



# 4<sup>th</sup> Gathering of the Parliamentary Network on Climate Change

#ParlAmericasCC #TimeForAction

The 4<sup>th</sup> Gathering of the Parliamentary Network on Climate Change (PNCC) was hosted by the National Assembly of Suriname. It gathered 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.

## 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 SDG 11, 12, 13, 14, 15 and 17.



# Summary of the gathering

The keynote address was [delivered](#) by Ms. **Ana F. González Guerrero**, Co-Founder and Managing Director, Youth Climate Lab. Ms. González 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.



# Inauguration

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

The meeting allowed for a recognition to the outgoing president of the Parliamentary Network on Climate Change, Javier Ortega (Panama) for his leadership and years of service.

“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 ParlAmericas Board Member

“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 ParlAmericas Board Member

“A few years ago, all those who were immersed in this organization decided that the issue of climate change was important as a transversal topic in our discussions. We did it knowing that its importance was centered on the understanding that we human beings are the ones who have been destroying our planet. Sometimes we understand it, but we don't assimilate it so deeply as to develop actions that allow us to reverse the situation.”



**Javier Ortega**, Outgoing President of the PNCC



## Keynote address: A youth perspective on global climate action

**Ana F. González Guerrero**, representing [Youth Climate Lab](#) delivered a powerful speech reminding participants of the catastrophic climate reality the world is facing and how currently the actions laid out in the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) are not sufficient to meet the Paris Agreement targets as we are on a trajectory towards a global warming of 3°C – resulting in fatal impacts to many already vulnerable nations. Ms. González, however, noted that legislators, in partnership with other stakeholders such as youth, have the ability to influence and set ambitious targets and legislative frameworks to ensure that nations step up and create a world that is “inclusive, equitable, and prosperous.”

Throughout her address she noted examples and cases of how young people and in particular young women leaders are collaborating and doing their part to create climate solutions and to improve youth engagement. To conclude her address, she conducted a [survey](#) to assess the level of engagement participating parliamentarians have with youth. When revealing the results of the survey, she noted that most of the reported practices were related to informing youth and less reflected on building partnerships with them which she identified as an opportunity for more meaningful engagement and collaboration. Another product of the survey was a word cloud representing what participants thought of a youth-led climate action.



“We are concerned with the level and pace of action we’re not seeing. At this point, a slow win in climate change, is basically a loss... As the largest generation of young people in history, we want to be your partners in action. and let’s be real, you need us as partners. The key is intergenerational collaboration. I will say it again, young people can help – not just as stakeholders and voters, but as your partners and solution builders. We are the ones who will have to deal with either your successes or failures. Either we fail to clean up our mess or we inherit a cleaner, healthier and safer world from you.”



**Ana F. González Guerrero**,  
Co-Founder and Managing  
Director, Youth Climate Lab

The ways engaging youth extends the reach of a parliament’s message, beyond traditional channels:

- ➔ Allows for crowdsourcing and to de-risk ideas to accelerate innovative action
- ➔ Provides low-cost insights that consultants can’t create
- ➔ Helps build capacity and trains future leaders - the investments in youth today will pay dividends over decades



## Session 1: outcomes of cop24 (Poland) and preparations for cop25 (Chile)

The Conference of the Parties (COP), as part of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), occurs annually to oversee and promote the implementation of the Paris Agreement. These negotiations lay out a guiding framework for the climate agenda and national climate strategies for countries. Understanding the importance of these meetings, this session aimed to familiarize participants with the outcomes of COP24, in particular with the Katowice Climate Package – a set of modalities, procedures and guidelines for transparency that have implications on the national implementation of the Paris Agreement. It also aimed to bring insight on the main themes of the COP25 and how they can be applied to parliamentary work in the Americas and the Caribbean.

The session was moderated by Member of the National Assembly **Naomí Samidin** (Suriname). The first [presentation](#) on the outcomes of COP24 was conducted by **Carlos Fuller**, International and Regional Liaison Officer of the Caribbean Community Climate Change Centre and Chair of the Alliance of Small Island Nations. Mr. Fuller discussed the gravity of not reaching the 1.5°C target, especially for the Caribbean. As part of the Climate Package, Mr. Fuller explained the guidelines that were developed for the Transparency Framework that request parties to report their emissions and reductions, how NDCs are being implemented, the climate impacts that affects them and their adaptation strategy, the financial support they have provided or received, as well as the due dates for these reports and the Global Stocktake.

