



Parliamentary Action Points and Summary of Activities for the ParlAmericas Delegation at the Gender Equality Forum and the SIDS International Conference on SIDS

The ParlAmericas delegation of 14 parliamentarians representing ten countries from the Caribbean participated in a five-day program in Antigua and Barbuda for the Small Island Developing States (SIDS) [Gender Equality Forum](#) from May 25-26, organized by UN Women, as well as the [4th International Conference on SIDS](#), which took place May 27-30, 2024.

The events provided participants a space to engage in multi-stakeholder discussions on the path towards resilient prosperity and served as a platform for debate on the distinctive challenges that hinder gender equality and women’s empowerment in Small Island Developing States.

SIDS Gender Equality Forum

In the framework of the SIDS Gender Equality Forum, the delegation took part in high-level panels and open-dialogue discussions. Through their participation, delegates highlighted the importance of women’s leadership and the role of institutions on the gender equality and SIDS agendas; how gender equality and SIDS issues can be integrated into other international agreements; the manner in which the implementation of the commitments made at the GEF and SIDS can be inclusive of youth, and other stakeholders; and ways to effectively track and communicate progress on SIDS commitments.

As part of the GEF, a [final Communiqué](#) was issued to inform and contribute to the 4th International Conference on Small Island Developing States; it also provides a summary of the forum’s discussions. The Communiqué notes the importance of not viewing SIDS issues in isolation and taking into account the needs, perspectives, and agency of women and girls in the drive to achieve sustainable development, including through protection of human rights, provision of economic opportunities, and transformative leadership.

4th International Conference on SIDS

In the framework of the 4th International Conference on SIDS, ParlAmericas, jointly with Parliamentarians for Global Action (PGA), hosted the side event “[Empowering Action on the Escazú Agreement: A Parliamentarians & Civil Society Dialogue](#),” which brought together parliamentarians and civil society representatives from the Caribbean SIDS for a dialogue on the [Escazú Agreement](#) as a critical framework for effective and inclusive environmental governance that contributes to the region’s sustainable growth.

Participating delegates also observed parts of the official plenary sessions and partook in the [side events](#) of the Conference, which discussed topics such as disaster preparedness, economic revitalization, resilient digital networks, and enhancing the role of the private sector, among others. In addition, they had a bilateral meeting with Dr. Carolina SantaCruz-Pérez, Science Officer for the Latin American and Caribbean Region of the [International Science Council](#), who presented a pilot project the organization will launch in collaboration with ParlAmericas to facilitate connections between scientific experts and parliamentarians to support concrete legislative actions.

At the close of the SIDS Conference, an [Outcome Document](#) was released that focuses on resilient prosperity. Themes of focus include building resilient economies; fostering healthy and prosperous societies; ensuring water, food, and energy security; planetary sustainability and sustainable use of resources; and strengthening data collection, storage and analysis.

Parliamentary Action Points

Concrete actions parliamentarians can take in support of the priority issues addressed at the GEF and the SIDS Conference include:

1. **Raising awareness of national commitments:** Request that your country’s government officials and/or national negotiation team for SIDS4 present the national commitments made at the SIDS conference to Parliament. Delegates’ key learnings from participating in SIDS activities can also be shared with parliamentary colleagues, government representatives, and other groups to raise awareness of the conference and its outcomes.
2. **Integrating gender perspectives in international agreements:** Advocate to the national negotiating teams of future international/regional conferences to push for gender-responsive outcome documents and commitments that build on other adopted agreements and which include accountability frameworks such as timelines and implementation targets. The ParlAmericas [guide on the gender dimensions of development issues](#) in Caribbean SIDS can aid in advocacy on why a gender equality focus is important in negotiations on diverse themes not often seen as gender issues.
3. **Assessing budget allocation to support the implementation of commitments:** Ensure that the investments outlined in national budgets presented to parliament reflect commitments related

to sustainable development and gender equality, with sufficient resources allocated to support the implementation of strong responses to priority issues.

