



Report of Canadian Section of ParlAmericas

4th Gathering of ParlAmericas' Parliamentary Network on Climate Change

Paramaribo, Suriname

8–9 August 2019

Report

DELEGATION MEMBERS AND STAFF

From 8–9 August 2019, the Honourable David M. Wells, Senator and Mr. T.J. Harvey, M.P. represented the Canadian Section of ParlAmericas at the 4th Gathering of ParlAmericas' Parliamentary Network on Climate Change (PNCC), which was hosted by the National Assembly of Suriname in Paramaribo, Suriname. Delegates were accompanied by Ms. Alison Clegg, Advisor to the Canadian Section.

ACTIVITIES DURING THE 4th GATHERING OF PARLAMERICAS' PARLIAMENTARY NETWORK ON CLIMATE CHANGE

Welcoming Remarks

Jennifer Simons – who is Speaker of Suriname's National Assembly, a member of ParlAmericas' Board of Directors and Vice President–South America of ParlAmericas' PNCC – welcomed delegates to Suriname and recognized, in particular, Javier Ortega, the outgoing president of ParlAmericas' PNCC. She noted that Suriname's National Assembly is working to maintain that country's status as the most forested nation in the world, and pointed out that it will not be actions by small countries, but rather emissions reductions by G20 members, that will prevent the worst impacts of climate change. In highlighting the International Panel on Climate Change's (IPCC's) *Special Report on Global Warming of 1.5°C*, Ms. Simons drew attention to the urgency of addressing climate change in light of the special report's assertion that 12 more years of emissions at current levels will push global temperatures beyond safe levels. As well, she emphasized the importance of women, Indigenous peoples and youth in decision-making about climate change.

Ana Belén Marín, who is a member of Ecuador's National Assembly and Alternate Vice President–South America of ParlAmericas' PNCC, reminded delegates about the Protocol on Disaster Risk Reduction that ParlAmericas has produced, and urged them to consider how it can be included in the work of their legislatures.

Mr. Ortega concluded the welcoming remarks by underscoring that the real power to make change resides not only with a country's government, but also with legislators and those who have elected them.

Keynote Address

Ana F. González Guerrero – Co-Founder and Managing Director of Youth Climate Lab, an Ottawa-based non-governmental organization – spoke to delegates about youth perspectives on climate change in the region. In stating that youth are very concerned about the slow pace of progress to halt climate change, she described a "familiar pattern" of countries setting emissions reduction goals and not achieving them. Ms. Guerrero emphasized the essential role of youth in turning fear, despair and indignation about climate change into actions designed to address the climate crisis, and provided examples of young people who are working together to take action to address climate change. She also underlined the value to legislators of not just talking or listening to youth,

but of making them genuine partners in finding and implementing solutions to the climate crisis.

Session 1 – Outcomes of COP 24 (Poland) and Preparations for COP25 (Chile)

The first session, which was focused on past and upcoming United Nations climate conferences, was moderated by Naomi Samidin, who is a member of Suriname's National Assembly. The session had two presenters: Carlos Fuller, who is the International and Regional Liaison Officer of the Caribbean Community Climate Change Centre and a negotiator for the Alliance of Small Island States; and Iván Flores García, who is Chile's Speaker of the Chamber of Deputies.

Mr. Fuller presented selected outcomes of the 24th Conference of the Parties (COP 24) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), and described some of the outcomes of the negotiations. For example, he explained that decisions had not been reached regarding Article 6, which concerns international exchange of "mitigation outcomes," and spoke about the failure to agree on common timeframes for countries to achieve their nationally determined contributions (NDCs). Among other topics, Mr. Fuller outlined the way in which the Global Stocktake, which is established by Article 14 of the *Paris Agreement*, will work: parties to the UNFCCC will present regular progress updates on their responses to climate change. He also commented that Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, the United States and Russia had opposed any text that "welcomed" the IPCC's *Special Report on Global Warming of 1.5°C*, insisting instead on only "noting" it. As well, Mr. Fuller highlighted the urgency of implementing an effective response to climate change and the importance – particularly for countries in the Caribbean – of staying below the 1.5°C target.

Finally, Mr. Flores García spoke about plans for the 25th Conference of the Parties (COP 25) in Chile¹, and outlined that country's approach to climate change. He noted both the objectives of COP 25, which will focus on advancing negotiations about implementation of the Paris Agreement in order to promote climate action, and the opportunities for parliamentary engagement before and during the event. Mr. Flores also described Chile's new Climate Change Framework Law, which will commit the country to greenhouse gas emissions neutrality by 2050.]