President of the Chamber of Deputies **Iván Flores** (Chile) [presented](#) the objective of [COP25](#). President Flores affirmed the climate crises and the role humans have played in creating it. He mentioned how COP25 will be a meeting that asks parties to bring concrete actions to not only raise ambition but to implement the Paris Agreement. [COP25](#) will highlight the topics of oceans, glaciers, biodiversity, forests, adaptation, cities, renewable energies, circular economy and electromobility. President Flores described how parliaments are essential to raising ambition, ensuring the rights of vulnerable communities are voiced and the necessity for parliaments to work with the Executive to create integral climate solutions. He reflected that only two countries in the world (Norway and Sweden) have enacted legislation to achieve climate neutrality and how this shows that there is a need for parliaments to take action. He concluded that Chile has committed to becoming climate neutral by 2050 and how this is an opportunity to work within the parliament to make this a reality. Since then, the Chamber of Deputies recently passed a [resolution](#) to submit a bill on carbon neutrality.



We only have until 2030 to reduce our emissions by 50% to achieve that 1.5°C target... 2020 must be the year when we get new NDCs, and these NDCs must be much more ambitious because the present NDCs lead us to a 3°C trajectory and we need to cut it significantly to achieve that 1.5°C. target.



**Carlos Fuller**, International and Regional Liaison Officer of the CCCCC and Chair of the Alliance of Small Island Nations

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



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.

## Key points of discussion

The presentations were followed by a dialogue session with participating parliamentarians who reflected on experiences and practices from their respective countries and brought forth some key points of discussion:

- The Global Stocktake will allow countries to specify what resources are needed and what is being provided, helping to identify what is required to enable developing countries to enact action;
- There is a quantitative data and information gap on the impacts of climate change on the Caribbean as well as a need to have improved early warning systems for these impacts;
- The Caribbean Institute for Meteorology and Hydrology hosts the [Caribbean Climate Outlook Forum](#) which produces regional climate outlook products that are useful for decision-makers;
- The contribution of emissions from Small Island Developing States (SIDS) is minimal compared to other developed countries yet SIDS are taking bold climate actions setting an example for the rest of the world that if they can do it then those countries with more resources can also take action;
- There is a difficulty in balancing economic growth and sustainable development but there is a need to ensure that environmental concerns are prioritized;
- Climate finance is difficult to access for some countries due to the high amounts of paperwork and resources required to apply to it.



## Highlights of countries taking innovative climate action

Member of the legislative Assembly **Paola Vega** (Costa Rica), President of the Special Permanent Commission for the Environment, [presented](#) Costa Rica's National Decarbonization Plan. Ms. Vega explained that despite this plan being put forward there is still internal opposition, but the country is determined to bring the plan to fruition - demonstrating the importance of political will. One of the ways Costa Rica is looking to overcome these obstacles is to view the plan through a business lens, showing how climate inaction will lead to losses in GDP. The plan aims to bring a green, emission free, resilient and equitable economy that leaves no one behind. She highlighted the different legislative reforms that are required to implement the plan, including a reform to the integral waste law and fuel law.

Sharing the experience of the Congress of Peru in the creation of a multi-party green caucus within parliament was Member of Congress **Ana María Choquehuanca**. During her [presentation](#) Ms. Choquehuanca, coordinator of the multi-party green caucus, shared the process and the steps by which the Congress under her leadership was able to make the green caucus a reality. She highlighted the importance of creating a group that foment green initiatives in the parliaments in collaboration with the Executive and relevant stakeholders that work in related initiatives.

Members of the National Assembly **Grace Watamaleo** and **Riad Nurmohamed** (Suriname), provided presentations on an overview of climate actions being taken by the parliament of Suriname. The [presentation](#) focused on the capacity building actions that the National Assembly has undertaken to increase the parliamentarians involvement and knowledge in climate change issues through field visits, reports and presentations from relevant stakeholders, as well as the establishment of a monthly climate change meeting or workshop. Ms. Watamaleo [presented](#) on the recent efforts the parliament has been working on in matters related to disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation.



