

PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release

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Young Women of Jamaica Take Their Seats in Parliament

On February 21, 2023, young women from across Jamaica took part in a historic, all women parliamentary debate in the Houses of Parliament of Jamaica. This simulated parliamentary sitting marks the culmination of the Young Women in Leadership (YWiL) – Jamaica program organized by ParlAmericas and Caribbean Women in Leadership (CIWiL) in partnership with the Bureau of Gender Affairs in the Ministry of Culture, Gender, Entertainment and Sport and the Houses of Parliament.

The YWiL program seeks to support young women in preparing for current and future leadership roles by providing training and education on political leadership, encouraging consideration of leadership and service from a transformational perspective, and creating a space to foster supportive communities of women and other allies. Participants in the Jamaica program were nominated to take part due to their interests in gender equality and public leadership.

In preparation for the parliamentary sitting, and in line with program objectives, during the period of December 2022 to February 2023, the YWiLJA programme consisted of virtual and in-person training sessions focused on the program's core components: transformational leadership, gender equality and inclusive decision-making, parliamentary procedure, and strategies for effective leadership. All of the program's sessions were led by distinguished facilitators, including parliamentarians, civil society leaders, practitioners from various fields, and other leaders from Jamaica and across the region. Following the program's conclusion, participants are encouraged to share the learning and skills gained within their communities.

The YWiL Parliamentary Sitting was the first-ever all-women sitting in the Houses of Parliament of Jamaica and was being held in the framework of celebrations for International Women's Day 2023. Each participant served as a parliamentarian or officer of the parliament for a debate on a fictional motion that proposes the implementation of a national action plan to prioritize gender equality and women's economic empowerment, with focused attention on the education sector, care sector and digital transformation. Participants' contributions during the Sitting shared responses to the motion drawing on their expertise and research, and in line with their assigned role.

This initiative is one in a series of such activities organised in countries across the region, forming a core component of the ParlAmericas-CIWiL joint project to advance women's political participation in the Caribbean, supported by the Government of Canada through Global Affairs Canada. Prior YWiL initiatives have been hosted in Trinidad and Tobago, Antigua and Barbuda, and Saint Lucia.

Follow the meeting using #YWiLJA, or by visiting the @ParlAmericas and @_CIWiL social media pages.

ParlAmericas is the institution that promotes parliamentary diplomacy in the inter-American system. Composed of the 35 national legislatures in North, Central and South America, and the Caribbean, ParlAmericas promotes cooperative political dialogue, facilitates the exchange of good legislative practices, and produces tailored resources to support parliamentarians in their work. The International Secretariat of ParlAmericas is headquartered in Ottawa, Canada. For more information, visit www.parlAmericas.org or write to info@parlAmericas.org.

CIWiL is a non-partisan and independent, flagship networking organization committed to advancing women's transformational leadership, and to increase the numbers of women in leadership and decision making in political and civic life. CIWiL applies a multi-partisan approach, to promoting women's full and equal participation in all spheres through training, advocacy and research. CIWiL is headquartered in Trinidad and Tobago with a network of National Chapters throughout the region. For more information visit <https://ciwil.org> or contact us via info@ciwil.org