



Report of the Canadian Section of ParlAmericas

**14th Gathering of ParlAmericas' Parliamentary Network for
Gender Equality and 19th Plenary Assembly**

Bogotá, Colombia

From November 30 to December 2, 2022

Report

DELEGATION MEMBERS AND STAFF

From 30 November to 2 December 2022, Senator Rosa Galvez – Vice-Chair of the Canadian Section of ParlAmericas, 2nd Vice-President of ParlAmericas and President of ParlAmericas' Parliamentary Network on Climate Change (PNCC) – led a delegation to the 14th Gathering of ParlAmericas' Parliamentary Network for Gender Equality (PNGE) and 19th Plenary Assembly. Held in Bogotá, Colombia, the theme was “Legislative Perspective for Inclusive Economic Growth: Investing in the Care Economy.” The other delegates were the following members of the House of Commons: Alistair MacGregor, Soraya Martinez Ferrada, Jamie Schmale and Nathalie Sinclair-Desgagné.

The delegation was supported by Catherine Cuerrier, Association Secretary, and Clare Annett, Advisor to the Canadian Section.

ACTIVITIES DURING THE 14TH GATHERING OF PARLAMERICAS' PARLIAMENTARY NETWORK FOR GENDER EQUALITY

A. Welcoming Remarks

In providing welcoming remarks, Representative David Racero, President of Colombia's House of Representatives, emphasized that gender equality is a priority for Colombia, and highlighted efforts to create a ministry for gender equality in that country. According to House of Representatives President Racero, gender equality and – by extension – the care economy should be the centre of policymaking.

Representative Bridgid Annisette-George, Speaker of Trinidad and Tobago's House of Representatives and Vice-President of ParlAmericas, also provided welcoming remarks, summarizing such recent efforts and priorities as advancing ParlAmericas' mandate of fostering inter-American state collaboration, renewing the social contract, strengthening democracy and continuing the recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. In Speaker Annisette-George's opinion, the care economy is integral to recovery from the pandemic, and care work – which is both valuable and productive – should be considered alongside poverty reduction when policy decisions are made. Moreover, according to Speaker Annisette-George, the care economy is a shared responsibility between the state and individuals, and the goal should be ensuring that people of all genders have equal access to care and to opportunities to advance in society.

Colombian Representative Jezmi Barraza, the PNGE's Vice-President for South America, highlighted the importance of the care economy in achieving gender equality, adding that all ParlAmericas countries should prioritize recognition of – and support for – the care economy, as well as caregivers who are women.

Colombian Senator Germán Blanco, Member of the ParlAmericas Board of Directors, spoke about the changing priorities in Colombia following the election of President Gustavo Petro in August 2022, as well as efforts to move from a “partial peace” to a “total peace,” the latter of which requires human rights to be upheld and equality for all to be

achieved. Senator Blanco explained that violence against women of all forms and in all locations – including physical, emotional, sexual, economic, political and online – remains a barrier to gender equality.

Dr. Gabriela Serrano, Director of Programs at the Instituto Republicano Internacional Colombia (hereafter, the Institute), and Dr. Marcos Rodriguez Fazzone, Senior Specialist with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations' office in Colombia, made presentations. Dr. Serrano drew attention to the Institute's work, which aims to facilitate collaboration in addressing pressing issues and priorities in Colombia. Dr. Rodriguez Fazzone described efforts to address hunger in the Americas and the Caribbean, particularly by including parliamentarians of all political parties in discussions about food safety and rural safety, including for rural women. In underscoring that the needs of residents of rural communities, including women, differ from those of individuals living in urban settings, Dr. Rodriguez Fazzone contended that equal rights for women residing in rural communities must consider women's care work, particularly to recognize that rural women provide unpaid care work and domestic work that sometimes total 14 hours per day.

