



GENERAL ASSEMBLY
SECRETARIAT
DIRECTORATE GENERAL

XLIX^a Legislature
Fourth Period

SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON FUTURES

File S/C

Circulation No.: 106/2023

14 September 2023

II WORLD SUMMIT OF COMMITTEES OF THE FUTURE

Verbatim transcript of the meeting held on
14 September 2023

ATTENDANCE

Chair: Legislator Rodrigo Goñi Reyes (Chair)

Members: Legislators Felipe Carballo Da Costa, Verónica Leticia Mato, Martín Melazzi, Gustavo Olmos, Carmen Sanguinetti, Sebastián Valdomir and Álvaro Viviano

Secretaries: María Elena Morán and Vladimir De Bellis

Deputy Secretaries: Sofía Martorano and Joseline Rattaro

SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON FUTURES

(Meeting held on 14 September 2023 jointly with the working group for the II World Summit of Committees of the Future).

THE CHAIR.— I call this meeting to order.

*(The time is
13:06).*

—For this meeting of the Special Committee on Futures, we have invited everyone involved in organizing the event that will take place between 25 and 27 September, including both members of Parliament and organizations contracted for the event or participating as partners.

Today, the idea is to spend an hour reviewing absolutely all the main elements of the event so that they are duly recorded in formal minutes and approved by the committee, with a public record so that everyone can consult it and know what we will be doing on those dates.

I will begin briefly with the finalized agenda. I have asked the secretary to hand you the latest version, which will be the one we follow, with some minor adjustments, but essentially it is the version you are about to receive.

We begin on Monday, 25 September, with a formal opening ceremony in the Chamber of the House of Representatives at 19:00, attended by the President of the Republic, the President of the General Assembly, the Speaker of the House of Representatives and, probably, the President of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, which is also a co-organizer. Those four would, in principle, be seated at the front on the upper dais. I mention all this for the sound arrangements and everything else needed to ensure that the ceremony proceeds properly.

As you will recall, when the President of the Republic attends, he generally speaks standing up, and the entire sound setup is arranged so that people can speak while standing, although the ceremony will be chaired by the President of the General Assembly.

The reserved boxes will be occupied by specifically identified guests. They will include presidents or vice-presidents of regional parliaments and other officials whose identities are duly established, such as representatives of international organizations, for example the UN, the OAS and the European Union. Why do I mention these organizations? Because they are actively involved in the event. Therefore, both boxes will be filled by the most senior officials connected with the event, such as the presidents of Parlatino and Parlasur, and so on. So, as I said, the boxes will be full of officials of that rank.

The platform seating areas, locally called bandejas, will be occupied, as protocol requires, by ministers, undersecretaries and a few other officials of equivalent rank.

The parliamentary seats, of which there are 164, will be reserved for parliamentarians who have registered, whose total is very close to that number. Today, around 155 are confirmed and accepted, although a slightly larger number have registered. Therefore, even if all those registered are eventually confirmed, there are always some who do not attend. I do not want to single out a country that has had a problem related to geography or an accident; situations like that can arise, so a proportion will not attend. We should plan for 150 parliamentarians, all of whom can be accommodated in the seats. Naturally, we are reviewing—and I apologize—a matter that may seem minor. We usually have disagreements over the seat cushions, so if we can provide them for all 164 seats, that will be better. We need to ensure that the seating is in the best possible condition.

We should also put on record, for the appropriate action, that we need to extend the sound system to the platforms. Why? Because they will always be used for panel discussions. These platforms, much like those at other similar conferences we have attended, are used for that purpose: for the panels. Whoever is chairing the event remains on the upper dais, but the panels will take place on the platforms. So the sound arrangements—the platforms currently have no sound system—must be properly set up for the panels. The parliamentarians will be seated at their desks, each with a microphone.

That is how we will conduct the proceedings, always in the Chamber of the House of Representatives.

After the opening ceremony, which will last—the pace is set by the President of the Republic and the President of the General Assembly—an hour or a little more—no longer, but no shorter either—we will hold a cocktail reception, the first one, for everyone inside, and also—I forgot to mention—for the eighty or ninety delegates who will be in the first public gallery. The delegates are experts and senior officials from the various parliaments. Many people call them advisors, but they are senior parliamentary officials with an interest in the subject. Therefore, those identified—and this will be duly specified—as delegates or advisors—the exact designation will be settled clearly later—will always have access to the first gallery, which can accommodate more than 150 people. So that group will always fit into that area and is also authorized to follow the proceedings from the first gallery.

On that first day, then, we will move from the opening ceremony to a cocktail reception where, on that occasion only, we will also have other special guests besides the ministers, such as the presidents and some vice-presidents of public bodies

that have worked with this committee in their respective fields, namely those concerned with science and technology: ANII, LATU, Inefop, Ceibal and Agesic, among fifteen or twenty other public bodies. All of them, having worked with the Special Committee on Futures, will naturally be invited to that first opening reception.

