



**Report of the Canadian Parliamentary Delegation respecting
its participation at the 47th Board of Directors Meeting and
the 4th Gathering of ParlAmericas' Open Parliament Network**

Canadian Section of ParlAmericas

**Quito, Ecuador
11–14 March 2019**

Report

A. Delegation

From 11–14 March 2019, the Honourable Bob Nault, P.C., M.P., President of ParlAmericas and Chair of the Canadian Section of ParlAmericas, led an all-party delegation to ParlAmericas' 4th Gathering of the Open Parliament Network in Quito, Ecuador. Mr. Nault was accompanied by Mr. Randy Boissonnault, M.P., Mr. David Christopherson, M.P., the Honourable Percy E. Downe, Senator, the Honourable Rosa Galvez, Senator, the Honourable Kellie Leitch, P.C., M.P. and Mrs. Sherry Romanado, M.P. The delegation was accompanied by David-Andrés Novoa, the Canadian Section's Executive Secretary, and by Andre Barnes, Advisor to the Canadian Section.

B. Event

ParlAmericas is an independent network comprising national legislatures that are members of the Organization of American States. At ParlAmericas' events, legislators from across the hemisphere hold discussions and build relationships. In particular, ParlAmericas provides Canadian parliamentarians with a forum for raising Canada's profile in the hemisphere, promoting issues of importance to Canada, and engaging potential and long-standing hemispheric partners.

ParlAmericas was constituted in 2001 at a meeting hosted by the Parliament of Canada in Ottawa. Since that time, the Canadian Section has played a leading role in ParlAmericas, which has established itself as a transparent, equitable and diverse organization. ParlAmericas International Secretariat is incorporated in Canada, and is the only interparliamentary forum to have its headquarters located in Ottawa. In response to Canada's increasingly important relationship with the countries of the Latin American and Caribbean region, ParlAmericas has expanded its hemispheric role and presence, and has increased engagement and collaboration with like-minded multilateral partners.

At this event, the Canadian Section's delegates participated in the 4th Gathering of the Open Parliament Network, which was attended by more than 100 legislators from 27 countries throughout the hemisphere. Presentations and workshops addressed the importance of post-legislative scrutiny, enhanced openness and public trust in democratic institutions, and stronger parliamentary oversight to counter corruption. Notably, Senator Downe made a presentation about Canada's perspective on post-legislative scrutiny. Prior to the start of the gathering, the Canadian delegation participated in a variety of other meetings, as described below.

This report summarizes the discussions that occurred in Quito.

C. Meetings Held Prior to the 4th Gathering of the Open Parliament Network

1. Briefing by Canada's Ambassador to Ecuador

On 11 March 2019, Canada's Ambassador to Ecuador, Ms. Sylvie Bédard, and Embassy officials briefed delegates about the state of political, economic and social affairs in Ecuador. They were told that Ecuador is an Andean country comprising several distinct

regions. It has a population of 16 million people¹, with a growing middle class and a large population of Indigenous peoples. Ecuador has abundant natural resources, particularly oil.

For the past 38 years, Ecuador has had democratic stability. Recently, the Government of Ecuador has made significant investments in public education and infrastructure, and is taking steps to diversify its economy. Ecuador has also indicated an interest in promoting inclusive development, reinforcing human rights (including gender equality and LGBTQ2 rights), fostering reconciliation with Indigenous peoples, and gaining membership in such international multilateral bodies as the Organisation for Economic Co operation and Development and the Pacific Alliance.

Canada and Ecuador share a common global outlook, and there are opportunities to deepen the bilateral relationship. Two-way trade between Canada and Ecuador has decreased in recent years, falling from about \$800 million in 2015 to approximately \$500 million in 2018. The principal reason for this decline is the May 2018 cancellation, by Ecuador, of the foreign investment promotion and protection agreement between the two countries. A number of Canadian firms in the extractive sector have investments in Ecuador. In recent years, mining revenue in Ecuador increased following the country's adoption of a new legal and regulatory framework for mining.

Beginning in 2000, Ecuador adopted the U.S. dollar as its currency, a measure that enhanced the country's economic stability. That said, as an oil-producing country and a member of the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), Ecuador has recently experienced some fiscal challenges because of the decrease in the global price for oil. As well, a large number of Venezuelan migrants continue either to seek refuge in, or to transit through, Ecuador. Furthermore, due to its geographic proximity to coca-producing countries, Ecuador is used as a drug trafficking route.

