneficiaries of project activities





## MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE PARLAMERICAS OPEN PARLIAMENT NETWORK



Dear colleagues,

In 2019, our Open Parliament Network has continued to promote dialogue and action on legislative openness, bringing together parliamentarians from the Americas and the

Caribbean, legislators from other regions of the world, senior parliamentary staff and civil society representatives.

The Network's 4<sup>th</sup> annual gathering focused on parliamentary oversight and how transparency, accountability, citizen participation and ethics can help us to develop legislation and actions that counter corruption and achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. More than 100 legislators, parliamentary staff and civil society representatives from 27 countries of the hemisphere convened in Ecuador to discuss integrity, money laundering and asset recovery, among other issues, emphasizing opportunities for collaboration with civil society for more effective parliamentary oversight.

We held a meeting in Costa Rica, in collaboration with the *Directorio Legislativo* Foundation, to share experiences working on open parliament across the region. We also hosted two workshops related to post-legislative scrutiny and monitoring progress on the SDGS through public spending with the support of the Westminster Foundation for Democracy and the Institute of Fiscal Studies and Democracy (IFSD) of the University of Ottawa, respectively.

During the Open Government Partnership (OGP) Global Summit, we organized the Open Parliament Day, where more than 120 legislators, parliamentary staff and civil society representatives from 34 countries of the world discussed collaboration with civil society to promote open states and reflected on how to combat fake news. We also participated in sessions of this Summit, highlighting the role of parliaments in these spaces.

We established a parliamentary staff network to share good practices and experiences in the implementation of open parliament principles at a technical and institutional level. Its first meeting was held in Panama with the participation of 11 countries.

In partnership with the Network on Transparency and Access to Public Information and with sponsorship from EUROsociAL +, we are developing a toolkit on transparency and access to information in parliament. We also presented a publication on fiscal transparency, which was developed in collaboration with IFSD and the Global Initiative for Fiscal Transparency.

We are progressing on a guide for creating open parliament action plans and are also developing a toolkit on parliamentary accountability at the institutional level. These publications will be officially launched during the next meeting of the ParLAméricas Open Parliament Network in 2020.

Next year we will continue to encourage the adoption of action plans and open parliament commitments that can be presented to OGP, inter-institutional coordination to strengthen open states and collaboration and co-creation with civil society.

It is an honor to have the support and participation of parliamentary delegations in our activities and I hope to continue to benefit from your distinguished presence in 2020.

Sincerely,

*Blanca Ovelar*

**Senator, Paraguay  
President of the Open Parliament Network**

.....  
 FOLLOW ME ON TWITTER @OVELAR\_BLANCA

## 4<sup>TH</sup> GATHERING OF THE OPEN PARLIAMENT NETWORK

### #ParIAmericasOPN

**THEME:** Beyond the Walls of Parliament: Strengthening Parliamentary Oversight

**VENUE:** Quito, Ecuador

**DATES:** March 12-14, 2019

**PARTICIPANTS:** More than 100 parliamentarians, parliamentary staff and civil society representatives from 27 countries



*This activity is aligned with SDG 16*

The 4<sup>th</sup> gathering of the ParlAmericas Open Parliament Network (OPN), **hosted by the National Assembly of Ecuador**, brought together parliamentarians with subject matter specialists to share experiences, knowledge and strategies to strengthen parliaments' oversight work through open parliament action plans and initiatives developed in collaboration with civil society. The gathering's theme, Beyond the Walls of Parliament: Strengthening Parliamentary Oversight, focused on the important role of parliament to advance higher standards of transparency and accountability in all branches of government, a necessary condition for achieving progress on the anti-corruption measures



outlined in the [Lima Commitment](#), and to foster more effective implementation of the 2030 Agenda and its [Sustainable Development Goals](#).

The gathering was opened by President of the National Assembly the Honourable **Elizabeth Cabezas** (Ecuador), Vice-President of ParlAmericas; Member of Parliament the Honourable **Robert Nault** (Canada), President of ParlAmericas; and Senator **Blanca Ovelar** (Paraguay), President of the OPN.

The inauguration was followed by a series of working sessions, where participants engaged in productive exchanges of experiences and good practices. Discussions explored key features of corruption in the region and proposed an ambitious agenda toward more systemic transformation, as well as strategies

and mechanisms to strengthen parliamentary oversight of legislative frameworks and practices to open governments, prevent corruption, prosecute perpetrators and recover stolen assets.