So, on that first day, we will have a number of special guests. It may be the only day that is a little difficult for us, because we will not ask ministers to show their badges, nor will we ask the undersecretaries and presidents of those bodies. We must have arrangements in place so that they can enter without difficulty, both for the plenary and for the opening reception. On that occasion, we will also invite all the ambassadors and consuls who have been helping with the event. Therefore, the opening reception in the Salón de los Pasos Perdidos, following the formal opening ceremony, will be attended by approximately three hundred people.

As you know, but let me remind you, the official entrance will always be the door on Avenida del Libertador, that is, the official entrance to the Palacio Legislativo; we will return to that matter later. The ceremonial vestibule will be fully set up for accreditation. In the first section of the Salón de los Pasos Perdidos, and in the vestibule as well, there will be more accreditation points to help direct people. In those first sections of the Salón de los Pasos Perdidos, there will also be areas for the press. We will set up spaces and backstage areas so that the press has several areas available there from the outset.

The rest of the hall will remain available for people to rest, talk and move around. The Salón de los Pasos Perdidos will be kept free for that. With more than three hundred people around at any given time, that space will be very necessary.

The Salón de Eventos Especiales will be set up for use in case of any contingency, so people will not be able to come and go freely.

So, on Monday, there will be that reception. In principle, there will be no speeches. There will be a screen—not the huge one we originally envisaged, but a smaller one—on which we will show the agenda, logos and so on, giving a sense that a summit is taking place. The reception will last approximately an hour and a half. Therefore, we should be prepared to finish at around 09:30 or 10:00.

On that first occasion, we will test the arrangements we have made for vehicle access on the lower level, as planned, with the appropriate barriers and the buses, of which, at this stage, there will be no fewer than four, coming directly from the Hotel Hyatt. That day will be a little more complicated because more official cars will be arriving. The protocol team will later decide whether official cars should use the same area or another one, since they are more readily recognized. This is a very specific group of guests whose identities are established and very well known.

On Tuesday, 26, we start early. As indicated, accreditation begins at 08:30. We cannot say otherwise. The first buses will leave at 08:00. It is very early, but it is the first day.

The plan—and I clarify this for those who have asked me—is that the official summit buses will be escorted, at the designated times, by motorcycles so that they can arrive within a reasonable time and without problems. We are always talking about buses leaving from the Hyatt and Costanero hotels. Others will make their own arrangements.

As the program indicates, accreditation will run from 08:30 to 09:00. We will try to keep to that schedule as closely as possible, but let me say now

that—this must be our approach—each participant, each parliamentarian, is responsible for keeping to their own schedule. We will never pressure anyone, nor will we do what happens at a match, which cannot begin without the players. Instead, we will act in accordance with the scheduled times. What do I mean? If, at 09:00 or 09:05, we have scheduled the first activity in the plenary chamber, that is when it will take place. The arrangements allow the meeting to proceed, because the number of people—as we discussed here—is substantial. We can operate perfectly well with fewer than the full number present.

Do we have a problem? Yes, with the seating in the Chamber of the House of Representatives, because late arrivals make it difficult to enter a row. That is inconvenient, but there is no solution. Each delegation's desks will have a small flag, naturally one per country. For example, if five Indian participants attend, they will have the flag of India and a nameplate. What is my point? Each delegation, whose members arrive more or less together, will have to deal with this problem, and it will arise. The good thing is that the sound in the plenary chamber is quite clear and loud, so if people have to stand up and sit down because of late arrivals, we have no choice but to accept the inconvenience. Why? Because our schedule is very tight. So we will start and finish more or less at the planned times.

On the first day, we have two consecutive activities, so we are considering starting at 09:00 and finishing at 10:45. That will be the longest period people spend seated. It is the same length of time one sits through a film at the cinema, so we can also remain seated for an hour and forty-five minutes without getting up.

After that, there will be a fifteen- or twenty-minute coffee break, for which the areas in the Salón de los Pasos Perdidos must be clearly marked out, as there will be a constant flow of people.

This brings us to the first major issue: the restrooms. We have very few restrooms, and they are not easy to reach. Therefore, the signage will identify each room. I should mention that eight rooms have already been confirmed for the working groups: the Antesala de la Cámara de Representantes, the Antesala del Senado, the Sala Ministros, the Sala Juan Andrés Ramírez, the Sala Martín C. Martínez, the two Frente Amplio parliamentary-group rooms in the House of Representatives, and the Partido Nacional parliamentary-group room, also in the House of Representatives. We have therefore identified five restroom areas: in the House, one for men and one for women; the restrooms inside the Frente Amplio parliamentary-group area—this is very important, because they provide additional facilities—and those in the Senate corridors. That means two or three more at most. In other words, we have very few restrooms. Therefore, their locations must be clearly indicated. The pull-up signs must also show where the restrooms are, because otherwise they are impossible to find.

