



**Report of the Canadian Parliamentary Delegation respecting
its participation at the 3rd Gathering of the Open Parliament
Network, the 45th Board of Directors Meeting of
ParlAmericas, and the 8th Summit of the Americas**

Canadian Section of ParlAmericas

Lima, Peru

April 11 to 13, 2018

REPORT

DELEGATION MEMBERS AND STAFF

From April 11 to 13, 2018, the Honourable Robert Nault, P.C., M.P., Vice-President of ParlAmericas and Chair of the Canadian Section of ParlAmericas, led an all-party delegation to Lima, Peru for the 3rd Gathering of the Open Parliament Network at the 8th Summit of the Americas. The former was focused on “Open States for Democratic Governance Against Corruption,” while the latter had “Democratic Governance against Corruption” as its theme.

The other members of the delegation were the Honourable Rosa Galvez, Senator, the Honourable Michael L. MacDonald, Senator, Mr. François Choquette, M.P. and Mr. Marc Serré, M.P. The delegation was accompanied by David-Andrés Novoa, the Canadian Section’s Executive Secretary, and June Dewetering, Advisor to the Canadian Section.

PARLAMERICAS AND THE OPEN PARLIAMENT NETWORK

Founded 17 years ago in Ottawa, Canada, ParlAmericas brings together parliamentarians from countries throughout the Americas. Its work primarily focuses on three permanent thematic networks:

- the Open Parliament Network;
- the Parliamentary Network for Gender Equality; and

ParlAmericas’ Open Parliament Network – which was established in 2015 and is formerly known as the Inter-American Parliamentary Network on Transparency, Access to Public Information, and Probity – is designed to promote legislative openness through:

- increased transparency and access to public information;
- stronger accountability by democratic institutions;
- the participation of citizens in legislative decision-making; and
- the promotion of a culture of ethical behaviour and probity in national legislatures throughout the Americas and the Caribbean.

With the goal of combatting corruption, enhancing public trust and strengthening democratic institutions, the Open Parliament Network undertakes workshops, facilitates exchanges among legislators, and provides tools to assist legislators in their work. The Network is governed by a five-member executive committee that includes a president and four sub-regional vice-presidents representing North America, Central America, South America and the Caribbean.

ACTIVITIES DURING THE 3RD GATHERING OF THE OPEN PARLIAMENT NETWORK

With a view to contributing to the discussions at the 8th Summit of the Americas, the focus of the 3rd Gathering of the Open Parliament Network was parliamentary practices and measures relating to the fight against corruption and the building of citizens' trust in legislatures. During the meeting, members of the Canadian delegation participated in the following sessions:

- Inauguration
- An Instrument for Consensus Building of the Congress of the Republic of Peru: The Legislative Agenda
- Keynote Address
- Session 1 – Taking Stock: Is corruption worsening or have transparency measures increased its visibility?
- Session 2 – Ethics and probity for a parliament with integrity
- Session 3 – The role of women parliamentarians in the fight against corruption
- Session 4 – Guidelines to develop open parliament action plans
- Session 5 – New modernization and legislative openness tools and mechanisms in the Americas and the Caribbean
- Closing.

In offering regrets on behalf of ParlAmericas' President, Mexican Senator Marcela Guerra, Mr. Nault delivered remarks during the meeting's inauguration; he also provided closing remarks. Senator Galvez spoke about the Senate of Canada's current efforts to enhance legislative openness, and Mr. Randy Boissonnault, M.P. was elected as the Open Parliament Network's Vice-President for North America.

At the meeting of ParlAmericas' Board of Directors, Mr. Nault similarly offered Ms. Guerra's regrets, and inaugurated the meeting. Among the topics addressed during the Board meeting was ParlAmericas' communications plan for 2018–2019. Its website is continuing to be updated, podcasts for each activity are being made available, and video content is being included in communications strategies. As well, ParlAmericas is supporting legislators as they promote their work through social media. Moreover, the issue of a proposed 30% increase in membership fees, which is the cumulative amount of inflation since 2003 when the current fees were established, was discussed. Members of the Board were urged to consult their parliaments about the proposed fee increase before the Board's next meeting in Victoria, British Columbia in September 2018, when the issue will again be discussed.

