

DIVERSIFYING POLITICAL POWER TO BUILD INCLUSIVE SOCIETIES



8TH ANNUAL GATHERING ORGANIZED BY THE
GROUP OF WOMEN PARLIAMENTARIANS





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ParlAmericas would like to sincerely thank the National Assembly of Ecuador for their invaluable contributions as the host of the gathering. In particular, ParlAmericas wishes to thank the President of the National Assembly, **Gabriela Rivadeneira**, and the President of the Group of Women Parliamentarians and Member of the National Assembly, **Gina Godoy**. We would also like to thank the **administrative and technical staff of the National Assembly** whose work was vital to the gathering's success.

We extend our gratitude to the participating delegates, moderators, and panellists for their contributions during the working sessions and their unwavering commitment to achieving gender equality in the hemisphere. We would also like to acknowledge the

experts who shared their experience and knowledge: **Otilia Lux de Cotí** (member of the Management Group of the Indigenous Fund for Latin America and the Caribbean), **Tonni Ann Brodber** (Deputy Representative of the UN Women Multi-Country Office for the Caribbean), **Iruno Aguirrezabal** (Regional Advisor on Leadership and Political Participation for UN Women) and **Marco Aurélio Martins** (Executive Coordinator of Promundo Brazil).

We would also like to thank the **community leaders in Ecuador** for their participation and generosity in sharing their experiences.

Finally, ParlAmericas is immensely grateful for the financial support provided by **Global Affairs Canada**.



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MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT OF PARLAMERICAS

Dear colleagues,

During the 8th Annual Gathering of the Group of Women Parliamentarians of ParlAmericas, *Diversifying Political Power to Build Inclusive Societies*, which was held in Quito, Ecuador, from June 2-3, 2016, with parliamentarians from 29 countries and territories in the Americas and the Caribbean in attendance, we continued our progress towards achieving real equality between men and women in our societies.

We had fruitful discussions on parity democracy, mechanisms to encourage greater representation in our parliaments, women's labour rights, the empowerment of Indigenous women, and the great need for men's involvement in the struggle for gender equality. The results of these exchanges are reflected in the concrete agreements that form the final declaration. This gathering presented a new opportunity to confirm the unwavering commitment of ParlAmericas and its Group of Women Parliamentarians to overcome gender gaps.

I would like to express my gratitude to the National Assembly of Ecuador, to its President Gabriela Rivadeneira, and to Member of the National Assembly Gina Godoy, President of the Group of Women Parliamentarians, for their commitment to the gender equality agenda and their hospitality and attention during the gathering.

I encourage you all to persevere in the work being undertaken by your parliaments to build more inclusive societies.

Sincerely,

Marcela Guerra

MARCELA GUERRA

Senator, Mexico

President of ParlAmericas

.....
 FOLLOW ME ON TWITTER @MARCELAGUERRANL



MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE GROUP OF WOMEN PARLIAMENTARIANS

Dear colleagues,

Since 2003, the Group of Women Parliamentarians of ParlAmericas has been working to promote initiatives within our parliaments aimed at strengthening the political empowerment of women, and to encourage the inclusion of gender perspectives in our respective legislative agendas.

We have developed relevant activities and resource materials to support the efforts being undertaken in each of our parliaments and created spaces for inter-parliamentary collaboration on legislative best practices on these topics.

On this occasion, we had the privilege to welcome one hundred parliamentarians from the Americas and the Caribbean to Quito, Ecuador, for our 8th Annual Gathering. Within this report you will find not only the main results of the working sessions, but also tools and resources that we hope will be useful in

strengthening the bold work being carried out to achieve gender equality.

I invite you to continue advancing on this path, to share this report, and to join us in our future activities.

Best wishes,

GINA GODOY

*Member of the National Assembly, Ecuador
President of the Group of Women Parliamentarians
of ParlAmericas*

.....
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PARLAMERICAS



We are an **INDEPENDENT FORUM** that promotes **PARLIAMENTARY DIPLOMACY**



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THE GROUP OF WOMEN PARLIAMENTARIANS

The Group of Women Parliamentarians is a permanent working group of ParlAmericas that promotes women's political empowerment and the application of a gender lens on the legislative agendas of its member parliaments.