“The fact that we are politicians in these spaces is important because we have to understand the relationship between private interests and the environment.”



Member of the  
Legislative Assembly  
**Paola Vega** (Costa  
Rica)

“We have to reverse the conditions that have kept us passive. Politics does not have to be an obstacle to the protection of the environment. Politics and political parties cannot, in themselves, be an impediment to guarantee the care of the environment, to guarantee the sustainable development and survival, in minimum conditions, of our citizens.”



Member of Congress  
**Ana María  
Choquehuanca** (Peru)

## Session 2: taking climate action and building resilience through the power of legislation

Session 2 was structured to examine where the Americas and the Caribbean are in terms of the state of the region's environment and the current and projected climate change impacts, the legislative actions undertaken to improve the quality of the environment, and how parliamentarians can increase or spread these good practices to advance sustainable development.

To commence the session **Keisha Garcia**, GEO-6 Expert and Former President of the Cropper Foundation provided a summary presentation on the [IPCC special report on the impacts of global warming of 1.5 °C](#) and the [GEO-6 report](#). The GEO reports, as explained by Ms. Garcia, are made up of regional assessments that feed into a global assessment that examines existing research on the environment, based on questions from stakeholders (such as policy makers). Ms. Garcia shared that climate change is negatively affecting ecosystem services and increasing the species extinction rate, water stress, number of extreme events and food insecurity. She emphasized the necessity to mainstream climate change considerations through all sectors.

As a Small Island State Antigua and Barbuda cannot change the world but we have decided to change the few square miles that we occupy and in so doing we would have began to change the world, my hope is that this Gathering will be another stepping stone to realize in a true global or at least a regional response to moving from a linear economy towards a circular one.



Deputy President of the Senate **Osbert Frederic**  
(Antigua and Barbuda)



There is a critical role for national governments to look at how they can undertake work at the national and subnational level to inform their policy and legislative frameworks... When preparing GEO and also IBIS reports, we sent invitations to policy makers to become engaged in the process, however the response rate was very low, so I do encourage you to become involved in these reporting processes and collaborate in an ongoing dialogue. The engagement between scientists and policy makers is the most important aspect of generating data and knowledge.



**Keisha Garcia**, GEO-6 Expert  
and Former President,  
Cropper Foundation





Following the opening presentation of the session, good legislative practices to address concrete thematic areas under the umbrella of climate change, were shared:

➡ Representative **César Pachón** (Colombia) discussed the topic of sustainable agriculture emphasizing the need to work with rural farmers protect their rights and encourage youth in agriculture. He mentioned the importance of Colombian Paramos and the need to protect such unique and necessary ecosystems that serves as a fresh water source for a significant percentage of the country's population.



➡ Member of the National Assembly **Ana Belén Marín** (Ecuador) presented Ecuador's experience and work in the drafting of the "Organic Law on Risk and Disaster Management" and how this legislation was aligned with the priorities of the Sendai Framework using the [Parliamentary Protocol for Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Change Adaptation](#) developed by ParlAmericas in collaboration with UNDRR.



➡ Professor Dr. **Sewnath Naipal** from Anton de Kom University (Suriname) discussed the impacts of a warming world such as sea level rise leading to more frequent flooding in low lying areas increased coastal wetland erosion and a change in water hydrology due to seawater penetration. To help with these impacts he demonstrated how mangroves are key species for climate adaptation as they help alleviate many of these impacts.



➡ Deputy President of the Senate **Osbert Richard Frederick** (Antigua and Barbuda) shared how climate change through disasters drastically impacted Antigua and Barbuda and therefore the critical need to undertake climate change mitigation. Senator Frederick shared his nations leadership in being the first country to ban single use plastics and the associated legislative actions used for its enforcement. Additionally its role in the launch of the [Antigua and Barbuda Declaration](#) to eliminate single use plastics.



➡ Senator the Honourable **David Wells** (Canada) shared the "Bow Tie Method" as a strategy to use for creating regulations that minimize environmental risks associated with resource extraction. Senator Wells noted the importance of having an objective-based approach rather than a prescriptive one to allow for better informed decision making and outcomes; Instead of providing industries with a checklist, regulation should focus on areas that should be evaluated. Parliamentarians have tools at there disposal to improve industry practices through legislation and regulatory frameworks and therefore positively influence industry.



