



Inter-Parliamentary Union
For democracy. For everyone.

130
years of
empowering
parliamentarians

Parliamentary Meeting on the occasion of the United Nations Climate Change Conference

Madrid, 10 December 2019

The IPU and the Spanish Congress of Deputies organized a Parliamentary Meeting at the twenty-fifth Conference of the Parties (COP25) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in Madrid, Spain. The Parliamentary Meeting was attended by a total of 176 participants from more than 30 countries, 127 of whom were members of parliament. They heard from some of the key figures in climate change science and policy, including Mr. Hans-Otto Pörtner, Professor and Co-Chair of Working Group II of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, and Mr. Jeffrey Sachs, Professor and Director of the Center for Sustainable Development at Columbia University. The opening included remarks by Ms. Meritxell Batet Lamaña, President of the Spanish Congress of Deputies, and closing remarks were delivered by the Spanish Secretary of State for the Environment, Mr. Hugo Morán, and by Ms. Cristina Narbona, First Vice-President of the Spanish Senate. The IPU President, Ms. Gabriela Cuevas Barron, participated in the meeting and made welcome remarks. The first thematic session was moderated by the Honorary IPU President, Mr. Saber Chowdhury, MP from Bangladesh.

Ms. Batet Lamaña, during her opening address, urged participants: "We must make progress towards a climate neutrality scenario in 2050, thus going beyond the goals of 2030, with a new development model, always bearing in mind the social impact that these measures might have, so that we can maximize opportunities for everyone, 'leaving no one behind'." Ms. Cuevas Barron welcomed participants on behalf of the IPU. She underlined the vital role parliaments played in fostering international cooperation to tackle cross-cutting and immediate threats, and stressed that the time for parliaments to take stronger and more concerted action to respond to climate change was now.

During the course of the meeting, participants had the chance to discuss the current state of "climate emergency" and national commitments to mitigate greenhouse gas emissions in light of climate science and the implementation of the Paris Agreement. MPs showcased examples of their work on climate change at the national and regional levels.

Introducing the first expert speaker, moderator Chowdhury briefed MPs on the recent unanimous adoption of a resolution by the Bangladeshi Parliament for the declaration of a planetary emergency, with the aim of raising global awareness of the need to save the earth from its existential crisis of climate change and of the devastating impact of climate-related disasters and the increase in extreme weather events. He stressed that the Bangladeshi Parliament had called upon all other parliaments, governments, the United Nations and other stakeholders to work on a war footing, as custodians and as one team, to protect and fortify the planet – the "only home human beings have".

Following this introduction, MPs had the opportunity to learn about the latest science concerning global warming. Mr. Pörtner informed participants: "Current climate change is human-made. Full stop. Without human activities we would not have climate change. The global picture is very clear." Yet, he also stressed that something could still be done about it. He cautioned MPs that global warming was happening at a faster rate than expected and that it came with economic impacts. Mr. Pörtner called for ambitious action on mitigation, combined with land and ocean management as well as overarching

measures, e.g. a carbon price. He urged parliamentarians to find the right balance between short-term interests and long-term needs. His presentation was followed by various questions from the audience and a fruitful debate on the way forward.

With respect to the creation of enabling environments for renewable energy investments, Mr. Sachs provided delegates with suggestions for the development of policies and action plans, taking into account the specific regional circumstances. In particular, Mr. Sachs made a case for a global energy transition. He emphasized that wind, solar and hydro energy were cheaper than carbon paired with carbon capture and storage. He also highlighted the need to electrify countries' transport systems. Mr. Sachs called upon parliamentarians to prioritize action plans to achieve net zero emissions by 2050. He stressed that it was important to secure the engagement of parliaments on this issue, and he suggested cooperating with the IPU on the development of a toolkit to assist parliaments with this. His presentation sparked several comments and questions from the audience and an enriching debate.

During his closing remarks, the Spanish Secretary of State for the Environment, Mr. Hugo Morán, reminded delegates that what was currently being called a state of "climate emergency" was not just a temporary situation, and cautioned them that the future was never going to return to what it had been like before.