



## ParlAmericas delegation to the General Assembly of the OAS

On June 19-21 2017, a ParlAmericas delegation observed the 47<sup>th</sup> Regular Session of the General Assembly (GA) of the Organization of American States (OAS), held in Cancun, Mexico on the theme of [Strengthening Dialogue and Concerted Action for Prosperity](#). The delegation was led by Senator **Marcela Guerra** (Mexico), President of ParlAmericas, and composed of legislators from Canada, Colombia, Ecuador, Grenada, Mexico, and Panama.

The delegation also observed the work of the [Inter-American Commission on Human Rights \(IACHR\)](#), the [Inter-American Court of Human Rights](#), the [Inter-American Commission of Women \(CIM\)](#) and the [Inter-American Juridical Committee \(IAJC\)](#), as well as the adoption of declarations and resolutions put before the General Assembly.

As part of their program, members of the ParlAmericas delegation also attended the Dialogue with Civil Society Representatives and Other Actors, the Meeting of the [Summit Implementation Review Group \(SIRG\)](#) and panel discussions on: (1) Integral Development and Prosperity in the Hemisphere, (2) Opportunities and Challenges for Women's Leadership in the Americas, and (3) Multidimensional Security.

The delegation made an intervention at the Dialogue on the Rule of Law and Environmental Justice, a parallel session organized by the Government of Mexico, where the President of the ParlAmericas Parliamentary Network on Climate Change (PNCC), Member of the National Assembly **Javier Ortega** (Panama), delivered remarks on the importance of a coordinated approach between all social actors and institutions – including the parliamentary branch of government – to combat climate change. Mr. Ortega also announced the

### THEME

Strengthening Dialogue and Concerted Action for Prosperity

### DATE

June 19-21, 2017

### LOCATION

Cancun, Mexico

The participation of ParlAmericas at the OAS General Assembly is guided by two objectives: to raise awareness about the function and contributions of parliaments in turning executive commitments to concrete and funded public policy actions; and to provide an opportunity for individual parliamentarians to gain a better understanding of issues that are currently being discussed within the OAS, and their effects on countries and citizens across the Hemisphere.

The ParlAmericas program included attendance at all of the plenary sessions, beginning with the official inauguration of the General Assembly which included a keynote address by his Excellency **Enrique Peña Nieto**, President of Mexico. Delegates were then present at the Foreign Ministers Dialogue, and the plenary session which featured reports on the work of the



Senator  
**MARCELA GUERRA**  
(Mexico),  
President of  
ParlAmericas

*“At this OAS General Assembly ParlAmericas reaffirms its commitment to contribute to the achievement of the agreements and actions taken, and to support, from the legislative branch, the attainment of well-being for all in the Americas and in the Caribbean.”*



Member of  
Parliament  
**HON. ROBERT NAULT** (Canada),  
Vice-President of  
ParlAmericas

*“I am looking forward to working with the OAS to reinforce the important role of parliaments in governance and law-making throughout the hemisphere. The OAS provides a great forum to gain a better understanding of global issues like climate change and gender equality, while also emphasizing Canada’s focus on developing inclusive and open democratic societies.”*



Senator  
**JOSÉ OLVERA**  
(Mexico)

*“These meetings were important for promoting the values of inclusive, democratic governance; these values are shared by the legislative branch.”*

upcoming publication of two complementary resources that ParlAmericas has developed in collaboration with the OAS Department of Sustainable Development (DSD), entitled: [Climate Change: A Comparative Overview of Rights Based Approach in the Americas](#); and [Climate Change: A Comparative Overview of Legislative and Executive Responses in the Americas](#).

In addition to accompanying the formal agenda of the General Assembly, the ParlAmericas program also included a series of bilateral meetings with OAS officials, and Ministers of Foreign Affairs.

Members of the ParlAmericas delegation engaged in separate dialogue sessions with the following OAS officials: (1) [Secretary General Luis Almagro](#); (2) [Assistant Secretary General Nestor Mendez](#); (3) [Secretary for Strengthening Democracy Francisco Guerrero](#); and (4) [Secretary for Hemispheric Affairs James Lambert](#). These discussions addressed the current work of the OAS in the hemisphere, with a particular emphasis on the ongoing dialogue amongst OAS Member States regarding the situation in Venezuela and the role of the OAS in supporting a peaceful political solution. The value of engaging the parliamentary branch in the Inter-American system and the importance of a strengthened strategic relationship between ParlAmericas and the OAS to foster synergies in the work of both institutions were also discussed in relation to thematic issues of mutual interest.

Delegates addressed how the work of ParlAmericas in strengthening parliaments complements efforts of the OAS to build more efficient, transparent and inclusive institutions. They also further reinforced the message that ParlAmericas is the only institution that was created by

national parliaments of the OAS Member States with the explicit mandate of facilitating participation of the parliamentary branch in the Inter-American system; this sets ParlAmericas, and its engagement with the OAS and Summit of the Americas process, apart from other inter-parliamentary entities in the region.

Over the course of the OAS General Assembly, members of the delegation also met briefly with the Canadian Minister of Foreign Affairs **Chrystia Freeland**, the Ecuadorian Minister of Foreign Affairs and Human Mobility **Maria Fernanda Espinosa**, the Guyanese Vice-President and Minister of Foreign Affairs **Carl Greenidge**, the Jamaican Minister of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade **Kamina Johnson Smith**, and the Panamanian Vice-President and Minister of Foreign Affairs **Isabel de Saint Malo**.

