DE NATIONALE ASSEMBLÉE
VAN DE REPUBLIEK SURINAME

Juni

2019

Verslag "48th Meeting of the Board of Directors and the 11th Gathering of the ParlAmericas Parliamentary Network for Gender Equality"

De Nationale Assemblée

Opgemaakt voor:
drs. Jennifer Simons
mw. Jenny Warsodikromo
dhr. Marinus Bee LL.B

INHOUDSOPGAVE

"48th Meeting of the Board of Directors and the 11th Gathering of the ParlAmericas Parliamentary Network for Gender Equality"

Inleiding

ParlAmericas heeft van 18 tot en met 20 juni 2019 voor de 11de keer de vergadering voor het gender netwerk georganiseerd in Mexico City, Mexico. Tijdens deze vergadering is het accent gelegd op de positie van vrouwen op de werkvloer. Zowel nationaal als internationaal is er aandacht besteed aan dit onderwerp. Vanuit Suriname heeft een delegatie onder leiding van de voorzitter van het parlement, mevr. Jennifer Simons en de leden Jenny Warsodikromo en Marinus Bee de vergadering bijgewoond.

Voorafgaand aan de werksessies is de 48ste board of directors meeting gehouden. De diverse landen die lid zijn van de board hebben verslag gedaan omtrent voorgaande vergaderingen van de verschillende netwerken waaronder gender, open parlement en klimaat. Verder is aan de orde gekomen de financiële status van de organisatie en het jaarprogramma.

Tijdens de vergadering voor het gender netwerk zijn parlementariërs en NGO's van verschillende landen in de gelegenheid gesteld om de trainingssessie te volgen. Het onderwerp van de training was seksueel molest op de werkvloer. De aandacht was gevestigd op de volgende onderdelen:

1. De definities en manifestaties van seksueel molest op de werkvloer
2. Wat is seksueel molest
3. Internationale en regionale raamwerken: verplichtingen voor parlementair toezicht
4. Wetgeving inzake seksueel molest: het parlement als werkplek
5. Benaderingen ter voorkoming van seksuele intimidatie
6. Het creëren van werkplekken zonder seksueel molest

DE NATIONALE ASSEMBLÉE
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Onderdeel A Verslag externe activiteiten DNA

Administratieve, technische en logistieke informatie	
Reden voor de missie **Type Activiteit** *A.u.b. Kiezen wat van toepassing is* *Indien anders, graag toelichting*	**Reguliere vergadering internationale organisatie**
Naam van de Activiteit	**48th Meeting of the Board of Directors and the 11th Gathering of the Parliamentary Network for Gender Equality**
Organisatie *A.u.b. Aankruizen wat van toepassing is of invullen indien anders.*	**PARLAMERICAS**
Lokatie (Land, Stad)	**Mexico City, Mexico**
Periode van de activiteit	**Van: 6/18/2019** **Tot: 6/20/2019**
Hotel / Verblijf (Naam, Adres, Telefoonnummer, Email)	**Sevilla Palace Hotel, Av. Paseo de la Reforma No.105, Colonia, Mexico City**
Delegatie afvaardiging	**Delegatie Voorzitter:** SIMONS JENNIFER **Leden:** BEE MARINUS WARSODIKROMO JENNY

Ambtelijke assistentie	**De Griffier** ☐ **Ambtelijke assistentie** ☒ **, mw. Grant N., mw. Loseng G.,** **mw. Jadoenathmissier I.** **Protocol** ☐
Thema en onderwerp(en) die aan de orde komen	**Thema/ Onderwerp 1. Werksessie: seksuele intimidatie op de werkplek te voorkomen en aan te pakken.** **Thema/ Onderwerp 2. Herkennen van vrouwenarbeid; de zorgeconomie.** **Thema/ Onderwerp 3. Discussie over wetten om de gaten in de economische rechten van vrouwen te dichten.** **Thema/Onderwerp 4. Discussie over case studies m.b.t. data verkennen en aan oplossingen werken t.b.v. wetgeving.** **Thema/Onderwerp 5. Mogelijke kansen voor vrouwen en de toekomst.**
Doel van de organisatie van de activiteit	**Deze conferentie zal de vele voordelen van economische versterking van vrouwen onderzoeken, een kritisch element in de constructie van een gender-rechtvaardige toekomst.** **Parlementariërs uit Noord- en Zuid-Amerika en het Caribisch gebied zullen bijeenkomen om goede wetgevingspraktijken met elkaar uit te wisselen. Middels panelbijeenkomsten en workshops zal er getracht worden om de obstakels voor vrouwen tot volledige inbreng van talenten in het personeelsbestand te verminderen.**
Korte inhoud van de activiteit (bijlage mogelijk)	**ParlAmericas ondersteunt parlementaire inspanningen om gendergevoelige wetgevende maatregelen te bevorderen. Als onderdeel van het programma voor gelijkheid van mannen en vrouwen wordt er inclusieve werkruimten gecreëerd van beste praktijken door het bevorderen en ondersteunen van gender gelijkheid. In nauwe samenwerking met partners uit het maatschappelijk middenveld wordt programma's voor gelijkheid van vrouwen en mannen, politieke leiderschap van vrouwen, inclusief dat van de volgende generatie van vrouwelijke leiders.**
Primaire doelstelling van de delegatie	**Informatie en kennis vergroten m.b.t. wetgeving, beleid, begroting etc**
Wat is het belang van participatie voor DNA specifiek?	**Het verkrijgen van meer inzicht in gender gelijkheid.**
Wat is het belang van participatie voor Suriname in het algemeen?	**Het lobbyen met andere parlementariërs en stakeholders in het kader van gendergelijkheid.**

Voorbereiding: **Zijn er voorafgaand aan deze dienstreis meetings gepland door de delegatie?** **Bij verschillende meetings vooraf, kunt u meer opties selecteren.**	**Ja, er is voorafgaand een meeting gepland met de delegatieleden.** **De onderwerpen zijn:** **1. Het kandideren van vrouwelijke parlementariërs** **2. Het introduceren van Quotum** **3. Het overtuigen van de bevolking zowel politieke organisaties en de NGO's over het belang van de participatie van vrouwen in de politiek**
Zal de informatie van de activiteit gedeeld worden na terugkeer met anderen buiten de Huishoudelijke vergadering?	**Met deskundigen DNA** **Toelichting: Werken aan culturele randvoorwaarden mbt gender gerelateerde issue's. Quotumwet moet als back up zijn voor de terugval van vrouwen in de politiek. Het houden van Ronde tafel discussies met vrouwen van de verschillende politieke partijen.**
Pre- Statement	**Geen**

DE NATIONALE ASSEMBLÉE
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Onderdeel B Verslag externe activiteiten DNA

I. Administratieve, technische en logistieke informatie	
BIJLAGEN TOE TE VOEGEN VOOR VERTREK *A.u.b. Aankruizen wat is toegevoegd*	☒ **Programma** ☒ **Website/ Weblink voor nadere informatie:** http://www.parlamericas.org/en/ourwork/2019.aspx
Programma	Zie bijlage
BIJLAGEN TOE TE VOEGEN NA TERUGKEER	☒ **Eindverslag** ☐ **Kopie Businesskaarten van gelegde contacten** ☒ **Persbericht** ☒ **Foto's**
Eindverslag	**Zie bijlage**
Overzicht van Activiteiten	1. **Board meeting** 2. **Trainingsessie** 3. **Plenaire vergadering w.o. 4 sessies** **Zie programma voor verdere details.**
Algemene conclusies	**1. Parlementsleden, Internationale organisaties en NGO's van 22 landen uit de regio hebben geparticipeerd** **2. Belangerijke issues omtrent vrouwen en gender gerelateerde vraagstukken zijn besproken**
Aanbevelingen of bevindingen	**1. Er zijn ronde tafel discussies gehouden** **2. Resultaten van de gehouden verkiezingen voor vacante posties zijn gepresenteerd**

