

PRESS RELEASE

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Parliamentarians and parliamentary staff of the Americas participate in a virtual meeting to discuss strategies to build back better and integrate key climate change and environmental considerations into economic recovery plans.

On Friday, July 10th, ParlAmericas held a virtual meeting hosted by the Chamber of Deputies of Chile on the importance of building back better for a green and sustainable economic recovery from COVID-19. Parliamentarians and parliamentary staff from 14 countries in the Americas attended the virtual gathering.

Speaker of the Chamber of Deputies Diego Paulsen (Chile) opened the meeting by welcoming the panelists and attendees and remarking on the opportunities that could be generated from a green recovery in the region: “It is essential that governments seriously commit to the United Nation’s Sustainable Development Goals, the 2030 Agenda, which constitutes a roadmap for the next decade that ensures economic development with social well-being and environmental equilibrium. This transformation, far from halting economic growth, represents an opportunity for real development with equity and the generation of new green jobs in Latin America.”

Member of the National Assembly Elizabeth Cabezas (Ecuador), President of ParlAmericas also gave welcoming remarks, highlighting the role of legislators in responses to COVID-19: “As parliamentarians we have a very important role in the transition occurring in our countries, which ranges from responding to the immediate impacts of this pandemic to addressing the recovery and reconstruction of our societies. We have the opportunity to make changes that allow for a redefinition of our systems and their objectives, as well as invest in green sectors and reorient our economies to work for the environment.”

The expert panel was moderated by Member of the National Assembly Ana Belén Marín (Ecuador), President of the ParlAmericas Parliamentary Network on Climate Change, who emphasized that climate action should not be sidelined in recovery processes: “This year, each country is responsible for updating their respective Nationally Determined Contributions which outline the actions that will be carried out to curb climate change in line with the Paris Agreement. Parliament plays an important role in this process to guarantee that the measures adopted within these plans are increasingly ambitious, robust, and pragmatic, giving special consideration to the most vulnerable populations.”

In their interventions, the panelists covered a range of topics connected to the broader theme of building back better. Director of the United Nations Environment Programme – Latin America and the Caribbean Office, Leo Heileman, provided an overview of the impact of the pandemic on climate change and how the Paris Agreement and the 2030 Agenda could serve as frameworks for achieving a sustainable recovery; Raul Salazar, Chief of the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction – Regional Office for the Americas and the Caribbean, outlined lessons to be learned from COVID-19 to improve disaster risk management and community resilience; and doctoral candidates Brian O’Callaghan

and Alex Clark from the University of Oxford shared climate policy recommendations that are aligned with economic recovery goals.

Following the presentations, Member of the National Assembly Ana Belén Marín moderated a discussion period, allowing participants to ask the panel questions and share experiences from their respective countries. The meeting concluded with closing remarks from Member of the Legislative Assembly Paola Vega (Costa Rica), Vice-President of the ParlAmericas Parliamentary Network on Climate Change – Central America, who thanked panelists and participants for a fruitful and timely dialogue.

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