In providing concluding remarks, Mexican Senator Veronica Camino Farjat, the PNGE's President, emphasized the importance of diverse perspectives – for example, those of young women – in political leadership and in parliaments. Senator Camino Farjat pointed out the role of parliaments and legislators in recognizing and valuing care work, especially in the context of gender equality, and noted that women in the Americas and the Caribbean continue to be over-represented in informal and unpaid jobs – including care work – despite their increased prevalence in formal employment. Finally, Senator Camino Farjat asserted that countries must both enact legislation and change social norms and attitudes about women in order to achieve gender equality and end all forms of discrimination, including violence against women.

B. Reports by Parliamentary Delegations

Senator Camino Farjat moderated the presentation of reports by parliamentary delegations. The reports were presented by:

- from Canada, Senator Galvez;
- from Argentina, Senator Nora del Valle Giménez and Deputy Cecilia Britto;
- from Bolivia, Senator Simona Quispe Apaza;
- from Chile, Deputy Maite Orsini;
- from Colombia, Representative Jhoany Carlos Palacios;
- from Costa Rica, Deputy Carolina Delgado, who is a member of ParlAmericas' Board of Directors;

- from Ecuador, National Assembly Member Wilma Andrade, who is Vice-President for South America for ParlAmericas' Open Parliament Network (OPN);
- from Grenada, Senator Dessima Williams, who is President of the Senate;
- from Honduras, Deputy Silvia Ayala;
- from Jamaica, Senator Nathalie Campbell-Rodrigues, who is the PNGE's Vice-President for the Caribbean;
- from Mexico, Deputy María de Jesús Rosete Sánchez;
- from Nicaragua, Deputy Arling Alonso, who is a member of ParlAmericas' Board of Directors;
- from Panama, National Assembly Member Kayra Harding, who is the PNGE's Vice-President for Central America;
- from Paraguay, Senator Blanca Ovelar, who is President of ParlAmericas;
- from Saint Lucia, Senator Lisa Jawahir; and
- from Suriname, National Assembly Member Debie Radjendrekoeamar, who is the PNCC's 2nd Vice-President for South America.

The reports described efforts and initiatives in delegations' home countries designed to support the care economy, value care work and advance gender equality. In particular, the reports address such issues as the following:

- improving access to, and the collection of, data about gender equality, care work and its contribution to gross domestic product, and about women's representation in leadership and politics; and
- changes to services and their availability during the pandemic, such as grocery deliveries.

In providing the Canadian perspective, Senator Galvez underlined that – as partly evidenced by the pandemic – care work and caregivers are integral to every society. According to Senator Galvez, Canada is implementing initiatives to support the care economy, and is working to improve the collection and analysis of disaggregated data relating to care work and other unpaid work. As well, Senator Galvez noted that Canada continues to engage men and boys in its gender equality efforts, including through addressing gender-based violence, as well as increasing the participation by men and boys in unpaid care work and domestic work.

Senator Galvez concluded by highlighting Canada's efforts to support those who provide care to children, noting the efforts to create and implement a Canada-wide early learning and child care system that aims to provide access to affordable child care for all families

in Canada. In Senator Galvez's opinion, ensuring access to affordable child care for families across Canada is integral to achieving gender equality, and can support individuals – particularly women – in redistributing their time away from unpaid care work and towards paid employment and/or education and skills training.

Senator Ovelar provided closing remarks, asserting that collaboration within and among legislatures is integral to achieving gender equality. In Senator Ovelar's view, gender equality efforts must include an understanding of the care economy to ensure consistent approaches to related legislation and policy efforts.

C. Facilitated Dialogue on “The Economic Dimensions of Care: Myths and Realities”

Colombian Representative Juan Carlos Losada moderated a dialogue with three speakers: Cecilia López, Colombia's Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development; Ana Güzmes, Director of the Gender Affairs Division at the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean; and Helen Royer, Director of Human Development at the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Secretariat.

Minister López described the need for legislative reforms in Colombia to address gender inequality, with a specific focus on the differences between urban and rural populations. In explaining that the pandemic has reinforced the essential nature of the care economy, Minister López added that the care sector should be regulated because no other sector brings more value to society. Minister López clarified that care work should not be fully privatized because privatization would lead to higher prices for care, leading to a decreased demand and harm for people who need care. As well, Minister López stressed that the state alone should not be responsible for funding care work, and concluded by stating that care work must be meaningfully valued and compensated by both the state and the marketplace.