Round table work centered on the development of concrete actions that can be taken by parliaments to foster a more open State. Participants explored opportunities to apply open parliament approaches to legislative work on important public policy issues like gender equality, climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction, and the inclusion of Indigenous peoples. Participants also discussed their experiences and ideas for collaboration with civil society to strengthen parliamentary oversight of sustainable development issues.

Parliamentary delegations were provided an opportunity to present the results of previously submitted national level commitments for applying open parliament measures in their parliaments, and to share new commitments to be implemented in the coming year, to be captured in the ParlAmericas Open Parliament Commitment Tool. These sessions were moderated by Member of the Legislative Assembly **Maritza Espinales** (Nicaragua), Board Member of ParlAmericas, and by Speaker of the House of Assembly the Honourable **Andy Daniel** (Saint Lucia), Board Member of ParlAmericas.

A detailed [report](#) about this meeting can be accessed on the ParlAmericas website.

“

*We have taken the decision, through a reform of the Standing Orders of the National Assembly, to establish the Legislative Research Analysis Center, which will allow us to have a much more expeditious analysis of legislation, both ex ante and ex post, and above all, strengthen transparency mechanisms to inform citizens as well as the links that we are weaving with different civil society organizations.*

”



The Honourable President of the National Assembly  
**Elizabeth Cabezas** (Ecuador), Vice-President of ParlAmericas



“

*Post-legislative scrutiny is crucial to ensure that legislation we approve has the intended effects and results. This evaluation also allows us to be much more effective in our parliamentary oversight work, and based on this scrutiny, we can improve the laws in our countries, the quality of our political representation and build citizens' confidence in our parliaments and promote their participation.*

”



Member of the National Assembly **Fernando Burbano**  
(Ecuador)

## DECLARATION

The 4<sup>th</sup> gathering of the OPN concluded with the reading of the [declaration](#) by Member of the National Assembly **Karina Artega** (Ecuador), and the discussion and approval process was moderated by the Honourable **Robert Nault**. Among the commitments adopted by the convened parliamentary delegations to further advance open parliament principles, tackle corruption and strengthen parliamentary oversight, highlights include:

- Monitoring progress and accompanying the efforts of our States in the fight against corruption, improving collaboration between all branches of the State in pursuit of strengthened democratic governance, which were all aspects of the Lima Commitment;
- Establishing opportunities for collaboration with civil society organizations in the development and implementation of strategies to strengthen parliamentary oversight and openness across all sectors of the government with special attention to public policies addressing gender equality, climate change and the inclusion of indigenous peoples;
- Co-creating and implementing open parliament action plans or other initiatives in collaboration with civil society and parliamentary staff, with the objective of developing tools and participatory processes that contribute to strengthening parliamentary oversight and promoting the opening of government institutions;
- Considering, during the initial phases of drafting legislation, demographic data and relevant evidence that contributes to designing specific indicators and targets, disaggregated by gender and other social factors relevant to the national context, which can later be used to evaluate laws and government policies through these specific lenses. Where relevant data and evidence do not exist, advocating for this to be collected;
- Establishing and strengthening comprehensive mechanisms for legislative scrutiny and analysis that ensure the effective implementation and fulfillment of the intended objectives and promoting the adoption of the Global Declaration on Post-Legislative Scrutiny.



*Public procurement has to be strengthened. We must create a link with citizens and provide information that is useful. Giving citizens a contract does not help. It is when you take the time to tell them what they are going to receive, what they should see, what quality of materials should be used, how long the work will last, what goods and services will be provided, that you are going to meet their needs (for their understanding and active participation). When that information is given, then you can have transparency in public procurement.*



**Juan Ricardo Ortega**, Senior Advisor, Inter-American Development Bank



*Parliaments can engage civil society in the formal process to monitor national implementation (of legislation and public policies to govern natural resources), while recognising the value of independent monitoring and review by civil society, for example through shadow or spotlight reports.*



**Zakiya Uzoma-Wadada**, Chair, Caribbean Natural Resources Institute



# OPEN PARLIAMENT DAY AND PARLIAMENTARY TRACK OF THE OPEN GOVERNMENT PARTNERSHIP GLOBAL SUMMIT

#ParlAmericasOPN #OGPCanada

**THEME:** Leveraging Collaboration with Civil Society to Improve Legislative and Public Policy Solutions

**LOCATION:** Ottawa, Canada

**DATE:** May 29-30, 2019

**PARTICIPANTS:** More than 120 parliamentarians, parliamentary staff and civil society representatives from 34 countries



*This activity is aligned with SDG 16*



Open Parliament Day of the Open Government Partnership Global Summit, hosted by the [ParlAmericas Canadian Section](#), with support from the [Open Parliament e-Network \(OPeN\)](#), brought together parliamentarians, parliamentary staff and civil society representatives from across the world to share experiences, knowledge and strategies to strengthen parliaments' efforts to advance open government reforms. Under the theme Leveraging Collaboration with Civil Society to Improve Legislative and Public Policy Solutions, the meeting's working sessions addressed efforts to transform parliaments' relationship with the public by promoting transparency, accountability, participation and high ethical standards as part of a larger objective to create more open States and transform government culture to promote innovation and continuously improve policies and service delivery to meet public needs.

