



#ParlAmericasCC #EscazuAgreement

 **THEMES:** Environmental governance, Human rights

 **DATE:** July 11, 2023

 **LOCATION:** Virtual

 **PARTICIPANTS:** More than 70 parliamentarians, parliamentary staff, youth leaders, and representatives of civil society and multilateral organizations

 **CO-ORGANIZER:** Parliamentarians for Global Action (PGA)



This activity aligned with SDGs 5, 10, 13, 15, 16, and 17.



Towards effective environmental governance: Access to information, participation, and justice

Recognizing the importance of urgent action to promote inclusive and effective environmental governance across Latin America and the Caribbean, and the crucial role of the [Escazú Agreement](#) in guiding these efforts, ParlAmericas in collaboration with Parliamentarians for Global Action (PGA) convened parliamentarians, specialists, and representatives of civil society from the hemisphere to address parliamentary efforts on this agenda. Featuring a keynote presentation on the state of the Escazú Agreement's implementation in the region, a panel discussion, and subsequent open dialogue, the session examined the role of parliaments in safeguarding the rights of access to information, participation, and justice in environmental matters as enshrined in the Agreement, including special emphasis on empowering women, youth, and marginalised communities to participate in environmental decision-making.



AGENDA HIGHLIGHTS

Opening remarks:

- The Honourable **Valerie Woods**, MP (Belize), Speaker of the House of Representatives, PGA Board Member, and Climate Action Campaign Convenor
- The Honourable Senator **Rosa Galvez** (Canada), President of the ParlAmericas Parliamentary Network on Climate Change

Presentation:

- **David Barrio Lamarche**, Environmental Affairs Officer, Escazú Agreement Secretariat, ECLAC

Panellists:

- Senator **Sophia Frazer-Binns** (Jamaica), Shadow Minister of Land, Environment and Climate Change
- Senator **Emilio Álvarez Icaza** (Mexico), PGA Board Member
- **Tyrell Gittens**, young geographer, environmentalist, conservationist and journalist from Trinidad and Tobago

Moderator:

- Member of the Chamber of Deputies **Margarita Stolbizer** (Argentina), PGA Board Member

Closing remarks:

- **Mónica Adame**, Secretary General of PGA
- **Alisha Todd**, Director General of ParlAmericas

MAIN TAKEAWAYS FROM THE MEETING:

- The Escazú Agreement presents the minimum standards that States must observe in order to fulfill the rights of access to information, participation, and justice in environmental matters, promoting a human-rights centred approach to environmental governance in the region.
- Through the Agreement, States are called to establish conditions that encourage public participation in environmental decision-making processes and that are adapted to the social, economic, cultural, geographical and gender characteristics of their national population. As representatives of their people, parliamentarians can be instrumental in applying an inclusive and participatory lens that facilitates broad and meaningful participation.
- It is essential that the public, especially youth, women, and members of communities particularly vulnerable to the effects of environmental degradation are empowered to participate in environmental decision-making, this includes ensuring sufficient notice is given and accessibility needs are considered ahead of public consultations on environmental projects.
- Taking into account the central role of justice for democratic strengthening as well as the specific provision of the Escazú Agreement to protect environmental human rights defenders, the most threatened of whom are women, farmers and Afro-descendant and Indigenous persons, it is imperative that the judicial system is adequately equipped to protect the people and address their petitions, through robust legal frameworks. For instance, parliaments can strengthen the judicial system's capacity to address socio-environmental disputes by incorporating environmental crimes in the penal codes.



[FULL AGENDA](#)



[PRESS RELEASE](#)



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