According to Ana Güzmes, women perform approximately 74% of the unpaid care work in the Americas, and such work – which is second to gender-based violence as significant contributors to gender inequality – can impede women's participation in paid employment and in electoral politics. In Ana Güzmes' opinion, the perceptions of care work and the care economy must be shifted to recognize that care is essential to human life and to society, with almost everyone needing care at some point in their lives.

As well, Ana Güzmes characterized access to care as a right, and stated that care work must be recognized as valid and valuable employment that is compensated fairly. In noting that care work and the care economy are integral to social protection, Ana Güzmes described three pillars for supporting the care economy: recognize care work; reduce the amount of care work that is unpaid and disproportionately placed on women; redistribute care work – both elder care and child care – more equitably across those providing care.

Helen Royer highlighted common misconceptions regarding care work and the care economy, including that unpaid care work is not work and is instead “women's place in the household,” and presented some best practices concerning the proper valuation of care work. As well, Helen Royer emphasized that individual behaviours related to the division of unpaid care work and domestic work must change, as must the gender norms

that inform society's structures, systems and institutions. In focusing on the pandemic, Helen Royer stated that the ways in which societies value care work – including the care of children, the elderly, individuals with disabilities or others requiring care – was placed in “sharp focus,” and called for gender-responsive economic strategies that consider people working in both the formal and the informal economies.

Finally, Helen Royer presented several goals, priorities and best practices relating to the valuation of care work in the CARICOM region, advocating for: enhanced data collection concerning care work; policies supporting a redistribution of the gendered responsibility for care work; increased social awareness about the value of care work; improved labour conditions for those working in paid caregiving roles; and greater availability of child care.

In responding to questions, the speakers noted the importance of government support for the care economy, and related social and other benefits, as well as publicly funded child care in urban and rural settings.

Senator Ovelar provided closing remarks, contending that proper valuation of care work is integral to achieving gender equality.

D. Data: The Key to Legislative Action that Values Care Work

In moderating a session on the topic of the role of data in legislating the value of care work, Chilean Deputy Christian Tapia underscored the need for men to acknowledge – and to work to address – the gendered imbalance in domestic work and care work. The session's two presenters – Julieth Solano, Technical Director of the Directorate of Statistical Regulation, Planning and Standardization at Colombia's National Administrative Department of Statistics, and Isiuwa Iyehen, Deputy Representative of the UN Women Multi Country Office, Caribbean – described different approaches to data collection and underlined the importance of data in creating legislation that values care work.

Regarding Colombia's laws pertaining to care work, Julieth Solano spoke about time use surveys as a means of collecting data that can inform how care work “fits into national accounts,” and that can contribute to the measurement of women's economic and social contributions. In Julieth Solano's view, these data are a fundamental tool in understanding the economic value of care work, and in developing and implementing related public policies. Julieth Solano highlighted that, since the first survey in 2012–2013, questions relating to gender stereotypes and social roles have been added in order to understand how stereotypes and beliefs about social roles affect women's participation in society, with COVID-19–related questions included in the 2020–2021 survey. Finally, Julieth Solano discussed survey results, noting that data revealed a deepening of gender gaps in unpaid domestic work and care work in Colombia, partly due to the pandemic.

Isiuwa Iyehen focused on unpaid care and domestic work–related data collection in the CARICOM, which is limited. Drawing attention to both Sustainable Development Goal 5.4 and UN Women's support provided to CARICOM countries for the development of methodologies and instruments to collect data on such work, Isiuwa Iyehen underscored that various CARICOM countries' existing surveys and data collection instruments – such as the census, labour force surveys and poverty surveys – could be adapted to include questions relating to unpaid care work and domestic work. According to Isiuwa Iyehen,

despite being interrupted by the pandemic, Grenada has conducted – and will continue with – a UN Women–supported pilot project to integrate three questions on unpaid care work and domestic work into its labour force survey. Finally, Isiuwa Iyahan identified some lessons learned from Grenada’s pilot project, including the following:

- Self-reported results are the most reliable.
- When survey questions use the previous day as the reference period, respondents can more accurately recall their unpaid care work and domestic work activities.
- Training provided to those responsible for the survey and “pre-testing” of survey questions yield better data collection overall.

