



**Report of the Canadian Parliamentary Delegation
respecting its participation to ParlAmericas' Annual
Gathering on Climate Change "Parliamentary Action to Stop
Climate Change"**

Canadian Section of ParlAmericas

Panama City, Panama

August 3 to 5, 2016

Report

INTRODUCTION

The Canadian Section of ParlAmericas attended the ParlAmericas' Annual Gathering on Climate Change, entitled "Parliamentary Action to Stop Climate Change", held in Panama City, Panama from August 3 to 5, 2016. The Canadian parliamentary delegation was composed of Senator Tobias C. Enverga Jr. and Ms. Julie Dzerowicz, Member of Parliament. Mr. Cédric Taquet assisted the delegation as Secretary. This meeting was ParlAmericas' first Annual Gathering on Climate Change and underscores the importance of strengthening dialogue and cooperation between members of ParlAmericas to take action on climate change.

Meeting with the Canadian Embassy in Panama

Prior to attending the official inauguration of the Annual Gathering on Climate Change, the members of the Canadian parliamentary delegation, in the absence of Ambassador Karine Asselin, met with Mr. Michael Redenbach, Senior Trade Commissioner, and Ms. Teresita Chavez, Policy Analyst. The parliamentarians were briefed on the state of Canada-Panama relations, recent social and economic improvements in Panama and trade relations between the two countries.

THE MEETING

Opening Ceremony

The Meeting was opened with welcoming remarks by Mr. Elias Castillo, Member of Parliament (Panama) and Secretary General of the Latin American and Caribbean Parliament, who thanked the parliamentarians for attending this important conference on climate change. Mr. Javier Ortega, Representative of the National Assembly (Panama) and Member of the Board of Directors of ParlAmericas, also welcomed the delegates. Senator Marcela Guerra (Mexico), President of ParlAmericas, welcomed the delegates to ParlAmericas' first Annual Gathering on Climate Change and introduced Ambassador Patricia Espinosa Cantellano, Executive Secretary of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, who made her remarks via a video message, and, the Honourable Mirei Endara, Panama's Minister of Environment.

Minister Endara mentioned that climate change is a reality in Panama that is affecting its ecosystem, even though Panama is only responsible for an infinitesimal percentage of the global emissions. The Minister called for all countries to sign the COP21 agreement and for the largest world economies to demonstrate how they will concretely reduce CO2 emissions. She concluded by saying that coastal countries like Panama will be affected first by climate change and the rise of global temperature.

Panel Sessions

After the inauguration of ParlAmericas' first Annual Gathering on Climate Change, the delegates proceeded to the panel sessions, which covered three main themes: (1) Best legislative practices: Measures for climate change mitigation and adaptation; (2) Citizen participation: Joint development of strategies and educational resources on the environment; and (3) Innovative perspectives: Scientific actions and policy reforms to curb climate change.

Session 1 —Best legislative practices: Measures for climate change mitigation and adaptation

Moderated by Mr. Harley James Mitchell Moran, Environmental law expert, the panelists discussed the new laws that have been adopted in Saint Lucia and Argentina, and the mission and goals of the United Nations Environment Programme.

The Honourable Gale Rigobert, Minister of Education, Gender Relations and Sustainable Development (Saint Lucia), began her presentation by stating that, although small island economies like Saint Lucia are not as guilty as other larger countries, they will be the most affected by the inherent dangers of climate change. This concept of climate change inequality is a matter that Saint Lucia raises at each international climate change forum, emphasized Minister Rigobert.

Mr. Juan Carlos Villalonga, Member of Parliament (Argentina) and Vice-President of the Commission on Natural Resources and Conservation of the Human Environment of the Chamber of Deputies, exposed the challenges of climate change for developing countries and for Argentina and described the legislative action taken by the Parliament of Argentina in relation to the objectives of the COP21.

Ms. Mara Angélica Murillo Correa, Regional Deputy Director of the United Nations Environment Programme, explained the goals and the mission of the world leading environmental authority, namely to set the global environment agenda, promote a coherent implementation of the environment dimension in the United Nations organization and encourage partnership among countries to fight climate change.

Session 2 – Citizen participation: Joint development of strategies and educational resources on the environment

Facilitated by Ms. Sandra Lombardo, Programme Specialist (UN Women), the panel discussed cooperation in climate change mitigation and adaptation, the fact that citizen participation is vital to ensuring collective behaviour changes to tackle climate change, and ways to include vulnerable groups, who are distinctly affected by climate change, in decision-making.

The panelists included Senator of Bolivia and Chair of the Senate Commission on Environment, Ms. Placida Espinoza Mamani, Member of Parliament (Colombia) and Member of the Sixth Commission (public services, public works and transportation), Mr. Carlos Eduardo Guevara Villabon, and Mr. Carlos Eloy Viteri Gualinga, Member of Parliament (Ecuador) and President of the Commission on Biodiversity and Natural Resources.

Ms. Mamani described the contrast between the day-to-day reality in rural areas and large Colombian cities, such as Bogota, in implementing measures to curb climate change. She discussed the initiative in Colombia's large cities to implement and facilitate a "bicycle culture" and to actively encouraged citizens to use bicycles for their daily activities.