INAUGURATION

During the opening of the 3rd Gathering of the Open Parliament Network, comments were made by Luis Galarreta, President of Peru's Congress, the Honourable Robert Nault, P.C., M.P., Vice-President of ParlAmericas and a member of Canada's House of Commons, and Karla Prendas, Central America's Vice-President on the Open Parliament Network and a member of Costa Rica's Legislative Assembly.

Mr. Galarreta stressed the need for democratic institutions to fight corruption, including through transparency and high ethical standards, and to work together in strengthening democracies and helping those in countries where assistance is most needed. He also spoke about the priority that should be given to developing practical tools and solutions that will combat corruption and will support both governance within parliamentary institutions and citizen engagement. In his view, while the path to success will be long and many challenges will be encountered, the battle against corruption must be won.

Mr. Nault provided context for the meeting through commenting on the Summits of the Americas, especially the 8th Summit and its focus on democratic governance as a tool for fighting corruption; he also highlighted the connection between the 3rd Summit and the formation of ParlAmericas. He noted that, through such actions as ratifying agreements and approving budgetary allocations, legislators often play a critical role in ensuring the successful implementation of the commitments made by the western hemisphere's heads of state and government at these Summits.

In characterizing corruption as perhaps the greatest challenge to the legitimacy of institutions and as a factor undermining progress, Mr. Nault supported the identification of concrete anti-corruption strategies and measures through involving legislators from all parties and levels of government, as well as citizens and civil society organizations. He also suggested that, because corruption affects women disproportionately, there is a need to mainstream gender in these strategies and measures, and to recognize the importance of women's leadership in decision making in the public and private sectors.

Ms. Prendas described corruption as a critical issue that has economic and social impacts. According to her, to combat corruption, access to information, transparency, citizen participation, accountability, controls on lobbying activities and ethical conduct are among the required tools and areas for action. She also mentioned that citizens must have confidence in their legislators, and that political institutions must be seen as credible.

AN INSTRUMENT FOR CONSENSUS BUILDING OF THE CONGRESS OF THE REPUBLIC OF PERU: THE LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

Luis Galarreta, President of Peru's Congress, presented a tool – established in 2001 but since updated – that the Congress uses to build consensus.

According to Mr. Galarreta, the tool's essential goal is to identify areas of consensus or broad support between Peru's government and its Congress. He told delegates that, once the executive and legislative branches have identified these priority macro-level topics, efforts are directed to monitoring – and following up on – the issues that are on the consensus-based legislative agenda.

KEYNOTE ADDRESS

Martin Kreutner, from the International Anti-Corruption Academy, provided a keynote address on the topic of corruption. In his view, the choice of "Democratic Governance against Corruption" as the 8th Summit of the Americas' theme sends a strong signal about the priority that must be given to fighting corruption.

In characterizing corruption as being as old as humankind, Mr. Kreutner highlighted a number of international instruments aimed at combatting corruption, identified a variety of anti-corruption laws and other measures that exist throughout the western hemisphere, and noted prosecutions of high-level politicians and business leaders.

Mr. Kreutner urged the western hemisphere's legislators to fill the leadership void and act on their responsibility to combat corruption in order to contribute to a better world for current and future generations. That said, he questioned whether the hemisphere will become a leader, or whether it will be overcome by the volume and range of corruption that exists.

As well, Mr. Kreutner identified five priorities regarding anti-corruption efforts: inclusivity, which requires businesses and civil society organizations to be involved; transparency, including in relation to both legal systems and political institutions; independence, including in the context of the legislative branch from the executive branch; integrity, which requires legislators to act in an ethical manner and be leaders regarding good governance; and curiosity, with perspectives being constantly challenged, and open and free discourse among stakeholders occurring.

According to Mr. Kreutner, corruption is disproportionately burdensome for citizens who are poor, and there is a growing economic and societal divide within and across countries. He suggested that public services should not be provided solely to those who have the greatest ability to pay for them.

Finally, Mr. Kreutner stressed that the spread of "fake news" is occurring at the expense of facts, and that a strong and sustained fight against corruption is important for peace and security. In addition to corruption, he indicated the need for collective efforts to address such global threats as climate change and the rise of violent extremism.