The meeting was opened by Member of Parliament **Randy Boissonnault** (Canada), Vice-President of the ParlAmericas Open Parliament Network (OPN), and Member of Parliament **Greg Fergus** (Canada), Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Treasury Board and Minister of Digital Government, along with Member of the National Assembly **Elizabeth Cabezas** (Ecuador), Vice-President of ParlAmericas who presented the [Executive Summary of the Guide to Develop Open Parliament Action Plans](#).



Welcome remarks were followed by a working session where parliamentary delegates exchanged their experiences regarding collaboration with civil society to develop and implement open parliament action plans or initiatives. They also explored how this collaboration could be leveraged to strengthen parliament's representation and oversight roles to build stronger and more inclusive democracies that deliver better services and public policies, in line with Sustainable Development Goal 16 of the 2030 Agenda. The meeting ended with a panel discussion to explore opportunities through which parliament can leverage the openness agenda to contribute to more informed debates and transformative public policy outcomes. It also discussed emerging challenges, like fake news and disinformation, and considered possible solutions.



*Open Parliament e-Network started working with a group of parliamentarians that we could count on one hand, and today we are here with more than 100 reformers from parliaments and congresses.*



**Maria Baron**, Global Executive Director of Directorio Legislativo



*Open Parliament and Open Government go hand in hand and Canada is honoured to co-chair the Open Government Partnership at this critical time in the world for transparent, trusted and democratic participation... Our participation in OGP has stretched across two governments of different political stripes. It is vital that legislators like us, no matter what their party affiliation, embrace the values of openness and transparency so that despite changeovers citizens continue to benefit from this global movement.*



Member of Parliament **Greg Fergus** (Canada),  
Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Treasury Board and Minister of Digital Government

## PARLIAMENTARY TRACK OF THE OPEN GOVERNMENT PARTNERSHIP GLOBAL SUMMIT

Parliamentary delegations participated in OGP Global Summit sessions under the theme Participation, Inclusion, Impact, where they exchanged with peers, government officials, academia, civil society and other open government stakeholders. They had the opportunity to debate strategies to enable citizens, civil society and business to participate in government decision-making; empower under-represented people to engage actively with governments; and help citizens understand how open government affects their day-to-day lives.

By participating in various sessions across the summit, they discussed important issues, such as disinformation, beneficial ownership registries, gender equality, participatory and inclusive policy making, public sector innovation, anti-corruption, artificial intelligence and access to justice, among others. Among these was a session focusing on the role of parliaments in advancing the open government agenda beyond opening the institution of parliament and another focusing on exchanging good practices between government and parliament action plans to fight corruption. Several parliamentarians also led the conversation as panelists in their respective sessions.

A detailed [report](#) about this meeting can be accessed on the ParlAmericas website.



## ACTION POINTS

During [Open Parliament Day and the Parliamentary Track of the Open Government Partnership Global Summit](#), the following action points were highlighted:

- Participate more actively in national open government efforts by promoting existing Action Plans and raising ambitions, or promoting the participation of your government in the [Open Government Partnership](#);
- Develop, review and adopt legislation that increases transparency, accountability, citizen participation and ethical standards for public office holders, in support of Action Plan commitments (i.e. lobby regulation, access to information, asset declarations, participation regulation, etc.);
- Co-create, implement, monitor and evaluate Open Parliament Action Plans with civil society, to commit to key priorities to transform the interaction between parliament and the public towards more inclusive and effective legislation and oversight of public policies to ensure they meet citizens' needs;
- Establish spaces for citizen participation to contribute to a more exhaustive and inclusive debate around important national policy issues going beyond openness in general (i.e. climate change, pension reform, anti-corruption bills, etc.), and to co-create solutions to these issues;
- Ensure that all participative spaces established are inclusive to women, indigenous peoples and other historically marginalized groups, so that they can be used to bring the voices of the under-represented to the table.