Mr. Gualinga explained recent legislative initiatives in Ecuador, the importance of the parliamentary consultation process to include all Ecuadorians in the fight against climate change and the goal set by his country to increasingly rely on renewables in the future to sustain the growing demand for energy in Ecuador.

Session 3 – Innovative perspectives: Scientific actions and policy reforms to curb climate change

The third and final working session was opened by Carlos Vargas Lombardo, Engineer and Expert in Natural Resources and Environmental Management, who introduced the panelists: Arnaldo Euclides Giuzzio Benitez, Senator (Paraguay) and Member of the Commission on Energy, Natural Resources, Population, Environment, Production and Sustainable Development; Dr. Monica Araya, Founder and Executive Director, Nivela and Costa Rica Limpia; and Amin Asadollahi, Climate Change Mitigation Lead – North America, International Institute for Sustainable Development.

Dr. Monica Araya began her presentation by pointing out that almost all the electricity in Costa Rica comes from renewables. Hydroelectricity plants and dams represent 80% of the electricity produced in Costa Rica. Dr. Araya then focussed on Costa Rica's next environmental challenge to get rid of oil in transportation. 32% of all trips in the country are made by cars using fossil fuel energy. She mentioned that if Costa Rica was able to invest in renewables for its electricity consumption, it would be able to make the transition from fuel and oil to sustainable and renewable energy in transportation. She concluded by mentioning that fossil fuel is no longer an option for Costa Rica and that greater government incentives are needed to make renewable energy more efficient and competitive in the transportation sector. She also said that it was up to the present generation to address this environmental challenge.

The next panelist, Mr. Amin Asadollahi, exposed the urgency of the matter. He mentioned that the current situation is caused by previous generations that polluted and by not holding those responsible for that pollution accountable. The current and next generation must now pay the price. He then explained the Canadian situation and provincial initiatives such as a carbon pricing policy in British Columbia and Alberta, and the carbon cap and trade system between Quebec, Ontario and California. He said that, since British Columbia introduced a carbon pricing policy, the province's economy has been growing faster than economies in the rest of Canada, even though the carbon price is going up and emissions are going down. He added that putting a price on carbon makes economic sense according to practical experiences. The carbon cap and trade system between Quebec, Ontario and California created a whole new economy and commercial opportunities because Californian companies come to Quebec and Ontario to buy carbon credits. He explained that is important for economies that are highly dependent on oil to stay ahead of the regulatory curve so as to reduce economic

consequences when the price of oil crashes. He concluded by saying that the narrative in Canada changed quickly and that current and future environmental challenges will bring jobs and economic growth.

Senator Euclides informed participants on the magnitude of deforestation in Paraguay and the importance of maintaining biological corridor between agricultural farms and protected reserves to avoid the compartmentalisation of wildlife. He concluded by mentioning the importance of the participation of indigenous populations in the legislative process in Paraguay to ensure that the environmental challenges bring jobs and economic growth to his country.

Closing Session and Final Remarks

Marcela Guerra, Senator (Mexico) and President of ParlAmericas, made closing remarks and thanked the meeting organizers, guest speakers and participants. She encouraged parliamentarians of ParlAmericas to continue supporting this important forum for discussion and dialogue on climate change.

Following the third and final session, a Declaration of Commitment was read and concurred in by the delegates to conclude ParlAmericas' Annual Gathering on Climate Change. The text of the declaration can be found in Appendix A.

Meeting with local and international environmental groups in Panama

The Canadian delegation met with Rita Spadafora, Executive Director of the National Association for the Conservation of Nature in Panama, also named ANCON. Ms. Spadafora, who specializes in the monitoring and evaluation of sustainable development programs, spoke to the Canadian delegation about the magnitude of deforestation in Panama and its impact on the Panama Canal, the country's most important source of revenues and economic growth. The National Association for the Conservation of Nature is Panama's oldest and largest environmental NGO; it focusses on promoting environmental education, supporting sustainable projects in rural communities and protecting Panama's forests and biodiversity.

The Canadian delegation also met with Dr. Matthew Larsen, Director, Dr. W. Owen McMillan, Dean of Academic Programs, and Javier Mateo-Vega, Ph.D. candidate at McGill University and Research Fellow, at the Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute in Panama City. Dr. Larson presented an overview of the Institute mandate to provide a global platform for tropical research, train the next generation of tropical scientist and help local communities protect tropical forest and biodiversity in Panama. Mr. Mateo-Vega told the delegation about the cooperation between McGill University and the Institute; doctoral students from all parts of the Americas come to Panama to study the tropical forest. Dr. Owen McMillan concluded by exposing the extensive deforestation taking place in Panama and its impacts on rural communities and the economy.

CONCLUSION

This international conference provided an excellent opportunity for the Canadian Section of ParlAmericas to actively participate in discussions on climate change and parliamentary actions to reduce global emissions. The delegation would like to thank the International Secretariat of ParlAmericas and the Latin American and Caribbean Parliament Headquarters for their work in ensuring the success of the event. The delegation also thanks the Canadian Embassy in Panama City for its support and its interest in this important inter-parliamentary conference.