Concerning corruption, the Canadian Centre of Excellence in Anti-Corruption (CCEAC) – a body created by the University of Ottawa that works in collaboration with the Royal Canadian Mounted Police – was scheduled to deliver a series of workshops in March 2019 in Quito. In particular, Ecuadorian public- and private-sector employees were expected to learn about their legal obligations under Ecuador's conflict of interest regime, and to share experiences and best practices.

Regarding Indigenous peoples in Ecuador:

- Between 7% and 10% of the country's population self-identifies as Indigenous, while about 40% self identifies as mestizo (the equivalent of Métis in Canada).
- There are about 21 distinct communities of Indigenous peoples in Ecuador.
- Indigenous peoples in Ecuador have organized themselves into a political party and have elected representatives to the National Assembly.

¹ Ecuador has a relatively young population, with an average age of about 28 years.

- Due to its Andean geography, many Indigenous communities have had only limited contact with outsiders.
- There is a high level of Indigenous language preservation throughout the country.
- For 2019, Ecuador and Australia were selected as co-chairs of the Steering Committee of the International Year of Indigenous Languages at the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.
- Ecuador continues to take steps to combat human trafficking of Indigenous peoples, a crime that has resulted from drug trafficking.

During the briefing, other topics that were discussed included the following:

- Ecuador's progress in relation to joining the Open Government Partnership;
- student exchanges between Canada and Ecuador, recognizing that Ecuadorian students' enrolment in Canadian post-secondary institutions has increased by 25% over the past four years and that Ecuador ranks fourth among South American countries for post-secondary students studying in Canada;
- tourism in Ecuador, especially ecotourism, with about 36,000 Canadians visiting Ecuador each year and 50% of those visitors travelling to the Galapagos Islands;
- the Galapagos Islands as an example of conservation, with tourists being permitted to visit only 3% of the territory and the remaining 97% serving as an "off-limits" national park;
- Air Canada's recent announcement that it will offer non-stop flights between Toronto and Quito, with potential benefits for tourism and trade;
- the geopolitical influence of various countries in Ecuador and the Andean region; and
- Ecuador's investment in renewable energy, especially solar given the country's geographic placement directly below the sun and numerous sunny days each year.

2. ParlAmericas 47th Board of Directors Meeting

On 12 March 2019, ParlAmericas held its 47th Board of Directors meeting. Ms. Elizabeth Cabezas, President of Ecuador's National Assembly, and Mr. Nault provided opening remarks, following which routine procedural motions were moved and adopted. These motions included adoption of the meeting's agenda and the minutes from the previous meeting of the Board.

ParlAmericas' International Secretariat provided an update about the implementation of its 2018–2019 communications work plan. It noted such initiatives as a development project in the Caribbean to assist women's entry into politics, the creation of an access-

to-information resource for national legislatures, and potential carbon neutrality in relation to the International Secretariat's operations.

As well, representatives of ParlAmericas' three official thematic networks – the Open Parliament Network (OPN), the Parliamentary Network for Gender Equality (PNGE) and the Parliamentary Network on Climate Change (PNCC) – reported on their activities over the past year and spoke about their proposed work plans for 2019–2020.

In commenting on the OPN, Ms. Ana Belén Marín, who is a member of Ecuador's National Assembly, told the Board that members of the OPN had recently attended a meeting in Costa Rica on the topic of implementing open parliament action plans and policies. She also updated the Board about initiatives that Ecuador's legislature had recently implemented to increase accountability to the public, such as conducting a post-legislative review of their statutes and studying the implementation of transnational evidence-sharing to improve efforts to combat corruption at an international level. The Board approved a motion that allows International Secretariat staff to exchange information and coordinate with staff employed at the various legislatures belonging to ParlAmericas with a view to advancing the OPN's work. Lastly, Mr. Boissonnault encouraged the Board's members to attend the OPN and Open Government Partnership (OGP) meetings in May 2019 in Ottawa.

Regarding the PNGE, Ms. Karina Banfi, who is a member of Argentina's Chamber of Deputies, told the Board that the PNGE and the United Nations jointly held a conference in Barbados in November 2018. The conference's themes included increasing women's inclusion in all facets of society and establishing connections between women at the local level to support each other's work. She noted that Mexico has agreed to host the next PNGE meeting in June 2019; it will have the theme of economic empowerment. As well, she informed the Board that the PNGE has been invited to give a presentation on the topic of gender equality in Latin America at an Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean meeting to be held in November 2019.

