



| SPECIAL COMMITTEE FOR THE FUTURE

(Meeting of March 10, 2022)

(A Zoom connection is established with some legislators)

AD HOC CHAIR (Rodrigo Goñi Reyes).—A quorum being present, the meeting is called to order.

(The time is 10:47)

—We shall consider the first item on the agenda: “Election of the Committee Chair and Vice Chair.”

MR. VIANA (Pablo).—We nominate Deputy Rodrigo Goñi to continue chairing the Special Committee for the Future.

AD HOC CHAIR.—We shall vote. (A vote is taken)

—Eight out of nine: CARRIED.

MR. OLMOS (Gustavo).—We nominate legislator Silvia Nane to serve as Committee Vice Chair for this period.

THE CHAIR.—We shall vote. (A vote is taken)

—Nine in favor: CARRIED. Unanimous.

As there is no incoming business, I will take the opportunity to propose an event—I have already discussed it with some legislators—to be held on April 5, at which we would present a publication,

which will of course include all of us: an organized synthesis of the thirty presentations given on September 27 last year, which have been considered extremely valuable. It would also allow us to publicize all our names, addresses, our plans for this Committee and what the law provides. It also recognizes those thirty outstanding experts who remain in contact with us, by showing that we are taking up what they presented. This would launch our work for 2022.

We had taken it as agreed that this year we would address the future of work. This is the first topic addressed by other committees for the future around the world, and it can be approached across disciplines. We therefore ask everyone to suggest names for this committee of experts. Those who have been collaborating with us have expressed full willingness to continue in a more permanent group—for example, Dr. Radi, who closed our September 27 event—but this task will require about fifteen experts in the field. As in our previous work, they should be as representative as possible in perspectives, views, ages, sex, gender and so on. The group must be as plural as possible. Therefore, the list of experts must be approved by this Committee. As we continue exchanging ideas, as we did last time to create a very plural group, we must consider existing think tanks—some more economically oriented, others from the trade union movement—and experts from different universities, technology and other fields.

Let us focus on people who are already experts on the topic, rather than people who would need to begin studying it. The people we have begun speaking with were suggested by the Rector of the University through many of you who have been considering names. Clearly, the best choice is people who have worked and researched this issue here or abroad, including research abroad on issues concerning our country. We will keep discussing this, even informally, but I wanted it recorded in the verbatim record.

I also want to record that UNDP has confirmed advisory support from Lydia Garrido, technical secretariat support from an economist to accompany this process, and Bruno Gili, who is also working with us on events of this kind and whom we therefore invited today. This is the group we have been working with, and of course we are always open to legislators' proposals.

The World Bank has also contributed the work of professional María Noel Lanzaro to support us in this task.

I think there has been a very positive response to helping us in this process.

(The Zoom connection ends)

(A Teams connection is established)

—We welcome you.

MR. STRAND (Joakim) (Interpreted from English).—Distinguished senators and deputies of the Special Committee for the Future of Uruguay's General Assembly: I would like to say that we are very happy and pleased to have this

meeting with you. We do not have much time, but I think we could begin by introducing the Finnish team. Then you can make your introductions, and we can begin discussing the Committee's activities.

I would like each member of Finland's Committee for the Future to introduce themselves.

I am the Chair of Finland's Committee for the Future.

MS. TANUS (Sari).—I am a member of the Committee for the Future. Thank you very much.

MS. MÄKISALO-ROPPONEN (Merja).—I am a member of the Committee for the Future.

MR. PIRTTILAHTI (Arto).—I visited your country with the Committee for the Future a few years ago, and I hope we can continue the very strong cooperation we have begun.

Thank you very much.

MS. HOLOPAINEN (Mari).—It is a pleasure to meet you. I think this international cooperation is extremely important at such a critical time.

MR. STRAND (Joakim).—Thank you very much. We have other members of Parliament on the Finnish side whom I cannot see at the moment.

MS. HÖYSSÄ (María).—I am the Committee's Senior Adviser.

It is a pleasure to meet you.

THE CHAIR.—Thank you very much.

First, thank you very much for taking the initiative to hold this meeting.

We know this is a special time for you, but holding this meeting is very important to us.

On our side, I will introduce our colleagues; we cannot turn the camera so you can see them.