Respectfully submitted,

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

APPENDIX A

Declaration of Commitment

Parliamentary Action to Stop Climate Change

3-5 August 2016 | Panama City, Panama

We, parliamentarians of 18 countries, gathered at this annual gathering on climate change entitled *Parliamentary Action to Stop Climate Change* in Panama City, Panama, on 4 and 5 August 2016, discussed our shared objective to strengthen the legislative agenda in order to overcome the challenges and implications of climate change, as well as its multiple effects and manifestations throughout the planet.

In the course of this gathering, parliamentarians from the Americas and the Caribbean, aware of the pressing issues generated by climate change, attended work sessions and exchanges with subject-matter experts in order to develop legislative strategies for a common agenda that will allow us to deal with environmental phenomena and their social and economic impact on people and communities. In furtherance of this objective, we have created the Parliamentary Network on Climate Change, a joint initiative developed by ParlAmericas and Parlatino to coordinate parliamentary actions to fight climate change in the Hemisphere. Now therefore,

Acknowledging

That climate change is a pressing issue common to humankind which calls for coordinated actions and adequate responses from all sectors and institutions;

That climate change is a cross-cutting phenomenon with manifold manifestations which affects not only the environment but also the production and supply of food, natural resources, social and economic conditions, the displacement and mobilization of different populations, and the ability to respond to natural disasters;

That the impacts of climate change pose an open threat to humankind and to the planet at large, and therefore demand increased cooperation among all countries, as well as the adoption of coordinated mitigation actions;

That parliamentarians of the Americas and the Caribbean have a central role in the development of legislative strategies to mitigate and adapt to climate change;

That climate change policies call for domestic legislation that is consistent with international standards and agreements on the matter, particularly those set forth in the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the agreements executed at the Conference of the Parties to the UNFCCC;

That mitigating the effects of climate change involves education, training, awareness-raising, and citizen's involvement, as well as public access to information and cooperation at all levels; 2

That climate change has different effects on the population and that, in our capacities as legislators, we are responsible for considering the impact it bears on indigenous communities, women, and youth, among other groups, as well as for involving the population as a whole in the development of the above-mentioned policies;

That technological breakthroughs and clean energy are essential in achieving the objective of limiting global warming to 2 degrees Celsius, with efforts being aimed at limiting this increase to 1.5 degrees Celsius, as approved in the Paris Agreement in December 2015;

That parliamentarians have been entrusted with the responsibility to adopt legislation that will promote and allow technological and scientific developments in order to increase the use of clean energy and thus curb climate change;

We undertake to:

1. Establish the Parliamentary Network on Climate Change as a hemispheric forum for legislative work and for the exchange of best practices to mitigate the environmental, social and economic effects of climate change.
2. Prioritize the phenomena associated to global warming, as well as their social, economic and environmental impact and strategies to deal with the same, in the public and legislative agendas of our countries.
3. Seek to strengthen framework legislation on climate change, and ensure a long-term legislative solution is adopted.
4. Follow up on the legislative actions and efforts taken to materialize the intended nationally determined contributions (INDC) in the periods between the Conferences of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.
5. Work jointly with other sectors of society in the quest for sustainable answers to the challenges posed by global warming.
6. Encourage citizen's involvement in the development of legislation and the supervision of governmental and parliamentary policies on climate change, particularly by the groups that are most vulnerable to its impacts.
7. Consider the gender implications and differential approaches in the drafting of legislation to mitigate and adapt to climate change.
8. Foster the exchange of innovative practices in the fields of legislation, citizen involvement, scientific actions and policies to mitigate and adapt to climate change.
9. Ensure the development and implementation of legislative actions that will encourage scientific innovation in the area of climate change and electric transportation.
10. Encourage cooperation between Parliaments and Government agencies in the development and implementation of innovative policies to combat climate change and in measuring progress.
11. Promote international cooperation to curb climate change through parliamentary diplomacy, including the ratification of the Paris Agreement which was signed by 174 countries in New York on 22 April 2016.

12. Cooperate with international organizations such as the Secretariat of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), among others, and civil society organizations and indigenous peoples, in order to further the work of the Climate Change Network.

Signed in Panama City, Panama, on 5 August 2016.

Travel Costs

ASSOCIATION	Canadian Section of ParlAmericas
ACTIVITY	Annual Gathering on Climate Change “Parliamentary Action to Stop Climate Change”
DESTINATION	Panama City, Panama
DATES	August 3–5, 2016
DELEGATION	
SENATE	Hon. Tobias C. Enverga Jr., Senator
HOUSE OF COMMONS	Ms. Julie Dzerowicz, M.P.
STAFF	Mr. Cédric Taquet, Secretary to the delegation
TRANSPORTATION	\$3,387.40
ACCOMMODATION	\$1,301.15
HOSPITALITY	\$0.00
PER DIEMS	\$1,408.20
OFFICIAL GIFTS	\$0.00
MISCELLANEOUS/REGISTRATION FEES	\$0.00

TOTAL

\$6,096.75