

## PRESS RELEASE

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### **Caribbean presiding officers participated in a working meeting on open parliament**

On November 1, ParlAmericas hosted the Working Meeting of Caribbean Presiding Officers on Open Parliament which brought together presiding officers, parliamentarians, and clerks from 11 countries of the Caribbean to explore possible next actions to implement legislative openness in the region based on priorities and challenges identified at a previous working meeting that took place in April this year.

Participants highlighted the importance of continuing high-level exchanges among presiding officers of the Caribbean to facilitate greater cooperation. It was emphasized that transparency and sharing information regarding standing orders, legislation and decisions adopted by parliaments, would be welcomed to deepen that cooperation. Likewise, the need to continue strengthening codes of ethics, spaces for interaction with citizens, and accountability mechanisms was discussed, and it was emphasized that gender-considerations should inform this work.

The Honourable Bridgid Annisette-George (Trinidad and Tobago), Speaker of the House of Representatives and Vice-President of ParlAmericas, welcomed all participants emphasizing that “we need to be leaders in our parliaments to cultivate a culture of continuous learning and improvement to ensure that our parliaments are leading by example for more inclusive, responsive and effective governance, especially as we confront the many complex challenges and opportunities that our countries are facing.”

The meeting was chaired by Arthur E. Holder (Barbados), Speaker of the House of Assembly and ParlAmericas Board Member, who stressed that “advancing on Open Parliament initiatives needs to be understood as working to improve our institutions to serve all of our citizens, and to do so we need to be conscious of how aspects of our institutional processes have gendered dimensions so that we are deliberate in developing actions that make our parliaments more accessible for both women and men equally.” The Honourable Marinus Bee (Suriname), Speaker of the National Assembly and ParlAmericas Board Member, concluded the meeting by stating that investing in open parliament means investing in strengthened legislatures that are preparing to work through mounting challenges, including building back from COVID-19 with stronger, more resilient societies.

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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](http://www.parlamericas.org) or write to [info@parlamericas.org](mailto:info@parlamericas.org).