Let me introduce Deputy Verónica Mato, from the opposition; Senator Graciela Barrera, also from the opposition; Deputy Sebastián Valdomir, also from the opposition; Deputy Sebastián Cal, from the governing coalition; Senator Carmen Sanguinetti, from the Partido Colorado and also from

the governing coalition; Deputy Gustavo Olmos, from the opposition, the Frente Amplio parliamentary group; Deputy Felipe Carballo Da costa, from the opposition; Deputy Pablo Viana, from the Partido Nacional and the governing coalition; and Senator Silvia Nane, from the Frente Amplio, also in opposition.

SENATOR NANE (Silvia).—It is a pleasure to see you all. I am Vice Chair of the Committee for the Future and a senator from the Frente Amplio, now in opposition.

THE CHAIR.—We are also joined by Ms. Lydia Garrido, UNESCO adviser, and Deputy Martín Melazzi.

REPRESENTATIVE MELAZZI (Martín).—It is a pleasure for us to meet members of Finland's Committee for the Future so that we can work together. This is a very important meeting for everyone.

THE CHAIR.—Mr. Bruno Gili, coordinator of the expert group, is also present.

That concludes my introductions.

We appreciate your willingness to help us in this process.

We began last year. Although the Special Committee for the Future was created two years ago, we began our work last year.

Of course, we would like to congratulate you on everything you have developed, on launching the Committee for the Future, and on cooperating with other parliaments such as Uruguay's. We would like to mention that we received a visit from Finland in 2015; your visit was an opportunity to see the way forward, providing an example and guidance for our Parliament.

Of course, we want to learn from international best practices, especially Finland's, and from international experts, to establish an experience grounded in our own identity, and we are working to open ourselves to the world. We therefore want to tell you that our Committee draws inspiration from yours; we thank you for always being there for us.

As I said, Uruguay's Committee was created two years ago and, as you know, comprises both Chambers, the Senate and the Chamber of Deputies. We also have representatives of all political parties, from the opposition to members of the governing coalition—all political parties.

We began our process early in 2021, last year, and devoted most of our time and energy to refining organizational and operational arrangements. We agreed on UNESCO advisory support, technical support from the United Nations Development Programme, and the formation of an

expert group to work together. It is a diverse group of experts in different areas of technology and bioethics, working jointly.

Last September, we also held a major public event with more than thirty experts. Our country's leading experts in science, technology and bioethics set out the main challenges for the future, presenting their vision for our country.

For 2022, we have decided to address the work of the future through a plan involving expert contributions and exchanges among legislators. We will produce a report on different trends, threats and opportunities toward the end of this year, in September, to present to the national Parliament and the country as a whole. That is our plan, and we have a strong interest in deepening our relationship with your Committee for the Future. Uruguay has no futures foresight system, but we think the foundations are in place, so we are pursuing this process in this parliamentary Committee. We want to adopt an advanced foresight framework, which is why we chose a hybrid system; we recognize that this, with its complexity, is part of our work.

Finally, we express our strong interest in maintaining our relationship with your Committee. Thank you very much for inviting us to the Summit of the Future, to be held in your country in October.

Again, Mr. Chair, thank you for your willingness to listen to us; of course, we are extremely interested in hearing from you.

MR. STRAND (Joakim) (Interpreted from English).—(Interpretation from English is interrupted)

Our delegation greatly appreciated the work you did during that trip in October 2015. The Committee visited parliaments, universities and factories. Three members of Parliament here today took part in that 2015 visit.

Let me now tell you about our Committee's activities. The Committee for the Future was established as a standing committee of Finland's Parliament in 1993 and included members of the Finnish Parliament in 2017. I noticed that you emphasized the value of including members of all parties, and we do the same. We work together thinking about the future, and we have an excellent committee that values all colleagues' work; there is a pleasant atmosphere. Our cabinet counterpart is the Prime Minister, with whom we have good contact and relations. We can say our Committee serves as a think tank for futures, science and technology policy in Finland.

The Committee's mission is to generate dialogue with government on major future problems as well as opportunities. We always try to maintain

a positive mindset to seize opportunities while also considering threats, to examine the problems of today's world.

We also work on our own projects of interest to Committee members, and we have a budget we can use in different areas. [We have the economics of green transitions; the future development of the European Union is important from the perspective of influence. Many of our reports are on the government website, available in English and kept up to date.

During this administrative period, we have had major changes concerning sustainable development under the 2030 Agenda and related aspects, such as fighting climate change by making the fullest use of technology.

We also focus on artificial intelligence, nationally and at European Union level, working with artificial intelligence.

We are currently working on a report on the reasons for well-being, ill-being or illness in our country, as the two situations are highly polarized.