With a focus on the PNCC, Mr. Javier Ortega, who is a member of Panama's National Assembly, reported that the topics discussed at the PNCC's third annual meeting included carbon pricing, risk assessment and mitigation, and climate change resiliency. The fourth meeting of the PNCC is scheduled for October 2019 in Panama, where the theme will be raising awareness about the need for proportional contributions among countries to combat climate change. He also told the Board that the negative effects of climate change disproportionately affect marginalized groups, such as women. Ms. Gladys López, who is a member of Cuba's National Assembly, discussed the PNCC's participation at the December 2018 United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP24), which led to it being granted observer status at UN climate change conferences. Furthermore, the Board was informed that a PNCC meeting is being planned for July or August 2019 in Paramaribo, Suriname to discuss the ways in which countries can attain their *Paris Agreement* commitments for 2019. Potential themes for that meeting could include issues that countries are facing in accessing funds to assist with climate change adaptation, and the merits of non-market-based carbon pricing.

Mr. Patrick Kemper, who is a member of Paraguay's National Congress, provided the Board with an update about planning for the 16th Plenary Assembly, which will be held in

Asuncion, Paraguay from 30 October–1 November 2019. The theme for the Plenary Assembly will be implementation of the United Nations' 2015 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In conjunction with the Plenary Assembly, a workshop on the use of open data to track attainment of the SDGs is being planned.

As part of the Board meeting, ParlAmericas' annual general meeting (AGM) was held. Ms. Jennifer Simons, who is Speaker of Suriname's National Assembly, was appointed Chair of the AGM. The audited financial statements were presented and accepted, following which financial and administrative matters relating to the International Secretariat were discussed.

The Board's meeting concluded with a presentation by representatives of the U.S. House of Representatives' House Democracy Partnership, which provides technical training to national legislatures about strengthening public institutions and the rule of law. They expressed an interest in identifying areas for collaboration with ParlAmericas.

3. Welcoming Remarks and Introduction to Post-Legislative Scrutiny

On 12 March 2019, ParlAmericas conducted a workshop on the topic of post-legislative scrutiny, the purpose of which was a discussion of the role of legislatures in monitoring and evaluating the implementation of the legislation that they have passed.

In providing introductory remarks, Mr. Franklin De Vrieze – who is Senior Governance Adviser at the Westminster Foundation for Democracy – explained the concept and use of post-legislative scrutiny. He began by noting the importance of reviewing enacted legislation in order to determine the extent to which intended impact(s) are being realized. In his opinion, the implementation of laws can be complex, and can involve such factors as the clarity of the legal drafting, a law's compatibility with existing statutes, and the availability of resources both to implement a law and to enforce the changes that it requires.

According to Mr. De Vrieze, legislatures that conduct post-legislative scrutiny can be placed on a spectrum: from passive scrutiny to informal scrutiny (i.e., ad hoc structures or procedures) to formal scrutiny (i.e., systematic structures or procedures). He provided examples of legislatures that, in his view, conduct different types of post-legislative scrutiny.

Concerning passive scrutiny, Mr. De Vrieze focused on Estonia, where the government decides whether existing statutes will be reviewed and, if so, designates the entity that will review them; the review can be conducted, for example, by a national statistics office, or governmental departments of science, technology or sustainable development.

As examples of informal scrutiny, Mr. De Vrieze discussed South Africa, Italy and Indonesia. Since the end of apartheid, South Africa has been reviewing the impact of all enacted legislation, with this review undertaken by a panel of experts, not by legislators. In Italy, the legislature's administration conducts post-legislative scrutiny, although legislators rarely study the results of this scrutiny. In Indonesia, parliamentary committees are assigned the task of conducting post-legislative scrutiny but this work is not conducted in a systematic way.

Lastly, as examples of formal scrutiny, Mr. De Vrieze spoke about Sweden and the United Kingdom. Sweden's constitution requires post-legislative scrutiny to occur, and legislators

are supported in this task by a dedicated secretariat and the national audit office; resulting reports are often tabled in the legislature and then debated. In the United Kingdom, the government reviews and reports on all legislation within three to five years of having been passed by Parliament. Select committees in both the House of Lords and the House of Commons have the mandate to review these reports and to evaluate statutory performance. In their report, these committees can request that the government provide a response within two months.

4. Post-Legislative Scrutiny Practices in the Americas and the Caribbean

Following Mr. De Vrieze's remarks, a panel of legislators and experts gave a series of presentations on the practices used in their jurisdiction to undertake post-legislative scrutiny. Mr. Fernando Burbano, who is a member of Ecuador's National Assembly, moderated the session. He told participants that, in his view, post-legislative scrutiny is an important mechanism for incorporating citizen input into the law-making process. However, he noted that this scrutiny must occur systematically, include key indicators for measuring outcomes, and have adequate resources.