## Session 3: overcoming the obstacles and seizing opportunities for implementing carbon market and non-market mechanisms

[Article 6 of the Paris Agreement](#) refers to market and non-market mechanisms and is still under debate and will be a point of discussion for the coming COP25. The objective of this session was to understand the differences between market and non-market mechanisms and learn how they can prove to be valuable to incentivize collaboration and uptake from diverse stakeholders to reduce carbon emissions and adapt to climate change.

**Carlos Ruiz-Garvia**, Coordinator of the UNFCCC Regional Collaboration Center for Latin America and Caribbean, [presented](#) an overview of the session's topics including key areas of the Paris Agreement and the role of the UNFCCC and the Regional collaboration center, as well as the benefits of article 6, and examples of carbon markets for climate mitigation in the region. Article 6, as explained by Mr. Ruiz-Garvia, can be used as a tool to induce cooperation among stakeholders, including the private sector, to implement the NDCs and decarbonize the economy, as well as to advance sustainable development through the framework of the NDCs. It also allows for accountability, by quantifying the actions taken by countries and through the Global Stocktake these actions can be measured to evaluate whether they are ambitious enough to meet the overarching goal of the Paris Agreement.

Member of the Chamber of Deputies **Nelly Lenz Roso** (Bolivia) [presented](#) an example of a non-market mechanism. She shared Bolivia's Law of Mother Earth and their work on protecting forest through a joint mechanism. Ms. Lenz in addition discussed an 'Indigenous Platform' (*Plataforma Indígena originaria campesina de lucha contra el cambio climático*) that allows for the inclusion of indigenous peoples into the creation of climate solutions.

In continuation, Speaker of the House of Assembly **Arthur E. Holder** (Barbados) provided another example of a non-market mechanism and [presented](#) Barbados' experience with using fiscal incentives to support the countries transition to renewable energy and reduce their dependency on fossil fuels by addressing supply and demand. Speaker Holder described the various [fiscal incentives used](#), encompassed under 8 pieces of legislation, to encourage homeowners, companies, shareholders, financial institutions to invest or use clean energy technologies.

You as parliamentarians can support not only the negotiation process, but once the results and the rules of article 6 are in place, monitor the correct implementation of these initiatives through legislative activity, but also monitor commitments that the governments put on the table within the framework of their NDCs.



**Carlos Ruiz-Garvia**, Regional Coordinator, Regional Collaboration Center - Latin America and Caribbean, UNFCCC





Following the presentations, Mr. Ruiz Garvia facilitated a dialogue among panellists and participants. Points of discussion include:

- the challenges of the regulation and control of market mechanisms, making note on how the enhanced transparency framework could help improve its accountability.
- The need to keep incentivizing the reduction in emissions to preserve environmental integrity and how a cost-benefit analysis can help validate this important work.
- Parliamentarians can play a crucial role in influencing the priorities of their countries' negotiating teams at COP by asking and becoming knowledgeable on what these priorities are and push for greater ambition.

“The participation of indigenous peoples is important to strengthen these alternative non-market approaches, it is essential to include indigenous peoples in the construction of climate change policy and in other aspects since from the perspective of Mother Earth and the healthy relationship between humans and nature are of complementarity and cooperation and not of market transaction.”



Member of the Chamber of Deputies **Nelly Lenz Roso**, (Bolivia)

“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), ParLAmericas Board Member



## Session 4: Raising ambition and accessing climate financing



The Paris Agreement dictates that developed nations should provide and mobilize climate finance to allow and assist developing country parties to mitigate and adapt to climate change. This session provided key information on what climate finance is, examined and discussed available funds for countries in the Americas and the Caribbean, and showed how capacity can be raised to make climate finance more accessible. At the start of the session, participants were shared ParlAmericas [Primer on Climate Financing: Mechanisms and Opportunities for Latin America and the Caribbean](#), a short publication that summarizes what Climate Finance is and the instruments and available sources of financing available.

