



## THEME

Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Change Adaptation

## LOCATION

Panama City, Panama

## DATE

February 22-23 2018

## PARTICIPANTS

23 parliamentarians from 16 countries, 4 international organizations specialists and 1 network of civil society organizations



This activity aligned with SDGs 1, 5, 9, 11 and 13.

# DIALOGUE ON DISASTER RISK REDUCTION

[#ParlAmericasCC](#) [#Switch2Sendai](#)

This activity was organized by the [ParlAmericas Parliamentary Network on Climate Change](#) in collaboration with the [United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction \(UNISDR\)](#). It convened parliamentarians from across the Americas and the Caribbean with representatives from civil society and international organizations in dialogue sessions and a field visit to exchange good practices and promote risk-informed decision-making and legislation for disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation.

This dialogue builds on a Cooperation Agreement and marked the first activity of a joint work plan between ParlAmericas and the UNISDR to develop a new Parliamentary Protocol on Disaster Risk Reduction and Adaptation that will serve as a guide for parliaments in the hemisphere to align legislative work on disasters to the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction.

The dialogue was opened by Member of the National Assembly **Javier Ortega** (Panama), President of the ParlAmericas Parliamentary Network on Climate Change; Member of the National Assembly **Mariela Vega** (Panama); **Karine Asselin**, Ambassador of Canada to Panama; and **Raúl Salazar**, Head of the UNISDR Regional Office for the Americas. **Dr. Jose Di Bella**, Climate Change Program Manager, then introduced the dialogue by describing its linkages to the principles of the [ParlAmericas Climate Change and Sustainability Program](#).



Member of the National Assembly **JAVIER ORTEGA** (Panama), President of the ParlAmericas Parliamentary Network on Climate Change

*"As parliamentarians, we have the critical responsibility to advance this agenda and take measures that support disaster risk reduction commitments in national policies, action plans, programs and budgets at all levels, as well as examine the relevant legal frameworks. The meeting represents a decisive step on the path that ParlAmericas, together with the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction have established to promote parliamentary actions aimed at reducing the causes of vulnerability in our countries, cities, and communities."*

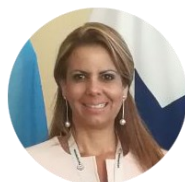
## FIVE PRINCIPLES OF THE PARLAMERICAS CLIMATE CHANGE PROGRAM

1. Climate Science for Parliamentarians
2. Alignment to International Frameworks
3. Alliances and Partnerships
4. Active Field Engagement
5. Gender Inclusive Dialogue and Action

*"Canada stands in solidarity with the many countries affected by disasters, recently announcing support for reconstruction and climate resilience efforts in the Caribbean region over the next five years. This pledge will help national governments build back better and strengthen national adaptation capacities."*



**KARINE ASSELIN**,  
Ambassador of  
Canada to Panama



Member of the  
National Assembly  
**MARIELA VEGA**  
(Panama)

*"The incorporation of disaster risk management into development planning can reverse the current trend of increasing impacts of disaster events. More than two-thirds of the world's population will live in cities before the year 2050, and if countries act decisively, lives can be saved and assets protected. However, many nations do not have the tools, experience or mechanisms to incorporate disaster risk reduction into their investment decisions. Parliaments understand the importance of supporting, through legislative work, the commitments of their governments and international organizations in disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation. "*

## THE SENDAI FRAMEWORK FOR DISASTER RISK REDUCTION:

The Sendai Framework was adopted by UN Member States on 18 March 2015 at the Third UN World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction in Sendai City, Miyagi Prefecture, Japan.

The Sendai Framework is a 15-year, voluntary, non-binding agreement which recognizes that the State has the primary role to reduce disaster risk but that responsibility should be shared with other stakeholders including local governments, the private sector and other stakeholders. It aims for the substantial reduction of disaster risk and losses in lives, livelihoods and health and in the economic, physical, social, cultural and environmental assets of persons, businesses, communities and countries.