There is significant polarization, with parallel experiences: some people feel much better, while others, especially young people, do not feel at all good about the way society is for them.

That is another topic we would like to present at the Summit.

We also have a very interesting topic concerning art and culture, facilitating exports and innovation and technology policies: contributing and combining art and culture with technology.

We have very interesting examples. In wind energy development, for instance, an expert and an engineer have been looking at old pictures of birds and how nature has enabled animals to use their wings. Wind engineers have learned from that art to increase the efficiency of mechanisms. This is just one example of products combining culture and technology in our policy.

As I said, we are very happy to know you will come to Finland. The event's formal name is "World Summit of Committees of the Future." It will take place on October 12 and 13; that is autumn for us. We will invite many committees, fourteen from around the world, and thank you for accepting our invitation. Of course, we will provide more information later.

The countries that have confirmed so far are Austria, Canada, Estonia, Iceland, Lithuania, Poland, Thailand and yourselves. So we have a very

interesting combination of countries, and we hope more will confirm their attendance.

We want to create a cooperative community among committees for the future from different corners of the world, and we look forward to working together in pursuit of information. There is the Summit, and we also have publications to contribute to the world. We hope this work can continue in coming years and help make the world a better place to live.

I will now give a brief introduction to the Committee's work. I would like to open the floor to questions from all participants; you can raise your hands and turn on your microphones, as this discussion is not strictly formal.

THE CHAIR (Interpreted from English).—Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

We have two brief questions because we are only just beginning this process.

First, as a legislator—we are a parliamentary committee—I would like to know what process or methodology you used to work efficiently and effectively with experts in other scientific, technological and other fields.

Second, I would like to know how you manage the approval process for the final report. As you told us, you address different challenges and ultimately approve reports to share not only with other parliaments but with the country as a whole. What is the approval process? I ask because different experts may have different opinions and perspectives. How do you vote on the report?

How do you do it? Can you tell us how we could do it?

MR. STRAND (Joakim) (Interpreted from English).—Thank you very much for the question.

I will try to answer. Perhaps my colleagues can add more afterward.

Our main task is to create dialogue with government about future issues of concern, often related to technology. We can say that after a government term ends, the government publishes future reports and presents the outlook. The Prime Minister's Office sends the report to Parliament. Our main task is to prepare the response

to Parliament on the reports. We are accountable to Parliament for the report on the

future, and the Finnish government seeks to identify the political issues and matters raised, especially those where changes can be made or legislation developed. Compared with other committees, on education for example, we do not work directly on legislation but rather on our reports, although we can state the Committee's position. For example, this spring we will discuss many aspects of security and foreign policy, presenting Finland's perspective, and the Committee for the Future will issue a statement. Other committees will also issue statements, but we do not work directly on legislation, so we do not have to vote on minor matters.

Of course, when we pose questions, we may have different views—for example, on how much effort we are prepared to make as a country on climate change, because political parties approach it differently, as they do other issues.

So far, we have generally managed to agree on statements without needing a vote, but perhaps a colleague would like to add something.

Now that our friends from Uruguay are with us, there is an opportunity to ask questions.

THE CHAIR (Interpreted from English).—Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

I do not know whether you have any questions; on the other side, Senator Sanguinetti would like to ask one.

SENATOR SANGUINETTI (Carmen) (Interpreted from English).

—Thank you very much, Mr. Chair, and all of you for participating. It is a pleasure for us to speak with people who have so much experience.

I have a very specific question and want to take this opportunity to ask it. You mentioned well-being versus ill-being or illness. Those of us working on these issues are curious whether you have experience addressing matters like this in countries with economies like Uruguay's. Of course, it is much easier to discuss the economy and well-being in countries such as Finland, where average wages are much higher than in Uruguay.

I would like to know whether you have experience with parliaments of other countries that might be comparable to Uruguay.

MR. STRAND (Joakim) (Interpreted from English).—This question is extremely important; it is also very broad and substantial.

Perhaps a colleague would like to comment.

We are currently working on the report and have no information to announce, because the work is ongoing.

As you said, economic well-being is one of the main reasons for this research, because we have the feeling—and much points in that direction—that even though we have more resources and better incomes, that does not mean people feel well.

Technology may be one factor; young people, for example, spend too much time on social media, with all the pressure that entails.

We have also lived through a pandemic over the past two years, and we know many young people have stayed home and missed out on what is normal for their age. So many social aspects have affected our population; perhaps the health committee—I do not know whether you are familiar with it—would be best placed to answer, as it is also working on this. We must update these issues and will do so at the Summit.