After the presentations, delegates discussed the challenges experienced by small countries that want to access climate finance, but find that it can take years before they are able to receive the funds. Several delegates said that, even though the emissions of any small island developing state are a small fraction of total global emissions, it is important for such states to take concrete actions to reduce their emissions and to lead by example. Some delegates suggested that they lack sufficient information to allow them to respond to the impacts of climate change, and they learned that meteorologists from around the Caribbean work together to compile data and prepare tools that decision-makers can use for planning, such as regular "outlooks" that predict droughts and other impacts of climate change.

¹ At that time, the 25th Conference of the Parties was expected to be held in Chile in December 2019. Due to civil unrest in Santiago de Chile, the location of the conference was changed to Madrid, Spain.

Special Presentations on the Role of Parliaments in Advancing Innovative National Actions

Paola Vega, who is a member of Costa Rica's Legislative Assembly and President of that country's Special Permanent Commission for the Environment, presented Costa Rica's National Decarbonization Plan. She indicated that the government is committed to a green, emissions-free, resilient and inclusive economy. While recognizing that Costa Rica's electricity system is already mostly decarbonized, she explained that the country faces challenges in reducing emissions in such areas as transportation, manufacturing, waste and agriculture. In noting that Costa Rica's plan is focused on such concepts as a fair transition toward a low-carbon economy, green tax reform and transparency, Ms. Vega provided examples of legislation that is contributing to the country's decarbonization. As well, she emphasized that, although Costa Rica's emissions are not large from a global perspective, it hopes that its climate efforts are an inspiration to larger countries.

Ana María Choquehuanca, who is a member of Peru's Congress and coordinator of the multi-party "Green Caucus," recounted the process that was undertaken to create that caucus and commented on the value of multi-party green initiatives in legislatures. She acknowledged the challenges involved in reaching consensus among many differing interests, but argued that environmental issues can bring people together and that the right to a healthy environment is a basic human right. Ms. Choquehuanca described the worsening impacts of climate change that are being felt in Peru, particularly in rural areas and by Indigenous peoples, noting that climate change is not a partisan issue.

Session 2: Taking Climate Action and Building Resilience through the Power of Legislation

The second session, which was focused on legislation relating to climate action and resilience, was moderated by Keisha Garcia, who was a co-leader during the preparation of the Latin American and Caribbean section of the sixth report of the United Nations Environment Programme's (UNEP's) Global Environmental Outlook (GEO) – or GEO-6 – that was released in early 2019. The session had five presenters, each of whom provided a case study for consideration: César Pachón, who is a member of Colombia's House of Representatives; David M. Wells, who is a member of Canada's Senate; Ana Belén Marín, who is a member of Ecuador's National Assembly and Alternate Vice President–South America of ParlAmericas' PNCC; Sieuwnath Naipal, who is a professor of geography and hydrology at Suriname's Anton de Kom University; and Osbert Richard Frederick, who is Deputy Speaker of Antigua and Barbuda's Senate.

The session began with a description and discussion of observed and projected climate and environmental issues in the hemisphere. Ms. Garcia described relevant contents of GEO-6, and highlighted the impacts of climate change on Latin America and the Caribbean. She stressed the potential value of engagement between scientists and policy makers, noting that the latter could make decisions based on information in the GEO reports and are regularly invited to contribute to them.

Mr. Pachón discussed sustainable agriculture. Among other topics, he emphasized farmers' rights and the importance of supporting rural youth who might like to be part of the agricultural sector but are drawn to urban areas for various reasons. As well, Mr.

Pachón drew attention to the challenges faced by rural agricultural workers in Colombia, and emphasized the importance of preserving biodiversity and protecting ecosystems, such as the Páramo, Colombia's alpine tundra.

Senator Wells shared his experiences regarding the regulation of Canada's offshore oil sector, focusing on the role of legislation in minimizing environmental risks. He highlighted the way in which the Canada–Newfoundland and Labrador Offshore Petroleum Board had successfully shifted from prescriptive regulations to objectives-based regulations to achieve desired outcomes more effectively. As well, Senator Wells emphasized that, because firms respond to regulations, governments can influence firms' actions by ensuring the existence of appropriate regulations.