4. **Creating meaningful partnerships with civil society, private sector, academia, and youth:** Strengthen alliances with government gender machineries, women's movements, young women, feminist organizations, human rights defenders, and climate and environmental defenders to inform legislative work. Explore opportunities as well for these actors to become more engaged in areas of parliament's work as a whole to promote awareness, develop internal capacities, build political commitments, leverage knowledge sharing, and take action to foster gender equality and women's empowerment. Effort should be made that these collaborations also include men in the conversations to accentuate that gender issues include all.
5. **Reviewing the gender-sensitivity of climate legislation:** Assess if new and existing climate legislation and policies are gender sensitive or if reforms/amendments could strengthen their responsiveness to the gender dimensions of the issue of focus. To support these efforts, assess whether there are initiatives in place or that could be taken to improve collection of and access to disaggregated data.
6. **Combating gender-based violence:** Strengthen legislative and policy frameworks to address gender-based violence, as one of the most insidious and devastating forms of gender inequality. This requires, among other actions, ensuring the necessary services, pathways, and infrastructure (such as safe spaces, shelters, and one-stop approaches) are in place; prevention pathways through education and media representation; and appropriate psychosocial support for survivors.
7. **Strengthening national biodiversity protection efforts:** Advocate for the ratification of the High Seas Treaty (BBNJ Agreement) to strengthen international cooperation in safeguarding marine biodiversity beyond national jurisdiction. Simultaneously, develop comprehensive policies that address both marine and terrestrial ecosystems, with a focus on stimulating blue economies, while integrating gender-sensitive approaches to conservation.
8. **Investing in sustainable industries and promoting equitable participation in these sectors:** Promote investments in sustainable and low-carbon economies, and ensure women and youth have access to these opportunities by promoting their inclusion in financing, global value chains, digital opportunities, and essential resources.
9. **Escazú Agreement Implementation:** Advocate for the ratification of the Escazú Agreement. If it has already been ratified, prioritize monitoring and supporting the Agreement's implementation. This could begin with building a national implementation roadmap, ensuring that youth, women and girls, Indigenous groups, and traditionally marginalized individuals are part of its design.
10. **Capacity building:** Promote capacity building workshops in parliament on topics addressed in the SIDS4 outcome document, GEF communique, and the side event on the Escazú Agreement, as well as on skills related to gender-responsive and evidence-based decision making.

If you take action on any of these points, or need any assistance in developing strategies to take action, please let us know at the ParlAmericas Secretariat. We are here to help; and your actions can help inform our work in supporting good practices in other parliaments.

Members of the ParlAmericas delegation:

- Her Honour **Cynthia Forde** (Barbados), Deputy Speaker of the House of Assembly
- The Honourable **Valerie Woods** (Belize), Speaker of the House of Representatives
- The Honourable Representative **Lakeyia Joseph** (Dominica), Parliamentary Secretary in the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Blue and Green Economy
- The Honourable Senator Dr. **Dessima Williams** (Grenada), President of the Senate and Member of the ParlAmericas Board of Directors
- The Honourable Senator Dr. **Joyelle Clarke** (Saint Kitts and Nevis), Minister of Sustainable Development, Environment, Climate Action and Constituency Empowerment
- The Honourable Senator **Lisa Jawahir** (Saint Lucia), Vice-President for the Caribbean of the ParlAmericas Parliamentary Network for Gender Equality
- Member of the National Assembly **Grachelle Sluisdom** (Suriname)
- Member of the National Assembly **Karto Evert** (Suriname)
- Member of the National Assembly **Remie Tarnadi** (Suriname)
- Senator The Honourable Dr. **Erecia Hepburn Forbes** (The Bahamas)
- The Honourable Senator **Anthony Vieira** (Trinidad and Tobago), First Vice-President for the Caribbean of the ParlAmericas Parliamentary Network on Climate Change and Sustainability
- The Honourable Senator **Alincia Williams-Grant** (Antigua and Barbuda), President of the Senate
- The Honourable Senator **Shawn Nicholas** (Antigua and Barbuda)
- The Honourable Senator **Kiz Johnson** (Antigua and Barbuda)
- Dr. **Jacqueline Wiltshire** (Barbados)