Kopieen Businesskaarten	**Geen**
Persbericht	**Gelijke toegang tot arbeid en goede arbeidsvoorwaarden voor vrouwen centraal tijdens ParlAmericas-vergadering in Mexico** Seksueel molest op de werkvloer en genderbalans zijn twee belangrijke onderwerpen, die worden besproken tijdens de 11e vergadering van het Parlementair netwerk voor Gendergelijkheid in Mexicostad, Mexico. De voorzitter van De Nationale Assemblée (DNA), drs. Jennifer Simons, staat aan het hoofd van een delegatie die van 18 tot en met 20 juni 2019 de ParlAmericas vergadering bijwoont. De delegatie bestaat verder uit de leden Marinus Bee LL.B en Jenny Warsodikromo. Vóór aanvang van de plenaire vergadering is op 18 juni een Board of Directors meeting gehouden. Tijdens de 48ste bestuursvergadering van ParlAmericas zijn een aantal onderwerpen besproken. Er is onder andere een update gegeven over de verdere ontwikkeling van de organisatie. **Trainingssessie seksueel molest op de werkvloer** In Mexico hebben de parlementariërs tijdens een traningssessie informatie met elkaar gedeeld over de stand van zaken ten aanzien van seksueel molest op de werkvloer. Er zijn diverse maatregelen besproken, die genomen kunnen worden om seksuele intimidatie op de werkvloer niet alleen te voorkomen maar ook aan te pakken. Tijdens de sessie is de wetgeving van een aantal landen in de regio besproken, waarbij de sterke en zwakke punten zijn belicht. In Suriname is de wetgeving ten aanzien hiervan als onderdeel van de totale aanpassing in de arbeidswetgeving door het ministerie van Arbeid voorbereid. **Wetgeving op het gebied van seksuele intimidatie is van belang** Parlementariërs zijn het er unaniem over eens, dat er wetgeving moet komen of verbeterd op het gebied van seksuele intimidatie. Dit is op de eerste dag van de conferentie ook duidelijk naar voren gekomen tijdens de trainingssessie "Preventing and adressing sexual harassment." Tijdens deze sessie hebben volksvertegenwoordigers uit verschillende landen informatie over de situatie in hun land gedeeld met collega's en toegelicht dat de meeste mensen bang zijn om te praten over problemen die zij ervaren op de werkvloer. **Bijdrage Surinaamse delegatie** De Surinaamse delegatie heeft bij aanvang van de sessie aangegeven, dat het een goed moment is om samen te komen en te praten over het onderwerp. Verder hebben zij de collega parlementariërs aangegeven, dat in Suriname rekening gehouden moet worden met de verschillende culturen en benadrukt dat als er wetgeving is die mensen zal beschermen en zorgen dat zij niet in stilte lijden onder molest op de werkvloer.

	Voorzitter Simons, heeft gesproken over het belang van onderwijs voor verandering van de houding bij vrouwen en mannen zodat de laatste barrières kunnen worden doorbroken. Dit omdat naast wetgeving er vooral psychologische en culturele barrières zijn, die door het vroeg onderwijzen van kinderen kunnen worden doorbroken. Het besef bij burgers moet worden ontwikkeld dat zij als mannen en vrouwen het best samen kunnen werken voor hun eigen welzijn en dat van anderen, waaronder hun medewerkers en gezinnen. **Attitudeverandering** De leden zijn het erover eens, dat attitudeverandering op verschillende manieren moet worden bevorderd. Ook het vraagstuk van negatieve houdingen en opvattingen die via muziek en andere media onder jongeren wordt gepropageerd, is door veel leden aangekaart. Hoe om te gaan met dit vraagstuk en de invloed van social media in het algemeen op opvattingen en het gedrag van jonge mannen en vrouwen is intensief besproken door de parlementariërs. Het niet toelaten van denigrerende muziek tijdens optredens is ook aangehaald als een mogelijkheid voor overheden om daartegen in te gaan. **Belang van opvoeding van beide geslachten** Voorzitter Simons heeft aangegeven dat er zorgen zijn over het minder presteren van jongens in het Caribisch gebied binnen het onderwijssysteem. Dit heeft niet alleen voor hun negatieve effecten, maar ook op de vrouwen. "Willen we dus voor vrouwen meer mogelijkheden voor ontplooiing en welzijn scheppen, dan moeten we ook aandacht hebben voor de problemen van jongens in het onderwijs. Mannen en vrouwen moeten in de opvoeding ervan worden overtuigd, dat ze door elkaar te respecteren en samen te werken een grotere kans hebben op welzijn voor iedereen." Samenvattend kan worden gesteld dat de deelnemers zijn gemotiveerd om in hun eigen land de wetgeving te evalueren en te werken aan nieuwe of verbeterde wetgeving evenals het werken aan andere mogelijkheden om seksueel molest op de werkvloer tegen te gaan, zodat iedere werkende burger zich normaal kan inzetten en ontplooien.
Foto's	**Zie verslag**

Voor gezien,

Datum 24/09/2019 Delegatie Voorzitter	Datum 24/9/2019 DNA Voorzitter	Datum 24/9/2019 08/10/2019 Griffier van DNA

Dag 1

Voorafgaand aan de sessies is de gebruikelijke board of directors meeting gehouden. Daarna hebben de parlementariërs en de NGO's een training sessie gevolgd over "Frameworks to prevent and address workplace sexual harassment".

Het thema van deze conferentie is "Achieving balance in the world of work". Tijdens deze conferentie hebben de diverse participanten van gedachten gewisseld over goede wetgevingspraktijken via een reeks panelsessies en workshops die de culturele en juridische barrières voor de toegang van vrouwen en de volledige bijdrage van het personeel analyseren. Het maatschappelijk middenveld en multilaterale belanghebbenden, waaronder actoren die deel uitmaken van de Inter-Amerikaanse Task Force voor vrouwenleiderschap en empowerment, hebben met parlementaire afgevaardigden deelgenomen aan discussies over collectieve acties om meer inclusieve economieën te smeden die autonomie en waardigheid in het beroepsleven van alle mensen van de samenleving bevorderen in de regio.

De Onderwerpen die aan de orde zijn gekomen zijn:

1. Recognizing women's labor: The care economy
2. Unfinished business: Laws to close the gaps on women's economic rights
3. Discussion tables: Exploring data, building solutions
4. Capitalizing on windows opportunity: Women and the future of work

In de eerste sessie is aan de orde gekomen de zorgeconomie die bestaat uit de productie, distributie, uitwisseling en consumptie van zorgdiensten. Gezondheid, onderwijs en sociale voorzieningen overlappen echter met andere vormen van betaald en niet-betaald werk, bijvoorbeeld door familieleden en leden van de gemeenschap, soms als gevolg van een gebrek aan toegang tot kwaliteitsvolle zorgdiensten. Sommige regeringen zijn afhankelijk van het niet-betaalde werk van vrouwen en meisjes of onvoldoende gecompenseerde huishoudelijk personeel, om openbare diensten te verlenen, of als vervanging daarvan, in hun inspanningen om de uitgaven van de staat te beperken. De zorgeconomie groeit door de toegenomen vraag naar zorg voor kinderen en de verouderende bevolking, wat de komende jaren voor veel banen zal zorgen. Zorgwerk wordt echter nog steeds gekenmerkt door een gebrek aan uitkeringen en beschermingen, een laag salaris of een gebrek aan compensatie en het risico op lichamelijke en geestelijke schade, en in sommige gevallen seksueel misbruik.

Het is duidelijk dat nieuwe oplossingen voor de zorgverlening in twee opzichten nodig zijn:

1. Omdat het betrekking heeft op de aard en de versoepeling van zorgbeleid en -diensten
2. En op de voorwaarden waaronder zorg wordt verleend.

Vrouwen zijn over het algemeen onevenredig verantwoordelijk voor het niet-betaalde zorgwerk dat aan andere mensen wordt geleverd.

In de 2de sessie zijn de presentatoren een stapje verder gegaan, door de wetgeving uiteen te zetten die door parlementariërs van Canada, Cuba, Nicaragua en de UN Women organisatie zijn besproken. **Cuba** heeft door de jaren heen werk verzet om wetten die van groot belang zijn op de bevolking aan te nemen, in het bijzonder voor de vrouwen. Verder hebben zij een nationale enquête gedaan op gender gelijkheid. Deze resultaten hebben het parlement een beeld gegeven over wat er precies gebeurd met vrouwen in het land. Dit maakt dat zij van daaruit kunnen kijken wat de knelpunten zijn en hoe die op te lossen. Er word gekeken naar alternatieven om de participatie van vrouwen in de werkende klasse te verhogen. Wat betreft het onderwijs doen vrouwen het goed. Er is een feministische organisatie die zich bezig houd met de participatie van vrouwen en zeker 66% zijn geregistreed. De wet staat geen discrimanatie toe aan vrouwen op basis van diverse aspecten. Cubaanse vrouwen hebben recht op een compleet sociaal pakket. Zo probeert de regering de meest belangerijke zaken aangaande vrouwen te implementeren. In 2017 is de wet op zwangersschap verlof aangepast. De wijzigingen die zijn opgenomen zijn van belang vooral op de vader en andere directe familieleden. Cuba heeft nu te kampen met een vergrijzing van de bevolking. De geboorte cijfers zijn zeer laag en dat stimuleert de economie niet. **Canada** heeft door de jaren heen gewerkt aan diverse wetten die van belang zijn op de bevolking. 1 van de wetten "the Employment Equity Act" is een wet waarbij een ieder recht heeft op werken, het maakt niet uit als je een immigrant bent of niet. Vervolgens heb je de "Pay Equity Act" wilt zeggen dat alle gender recht hebben op gelijke loon. Er is een speciale fonds in het leven geroepen waarbij een ieder geld kan storten. Vrouwen die met zwangersschaps verlof gaan kunnen dan uit deze fonds een bijdrage ontvangen. In Canada is de internationale dag van het meisje op 9 december 2011 in het leven geroepen en wordt jaarlijks herdacht. Verder zijn er diverse regels opgenomen waarbij meisjes recht hebben op educatie. Daarnaast is er ook opgenomen dat meisjes niet in het huwelijk mogen treden voor hun zestiende. Vrouwen moeten een visie hebben in het leven en vanuit dat oogpunt kunnen hun doelen gerealiseerd worden. **Nicaragua** heeft een nationale "Human Development Plan". In dit plan zijn er drie belangerijke aspecten opgenomen te weten:

1. Vrouwen hebben het recht om te participeren in diverse activiteiten
2. Het promoten van educatie en wetten om geweld tegen vrouwen aan te gaan
3. De naleving op de wet op gender gelijkheid.

