



#ParlAmericasOPN

TITLE: Integrity Matters: Building Stronger Democracies

THEMES: public integrity, legislative openness

DATES: March 9, 15 and 22, 2022

LOCATION: Will either be Virtual, or City, Country

PARTICIPANTS: More than 180 parliamentarians, parliamentary staff and representatives of civil society and youth organizations from 19 countries of the Americas and the Caribbean.

HOST: Chamber of Senators of Paraguay



This activity aligned with SDG 16.



6th Gathering of the ParlAmericas Open Parliament Network

The 6th Gathering of the ParlAmericas Open Parliament Network (OPN) brought together parliamentarians, parliamentary staff and representatives of youth and civil society organizations from the Americas and the Caribbean to discuss public integrity, recognizing its importance not only in preventing and fighting corruption, but as one of the fundamental pillars of democratic governance.



AGENDA HIGHLIGHTS

Opening remarks:

- Senator **Blanca Ovelar** (Paraguay), President of ParlAmericas
- Senator **Hermelinda Alvarenga de Ortega** (Paraguay), Second Vice-President of the Chamber of Senators
- Member of the Legislative Assembly **Ana Lucía Delgado** (Costa Rica), First Vice-President for Central America of the OPN
- Member of the National Assembly **Wilma Andrade** (Ecuador), Vice-President for South America of the OPN

Keynote Speakers:

- **Delia Ferreira**, Chair, Transparency International
- **Daniel Ortega Nieto**, Senior Governance Specialist, World Bank
- **René Fernández Bobadilla**, Minister Executive Secretary of the National Anticorruption Secretariat, Paraguay
- **Julio Bacio Terracino**, Head of Division, Public Sector Integrity, OECD
- **Radivoje Grujic**, Democratic Governance, OSCE

Dialogues moderated by:

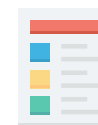
- The Hon. **René Cormier** (Canada), Senator and Second Vice-President for North America of the OPN
- The Hon. **Bridgid Annisette-George** (Trinidad and Tobago), Speaker of the House of Representatives and Vice-President of ParlAmericas
- Member of Parliament **Robert Nesta Morgan** (Jamaica), Minister in the Office of the Prime Minister with responsibility for information
- Senator **Amado Florentín Cabral** (Paraguay)
- The Hon. **Joseph Isaac** (Dominica), Speaker of the House of Assembly and member of the Board of Directors of ParlAmericas
- His Honour **Reginald Farley** (Barbados), President of the Senate

Panellists:

- Senator **Jorge Querey Rojas** (Paraguay)
- The Hon. **Juan Edghill** (Guyana), Minister of Public Works
- **Karina Kalpschtrej**, Director of Institutional Strengthening, Poder Ciudadano
- **Svenja Bonnecke**, Chile Transparente
- **Elvis Acosta**, representative of the Leading with Integrity Program, Espacio Cívico
- **David Salmon**, member of the Youth Parliament of Jamaica
- **Luís Kimaid**, Executive Director, Bússola Tech
- Member of the National Assembly **Corina Cano Córdoba** (Panama), Second Vice-President for Central America of the OPN
- Senator **Juan Antonio Coloma** (Chile)
- Member of the National Assembly **Wilma Andrade** (Ecuador), Vice-President for South America of the OPN

Closing remarks:

- Senator **Javier Macaya** (Chile), President of the OPN
- The Hon. **Carolyn Trench-Sandiford** (Belize), President of the Senate and ParlAmericas Board Member



[FULL AGENDA](#)



[PRESS RELEASE](#)



[VIDEO RECORDING](#)



AGENDA HIGHLIGHTS

Throughout the three sessions of the event, participants, panellists, and subject-matter experts addressed, among other topics, the main considerations that should be included in a robust public integrity strategy, according to some of the most recognized international standards and instruments in this field, and explored mechanisms for promoting civil society participation in the processes needed to foster an inclusive culture of integrity.