They agreed that the care economy and related policies must consider such factors as women’s experiences, identities and geographic location.

E. Legislating for the Care Economy: Parliamentary Work

Jamaican Senator Sapphire Longmore, Member of ParlAmericas’ Board of Directors, moderated a session on the topic of legislating in relation to the care economy. Senator Longmore asserted that “care” encompasses a wide range of issues, including the prevention of – and a reduction in – future harms resulting from a lack of available care, and argued that supporting the care economy and care work should be prioritized by governments.

Soraya Martinez Ferrada presented the Canadian context relating to legislating for the care economy, providing the examples of the country’s gender-balanced Cabinet since 2015, as well as efforts to increase women’s representation at all levels of government and in decision-making positions, as indicators of the priority given to gender equality in Canada. As well, in the context of the care economy, Soraya Martinez Ferrada emphasized the importance of ensuring access to housing, which is the foundation on which equality in care is built.

Concerning the pandemic, Soraya Martinez Ferrada noted that the gender gap in unpaid care work and domestic work has increased, with women having greater responsibility for such care, including because of the closures of schools and child care facilities and the unavailability of informal care arrangements, such as friends or family caregivers. Moreover, Soraya Martinez Ferrada drew attention to two parliamentary studies by the House of Commons Standing Committee on the Status of Women, both of which made recommendations concerning the need for improved access to child care in Canada.

Finally, Soraya Martinez Ferrada highlighted various Canadian initiatives designed to improve the accessibility of child care and to support parents in Canada, including the following:

- The *Canada Labour Code* provides a right to parental leave for both parents, and for births and adoptions.

- The Canada Child Benefit is a monthly payment made to families with children under 18 years of age.
- In collaboration with the provinces and territories, the Government of Canada has been pursuing the implementation of an early childhood education and child care system that is accessible and available at a cost of \$10 per day per eligible child.

Costa Rican Deputy Katherine Moreira Brown described some of Costa Rica's initiatives aimed at supporting care work, noting – for example – that the country's constitution ensures a high quality of life and respect for human rights by both providing welfare support and making commitments concerning the provision of health care and education. According to Katherine Moreira Brown, Costa Rica's care policy addresses the following five areas:

- developing and providing government-managed supports and services that meet the needs of different populations;
- collecting data and information, including in relation to health care and income supports;
- ensuring that people who need support, regardless of whether they reside in an urban or a rural region, have access to required services;
- closing the gender gap in employment by supporting the care needs of children and people with disabilities to ensure that women and men have equal opportunities to participate in formal employment; and
- providing a standardized system of care that ensures equal access to health care and social protections.

The question-and-answer period covered topics relating to data and gender-based social norms, and their impacts on perceptions about responsibility for care work and the quality of care provided across countries. Soraya Martinez Ferrada referenced Canada's data collection and data sharing initiatives with the provinces and territories, as well as with community organizations working with vulnerable populations. In addition, Soraya Martinez Ferrada said that social behaviours and perspectives that are based on gender norms and stereotypes have an impact on gender equality, which can negatively affect women's participation in decision making, policy development and leadership. Finally, Soraya Martinez Ferrada emphasized the importance of engaging men and boys in conversations about gender equality, care work and "healthy masculinities."

F. Inter-American Model Law on Care – Inter-American Commission of Women

Alejandra Mora Mora, Executive Secretary of the Inter-American Commission of Women, presented the Inter-American Model Law on Care and its implementation guide, and identified the model's five "Rs": recognition, reduction, redistribution, remuneration and representation.

In explaining that the importance of care in everyday life should be recognized, and that the definition of “care” should include people’s dependence on one another, Alejandra Mora Mora contended that efforts to reduce and redistribute women’s care responsibilities should include lowering gender-based discrimination, as well as engaging men and the private sector in providing care. As well, Alejandra Mora Mora asserted that women’s unpaid care work and domestic work should be properly compensated and valued.

