



# OFFICE OF THE CLERK

Independence Hill  
P.O. Box 139, Belmopan, Cayo District, Belize Central America  
Tel. (+501) 822-2141/2142 or 2144  
E-mail: [ClerkNA@bna.gov.bz](mailto:ClerkNA@bna.gov.bz)  
[www.nationalassembly.gov.bz](http://www.nationalassembly.gov.bz)

---

REF: NA/17/26 (8)

## **Ywil Belize Program Empowers Emerging Leaders for Public Life**

March 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2026 - Young women leaders from across Belize took their seats in the National Assembly last Friday, bringing the Young Women in Leadership (YWiL) – Belize program to a momentous close. Convened by ParlAmericas, Caribbean Women in Leadership (CIWiL), the Women’s Parliamentary Caucus of Belize, the CIWiL Belize National Chapter, and the Belize Youth Department, and with the support of the National Assembly of Belize, the program facilitated capacity-building and learning on parliamentary decision-making, gender equality, and inclusive, transformational leadership, and created a historic avenue to put this knowledge into practice.

Throughout February and March 2026, YWiL Belize participants engaged in interactive virtual sessions on the program’s core themes that combined expert guidance from parliamentarians, parliamentary staff, government representatives, civil society, and other youth advocates with dialogue and exchange. Participants explored approaches to leadership, governance, advocacy, and action that can support in advancing inclusion and meaningful change within their communities, through the parliamentary sphere and beyond. Session topics included gender equality in theory and practice, the women’s movement and feminist advocacy in Belize, transformational leadership, parliamentary procedure, and strategies for preparing and delivering effective parliamentary interventions.

Supporting women’s leadership in political and civic life was also a central objective and focus of content. Sessions facilitated reflection on the persistent barriers that continue to shape women’s underrepresentation in these spaces and on concrete strategies to move towards equitable participation. The in-person leadership workshop on March 19<sup>th</sup>, 2026, focused on this dimension of the program in particular. Across these sessions, the critical roles of mentorship, solidarity, and collaboration were highlighted as particularly relevant for navigating barriers, with public education and advocacy on the importance of gender equality noted as critical to barriers being dismantled. Adopting practices to foster inclusion and diversity in decision-making spaces, through public participation and consultation, the use of disaggregated data, and other tangible steps, was also emphasized as both a direct way to ensure greater representation and as a means of contributing to more responsive outcomes that expand equitable access to rights and opportunities.

Effective strategies to support young women's leadership was also the theme of the YWiL Parliamentary Sittings on March 20<sup>th</sup>, 2026, at the National Assembly of Belize. The YWiL House of Representatives and YWiL Senate considered a motion approving the development of temporary special measures to accelerate young women's leadership in public, political, and economic spheres. Participants' contributions across the debates elevated the perspectives and stories of young women leaders from diverse lived realities, as well as data and research on the topic, making an impactful collective case for tailored responses to their unique experiences of inequality. Importantly, they also affirmed the need to celebrate and recognize the immense contributions and already-existing capabilities and potential of young women leaders.

The Sitting served as a practical exercise in parliamentary leadership. Beyond preparing their interventions, participants rehearsed parliamentary procedures, caucused in preparation for the debate, and engaged in practice sittings. These activities provided direct exposure to parliament's functioning, in addition to strengthening participants' confidence, deepening their understanding of governance processes, and equipping them to engage more effectively in policy dialogue and decision-making spaces.

By the close of the program, YWiL Belize participants had not only built skills and knowledge, but also strengthened a network grounded in shared purpose and collective action. They completed the program equipped with the essential tools to expand their influence, strengthen advocacy, and drive meaningful change within their communities and beyond.

Belize is the sixth country in the Caribbean to convene a Young Women in Leadership initiative. Previous YWiL programs have been hosted in Trinidad and Tobago, Antigua and Barbuda, Saint Lucia, Jamaica, and Grenada. Past participants of this initiative form a network of more than 250 young women leaders across the region.

The YWiL Belize Program was made possible thanks to the generous support of the Government of Canada through Global Affairs Canada and The National Assembly of Belize.

\*\*\*\*END\*\*\*\*