Senator Downe provided a Canadian perspective on post-legislative scrutiny. His presentation outlined Canada's legislative process, highlighted statutory review and sunset provisions in legislation, and noted the *Statutes Repeal Act*. He also provided information about a variety of non-statutory means by which Canadian parliamentarians can exercise their oversight and review duties in relation to legislation; these means include written questions tabled in the Senate, the access-to-information process, and the role of two of Canada's officers of Parliament: the Auditor General of Canada; and the Parliamentary Budget Officer.

Ms. María Fernanda Arreguín Gámez, Coordinator of Post Legislative Scrutiny for the State Congress of Guanajuato, Mexico, gave a presentation that was focused on law assessment in Mexico. She noted that Guanajuato's State Congress has formal oversight powers with which it reviews enacted legislation, with a legal requirement to review most legislation within five years of enactment. According to her, the State Congress uses a variety of impact indicators, such as the following:

- legal indicators: The State Congress considers such questions as: Has the law performed as intended? Does the law operate well alongside other laws? Does the law have accompanying regulations or secondary laws and, if so, are these effective?
- citizen participation: The State Congress convenes focus groups, conducts interviews, and gathers the public's views about a law through holding roundtable and panel discussions.
- efficiency: The State Congress measures the objectives of the law against its outcomes.

Guanajuato's State Congress publishes the results of its reviews of legislation; these results are publicly available.

Ms. Angelique Massiah, who is a parliamentary clerk in Trinidad and Tobago, made a presentation about the Parliament of Trinidad and Tobago's review of the 2012 *Administration of Justice Act*, which provides for the detection of serious crimes using DNA evidence and analysis. According to her, the Act was reviewed in 2015 by a joint parliamentary committee that undertook an in-depth study, including public hearings and site visits, before tabling its report; the report received a government response. Ms. Massiah commented that, in her view, post-legislative scrutiny could potentially be made more efficient and effective through the use of automation or computer programs.

The final presentation was made by Mr. Roccio Noriega, an official with the National Congress of Chile. He said that the National Congress' post-legislative review department was established in 2011, and that – with three staff – it conducts post-legislative reviews of two or three laws per year; the resulting reports are tabled in the National Congress and are made available to the public. As well, Mr. Noriega noted that, when analyzing the outcomes of particular laws, the guiding principles of the reviews include accountability, citizen participation, transparency, ethics, integrity and the application of a gender lens.

5. Applying Post-Legislative Scrutiny Principles and Practical Steps

During the workshop on post-legislative scrutiny, participants formed groups and completed a learning activity: scrutinizing hypothetical statutes. They then reported their observations in a plenary session.

In introducing the activity and providing practical advice for its completion, Mr. De Vrieze noted the following:

- Primary and secondary legislation must work in concert; in particular, secondary legislation must operate within the scope established by primary legislation and must not spend amounts larger than those appropriated by primary legislation.
- Legislation often has differing impacts on men and women.
- Collecting data and applying specific indicators can improve the analysis of whether and – if so – the extent to which a statute is meeting its intended goals.
- The purpose of post-legislative scrutiny is not to re-open policy arguments.
- Post-legislative scrutiny is usually conducted three to five years after a law's enactment to allow sufficient evidence to be collected and all aspects of the law to be brought into force.
- In general, post-legislative scrutiny should aim to collect diverse views, be transparent and consistent in its processes, and establish any further review mechanisms that are required.

6. Global Declaration on Post-Legislative Scrutiny and Concluding Remarks

At the end of the post-legislative scrutiny workshop, Mr. Devin O'Shaughnessy – who is Director of Programmes at the Westminster Foundation for Democracy – provided an overview of the Global Declaration on Post-Legislative Scrutiny, which is designed to

raise awareness about legislatures' role in providing oversight of previously enacted statutes. He noted that the declaration encourages legislatures to seek input from experts and citizens as they undertake this oversight.

At the conclusion of the workshop, Mr. Cesar Solórzano, who is a member of Ecuador's National Assembly, remarked that post-legislative scrutiny improves legislation, and promotes citizen participation and trust in democratic institutions.