*There is serious information asymmetry between the executive and legislative bodies. By this I mean that the executive holds information and resources that are simply not available to most legislative authorities in order for them to exercise their responsibilities in terms of oversight and their mandate in general... Civil society organizations also face a situation of information starvation and this creates a platform of commonality for parliaments and civil society to work together to advance towards a common goal of openness as tool to create accountability for the management of public affairs.*



**Mukelani Dimba**, Head of Development at the International School for Transparency



*Historically most of the national developments we have achieved have come about because of activists and parliaments working together. However, we have parliaments today who have lost the trust of the citizenry. It is the responsibility of parliamentarians to publicly invite civil society and the citizenry to contribute their input to bills... and appreciate and embrace the role of civil society in co-creation.*



Senator **Ranard Henfield** (The Bahamas), Vice-President of the ParlAmericas Open Parliament Network for the Caribbean

# 1<sup>ST</sup> MEETING OF THE PARLAMERICAS PARLIAMENTARY STAFF NETWORK ON OPEN PARLIAMENT

## #ParlAmericasOPN

**THEME:** Open Parliament Pillars

**LOCATION:** Panama City, Panama

**DATE:** December 4-5, 2019

**PARTICIPANTS:** More than 25 parliamentary staff members, parliamentarians and civil society representatives from 11 countries in Latin America



*This activity is aligned with SDG 16*



In collaboration with the National Assembly of Panama, ParlAmericas organized the 1<sup>st</sup> meeting of the Parliamentary Staff Network on Open Parliament with the objective of creating a dedicated space for the exchange of experiences and good practices implemented in parliament towards legislative openness. This new space in the framework of the ParlAmericas Open Parliament Network was created in recognition of the crucial role of parliamentary staff in the sustainability and effective advancement of the open parliament agenda at the institutional level.

The meeting opened with remarks by **Quibián Panay** (Panama), Secretary General of the National Assembly, and Member of the National Assembly **Fernando Arce** (Panama), member of the ParlAmericas Board of Directors. Afterwards, parliamentary staff were invited to deliver brief presentations on their good practices and challenges related to accountability in parliament. Representatives from [Brazil](#), [Chile](#), [Costa Rica](#), [Dominican Republic](#), [Ecuador](#), [Guatemala](#), [Honduras](#), [Mexico](#), [Panama](#), [Paraguay](#) and [Peru](#) highlighted forums, fairs and public hearings; digital tools like apps; and standardized reports on parliamentary travel and annual results of legislative work, among others, as good practices that their institutions are implementing.



The meeting's working sessions allowed for the exchange of experiences and good practices on transparency and access to information, accountability in parliament and citizen participation, as well as greater understanding of the "design thinking" methodology for the creation and redesign of public services and programs provided by parliaments. The meeting concluded with an international panel on open parliament, during which the experiences of Chile, Ecuador and Panama in implementing open parliament action plans and other related initiatives were shared. This activity served as a precursor to the official launch of the ParlAmericas Parliamentary Staff Network on Open Parliament.

Next steps for the ParlAmericas Parliamentary Staff Network on Open Parliament:

- Create a guiding document on the Network's goals and targets to allow for the evaluation of its progress at each meeting;
- Determine a main theme for each meeting that parliaments will present reports on to facilitate understanding of how the legislative branch is advancing on these issues;
- Establish a list of parliamentary staff that includes their areas of expertise, interest, and work to encourage the sharing of experiences and good practices through the ParlAmericas Open Parliament Portal;
- Offer training by parliamentary staff who have progressed on a specific area of legislative openness to others who are beginning similar work to serve as an input to their processes and encourage collaborative work;
- Collaborate with the Latin American Network for Legislative Transparency to contribute to the new methodology for the legislative transparency index and its implementation.

*Involving the operational side, the staff of the different assemblies and parliaments, is a wise decision on ParlAmericas' part to make clear what we are looking for as an organization, and facilitate others' support for and participation in this important effort to create [open parliament] policies that achieve the results we seek. In the Ecuadorian case, we have a group of a variety of legislators from different parties and among us we have decided that the open parliament policy has to be institutionalized, come into force, and become a common practice in the Assembly of Ecuador. We have standing meetings with civil society and working groups have been formed in different provinces to explain this initiative.*



Member of the National Assembly **Elizabeth Cabezas** (Ecuador), President of ParlAmericas

*Parliamentary staff are a fundamental part of the sustainability and effective implementation of action plans, commitments, and initiatives to advance greater transparency, accountability, citizen participation and ethics in the legislature.*



Member of the National Assembly **Fernando Arce** (Panama), Member of the ParlAmericas Board of Directors