Since its creation in 2003, the Group has organized numerous activities and initiatives to foster the exchange of knowledge and legislative best practices within inter-parliamentary spaces. These activities convene legislators from the Americas and the Caribbean on topics of hemispheric relevance, including the promotion and strengthening of the leadership of women parliamentarians, eradicating gender-based political violence and harassment, facilitating dialogue with women's organizations, and more in order to advance public policy on gender equality.

THE GATHERING: DIVERSIFYING POLITICAL POWER TO BUILD INCLUSIVE SOCIETIES



GINA GODOY,
Member of the
National Assembly
(Ecuador) and
President of the
Group of Women
Parliamentarians

“In this parliament, women do not do politics from the comfort of a desk; rather we make our desks our trenches. Our words are not stray bullets; rather they show coherence and certainty of purpose. Our bodies are not stationary instruments, but rather the scene of a constant and committed battle with change as praxis.”

“The struggle for women’s rights is the struggle of our communities, a struggle for affirmation and a deepening of our democracies in the face of everything that tries to cut them short, condition them, or subject them to particular interests.”



GABRIELA RIVADENEIRA,
President of the National
Assembly (Ecuador)

“It remains very clear: [women] represent half of the world’s population; therefore, we want half of the spaces of power in our democracies. It is our right.”



MARCELA GUERRA,
Senator (Mexico)
and President of
ParAmericas

“Reducing the democratic deficit involves eliminating the absence or under-representation of historically excluded sectors, like Indigenous peoples, people of African descent, or women. These groups are part of all social collectives and represent half of humanity.”

OTILIA LUX DE COTÍ,
keynote speaker
(Guatemala)





RESOURCES AND TOOLS

Below are resources to guide legislative work on women's political empowerment, the eradication of violence against women, and the struggle for gender equality.

[Convention of Belém do Pará on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence Against Women](#) (Organization of American States)

[Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women](#) (United Nations)

[Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action](#) (United Nations)

[Plan of Action for Gender-sensitive Parliaments](#) (Inter-Parliamentary Union)

[Framework for the Consolidation of Parity Democracy](#) (UN Women and Parlatino; in Spanish)

SESSIONS

Legislative advances to promote representative parliaments: Feminist perspectives

As key institutions for strengthening democracy, parliaments must aspire to reflect the diversity of the societies that they represent, both in descriptive terms (through the composition of their membership) and in substantive terms (through their political influence and the tangible benefits in terms of public policies).



“We have made progress in the recognition of women’s rights through a legal framework for gender equity and women’s empowerment. However, there are many pending issues that limit women’s ability to fully exercise their rights, because they stem from cultural attitudes and education based on patriarchal models.”

**LISBETH
HERNÁNDEZ
LECONA,
Senator
(Mexico)**

“Since the creation of the Secretariat for Women’s Policies, the number of secretariats and departments for women in states and municipalities across the country has continued to grow. In addition, three national policy plans for women have been designed, and the implementation of the Casa de la Mujer Brasileira (Brazilian Women’s House) has been finalized, among other actions aimed at strengthening public policy for gender equity.”

**LUIZIANNE LINS, Member of the
Chamber of Deputies (Brazil)**

**WENDELL
ASADANG,**
Member of
the National
Assembly
(Suriname)

“Since 2015 we have seen an increase of 27.5% in the number of female legislators in parliament. Nevertheless, there is still much to be done to promote the participation of women in decision-making positions.”

“In 26 years we have learned that we need to close the doors through which patriarchy and the machismo that prevails in political parties can enter. We have learned that we have to fight for our rights every day.”

GLORIA VALERÍN, former
Member of the Legislative
Assembly (Costa Rica)

“In these inter-parliamentary dialogues, it is important to address the ways in which women’s leadership on the continent is affected by issues like gender violence, a lack of solidarity, the absence of gender-sensitive regulations and statutes in political parties, and other realities that shape women’s participation.”

