



# **ParlAmericas** **Express**

YEAR 2. ISSUE 1. JANUARY 2013

- ✓ **Parliaments and Extractive Industries**
- ✓ **Annual Gathering of the Group of Women Parliamentarians**
- ✓ **Diplomatic talk**
- ✓ **Americas barometer**
- ✓ **Resource center**



## **2013 UPCOMING EVENTS**

**21-22 FEBRUARY**  
**30<sup>th</sup> Board of Directors**  
**meeting**  
**(Medellín, Colombia)**

**25-26 FEBRUARY**  
**Parliaments and Extractive**  
**Industries Workshop**  
**(Bogotá, Colombia)**

**16-17 MAY**  
**Annual Gathering of the**  
**Group of Women**  
**Parliamentarians**  
**(Paramaribo, Suriname)**



**ParlAmericas**

Established in 2001

**President**

Randy Hoback (Canada)

**1<sup>st</sup> Vice-President**

Víctor Julio III (Panama)

**2<sup>nd</sup> Vice-President and  
President of the Group of  
Women Parliamentarians**

Linda Machuca (Ecuador)

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Gina Hill

**Program Manager**

Viviane Rossini

**Project and  
Communications Officer**

Thaïs Martín Navas

**Event Logistics and  
Administrative Officer**

Marcelo Virkel

## Message from the President



Dear colleagues,

Welcome to this new issue of **ParlAmericas Express!** I hope you had a wonderful holiday and that 2013 is off to a terrific start.

Last November, the Canadian Section of ParlAmericas, of which I am Chair, celebrated its Annual General Meeting and hosted a reception to foster relations with the diplomatic community in Ottawa. It was a successful and well-received event. This January, the Canadian Section participated in bilateral meetings with our colleagues in Guatemala and El Salvador.

The Canadian Section, as any other National Chapter of ParlAmericas, is much like a Parliamentary Friendship Group or Association. It formalizes an intention on behalf of the Canadian Parliament to develop and enhance open and reciprocal relations

with other parliaments in the hemisphere. As such it is a valuable mechanism through which Parliamentarians communicate across the region.

Having a National Chapter in place provides a framework for institutional memory. As parliamentarians we may have limited terms, change portfolios, or leave politics, and take our knowledge and institutional memory with us. By forming an official National Chapter of ParlAmericas, the history of your parliament's interactions with other ParlAmericas member parliaments and with the organization itself, allows a record of institutional memory to be easily kept for continuity and future reference.

If your legislature does not already have one, I strongly encourage you to establish a National Chapter to promote the official inclusion of your parliament in ParlAmericas. For the assistance of our International Secretariat in setting up a National Chapter, write to [info@parlamericas.org](mailto:info@parlamericas.org).

I will be glad to personally reply to your inquiries at [president@parlamericas.org](mailto:president@parlamericas.org).

Best regards,

**Randy Hoback**

*Member of Parliament of Canada  
President of ParlAmericas*

## About ParlAmericas: The International Secretariat

The International Secretariat is responsible for assisting ParlAmericas, its Board of Directors, and its Executive Committee in the performance of their functions, as well as in the implementation of various projects.

The responsibilities of the International Secretariat include ensuring the efficient operations of the organization, liaising with supporters and partners, coordinating the implementation of programs and projects, preparing budgets and reports for the Board of Directors and supporters, serving as a channel of communication within the hemisphere, and acting as the institutional memory.

The International Secretariat team is composed of the Director General, a Program Manager, a Program and Communications Officer, and a Logistics and Administrative Officer. The Secretariat also benefits from consultants with expertise in different areas that may be required to fulfill the objectives of ParlAmericas. The International Secretariat is located in Ottawa, Canada.