SESSION 1 – TAKING STOCK: IS CORRUPTION WORSENING OR HAVE TRANSPARENCY MEASURES INCREASED ITS VISIBILITY?

The first session during the 3rd Gathering of the Open Parliament Network was focused on "Taking Stock: Is Corruption Worsening or Have Transparency Measures Increased Its Visibility?"

In speaking to delegates, the Organization of American States' Jean Michel Arrighi emphasized the role of legislatures in creating and implementing laws and regulations designed to combat corruption, including those that would transform measures like the Inter-American Convention Against Corruption into national actions. However, in his view, the existence of laws and regulations is insufficient; efforts to enforce compliance with them must also be a priority.

According to Mr. Arrighi, the two key groups that must participate in the development of corruption-related regulatory frameworks are legislators and judges. In his opinion, both groups are fundamental in the fight against corruption.

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SESSION 2 – ETHICS AND PROBITY FOR A PARLIAMENT WITH INTEGRITY

During the Open Parliament Network's second session, which was on the topic of "Ethics and Probity for a Parliament with Integrity," Rodrigo Lara – President of Colombia's Chamber of Deputies – moderated a discussion among: Javier Macaya Danús, from Chile's Chamber of Deputies; Ranard Henfield, from the Bahamas' Senate; and Yeni Vilcatoma, from Peru's Congress.

According to Mr. Macaya, high ethical standards are needed, and legislators must respect the spirit – and the letter – of the law. He stressed that legislators must always act with integrity, be objective and support the public interest. In his view, honesty should be an inviolate principle among legislators.

Mr. Henfield told delegates that corruption is increasing in Latin America and the Caribbean, and that transparency and improved governance must exist. In his opinion, it is not possible to fight corruption by "fighting corruption"; instead, a culture of integrity should be inculcated throughout society. In speaking about a legislative measure in the Bahamas designed to combat corruption, he highlighted a binding code of conduct, protection for whistleblowers, and an autonomous integrity commissioner who has both a guaranteed tenure and an adequate budget.

Finally, Ms. Vilcatoma urged delegates to remember that they are in their positions because they are interested in public service, and encouraged them to fight – not facilitate – corruption. In her view, instances of alleged corruption should be investigated and efficient collaboration to combat corruption should occur.

Legislators from Ecuador, Grenada, Guatemala and Haiti posed questions, including about integrity and ethics commissioners, and about the consequences of a "blurred separation" between the legislative and executive branches.

SESSION 3 – THE ROLE OF WOMEN PARLIAMENTARIANS IN THE FIGHT AGAINST CORRUPTION

The third session at the meeting of the Open Parliament Network concerned the role of women parliamentarians in the fight against corruption. In that regard, Alejandra Aramayo, from Peru's Congress, moderated a discussion among the following legislators: Luz Salgado, Luciana León and María Elena Foronda, who are also from Peru's Congress; Ana Belén Marin, from Ecuador's National Assembly; and Akilah Byron-Nisbett, Deputy Speaker of Saint Kitts and Nevis' National Assembly.

Ms. Salgado noted that the impacts of corruption vary by gender. She also spoke about quotas for women candidates for political office, and advocated training to increase women's interest in politics. As well, she mentioned the impact of corruption on politicians' credibility and citizens' belief in them.

In describing women's participation in politics as important and diversity as beneficial, Ms. Belén Marin suggested that opportunities for women must be the product of efforts by both men and women. Her comments also focused on tax havens, tax evasion and offshore companies, and she suggested that a fight against tax havens is a fight against both transnational crime and corruption.

According to Ms. Forondo, those who are convicted of corruption should not be permitted to hold public office. She said that many problems lead to the marginalization of women and Indigenous peoples, and characterized problems as disguised opportunities.

In her comments, Ms. León highlighted the role of women parliamentarians in combatting corruption, and noted that legislation, transparency and access to public information are tools in this fight. She also suggested that the credibility of a country's public institutions has economic impacts, and stated that corruption may lead to fewer funds being available for health care, education and other priorities.

