



#ParlAmericas

THEMES: Migration, human rights, sustainable development, regional cooperation, gender equality

DATES: October 24 and 25, 2023

LOCATION: Panama City, Panama

PARTICIPANTS: More than 50 parliamentarians, parliamentary staff, specialists and representatives of civil society organizations from over 14 countries in the Americas and the Caribbean

HOST: National Assembly of Panama



These activities aligned with SDGs 1, 3, 5, 8, 10, 13, 16 and 17.



Parliamentary perspectives for safe, orderly and regular migration in Latin America and the Caribbean

The gathering, which brought together parliamentarians, specialists, representatives of multilateral organizations, civil society, and women's and youth organizations, provided a space to analyze recent migration trends in the region from various perspectives and facilitate the exchange of national migration policies and good legislative practices, seeking to promote comprehensive, inclusive, and human rights-based migration governance.

The sessions also focused on exploring sustainable and gender-sensitive strategies for promoting regional cooperation among national parliaments in the Americas and the Caribbean through a collaborative and coordinated approach to migration, fostering the development of innovative solutions to shared challenges.



AGENDA HIGHLIGHTS

Opening remarks:

- The Honourable Member of the National Assembly of Panama **Kayra Harding Bart**, Vice-President for Central America of the ParlAmericas Parliamentary Network for Gender Equality and host of the gathering

Specialists:

- **Rudolf Maxwald**, Senior Regional Liaison and Policy Advisor, International Organization for Migration (IOM)
- Representative **David Toro Ramírez** (Colombia)
- Member of Congress **Juan Carlos Rodas Lucero (Guatemala)**, Chair of the Migrants Committee
- **Sara Cognuck González**, consultant, UNICEF
- **Elena Lorac**, founder and co-coordinator of Reconoci.do, a movement of young Dominicans of Haitian descent
- **Verónica Cano**, researcher, CELADE-Population Division of ECLAC
- **Jacqueline Emmanuel**, Director of Economic Affairs and Regional Integration, Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS)
- **María Noel Vaeza**, Regional Director for the Americas and the Caribbean, UN Women

Dialogues moderated by:

- Member of the Chamber of Deputies **Nelsa Shoraya Suárez Ariza** (Dominican Republic), Second Vice-President for the Caribbean of the ParlAmericas Parliamentary Network on Climate Change and Sustainability
- The Honourable Member of the National Assembly **Alina González** (Panama)
- Member of the Chamber of Deputies **Camila Crescimbeni** (Argentina), Chair of the Population and Human Development Committee
- Member of Congress **Luis Enrique Ortega Sanchez** (Honduras)
- Member of the National Assembly **Radjendrekoemar Debie** (Suriname)
- Representative **Sylvia Ibareuren Gauthier** (Uruguay)
- The Honourable Member of the National Assembly **Juan Diego Vásquez** (Panama)
- Member of the Chamber of Deputies **Vlado Mirosevic** (Chile), ParlAmericas Board Member

Closing Remarks:

- The Honourable Member of the National Assembly **Kayra Harding Bart** (Panama), Vice-President for Central America of the ParlAmericas Parliamentary Network for Gender Equality and host of the gathering