If you would like to communicate with the International Secretariat, contact us at the following coordinates:

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E: [info@parlamericas.org](mailto:info@parlamericas.org) | W: [www.parlamericas.org](http://www.parlamericas.org)

# Board of Directors (2012-2013)



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Canada



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**Hugh Buchanan**  
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**Germán Alcides Blanco  
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Member of the Chamber of  
Representatives  
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**Alberto Grillón Conigliaro**  
Senator  
Paraguay



**Gina Hill**  
Director General  
ParlAmericas

# Parliaments and Extractive Industries: How to Improve Oversight and Increase Collaboration

Workshop



ParlAmericas, in collaboration with the Revenue Watch Institute, will host a training workshop for parliamentarians, entitled **“Parliaments and extractive industries: how to improve supervision and increase collaboration”** in Bogota, Colombia, on February 25<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup>, 2013.

The main objective of the workshop is to offer a forum for parliamentarians and subject experts to discuss the roles and actions of national legislatures with relation to extractive industries.

Through moderated debates as well as group work, the workshop seeks to disseminate knowledge and best practices that exist at a regional level with regards to legislation and supervision of the extractive sector in South America, and the possibilities of parliamentary collaboration.

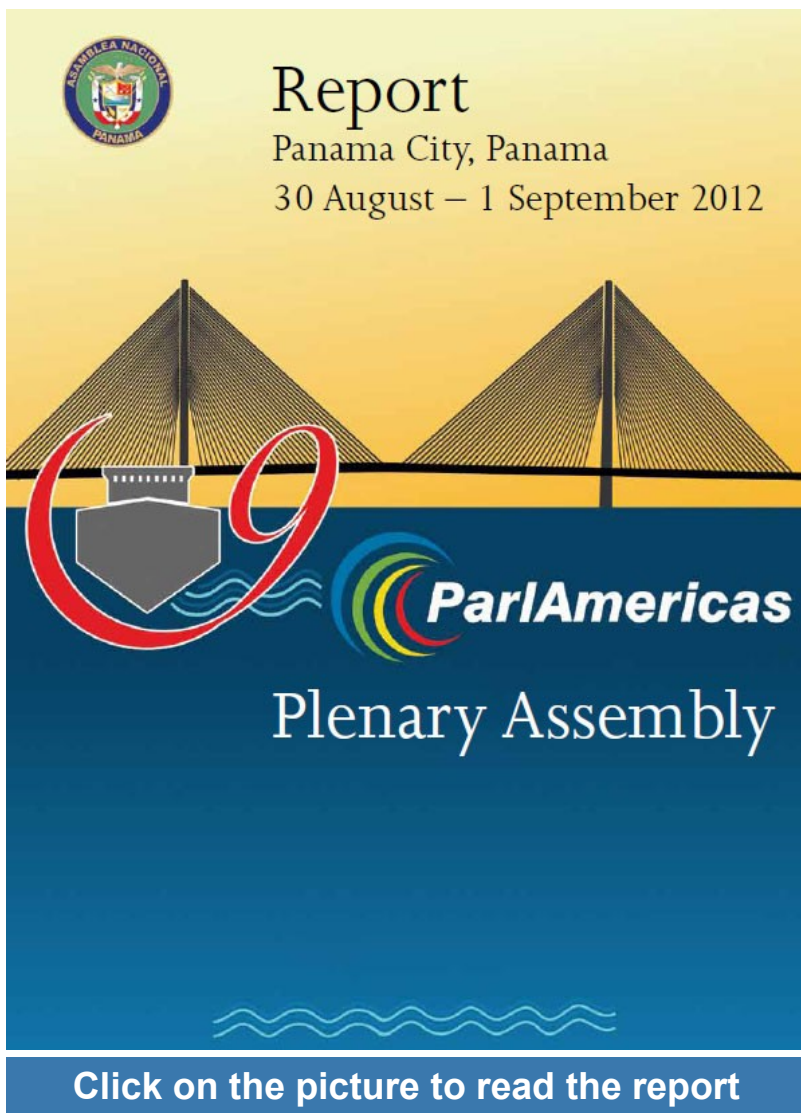


Los parlamentos y las industrias extractivas: cómo mejorar la supervisión y aumentar la colaboración

25 y 26 de febrero de 2013  
Bogotá, Colombia

# Plenary Assembly 9

## Report



The report of the 9<sup>th</sup> Plenary Assembly of ParlAmericas (30 August-1 September 2012, Panama City, Panama) is available at [www.parlamericas.org](http://www.parlamericas.org).