**RAUL SALAZAR**, Head  
of Regional Office,  
United Nations Office  
for Disaster Risk  
Reduction - The  
Americas

*"The Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction is explicit in mentioning the role of parliamentarians in promoting institutional debates that allow the elaboration and incorporation of disaster risk reduction in national and local legislative frameworks. This event seeks to advance the role of parliamentarians in disaster risk reduction at the regional level while strengthening the contributions of parliamentarians of the region at the global level."*

# BASIC CONCEPTS OF DISASTER RISK REDUCTION AND CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION

The first session of the dialogue, led by **Pilar Moraga**, Professor at the [Centre for Environmental Law at the University of Chile](#), introduced participants to the institutional framework, economic instruments and principal actors involved in disaster risk reduction and provided an overview of climate change laws in different countries across Latin America and the Caribbean.

Professor Moraga highlighted the critical role of parliamentarians in creating social and political consensus around disaster risk reduction policies and strategies, in promoting policy stability for maintained progress on this agenda, and in enabling legislation to facilitate related financial investments.

## Disaster Risk Legislation in Latin America and the Caribbean



*“Planetary warming exacerbates the risks of disasters, especially in vulnerable countries. Disaster risk reduction requires that national and local regulations look at prevention in the long-term perspective and strengthen the population's capacities to face the new challenges adequately to build a more resilient society for future generations.”*



**PILAR MORAGA**, Professor,  
Centre for Environmental  
Law and Principal  
Researcher, [Centre for  
Climate Science and  
Resilience, University of Chile](#)

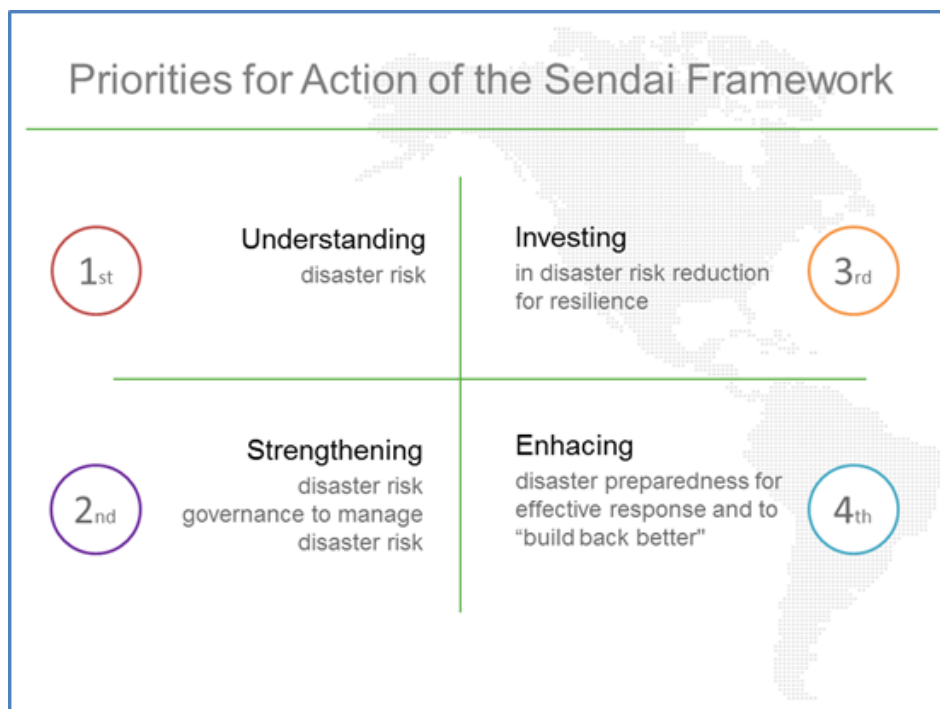
For more information related to the work of the PNCC, contact the  
ParlAmericas Climate Change Program:  
[parlAmericascc@parlAmericas.org](mailto:parlAmericascc@parlAmericas.org)

# THE SENDAI FRAMEWORK FOR DISASTER RISK REDUCTION 2015-2030

The second session of the dialogue, led by **Raúl Salazar**, Head of the UNISDR Regional Office for the Americas, presented the goals, objectives, priorities for action, and principles of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, and their relationship with the sustainable development and climate change adaptation agendas.

