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## Third Regional Seminar on Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals for Parliaments of Latin America and the Caribbean

### **Pursuing climate action and sustainable development: The role of parliaments in enhancing policy coherence**

**10-11 August 2023, San José, Costa Rica**

Organized jointly by the Inter-Parliamentary Union and the Parliament of Costa Rica

Climate change is the most critical challenge facing the world today. According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), it will be impossible to limit global warming to 1.5 or 2 degrees Celsius<sup>1</sup> without immediate reductions in greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. The IPCC has also confirmed that while climate change is already causing irreversible damage, the worst effects are still to come, unless bold and aggressive measures are adopted immediately.

Latin America and Caribbean (LAC) countries emit relatively small amounts of GHGs yet remain on the front line of climate change impacts. The IPCC has noted that the climate in Central and South America has already changed and predicts a range of further impacts across the whole region, including more extreme weather patterns, glacier volume loss, sea-level rise, record temperatures, widespread droughts, tropical waves, intense rainfalls and hurricanes. Climate-induced bleaching of and damage to coral reefs pose a significant threat to marine life but also threaten the livelihoods of LAC populations, particularly of those in the Caribbean<sup>2</sup>. Many communities are not prepared to face climate-related threats, and some population groups are more vulnerable to these threats than others.

Climate impacts are harming human health by increasing the spread of diseases, and are among the reasons behind a global rise in hunger and poor nutrition. Climate change is also directly affecting food supplies, infrastructures and economies, including the tourism sector. According to the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), climate change could significantly worsen long-term economic prospects and exacerbate inequalities in the LAC region<sup>3</sup>. It is essential to advance towards a comprehensive agenda that addresses existing challenges and improves the well-being of the people and the whole planet.

With 2023 seeing the mid-point for implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as well as the first Global Stocktake of the Paris Agreement, there is no doubt that the year represents a key milestone for countries to reiterate and honour their international commitments, making sure that national policies, programmes and budgets are aligned with them in a coherent manner.

Parliaments have a pivotal role to play in ensuring these major international agreements are translated into national action. They can help build a solid legal framework, and propose and advocate for legal reforms or amendments that duly reflect the complexity of development, which comprises economic, social and environmental dimensions. Parliaments can also hold

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<sup>1</sup> As per targets established in the Paris Agreement 2015

<sup>2</sup> See Yglesias-Gonzalez et al (2022) <https://www.thelancet.com/action/showPdf?pii=S2667-193X%2822%2900065-5>

<sup>3</sup> CEPAL <https://www.cepal.org/en/pressreleases/latin-america-and-caribbean-green-transition-can-be-economic-and-social-game-changer>

governments to account on development policy choices and strategies, and advocate for a coherent integration of the SDGs into budgets and plans, making sure that the needs of all – most notably those that are underrepresented, marginalized or in vulnerable situations – are duly taken into consideration.

The IPU and the Parliament of Costa Rica are jointly organizing a regional seminar for parliaments of Latin America and the Caribbean. The event will bring together parliamentarians for a critical inter-parliamentary dialogue on the pursuit of climate action and sustainable development, as well as the role of parliaments in enhancing coherence between national policies and global agendas.

The event will take stock of the achievements made in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Paris Agreement, and explore ways to boost progress in pursuit of a climate-resilient and sustainable LAC region. By exploring these key issues, parliaments will be able to play a stronger role in their countries' dialogues on sustainable development and climate change, and ensure they are better equipped to raise national ambitions ahead of major global events including the 2023 SDG Summit and COP28.

### **Format and objectives of the seminar**

The seminar will be held in-person and consist of both plenary discussions and presentations by regional and international experts and members of parliament. The overall aim of the seminar is to facilitate knowledge-sharing among parliaments in the Latin America and Caribbean region and have participants engage in critical discussions to identify the most efficient and impactful ways to enhance parliamentary action on climate change and sustainable development.

The seminar will be followed by a field visit organized by the Parliament of Costa Rica.

**Venue and dates:** The seminar will be held in the Parliament of Costa Rica in San José on 10-11 August 2023.

**Draft agenda:** The agenda will be developed jointly by the IPU and the Parliament of Costa Rica.

**Participation:** The seminar is open to the following IPU Member Parliaments: Argentina, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, Uruguay, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of).

National parliaments in the region that are not currently IPU Members are also invited to attend. In addition, IPU Associate Members and Observers are welcome to participate.

**Working languages:** Spanish and English.