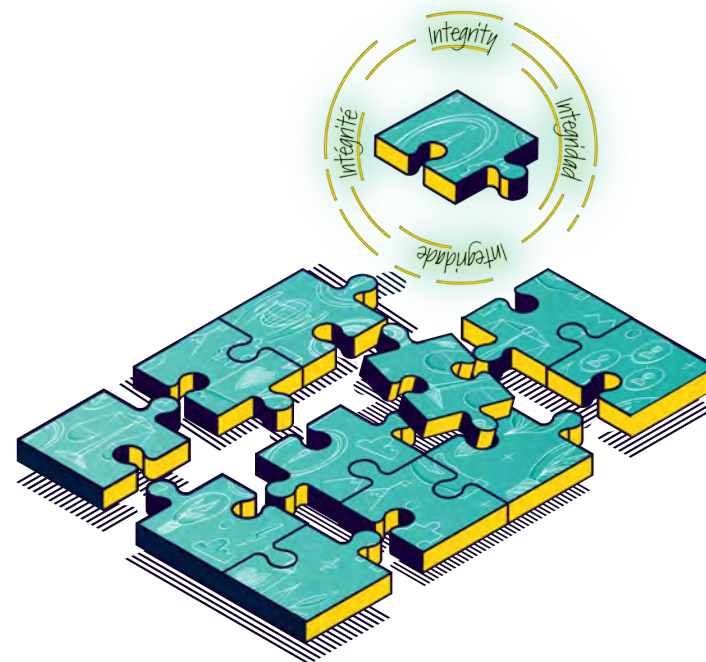
In addition, the meeting provided a space for the exchange of good legislative practices related to public integrity and the discussion of new challenges and trends in strengthening integrity both in parliament and in different public agencies, especially considering conflict of interest management and public integrity systems, while taking into account the post-COVID-19 pandemic recovery processes.



KEY RESOURCES

The Road Map towards Legislative Openness 2.0 was officially launched during the gathering, and documents and materials related to public integrity were shared. They are available at the following links:

- [Road Map towards Legislative Openness 2.0](#), ParIAmericas (2022)
- [Corruption Perceptions Index](#), Transparency International (2021)
- [Public Integrity in Latin America and the Caribbean 2018-2019](#), OECD (2019)
- [Behavioural Insights for Public Integrity](#), OECD (2018)
- [Recommendation of the OECD Council on Public Integrity](#), OECD (2017)



Parliamentary Dialogue with Civil Society and Youth Representatives (March 9)

Main reflections during the session:

- Fostering a culture of integrity is an aim that should involve not only the branches of the state but society as a whole, collaborating to ensure that interactions between the public and private sectors, civil society and natural persons are mediated by the highest legal and ethical standards and always prioritize the public interest.
- The state needs to promote spaces for dialogue and consultation to ensure the substantive participation of a broad and diverse spectrum of social actors in the processes of building a culture of inclusive integrity, with the incorporation of gender and intersectional perspectives.
- As acknowledged by multilateral organizations such as the World Bank, substantive civil society participation in efforts to promote public integrity and safeguard the public interest requires that competent institutions collect and publish data disaggregated by gender and other variables that reflect the differential impacts of corruption, particularly on historically marginalized groups.
- The socioeconomic effects of corruption are especially severe among these historically marginalized groups, perpetuating inequality and poverty and posing a barrier to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

Inter-Parliamentary Dialogue (March 15)

Main reflections during the session:

- Public integrity systems based on preventive and corrective mechanisms for promoting ethical behaviour and probity among public authorities and officials are essential to the fight against corruption and, by extension, to ensuring good governance.
- International trends and standards related to public integrity recommend that corruption be addressed not through isolated and unconnected cases, but with a comprehensive approach based on three main pillars: a consistent and complete integrity system, a culture of public integrity, and effective accountability mechanisms.
- Public integrity systems should incorporate mechanisms and instruments ensuring that decision-making processes are carried out under the highest ethical standards. With regard to parliaments, it is relevant to adopt or strengthen binding and consensual codes of ethics and conduct for parliamentarians and parliamentary staff that address the prevention of misconduct, establishing investigation processes and mechanisms, including channels for requesting information and filing reports, and setting forth sanctions.
- Codes of conduct, ethics committees, conflict of interest regulations, and updated regulations on the regime of incompatible activities are some of the instruments and good practices that can be implemented by parliament to reduce the risks associated with corrupt practices and strengthen integrity in the legislative branch.

Plenary Session (March 22)

During the session, the following parliamentary delegations presented some of the legislative initiatives that they have been undertaking in different areas to continue to promote legislative openness: Bolivia, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Panama, Saint Lucia.