Mr. Salazar described the importance of integrating disaster risk reduction into sustainability planning and of addressing climate change as one of the drivers of disaster risk. Participants then considered ways in which national parliaments can support the integration of disaster risk reduction measures in consultations, legislative actions, national budgets and oversight of government programs.

This dialogue focused on the importance of developing and strengthening, as appropriate, mechanisms to periodically assess and publicly report on national and local disaster reduction plans; and of promoting public scrutiny and parliamentary debates on related progress in addressing vulnerability and advancing disaster risk reduction measures.



# DISASTER RISK REDUCTION, CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION AND THE PARIS AGREEMENT

The third session of the dialogue focused on linkages between the disaster risk reduction agenda and Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) of countries under the Paris Agreement, and the importance of gender responsive measures.

**Cayetano Casado**, Regional Specialist for Latin America and the Caribbean in the [NDC Partnership, UNFCCC Regional Collaboration Centre - Panama](#), explained the process to formulate and implement National Adaptation Plans (NAPs) and provided a broad overview of approaches to integrate adaptation, sustainable development and disaster risk reduction in public policy. He emphasized that the adaptation agenda currently faces challenges that require embedding of climate change considerations into various existing (or new) sectoral laws and policies to advance adaptation planning at the national and subnational levels.

*“The Latin America and the Caribbean region is very vulnerable to the impacts of climate change and it recognizes the importance of adapting to these impacts to achieve the preservation of the development gains obtained in recent decades and to ensure sustainable development of communities and nations in the future. The NDC Partnership is here to assist countries to accelerate the achievement of the NDC’s through the facilitation of technical and financial support, knowledge management and learning.”*



**CAYETANO CASADO**,  
Regional Specialist for  
Latin America and the  
Caribbean, NDC  
Partnership, UNFCCC  
Regional Collaboration  
Centre Panama

**Alma Perez**, Regional Advisor on Peace and Security and Humanitarian Action at [UN Women](#), in turn, described how UN Women is working to strengthen community resilience to natural hazards in a changing climate by addressing gender inequality that exists in disaster situations, both in terms of impacts, and in the response and recovery of women, men, girls, and boys. Ms. Perez explained that all forms of violence against women and girls reach peak levels in disaster situations and highlighted the differentiated impacts of disasters on women based on gender roles.

To operationalize and achieve the gender commitments under the Sendai framework, Ms. Perez urged national parliaments and governments to: strengthen women’s capacity to respond to and recover from disasters, promote women's leadership and participation in decision-making on disaster risk reduction, and conduct analyses to better understand the gendered dimensions of risk and corresponding measures to reduce and manage these risks.



**ALMA PEREZ**,  
Regional Advisor on Peace and  
Security and Humanitarian  
Action, UN Women

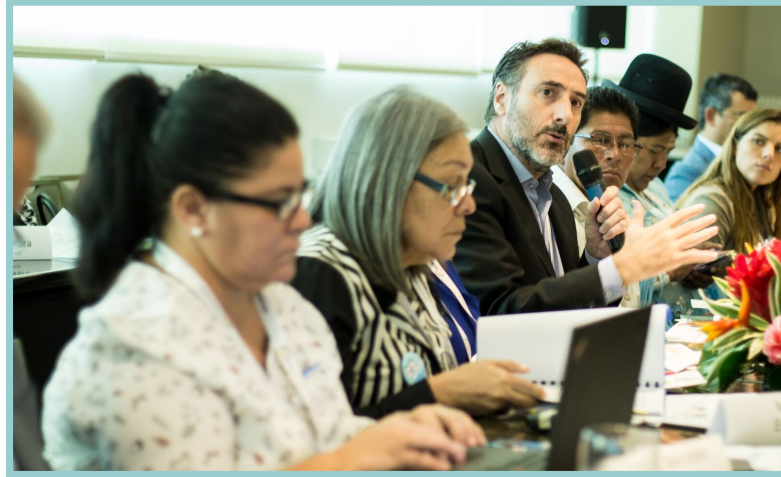
*“The lack of access to information and resources place women in a situation of particular vulnerability to natural disasters. Effective prevention and response require normative frameworks to make visible the voices of women, ensure their protection, recognize their leadership and include them as an active part in disaster risk reduction and recovery initiatives.”*

## INTER-PARLIAMENTARY DIALOGUE

Throughout each of the sessions, the parliamentarians in attendance contributed their questions, insights and perspectives. This sharing of best practices and lessons learned from the experiences within their respective countries anchored the concepts and issues being discussed in concrete, real-life examples.