Ms. Belén Marín presented Ecuador's experience with preparing its *Organic Law on Risk and Disaster Management*. She commented on the Ecuadorian government's use of the principles outlined in the Parliamentary Protocol for Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Change Adaptation, on which ParlAmericas and the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction collaborated. Ms. Belén Marín asserted that preventing environmental damage is much less costly than trying to address that damage later, and emphasized the value of scientific information in helping decision makers to identify appropriate actions.

Mr. Naipal reiterated that climate change is happening, and identified some of the impacts of the resulting rise in sea levels and changes in precipitation patterns, including erosion, frequent flooding in low-lying areas and the intrusion of saltwater in agricultural areas. He explained that mangroves are essential for adaptation to climate change because they moderate the impacts of both waves and wind, thus protecting coastal ecosystems. Dr. Naipal also noted the importance not just of preventing further damage to mangroves, but of actively restoring them.

Finally, Mr. Frederick talked about the impacts of climate change on Antigua and Barbuda, and about the work that the country's Parliament is doing to help mitigate climate change and protect the environment. In mentioning that Barbuda's infrastructure was so badly damaged by Hurricane Irma that all residents were evacuated to Antigua, he pointed out that people want to do something to address climate change and environmental problems. As well, Mr. Frederick described the country's ban on single-use plastics and the legislative actions that have been undertaken to enforce it. He also noted that small island countries, like Antigua and Barbuda, are among the least of the polluters but among the first of the casualties of climate change.

Special presentations on Suriname's measures to address climate change

Riad Nurmohamed, who is a member of Suriname's National Assembly, outlined the climate change–related actions taken by the National Assembly of Suriname over the last five years. He highlighted local and international capacity-building workshops for legislators, field visits and adoption of climate change–related policies, all of which contribute to greater understanding and involvement by the National Assembly's members in climate change issues.

Grace Watamaleo, who is also a member of Suriname's National Assembly, used photographs to illustrate some of the impacts of climate change in Suriname. As well, she

described the National Assembly's recent activities relating to disaster prevention and management. She noted that the government and opposition parties have pledged to work closely together on climate change issues, and underscored that a new energy law that supports renewable energy has been passed and that other legislation is in progress. As well, Ms. Watamaleo emphasized the importance of the work that is underway in Suriname's National Assembly concerning planning for disaster risk reduction.

Session 3: Overcoming the Obstacles and Seizing Opportunities for Implementing Carbon Market and Non-Market Mechanisms

The third session was focused on market and non-market mechanisms for reducing greenhouse gas emissions. The session was moderated by Carlos Ruiz-Garvia, who is Coordinator of the UNFCCC's Regional Collaboration Center for Latin America and Caribbean. The session's two presenters, each of whom presented case studies, were Nelly Lenz Roso, who is a member of Bolivia's Chamber of Deputies, and Arthur E. Holder, who is Barbados' Speaker of the House of Assembly.

Mr. Ruiz-Garvia explained that the Regional Collaboration Centers support implementation of the UNFCCC through helping to strengthen the global response to the threat of climate change. He highlighted the UNFCCC's timeline for reaching net zero emissions by 2050, and explained that markets should be able to support – not undermine – countries' ambition and actions to achieve the 2050 goal. Mr. Ruiz-Garvia also discussed the challenges and potential benefits associated with implementation of Article 6 of the *Paris Agreement*, which concerns market mechanisms for reducing global emissions. According to him, Article 6 is the only part of the agreement that directly addresses private-sector engagement in future trading of emissions reductions. He mentioned that negotiators hope to agree on implementation details concerning Article 6 at COP 25 in December 2019.

Ms. Lenz Roso presented the first of two case studies on non-market mechanisms for emissions reductions. She outlined the Bolivian government's approach to the governance of climate change issues, which includes its 2010 *Law No. 71 on the Rights of Mother Earth*. As well, she described Bolivia's development of a non-market mechanism for forest protection as an alternative to the UNFCCC's market mechanism, and highlighted the country's success in developing a platform for Indigenous and farming communities to express their views nationally and internationally.

Finally, in presenting the second case study, Mr. Holder provided an overview of Barbados' fiscal incentives designed to support energy efficiency and renewable energy, which were developed because the government recognized that the public sector alone cannot address climate change. As well, he identified some of the impacts of climate change in Barbados, and described several pieces of legislation that encourage financial institutions, companies, shareholders and homeowners to use or invest in renewable energy.