D. 4th Gathering of the ParlAmericas Open Parliament Network – “Beyond the Walls of Parliament: Strengthening Parliamentary Oversight”

1. Inauguration and Opening Remarks

The 4th Gathering of the Open Parliament Network started on 13 March 2019. Ms. Cabezas began the meeting by noting the attendance of delegates from 27 of the 35 countries in the hemisphere. In emphasizing that ParlAmericas plays an important role in bringing the countries of the hemisphere together to discuss mutually held challenges, she stated that one challenge faced by legislatures and politicians alike is improving the public's perception of them; in her view, ParlAmericas is a valuable “platform” for helping to restore public trust and confidence in politics. Ms. Cabezas also provided an overview of the measures taken by Ecuador's National Assembly to improve transparency and openness, including renewal of the legislature's website and improved public accessibility to the legislature's building. According to her, Ecuador has also recently reformed its legislation concerning access to information and citizen participation, and is examining whether to adopt transnational laws to combat international corruption.

Senator Blanca Ovelar, who is a member of Paraguay's Senate and President of the ParlAmericas Open Parliament Network, stated that legislators need to be active in promoting the goals of openness, ethics and quality of governance; according to her, they must also make a commitment to responding to the public's concerns and restoring trust in politics. Senator Ovelar called on legislators to do their part in creating fair societies, and in improving and strengthening democratic institutions. In her view, political corruption too often hampers citizens' hopes and dreams. Finally, she noted the importance of conducting post-legislative scrutiny in order to improve the laws that legislatures pass.

Mr. Nault characterized ParlAmericas as a valuable mechanism for both strengthening democratic governance in the hemisphere and being a forum for legislators to work together to find solutions to the most critical challenges of our time. He also remarked that, as public scrutiny of politicians and of governmental institutions continues to rise, ensuring that the executive and the legislative branches are engaged in practices that meet the highest standards of good governance is critical. According to him, corruption has a range of negative effects, with research suggesting that it can have an annual global cost of about US\$2.6 trillion. Mr. Nault also identified the 2018 Lima Commitment as an important step towards the regional coordination of efforts to address corruption. As well, he stated that legislators have an obligation to lead by example, and to strengthen parliamentary oversight of the implementation of laws and public policies that affect the lives of citizens.

2. Keynote Speakers and Working Session 1: Towards a Systemic Transformation to Counter Corruption

The first session during the 4th Gathering of the Open Parliament Network was entitled “Towards a systemic transformation to counter corruption.” The session was moderated by Ms. Cecilia Chacón, who is a member of Peru’s National Congress, and involved two keynote speakers and a question-and-answer period. Ms. Chacón opened the session by commenting that corruption affects all countries, and that – because corruption spans national borders – combatting corruption requires an international network of information sharing.

Mr. Juan Ricardo Ortega, who is Senior Advisor at the Inter-American Development Bank, began his keynote address by suggesting that drug trafficking has “contaminated” politics in many Latin American countries, with states struggling to control its spread in light of drug cartels’ vast resources. In his view, only citizens who feel that they are a part of society will defend the rules of that society, which gives rise to a need for society-wide agreement about the rules for becoming wealthy. To illustrate this point, he provided the example of the black market: if society did not consider selling or buying contraband to be a criminal activity, the laws meant to combat the black market would be practically unenforceable.

Mr. Ortega stated that most countries have experienced periods of corruption and opportunism. He noted, for instance, the United States in the 1880s, when corruption was commonplace in the private and public sectors. As well, he suggested that there is a correlation between wealth inequality and corruption, and that countries that are unable to address high levels of corruption adequately are unable to avoid widespread poverty.

Finally, Mr. Ortega identified measures that legislators can help to put in place to combat corruption, including the following:

- Information held by governments should be made publicly accessible, including in relation to procurement contracts.
- Governments should commit themselves to participating in, and adhering to, international anti-corruption treaties and conventions.
- Countries should share personal and corporate tax information among themselves.
- A strong, well-resourced and independent judiciary should be fostered.

Ms. Shaazka Beyerle – who is Senior Research Advisor with the Program on Nonviolent Action at the United States Institute of Peace – began her keynote address by indicating that corruption affects all sectors in society and that its widespread nature can make it difficult to detect. She also stated that, because corruption benefits those who engage in it, individuals and entities that attempt to combat or end it are potentially at risk.

In Ms. Beyerle’s opinion, there is a link between corruption in society on one hand, and violent conflict and civil war on the other hand. In her view, countries that experience high levels of corruption also are more likely to experience poverty, low rates of development

and weak democratic values. Ms. Beyerle noted that her research used data from the World Justice Project's Rule of Law Index and the International Budget Partnership's Open Budget Survey.