Delegates highlighted the need for parliamentarians to take an active role in communicating with citizens about climate risk, noting that information is critical to build adaptation capacities in their communities. They emphasized the essential role of parliamentarians to advance the implementation of Paris Agreement commitments within their own countries. Delegates also acknowledged the need to promote actions at the local level, where the impacts of climate change are experienced, and where the effects of natural disasters translate into material and human losses.





# EXPERIENCES AND LESSONS LEARNED BY CIVIL SOCIETY IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF DISASTER RISK REDUCTION AND CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION PLANS

The fourth session of the dialogue was led by **María Bastías**, Regional Coordinator for the [Global Network of Civil Society Organizations for Disaster Reduction](#) who shared civil society experiences with the implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, and its predecessor Hyogo Framework.

In her exchange with parliamentarians, Ms. Bastías also reflected on the importance of collecting frontline perceptions held about disaster risk and related challenges, as experienced by individuals at the local community level, to inform improved public education campaigns, agricultural techniques, investments in infrastructure and major emergency response systems. This spurred a discussion on ways in which parliamentarians can work with civil society to assist in reducing the underlying causes of vulnerability that elevate levels of risk in communities – most notably in urban areas where 80% of the hemisphere's population resides.

*“The links and commitments of CSOs at the local level generate advantages that contribute to achieving a greater impact on the implementation of the Sendai Framework in local communities. The alliance with key actors, such as Parliamentarians, can contribute to putting frontline voices of risk in decision-making spaces, and systematically incorporate local realities in legislative work. There will be no resilient Nations without resilient communities.”*



**MARÍA BASTÍAS**,  
Regional Coordinator for  
Latin America and  
Caribbean, [Global  
Network of Civil  
Society Organizations  
for Disaster Reduction](#)



## CASE STUDIES AND LEGISLATION ON DISASTER RISK REDUCTION

The fifth session of the dialogue was led by Speaker of the House of Representatives **Bridgid Annisette-George** (Trinidad and Tobago), Member of the Chamber of Representatives **Darcy De Los Santos** (Uruguay), and Senator **Máxima Apaza** (Bolivia), who explored similarities and differences in national regulatory frameworks for disaster risk reduction.

The panelists presented on the current status of disaster risk reduction and adaptation legislation in their countries, and shared personal experiences on effective practices and community engagements to strengthen disaster risk reduction governance and local institutions. For example, in the case from Trinidad and Tobago, Speaker **Hon. Annisette-George** presented the legal framework in her country that regulates disaster risk reduction, including a wide range of thematic laws, such as the Disaster Measures Act, the Municipal Corporations act, the Regional Health Authorities Act and the Water and Sewage Act. The presentation fostered an engaged discussion on parliamentary work to address legislative gaps to strengthen national disaster risk reduction capabilities.

In the course of this discussion, Senator **Máxima Apaza** (Bolivia) made a notable emphasis on the role of traditional knowledge and local practices as critical knowledge systems that can inform legislation and national policies.