TONNI ANN BRODBER
Deputy Representative,
UN Women Multi-Country
Office for the Caribbean



IN THE WORDS OF THE DELEGATES

“The affirmative actions introduced with the objective of stimulating and strengthening women’s participation have been decisive in ensuring a greater presence of women in parliaments.”



RESOURCES AND TOOLS

Below are some relevant resources to guide legislative work on women's political empowerment.

Strategic Guide on the Political Empowerment of Women: Framework for Strategic Action (UN Women)

Gender Mainstreaming in Latin American Parliaments: A Work in Progress (Inter-Parliamentary Union and International IDEA)

The Road to Substantive Democracy: Women's Political Participation in the Americas (Inter-American Commission on Human Rights)

The Brazilian Women's House provides, in a single space, specialized services to address different types of violence against women. The House is one of the most important achievements of the Secretariat for Women's Policies' programme, "Women, living without violence."

DATA

According to the Inter-Parliamentary Union, as of June 2016, men held 72.4% of the seats in legislatures of the Americas; women held 27.6%.

¹ Adapted from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees' Intersectionality-Based Policy Analysis framework

Self-evaluation questionnaire: Intersectionality in Legislation, developed by UN Women Multi-Country Office for the Caribbean and ParlAmericas¹

- Does the legislation recognize multiple intersecting identities (including 'race', ethnicity, sex, class, (dis)abilities and sexuality) and systems (including classism, heterosexism)?
- What are the potential direct and indirect impacts of the clauses of the legislation on different groups/identities in the country? Will they promote equity or exacerbate inequity?
- What additions/deletions might be required to better address intersectional inequities and promote social justice?
- How might the legislation interact with other pieces of legislation/policies/programmes to reduce or entrench inequity?

Men's participation in gender equality work

Gender equality benefits all members of society and is not simply a “women’s issue,” nor is it only women’s responsibility. On the contrary, gender equality can only be achieved with the active participation of men. Their majority presence in parliaments and decision-making spaces enables them to contribute directly to promoting policies that advance women’s rights and create more egalitarian societies.

DIEGO VINTIMILLA,
Member of the
National Assembly
(Ecuador)

“Men are not doing anyone a favour by participating in the women’s movement, and it is not a concession; it is an ethical commitment to rights.”

“We are convinced that the collective goodwill of men and women makes our democracies stronger and our economies more successful. It is not only our laws that are gender-sensitive; the current Ministerial Cabinet is composed of 15 women and 15 men.”

ROBERT NAULT, Member of Parliament
(Canada)

JOSÉ RICCARDO, Member of the
Chamber of Deputies (Argentina)

“The asymmetrical power relationships between men and women are evident. Breaking down these prejudices requires that men participate, for example, in the design of educational reforms that address gender equality and new ways for men and women to relate to one another.”

“Without a doubt, men’s involvement will improve relationships between men and boys, which will positively result in a radical change in attitudes towards women and families.”

HAZEL BRANDY-WILLIAMS,
Minister (Saint Kitts and Nevis)



RESOURCES AND TOOLS

Below are resources to inform legislative work on men's participation in achieving gender equality.

Toolkit on Engaging Men and Boys to Advance Gender Equality (United Nations Population Fund)

Working with Men for More Egalitarian Societies in Latin America and the Caribbean (United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization; in Spanish)

Masculinities and Public Policy: Involving Men in Gender Equality (University of Chile. Faculty of Social Sciences. Department of Anthropology; in Spanish)

HeForShe Campaign (UN Women)

DATA

For the first time in Canada's history, its ministerial cabinet, made up of elected parliamentarians, is composed of equal numbers of men and women. In the current parliament, by contrast, women occupy 26% of seats.



“It is necessary to discuss progress on maternity and paternity leave legislation, as sharing responsibilities and actively involving men in caring for and raising children has extremely positive results.”

MARCO AURÉLIO MARTINS
Executive Coordinator,
Promundo Brazil

IN THE WORDS OF THE DELEGATES

“It is essential to have the support of legislators in order to achieve gender equality. And to support these efforts, it is important that parliaments offer legislators opportunities for capacity building. We do not want to be there because a law tells us to be; we want to be there because we need to represent women's interests.”

