



National Assembly of Belize

Office of the Clerk

P.O. Box 139, Belmopan, Cayo District, Belize Central America

Tel. (+501) 822-2141/2142 or 2144

E-mail: ClerkNA@bna.gov.bz

www.nationalassembly.gov.bz

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PRESS RELEASE

National Assembly Represented at a Multi-Stakeholder Dialogue on Gender Equality and Sustainable Development in Saint Lucia

—Friday, 3rd November 2023— The National Assembly of Belize was represented this week at a multi-stakeholder dialogue on gender equality and sustainable development from 31st October to 1st November in Gros Islet, Saint Lucia. The Belize parliamentary delegation includes the Speaker of the House of Representatives, Hon. Valerie Woods, Senator, Hon. Janelle Chanona, Chair of the Women's Parliamentary Caucus, and Senator, Hon. Erica Jang. The event had the participation of parliamentarians and civil society organizations from 17 Caribbean countries.

The meeting was hosted by ParlAmericas, UN Women Multi-Country Office for the Caribbean, and the Parliament of Saint Lucia. During the first day, Speaker Woods moderated the keynote panel: The Cost of Violence against Women and Girls (VAWG) and its impact on sustainable development. The delegation also attended two other panel discussions on Innovative initiatives to end VAWG, and Good Practices for building partnerships to advance gender equality and sustainable development.

During the second day, the delegation participated in an interactive workshop where they were able to examine Small Island Developing States (SIDS) specific issues from a gender perspective. They also attended roundtable sessions on engaging civil society and parliamentarians on working together to apply a gender lens in the examination of development issues and to consider possible responses. Also participating from Belize as invited guests of the organizers were PETAL's Simone Hill and the Caribbean Commonwealth Youth Council representative, Dominique Noralez.

Following the two-day meeting, the parliamentary delegation attended a discussion on 2nd November with other Caribbean women's parliamentary caucuses in the Caribbean. This session brought together representatives from Belize, Antigua and Barbuda, Grenada, Jamaica, Saint Lucia, and Trinidad and Tobago to strengthen regional networks, facilitate exchange on current priorities and projects, and discuss support that can be provided to the continued growth of women's parliamentary caucuses in the region. At this meeting the Belize caucus representatives shared the experience of the planning meetings of the Belize Women's Parliamentary Caucus, discussed some of the suggestions on priority areas for the caucus, as well as participated in a workshop on effective gender equality advocacy: messaging, tools, and partnerships.

Travel and accommodation costs for the Belize parliamentary delegation were made possible through ParlAmericas and UN Women. The delegation returns to Belize on 4th November.

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