THE CHAIR (Interpreted from English).—Thank you very much. The last question.

SENATOR NANE (Silvia) (Interpreted from English).—

Thank you,
everyone.

I have specific questions on two points. On budget matters, I would like to know the Committee for the Future's role in budget discussions and its role in discussing strategic plans for science, technology and innovation.

Thank you very
much.

GUEST (Interpreted from English).—Excellent question. I will begin with the second part, because science, technology and innovation really engage our interest. We are working on that; we hope and believe we

can focus on Finland, strengthening our position, and we are addressing that in the report.

On the budget, we do not have... Of course, our own budget is small compared with the budgets handled by the Finnish government, and it is renewed each year. We have two- and three-year plans, addressing education, technology, development, research and cooperation with the private sector and businesses.

Perhaps my colleagues can add something. It is also worth remembering that many members of the Committee for the Future sit on other committees; many are on the Trade and Finance Committees. As I said, I hope many ideas we develop here enrich other committees' discussions and lead to increased funding for research, for example. Indirectly, that influences our budget.

MS. TANUS (Sari) (Interpreted from English).—As the

Chair told you, we work on other committees, so we take ideas from whatever we are discussing here to those committees and make suggestions. In this way, we examine implications for the near and more distant future, looking at influences on different sectors—not only where the world is taking us, but where we would like to go and what we can do to move in that direction.

I myself believe in thinking about where we come from, our history and everything affecting us, our children and the country. We consider all those things when planning our future and making decisions for it.

I would also like to return to the earlier discussion about how we handle topics in the Committee. We can, and do, invite experts and specialists to meetings. They know the subject beforehand and can make presentations or statements to the Committee. One, two or three specialists may attend; we listen to their presentations and then discuss the issues. We ask questions, they answer, and we continue asking about different areas. | Sometimes we even ask them to continue answering questions in writing after the meetings.

After hearing them, we can also invite more specialists to the next meeting on the same topic.

We therefore analyze matters in depth, especially those we prioritize, and produce documents.

Once we have the documents, we analyze them together. As our Chair said, discussion is usually unnecessary; we reach agreement on the type of document. Generally, we all agree with what is written in them.

In other words, ours is a process that makes extensive use of dialogue: we hear experts, ask questions, listen to answers, develop documents and issue statements.

At the end, the document is available to everyone. Of course, we also hold plenary meetings and provide our documents to other committees, depending on the topic discussed.

MR. STRAND (Joakim) (Interpreted from English).—What has been said is very important: the role of the experts we invite.

For example, yesterday we received four space experts. Tomorrow we will continue speaking with more experts about space.

Whomever we invite, experts are always happy to attend; that is very good.

I would now like to ask about your situation.

When our Committee was founded in the mid-1990s, some sectors did not have much respect for it; they thought we were not very useful. I think our role in Parliament has grown stronger and is increasingly valued and respected; we see it in our work. So I would like to ask how your parliamentary colleagues reacted to the creation of your Committee. Are they enthusiastic? Are they happy, or do they simply see you as a think tank discussing future matters?

THE CHAIR (Interpreted from English).—I think we are experiencing the same thing you did.

Some legislators think we will not be able to create an open vision to seize the opportunities change offers and, of course, address the threats the world presents daily.

As you know, threats arise, but I think we can address this situation and follow your process.

We hope the rest of Parliament and the public will be able to see the results of our Committee's work.

REPRESENTATIVE VALDOMIR (Sebastián) (Interpreted from English).—Thank you very much, dear colleagues, for sharing your time today.

I have two questions. One is what topics we will discuss at the October Summit. The other is whether seminars on technology transfer could be included, because the difference between your country and ours might be a specific topic to develop in our relationship. As you know, globally, best practices in technology transfer are the most important issue among northern countries, but we are in the south, with small economies facing enormous environmental and social-policy challenges. It would therefore be important to consider including these topics at the October Summit.

MR. STRAND (Joakim) (Interpreted from English).—We can still define the topics to be discussed at the Summit. We are even receiving contributions from people telling us what they want on the agenda.

I think some topics certainly must be presented. Those the legislator raised will be included one way or another; there is no doubt about that.

I also think the Summit will be very important in setting the course for many committees for the future around the world.

We are increasingly opening up so that anyone can access our reports and they are available to the general public. In a week or two, we will receive young people from all over Finland in Parliament. Our Committee for the Future is one they will visit. We will tell them about the Summit because we want people to be inspired, and in turn to inspire us with their ideas about the future.