#NIUNAMENOS (NOTONELESS) CAMPAIGN

During the gathering, the delegation from Argentina presented the *Ni Una Menos* (Not One Less) campaign, which “is a collective outcry against sexist violence.” The initiative was conceived by a group of journalists, activists, and artists, was adopted by the broader society, and became a collective campaign.

The delegates in attendance expressed their support for the campaign, and underlined its importance by including a reference to the campaign in the gathering’s final declaration.

 [@NIUNAMENOS_](https://twitter.com/NIUNAMENOS_)



Advancing Indigenous women's leadership

Indigenous women face specific challenges arising from the intersection of various forms of discrimination including sexism and racism. In spite of this, these women have been at the forefront of social movements to demand change in the public sphere, particularly through their growing presence in parliaments.

IN THE WORDS OF THE DELEGATES

"Women, especially Indigenous women, suffer permanently from political harassment and we are attacked from the moment we begin our political careers."



MÁXIMA APAZA,
Senator (Bolivia)

"We, as Indigenous women, can also take on decision-making positions as senators, members of parliament, mayors, town councillors; we can decide. But we have to break away from machismo."

"Indigenous women are victims of triple discrimination: being women, being Indigenous, and being poor. We need to take into account ethnicity in decision-making; we must design legislation in which all communities, nationalities, and ethnicities are included."

ESTHELA ACERO, Member of the National Assembly (Ecuador)

"There is much to be done to achieve equality for Indigenous women in Guyana. We have made important progress since Guyana's independence, but we have to keep working to give more value to and better opportunities for women's professional growth, especially Indigenous women."

VALERIE GARRIDO-LOWE,
Minister (Guyana)

"Indigenous women's leadership in Honduras has been seriously affected by repression and violence. Additionally, living conditions, particularly in rural areas where only 22.5% of women have access to formal work, make it more difficult to establish sustainable processes to strengthen their leadership."

SCHERLY ARRIAGA, Member of Congress (Honduras)

RESOURCES AND TOOLS

Below are resources to inform legislative work on promoting Indigenous women's leadership.

Diversity in Parliament: Listening to the Voices of Minorities and Indigenous Peoples (Inter-Parliamentary Union)

Implementing the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples: Handbook for Parliamentarians N° 23 (Inter-Parliamentary Union)

Guaranteeing Indigenous People's Rights in Latin America: Progress in the Past Decade and Remaining Challenges (Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean)

IN MEMORIAM: BERTA CÁCERES

Berta Cáceres was a Lenca Indigenous woman and one of the most recognized human rights defenders in Honduras. For more than 20 years, she led the struggles of Indigenous communities in defense of their rights. Her work, deeply committed to the protection of the environment, was recognized with the prestigious Goldman Prize. She worked intensively on the campaign to protect the Galcarque River, a place of cultural importance for the Lenca people. The River was the proposed site for the construction of the Agua Zarca hydroelectric dam, and work began without the consent of local communities or having followed the necessary consultation processes. She was a victim of harassment and threats. Berta was assassinated on March 3, 2016.

DATA

According to information collected by the Inter-Parliamentary Union, Indigenous women are significantly under-represented in parliament. In 2014, only 20% of the 923 Indigenous parliamentarians identified in the world were women.

“Indigenous women’s political participation in parliament is a true act of heroism. For a woman, reaching parliament is very difficult, but for an Indigenous woman, it is a feminine odyssey.”

OTILIA LUX DE COTÍ,
keynote speaker
(Guatemala)

“Women do not have money. Most have to ask even to travel. There are laws, but they are for the urban sector where they already have technological support to obtain information and react to it. But in communities, women do not have the time to watch television, much less to read a newspaper. In these places they must work, creating small businesses.”

PATRICIA CHAMORRO, Indigenous leader (Ecuador)



Policies and reforms to guarantee women's labour rights

Women's greater participation in the labour market not only offers the possibility of increasing the well-being of the individuals working, but it also contributes positively to economic growth in the society in general.