Speaking to the demand to raise ambition, His Excellency Ambassador and Advisor to the Cabinet of the President – Coordination Environment **Robby Ramlakhan** (Suriname) [presented](#) how Suriname is stepping up to this challenge by implementing relevant and inclusive environmental policies and taking significant climate action. Ambassador Ramlakhan highlighted how Suriname is working on nature conservancy and protecting their forests – Suriname has 93% tree coverage - in order to benefit from the ecosystem services nature provides them. Similarly, he mentioned the [Krutu of Paramaribo Joint Declaration on HFLD Climate Finance Mobilization](#) that was adopted during the HFLD Conference on Climate Finance Mobilization that Suriname hosted.

Dr. **César Falconi**, Representative of the Inter-American Development Bank in Suriname [presented](#) on the funds made available by multilateral banks and how many have targets to have a certain percentage of their funds dedicated to climate change efforts. The IDB created [NDC invest](#), a resource to help countries transform their NDCs into achievable investment plans. Dr. Falconi noted that to access available climate financing there needs to be an awareness of one's capacity to access funds and have the ability to implement the project and obtain results. He emphasized that the public sector should become involved and highlighted that a popular strategy is through the use of green bonds.

Dr. **Victor Viñas**, Board member representing Latin America and the Caribbean in the Adaptation Fund and Green Climate Fund, both part of UNFCCC's Finance Mechanism, [presented](#) on the Climate Finance Mechanism. A focus of his presentation was loss and damage, and how there has been a strong demand from the Caribbean countries for its inclusion in the Paris Agreement, however, there is still opposition from some countries. He remarked that climate finance is complex and indeed difficult to obtain but that it is possible for small states to access these funds if they take advantage of the support and the already accredited institutions.





You have had and will continue to have all our support, remember as the cliché says I am one of your men on the Board, I am one of those men in the region. Use me, any questions, or anything. If your country does not have a representative in the Green Climate Fund or in the Adaptation Fund you can write to me and I can support you.



**Victor Viñas**, Board member representing Latin America and the Caribbean in the Adaptation Fund and Green Climate Fund

#### Following the presentations, participants highlighted:

- ➡ Some of the countries who would be applying, especially those with fewer resources, don't have the technical capacity and the time to apply to the available funding as there were too many bureaucratic steps;
- ➡ Strategic alliances should be made between organizations and/or among stakeholders to make projects more attractive to funding;
- ➡ Projects that incorporate a gender and youth analysis and respond to the needs of the most vulnerable groups are more likely to get financed;
- ➡ To attract more funding and encourage other stakeholders to contribute to a project, states can leverage their current funding to obtain more or similarly leverage their countries NDCs.



Climate change is important to us in our policy making, we cannot do as if climate change was not at our door. Everyday we feel the effects of climate change that's why we have included this specific issue in our environmental policy because we are of the opinion that you cannot talk about sustainable development without considering the impact of climate change... you cannot execute policy without having the necessary legislation to support it.



His Excellency Ambassador **Robby Ramlakhan**, Advisor to the Cabinet of the President – Coordination Environment (Suriname)



The success and the sustainability of climate financing efforts depends on a strong policy framework, parliaments using their representative and legislative oversight functions can be very useful to promote, to implement, and to monitor climate change efforts. Parliaments can help to influence funding to climate change and influence that the budget should include climate change efforts.



**César Falconi**, Inter-American Development Bank representative in Suriname

## 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. Professor **Dr. Naipal** shared with participants how he is using mangroves, through the *Building with Nature Project*, as a climate adaptation tool. Participants were able to see first hand 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.





## Parliaments Present



Antigua and  
Barbuda



Chile



El Salvador



Peru



Barbados



Colombia



Grenada



Saint Lucia



Bolivia



Costa Rica



Jamaica



Saint Vincent  
and the  
Grenadines



Canada



Ecuador



Mexico



Suriname

## Executive of the Parliamentary Network on Climate Change

During the gathering, all positions of the Executive Committee of the Network were up for election. The PNCC Executive Committee now consists of the following members:

### Ana Belén Marín

President

Member of the National Assembly, Ecuador

### Rosa Galvez

Vice President - North America

Senator, Canada

### Paola Vega Rodríguez

Vice President - Central America

Member of the Legislative Assembly, Costa Rica

### Andy Daniel

Vice President - Caribbean

Speaker of the House of Assembly, Saint Lucia

### Ana María Choquehuanca de Villanueva

Vice President - South America

Member of Congress, Peru

### Jennifer Simons

Alternate Vice President - South America

Speaker of the National Assembly, Suriname

Canada



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