



#ParIAmericasGEN

 **TITLE:** “Strengthening Legislative Advocacy by Feminist Organizations in Latin America: Processes, Tools, and Experiences”

 **THEMES:** Gender equality, care work, economic valuation of unpaid care work

 **DATE:** February 24, 2023

 **LOCATION:** Virtual

 **PARTICIPANTS:** 107 representatives of women’s organizations from 15 countries



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



Virtual workshop for Latin American feminist organizations

This interactive training session, “**Strengthening Legislative Advocacy by Feminist Organizations in Latin America: Processes, Tools, and Experiences,**” aimed to explore processes, tools, and experiences related to the participation of feminist organizations in parliamentary processes. Recognizing the fundamental role these organizations play in influencing legislative and policy changes in the region, this workshop provided an introduction to parliamentary processes, the value of building collaborative relationships with parliaments, the relationship between the public agenda and the legislative agenda, the open parliament approach as an advocacy opportunity, and effective strategies on how to individually engage with parliamentarians at key moments.



AGENDA HIGHLIGHTS

Opening remarks:

- Senator **Verónica Camino Farjat** (Mexico), President of the ParlAmericas Parliamentary Network for Gender Equality

Presentation “**Why engage with parliaments? The legislative process and opportunities for action**”:

- **Guadalupe Valdez** (Dominican Republic), former Member of the Chamber of Deputies

Presentation “**Open parliament: windows of opportunity for feminist advocacy**”:

- **Valentina Enciso**, Political Action Coordinator, *Fundación Artemisas*, Colombia

Group interview with former parliamentarians: “**Gender equality, parliaments, and territories: weaving networks from within**”:

- Moderator: **Marcela Sabat** (Chile), former Member of the Chamber of Deputies and Senator
- Panellists:
 - **Gina Godoy** (Ecuador), former Member of the National Assembly
 - **Ana Matilde Gómez** (Panama), former Member of the National Assembly
 - **Nielsen Pérez** (Costa Rica), former Member of the Legislative Assembly

Interactive group workshop in breakout sessions: “**Gender equality, parliaments, and territories: weaving networks from outside**”:

- Moderators:
 - **Friné Salguero**, Simone de Beauvoir Leadership Institute, Mexico
 - **Ana Lima**, CLADEM, Mexico
 - **Justina Lee**, Ecofeminista, Argentina



SHARED RESOURCES

The session also included a presentation on ParlAmericas' [What We Heard](#) report, which details the key findings of a survey carried out among women's organizations in Latin America on their engagement with parliaments. It is worth noting that the results of this survey informed the development of this workshop.

The following are key resources on citizen participation in the legislative process that were shared during the session:

- [Road Map Towards Legislative Openness 2.0](#) (ParlAmericas)
- [Toolkit: Citizen Participation in the Legislative Process](#) (ParlAmericas)
- [Plataforma en Colectiva](#) [“As a Collective” Platform] (Fundación Artemisas, available in Spanish)



[FULL AGENDA](#)



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CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The following are some of the key conclusions and recommendations from the session:

On the importance of citizen participation:

- Citizen participation in parliamentary processes is crucial, as it can contribute to better legislative debates that consider diverse perspectives, informed by the experiences and backgrounds of various actors.
- The participation of feminist organizations in the legislative process can lead to the debate and approval of legislation that promotes greater equality and considers and seeks to reduce inequities.

On the mechanisms for participating in parliamentary processes:

- It is important to understand the legislative cycle in order to select the best participation strategy, the appropriate timing, and the actors involved. This may vary from country to country depending on the specific institutional system and procedures (unicameral vs. bicameral legislatures, number of committees, status of bills, etc.).
- Parliament is the legislative branch of government that is responsible for legislating, while the executive branch of government is responsible for developing policy. It is essential to understand the role and functions of the different branches of government to determine the best entry point for advocacy activities and the most effective strategy for participation.
- Formal mechanisms for participating in parliamentary processes include: submitting bills through a citizen initiative process or through parliamentarians; participating in public hearings or other activities proposed by parliaments' citizen participation units; participating in committee meetings; submitting comments as a stakeholder; attending plenary sessions; monitoring legislative work through the website and social media; meeting with parliamentarians during constituency visits; submitting requests for access to public information; and co-creating open parliament commitments, among others.

On direct advocacy with parliamentarians:

- Advocacy messages and materials should be based on evidence (citing relevant facts and sources), concise, and compelling.
- Another possible advocacy campaign tool is to tell a story of how an issue affects specific populations in the country and how the proposed reform could positively impact those communities in order to capture the interest of elected representatives.
- It may be useful to tie strategies to regulatory frameworks and international agreements, as well as share comparative legislation and the experiences of other countries that have passed laws in the area of interest.
- Consider that parliamentary duties include not only the legislative function, but also the budgetary and oversight functions, which can also be influenced by advocacy efforts.
- Research the issue prior to implementing advocacy efforts to identify competing priorities and ideas that different stakeholders may have on the issue. This will help in developing advocacy strategies and persuasive messages for parliamentarians who have varying views on the issue.
- Build alliances with a variety of political actors that will enable exploring conversations and solutions in a collaborative manner.
- Recognize that political decisions will also be guided by political party ideology and legislative dynamics, and identify the leadership of each group. Discussing, sharing research, sending emails, and meeting with party or caucus leaders can be useful approaches to influencing parliamentary debates.
- Organize public advocacy events to obtain feedback from a broader audience on the issues of interest. This strategy allows policymakers to hear different perspectives, including from academics, experts, youth, representatives of civil society organizations, and members of interested/affected communities.

COUNTRIES REPRESENTED



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