IN THE WORDS OF THE DELEGATES

"Gaps still remain between the formal and legal recognition of women's labour rights and the possibility of actually exercising them. It is necessary to fill this vacuum with follow-up mechanisms and the support of unions and social organizations."

CARMEN OMONTE,
Member of Congress (Peru)

"As Minister of Women and Vulnerable Populations, I had the opportunity to work on the creation of the Office for Entrepreneurship and Economic Development for Women, a joint initiative directed at women's economic empowerment. No society that claims to provide its citizens with opportunities for sustainable development will be able to achieve this while disregarding women's autonomy and economic independence."

"It is no secret that women, especially those from less privileged sectors of society, have to juggle a number of roles: as economic actors, heads of households, and mothers. The lack of legal regulations puts many women in a vulnerable situation, silencing their voices and actions."

AYANNA WEBSTER-ROY,
Minister (Trinidad and Tobago)

"One of the basic conclusions from these discussions is that of the need to consider how women's work situations influence problems with autonomy, independence, and empowerment. These conditions then create obstacles to women's participation and representation."

MARGARITA STOLBIZER,
Member of the Chamber of Deputies (Argentina)



“In order to reinforce the legislative progress that we have been making on these topics, we must make the necessary cultural transformations to strengthen the labour guarantees for women.”

ITZEL SARAHÍ RÍOS DE LA MORA,
Senator (Mexico)

“It is imperative that we move forward with consistent laws that address the problem of the salary gap between men and women. Equal pay for equal work must be the due North towards which we direct our efforts.”

AMÍN NIFFOURI,
Representative (Uruguay)



RESOURCES AND TOOLS

Below are resources to inform legislative work on policies and reforms to guarantee women's labour rights.

Advancing Gender Equality in the Context of Decent Work (Organization of American States)

Women at Work: Trends 2016
(International Labour Organization)

Convention C-189 concerning decent work for domestic workers
(International Labour Organization)

DATA

According to the International Labour Organization, 46.3% of women and 55.5% of men who are part of the economically active population in the region have fewer than 12 years of formal education.

Delegation progress reports

In response to the commitments made as part of the Action Plan for Preventing Political Harassment and Violence Against Women, which was developed during the Annual Gathering of the Group of Women Parliamentarians of ParlAmericas held in June 2015 in Termas de Río Hondo, Argentina, delegates were given the opportunity to present their respective progress reports. Delegates shared their legislative achievements towards the eradication of political harassment and violence against women.

CONCEPT

Gender-based political harassment

Consists of intimidation, coercion, or violence against women due to their participation in public and political life, in ways that exacerbate gender-based discrimination.

Argentina

The Senate's Commission on the Status of Women has made progress on the classification of femicide and other forms of harassment and violence against women.

Bolivia

The Plurinational Legislative Assembly continued to implement the articles of the Law against Political Harassment and Violence against Women.

Canada

The House of Commons approved the Policy on Preventing and Addressing Harassment.

Chile

The new Political Parties Law contains provisions for increasing women's participation and securing funds for their training.

Costa Rica

The Special Permanent Commission for Women presented the Law against Political Harassment and/or Violence against Women.

Cuba

The Federation of Cuban Women has been working continuously to raise awareness and conduct training sessions to incorporate a gender focus in legislative work.

Ecuador

In addition to legislative progress on gender equality, campaigns like #uneteporlaigualdaddegenero (unite for gender equality) have been developed to raise public awareness about political harassment and violence.

Mexico

The Protocol to Address Political Violence against Women has been implemented as a joint effort by many institutions and Mexican state agencies to establish mechanisms for victims of political violence to receive assistance.

Venezuela

The Law on Women's Right to Live Free from Violence establishes a series of provisions that classify intimidation, harassment, and institutional violence against women as crimes.