On the final day of the program, the ParlAmericas delegation held a dialogue session with the host of the 47<sup>th</sup> OAS General Assembly, Mexican Secretary of Foreign Affairs **Luis Videgaray**. The importance of multilateral fora to support political dialogue on pressing regional issues like the situation in Venezuela was discussed. Secretary Videgaray underlined the valuable role of ParlAmericas in providing a necessary forum for parliamentarians to engage in the Inter-American system. This, in his view, reinforced the essential norm that respect for all three branches of government – Executive, Legislative and Judicial – is fundamental for democracy. The dialogue concluded with an agreement that the ParlAmericas delegation would issue a [statement for the guarantee of security of Venezuelan parliamentarians](#) who had attended the General Assembly.

“As the president of the commission on foreign relations—international organizations, I consider it to be of special importance that we parliamentarians actively participate in multilateral institutions to strengthen their work at the regional and international levels.”



Senator  
**LAURA ROJAS**  
(Mexico)

“As a former Minister of State responsible for the Americas, participating as a part of this delegation was a terrific wakeup realization for me regarding the potential of ParlAmericas. I believe that ParlAmericas provides a platform for parliamentarians of all stripes to engage in diplomacy in the Inter-American system and complement the work of the OAS. For future General Assemblies, I would encourage a more formal interaction with OAS delegations be explored along the lines of the official dialogue held with civil society.”



Member of Parliament  
**HON. PETER KENT**  
(Canada)

“First, to understand more precisely the dynamics of these Assemblies, to hear firsthand the positions of each country, and to identify possible legislative solutions to the problems Member States face to help to avoid fundamental themes like democracy, the division of power, and respect for human rights, among others, being setback in any of our countries.”



Member of the Chamber of Deputies  
**TERESA LIZÁRRAGA**  
(Mexico)



President of the Senate  
**HON. CHESTER HUMPHREY**  
(Grenada)

“Participating in these instances allows us to present the ways in which parliaments can play a role to support the resolution of difficulties between and within States.”

“The dialogue between national representatives and engagement with the legislative branch are essential to defend and protect the rights and interests of the peoples of our hemisphere.”



Member of the Chamber of Deputies  
**ÁNGEL II ALANÍS**  
(Mexico)



Member of the National Assembly  
**JAVIER ORTEGA**  
(Panama), during his intervention in the session Dialogue on the Rule of Law and Environmental Justice

“We reiterate ParlAmericas’ commitment to creating spaces that enable parliamentarians to advance a coordinated agenda with clear, concrete goals in order to create just and inclusive environmental legislation in the Americas and the Caribbean.”

“It has been very important to have had these meetings, to be able to make the organization known... to take advantage of this space as a parliamentary organization to connect with other organizations, foreign ministers, state institutions, and civil society.”



Member of the National Assembly  
**BAIRON VALLE**  
(Ecuador)



Member of the Chamber of Deputies  
**MARCELA GONZÁLEZ SALAS**  
(Mexico)

“What I liked most was the opportunity to be in the General Assembly of the OAS, see how it is run, the discussion, and, on this occasion, the presence of a key issue that concerns us all – the situation in Venezuela.”

Representative  
**GERMÁN BLANCO**  
(Colombia)



“The presence of parliamentarians legitimizes our role in regards to diplomatic decisions taken by the Executive, allowing us to do the necessary lobbying to position our parliamentary work.”

Final declarations and resolutions from the 47<sup>th</sup> OAS General Assembly can be consulted at <http://scm.oas.org/Ag/documentos/>

## VIII SUMMIT OF THE AMERICAS

The delegation held an introductory meeting with Ambassador **Antonio García Revilla**, National Coordinator for Summits and Director General Multilateral for the Foreign Ministry of Peru to discuss the ParlAmericas proposal to convene an official parallel meeting for parliamentarians within the framework of the VIII Summit of the Americas to be held in Lima, Peru in April 2018.

### MEMBERS OF THE DELEGATION

**MARCELA GUERRA**, President of ParlAmericas. Senator, Mexico  
**HON. ROBERT NAULT**, Vice-President of ParlAmericas. Member of Parliament, Canada  
**HON. PETER KENT**, Member of Parliament, Canada  
**GERMÁN BLANCO**, Member of the Board of ParlAmericas. Representative, Colombia  
**BAIRON VALLE**, Member of the Board of ParlAmericas. Member of the National Assembly, Ecuador  
**HON. CHESTER HUMPHREY**, Vice-President for the Caribbean of the Parliamentary Network on Gender Equality of ParlAmericas. President of the Senate, Grenada  
**JOSÉ OLVERA**, Member of the Board of ParlAmericas. Senator, Mexico  
**MARCELA GONZÁLEZ SALAS**, Vice-President for North America of the Open Parliament Network of ParlAmericas. Member of the Chamber of Deputies, Mexico  
**LAURA ROJAS**, Senator, Mexico  
**TERESA LIZÁRRAGA**, Member of the Chamber of Deputies, Mexico  
**ÁNGEL II ALANÍS**, Member of the Chamber of Deputies, Mexico  
**JAVIER ORTEGA**, President of the Parliamentary Network on Climate Change of ParlAmericas. Member of the National Assembly, Panama



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



ParlAmericas is composed of the **NATIONAL LEGISLATURES** of the Member States of the OAS 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**

International Secretariat of ParlAmericas

710—150 Wellington St., Ottawa, Ontario, K1P 5A4 Canada

Telephone: +1 (613) 594-5222 | Fax: +1 (613) 594-4766 | [www.parlAmericas.org](http://www.parlAmericas.org) | [info@parlAmericas.org](mailto:info@parlAmericas.org)

