



#ParlAmericas2022

 **TITLE:** Parliamentary Diplomacy: Making Multilateralism Work for the People

 **THEMES:** Parliamentary diplomacy, multilateralism, Inter-American system

 **DATES:** December 2, 2022

 **LOCATION:** Bogota, Colombia

 **PARTICIPANTS:** More than 85 parliamentarians from 18 countries of the Americas and the Caribbean.

 **HOST:** Congress of the Republic of Colombia



This activity is aligned with SDGs 10, 16, & 17.



19th ParlAmericas Plenary Assembly

The 19th ParlAmericas Plenary Assembly was dedicated to parliamentary diplomacy, its relevance in the complex economic, social, and political situation and the role of ParlAmericas as the hemispheric body mandated to promote parliamentary participation in the inter-American system.

Parliamentarians had the opportunity to participate in a dialogue session to share their perspectives on parliamentary diplomacy through ParlAmericas and their views on enriching an institutional vision for strengthening and solidifying parliamentary participation in the inter-American system.

The dialogue drew attention to how phenomena such as multilateralism, regional integration, globalization, and the promotion of human rights and democracy in international relations require an increasingly active engagement of parliamentarians, as representatives of the will of the people, in international affairs.



AGENDA HIGHLIGHTS

Opening remarks:

- Senator **Blanca Ovelar** (Paraguay), President of ParlAmericas

Parliamentary dialogue moderator:

- Member of the National Assembly **Wilma Andrade** (Ecuador), Vice-President for South America of the ParlAmericas Open Parliament Network

Keynote speaker:

- **Epsy Campbell Barr**, former Vice-President of the Republic of Costa Rica

Presentation of annual reports by the ParlAmericas parliamentary networks:

- Senator **Verónica Camino** (Mexico), President of the Parliamentary Network for Gender Equality
- Senator **Bertha Caraveo** (Mexico), Vice-President for North America of the Open Parliament Network
- The Honourable Senator **Rosa Galvez** (Canada), President of the Parliamentary Network on Climate Change

Reading of the Declaration on Parliamentary Engagement in the Inter-American System through ParlAmericas:

- Senator **Antares Vázquez** (Mexico), ParlAmericas Board Member

Closing remarks:

- Honourable Representative **Jezmi Barraza** (Colombia), Vice-President for South America of the ParlAmericas Parliamentary Network for Gender Equality



[AGENDA](#)



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Declaration

During the Plenary Assembly, parliamentarians adopted the [Declaration on Parliamentary Engagement in the Inter-American System through ParlAmericas](#), which includes, among others, a commitment to:

- Actively participate, through ParlAmericas, in the various multilateral spaces of the inter-American system to offer, as representatives of the interests of our constituents, parliamentary perspectives to the discussion of issues of hemispheric importance, such as climate change, gender equality and women's rights, migration, the strengthening of democratic governance, the fight against corruption, the consolidation of the rule of law, the defence of human rights, and the reduction of poverty and social inequalities, among others.
- Exercise parliamentary oversight on the implementation of the commitments and agreements adopted by our governments under the framework of the inter-American system, and promote the principles of accountability and transparency in the organizations that compose the inter-American system.
- Inform the development of the ParlAmericas Strategic Plan 2023–2030 which includes a vision for strengthening parliamentary diplomacy and parliamentary engagement in the inter-American system in line with shared democratic principles.



KEY FINDINGS

Session introduction

In her remarks, Senator **Blanca Ovelar** (Paraguay), President of ParlAmericas, contextualized parliamentary diplomacy, outlining some of its main historical milestones, its importance in the context of international relations, and its advantages as an indispensable instrument for facilitating dialogue between States, promoting consensus-building, and addressing and resolving complex issues that cannot be directly addressed by governments under certain circumstances.

Senator Ovelar shared a brief summary of the history of ParlAmericas—the only inter-parliamentary organization in the hemisphere composed of the 35 National Legislatures from North, Central and South America and the Caribbean—highlighting its role as an organization mandated to promote parliamentary participation in the inter-American system and contribute to inter-parliamentary dialogue on issues of hemispheric importance.

Inter-parliamentary dialogue

The parliamentary dialogue session covered a series of guiding questions that allowed parliamentarians to share their views on the value of parliamentary diplomacy and the role of ParlAmericas in promoting and facilitating parliamentary participation in the various decision-making forums of the inter-American system.

During the session, parliamentarians identified some of the main topics for inclusion in the ParlAmericas agenda concerning parliamentary diplomacy in the Americas and the Caribbean, informing with their contributions the development of the ParlAmericas Strategic Plan 2023–2030, particularly with regard to the institutional vision for alignment with the inter-American system and other hemispheric multilateral spaces.