*Support and commitment from the highest authorities in parliament is fundamental to the success of transparency and accountability projects, as well as awareness-raising campaigns to foster a culture of integrity. Sharing good practices with other countries helps us to strengthen and improve these efforts.*



**Patricia Letona** (Guatemala), Director of the Access to Information Unit of the Congress of the Republic



*In Panama we recognize the importance of open parliament, and we have developed initiatives that allow for broader and more effective citizen participation in parliamentary work as a result [...] we are also in the midst of a process of discussion and debate to ensure greater transparency in the Panamanian parliament. I hope that through this meeting's dialogue and exchanges we can learn from one another, explore opportunities for collaboration between the countries gathered here, and, in this way, strengthen legislative openness in our institutions.*



**Quibián Panay** (Panama), Secretary General of the National Assembly





## MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE PARLAMERICAS PARLIAMENTARY NETWORK ON CLIMATE CHANGE



Dear colleagues,

This year, the Parliamentary Network on Climate Change (PNCC) concentrated its work on increasing climate ambition, facilitating spaces for the exchange of knowledge and

experiences with subject matter experts and civil society, as well as contributing to international climate discussions, highlighting the fundamental role of parliaments in climate action.

In addition, we built and consolidated the relationship between ParlAmericas and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), signing a Memorandum of Understanding with the goal of strengthening our joint work. For its part, the International Secretariat of ParlAmericas signed a letter of commitment to join the UNFCCC's "Climate Neutral Now" initiative, to measure, reduce and compensate for greenhouse gas emissions.

We held the 4<sup>th</sup> gathering of the PNCC, titled "Advancing Climate Action through Legislation and Parliamentary Oversight," in Paramaribo, Suriname, which was organized with the generous support of the National Assembly of Suriname. During this year's gathering, parliamentarians issued a call to action, which sought to demonstrate how legislative action contributes to the achievement of the goals of the Paris Agreement and supports the empowerment of diverse actors to be part of the solutions. Further, the PNCC participated in various subregional and international climate dialogues, including the Regional Workshop on Biodiversity and Traditional Ecological Knowledge, in Tegucigalpa, Honduras. We also participated in high-level dialogues during the 2019 Latin American and Caribbean Climate Week in Salvador Bahía, Brazil.

We organized an official high-level side event at PreCOP25, held in San José, Costa Rica, on strengthening climate governance as a tool to achieve a just

transition towards decarbonization. A parliamentary delegation also participated in COP25 in Madrid, Spain, where the work of parliamentarians in the hemisphere was presented and good practices for combating climate change were collected. This year, the COP's main objective was to raise general ambition among all parties in preparation for updating the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) in 2020.

I am proud to share two new publications that seek to contribute to our parliamentary work against climate change. The Parliamentary Protocol for Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Change Adaptation, a collaboration with the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction published in February, is a tool that facilitates action by legislatures in implementing the Sendai Framework, helping to strengthen our countries' resilience and adaptive capacity. The second publication, Parliament's Role in Implementing the Sustainable Development Goals, launched in October, addresses how parliaments can incorporate the SDGs in their work and facilitate the effective implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

I take this opportunity to thank everyone who participated in our activities and those who represented ParlAmericas in conferences and high-level dialogue. I encourage you to continue adopting measures to protect our environment and advance the objectives of the Paris Agreement.

Sincerely,

*Ana Belén Marín*

**Member of the National Assembly, Ecuador  
President of the Parliamentary Network for Climate Change**

.....  
[FOLLOW ME ON TWITTER @ANITABELENMARIN](https://twitter.com/ANITABELENMARIN)

## 4<sup>TH</sup> GATHERING OF THE PARLIAMENTARY NETWORK ON CLIMATE CHANGE

### #ParlAmericasCC #TimeForAction

**THEME:** Advancing Climate Action through Legislation and Parliamentary Oversight

**LOCATION:** Paramaribo, Suriname

**DATES:** August 8-9, 2019

**PARTICIPANTS:** More than 50 parliamentarians, parliamentary staff and civil society representatives from 16 countries



*This activity is aligned with SDGs 11, 12, 13, 14, 15 and 17*

The 4<sup>th</sup> gathering of the Parliamentary Network on Climate Change (PNCC) was **hosted by the National Assembly of Suriname**. It convened parliamentarians, expert practitioners and civil society representatives to engage in a series of working sessions that examined the overarching theme of Advancing Climate Action through Legislation and Parliamentary Oversight. Participants shared good practices and experiences, as well as examined key legislative actions that are contributing to drive an ambitious climate agenda to achieve the

Paris Agreement target of holding the increase in the global average temperature to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels.