Er zijn diverse wetten op basis van gender gelijkheid, die van toepassing zijn op vrouwen aangenomen. Er zijn speciale programma's voor vrouwen opgenomen waaraan zij kunnen participeren. De qouta wet is aangenomen waarbij 50% van de belangerijke posities ingevuld moet worden door vrouwen. Bijvoorbeeld bij de vorming van de regering, het hof van justitie, het parlement etc. Nicaragua probeert de bewustwording van gendergelijkheid te beinvloeden door diverse activiteiten te ontplooien in de samenleving. De kloof van mede verantwoordelijkheid van de mannen is nog niet gesloten maar er wordt daaraan hard gewerkt.

Dag 3

In sessie 3 wordt de open deur op kansen belicht die van toepassing zijn op vrouwen. Caricom landen zijn 1 van de weinige landen die geen data heeft op onbetaald werk. Landen zoals Barbados, Guyana, Trinidad, Jamaica, Greneda en Saint Lucia hebben de data die ze hebben over vrouwen op welk gebied dan ook vrij gegeven aan de UN Women. Hierdoor konden de UN Women het werk beginnen om data te verzamelen op diverse gebieden in deze landen. Voor mannen is in deze landen het werk boven de 60% en voor de vrouwen boven de 30%. Over het algemeen zijn vrouwen gemotiveerder om te werken. De meeste inwoners in bovengenoemde landen bezitten een mulo diploma. Dit is in feite heel erg voor de economie. Over het algemeen zijn vrouwen in deze landen hoger opgeleid dan mannen. Meer dan 70 % van de vrouwen werken als administratieve kracht. Het blijkt dat vrouwen en meisjes de grootste slachtoffers worden van klimaat verandering. Jamaica heeft de hoogste data in de wereld van vrouwen die een managers functie bekleedden en wel 60 %. In de top 10 van managers bezette functies door vrouwen in de wereld zijn er 3 landen van Latijns Amerika en 3 van het Caraibisch gebied. Gender gerelateerde issieus in deze landen vieren hoogtij. Tussen mannen en vrouwen in de zelfde top functies blijkt dat mannen meer verdienen dan vrouwen. Tussen de 50 en 80% van de mannen zijn eigenaar van ondernemingen en blijkt dat in deze werkplekken de vrouwen de managers functie bezetten. Er moet wetgeving op gebieden komen zoals zwangersschaps verlof, sexueel molest op de werkvloer, toegang tot gezondheid voor vrouwen en kinderen, meer support voor eigen onderneming voor vrouwen en nog meer.

Er is heel weinig data over de informele sector in de Caricom er moet hard gewerkt worden daaraan.

Vrouwen kennen serieuze problemen in de private en publieke sector wat betreft ict. De over grootste deel van deze werk plaatsen worden bezet door mannen.

Belangrijke zaken hiervan die meegenomen moeten worden:

1. Voor de wet op de volkstelling; onbetaald zorgwerk meenemen in economische activiteit.
2. Minimale bijdrage van onbetaald zorgwerk en productiewerk aan de economie berekenen (betreft bijv. productie van voeding in familietuin en in huis, productie van kleding door leden van het gezin)
3. Wetgeving voor persoonlijke zorg. Ook door ministerie van arbeid (huishoudsters, interieurverzorgsters)
4. Gezinsinkomen niet meer alleen definieren als financiele inkomsten uit arbeid voor anderen maar de onbetaalde arbeid door een of meer personen in het huishouden die al dan niet werk buitenshuis hebben
5. Overwegen: bij overlijden of echtscheiding/opheffing van concubinaat en pensioenen omrekenen in geld van de onbetaalde arbeid door een partner geleverd gedurende de periode waarin het huishouden gezamenlijk gevoerd werd, zodat deze persoon recht heeft op de gehele of gedeeltelijke uitkering daarvan voor enige andere uitkering na aftrek van kosten, tenzij er gedurende de relatie persoonlijke financiele middelen of (onroerende) goederen van de buitenshuis werkende partner aan de thuis werkende partner zijn gegeven in de orde van grootte of meer van het vastgestelde bedrag.
6. Verplicht bijv. elke 5 jaar specifiek bij wet vastgestelde indicatoren over welzijn educatie en ontplooiingskansen voor beide geslachten en ten aanzien van bestaande rechts en economische ongelijkheid.
7. In het onderwijs vanaf primair niveau het beheer van beschikbare (financiele) middelen en tijd invoeren.

In het secundair onderwijs bedrijfsrekenen in de lager jaren zo vlug mogelijk vervangen door een vak dat eerder de noodzakelijke kennis bijbrengt voor budgetteren, sparen, en alle andere contact dat burgers met het economisch, rechts- en overheidssysteem hebben.

Bijdrage:

Vraag Jamaica: what do you think contributed specifically to the high level of women in management and ownership positions in Jamaica and some other countries in the Caribbean compared to others?

I heard some pointers but is there a specific set of circumstances or active measures by government or community that helped those countries achieve this.

Bijdrage Voorzitter Simons

Very interesting presentations. We have been informed about the data but also about what parliaments have been doing with regards to legislation to protect women in the world of work. We take away the good Ideas and now want to contribute the experience and work in Suriname.

Surinamese women face many of the same problems, with regard to long working hours at work and at home and the different issues in the workplace. We can share that we in Suriname, recently have been very busy updating our labor legislation and in doing so have put strong emphasis on ensuring equality for men and women in the workplace and securing equal pay for women and men that do the same work. This has now been included explicitly in our labor laws.

We also approved a law for protection of the family with regard to labor. Now all women have a total of 16 weeks of maternity leave divided in the time before giving birth and after the baby is born. Fathers get a total of 8 days, but we have an additional provision that states that in case the woman, because of serious complications, is totally unable to care for her child after giving birth, or in the case the woman dies, the father or a first degree family member gets the leave in order to take care for the child.

This could be done because we have established a slightly different system to finance the leave of the parents. For many years this right for maternity leave was already enshrined in our constitution was not implemented for many workers in Suriname because of the fear that specifically small employers would not be able to pay extra workers and that they also because of that, might start discriminating against women when hiring.

We therefore established a fund to which each working citizen and business contributes reasoning that the children are not only of the parents but necessary to keep our country going. We as a society need to make sure that we do all we can to give these new citizens a good start in life and that this in the end will benefit the whole of society.

We will review the system in three years. This is what we have been doing in Suriname recently.

Agenda

11th Gathering of the ParlAmericas Parliamentary Network for Gender Equality:

Achieving balance in the world of work

Mexico City, Mexico | June 18-20, 2019

#ParlAmericasGEN

In order to reduce our ecological foot print, the gathering documents, resources and publications are available at www.parlamericas.org. For easy access through your mobile phone, we invite you to download a QR reader application.

Background

Studies demonstrate that gender equality is good economics and that investing in women and their labour rights promotes national growth, development, and good governance. Through the over-arching lens of "Balance," this conference will examine the many benefits of women's economic empowerment, a critical element in the construction of a gender-equitable future. Conference delegates from across the Americas and the Caribbean will exchange good legislative practices in a series of panel sessions and workshops about reducing the barriers to women's entry and full contribution of their talents to the workforce. Parliamentarians from across the region will be joined by civil society and multilateral stakeholders to discuss how to forge more inclusive economies that promote autonomy and dignity in the working lives of all members of society.