Following the presentation of the case studies, delegates discussed such topics as whether market mechanisms will be managed in a way that will ensure that reductions in atmospheric carbon occur, the costs of administering legislative regimes, and mechanisms through which legislators can best learn from each other and bring specific practical suggestions to their governments.

Session 4: Raising Ambition and Accessing Climate Financing

The fourth session was focused on climate financing, and was moderated by Mayuli Martínez Simón, who is a member of Mexico's Senate. The session's three presenters were: Robby Ramlakhan, who is Ambassador and Advisor to the Cabinet of the President–Coordination Environment in Suriname; César Falconi, who represents the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) in Suriname; and Victor Viñas Nicolás, who represents Latin America and the Caribbean on the UNFCCC's Adaptation Fund and Green Climate Fund.

Ms. Martínez Simón began the session by describing the negative effects of the excessive growth of sargassum, which is a type of seaweed that – in recent years – has been washing up in significant quantities on Caribbean beaches, and has been damaging the fishing and tourism sectors.

Mr. Ramlakhan outlined Suriname's approach to climate change–related challenges, mentioned the national climate change policy and listed some of the government's recent and current actions relating to climate change. As well, he spoke about the situation for high forest, low deforestation (HFLD) countries, like Suriname, which receive less than the amount of international funding that is needed to protect their forests. Mr. Ramlakhan noted that HFLD countries have 28% of the world's forested lands but receive 14% of the world's climate finance. In his view, while the HFLD countries' forests provide such ecological services as carbon absorption and water management that have global value, these countries receive little climate finance when compared to such countries as Brazil, where much more deforestation occurs.

Mr. Falconi explained that multilateral investment banks, such as the IDB, are aiming to increase the proportion of climate finance in their portfolios. He stated that the IDB aims for 30% of its funded projects in Latin America and the Caribbean to be carried out with climate finance and suggested that countries should promote, implement and monitor climate change efforts in order to be ready to access climate finance. Mr. Falconi also mentioned that, because legislators approve their countries' national budgets, they can take responsibility for ensuring that each budget has a sufficient focus on climate.

Finally, Mr. Viñas Nicolás described the UNFCCC's "financial mechanism" that was developed to facilitate the provision of climate finance. He also provided a historical overview of the treatment of loss and damage under the UNFCCC. Mr. Viñas acknowledged the difficulties that small countries face in accessing climate finance, but emphasized that it is possible and worthwhile to overcome those difficulties. As well, he suggested that it is helpful for legislatures to align their climate finance needs with achieving their NDC, and indicated that certain types of climate-related projects – such as those that focus on both mitigation and adaptation – are more likely to be funded.

Following the presentations, delegates discussed such concerns as the technical difficulties associated with accessing climate finance, the challenges of ensuring that climate-related projects led by women and youth can receive funding, and options for engaging the private sector in climate action. Delegates also spoke about the role of NDCs as planning tools, and stressed the large gap between the need for climate finance and the amount that is available in the region. They also highlighted the issue of climate-

related loss and damage, which they believe is an issue that receives inadequate attention.

Call for Action – Discussion and Adoption of Parliamentary Declaration

The Parliamentary Declaration in relation to the 4th Gathering of ParlAmericas' PNCC was read and discussed. Following some modifications, delegates voted to approve the declaration, which was intended to be presented as a parliamentary contribution during the September 2019 UN Climate Action Summit and COP 25 in December 2019.

Respectfully submitted,

Mr. Marc Serré, M.P.

Chair

Canadian Section of ParlAmericas

Travel Costs

ASSOCIATION	Canadian Section of ParlAmericas
ACTIVITY	4 th Gathering of ParlAmericas' Parliamentary Network on Climate Change
DESTINATION	Paramaribo, Suriname
DATES	August 8-9, 2019
DELEGATION	
SENATE	Hon. David M. Wells
HOUSE OF COMMONS	T.J. Harvey
STAFF	Alison Clegg
TRANSPORTATION	\$ 14,870.97
ACCOMMODATION	\$ 3,191.70
HOSPITALITY	\$ 0.00
PER DIEMS	\$ 1,640.03
OFFICIAL GIFTS	\$ 0.00
MISCELLANEOUS	\$ 479.38
TOTAL	\$ 20,182.08