The gathering was opened by Speaker of the National Assembly the Honourable **Jennifer Simons** (Suriname), host of the gathering and Vice-President of the PNCC for South America, and Member of the National Assembly **Ana Belén Marín** (Ecuador), Alternate Vice-President of the PNCC for South America.

The keynote highlighted the value and the importance of parliaments creating partnerships with youth in the process of taking bold political decisions that respond to the 'climate crisis' our world is facing. The keynote address was followed by a series of working sessions that discussed: the outcomes of COP24 and the expectations for COP25 and its significance to the work of parliaments; good legislative practices that address the various environmental facets of the GEO-6 report; the different non-market and market mechanisms that could be utilized by countries to collaborate and incentivize different actors to uptake more climatically sustainable practices; and finally, the need to raise ambition and how parliamentarians can help enable this through climate finance.



### Field Visit

Within the framework of the gathering, delegates undertook a guided field visit to the Wegnarzee, a low-lying coastal region that is highly vulnerable to future climate-induced sea level rise. In continuation of the gathering's sessions on taking climate action, the field visit provided a physical representation of a successful solution on how to use mangroves, through the Building with Nature Project, as a climate adaptation tool. Participants were able to see firsthand how mangroves are being replanted in

the area and are positively contributing to reducing erosion, helping alleviate the impacts of sea level rise and bringing life back into the area.

In addition, delegates participated in a cultural outing to celebrate Indigenous People's day and pay tribute to the Javanese People of Suriname.

A detailed [report](#) about this meeting can be accessed on the ParlAmericas website.



*From the parliament we must identify the most vulnerable sectors and support them so that they can be more resilient. Likewise, we can deliver regulations so that the executive may apply it and have protocols in mind that allow us to have a much broader picture in the Americas and the Caribbean, which will allow us to have greater inputs so that the decisions we make in our parliaments be the best possible.*



Member of the National Assembly **Ana Belén Marín** (Ecuador), Alternate Vice-President of the PNCC for South America and Member of the ParlAmericas Board of Directors



*The climate network does not just discuss the problems of climate change, the science and the debates surrounding this topic, we actually assist parliaments of the Americas and the Caribbean to take action in their own countries and in their own ways. Time for just talking is definitely over, the IPCC told the world that we have less than 12 years to avoid climate disaster, and several scientists add that we may even have less time. We are showcasing how parliamentarians are addressing climate change, raising political will and responding to the urgency to take climate action, because legislators have the power to positively affect the outcome in our world.*



The Honourable Speaker of the National Assembly **Jennifer Simons** (Suriname), Vice-President of the PNCC for South America and Member of the ParlAmericas Board of Directors



## DECLARATION

The 4<sup>th</sup> gathering of the Parliamentary Network on Climate Change concluded with **Nathalie Grant**, Head of the Protocol Department of the National Assembly of Suriname, reading the [Call for Action: A Parliamentary Declaration](#). The discussion and approval process were moderated by Speaker Simons. Among the commitments adopted by the convened parliamentary delegations to take Climate action and contribute to the implementation of the Paris Agreement in line with the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals. Highlights include:

- To call for all parliamentarians to actively support the work being currently done in their countries to update the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) for 2020, and to influence the process in order to surpass the level of ambition of the past NDCs, to meet the Paris Agreement goals and mainstream conservation agendas in the context of the Sustainable Development Goals;
- To call for governments to publish national data on climate emissions, mitigation and adaptation actions and public resources allocated for this purpose in an open format to strengthen parliamentary oversight and increase accountability, as well as foster collaboration and innovation across all sectors and levels to achieve progress towards meeting NDCs and the Paris agreement goals;
- To call for parliamentarians to review our national climate change and environmental related legislation and policy frameworks, examining where new legislation or reforms are needed, and exchange good legislative practices within the hemisphere to help in the advancement of a just transition;
- To call for parliamentarians to recognize the importance of climate science and scientific data, to examine the current and future environmental state of our countries, and to take evidence-based decisions and climate actions;
- To call for parliamentarians to empower youth and recognize the value in their calls to action by ensuring that they are active partners in climate-related decision-making processes at national and international levels.