This event, which covered the topics of weak rule of law, the economic crisis, and climate change, brought together 46 parliamentarians who participated as official delegates from 14 member countries of the Americas, as well as observers and representatives of institutions. In addition, experts from eight countries of the Americas participated as speakers during working group sessions.

*“As parliamentarians, we are becoming more aware that the concerns and issues faced by our countries cannot be seen in isolation, but must be approached from a shared perspective. It is through dialogue promoted by organizations such as ParlAmericas that we can learn from one another, and commit to the positive interaction that will allow us to improve not only the economic, social and cultural conditions of our own countries, but those of our hemisphere as a whole.”*

**Randy Hoback**

Annual Report of the President of ParlAmericas

# Diplomatic talk: Engagement of foreign service with the legislative branch of government

*His Excellency Georges de La Roche, Ambassador of Guatemala to Canada*



*His Excellency Georges de La Roche was appointed ambassador of Guatemala to Canada in May 2008. He has served in the Guatemalan Foreign Service since 1996.*

The legislative process and lawmaking systems vary in different countries, as each system of government takes a different route to legislating and making a public policy idea into law. In my country, Guatemala, we have a unicameral Congress made-up of 158 Congress-people who are elected every 4 years; general, state and municipal elections occur at the same time. With only one chamber to our Legislature, some learned members of civil society advocate reform; either to make room for an upper chamber, or alternatively to increase or reduce the total number of elected officials.

As a diplomat, I find the differences among diverse nations' Congresses and Parliaments to be fascinating. In Guatemala, our public officials are also very interested by the fact that Canada has a Parliamentary system with an elected House of Commons and an appointed Senate. The curiosity caused by that extends to our appointed Cabinet within the Executive, to whom I point out that in some countries an elected Parliamentarian may also be an appointed member of the Executive's Cabinet. In Guatemala we have, as you may have guessed, a Presidential system, with separation of powers between the Executive, the Legislative and the Judicial. My Foreign Minister thus keeps in mind that Canada's Foreign Minister is also an elected Parliamentarian, with additional legislative duties.

Regardless of the system and road map a country employs and utilizes to legislate, it is useful and very important for Diplomatic members of Embassy Staff to engage with elected or appointed Parliamentarians and Congress-people. In my personal experience, and indeed through-out my career as a diplomatic agent for my nation, I have had much-needed interaction with the legislature of the country I have been posted in. This can be carried out at an Attaché level in the form of courtesy visits, to share broad cultural, tourist or commercial topics of interest, or it can be at an Ambassadorial level

to address specific and particular issues. Such was the case in Washington D.C. regarding free trade agreements, where regional Embassies would group together and carry out targeted visits to particular members of Congress to share their countries' interest in approving and implementing said agreements. Here in Canada, I know of other diplomats—including Ambassadors—who, like I do, conduct essential visits to Senators and MPs so as to raise awareness of diverse issues related to immigration, regional security or other specific topics.