Finally, according to Alejandra Mora Mora, in the Inter-American Model Law on Care, women’s human rights should be protected and respected, and women’s perspectives should be integrated into the decision-making process for all care-related policies and processes.

G. Special Presentation by Bibiana Aído, Representative, UN Women Colombia

Bibiana Aído, Representative of UN Women Colombia, made a presentation on the topic of gender and care work, emphasizing that every country should ensure that parliamentarians who are women have opportunities to discuss and collaborate on approaches concerning all policy areas, but particularly regarding issues of gender equality. In Bibiana Aído’s opinion, although efforts to support women’s autonomy and empowerment are continuing, women’s disproportionate responsibility for unpaid care work and domestic work, as well as violence against women, are among the most significant barriers to equality. Moreover, according to Bibiana Aído, such events as meetings of the PNGE can help to create new foundations for more inclusive generations, better care for the planet and increased economic empowerment for women.

H. Presentation on Care Blocks

Dr. Natalia Moreno, District Director of Care Systems for the City of Bogotá, presented the city’s initiative called “Care Blocks.” Dr. Moreno stated that women’s disproportionate responsibility for unpaid care work and domestic work are leading women to experience a “poverty of time,” with the result that they lack adequate time for such activities as paid employment, education or training. According to Dr. Moreno, the Care Blocks initiative aims to use the city’s existing infrastructure to provide consolidated care programs in each district.

Dr. Moreno underlined that, at present, 14 of the City of Bogotá’s 45 districts have Care Blocks that bring together various services needed by women, such as financial services, support in accessing welfare, state-funded laundry facilities, certification and education programs, child care, health care, legal advice, and access to physical activities and recreation. According to Dr. Moreno, Care Blocks are designed in a way that is intended to break down the physical barriers that women face when they are responsible for unpaid care work and domestic work, thereby supporting women’s economic empowerment and gender equality. Recognizing that a fixed physical space cannot meet the needs of all women in the city, Dr. Moreno drew attention to the existence of mobile Care Blocks that bring some services, including Internet connectivity, to the city’s underserved areas.

I. Signing of the Memorandum of Understanding between ParlAmericas and the Parliamentary Front Against Hunger

ParlAmericas and the Parliamentary Front Against Hunger signed a Memorandum of Understanding concerning the fight against hunger. In highlighting that hunger is among the most pressing issues that must be addressed across nations, Senator Ovelar stressed the importance of nutrition and the effects of cycles of hunger on children's development and well-being. Finally, Senator Ovelar noted that the differences between urban and rural food insecurity should not be overlooked, and said that the needs of both rural and urban populations must be met.

J. Declaration on the Care Economy

Senate President Williams, Deputy Silvia Ayala and Senator Camino Farjat read the draft Declaration on the Care Economy. After discussion, the draft declaration was amended to ensure greater inclusivity and the representation of all ParlAmericas countries. The amended [declaration](#) was then adopted.

ACTIVITIES DURING PARLAMERICAS' 19TH PLENARY ASSEMBLY

A. Keynote Address on “Strengthening Multilateralism in the Americas and the Caribbean”

Dr. Epsy Campbell, former Vice-President of the Republic of Costa Rica, delivered the Plenary Assembly's keynote address, drawing attention to such societal concerns as the under-representation of women in leadership positions, economic insecurity, violence and war, racism and the effects of climate change. Dr. Campbell underscored the need for collaboration – across parliamentarians, other individuals and countries – to address these concerns. Moreover, Dr. Campbell pointed out the efforts of young people on social media and in physical locations to protest inequality and hate, as well as to advocate for dignity and human rights for all.

According to Dr. Campbell, multilateralism is the “way we move away from individualism.” In contending that “we must exist in humanity, in peace, in care” and adopt a perspective that prioritizes “common welfare” in order to address current social, environmental and global concerns, Dr. Campbell encouraged efforts that would result in gender parity in leadership positions, and suggested that various alliances and institutions – such as ParlAmericas – must share knowledge and promote a multicultural and diverse approach in decision making.