*The government of Barbados fully recognizes that in order to tackle climate change Barbados cannot do it alone, the public sector cannot do it alone. It is therefore important for there to be a collaborative effort between the public and private sector, this is why we have initiated fiscal incentives.*



His Honour Speaker of the House of Assembly  
**Arthur E. Holder** (Barbados), Member of the  
ParlAmericas Board of Directors

*Parliaments generate an important role in politics and therefore we are fundamental in the fight against climate change and its harmful effects as we are observing. We have to be more ambitious, esteemed colleagues in reducing emissions and we must encourage the participation of non-state actors in the various joint efforts.*



President of the Chamber of Deputies **Iván Flores** (Chile)

## DELEGATION TO COP25

### #ParIAmericasCC

**THEME:** Time for Action

**LOCATION:** Madrid, Spain

**DATES:** December 2-13



*This activity is aligned with SDGs 7, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15 and 17*



A delegation of parliamentarians from the Executive Committee of the ParIAmericas Parliamentary Network on Climate Change (PNCC) participated in official sessions of the UN Climate Change Conference COP-25, in Madrid, Spain, from December 2 to 13. The delegation was composed of Member of the National Assembly (Ecuador) **Ana Belén Marín**, President of the PNCC; Senator **Rosa Galvez** (Canada), Vice-President of the PNCC for North America; and Member of the Legislative Assembly **Paola Vega** (Costa Rica), Vice-President of the PNCC for Central America.

This year the chief objective of the COP was to raise overall ambition of all parties in preparation for the updating of the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) in 2020. A common call from stakeholders, including the delegation's parliamentarians, at COP25 was to make the NDCs more inclusive by creating them in consultation with diverse actors, and with consideration of human rights, gender equality and other social dimension of proposed climate solutions.

The objectives of the ParIAmericas delegation to COP25 were to:

- Promote the [Parliamentary Call for Action](#) adopted at the 4<sup>th</sup> gathering of the PNCC in Paramaribo, Suriname, and its key messages. This declaration calls on fellow parliamentarians, political leaders, civil society and multilateral



organizations, academia and all individuals in our hemisphere to urgently address climate change and to implement the Paris Agreement in line with the 2030 Agenda.

- Present the new ParIAmericas consultative [Guide on Green Parliaments](#) outlining how parliaments can lead by example and measure their current environmental footprint and undertake actions to improve their institutions' sustainability practices and environmental consciousness, thereby contributing to overall national emission reduction targets.
- Present the [Parliamentary Protocol for Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Change Adaptation](#) developed in collaboration with UNDRR to support parliamentarians in contributing to the implementation of the Sendai Framework and to provide tools for parliaments to help strengthen resilience and adaptive capacity to climate change.

- Learn about new developments and initiatives to mitigate and adapt to climate change across the world and discuss these issues with various stakeholders to develop potential partnerships and inform the planning for upcoming PNCC activities.

To achieve these overarching objectives, the ParlAmericas delegation participated in bilateral meetings, attended and participated in panels, and contributed a legislative perspective to the various official side sessions.

Senator Galvez attended a number of high-level side sessions and bilateral meetings. She was also given a private briefing with the Chief Negotiator of the Canadian COP25 team on the country's key negotiation topics. These included carbon market and non-market mechanisms and their accompanying rules, loss and damage, climate finance, the Gender Action Plan workplan, as well as the local communities and Indigenous people's platform. Senator Galvez also attended briefings and meetings in relation to achieving a just transition, receiving insights on what labour union were calling for at COP25.

Ms. Marín represented ParlAmericas in two official side sessions. The first was an event organized by the UNFCCC Global Climate Action at the Action Hub, Voluntary Carbon Management Programs – A Contribution to Mitigation through the Carbon Markets, in which she shared information about ParlAmericas' participation in the Climate Neutral Now initiative, as well as the launch of the consultative [Guide on Green Parliaments](#). She



additionally participated in the high-level panel, Just Transition towards an Inclusive Green Economy: A Driver for Ambitious Climate Action and SDGs, organized by the International Labour Organization. In addition, Ms. Marín and James Grabert, Director of the Sustainable Development Mechanisms, formally reaffirmed the MOU between ParlAmericas and UNFCCC.

Finally, during the second week of COP25, ParlAmericas was represented by Ms. Vega at the Parliamentary Breakfast hosted by the Global Renewable Congress. She presented in an official

side session organized by the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) and the Grantham Research Institute, Global Trends in Climate Legislation and Litigation: Enhancing Resilience and Adaptation, where she shared the [Protocol on Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Change Adaptation](#) that ParlAmericas developed in collaboration with UNDRR. Ms. Vega also attended the Parliamentary Meeting on the occasion of the COP, organized by IPU that was held at the Congress of Deputies of Spain, where she presented important work being advanced in the hemisphere on climate change and its linkages with gender equality and open parliament.