As well, Ms. Beyerle provided an overview of non-violent citizen movements and compared them to citizen movements that involve violence. She found that non-violent movements are both relatively more effective and more likely to lead to formal political participation and governing. According to her research, 43% of the violent movements that she studied led to a civil war within five years, while 34% of non-violent movements did so. Finally, in suggesting that citizens play an important role as whistleblowers who identify corrupt practices, Ms. Beyerle encouraged legislators to provide citizens with access to government-held information, and to involve them in the preparation of budgets and legislation.

During the question-and-answer period that followed the two keynote addresses, Senator Galvez commented that legislators should be forward-looking in relation to ethics and transparency, and should lead by example with their behaviour. As well, participants noted the following:

- Society should allow “vertical” advancement of citizens in terms of the accumulation of “legitimate” wealth.
- Governments should use laws and patents to protect and reward research and innovation.
- Strong, clear and enforceable laws should be put in place to regulate election financing.
- Resources and training should be provided to law enforcement agencies and the judiciary.
- Citizens should be provided with an opportunity for meaningful participation in society because engaged citizens are more likely to abide by – and promote – society's values, norms and laws.

3. Working Session 2: Strengthening Parliamentary Oversight to Promote Openness and Counter Corruption

The second session of the 4th Gathering of the Open Parliament Network, which was focused on the topic of “Strengthening parliamentary oversight to promote openness and counter corruption,” was moderated by Ms. María Inés Solís, who is Vice-President of Costa Rica's Legislative Assembly. In beginning the session, she commented that legislatures must exercise a control function over ethics and transparency in the private and public sectors to prevent corruption.

Ms. Anande Trotman-Joseph, who is Chairperson of Grenada's Integrity and Anti-Corruption Commission, spoke about Grenada's implementation of conflict-of-interest and anti-corruption legislation in 2007 and 2013, respectively. She mentioned that these laws established an independent integrity commission that, among other tasks, performs public education and outreach, and receives compliance declarations from legislators and

public office holders. According to her, as part of the conflict-of-interest protocol, the integrity commission reviews the acceptability of gifts received by legislators or public office holders that are valued at more than \$500.

Mr. Esteban Fullin, who is the International Monetary Fund's (IMF's) Regional Adviser for Latin America and the Caribbean on Anti-Money Laundering, provided information about the IMF's anti-money laundering regime. He noted that all countries should perform a risk assessment to identify vulnerabilities that could be exploited by money launderers, and characterized the banking, financial and scrap metal sectors, as well as casinos, as typical venues for money laundering. In commenting that corruption and money laundering are closely linked, Mr. Fullin suggested that countries should maintain a record of ownership of firms and their assets, and stated that many countries are not aware of their vulnerabilities to money laundering or of the ways in which firms can operate undetected in foreign countries. He also provided ratings of the hemisphere's countries regarding the prevention of money laundering and highlighted progress that they have made in this regard.

In his presentation, Mr. Ortega contended that reclaiming stolen assets is a better deterrent against corruption than is sending those found guilty of corruption to jail. He indicated that the United States' federal government punishes those found guilty of corruption by requiring them to pay back 2.6 times the amount that they have stolen. Mr. Ortega provided examples of national governments that have engaged in corruption-related prosecutions, such as Costa Rica, where criminals were laundering money through trade in goods, and Mexico, where criminals were laundering money but evading detection by transferring funds into and out of foreign countries.

Mr. Jaime B. Guerrero, who is a partner at Foley & Lardner LLP, focused on measures that private firms can take to prevent and detect corruption, including accurate bookkeeping, whistleblower protections, and compliance and internal control programs. He commented that, currently, firms can use computer programs to survey internal data with the goal of detecting corruption, and that some firms "harvest" data from social media accounts as a means of detecting corruption. Mr. Guerrero said that bribes in the form of direct payments are now rare, with – instead – illegal payments being made to individuals through such schemes as fraudulently hiring third-party consultants. In his opinion, national governments require extraterritorial "reach" to combat corruption because it is common for large firms to own foreign subsidiaries. In speaking about legislators' role in combatting corruption, he suggested that they could:

- help to support grassroots anti-corruption associations;
- ensure that the judiciary is independent from outside influences and has sufficient resources;
- collaborate with legislators in other countries to combat transnational corruption; and
- ensure that firms can implement anti-corruption laws, as required.

Following the presentations, Mr. Boissonnault introduced and facilitated an activity in which participants formed groups to work on a hypothetical case involving detecting, deterring and preventing bribery, corruption and conflicts of interest. At the end of the activity, each group presented its considerations and solutions in a plenary session.