MS. HOLOPAINEN (Mari) (Interpreted from English).—On behalf of the Secretariat, I would like to thank you for your questions. As we are running out of time, it would be very helpful if you sent them in writing.

MR. STRAND (Joakim) (Interpreted from English).—Mr. Chair, from Finland I warmly thank you for this meeting. We will be very happy to meet you in person. We hope you can come in October and look forward to that opportunity to further strengthen our cooperation.

THE CHAIR (Interpreted from English).—Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

Again, thank you for your time, especially at this moment. On behalf of our country and Parliament, we express our unreserved solidarity and closeness to your nation at this very special time it is facing.

Of course, we will see you in October. After that, I hope we can welcome you to our country again.

MR. STRAND (Joakim) (Interpreted from English).—I would love another opportunity to visit Uruguay.

Thank you very much, and welcome to Finland!

THE CHAIR (Interpreted from English).—Thank you very much. (The Teams connection ends)

—It was difficult, but we had to do it. I think it went very well. We must get used to meetings of this kind.

Thank you, Trinidad; it went perfectly. We will keep needing you, because we already have several invitations and requests from other committees for the future, such as New Zealand, Australia and Canada. I think that is how these committees work: collective intelligence and sharing knowledge and experience.

If you agree, we will continue preparing the activity for Tuesday, April 5.

(Discussion)

—The referendum is on the 27th, the following week is the post-referendum period, and then comes Holy Week or Tourism Week; we cannot delay further. That week will be fairly free, with little activity, according to my conversation with the Vice President, and the Senate and Chamber of Deputies would make room for our short event of an hour and a half. If you prefer, we can hold it on Wednesday the 6th.

(Discussion)

—All right, we will see.

I arranged for it to be held in the Events Hall. The idea is to invite the thirty experts who contributed, even if they do not attend in person; their presentations will also be published. Lydia is organizing and synthesizing those presentations, because it is useful. Of course, each expert will have the opportunity to make changes if they consider that what we have translated is not faithful. That way we can begin working. We will naturally remain in contact to form the expert group of twelve to fifteen people so we can begin working with Lydia and UNDP, which is also

very interested. Lydia also has a relationship with UNDP. It was meant to be done that way; UNDP wanted to participate and give us that contractual possibility. Bruno Gili, who joined us today and helped coordinate the previous activity, is helping with the next one.

I would add that the World Bank wants to contribute. Perhaps we should all attend a meeting with Ms. María Noel Lanzaro.

September 27 is the legal deadline for producing the report. If we are on track, we can submit a preliminary report and say we will complete it later, but legally we must present something on that date. So we must start working now. What will the format be? Once the expert group is formed, we will hold two public events each year; that is the *modus operandi* we initially decided on. We could hold one in May or June and another in August, with three or four experts who have studied the topic most and wish to participate. We would then exchange views with them here, probably after their presentation or report. They would then help us prepare the report.

We do not know how to produce that report. Why? Initially, I think perspectives and approaches to the challenges may differ greatly. Certainly, others have done it this way. In commissions such as national bioethics commissions, specific complex issues can involve different perspectives and approaches without requiring separate majority and minority reports. We can aim for that.

MS. GARRIDO (Lydia).—I simply want to add a technical point, in case you are not aware of it.

In Finland's case, the report is sent from the Prime Minister's Office to Parliament, as they said, for analysis and response, once per government term. They work on that report for four or five years. I mention it because of the time involved and the amount of expertise needed, especially if the aim is collective intelligence and co-creation.

THE CHAIR.—By law, we must deliver a report on a set date; we cannot escape that. We will see whether it is a first report, which we have already said will be voted on here, or a report to be followed by a second one. Undoubtedly, the work of the future will open up many other topics, some already highly controversial. We cannot say we will do nothing on September 27, because the law requires us to do so. Naturally, we can decide how to make it happen. I also think this is good for experts who have university workloads and so on, because their most frequent question is when it ends. It was different for those who volunteered to remain permanently available, like the experts we had last September 27. But for this specific task, we will

limit ourselves to September this year. Afterward, we have broad authority to decide how to expand that preliminary report and so on. Many related topics will also emerge, such as education and universal basic income, which it is good to begin opening up. We will neither close ourselves off nor leave matters so open-ended that people can say we are not complying with the law.

That is roughly the outline.

Do we agree? Thank you.

The meeting is adjourned. (The time is 12:00)

Montevideo, Uruguay. Legislative Branch.