Note: *All sessions will take place in rooms 5 and 6 of the "Hemiciclo" building of the Senate of the Republic of Mexico unless specified otherwise. Av. Paseo de la Reforma 135, Tabacalera, 06030 Mexico City.*

Monday, June 17, 2019 – Arrivals

All day	**Participant transfers from the airport to the Sevilla Palace Hotel**

Tuesday, June 18, 2019 – Board of Directors meeting & training sessions

All day	**Participant transfers from the airport to the Sevilla Palace Hotel**
8:30	**Transfer of ParlAmericas Board members to the Senate of Mexico**
9:00 – 13:00	**Meeting of the Board of Directors of ParlAmericas** *Location: Room 7*

12:30 **Registration at the Sevilla Palace Hotel and transfer to the Senate of Mexico (all delegates)**

13:00 – 14:30 **Lunch**
Location: Quinto Piso (Senate restaurant)

14:30 – 18:30 **Training session: Frameworks to prevent and address workplace sexual harassment**

This session will examine the problem of sexual harassment in the workplace as an obstacle to human rights and gender equality. Drawing examples from the region, it will provide an overview of the legal principles underlying national legislation on this issue and explore how these frameworks can be adapted for protocols or codes of conduct to prevent harassment within parliamentary institutions. The session will also present voluntary practices that parliamentarians can champion to promote cultures of respect and wellbeing for all employees, and by extension, achieve greater productivity, morale, and justice in their places of work. Participants will be invited to consider how #MeToo and other recent social movements are successfully raising the bar on acceptable behaviour and establishing greater accountability in cases of harassment or discrimination.

Language: English
Facilitator: Haran Ramkaransingh, Director of Legal Services, Equal Opportunities Commission, Trinidad and Tobago
Location: Room 7

Language: Spanish
Facilitator: Lucía Martelotte, Deputy Executive Director, Latin American Team for Justice and Gender (ELA, by its Spanish initials)
Location: Room 5 & 6

18:30 – 20:00 **Welcome reception for all delegates**
Location: La Cuña

Wednesday, June 19, 2019

08:30 **Transfer to the Senate of Mexico**

09:00 – 10:00 **Inauguration**

Opening remarks:
- Senator Antares Vázquez Alatorre (Mexico), host of the gathering and member of the Board of Directors of ParlAmericas
- The Honourable Robert Nault (Canada), P.C., M.P., President of ParlAmericas

10:00 – 10:35 **Official photograph**

10:35 – 10:45 **Report from the ParlAmericas Parliamentary Network for Gender Equality**
- Member of the Legislative Assembly Cristina Cornejo (El Salvador), Vice-President –Central America of the Parliamentary Network for Gender Equality

10:45 – 13:00 **Session 1. Recognizing women's labour: The care economy**

This session will explore gendered trends in labour, including non-remunerated care and domestic work, and their impacts on women and men from different backgrounds.

Emphasis will be placed on how parliamentarians can contribute to enhancing social protection systems; quantifying, valuing, and redistributing care work; and ensuring the livelihoods of women in the informal sector.

- Moderator: Julia Escalante de Haro, Regional Coordinator, Latin American and Caribbean Committee for the Defense of Women's Rights (CLADEM)
- Member of the Legislative Assembly Shirley Díaz Mejías (Costa Rica)
- President of the Senate Chester Humphrey (Grenada), Vice-President – Caribbean of the Parliamentary Network for Gender Equality
- Senator Verónica Camino Farjat (Mexico)

13:00 – 14:30 **Lunch**
Location: Quinto Piso (Senate restaurant)

14:30 – 17:00 **Session 2. Unfinished business: Laws to close the gaps on women's economic rights**

This session will consider gender equality under the law as a foundation for achieving equality in practice, with a focus on women during their working lives. Discussions will address parental leave and other family policies; closing the pay gap; access to credit, capital and property rights; and pension entitlements. Programs to support women entrepreneurs will also be addressed.

- Moderator: Beatriz García, UN Women Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean
- Member of the National Assembly Arelys Santana Bello (Cuba)
- The Honourable Dr. Kellie Leitch (Canada), P.C., M.P.
- Member of the National Assembly Maritza Espinales (Nicaragua)

Thursday, June 20, 2019

08:30 **Transfer from the Sevilla Palace Hotel to the Senate of Mexico**

09:00 – 10:30 **Session 3. Capitalizing on windows of opportunity: Women and the future of work**

This session will explore how technology and emerging markets are changing the nature of work and will apply a gender perspective to the resulting challenges and opportunities. Themes to be explored include training for the jobs of the future, youth (un)employment, financial literacy and mentorship for young women, and new expectations around flexibility and work-life balance.

- Moderator: Member of the Chamber of Deputies Camila Vallejo (Chile)
- Isiuwa Iyahen, Programme Specialist, Economic Empowerment Statistics, UN Women Multi Country Office for the Caribbean
- Diana Gutiérrez, Global Programme Manager, Business for Gender Equality, UNDP
- Sophia Bryan, Leadership and Business Development Strategist

10:30 – 12:30 **Session 4. Discussion tables: Exploring data, building solutions**

- Facilitation: Member of the Legislative Assembly Cristina Cornejo (El Salvador), Vice-President – Central America of the Parliamentary Network for Gender Equality

- Opening presentation: Teresa Guerra, Programme Associate, UN Women Mexico
- Roundtable discussions and report-backs in plenary

12:30 – 12:45 **Evaluations**

12:45 – 13:00 **Presentation of final declaration by Senator Antares Vázquez Alatorre (Mexico)**

13:00 – 13:15 **Results of elections for vacant positions on the Executive Committee of the Parliamentary Network for Gender Equality**

13:15 – 13:30 **Closing remarks**

13:30 – 14:30 **Lunch**
Location: Quinto Piso (Senate restaurant)

14:30 **Closed-door meeting of the Executive Committee of the ParlAmericas Parliamentary Network for Gender Equality**

Friday, June 21, 2018

All day **Transfers from the Sevilla Palace Hotel to the airport for departures**

Graphic Recording: Juliana Serrano, AMAZINK! Studio

Please note that meeting sessions will be audio-recorded to become podcast episodes. Find ParlAmericas on iTunes and Google Play to listen to sessions and presentations from our past gatherings held across the hemisphere.

ParlAmericas Podcast

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This activity is being undertaken in part with financial support from the Government of Canada through Global Affairs Canada.

DECLARATION

11th Gathering of the Parliamentary Network for Gender Equality:
Achieving Balance in the World of Work
Mexico City, Mexico | June 18–20, 2019

We, parliamentarians from 22 countries in the Americas and the Caribbean, have convened in Mexico City, Mexico from June 18 to 20, 2019, on the occasion of the **11th Gathering of the ParlAmericas Parliamentary Network for Gender Equality**, titled *Achieving Balance in the World of Work*.

During the working sessions of the gathering, we analyzed the status of women's empowerment in the labour force and exchanged legislative strategies to build a more gender-balanced future for our region. Given the decisive role of parliaments and their members in advancing evidence-based solutions for more inclusive economies, we reaffirmed our personal and collective commitment to transforming the discriminatory practices and stereotypes that create obstacles to this shared goal, thus promoting equality of rights and opportunities. We undertook these dialogues with awareness that the impacts of climate change and natural disasters, as well as social, economic, and political instability, threaten human rights, motivating us to build societies that are more just, equitable, and resilient.

As matters for priority action in this regard, we identified: recognizing, reducing, and redistributing women's valuable unpaid care and domestic work; closing the gaps in legal frameworks in order to promote substantive equality; eradicating workplace sexual harassment and other forms of discrimination that limit economic opportunities and rights; advocating for the collection and use of disaggregated data for policymaking that better meets the needs of all women in their working lives; and fostering positive cultural transformations that reinforce equitable and sustainable working conditions for the economies of the future.

Recognizing:

1. That women's paid and unpaid work provides significant, measurable benefits to national economic development and to public and private life, but is often undervalued;

2. That to successfully mitigate the many challenges facing our region, we will require the talents of women and men, and their equal access to decent and rewarding work, and equal pay for work of equal value;

3. That the international frameworks agreed to by our States, among them the SDGs, CEDAW, ratified ILO conventions, as well as various inter-American mechanisms, provide a roadmap that can be used to design legal reforms and national budgets that incentivize gender equality in the labour force;

4. That laws, policies, and other regulatory frameworks which appear to be "gender neutral" can in fact have discriminatory effects in practice; thus, differentiated and/or positive actions, such as quotas or targets for women, can help to redress unequal playing fields and historical injustices;

5. That comprehensive, high-quality data – disaggregated by gender and other social characteristics – should inform all policymaking as a means of avoiding unintended biases and better respond to the

realities facing women and men from different socioeconomic backgrounds throughout the life cycle;

6. That qualitative data on women's lived experiences provides more nuanced understandings of the diverse realities faced which is essential to the analysis of barriers and opportunities for advancing women's economic empowerment;

7. That parity in women's representation in leadership positions promotes better policy, better economic performance, and more equitable workplaces;

8. That women as a group are overrepresented in precarious, insecure, part time, undervalued, informal, and low wage work, and may further be hindered by systematic occupational segregation, gender pay gaps, gender-based violence, limited access to financial markets and resources, and family-unfriendly policies; and that one's individual experience of systemic inequality is differentiated based on positions of power and privilege;