Some of the priority issues identified by parliamentarians for inclusion in an agenda for parliamentary diplomacy in the hemisphere included, among others:

- **Migration:** One of the most complex transnational challenges for both origin and destination countries. The dialogue underscored the need to address migration from a human rights perspective, using an intersectional approach that recognizes its inherent risks and opportunities, as well as its relationship with phenomena such as climate change and inequality.
- **Disinformation and false news:** The threat posed to democracy and good governance by the proliferation of disinformation campaigns and computational propaganda was noted. Emphasis was placed on the need for coordinated action to address the disruptive nature of digital communication and its pernicious effects on democratic systems.
- **Climate change:** Identified as one of the great challenges of our time, and particularly critical for the well-being of the inhabitants of Latin America and the Caribbean, parliamentarians stressed the need to enhance the ambition of climate action and reach agreements on loss and damage that reflect the historical responsibilities of industrialized countries through concerted parliamentary diplomacy.



Senator **Blanca Ovelar** (Paraguay),
President of ParlAmericas

“The adoption of mandates during both the IX Summit of the Americas and the 52nd OAS Plenary Assembly to promote parliamentary participation in decision-making spaces through ParlAmericas unequivocally demonstrates, on one hand, the unanimous recognition in the most significant multilateral forums in the region of the importance of parliamentary diplomacy as a fundamental tool for international relations in the hemisphere; and on the other hand, the distinction of ParlAmericas as the quintessential entity for parliamentarians of the Americas and the Caribbean to participate in the inter-American system.”



Member of the National Assembly **Wilma Andrade** (Ecuador),
Vice-President for South America of the ParlAmericas Open
Parliament Network

“Our own experiences in ParlAmericas—through dialogues to promote the adoption of open parliament initiatives, our commitment to promote bold actions on climate change, our participation in electoral observation missions, and our unwavering defense of democracy and good governance in the hemisphere—confirm the need to promote spaces to practice parliamentary diplomacy in the Americas and the Caribbean.”



Epsy Campbell Barr, former Vice-President of the Republic of Costa Rica and
Keynote Speaker of the 19th ParlAmericas Plenary Assembly

“We have to promote—from our respective spaces—a people-centered humanism, human dignity, peace, and care; a humanism that inspires, and in turn, a multilateralism where we can put major issues related to human survival and the common good on the table; a multilateralism that must be equitable, multicultural and multiethnic.”



ELECTION RESULTS FOR THE PARLAMERICAS BOARD 2022–2024

ParlAmericas is run by parliamentarians for parliamentarians, with a Board of Directors composed of 21 seats which represent countries from North, South, Central America and the Caribbean. In addition, the Board has *ex-officio* representation from the Plenary Host, the ParlAmericas Immediate Past President, the Directors of the ParlAmericas Corporation, the ParlAmericas International Secretariat, and the OAS General Secretariat. Board Members are elected to a two-year term by the member parliaments of ParlAmericas during the Annual Plenary Assembly.

Senator **Blanca Ovelar** (Paraguay) and the Honourable **Bridgid Annisette-George** (Trinidad and Tobago), Speaker of the House of Representatives, were re-elected by acclamation as President and Vice-President of ParlAmericas, respectively.

In addition, the following sub-regional representatives were re-elected to the ParlAmericas Board:

Representatives for North America:

- Canada
- Mexico

Representatives for Central America:

- Costa Rica
- Nicaragua

Representatives for South America:

- Colombia
- Suriname
- Guyana

Representatives for the Caribbean:

- Barbados
- Jamaica

Additionally, Member of the Chamber of Deputies **Daniella Cicardini** (Chile), announced that the National Congress of Chile would host the 7th Gathering of the ParlAmericas Open Parliament Network to be held in 2023.

COUNTRIES REPRESENTED



Belize



Colombia



Guyana



Nicaragua



Suriname



Bolivia



Costa Rica



Honduras



Panama



Trinidad and Tobago



Canada



Ecuador



Jamaica



Paraguay



Chile



Grenada



Mexico



Saint Lucia

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This activity was made possible with the generous support of the Congress of the Republic of Colombia and the Government of Canada through Global Affairs Canada.



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



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



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



ParlAmericas is composed of the **35 NATIONAL LEGISLATURES** of the countries of North, Central and South America and the Caribbean



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



ParlAmericas organizes consultations and builds **MULTI-STAKEHOLDER PARTNERSHIPS** with young leaders and civil society organizations



ParlAmericas facilitates the exchange of parliamentary **GOOD PRACTICES** and promotes **COOPERATIVE POLITICAL DIALOGUE** in pursuit of the Sustainable Development Goals



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



ParlAmericas is headquartered in **OTTAWA, CANADA**

International Secretariat of ParlAmericas

703-155 Queen Street, Ottawa, Ontario, K1P 6L1 Canada

Telephone: +1 (613) 947-8999

Email: info@parlamericas.org