Dr. Campbell concluded by calling for compassion and collective action towards shared goals, such as climate action, peace, human development and opportunities for women.

B. Dialogue – Parliamentary Diplomacy: Making Multilateralism Work for People

Senator Ovelar opened a dialogue session on the topic of parliamentary diplomacy by emphasizing the importance of ensuring that ParlAmericas countries work together, find points of agreement and share priorities. In noting that peace remains a significant concern in many countries, Senator Ovelar contended that pluralism, parliamentary diplomacy and cooperation across countries can have positive effects on democracy, accountability, and progress regarding common issues and priorities, including climate change, the COVID-19 virus, violence, poverty and other inequalities. Furthermore,

Senator Ovelar asserted that all countries in Latin America and the Caribbean have full access to equal participation in ParlAmericas' various events, platforms and networks.

National Assembly Member Wilma Andrade moderated the dialogue session. In responding to a question about transparency and citizens' trust in democracy and parliament, Senator Galvez provided a Canadian perspective. Senator Galvez said that many crises are happening at the same time globally – environmental, financial and social – and suggested that the root causes of these crises are inequality and destruction of the planet. In Senator Galvez's opinion, parliaments should address these root causes to avoid temporary results and create permanent solutions instead.

Soraya Martinez Ferrada added that Canada's priorities include: gender equality; the fight against misinformation; protecting democracy against propaganda, fake news and other forms of misinformation; ensuring a collaborative international approach to sharing the responsibility to protect individuals fleeing their home countries; and reconciliation with Indigenous peoples, particularly Indigenous women, who experience multiple layers of discrimination.

C. Plenary Session

Senator Camino Farjat presented an overview of the PNGE's current work, reiterating that parliamentarians who are women must both recognize one another as empowered women and work together to advance women's rights.

Mexican Senator Bertha Caraveo, the OPN's 1st Vice-President for North America, provided an update on the OPN, stating that ParlAmericas' Road Map Towards Legislative Openness 2.0 aims to enhance public trust and strengthen democracy.

Finally, Senator Galvez drew attention to the PNCC's recent work, highlighting such activities as the PNCC's 6th Gathering, which brought together 160 parliamentarians, the most recent meeting of the United Nations Climate Change Conference, and efforts relating to sectoral decarbonization and gender-sensitive environmental models, among other areas.

D. Declaration on Parliamentary Engagement in the Inter-American System through ParlAmericas

Mexican Senator Antares Vázquez, who is a member of ParlAmericas' Board of Directors, read the draft Declaration on Parliamentary Engagement in the Inter-American System through ParlAmericas. The draft [declaration](#) was adopted without amendment.

E. Closing Remarks

In providing closing remarks, Representative Barraza summarized the discussions that had been held about the care economy, gender equality and the importance of multilateralism, and stressed that discussions about these topics should not end with the conclusion of ParlAmericas' 14th PNGE and 19th Plenary Assembly meetings.

Respectfully submitted,

Marc G. Serré, MP
Chair, Canadian Section of ParlAmericas

Travel Costs

ASSOCIATION	Canadian Section of ParlAmericas
ACTIVITY	14th Gathering of ParlAmericas' Parliamentary Network for Gender Equality and 19th Plenary Assembly
DESTINATION	Bogotá, Colombia
DATES	November 30 to December 2, 2022
DELEGATION	
SENATE	Hon. Rosa Galvez
HOUSE OF COMMONS	Mr. Alistair MacGregor Ms. Soraya Martinez Ferrada Mr. Jamie Schmale Ms. Nathalie Sinclair-Desgagné
STAFF	Ms. Catherine Cuerrier Ms. Clare Annett
TRANSPORTATION	\$ 19,500.80
ACCOMMODATION	\$ 2,240.19
HOSPITALITY	\$ 21.84
PER DIEMS	\$ 2,685.90
OFFICIAL GIFTS	\$ 0.00
MISCELLANEOUS	\$ 450.00
TOTAL	\$ 24,898.73