### Key messages from COP25

The following were points emphasized through ParlAmericas' participation at the COP:

1. All stakeholders and diverse actors are needed to combat climate change. There are public programs to encourage greater participation, such as voluntary carbon management programs that engage the private sector.
2. Countries should prepare to update and enhance their NDCs in consultation with civil society, being mindful of the participation and needs of women and youth, Indigenous peoples, people with disabilities, workers from traditionally unsustainable industries and marginalized communities.
3. Social justice, human rights and the 2030 Agenda should be outlined in the NDCs and in countries' national climate strategies. A just transition should be a focal point in these strategies to ensure that no one is left behind, as well as to allow for greater climate ambition.
4. Climate change legislation should have measures that allow for accountability and for more specificity, establishing a framework and instruments that will facilitate the achievement of the NDCs. Common instruments include the independent council to monitor progress and an expert council that provides evidence-based recommendations to the government.
5. There must be a commitment to create an enabling policy framework for renewable energy and to further accelerate the growth of renewable energy generation towards a 100% share within the coming years, and to embed this in a process built on the principles of public participation and just transition.



*It is essential to promote the active and inclusive participation of national and local governments, parliaments, international agencies, private sector and citizens in climate discussions so we can all contribute to the promotion of a just transition towards decarbonization.*



Member of the Legislative Assembly **Paola Vega**  
(Costa Rica), Vice-President of the PNCC for  
Central America



*We are here representing ParlAmericas, sharing our knowledge, but [also] learning about highly relevant topics such as a just transition [...] how we can continue to build green economies and [contribute] within our parliamentary spaces, policies that strengthen carbon neutrality.*



Member of the National Assembly **Ana Belén Marín**  
(Ecuador), President of the PNCC



*We were able to engage on the most pressing issues humanity faces today and focus our attention on how to transform energy, transportation, food and agricultural systems ... Legislators have unique responsibilities in helping raise the ambitions of their countries to foster the social dialogue necessary to address this urgent issue without furthering social divisions.*



Senator **Rosa Galvez** (Canada), Vice-President of the PNCC for North America

### Participation in Pre-COP25 in Costa Rica

ParlAmericas, in collaboration with the Legislative Assembly of Costa Rica and the UNFCCC Regional Center for Latin America and the Caribbean, organized a side session on the margins of Pre-COP25, which took place in San José, Costa Rica, from October 8 to 10.

The high-level side session, “Strengthening Climate Governance as a Tool to Achieve a Just Transition towards Decarbonization,” included the participation of Member of the Legislative Assembly **Paola Vega** (Costa Rica); Senator **Verónica Camino** (Mexico), Vice-President for North America of the Parliamentary Network for Gender Equality; Member of the Chamber of Deputies **Jorge Rathgeb** (Chile); **Haydée Rodríguez** (Costa Rica), Vice Minister of Water and Seas; **Ovais Sarmad**, Deputy Executive Secretary, UNFCCC; and **Andrea San Gil León** (Costa Rica), President of the Centre for Urban Sustainability.

The side event fostered a dynamic dialogue and exchange of good practices among diverse actors in relation to how effective and inclusive climate governance can contribute to achieving a just transition towards a decarbonized world. Panel discussions also emphasized the importance of having a gender perspective in the development of climate solutions that leave no one behind. The importance of including parliamentarians in national and regional climate discussions related to the transition towards a green economy was also highlighted.

# Thank you

for being part of ParlAmericas in 2019.

We look forward to building on these successes with your continued support!

## THE PARLAMERICAS TEAM

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Alisha Todd

Álvaro Terán

Anabella Zavagno

Andrea Marriaga

Andrés Mora

Christian Navarro

Eilish Elliott

Emilie Lemieux

Emilio Rodríguez

Jennifer Mowbray

Lisane Thirsk

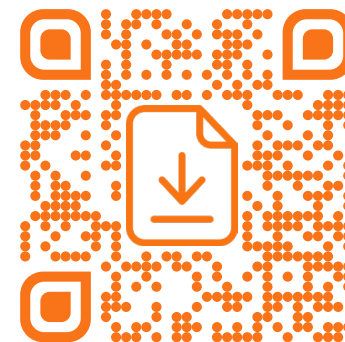
Lourdes Smith

Maria Boada

Mateusz Trybowski

Natalí Casanova





International Secretariat of ParlAmericas

703 - 155 Queen St., Ottawa, Ontario, K1P 6L1 Canada

Telephone: + 1 (613) 947-8999

[www.parlamericas.org](http://www.parlamericas.org) | [info@parlamericas.org](mailto:info@parlamericas.org)