ACTION PLAN FOR PREVENTING POLITICAL HARASSMENT AND VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

1. Apply multisectoral approaches to the prevention of gender-based political harassment/violence
2. Engage men in the empowerment of women in politics at all levels
3. Hold political parties accountable for gender equality
4. Create an enabling environment to raise the issue of political harassment/violence for public and parliamentary debate
5. Present policies, bills or reforms on political harassment/violence, and once passed ensure compliance by the corresponding institutions

RESOURCES AND TOOLS

Read ParlAmericas' report, *Gender-based Political Harassment: Building Awareness in Parliaments*.

Meeting with women community leaders from Ecuadorian civil society

ParlAmericas encourages connection and exchange between its member parliaments and civil society organizations, dialogue with citizens and the formulating initiatives and legislation in a participatory manner. To this end, the gathering offered a space to promote exchange with women community leaders from Ecuador's civil society.

Through their presentations, the leaders, who represented community, Indigenous, and Afro-descendant organizations, shared their experiences defending their rights. They spoke about the biggest challenges they have faced in the process towards social inclusion and political participation, and the struggle against gender-based violence.

The leaders also highlighted their achievements, particularly in relation to political representation, legislative progress in preventing and penalizing gender-based violence, and the defense of labour rights.



“I would like to draw attention to the need to strengthen legislation on psychological violence against women. While it is true that this is classified in the Comprehensive Criminal Code, the procedures are not clear and there are still gaps in its implementation. This is a problem shared by other Latin American countries.”

SUSANA VALAREZO,
*Centro Ecuatoriano de Promoción y
Acción de la Mujer (Ecuadorian Centre
for Women's Promotion and Action)*

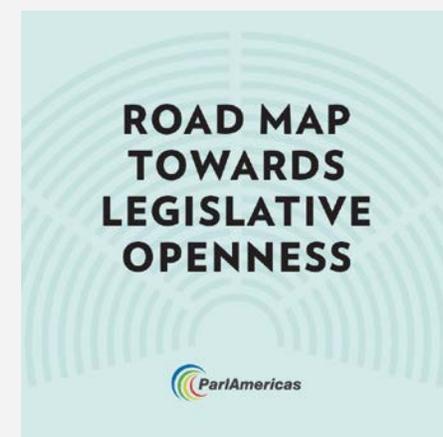
“These kinds of parliamentary gatherings allow us to put ourselves on the legislative agenda and work collaboratively on a number of concerns and initiatives. In particular, the need for education on gender-sensitive approaches and the opportunity to share the history of Indigenous and Afro communities in Ecuador.”

ANDREA MOSQUERA,
Afro-Ecuadorian leader



RESOURCES AND TOOLS

With a view towards strengthening dialogue with citizens and formulating initiatives in a participatory way, ParlAmericas' Open Parliament Network, in collaboration with civil society organizations, has developed a roadmap that includes as one of its pillars encouraging citizen and civil society participation in the design of mechanisms to increase legislative transparency.



“I have been participating in organizations since I was 14 years old and women are almost always delegated the role of secretary or treasurer, but we are capable of taking on other leadership roles. The President of the Assembly, Gabriela Rivadeneira, has demonstrated that it is possible to take on a big role.”

MERCEDES GUAMÁN,
Lawyer and Indigenous leader

“We are now fighting for gender equity with our Indigenous brothers. It appears that our male colleagues have conceded a bit, but we have not made complete progress. Some men trust in us, but not all want to relinquish their power.”

ANA MARÍA GUACHO,
Indigenous leader

DECLARATION OF COMMITMENT

8th Annual Gathering organized by the Group of Women Parliamentarians of ParlAmericas: *Diversifying Political Power to Build Inclusive Societies*

QUITO, ECUADOR

Parliamentarians from 29 countries and territories gathered in Quito, Ecuador from June 2-3, 2016 for ParlAmericas' 8th annual gathering on gender equality organized by the Group of Women Parliamentarians, engaging in dialogue centred on the shared objective of promoting greater diversity of political power and in other decision-making spaces, in order to make our parliaments and societies more inclusive.

Through this, the delegates continued the work and commitments initiated in 2003 to strengthen the leadership of women politicians through ongoing regional exchange of best practices, and to foster the creation of mechanisms encouraging women's participation in politics.