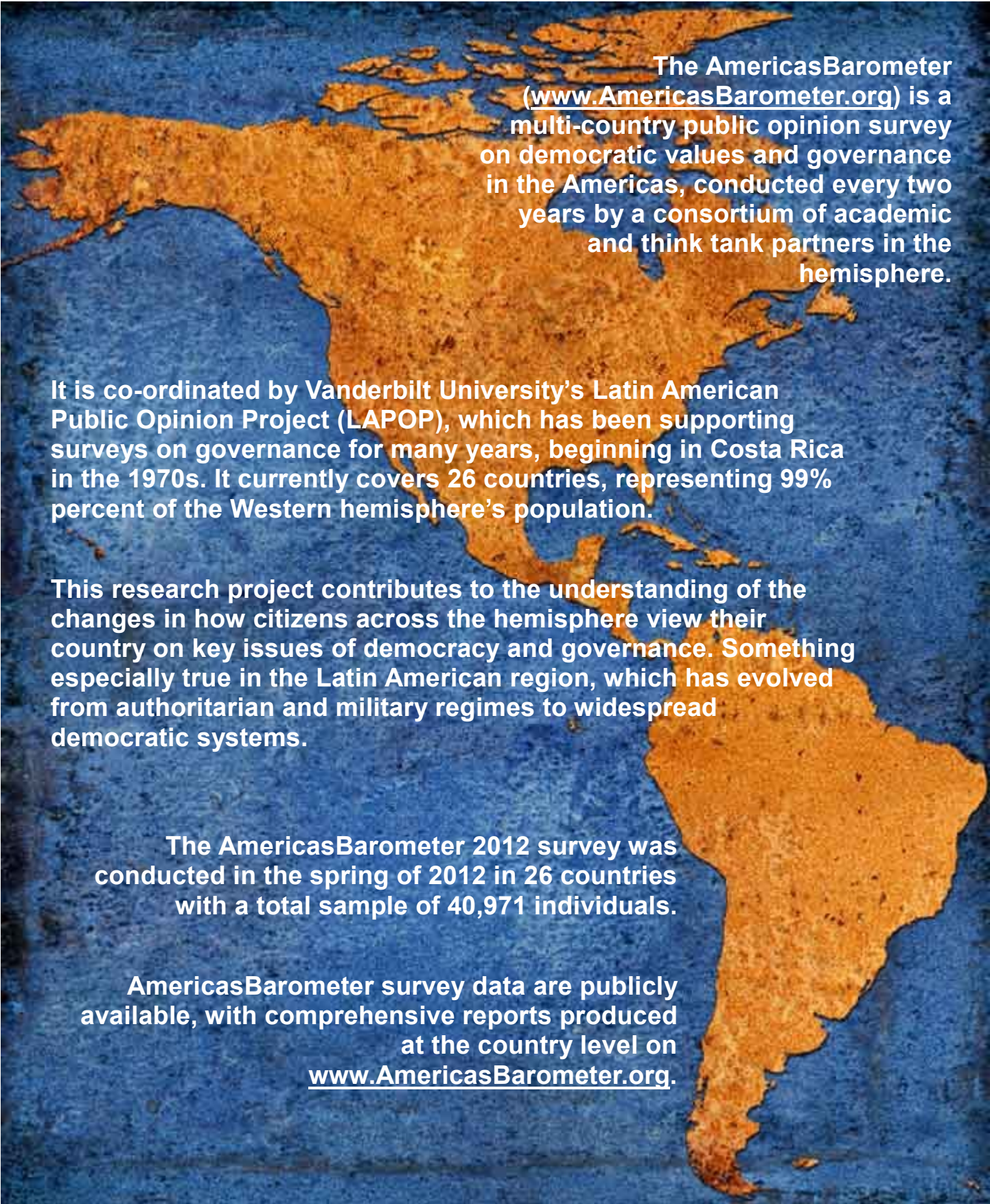
Interestingly, this diplomatic out-reach has also been a two-way street, as often Parliamentarians or Congress-people have had precise issues to share with us, or our Governments, and they use the Diplomatic channel of accredited Embassies *in situ* to convey those issues. Another example of this is the fact that Offices in Canada like the Parliamentary Centre actively execute out-reach activities with the accredited Diplomatic corps on particular topics. It is also encouraging to observe useful diplomacy at work during meetings and assemblies of Parliamentarians or Congress-people from around the globe, like at the Inter-Parliamentary Union recently celebrated in Quebec City, or at the regional meetings of ParlAmericas, which held its 9th Plenary Session this past August, with legislative representatives from over 14 countries of this region.

The Governor General of Canada recently led State visits to three nations in Latin America, including Guatemala. Accompanied by Canadian Parliamentarians amongst others<sup>1</sup>, His Excellency met with high level authorities in the countries visited, including paying a courtesy visit to Congress. This undoubtedly also forms part of that very important, vital, high-level diplomacy and interaction with the Legislative body.