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KEY FINDINGS

- Migration is a complex and multidimensional phenomenon that requires coordinated work among different State levels and branches, as well as collaborative efforts at the regional level. Given their role as representatives, parliaments can play a relevant role in migration governance at the national level and promote dialogue and cooperation through parliamentary diplomacy actions at the regional and international level.
- It is essential to understand the drivers of migration so that they can be addressed. These include factors such as poverty, violence, human trafficking, food insecurity, social conflicts, crime, economic crises, and the threats associated with climate change. Parliaments can play a key role in their budgetary functions in terms of ensuring investment in migrant origin countries to improve access to services, prevent and respond to violence, and create opportunities for vulnerable populations.
- Regarding migration routes, efforts must be enhanced to transform them into safe and regular routes. Parliaments can work on regulatory frameworks that guarantee family reunification in cases where minors are separated from their families, strengthen asylum procedures in relevant cases, and provide oversight to ensure that procedures at border crossings and reception areas are in line with international and regional regulatory frameworks, based on a human rights approach.
- It is necessary to promote the economic and social integration of migrants in all their diversity, recognizing their contributions to the development of their countries of origin, transit, and destination. To this end, parliaments can support or promote the signing of agreements on the free movement of persons with neighbouring countries or other countries in the region; the simplification of paperwork for the recognition of professional qualifications and licences; the necessary reform of regulations related to remittances; and the creation of employment programs that specifically focus on migrants, among other actions.
- The proportion of migrating girls, boys, and adolescents in Latin America and the Caribbean has increased to a record level in the last three years and is the highest worldwide (globally they represent 13% of the migrant population, compared to 25% at the regional level). Parliaments can be instrumental in guaranteeing the rights, safety, and well-being of migrant and refugee children and adolescents, in line with international conventions and agreements, ensuring their access to health, education and security. In this regard, it is also necessary to consider that girls and adolescents are even more exposed to risks of violence in all its forms, especially sexual violence, human trafficking, and discrimination.





The Honourable Member of the National Assembly **Kayra Harding Bart** (Panama), Vice-President for Central America of the PNGE and host of the gathering

"By recognizing that migration drives prosperity, innovation, and development at a global level, we can work together to optimize its contributions through improvements in its governance. It is essential to address and reduce migration vulnerabilities by establishing a safe, orderly, and regular process. In addition, it is necessary to empower migrants as well as host communities to achieve full inclusion and social cohesion."



Jacqueline Emmanuel, Director of Economic Affairs and Regional Integration, Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS)

"Integration mechanisms can provide multiple socio-economic co-benefits. In terms of the free movement of persons regime within the OECS, they include reducing the adversities that people face when disasters occur, attracting skills and services for recovery and reconstruction, and creating a positive effect on employment through greater skills mobility and increased opportunities for business growth and networking, among others."



Rudolf Maxwald, Senior Regional Liaison and Policy Advisor, International Organization for Migration (IOM)

"Too often, migration is a necessity rather than a choice. We need to address it collectively. We have to focus on saving and protecting lives and livelihoods, empowering people, communities and governments to drive solutions to displacement and irregular migration, and facilitating inclusive, innovative and responsive pathways to regular migration. We have to make migration work for migrants, communities, the private sector and countries of origin, transit and destination. We need to make sure we harness the potential of migration for sustainable development."



Sara Cognuck González, consultant, UNICEF

"In the last six years, 2.3 million children and adolescents were displaced due to climate disasters in Latin America and the Caribbean. When children or adolescents migrate, they not only lose their homes and social ties, but also lose access to basic services and, in many cases, their rights are not guaranteed. In addition, it is important to apply a gender lens to recognize that girls and adolescents are also exposed to sexual violence and other forms of gender violence. Legislatures are essential in taking action in response to this unprecedented crisis."



María Noel Vaeza, Regional Director for the Americas and the Caribbean, UN Women

"Until recently, migration data was generic. It is imperative that statistics also look at women, because migration affects us disproportionately. The region is experiencing a human mobility crisis, and we are witnessing the feminization of migration as well as the feminization of poverty. Pre-existing situations of vulnerability, inequalities, and gender roles interact with the multiple factors that drive people to migrate, and it is necessary to analyze and consider these intersections for inclusive approaches."



The Honourable Member of the National Assembly **Juan Diego Vásquez** (Panamá)

"It is valuable to discuss the positive effects of migration, how the phenomenon has evolved and how so many of our countries have been shaped by the knowledge, wisdom, experiences, and contributions of healthy, sustainable, and humane migration in the region. Understanding the contributions of migration and its opportunities, as well as its challenges, is essential."

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