Recognizing

That parliaments, as key institutions for the strengthening of democracy, must aspire to reflect, in substantive terms, the diversity of the societies they represent; and that this representation also encourages and promotes legitimacy in decision-making spaces;

That reducing the social, political, and economic gap between men and women is a fundamental priority in creating parity democracy and more inclusive societies, and at the same time, is a necessary component of designing and promoting gender-sensitive public policies;

That women face systematic gender-based discrimination in public life, and as a result, institutions must recognize and be sensitive to the multiple identities of women and other traditionally marginalized groups by preventing political practices that exclude these groups, particularly those related to discrimination based on gender, sexual orientation, age, religion, ethnicity, socio-economic status, disability, etc.;

That women have been crucial in the advancement of democracy in the Americas and the Caribbean, particularly in processes of democratic transition;

That it is necessary to continue to make advances in strengthening the constitutional rights and protection of Indigenous peoples and communities across the continent, ensuring

the respect, preservation, and promotion of their traditions, customs, and wisdom, with the objective of continuing to overcome the historical injustices these groups have faced;

That despite the systemic obstacles they face, Indigenous leaders on the continent have led important social movements to demand change in the public sphere, to promote the holistic well-being of Indigenous women, families, and communities;

That the inclusion and promotion of male and female Indigenous leaders, as well as other traditionally marginalized groups, in the respective parliaments of the countries across the region encourages more inclusive agendas and policies; nevertheless, there is still persistent under-representation of these groups in decision-making spaces, including national parliaments;

That despite the significant progress achieved in the Americas and the Caribbean in terms of the political participation of women and other traditionally marginalized social groups, enduring phenomena like gender-based political harassment and other forms of discrimination create obstacles for effective participation in public life and decision-making processes;

That it is of the utmost importance to ensure the necessary conditions are in place to guarantee women's labour rights across the continent, in equal and equitable conditions and in a manner responsive to the socio-economic issues they face, including wage gaps, unpaid domestic work, and other forms of gender discrimination that make it difficult for women to join the labour market and thereby affect their financial independence and well-being;

That men and boys play an essential role in advancing gender equality and, as such, must work jointly with women and girls to transform the social norms limiting the latter's access to opportunities and rights into conditions of equality and mutual respect, recognizing the importance of families in empowering women;

That we recognize the seriousness of gender violence and the need to promote and support the social demonstrations in many of our member countries as part of the "Ni Una Menos" campaign;

That incorporating voices from a variety of civil society actors will enrich consultations, debates, interventions, and parliamentary oversight, as well as lead to more sustainable development and the prevention and resolution of conflict;

That, in this regard, it is essential to ensure that parliaments are accessible and receptive to promoting the political representation of women, minorities, and other groups with interests and needs that have historically been marginalized in decision-making processes.

We commit to

1. Proposing and advancing, in our parliaments and in regional parliaments, legislative reforms that facilitate and encourage the substantial and effective participation of Indigenous women in the decision-making process, and reviewing existing legislation to ensure that it reflects inclusive and gender-sensitive perspectives.
2. Considering potential special mechanisms and electoral reforms appropriate to national contexts that will facilitate women's presence in parliaments, and evaluating the effectiveness of those that already exist in achieving gender equality and parity.
3. Defending women's labour rights through appropriate legislation that addresses the gaps, challenges, and disparities that women face in the labour market.
4. Continuing efforts to eradicate sexist,

exclusionary, and discriminatory practices in politics, including phenomena like political harassment and other manifestations of gender violence in both public and private spheres.

5. Placing greater emphasis on involving men in work related to women's rights and gender equality, including in such issues as childrearing, unpaid domestic work, discriminatory practices and harmful stereotypes, and denouncing and taking action against gender-based violence.
6. Strengthening our work with international and civil society organisations, particularly with women's groups and associations; actively seeking their participation and fostering social dialogue to find joint solutions to the problems we collectively face in the region.
7. Promoting the use of information and data disaggregated by gender and other social indicators as tools that allow for the creation of public policies better directed at overcoming socio-economic gaps between men, women, and marginalized groups.
8. Continuing inter-parliamentary dialogue, between national parliaments as well as regional and international parliaments,

and fostering the exchange of legislative best practices focused on gender and social inclusion in order to achieve more inclusive and gender-sensitive societies.