9. That priority attention must be given to vulnerable groups who may experience unique barriers to labour markets, including people living with disabilities, Indigenous, Afrodescendent, and ethnic minority peoples, among others;

10. That upholding the rights of paid domestic and care workers, whether employed formally or informally, requires critical action;

11. That universal social protection policies, when gender-responsive in their design, can be powerful mechanisms to reduce poverty and guarantee women's right to an adequate standard of living; these policies may relate to unemployment insurance, non-contributory pensions, affordable childcare infrastructure, paid parental leave, minimum wages, and skills training, among others;

12. That unpaid care and domestic work are responsibilities that continue to disproportionately burden women, and that these are a root cause of unequal access to productive opportunities such as paid work and education;

13. That co-responsibility for domestic, care, and reproductive work should be actively promoted and redistributed among men, women, the State, the private sector, and/or unions and other relevant bodies;

14. That gender-based violence in all its forms is a pervasive violation of human rights and an obstacle to economic autonomy at an individual level and economic growth at a national level;

15. That sexual harassment in the workplace is alarmingly common across all industries, as evidenced by individuals who have come forward in the context of #MeToo and other social movements, and this problem must be urgently addressed with comprehensive prevention measures;

16. That sensitivity training for personnel involved in the implementation and compliance of anti-violence and anti-discrimination measures can help to ensure that women or men who come forward to report workplace violations are not stigmatized or re-traumatized, but rather treated with respect and dignity;

17. That our societies are currently undergoing significant challenges in economic, technological, and demographic terms that necessitate creativity, innovation, entrepreneurial spirits, and proactive planning to ensure decent jobs for young women and men whose skills will need to respond to the evolving characteristics of labour markets;

18. That the private sector and other employers are pivotal actors in the advancement of gender equality in the world of work, and that partnerships with these entities can be leveraged to design, finance, and/or strengthen initiatives that promote more inclusive workplaces;

19. That cultural and policy shifts that promote a healthy balance between individuals' work and personal lives can lead to a more productive, healthy, creative, and prosperous workforce with adequate time for learning, leisure, and other self-development;

20. That meaningful consultations with diverse civil society groups, and their active participation in political decision-making on socioeconomic matters, are key to the creation of regulatory frameworks that promote the enjoyment of expanded choices and more fulfilling lives for all members of society;

21. That partnerships and coordination with, and among, regional and international organizations dedicated to gender equality facilitates the construction of more impactful agendas for gender equality; and that the member organizations of the Inter-American Task Force on Women's Empowerment and Leadership will continue to pursue the agenda to increase women's leadership in economic, political, and social life.

In view of the above,

We commit to:

1. Reviewing the status of international conventions for gender equality in the labour force, including ILO conventions pending ratification, and taking steps to harmonize our countries' legislation in line with our States' agreements.
2. Visibilizing the work of women around us and challenging harmful gender stereotypes.
3. Identifying provisions in our national laws that are directly or indirectly discriminatory to women in the world of work, and consulting with women's organizations to close this gap.
4. Forging new expectations around work-life balance in all sectors, including politics, and modeling these to the extent possible.
5. Advocating for the generation and use of gender-disaggregated data for all legislative decision-making.
6. Taking steps to strengthen social protection systems, ensuring that they are guided by principles of universality, co-responsibility, and gender equality.
7. Investing in gender-responsive infrastructure and training that will help to prepare youth for the rapidly transforming labour markets of the future.
8. Initiating or supporting actions to institutionalize an anti-sexual harassment policy that is appropriate for our parliaments.
9. Implementing good practices in our offices that build cultures of respect and inclusion for all employees.

Adopted in Mexico City, Mexico, June 20, 2019.

11th Gathering of the Parliamentary Network for Gender Equality

#ParlAmericasGEN

The 11th Gathering of the ParlAmericas Parliamentary Network for Gender Equality, **hosted by the Senate of the Republic of Mexico**, brought together parliamentarians from across the Americas and the Caribbean to exchange with specialists and other stakeholders about strategies to advance gender equality and women's labour and economic rights. Under the theme of *Achieving Balance in the World of Work*, the gathering's working sessions highlighted the ways parliamentarians can contribute to achieving greater recognition of women's roles as economic agents, and to reducing legal and cultural barriers to women's entry and full participation in the labour force.

The gathering was documented graphically by Juliana Serrano of Amazink!

THEME
Achieving Balance in the World of Work

LOCATION
Mexico City, Mexico

DATES
June 18-20, 2019

PARTICIPANTS
More than 70 parliamentarians, parliamentary staff, and representatives of civil society and multilateral organizations from 22 countries

This activity aligned with SDGs 5 and 8.

The gathering was officially inaugurated by Senator **Antares Vázquez Alatorre** (Mexico), Member of the ParlAmericas Board of Directors and the event's host; and by the Honourable **Robert Nault** (Canada), Member of Parliament and President of ParlAmericas.

Following the inauguration, Member of the Legislative Assembly **Cristina Cornejo** (El Salvador), Vice-President of the Parliamentary Network for Gender Equality (PNGE) for Central America, delivered a report on the PNGE's activities since the previous gathering and announced upcoming activities.

> In alignment with the Network's strategic plan, our recent work is centred in three concrete areas: women's political empowerment, women's economic empowerment, and ending gender-based violence. These essential and interconnected themes are evident in the work that we carried out and in the agendas that we advocate for.

Member of the Legislative Assembly **Cristina Cornejo** (El Salvador), Vice-President of the PNGE for Central America, Member of the ParlAmericas Board of Directors

The inauguration was followed by a series of working sessions in which participants dialogued on good practices and the experiences of their countries. Discussions explored different methods of reducing the barriers to women's entry and full contribution of their talents to the workforce, with themes including: the gendered dimensions of care work, the gaps in legislation for economic empowerment, preparing the workforce for the realities of the future, and addressing and preventing sexual harassment in the workplace. Roundtable work centered on the importance of comprehensive gender-disaggregated data for decision making on these and other related issues.

> Women's empowerment in the world of work is an urgent priority in its own right; it is something that the public is calling for. But it is also the smartest engine for achieving development, growth, and prosperity for our countries… Family-friendly taxation policies, paid maternity and paternity leave, affordable childcare options, and frameworks that promote more balanced working lives more generally -- these can all play significant roles in making gender-equal work opportunities a reality, benefitting everyone.

Hon. **Robert Nault** (Canada), Member of Parliament and President of ParlAmericas

> We have made important advances in the congresses of each of our countries, but we still have much to advance and many things to share. We have been hearing about good legislative practices from a number of congresses from our continent, and I believe that we need to continue dialoguing in order to construct a common path for the equality of women.

Senator **Antares Vázquez Alatorre** (Mexico), host of the gathering and Member of the ParlAmericas Board of Directors

Training Session: Preventing and Addressing Sexual Harassment in the Workplace

The first activities carried out in the framework of the gathering were training sessions on **preventing and addressing sexual harassment in the workplace.** Carried out separately in Spanish and English, these sessions examined the problem of workplace sexual harassment as an obstacle to human rights and gender equality. They provided an overview of the relevant legal principles, and they examined different types of national laws that address sexual harassment, drawing on examples from the respective subregions convened. The sessions also encouraged participants to consider how the good practices discussed could inform the development of **protocols or codes of conduct to prevent harassment within legislative institutions.**

The session in Spanish was delivered by **Lucía Martelotte**, Deputy Executive Director of the Latin American Team for Justice and Gender (ELA, in Spanish). In Latin America, in addition to specific laws on sexual harassment, the issue has been addressed in labour laws or codes, general laws on violence against women, anti-discrimination laws, and penal codes. Ms. Martelotte reviewed what characterizes strong and **comprehensive legislation or policies** on sexual harassment, such as protection mechanisms for victims. Among the good practices shared by participants in this session was the new Protocol for the Prevention and Sanctioning of Sexual Harassment in the Chamber of Deputies of Chile.

The English session was delivered by **Haran Ramkaransingh**, Director of Legal Services of the Equal Opportunity Commission (EOC) of Trinidad and Tobago, which works towards the elimination of discrimination and the promotion of equality of opportunity through advocacy, public education, research, and the conciliation of complaints. The EOC recently published *Guidelines on Sexual Harassment in the Workplace*, a practical reference for employers and employees in both the private and public sectors in the Caribbean. In this session, participants reviewed some of the latest advances in this area, such as Barbados' Employment Sexual Harassment (Prevention) Act, 2017 and the Canadian Parliament's Code of Conduct for Members of the House of Commons: Sexual Harassment Between Members. Participants discussed how other countries could adopt similar regulations with a view to **expanding the options for victims to report** violations and bring cases forward through the courts.