Finally, Ms. Byron-Nisbett identified the need to make women feel comfortable with the notion of dedicating themselves to public service. She also mentioned legislation, policies and programs designed to combat corruption.

Following the moderated discussion, legislators from Argentina, Bolivia and Cuba made comments about quotas for women candidates for elections, ethics and morals, among other topics.

SESSION 4 – GUIDELINES TO DEVELOP OPEN PARLIAMENT ACTION PLANS

During the fourth session of the Open Parliament Network's meeting, which was focused on the development of "open parliament action plans," Vlado Mirosevic – from Chile's Chamber of Deputies – moderated a discussion between Blanca Ovelar, from Paraguay's Senate, and Karla Prendas, Central America's Vice-President on the Open Parliament Network and a member of Costa Rica's Legislative Assembly.

In the view of Ms. Ovelar, a democracy is answerable to citizens, and the efforts of civil society organizations to fight corruption should be consistent with those of their countries' legislatures. She also stated that society is demanding access to public information, that transparency and accountability are needed, that legislators should act ethically and with probity, and that legislatures should have action plans, indicators and public reports on progress.

Ms. Prendas described corruption as one of the greatest challenges of our time, and noted that it affects economic and social development. According to her, citizens want their legislatures to be more open, transparent and accountable, and citizens' participation and access to public information leads to both these outcomes a high level of ethics and probity. In addition to citizen participation, which she believes makes decision making more efficient and effective, Ms. Prendas suggested that legislatures need action plans and toolkits.

Following the moderated discussion, delegates formed small groups to discuss the following eight elements of open parliament actions plans: building political will; creating or identifying a parliamentary body; identifying a process or criteria to determine civil society engagement; developing the co-creation process; implementing a communications strategy; monitoring progress and evaluating success; ensuring sustainability; and identifying other mechanisms for open parliament initiatives.

SESSION 5 – NEW MODERNIZATION AND LEGISLATIVE OPENNESS TOOLS AND MECHANISMS IN THE AMERICAS AND THE CARIBBEAN

The final session during the meeting of the Open Parliaments Network concerned modernization and legislative openness tools and mechanisms used in legislatures in the Americas and the Caribbean. During the session, Gladys López Bejerano, a member of ParlAmericas' Board of Directors and of Cuba's National Assembly, moderated a discussion among: Rosa Galvez, from Canada's Senate; Paulina Nuñez, from Chile's Chamber of Deputies; Belkys Pérez Cruz, from Cuba's National Assembly; Welsy Vásquez, from Honduras' Congress; Mauricio Mulder, from Peru's Congress; Andrés García Zuccardi, from Colombia's Congress; and Djoties Jaggernath, Mohamed Amzad Abdoel and Jennifer Simons, from Suriname's National Assembly. Ms. Simons is also a member of ParlAmericas' Board of Directors and Speaker of Suriname's National Assembly.

Ms. Galvez highlighted the Senate of Canada's website, Twitter account, YouTube presence, Facebook page, and digital magazine and newsletter, among other communications tools, while Ms. Pérez Cruz focused on accountability tools and the availability of public information. Ms. Nuñez stressed the importance of enhancing civil society's involvement in the legislative process, including through the use of technology, while Ms. Vásquez mentioned a liaison between legislators and civil society organizations.

Mr. Mulder noted that there are many definitions of the term "civil society" and underlined the importance of having access to the concerns of civil society organizations, while Mr. Garcia spoke about apps and websites. Finally, Ms. Simons, Mr. Jaggernath and Mr. Abdoel urged legislators to share as much information as possible with the public about their legislature's activities, including through posting agendas online, summarizing meetings with stakeholders, and making reports of committee meetings publicly available.

At the end of the moderated discussion, delegates were provided with an opportunity to present commitments regarding implementation of an action designed to contribute to legislative openness. In that regard, commitments were made by Chile, Colombia, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Peru and Venezuela.

CLOSING

During the closing session of the 3rd Gathering of the Open Parliament Network, Blanca Ovelar, from Paraguay's Senate, the Honourable Robert Nault, P.C., M.P., Vice-President of ParlAmericas and a member of Canada's House of Commons, and Luis Galarreta, President of Peru's Congress, addressed delegates.