9. Proposing actions and strategies, at the legislative level, to eliminate patterns of exclusion of Indigenous communities from decision-making on topics that impact the well-being of their communities and organizations.
10. Proposing, in our respective parliaments, the adoption of gender-sensitive approaches for the creation of public policy.
11. Reporting on the progress and difficulties in conducting this work during the next annual gathering of ParlAmericas on gender equality.

Finally, the parliamentarians gathered here express to the people of Ecuador as a whole, and to our colleagues in the National Assembly of Ecuador, our most sincere sentiments of support, solidarity, and humanity in the wake of the earthquake that took place this past April 16. We offer the victims and their families our respectful condolences, and to the survivors we extend a message of strength and resilience.

Issued in Quito, Ecuador, June 3, 2016

GLOSSARY

Found here is a glossary of key concepts related to gender equality.

EMPOWERMENT

Involves the achievement of not only equal capabilities (such as education and health) and equal access to resources and opportunities (such as land and employment) for an individual or group, but also the agency to use these rights, capabilities, resources and opportunities to make strategic choices and decisions.

EQUALITY

Ensuring individuals or groups of individuals are treated fairly and no less favourably because of any characteristics, including areas of race, gender, (dis)ability, religion or belief, sexual orientation and age.

EQUITY

The quality of being fair, unbiased, and just; involves ensuring that everyone has access to the resources, opportunities, power and responsibility needed to reach their full, healthy potential, as well as making any systemic changes required so that unfair differences may be understood and addressed.

GENDER

Refers to the attitudes, feelings, and behaviors that a given culture associates with a person's biological sex.

GENDER EQUALITY

Refers to the equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities of women and men and girls and boys. Gender inequality indicates unequal access to and control over the various material and non-material resources and assets of society.

INTERSECTIONALITY

The understanding that inequalities and oppression cut across different identity categories, and that social identities have multiple dimensions; for example, gender is not the only element of a woman's identity that can affect political participation – age, race, (dis)ability, class, sexual orientation, among others, must be considered in conjunction.

SEX

Refers to biological characteristics and is typically categorized as male, female, or intersex (i.e., atypical combinations of features that usually distinguish male from female).

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Development that meets the current needs of the population without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

PARTICIPANTS

The 8th Annual Gathering was attended by one hundred parliamentarians from the following parliaments:



	ARGENTINA		GUYANA
	ARUBA		HONDURAS
	BAHAMAS		JAMAICA
	BELIZE		MEXICO
	BOLIVIA		NICARAGUA
	BRAZIL		PANAMA
	CANADA		PARAGUAY
	CHILE		PERU
	COLOMBIA		SAINT KITTS AND NEVIS
	COSTA RICA		SINT MAARTENS
	CUBA		SURINAME
	DOMINICA		TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO
	ECUADOR		URUGUAY
	EL SALVADOR		VENEZUELA
	GUATEMALA		

APPENDIX

Workshop on “Gender, intersectionality and the Sustainable Development Goals in parliamentary work”

IN THE WORDS OF THE DELEGATES

“We, as a region, must do more than what we have done up until now. Our laws address the same problems but they tend to be quite different. There should be greater cohesion; we have to find points in common in our legislative advances.”

IN THE WORDS OF THE DELEGATES

“Forums such as this create a space for Caribbean countries that share similar legislative frameworks to identify what legal transformations are required. If we can work together to identify common problems, we can find creative and innovative legislative solutions.”



“Intersectionality provides guidelines to understand how people experience disadvantages. The reason behind the use of this lens: “How can we better understand our different identities?” Girls and boys are socialized differently. They are experiencing different gender roles: femininity and masculinity. Adequate policy on education must take gender roles into consideration.”

TONNI ANN BRODBER, Deputy Representative, UN Women Multi-Country Office for the Caribbean





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