Member of the  
Chamber of  
Representatives  
**DARCY DE LOS  
SANTOS**  
(Uruguay)

*"The smaller the community, the easier it is for governance to be effective and to promote the participation of civil society. The State is the guarantor of the resources for risk reduction and involving civil society organizations contributes an element of social control to the distribution of these resources. Allowing transparent access to disaster risk reduction planning to make informed and inclusive decisions is less expensive than later rebuilding homes or infrastructure built in high-risk areas due to poor decisions. In each parliament we must be attentive to what society demands."*

*"Not only one country suffers the effects of global warming, but several countries do, in one way or another, and we need to work without seeing the political colors, without seeing the political acronym, we need to see from the human point of view, which is important to collaborate, we are working along this line of thinking in Bolivia, within the legislature, the executive and social organizations."*



Senator  
**MÁXIMA APAZA**  
(Bolivia)

*"As legislators, in our communities we must lead our constituents in the identification of the relevant threats, educate our constituents about their role in minimizing the occurrence of threats and organize our constituents to be responsive to the impacts of threats. In our legislatures, we must advocate that all laws and policies are premised on and promote resilience and ensure that our budgets are adequately financed to support and oversee executive actions for compliance with Risk Reduction Management."*



Speaker, **Hon. BRIDGID  
ANNISETTE-GEORGE**  
(Trinidad and Tobago)

## COASTAL CLIMATE RISK IN AN URBAN CONTEXT

To further explore the role of local and civil society organizations and promote an integral view of disaster risk reduction, a field visit and briefing activity was organized with experts from the [National Civil Protection System of Panama \(SINAPROC\)](#).

This activity provided parliamentarians with an opportunity to observe different dimensions of climate risk in an urban coastal community site and relate these to concepts discussed in the earlier sessions of the dialogue, as well as their own experiences with disaster risk assessments in their countries.

The onsite briefing and discussion focused on the diverse impacts of climate change on local communities, potential adaptation options, and the relationship between national-level legislation, urban planning regulations and disaster risk management systems.

Parliamentarians reflected on different types of climate and disaster risks in their communities, and the possible impacts of climate change on coastal communities within their respective countries.

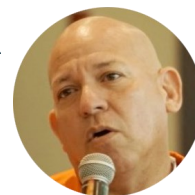


*"The knowledge that I have obtained through this conference will impact my work so that I can bring what I learned to Parliament so that we can start to implement improvements to our National disaster reduction and relief protocols."*



Member of  
Parliament **DAN  
RUIMY** (Canada)

*"The most important thing is that public policies integrate climate change and adaptation strategies in countries like ours, where climate variability affects communities. The Sendai Framework gives us four priorities: knowing the risk, governance, investment and preparing for the response. It is important that our authorities understand these concepts and know that empowerment is the basis of good preparedness and response to disasters. Therefore we must call for laws that align with the conceptual framework of disaster risk reduction."*



**REYES JIMENEZ**,  
National Coordinator  
of Disaster Risk Unit,  
SINAPROC



# PARLIAMENTARY ACTIONS TO SUPPORT THE IMPLEMENTATION OF DISASTER RISK REDUCTION MEASURES AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF A NEW PARLIAMENTARY PROTOCOL FOR DISASTER RISK REDUCTION

In this closing session of the dialogue, participants broke into working groups to review and present on concrete legislative actions that can be taken to promote and facilitate the implementation of disaster risk reduction measures.

Parliamentarians examined the four priorities of the Sendai Framework to contribute to the development of a matrix of parliamentary actions to advance in each of the different pillars for disaster risk reduction. Guided by a draft working document, discussions were held in small-groups followed by a report-back session, where parliamentarians highlighted the experiences shared on reducing disaster risk in the different countries, and efforts to strengthen local governance by promoting participatory processes on disaster risk reduction.

Through this working session, parliamentarians emphasized the importance of undertaking disaster risk assessments with the participation of local governments, communities and academic institutions to inform new legislation. They also stressed the importance of having disaggregated data to inform policymaking and for reviewing annual national budgets to assure public investments into disaster risk funds, disaster management agencies, and new technologies, such as early warning systems. Parliamentarians also advocated for evaluations on disaster risk responses and programming that applies an intersectional gender perspective to understand the differential capacities and needs in the context of disaster risk, and stated they considered as a critical priority to review building codes and national infrastructure plans to assure governments integrate disaster



This session informed a matrix of parliamentary actions that contribute to the four priorities of the Sendai Framework which can be downloaded [on the Climate Change Program Section of the ParlAmericas website](#).