4. Results of Open Parliament Commitments Presented at the 3rd Gathering of the Open Parliament Network

On 14 March 2019, the third session of the Open Parliament Network occurred, with delegates from each national legislature that had made commitments at the 3rd Gathering of the Open Parliament Network to implement an open parliament plan providing a short presentation about their country's progress in meeting their commitments. ParlAmericas' [Parliamentary Commitment Tool](#) also provides information about the progress made by countries in meeting their open parliament commitments.

The following countries made presentations:

Argentina: Argentina's National Congress has recently: enacted a law designed to promote transparency and public access to government-held information; established an access to information bureau within the National Congress to respond to public inquiries; and created an open data portal to disclose legislators' expenses.

Ecuador: Ecuador's National Assembly has recently: enacted an access-to-information law; established a commission with a mandate to increase citizen participation in public life; and taken steps to increase public participation at committee hearings.

Costa Rica: Costa Rica's Legislative Assembly is working to fulfill its commitments following a recent general election. In March 2019, all party leaders in the Legislative Assembly made a written commitment to: implement improved public disclosure of expenses and measures to increase citizen participation in the legislative process; and strengthen the legislative regime concerning access to information and conflict of interest.

Paraguay: Paraguay's National Congress made open parliament commitments in 2016, which have since been implemented. In 2018, the National Congress made additional commitments, which are currently being implemented. The National Congress is in the process of drafting a code for legislators concerning conflict of interest and increasing public disclosure of legislators' expenses.

Suriname: Since 2018, Suriname's National Assembly has: expanded the information available on its website; launched a smartphone application to improve citizens' access to legislative information; expanded an outreach program targeting children and young adults; and increased the number of public visits to the legislature.

5. Presentation of New Open Parliament Commitments by Parliamentary Delegations

Delegates from national legislatures making open parliament commitments for the year ahead spoke about proposed commitments and planned implementation. In particular, the following countries made presentations:

Ecuador: With the goal of creating an open and transparent society, Ecuador's National Assembly plans to increase participation in the legislative process by citizens, organizations and regional communities.

Canada: Mr. Boissonnault noted that Canada's Parliament plans to draft a framework for an open parliament plan prior to the federal general election in October 2019. He indicated that, as Vice President of ParlAmericas' OPN, he will contact the chairs of all parliamentary standing committees and suggest that post-legislative review of a federal statute be undertaken.

Argentina: Argentina's National Congress plans to launch an open law web portal in 2019.

Suriname: Suriname's National Assembly plans to: launch videos that provide accessible information about the legislative process and laws; make the work of parliamentary committees more open to the public; create a new open parliament plan; revise and update the legislative regime for public procurement; and take steps to increase the independence of the country's Auditor General.

Saint Lucia: Saint Lucia's Parliament plans to review and update its standing orders, and to encourage the public to attend sittings of Parliament.

Chile: Chile's National Congress plans to launch a "wikilaws" feature on its website that will allow the public to suggest amendments to proposed legislation.

6. Launch of the Parliamentary Protocol for Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Change Adaptation

Ms. Simons gave a presentation about a document entitled [Parliamentary Protocol for Disaster Risk Reduction for Latin America and the Caribbean](#). Established by ParlAmericas in collaboration with the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, the protocol is a guide for the hemisphere's national parliaments. It is aimed at aligning legislation concerning disaster risk reduction with the Sendai Framework, and at promoting an integrated approach to building resilience to disasters that combines disaster risk reduction, climate change adaptation and sustainable development.

7. Working Session 3: Applying Openness Practices to Advance Sustainable Development

The third session of the 4th Gathering of the Open Parliament Network had a focus on legislatures advancing sustainable development through applying openness practices. Mr. Arthur Holder, who is Speaker of Barbados' House of Assembly, moderated a discussion involving Ms. Juana Herrera, who is President of the National Forum of Women in Political Parties, Mr. Leví Sucre, who is Coordinator at the Atlantic Block of the

Bribri Cabécar Indigenous Network, and Ms. Zakiya Uzoma-Wadada, who is Chair of the Caribbean Natural Resources Institute.

Ms. Herrera commented that the Panama-based National Forum of Women in Political Parties was founded in 1993 to help women succeed in politics. She stated that, in the past, the organization has conducted research projects on such topics as women's participation in the public sphere, intimidation of – and violence against – women who are political candidates, and the funding and other resources received by female political candidates. Ms. Herrera said that, because women comprise 50% of the population in most countries, they should comprise 50% of those countries' legislators. She noted that women face “invisible” barriers when running for elected office, and – when compared to men – receive less funding and other resources. Ms. Herrera urged legislatures to consider establishing quotas or other mechanisms to achieve gender parity in legislatures.

