



## **The first regional gathering of the Forums of Women in Political Parties in Costa Rica concluded with the adoption of a declaration on women's political leadership**

SAN JOSE (COSTA RICA), August 24, 2023 - The first regional gathering of the Forums of Women in Political Parties, [\*Building Networks of Sisterhood to Promote Gender Equality\*](#), came to a successful conclusion today following two days of sessions in the city of San José, Costa Rica. The gathering, organized by ParlAmericas and the Legislative Assembly of Costa Rica, brought together women parliamentarians and leaders representing women's forums and political party groups from Costa Rica, Guatemala, Honduras, Panama, and the Dominican Republic. At the event's closing they [signed a declaration](#) on women's political rights and gender parity under conditions of equality and freedom from violence in all areas and functions of political and public life.

The gathering began with remarks from Member of the Legislative Assembly **Rodrigo Arias** (Costa Rica), President of the Legislative Assembly; the Honourable Member of the National Assembly **Kayra Harding-Bart** (Panama), Vice-President for Central America of the ParlAmericas Parliamentary Network for Gender Equality; **Marlene Mora**, President of the Forum of Women Politicians for Costa Rica; and Member of the Legislative Assembly **Carolina Delgado** (Costa Rica), President of the Special Standing Committee on Women, President of the Costa Rican Front of Women in Political Parties, and ParlAmericas Board Member. **Alejandra Mora Mora**, Executive Secretary of the Inter-American Commission of Women of the Organization of American States (CIM-OAS), delivered a keynote address presenting the [\*Model Protocol for Political Parties\*](#)—a tool that incorporates key international standards for addressing gender-based political violence.

A discussion on the role of the Forums of Women in Political Parties in advancing gender equality was also held during the first day of the gathering. Under the moderation of Member of the Legislative Assembly **Kattia Rivera Soto** (Costa Rica), representatives from women's forums and political party groups shared achievements and lessons learned from implementing initiatives, projects, and programs dedicated to promoting gender equality in the region. Following this discussion, the agenda for August 23, featured a panel on strengthening equal political representation moderated by **Adilia Caravaca**, Executive President of the National Institute of Women of Costa Rica, with the participation of **Eugenia Zamora**, President of the Supreme Electoral Tribunal of Costa Rica; Member of the Legislative Assembly **Daniela Rojas** (Costa Rica); former Member of the Legislative Assembly **María de los Ángeles Alfaro Murillo** (Costa Rica); and **Allegra Baiocchi**, United Nations Resident Coordinator in Costa Rica.

The second day of sessions began with an interview of former senator and political leader **Máxima Apaza** (Bolivia) by **Delmy Ordóñez** of the Forum of Women Politicians of Honduras regarding her experiences in the struggle for gender equality. This was followed by thematic working groups that addressed central concerns for the groups and forums, such as political advocacy, social media use, financing, and parliamentary relations. Afterwards, Member of the Legislative Assembly **María Marta**

**Carballo Arce** (Costa Rica) moderated an open dialogue to exchange reflections on how to strengthen sisterhood and alliances among Forums of Women in Political Parties. The agenda of that day continued with a discussion on eliminating political violence against women which was moderated by former Member of the Legislative Assembly **Paola Vega** (Costa Rica), with the participation of Minister for the Status of Women **Cindy Quesada** (Costa Rica); **Lourdes Araya**, representative of the Costa Rican Network of Women in Municipal Government; and Member of the Legislative Assembly **Carolina Delgado** (Costa Rica). The event concluded with closing remarks from **Elizabeth Williams**, Ambassador of Canada to Costa Rica, Minister Quesada, and Member of the Legislative Assembly Delgado.

## Quotes

### **Member of the Legislative Assembly Carolina Delgado, ParlAmericas Board Member**

*“Costa Rica opens its doors to the joint efforts of an entire region that is raising its voice against the political violence endured by women and in favour of equality, respect for our rights, and non-discrimination. Together with ParlAmericas, we have proposed strategic guidelines so that countries can collectively move forward in developing public policies that will contribute to achieving the desired goal: that women will no longer be victims of abuse, harassment, and violence in all its manifestations, including political violence.”*

### **Member of the Legislative Assembly Rodrigo Arias (Costa Rica), President of the Legislative Assembly**

*“Political violence against women undermines the very essence of democracy. No society can truly claim to be free and just as long as these discriminatory attitudes and practices persist. It is essential to recognize that harassment, intimidation, and attacks directed toward women in the political sphere—simply because they are women—are attacks on the diversity of voices and ideas that underpin the democratic system.”*

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

*“With the aim of promoting the empowerment of women, encouraging their participation in politics, and contributing to the emergence of a new generation of women leaders, the ParlAmericas Parliamentary Network for Gender Equality is developing a series of initiatives based on the value of sisterhood among women politicians as a necessary quality for building on what has already been built and advancing on the road to equality based on the achievements of many women leaders, parliamentarians, and activists who have contributed to paving the way toward gender equality and the recognition of women’s rights.”*

### **Marlene Mora, President of the Forum of Women Politicians for Costa Rica**

*“Our expectation is that the women gathered here will lead a regional agenda in favour of women’s human rights and democratic values, and that these two days of sessions will provide continuity to processes and agendas that will strengthen our work based on each of the valuable experiences shared. Let us promote spaces of sisterhood, let us lead the progress toward the rights of all women, and let us orient our efforts in favour of an intersectional agenda that exposes discrimination and proposes solutions in favour of equality.”*

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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.