

PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release

Ottawa, July 6, 2020

Senators and staff of the Senate of the Republic of Mexico participated in a webinar organized by the Open Parliament e-Network (OPeN) and the Mexican Senate on the importance of continuing to strengthen and advance the aims of the open parliament agenda, while considering the challenges posed by the current crisis.

On Monday, July 6, a webinar was held for staff and advisors of the Senate of the Republic of Mexico, with the aim of sharing Chile and Paraguay's experiences with open parliament action plans and discussing the progress made and challenges faced in further strengthening efforts toward parliamentary openness in Mexico. This webinar was organized by the Mexican Senate and OPeN, a consortium of international organizations that promote open parliament initiatives and actions around the world, represented on this occasion by ParlAmericas, the National Democratic Institute, and Directorio Legislativo.

Senator Mónica Fernández Balboa (Mexico), President of the Senate of the Republic, and Senator Blanca Ovelar (Paraguay), President of the ParlAmericas Open Parliament Network and member of the OPeN Parliamentary Leadership Committee, inaugurated the event. Senator Mónica Fernández welcomed the participants, highlighting that “an open parliament fosters democratic values, which is why parliaments need to encourage communication channels and forums that ensure and promote transparency, accountability, citizen engagement, and ethics.” Likewise, Senator Blanca Ovelar stressed the importance of continuing to promote the open parliament agenda, highlighting collaboration with civil society and the work of parliamentary staff as key drivers toward this end: “Parliamentary staff play a key role in the sustainability and effective implementation of open parliament action plans, commitments, and initiatives, which is why ParlAmericas created the Parliamentary Staff Network on Open Parliament.”

The webinar proceeded with a discussion on open parliament actions in Chile and Paraguay, with presentations by Luis Rojas, Deputy Secretary of the Chamber of Deputies of Chile, and María Liz Sosa, Director General for Legislative Strengthening and External Cooperation of the Chamber of Senators of Paraguay. The floor was then given to the representatives of various Mexican institutions and organizations, who shared their views on ongoing endeavours, as well as opportunities for further collaboration on the open parliament agenda. This segment was moderated by Verónica Camino (Mexico), Vice-President of the ParlAmericas Parliamentary Network for Gender Equality, and included the participation of Jaime Mena Álvarez, Director General of Parliamentary Support for the Senate, who offered an overview of recent developments around parliamentary openness in the Mexican Senate; Professor Khemvirg Puente of the National Autonomous University of Mexico, who addressed the progress and challenges in working toward openness in the country; Claudia Ramírez, Co-Coordinator of the Unit for the Transformation of Congresses of Transparencia Mexicana, who spoke about the open parliament experiences of Mexican civil society organizations; and Blanca Lilia Ibarra, Commissioner of the National Institute for Access to Information and Data Protection of Mexico (INAI), who presented the Open Government Action Plan in Mexico and emphasized the value of collaboration between the three branches of government.

After a question and answer period that allowed for an exchange between panellists and participants, Senator Antares Vázquez (Mexico), member of the ParlAmericas Board of Directors, gave the closing remarks, encouraging further progress in reforms related to the open parliament agenda in Mexico.

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The Open Parliament e-Network (OPeN) is a consortium of international and civil society organizations composed of ParlAmericas, National Democratic Institute, Latin American Legislative Transparency Network, Westminster Foundation for Democracy, Directorio Legislativo, and Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE). These organizations have come together to coordinate global efforts to advance legislative openness and contribute to global progress towards Sustainable Development Goal 16 to build strong institutions.