Mr. Sucre described the challenges he faces in Costa Rica as a member of an Indigenous community. He mentioned that his community is interested in obtaining “unfiltered” government-held data and information in a timely manner, and suggested that an ability to access this information would better inform discussions between Indigenous peoples and decision makers, which should occur at forums established by Costa Rica's legislators. He also noted that resources provided for climate change resiliency are not reaching Indigenous communities.

Ms. Uzoma-Wadada commented that the Caribbean Natural Resources Institute, which was established in 1986, undertakes collaborative projects focused on the equitable and sustainable use of natural resources. According to her, the projects have included work: to improve decisions about the use and management of resources; with national governments to establish sustainable development priorities and monitor their implementation, including those contained in the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals; and to support and coordinate the advocacy projects of non-governmental organizations.

Following the presentations, participants formed groups to work on a hypothetical case involving issues relating to gender equality, Indigenous peoples and climate change. Each group presented its considerations and solutions in a plenary session. For example, Ms. Romanado said that the group of which she was a part had discussed a case dealing with climate change awareness, acceptance and education. According to her, the group advocated collaboration with civil society organizations, governmental officials, academics, groups most likely to be adversely affected by climate change and other stakeholders. Moreover, Ms. Romanado indicated that the group also supported the joint development of a master strategy addressing the issues of climate resiliency and mitigation, disaster prevention and recovery, rebuilding initiatives, local considerations and budgetary requirements.

8. Closing Ceremony

During the closing ceremonies, Mr. Boissonnault invited participants to Ottawa, Canada in May 2019 for a meeting of the Open Government Partnership. As well, Ms. Corina Ortega, who is a member of Ecuador's National Assembly, expressed thanks for everyone's participation at the 4th Gathering of the OPN, and read the official declaration.

After discussion, participants adopted the declaration with the reservations noted by the Caribbean delegation.

Ms. Ovelar's closing remarks noted that the hemisphere's countries face common problems and challenges. She said that corruption currently affects millions of people, and suggested that curbing or eradicating this problem will require legislators to take decisive action. In her view, strong democratic institutions are the foundation of a healthy democracy. Ms. Ovelar concluded by stating that, once society takes steps to combat corruption, there should be "no turning back."

In his closing remarks, Mr. Nault thanked the expert panellists, Ms. Cabezas, ParlAmericas' Board members, participants, and the staff of Ecuador's National Assembly and ParlAmericas' International Secretariat. Mr. Nault underlined that legislators face rising public scrutiny and high citizen expectations, which are not a democratic crisis but instead an opportunity. In his role as President of ParlAmericas, he pledged to continue to do his part to ensure that the hemisphere's legislators have an opportunity to participate in high-quality learning activities and forums for mutually beneficial discussions. Mr. Nault concluded by stating that parliamentarians should accept their role as leaders, and should abide by their convictions.

Finally, during her closing remarks, Ms. Cabezas noted that 98 delegates from 27 countries had taken part in the 4th Gathering of the OPN, and thanked all participants, as well as the staff of Ecuador's National Assembly and ParlAmericas' International Secretariat. She encouraged participants to ensure that the words that they expressed during the meeting become actions, and characterized combatting corruption as a long and difficult journey to which all legislators must remain committed.

Respectfully submitted,

Hon. Robert Nault, P.C., MP
Chair
Canadian Section of ParlAmericas

Travel Costs

ASSOCIATION	Canadian Section of ParlAmericas	
ACTIVITY	47 th Board of Directors Meeting and the 4 th Gathering of ParlAmericas' Open Parliament Network	
DESTINATION	Quito, Ecuador	
DATES	March 11-14, 2019	
DELEGATION		
SENATE	Hon. Rosa Galvez, Senator Hon. Percy E. Downe, Senator	
HOUSE OF COMMONS	Hon. Robert D. Nault, P.C., M.P. Randy Boissonnault, M.P. Hon. Kellie Leitch, P.C., M.P. Sherry Romanado, M.P. David Christopherson, M.P.	
STAFF	David-Andrés Novoa, Association Secretary André Barnes, Advisor	
TRANSPORTATION		\$ 37,652.00
ACCOMMODATION		\$ 7,039.00
HOSPITALITY		\$ 3,960.00
PER DIEMS		\$ 1,272.00
OFFICIAL GIFTS		\$ 105.00
MISCELLANEOUS		\$ 5.00
TOTAL		\$ 50,033.00