Ms. Ovelar characterized politics as the most noble undertaking of humankind, but said that voters may see legislators as both privileged and corrupt. She also stressed the importance of ethics and probity, and noted – among other issues – the growing inequality in the world, the increased concentration of wealth, and rising poverty and malnutrition.

Mr. Nault noted that countries in the western hemisphere face challenges, including corruption, and need to collaborate with all relevant parties – including civil society organizations – as strategies to address both the causes and the consequences of corruption are identified. As well, in highlighting women’s empowerment as part of anti-corruption efforts and more generally, he spoke about the priority that should be given to promoting women’s participation in – and access to – decision-making processes and positions, and to applying a gender lens to all legislation.

With a focus on legislative openness, Mr. Nault underscored the importance of open parliament initiatives for advancing transparency, accountability, citizen participation and ethics in legislatures.

Moreover, Mr. Nault reminded delegates that ParlAmericas’ 15th Plenary Assembly will be held in Victoria, British Columbia from 9–12 September 2018. He encouraged delegates to attend the meeting, which will have “Promoting Inclusive Societies for Sustainable Development” as its theme.

Finally, Mr. Galarreta urged legislators not to ignore corruption, which has existed since the beginning of mankind and is unlikely to disappear. He supported the involvement of civil society organizations in efforts to combat corruption.

ACTIVITIES FOLLOWING THE 3RD GATHERING OF THE OPEN PARLIAMENT NETWORK

Following the 3rd Gathering of the Open Parliament Network, some members of the Canadian delegation attended selected sessions held during the 3rd CEO Summit of the Americas, which was focused on “Made in the Americas.” In particular, they heard presentations on the topics of “Public-Private Partnerships to promote transparency,” “Human Capital 2.0: The Future of Work in the Americas” and “Women at the Forefront of Economic Prosperity in the 21st Century,” and comments by Bolivian President Evo Morales, Bahamian Prime Minister Hubert Minnis, Jamaican Prime Minister Andrew Holness and Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau.

The Canadian delegation then participated in a roundtable discussion on the topic of “Strengthening Democratic Governance through Women’s Empowerment and Leadership,” which was sponsored by the Organization of American States’ Inter-American Commission of Women. The discussion was moderated by Jennifer Loten, Canada’s Ambassador to the Organization of American States, and involved comments by: Ana María Mendieta Trefogli, Peru’s Minister for Women and Vulnerable Populations; Luis Almagro, the Organization of American States’ Secretary General; Isabel Saint Malo de Alvarado, Panama’s Vice-President; Jorge Faurie, Argentina’s Minister of Foreign Affairs and Worship; Manisha Singh, from the U.S. Department of State; Margarette Macauley, from the Organization of American States; Karina Banfi, President of ParlAmericas’ Parliamentary Network for Gender Equality; Alicia Bárcena, from the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean; and Luiza Carvalho, from UN Women.

Finally, the Canadian delegation participated in the official inauguration of the 8th Summit of the Americas, which was attended by Canada’s Prime Minister, the Right Honourable Justin Trudeau.

Respectfully submitted,

Hon. Robert Nault, P.C., M.P.

Chair

Canadian Section of ParlAmericas

Travel Costs

ASSOCIATION	Canadian Section of ParlAmericas
ACTIVITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- 3rd Gathering of the Open Parliament Network;- 45th Board of Directors Meeting of ParlAmericas;- 8th Summit of the Americas
DESTINATION	Lima, Peru
DATES	April 11 to 13, 2018
DELEGATION	
SENATE	Hon. Rosa Galvez, Senator Hon. Michael MacDonald, Senator Hon. Robert Nault, P.C., M.P.
HOUSE OF COMMONS	Mr. François Choquette, M.P. Mr. Marc Serré, M.P.
STAFF	Mr. David-Andrés Novoa, Association Secretary Ms. June Dewetering, Advisor to the Canadian Section
TRANSPORTATION	\$22,024.80
ACCOMMODATION	\$7,794.40
HOSPITALITY	\$1,058.46
PER DIEMS	\$3,862.32
OFFICIAL GIFTS	\$0.00
MISCELLANEOUS	\$26.75
TOTAL	\$34,766.73