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Parliamentary Meeting on the occasion of the United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP25)

Ernest Lluch Hall, Congress of Deputies
Madrid (Spain), 10 December 2019



CORTES GENERALES

Climate emergency and national commitments to mitigate greenhouse gas emissions in light of climate science

Organized jointly by the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) and the Spanish Parliament

Concept note

The IPU regularly organizes parliamentary meetings on the occasion of United Nations Climate Change Conferences. These meetings attract participants from parliaments, governments, the United Nations, business, academia, the scientific community and non-governmental organizations. They allow parliamentarians to get information first-hand on the main issues and current thinking, interact with government negotiators, share good practices, and exchange views on parliamentary follow-up to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) sessions.

The twenty-fifth session of the Conference of the Parties to the UNFCCC (COP 25), hosted by the Government of Spain under the Presidency of the Government of Chile, will be an event of global importance. With the Paris Agreement and its implementation guidelines in place, COP 25 will have the important task of working out and adopting a package of decisions to ensure the global transition to full implementation of the Paris Agreement at the national level.

The Parliamentary Meeting on the occasion of COP 25 will be organized jointly by the IPU and the Spanish Parliament. The aim of the meeting is to convey a message of urgency based on scientific rigour so that the countries that have subscribed to and ratified the Paris Agreement raise their ambitions concerning the mitigation of greenhouse gas emissions.

A recently published World Meteorological Organization report indicates that the level of concentration of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere reached 407.8 parts per million in 2018, the highest level for 3 million years. Likewise, the Emissions Gap Report 2019, published by the United Nations Environment Programme, states that, even if all current national commitments are met, temperatures will rise by up to 3.2°C by the end of this century, well above the limit of 1.5–2°C set by scientists. That would trigger extreme climate events. The latest reports from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change on global warming of 1.5°C and the impact on the cryosphere make for sobering reading. In short, climate science insists that we are entering a situation of climate emergency and that there is still a great gap between the commitments undertaken by countries according to the nationally determined contributions and the goals to reduce emissions required by the Paris Agreement.

In this context, the Parliamentary Meeting will give parliamentarians an opportunity to hear from and exchange views with some of the public figures that are leading the global discussion on the climate crisis. One such expert is Mr. Jeffrey Sachs, Professor and Director of the Center for Sustainable Development at Columbia University. He will address the issue of a responsible response to climate change and the opportunities it offers to boost global economic growth under sustainable and socially equitable criteria.