Through this working session, participants also provided inputs to the new Parliamentary Protocol on Disaster Risk Reduction and Adaptation for the hemisphere that is being developed by ParlAmericas and the UNISDR.



Find ParlAmericas on [iTunes](#) and [Google Play](#) to listen to podcasts of the keynote address and some of the expert presentations, as well as presentations from past gatherings held across the hemisphere.

## Matrix of Parliamentary Actions to support the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction

Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction Priorities for Action			
Priority 1 Understanding Disaster Risk	Priority 2 Strengthening disaster risk governance	Priority 3 Investing in disaster risk reduction for resilience	Priority 4 Enhancing disaster preparedness and “build back better” in recovery, rehabilitation and reconstruction
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Request disaster risk assessments from local government or relevant ministries to inform response measures. Advocate for these assessments to apply an intersectional gender lens in order to analyze differential capacities and needs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Monitor and ensure mainstreaming disaster risk is considered in all sectoral legislation, programs and policies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promote investments in disaster risk assessments undertaken by local organizations, academic institutions and local governments</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review spending on reconstruction programs and plans</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encourage local organizations and institutions to build knowledge on disaster risks, share experiences, lessons learned and good practices in the community to reduce risk</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Visit local organizations working on disaster risks reduction and request local briefings and dialogues to inform your work. Ensure grassroots women's organizations are represented and that their perspectives are included in all dialogues</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Seek resources – including financial – to be allocated at all levels of administration to develop and implement disaster risk measures.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Request reports and information from local government or relevant ministries on disaster preparedness and contingency policies, plans and programs</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Communicate local disaster risk to national governments, citizens and local institutions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strengthen when possible mechanisms to assess and publicly report on investments, expenses and progress reports on disaster risk measures</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promote disaster risk assessments into land use regulations and legislation that influences urban planning</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promote in your district regular disaster preparedness, response and recovery exercises</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review and study disaster losses in your district or city, and the impacts on different sectors of the population and the environment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Involve local community representatives in decision-making processes and decision making on any disaster risk reduction discussions, including women and traditionally marginalized groups in a meaningful way</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promote legislation that creates incentives for the private sector to develop micro insurance programs for small businesses in urban and rural contexts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strengthen women's representation and involvement in recovery planning / decision making through inclusion in public forums or dialogues during post disaster recovery and reconstruction processes</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promote use of risk maps and visual tools to communicate to the general public and communities about local risks, including use of data from community mapping that captures gender specific capacities, vulnerabilities, management procedures</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop legal frameworks where appropriate, that ensure participation and inclusion of all stakeholders</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review health legislation to mainstream disaster risk management planning into infrastructure and primary health services, and women's &amp; children's access to health services during disaster recovery and reconstruction stages</li> </ul>	

## PARLIAMENTS IN ATTENDANCE



ANTIGUA AND  
BARBUDA



ARGENTINA



BOLIVIA



CANADA



CHILE



CUBA



GUATEMALA



HONDURAS



MEXICO



NICARAGUA



PANAMA



SAINT KITTS AND  
NEVIS



SAINT LUCIA



SURINAME



TRINIDAD AND  
TOBAGO



URUGUAY

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Canada



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## PARLAMERICAS



ParlAmericas is the institution that promotes **PARLIAMENTARY DIPLOMACY** in the **INTER-AMERICAN SYSTEM**



ParlAmericas is composed of the **NATIONAL LEGISLATURES** from North, Central and South America and the Caribbean



ParlAmericas facilitates the exchange of parliamentary **BEST PRACTICES** and promotes **COOPERATIVE POLITICAL DIALOGUE**



ParlAmericas mainstreams **GENDER EQUALITY** by advocating for women's political empowerment and the application of a gender lens in legislative work



ParlAmericas fosters **OPEN PARLIAMENTS** by advancing the principles of transparency, accountability, citizen participation, ethics and probity



ParlAmericas promotes policies and legislative measures to mitigate and adapt to the effects of **CLIMATE CHANGE**



ParlAmericas works towards strengthening democracy and governance by accompanying **ELECTORAL PROCESSES**



ParlAmericas is headquartered in **OTTAWA, CANADA**