The training sessions furthermore explored **voluntary practices** that parliamentarians can champion to promote cultures of respect and wellbeing for all employees, and to achieve greater productivity, morale, and equality in their places of work. Participants considered how #MeToo and other social movements are advancing critical conversations that are creating progress towards greater accountability and justice.

Session 1. Recognizing women's labour: The care economy

The gathering's first session focused on the care economy and its relationship to women's economic empowerment. During the session, panellists and participants explored parliamentary actions to respond to these issues, including: enhancing social protection systems; quantifying, valuing, and redistributing household care work; and ensuring the rights of women care workers, particularly those in the informal sector.

Conceptualizing care work

Care work represents a large area of employment for women, both formally and informally, but workers in this sector are often underpaid and undervalued. There are also discrepancies in terms of the formality of employment and the protections and benefits that workers enjoy. Further, women remain responsible for a disproportionate amount of unpaid household care work, which increases their workload, limits the time they have available for other economic or personal pursuits, and reinforces economic inequalities at the household level. The value of this work to the functioning of families and the economy in general is largely unrecognized. Each of these trends is shaped by a persistent and harmful belief that care work and the household are "women's domain."

Direct care activities involve interaction between the care provider and the recipient of care (such as children or parents).

Indirect care activities include tasks that assist others but do not require personal interaction (such as cooking and cleaning).

Paid care work is done for pay or profit, whether in households, nursing facilities, hospitals, etc.

- **Formal care work** is performed for an employer under a set working agreement that outlines wages, benefits, and other related provisions, as well as tax and social security contributions, allowing for greater job security.
- **Informal care work** is more precarious paid employment that is performed without a contract, outside of other frameworks for social security, or for wages and benefits below general market provisions. This can also include situations in which the remuneration is provided in-kind (e.g. boarding).

Unpaid care work is the performance of care activities without remuneration. This can be done in a variety of settings but is most often related to household and family spheres.

Session 1 (continued)

Julia Escalante de Haro, Regional Coordinator of the Latin American and Caribbean Committee for the Defense of Women's Rights (CLADEM), opened the session with an introduction to key concepts and trends related to the care economy. Both women and men are involved in unpaid and paid care work and experience vulnerability in these labour situations. Data reveals that gender has an impact on the types of roles filled and the conditions in which this work is undertaken. She highlighted that women undertake the majority of care work – mostly in an unpaid capacity – and that this burden influences their ability to access and remain in quality paid employment. Women in paid care work are also more likely to be self-employed in the informal sector, which means less **social protection and job security**. Further, care workers in such a setting are more susceptible to violence, discrimination, and a lack of recognition of labour and human rights. Ensuring adequate support and protections to workers in these situations requires **intersectional considerations**, as migrant women and women from other more vulnerable social groups are more likely to be employed informally. Following this introduction, a panel of parliamentarians presented initiatives from their respective countries to address these issues and others.

In her presentation, Member of the Legislative Assembly **Shirley Díaz Mejías** (Costa Rica) discussed two key laws that have been adopted in Costa Rica: Law 9325, which initiated national measurement of non-remunerated household care work through the National Statistics and Census System, and Law 9220, which created a National Child Care and Development Network. She also highlighted the importance of **time use data** to inform the creation of responsive policies and programs, and of considering and responding to related issues in the context of the broader economy, as fluctuations and crises can influence the public's need to seek employment in different sectors or under different terms.

President of the Senate **Chester Humphrey** (Grenada), Vice-President of the PNGE for the Caribbean, shared that increased attention was now being paid to recognizing and supporting unpaid household care work, but that Grenada had advanced most in terms of ensuring adequate support and protections for paid care workers, which he attributed to partnerships with and advocacy by trade unions. He outlined provisions in Grenada's labour code and social security legislation specifically related to **domestic workers**, and said that further efforts would be taken to strengthen legal protections in the context of the country signing on to the ILO's Domestic Workers Convention.

Session 1 (continued)

Senator **Verónica Camino Farjat** (Mexico) spoke to important initiatives to expand **parental leave** to include time for fathers following the birth of a child, though she highlighted that there was still a need to increase the length of time for both parents. She also advocated for not just capturing unpaid care work in data, but assigning it a value that could be accepted for credit provision or in the case of asset division if a couple separates, in recognition of the ways women are disadvantaged if their work has primarily been in the home. She stressed that true progress on any of these issues will require that legislation be supported by an accompanying focus on **education and communication** that fosters leadership for girls from a very young age.

Following the panel, participants engaged in productive conversation and shared additional good practices related to recognizing and supporting care work, domestic work, and social protection systems to achieve gender equality. These included employment protections to prevent discrimination against or firing of new parents, the development and strengthening of national care systems, programs to support care for older adults or those who are ill or living with disabilities, programs that provide income and other support to women entrepreneurs, and family friendly policies and infrastructure in parliament to ensure that parents in this workplace have access to the same provisions as other workers.

> If these unpaid care work services were given a value based on an hourly minimum wage, they would represent 9% of the global GDP, which would correspond to around $11 billion USD.

Julia Escalante de Haro (CLADEM)

> We already have the methods for measuring [care work]... so that is what we need to do. To be able to say to women: 'You have the right, you have the recognition.' But it is time to give it value. So now we move from a simple quantification of care work to putting it in law so that it forms part of the procurement and partition of justice.

Senator **Verónica Camino Farjat** (Mexico)

> Today in Grenada under the labour code, brought by force of activities of the trade union movement, domestic work is defined in law in terms of payments to be paid, the hours of work, and the right to annual paid vacation leave. That area of care work is also covered by our social security legislation... Employers are compelled to make contributions to the national social security system for retirement, sick leave, and other benefits for women who provide care work and domestic workers.

President of the Senate **Chester Humphrey** (Grenada), Vice-President of the PNGE for the Caribbean

> Law No. 9325 aims to visibilize, through the National System of Statistics and Census, the contributions of unpaid care work to begin to create some programs and methods on this.

Member of the Legislative Assembly **Shirley Díaz Mejías** (Costa Rica)

Session 2. Unfinished business: Laws to close the gaps on women's economic rights

The next session of the gathering examined gender equality under the law as a foundation for achieving equality in practice, with a focus on women during their working lives. The topics considered spanned parental leaves; the pay gap; access to credit, capital, and property; and pensions, among others.

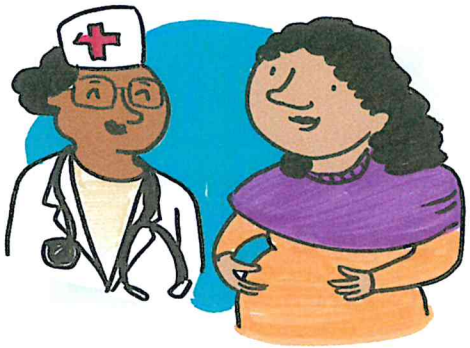
Beatriz García, representing the UN Women Americas and the Caribbean Regional Office, gave the opening presentation which provided an overview of a new study, *Analysis of Discriminatory Legislation on Women's Economic Autonomy and Empowerment in Latin America and the Caribbean*, published with the Ibero-American General Secretariat. The study illustrates how discriminatory legislation affects women's economic empowerment, as well as examples of national laws contributing to closing the identified gaps. The laws examined are divided into three categories: **access to goods and resources, access to remunerated work, and non-remunerated work.**

From a regional perspective, Ms. García noted, one of the significant remaining gaps is related to parental leave and maternity protection. She shared, for instance, that 29 of the 33 countries studied have not ratified ILO Convention No. 183, and that some employers are still using discriminatory practices like asking women to take pregnancy tests as part of hiring processes. Further, where maternity leave exists, its payment is sometimes at the employer's expense, disincentivizing the hiring of women. Paternity leave, meanwhile, is non-existent or very limited. Ms. García noted that removing the **direct and indirect forms of legal discrimination** revealed by the study is a crucial step towards substantive equality. She outlined a series of recommendations for decision makers, presented in the sidebar.

Recommendations

1. Ratify relevant international conventions and promote their effective implementation
2. Eliminate legal provisions that are directly discriminatory
3. Make progress on legislating affirmative actions
4. Contribute to awareness raising and training on gender
5. Facilitate greater empowerment for the most vulnerable rights' holders
6. Ensure access to justice that is reliable, affordable, and adapted to women's needs
7. Build on progress that has been made in order to close existing gaps in the enactment and application of laws for gender equality

Session 2 (continued)



Next, Member of the National Assembly **Arelys Santana Bello** (Cuba) spoke about advances that have been made in her country. In Cuba, there has been substantial progress on women's participation in certain sectors, such as STEM and the public service, whereas there is still lower participation in non-state – or private sector – jobs which is a nascent area of the economy. Ms. Santana spoke about the national survey on gender equality (2016), which captures sex-disaggregated data on many indicators, including attitudes towards woman and men, primary economic challenges, and time use and child care. This comprehensive survey provides a roadmap to continue to improve women's agency and position in the economy, Ms. Santana Bello noted. She stressed the importance of **investments in social services** that benefit women even during challenging economic times.