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

"Fostering a culture of integrity is an essential condition, not only for fighting corruption—a complex phenomenon that is unfortunately prevalent and has profound effects—but also for strengthening good governance, creating more productive economies and promoting more inclusive societies."



Senator **Hermelinda Alvarenga de Ortega** (Paraguay),
Second Vice-President of the Chamber of Senators

"National integrity systems must be part of broader political and social strategies that foster a culture of integrity in society. The success of the legal framework for fighting corruption depends, to a significant extent, on social ownership of the values and principles of integrity."



Delia Ferreira, Chair, Transparency International

"Parliaments play a central role in providing the public sector in general with all the necessary tools to guarantee a culture of integrity (...) parliaments must approve and update regulations on transparency, access to public information, public contracting, public ethics, and procedural laws against impunity for corruption."



Senator **Javier Macaya** (Chile), President of the OPN

"As identified by the Recommendation of the OECD Council on Public Integrity, strengthening public integrity is an objective that should involve not only the branches of the state but society as a whole, in order to build a culture of integrity in which interactions between the public and private sectors, civil society and natural persons are mediated by the highest legal and ethical standards."



The Honourable **Joseph Isaac** (Dominica), Speaker of the House of Assembly and member of the Board of Directors of ParlAmericas

"As parliamentarians, we are called upon to exercise oversight to limit opportunities for corruption in all government decision-making processes, as well as to discuss and pass legislation to promote public integrity. We are also responsible for ensuring the development of good practices and codes of conduct in parliament and in the performance of our duties, leading by example and in accordance with the highest ethical standards."



ELECTIONS RESULTS AND DECLARATION

The Executive Committee of the OPN thus includes the following members:

President

Javier Macaya Danús, Senator (Chile)

First Vice-President - North America

Bertha Alicia Caraveo Camarena, Senator (Mexico)

Second Vice-President - North America

René Cormier, Senator (Canada)

First Vice-President - Central America

Ana Lucía Delgado Orozco, Member of the Legislative Assembly (Costa Rica)

Second Vice-President - Central America

Corina Cano Córdoba, Member of the National Assembly (Panama)

Vice-President - South America

Wilma Andrade Muñoz, Member of the National Assembly (Ecuador)

Vice-President - The Caribbean

His Honour **Reginald Farley**, President of the Senate (Barbados)

Results of the Elections for the Open Parliament Network's Executive Committee 2022-2024

His Honour **Reginald Farley** (Barbados), President of the Senate, was elected by acclamation to serve as Vice-President for the Caribbean, the only position for which an election was held during the gathering.

Declaration

The 6th Gathering of the Open Parliament Network concluded with the reading of the [declaration](#). The commitments made by the participating parliamentary delegations included the following:

- Foster the adoption and improvement of codes of conduct for public servants in the entire state apparatus, in accordance with the highest standards of ethics, probity, and transparency, pursuant to the [Lima Commitment](#) and the [Inter-American Convention against Corruption](#) of the Organization of American States, the [United Nations Convention against Corruption](#), and the [OECD Recommendation on Public Integrity](#).
- Promote among competent authorities the importance of developing continuous training programs for public authorities and officials to support the correct, honourable, and appropriate performance of their functions that also take into account the relationship between public integrity, human rights, and gender equality as well as promote a better understanding of the risks of corruption inherent in the performance of their duties.
- Promote the participation of the private sector and civil society, academia, community-based movements and grassroots organizations, specialists, and other social actors in the development, regular updating, and implementation of national public integrity strategies, especially focusing on the inclusion of women and historically marginalized groups to ensure that their experiences are taken into account at every stage of the process.
- Advocate for horizontal and vertical cooperation among public officials, entities, and agencies at all levels of public administration to avoid duplication and exchange lessons learned and good practices in the fight against corruption and the strengthening of public integrity.
- Advocate for the strengthening of mechanisms established for whistleblower protection and bolster existing national legislation to encourage both citizens and public officials to report acts that violate public integrity standards and affect the public interest.

COUNTRIES REPRESENTED



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



Subscribe to the ParlAmericas Podcast on [Apple Podcasts](#), [Google Podcasts](#), or [Spotify](#), where you can listen to sessions from ParlAmericas activities.



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

