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TITLE: Open and Inclusive Parliaments: Experiences and Strategies in Latin America

THEMES: Gender equality, political participation and representation of women, gender-based violence, care policies, open parliament, co-creation

DATES: August 10 -11, 2023

LOCATION: Brasilia, Brazil

PARTICIPANTS: More than 45 parliamentary staff and representatives of civil society organizations from 14 countries of the Americas and the Caribbean

HOST: Federal Senate of Brazil



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



Joint Meeting of the Parliamentary Staff Network on Open Parliament and the Parliamentary Staff Network for Gender Equality of ParlAmericas

The joint meeting of the Parliamentary Staff Network on Open Parliament and the Parliamentary Staff Network for Gender Equality of ParlAmericas was dedicated to exploring issues related to gender equality within parliaments, including gender-based violence and care policies, and sharing experiences and good parliamentary practices at the operational and administrative level, as well as in the legislative sphere. In addition, parliamentary staff, together with specialists and representatives of civil society organizations, in particular women's organizations, participated in co-creation workshops to inform a ParlAmericas tool that will guide parliaments in the region in addressing the pillars of open parliament with a gender and intersectionality perspective.



AGENDA HIGHLIGHTS

Opening round table:

- **Ilana Trombka** (Brazil), Director General, Federal Senate
- **Luis Rojas** (Chile), Secretary General of the Constitutional Process, Deputy Secretary of the Chamber of Deputies of Chile, and General Coordinator of the Parliamentary Staff Network on Open Parliament
- **Kathy Ramos** (Panama), Director of Gender of the National Assembly and Regional Coordinator for Central America of the Parliamentary Staff Network on Gender Equality

Opening:

- Honourable Representative **Catherine Juvinao Clavijo** (Colombia), Vice-President for South America of the ParlAmericas Open Parliament Network

Keynote speaker:

- Dr. **Livia Maria Sant'Anna Vaz**, Attorney General of the Public Prosecutor's Office of the State of Bahia

Discussions moderated by:

- **Yuriria García Núñez** (Mexico), Head of Gender Equality Unit, Chamber of Deputies
- **Maria Terezinha Nunes** (Brazil), Coordinator of the Equity Network, Federal Senate
- **Catalina Cirio** (Argentina), Deputy Director of the Parliamentary Observatory on Gender and Equity, Honourable Chamber of Deputies of the Nation

Presentaciones

- **Doris Muñoz Varela** (Uruguay), Director of Communications, Chamber of Representatives
- **Gisela Manero** (Argentina), Director of Equality, Honourable Chamber of Deputies of the Nation
- **Luis Acosta** (Honduras), Legislative Manager, National Congress
- **Claudia Fuenzalida Cereceda** (Chile), Head of the Planning and Management Unit and lead on gender issues, Senate of the Republic
- **Natalia Ferreira Da Costa** (Paraguay), Project Coordinator, Chamber of Senators
- **María Cristina Rosado** (Colombia), Secretary of the Legal Committee for Women's Equity of the Congress of the Republic and Regional Coordinator for South America of the Parliamentary Staff Network for Gender Equality
- **Stella Maria Vaz Santos Valadares** (Brazil), General Coordinator of the Standing Committee for the Promotion of Gender and Racial Equality, Federal Senate
- **Tarcila Rivera Zea**, Founder and President of the Centre for Indigenous Cultures of Peru (CHIRAPAQ) and Founder of the Continental Network of Indigenous Women of the Americas (ECMIA, by its Spanish acronym)



[FULL AGENDA](#)



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AGENDA HIGHLIGHTS

Co-creation facilitated by:

- **Rocío Noriega (Chile)**, Advisor to the Bicameral Group on Transparency, National Congress

Working groups moderated by:

- **Stella Maria Vaz Santos Valadares (Brazil)**, General Coordinator of the Standing Committee for the Promotion of Gender and Racial Equality, Federal Senate
- **Roger Celi**, Coordinator of the Legislative Area, Citizenship and Development Foundation
- **Marcela Castrillón (Uruguay)**, Interim Director of the Administrative Area, Chamber of Representatives
- **Eduardo Carrillo**, Co-Executive Director, TEDIC
- **Juan Carlos Chavarria (Costa Rica)**, Director of Citizen Participation of the Legislative Assembly and Regional Coordinator for Central America of the ParlAmericas Parliamentary Staff Network on Open Parliament
- **Delfina Schenone**, Head of the Policy Area, Latin American Team for Justice and Gender
- **Flora Vagas (Brazil)**, International Affairs Advisor of the General Directorate, Federal Senate
- **Sílvia Rita Souza**, Executive Director, Women's Democracy Network Brazil





KEY CONCLUSIONS

- Parliaments represent the forum for consensus-building to draft laws, including those related to the gender equality agenda, such as addressing gender-based violence or care policies. At the same time, parliaments are also workplaces and, therefore, must also have clear internal regulations to prevent, address, penalize, and eradicate gender-based workplace violence, as well as standards in support of caregiving and breastfeeding. Parliamentary staff are essential to establishing, communicating, and implementing these initiatives, both as planners and end users.
- The open parliament framework, with its four pillars—transparency and access to information, accountability, citizen participation, and ethics and probity—is a key instrument for promoting gender equality in and within legislative work. To achieve this, multi-stakeholder consultation, dialogue, and cooperation are essential.
- It is important to incorporate an intersectional approach to understanding the issues and defining solutions. Intersectionality is an analytical tool that recognizes that systemic inequalities are shaped by overlapping social factors, such as gender, ethnicity and class, among others. Consequently, a person's disadvantages and privileges cannot be understood by examining the various elements of his or her identity in isolation. On the contrary, we must pay attention to the set of power relations that affect them. The meeting addressed the experiences of black women and the intersections between violence and racism in particular, as well as the experiences of Indigenous women and the specific obstacles they face in order to participate in politics and influence parliaments.
- Promoting policies in favour of advancing the skills and competencies on gender equality and open parliament among parliamentary staff may be key to mainstreaming a gender perspective in the work carried out in legislative, administrative, and operational spheres of parliaments.





Ilana Trombka (Brazil), Director General of the Federal Senate:

"Civil servants, parliamentary staff, we have immense power in our hands. We have daily contact with those who create the laws and we work daily with the public bureaucracy. Out of this coexistence must come the improvement of society, especially to work toward achieving gender equity."



Kathy Ramos (Panama), Director of Gender of the National Assembly and Regional Coordinator of the ParlAmericas Parliamentary Staff Network on Gender Equality:

"In this meeting we have the opportunity to explore how we can mainstream the gender perspective in the legislative openness agenda with the shared objectives of strengthening our legislative institutions to build open, inclusive, and gender-sensitive parliaments."



Hon. Representative **Catherine Juvinao Clavijo** (Colombia), Vice-President for South America of the ParlAmericas Open Parliament Network

"Ongoing dialogue and co-creation between members of Congress, parliamentary staff, and civil society organizations will undoubtedly be the key to making our parliaments more open and inclusive organizations, whether to function more effectively or to improve our society. In this way, we will rise to the legislative challenges that a new digital society demands."



Livia Maria Sant'Anna Vaz (Brasil), Attorney General of the Public Prosecutor's Office of the State of Bahia:

"I believe that yes, it is vitally important that we have regulatory frameworks for gender equity, but we need the individuals who comprise the legislatures to have prior knowledge, free from discrimination. Otherwise, laws will remain solely on paper."



Luis Rojas (Chile), Secretary General of the Constitutional Process, Deputy Secretary of the Chamber of Deputies of Chile, and General Coordinator of the ParlAmericas Parliamentary Staff Network on Open Parliament:

"There is a clear need for citizens to exercise their right to participate, and we must be up to the task of guaranteeing not only formal but substantive participation in discussions on public affairs from an inclusive perspective."



Tarcila Rivera Zea, Founder and President of the Centre for Indigenous Cultures of Peru (CHIRAPAQ) and Founder of the Continental Network of Indigenous Women of the Americas (ECMIA, by its Spanish acronym)

"Civil society, women and, in this case, Indigenous women, can, with the right information, have a better and greater participation in developing and following up on the implementation of laws."



COUNTRIES REPRESENTED



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



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