The Honourable Member of Parliament Dr. **Kellie Leitch** (Canada) then presented on initiatives that have helped to lessen the workplace inequalities faced by women, Indigenous people, disabled persons, visible minorities, and newcomers to Canada. She shared the example of the Employment Equity Act, which set a foundation that required **special measures** and the accommodation of difference. Dr. Leitch then explained how employment insurance provisions, such as paid parental leave and compassionate (end of life) care benefits, have improved women's economic circumstances over the years. She additionally described government programs for women entrepreneurs and for mentorship in non-traditional sectors. Other good practices highlighted were related to flexible work schedules, which allow more mothers to seek employment; campaigns surrounding International Day of the Girl; and strong enforcement mechanisms. Finally, Dr. Leitch stressed the need to establish clear and transparent timelines for bold new ideas that parliamentarians put forward to challenge the status quo.

Member of the National Assembly **Maritza Espinales** (Nicaragua) presented on a series of laws that protect women's economic rights in her country, among them: Law No. 648 on Equal Rights and Opportunities; Law No. 717 Establishment Act for the Land Fund with Gender Equity for Rural Women; Law No. 718 to Protect Families in which there have been Multiple Pregnancies and Births; and Law No. 757 on Equitable and Dignified Treatment for Indigenous Afro-Descendent Populations.

Session 2 (continued)

Ms. Espinales also described a number of programs in related areas like food security, literacy, housing, and credit for small enterprises. She explained that these efforts align with the National Human Development Plan (2018-2021) and are contributing to macro and micro economic benefits. However, she noted that **implementation and resourcing** remain challenges. Ms. Espinales lastly highlighted women's representation in public institutions, an area where Nicaragua is a global leader.

In the dialogue after the panel, participants reflected on the work that remains to be done, recalling that our hemisphere is the region with the greatest inequality. A recurring discussion point was on the role of women's movements and manifestations in driving forward change, as they have created an obligation for society – and parliaments – to respond to economic and other inequalities. One participant drew attention to a noted contradiction in women's empowerment in certain countries where parity has been achieved in political representation, yet women's economic inclusion remains very low. Through an exchange on possible policy solutions, it was observed that quotas for workplaces are often rejected by the private sector. As a strategy to shift thinking on this, evidence can be highlighted to show that diversity in the makeup of boards increases the profitability of companies. Another recommendation was to enact regulations that require organizations to publish the names of their board members; this transparency can motivate more balanced representation.

> Very recently we developed a really interesting compendium that presents all of the legislation that helps and supports women and their incorporation in the country's economic life.

Member of the National Assembly **Arelys Santana Bello** (Cuba)

> Our final objective with this report is to contribute to the visibility, for the benefit of decision makers, of the unfinished business in terms of legislation on women's economic empowerment.

Beatriz García (UN Women Americas and the Caribbean Regional Office)

> As you can see, Nicaragua is trying to close the gaps. But I believe that the greatest challenges that we have are related to awareness and sensitivity, because there is already a legal framework.

Member of the National Assembly **Maritza Espinales** (Nicaragua), Member of the ParlAmericas Board of Directors

> In Canada alone, women being involved as entrepreneurs mean an opportunity for up to $15 billion more involvement in our economy. No one can tell me that's not important. And we know that the diversity of women on boards, to make sure a company's more successful, has a meaningful impact globally.

Hon. Dr. **Kellie Leitch** (Canada), Member of Parliament

Session 3. Capitalizing on windows of opportunity: Women and the future of work

The third session of the gathering explored how technology and emerging markets are changing the nature of work, and the resulting challenges and opportunities for achieving gender equality. In the context of our rapidly shifting economies, panellists reflected on preparing women and men for the jobs of the future, including through technical training, financial literacy, and mentorship, as well as policies that support work-life balance.

In her opening presentation to frame the session, Member of the Chamber of Deputies **Camila Vallejo** (Chile) reviewed the implications of increasing **automation, digitalization, and flexibility** for the workforce. She cited global and regional data on the displacement of workers by technology and explained that, due to their concentration in low skill work, women face a higher risk of their jobs being automated. She also drew attention to the growing reliance on contractors who take on specialized, temporary roles requiring intrinsically human skills: creativity, persuasion, complex problem solving, and innovation, among others. Ms. Vallejo emphasized the importance of thoughtfully designed regulations and measures to ensure that workers can benefit from new technologies and flexible forms of work, and that gender inequalities are not perpetuated in the changing economy. For instance, education systems should promote learning that is continuous, flexible, multi-disciplinary, and creative. She also underscored the importance of **co-responsibility** and child care systems and shared related initiatives in Chile, including universal nurseries, computer programming classes in all schools, and legislative bills on pay equity and on reducing the work week from 45 to 40 hours.

Isiuwa Iyahen, Programme Specialist, Economic Empowerment and Statistics, UN Women Multi Country Office for the Caribbean, then gave a presentation on **labour and education trends** for women and men in the Caribbean, drawing on data from 2017 Labour Force Surveys in Barbados, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, Saint Lucia, and Trinidad and Tobago (which only include paid work). The analysis revealed that, while most of the population is only reaching secondary education, women in CARICOM are more likely than men to have tertiary education. However, the employment rate is lower for women than men at every level of education. Women are also overrepresented in clerical positions and underrepresented in trades and machine-oriented work.

Session 3 (continued)

While women accounted for a relatively high proportion of managers in some countries studied, further analysis revealed this was often in one-person establishments. This prompts consideration of its classification as management and signals the importance of comprehensive data to understand the nuance of trends. Ms. Iyahen highlighted that **persistent structural inequalities** in the workforce mean that access to education alone will not address the gender inequalities in employment and wages and likelihood of experiencing gender violence. She outlined a number of recommended practices to help this situation, including the adoption of the Women's Empowerment Principles. In this joint private sector initiative by the UN Global Compact and UN Women, signatories commit to advancing gender equality through their recruitment, retention, and promotion policies, work-life balance and health and safety measures, promotion of equal pay for work of equal value, and enforcement of zero tolerance for sexual harassment.

Diana Gutiérrez, Global Programme Manager, Business for Gender Equality, UNDP, next presented on "gendering" the fourth industrial revolution, through the lens of the private sector. She reviewed some of the occupations in decline in the region – such as accounting and payroll assistances, administrative and executive secretaries, assembly line workers, customer service workers, and general and operations managers – and emerging areas for employment, including data science, artificial intelligence, and organizational development. Ms. Gutiérrez explained that a **gender perspective** is important in the further growth of these areas, as there is a risk of bias transfer in the development of algorithms and machine learning. She also concluded that not enough is currently being done to train workers for these fields, especially in relation to women's participation, despite a strong business case for such a focus. A greater presence of women in workplaces has been found to contribute to improved work environments, decreased turnover and absenteeism, improved corporate image and reputation, and greater returns on investments.

Skills demand

Emerging

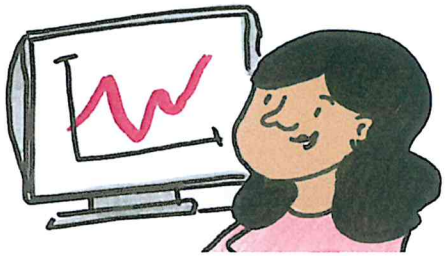
Active learning, analytical thinking, creativity, critical thinking, emotional intelligence, innovation, leadership, reasoning and design, resolution of complex problems, social influence, system analysis and evaluation, technological design and programming, time management

Declining

Auditory and spatial abilities, endurance and precision, financial and material resource management, installation and maintenance of technology manual dexterity, math, management of financial and material resources, memory, reading and writing, quality control, time management, use and monitoring of technology

Source: *Future of Jobs Survey 2018*, World Economic Forum, page 12

Session 3 (continued)



She explained that UNDP's Gender Equality Seal program seeks to recognize businesses that adopt commit to promoting gender equality and empowering women in their workplaces. Through this voluntary program, the organizations work to address gender gaps in critical areas of their operations. The role of legislative bodies, Ms. Gutiérrez noted, plays a role in establishing strong **national labour standards** and legal instruments for gender equality, and through the design of incentives that can include procurement and taxation.

To open her presentation, **Sophia Bryan**, Leadership and Business Development Strategist and Commonwealth Youth Ambassador (Jamaica), explained that her capacity building work with entrepreneurs and leaders stemmed from her desire to help create an ecosystem that supports women's development and allows them to thrive in business and formal employment. Ms. Bryan presented on barriers that currently exist to this goal in the Jamaican context. For example, she shared that the Women's Health Survey (2016) reveals the prevalence of women experiencing **economic abuse** by their partners; the occurrence of which cannot be predicted based on the woman's educational background. Ms. Bryan also spoke about her own experiences of gender discrimination when she ran for a youth elected leadership position, which cemented her view of the importance of leadership building. She encouraged the adoption of **transformational leadership** models that focus on fostering confidence, an understanding of and ability to clearly communicate one's value, emotional intelligence, and teamwork. Employers and political parties alike can actively promote the participation of women and youth in their spaces – and in doing so, ensure that it is not only those from privileged background who are able to access opportunities.

