



ParlAmericas proposal for enhanced engagement with the OAS welcomed by Member States

WASHINGTON, D.C. (UNITED STATES), March 14, 2024 — Today, at the headquarters of the Organization of American States, a ParlAmericas parliamentary delegation participated in the Joint Special Meeting with the Committee on Juridical and Political Affairs and the Committee on Inter-American Summits Management and Civil Society Participation in OAS Activities (CISC) on the topic of Legislative Cooperation. During the Joint Special Meeting, ParlAmericas put forth a proposal to serve as a roadmap for continued enhanced parliamentary engagement with the OAS that was embraced by all Member States.

Twenty-two parliamentarians representing 17 national legislatures from Latin America, the Caribbean, and Canada participated in the three-day delegation to Washington, D.C., which concluded with the Special Joint Meeting. It included speakers of parliaments from the region and various members of the ParlAmericas Board of Directors and Network Executive Committees. The delegation was led by Senator **Blanca Ovelar** (Paraguay), President of ParlAmericas.

In advance of the Special Joint Meeting, U.S. Senator **Ben Cardin**, Chair of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, and U.S. Senator **Roger Wicker**, Ranking Member of the Senate Armed Services Committee, submitted a letter welcoming ParlAmericas' proposal as a foundation for advancing parliamentary participation in the OAS in the immediate future, recognizing the ideas outlined in the proposal as starting points for realizing their vision articulated in the OAS Legislative Engagement Act.

Earlier in the week, the ParlAmericas delegation had a productive meeting with the senators about ways to build upon ParlAmericas' institutional integration with the OAS.

The program for the delegation also included an exchange with OAS Secretary General **Luis Almagro** on the state of democracy in the region. The Secretary General reaffirmed ParlAmericas' role as the permanent inter-parliamentary organization in the Inter-American System.

During their time in Washington, D.C., the delegation also held dialogues with officials from different OAS Executive Secretariats, bilateral meetings with representatives from the United States Congress, and a panel with Washington-based partners: the United States Congress House Democracy Partnership (HDP), the National Democratic Institute (NDI), and the International Republican Institute (IRI).

The program provided parliamentarians with an opportunity to learn more about the work of the OAS and discuss issues of shared interest being prioritized by regional stakeholders, namely security and transnational crime, democracy and the rule of law, gender equality and human rights, migration, climate change, and economic development. The delegation was further an opportunity to optimize

parliamentary participation at the OAS through ParlAmericas, and to action ParlAmericas' reaffirmed mandate to foster the participation of parliamentarians as an integral part of the Summits of the Americas process. A resounding conclusion of the delegation was the affirmation that parliamentary diplomacy serves as an important safeguard for democracy in the hemisphere.

Members of the delegation

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

The Honourable **Bridgid Annisette-George** (Trinidad and Tobago), Speaker of the House of Representatives and Vice-President of ParlAmericas

Senator **Verónica Noemí Camino Farjat** (Mexico), Second Vice-President of ParlAmericas

Senator **Javier Macaya Danús** (Chile), Second Vice-President of ParlAmericas

Member of the Chamber of Deputies **Margarita Stolbizer** (Argentina)

His Honour **Arthur E. Holder** (Barbados), Speaker of the House of Assembly

The Honourable **Carolyn Trench Sandiford** (Belize), President of the Senate

Senator **Peter Boehm** (Canada)

Member of Parliament **Anthony Rota** (Canada)

Senator **Germán Blanco Álvarez** (Colombia)

Member of the Legislative Assembly **Carolina Delgado Ramírez** (Costa Rica)

The Honourable **Joseph T. Isaac** (Dominica), Speaker of the House of Assembly

Ricardo de los Santos Polanco (Dominican Republic), President of the Senate

Member of the Chamber of Deputies **Nelsa Shoraya Suárez Ariza** (Dominican Republic)

Senator **Carlos Manuel Gómez Ureña** (Dominican Republic)

Senator **José del Castillo Saviñon** (Dominican Republic)

Henry Kronfle (Ecuador), Speaker of the National Assembly

Member of Congress **Andrea Villagrán Antón** (Guatemala)

Member of Congress **Yessica Rosselli Amuruz Dulanto** (Peru)

The Honourable **Alvina Reynolds** (Saint Lucia), President of the Senate

The Honourable **Marinus Bee** (Suriname), Speaker of the National Assembly

For further information, visit www.parlAmericas.org and follow us on 

About ParlAmericas

ParlAmericas is the institution that promotes parliamentary diplomacy in the inter-American system.

Composed of the 35 national legislatures in North, Central and South America, and the Caribbean,

ParlAmericas promotes cooperative political dialogue, facilitates the exchange of good legislative

practices, and produces tailored resources to support parliamentarians in their work. The International

Secretariat of ParlAmericas is headquartered in Ottawa, Canada.