<sup>1</sup> *Canadian Member of Parliament and President of ParlAmericas, Randy Hoback, was one of four parliamentarians on this trip.*

# Americas Barometer

*Democracy and governance in the Americas*



The AmericasBarometer ([www.AmericasBarometer.org](http://www.AmericasBarometer.org)) is a multi-country public opinion survey on democratic values and governance in the Americas, conducted every two years by a consortium of academic and think tank partners in the hemisphere.

It is co-ordinated by Vanderbilt University's Latin American Public Opinion Project (LAPOP), which has been supporting surveys on governance for many years, beginning in Costa Rica in the 1970s. It currently covers 26 countries, representing 99% percent of the Western hemisphere's population.

This research project contributes to the understanding of the changes in how citizens across the hemisphere view their country on key issues of democracy and governance. Something especially true in the Latin American region, which has evolved from authoritarian and military regimes to widespread democratic systems.

The AmericasBarometer 2012 survey was conducted in the spring of 2012 in 26 countries with a total sample of 40,971 individuals.

AmericasBarometer survey data are publicly available, with comprehensive reports produced at the country level on [www.AmericasBarometer.org](http://www.AmericasBarometer.org).

# Resource Center

\*\* Please note that ParlAmericas does not necessarily endorse the views espoused in articles profiled \*\*



## Recommendations for a New Administration: Move beyond the Drug Focus in the Andes

In a new report from the **Center for Strategic and International Studies**, Phillip McLean analyses the US “Andean policy”, focused primarily on keeping drugs produced in South America from arriving in the United States. [Read](#)



## Global Environment Outlook 5 (GEO-5): Environment for the Future We Want (summary)

This GEO report by the **United Nations Environment Programme** builds on the assessment findings of its predecessor and draws from lessons learnt. It has brought together thousands of scientists and hundreds of collaborating centres. [Read](#)



IOM • OIM

## Migration, Environment and Climate Change: Assessing the Evidence

The papers in this **International Organization for Migration** report address the need for sound empirical research and identify priority areas of research for policy makers in the field of migration and the environment. [Read](#)



WOLA

## Consolidating "Consolidation" in Colombia

This paper by **Washington Office in Latin America's** Senior Associate for Regional Security Policy Adam Isacson, seeks to identify the reasons why the Consolidation program's military-to-civilian transfer has stalled in Colombia. [Read](#)



## International Migration in the Americas

This **Organization of American States** and **Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development** report aims to produce yearly statistics and analysis of trends in international migration within, to and from the Western Hemisphere. [Read](#)



## Organized Crime and Insecurity in Belize

In this **Inter-American Dialogue** working paper, Julie López offers an in-depth look at the security landscape in Belize, a country which faces criminal challenges similar to those of its larger Central American neighbours. [Read](#)



Wilson Center

## A New Beginning for Mexican Oil

This **Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars** and **Instituto Tecnológico Autónomo de México** report focuses on the issues facing Mexico's hydrocarbons sector and the most important principles that must underlie the forthcoming reform of the country's oil and gas industry. [Read](#)



## World Disasters Report 2012

This **International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies** report analyses the complex causes of forced migration and its consequences and impacts on displaced populations, their hosts and humanitarian actors. [Read](#)



World Health Organization

## Sustaining the drive to overcome the global impact of neglected tropical diseases

This report by the **World Health Organization** reveals progress against 17 neglected tropical diseases, thanks to a new global strategy, a regular supply of quality assured, cost-effective medicines and support from global partners. [Read](#)

## Partners



Agence canadienne de  
développement international

Canadian International  
Development Agency



Organization of  
American States



WORLD TRADE  
ORGANIZATION



Parliamentary Centre  
Le Centre parlementaire  
Centro Parlamentario



GLOBAL ORGANIZATION OF PARLIAMENTARIANS AGAINST CORRUPTION  
ORGANISATION MONDIALE DES PARLEMENTAIRES CONTRE LA CORRUPTION  
ORGANIZACION MUNDIAL DE PARLAMENTARIOS CONTRA LA CORRUPCIÓN