Ms. Bryan stressed that their inclusion in such spaces begins with removing assumptions about what a person knows (or does not know) and what they have access to (e.g. the internet), and instead ensuring they have adequate support. Government and parliamentary actors should also play a role in these efforts. Accessible programming can be introduced or promoted to strengthen financial literacy and management skills, mentoring, and wage negotiation.

The future is promising, but using technology appropriately also means understanding who is designing that technology, and that is human beings. And as human beings we have biases. Many times consciously, but the majority of times, unconsciously. So that is the biggest challenge.

Diana Gutiérrez (UNDP)

My negative and positive experiences as a candidate for chairperson of an international organization drastically changed my perspective on the importance of prioritizing women's leadership and overcoming the crucial hurdle of culture.

Sophia Bryan (Leadership and Business Development Strategist and Commonwealth Youth Ambassador)

When we have occupational sex segregation – the way in which we have it in CARICOM – that presents a problematic, particularly if you're looking at medium to long-term economic growth prospects… We need to think about where our people are positioned, and whether we are ready to meet the demands of climate change adaptation, and the obvious gender implications associated with that transition.

Isiuwa Iyahen (UN Women Multi-Country Office – Caribbean)

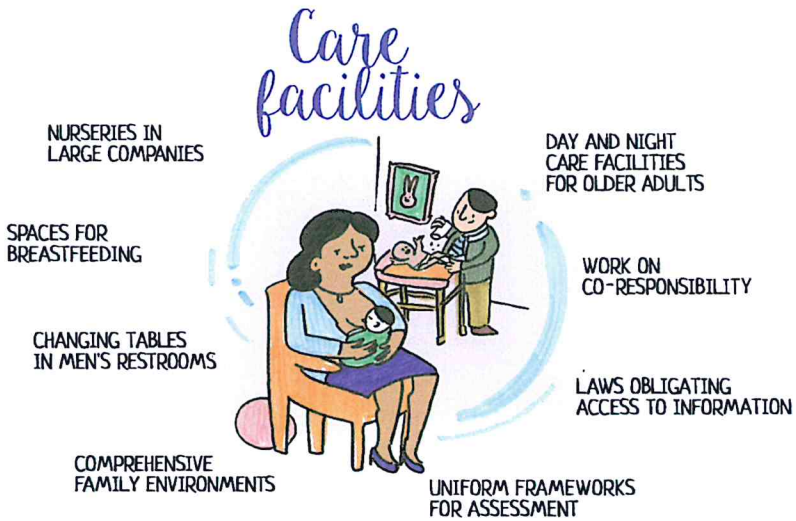
The changes brought by technology and our times can be an opportunity if measures are taken now to especially safeguard women and workers from disadvantaged social classes.

Member of the Chamber of Deputies **Camila Vallejo** (Chile)

Session 4. Exploring data, building solutions

The final session provided an in-depth look at different policy topics through working groups facilitated by Member of the Legislative Assembly **Cristina Cornejo** (El Salvador), Vice-President of the PNGE for Central America. To begin, **Teresa Guerra**, Program Associate at UN Women – Mexico, presented on the importance of gender-disaggregated data for the design of inclusive public policies and political decision making. Ms. Guerra highlighted the Global Center of Excellence on Gender Statistics (CEGS), an initiative of UN Women and Mexico's Nacional Institute on Statistics and Geography (INEGI, in Spanish) which is a leader in this area.

Participants then worked in roundtables to exchange on the following topics: **pay equity, gender quotas for private and public organization, care centres, social protection and pensions for older women,** and **maternity and paternity leave**. Each table was accompanied by a subject matter specialist who shared further data from the region and policy considerations. Participants discussed how the topic at their table has been undertaken in their country, sharing good practices and experiences. They also spoke about what would be at risk if the topic is considered in a gender-blind way. They noted the type of data that is required to inform effective, sustainable lawmaking on these topics, and the possible barriers to the collection and use of such data. Lastly, they reflected on the role of parliamentarians in addressing these challenges and strategic partnerships that could be leveraged to make further progress. Each table gave a report summarizing the key takeaways from their discussions.



Gender quotas

MENTORSHIP IS KEY FOR LEADERSHIP POSITIONS

THE WAGE GAP CONTINUES TO EXIST EVEN WHEN MORE WOMEN ACCESS WORK

LEADERSHIP BY MINISTRIES IS ESSENTIAL

ECONOMIC SUPPORT FOR TRAINING TO ACCESS POSITIONS OF POWER

GENDER QUOTAS AS A FORM OF GUARANTEE

SOCIETAL PERCEPTIONS ARE A KEY CHALLENGE

Pay equity

ESTABLISH PARTNERSHIPS WITH DIFFERENT SECTORS TO ACHIEVE PARITY

TRAINING FOR PREVENTION

WORK TO RAISE AWARENESS ON THE IMPORTANCE OF DATA

ECONOMIC GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT INCREASE WITH EQUITY

WORK WITH SOCIETY, GRASSROOTS ORGANIZATIONS, AND UNIONS

POLITICAL COMMITMENT TOGETHER WITH LEGISLATION

Pensions and social protection

INFORMALITY IS MOST COMPLEX BECAUSE IT HARMS WOMEN MORE

IF AN OLDER ADULT DOES NOT HAVE A PENSION, MORE POVERTY IS GENERATED

A UNIVERSAL PENSION IS NECESSARY

A PENSION CULTURE IS LACKING "SENSITIZATION"

CURRENT LEGISLATION IN OUR COUNTRIES IS INSUFFICIENT TO GUARANTEE A DIGNIFIED OLD AGE

Declaration Highlights

The 11th Gathering of the ParlAmericas Parliamentary Network for Gender Equality concluded with the reading of the declaration by Senator **Antares Vázquez Alatorre** (Mexico), accompanied by the Hon. **Robert Nault** (Canada). Among the commitments adopted by the convened parliamentary delegations to further advance women's empowerment in the labour force and build more gender-balanced future for our region:

- Reviewing the status of international conventions for gender equality in the labour force, including ILO conventions pending ratification, and taking steps to harmonize our countries' legislation in line with our States' agreements.
- Identifying provisions in our national laws that are directly or indirectly discriminatory to women in the world of work, and consulting with women's organizations to close this gap.
- Advocating for the generation and use of gender-disaggregated data for all legislative decision-making.
- Taking steps to strengthen social protection systems, ensuring that they are guided by principles of universality, co-responsibility, and gender equality.
- Initiating or supporting actions to institutionalize an anti-sexual harassment policy that is appropriate for our parliaments.

Parliaments Present


Antigua and Barbuda


Colombia


Guyana


Peru


Argentina


Costa Rica


Haiti


Saint Kitts and Nevis


Barbados


Cuba


Jamaica


Saint Lucia


Bolivia


Ecuador


Mexico


Suriname


Canada


El Salvador


Nicaragua


Trinidad and Tobago


Chile


Grenada


Panama


Venezuela

Canada

This gathering was made possible with the generous support of the Senate of the Republic of Mexico and the Government of Canada through Global Affairs Canada.

Executive Committee of the ParlAmericas Parliamentary Network for Gender Equality

After elections that took place at the gathering, the composition of the PNGE Executive Committee is the following:

Maya Fernández Allende
President
Member of the Chamber of Deputies, Chile

Verónica Camino Farjat
Vice-President - North America
Senator, Mexico

Cristina Cornejo
Vice-President - Central America
Member of the Legislative Assembly, El Salvador

Karina Arteaga
Vice-President - South America
Member of the National Assembly, Ecuador

Marcela Sabat
Alternate Vice-President - South America
Member of the Chamber of Deputies, Chile

Chester Humphrey
Vice-President - The Caribbean
President of the Senate, Grenada

Delsa Solórzano
Observer
Member of the National Assembly, Venezuela

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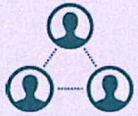

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ParlAmericas is composed of the **35 NATIONAL LEGISLATURES** *from North, Central and South America and the Caribbean*

ParlAmericas facilitates the exchange of parliamentary **BEST PRACTICES AND** *promotes* **COOPERATIVE POLITICAL DIALOGUE**

ParlAmericas mainstreams **GENDER EQUALITY** *by advocating for women's political empowerment and the application of a gender lens in legislative work*

ParlAmericas fosters **OPEN PARLIMENTS** *by advancing the principles of transparency, accountability, citizen participation, ethics and probity*

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