With the rooms, the anterooms and the three Senate rooms now confirmed, with their respective microphones and the right capacity, we will have no problems. The two Frente Amplio parliamentary-group rooms, which are very good, and the Partido Nacional parliamentary-group room have no sound system, so one must be installed, with at least two microphones. We must provide sound equipment there using what we already have or by hiring it, but those three rooms need it. The anterooms have their equipment, but we will provide whatever else is needed so that both can operate, because they will accommodate the largest groups.

After the morning coffee break, at 11:00, 11:10 or 11:15— we will inevitably slip a little behind schedule—we will hold the other plenary session, also in the Chamber of the House of Representatives, with the private companies. There will be a panel of seven or eight people who, as I said, will be on the platform as panelists, with the moderators probably in the

chair's seats, that is, on the upper dais. This is the panel on the platform that will, in principle, be the longest of all, at an hour and a half. Naturally, it will be one of the summit's major sessions, running from 11:10 or 11:15 until close to 13:00.

At 13:00, we have lunch, which poses quite a challenge. Why? Because the official lunch is off-site at Club Uruguay, which participants will reach by bus, and there will also be a parallel, unofficial lunch, to put it that way, organized by Parlatino, which will hold a very important event. Parlatino is the body that brings together Latin American parliaments, in which Uruguay plays a very important role. That event will be very important, and we hope that as many Latin American parliamentarians as possible will attend, among other reasons because it helps reduce the number needing transport to lunch at Club Uruguay.

So, what will happen? We cannot force Latin American parliamentarians to attend Parlatino's lunch. We will try to steer the invitation in that direction. Naturally, anyone wearing a parliamentarian or delegate badge can board the bus and go to Club Uruguay. That is the reality.

So that will be a slightly complicated situation. Why? Because we have to bring the Latin American legislators to the Sala Acuña de Figueroa, where the event and lunch will take place. Lunch will be served at the back, and the event will be held in the Sala Acuña de Figueroa. The sound system and screens there must also be operational between 13:00 and 15:00. Naturally, we will need to monitor who is there, which is very important, including Parlatino's representatives, among others. That will be more closely managed. We also have the advantage of more restrooms in the basement. Lunch at Club Uruguay is very difficult to keep to time; we will try to keep it as close to the schedule as possible. Those attending will have a seat and a meal

at Club Uruguay. We will not be able to control exactly how many go to one venue and how many to the other. We know that the buses must have escorts to arrive within a reasonably short time, both going there and returning. We will try to make lunch as quick as possible, but it will be a seated meal.

We must be extremely well prepared and extremely flexible about people leaving. In other words, it is normal for some people to leave. Full stop. Certainly, observing that flow on the first day will help us work out how to prepare for the second day, but we must also be aware that some people leave and return, while others do not.

We plan to start the afternoon at 15:00. We will be flexible about that time, because we cannot begin until the buses return from Club Uruguay: that is our responsibility, not the parliamentarians'. So we will most likely be a little behind schedule and start at 15:30. That session will also last an hour and a half, always in the Chamber of the House of Representatives, ending at 16:30, 16:45 or 17:00. We will also have a break in the Salón de los Pasos Perdidos for coffee and so on.

At approximately 17:00, we begin the workshops, the group work, in those rooms, and we must have teams ready. Apart from the two moderators in each group, Parliament, through the protocol team or whoever is responsible, must provide one or two people—I would say two per group—to accompany the group to its room and help with anything it needs during that hour and a half.

After the group work ends, around 19:00, in principle— I repeat, in principle; we will see whether people are too tired or have dispersed—we will hold a plenary session. This could even be our first opportunity to use the Salón de

Eventos Especiales. If attendance has fallen considerably, as we expect, and there are fewer than 150 of us in total, we will use the Salón de Eventos Especiales for a change of setting and to relax a little. So that space will be available for the final session. Why? Because many people will leave, exhausted from traveling and having had no sleep, and so on, and we should avoid the embarrassment of leaving empty spaces in the Chamber; it would be better to move to the events hall.

We will keep it brief because, at 20:00 or 20:30, we will have Tuesday's dinner, at Mercosur headquarters. The good thing is that we will be prepared for at least 250 people. We do not know how many will stay behind to sleep, but if everyone decides to attend, the buses will leave as usual, every ten minutes, and people can arrive at Mercosur headquarters and join in freely. We will make it clear that this activity is entirely optional: they can choose whether to drop in briefly, not attend at all, or whatever they prefer. Naturally, there will be a finishing time, no later than 22:30.

After the reception at Mercosur headquarters, the buses will return to the Hyatt hotel, which has the great advantage of being nearby; the journey is very short.

Anyone wishing to depart from this itinerary will do so independently, on their own and without any responsibility on our part. Lourdes's team will have options available for anyone wanting to go out and do other things outside the summit. That must be perfectly clear.

Let us now turn to Wednesday, the third day overall or the second working day. We start at 09:00 with the same arrangements: in the plenary chamber of the House of Representatives until 10:30, an hour-and-a-half session, followed by a coffee break. At 11:00, or a little later, we have the second round of group work, along the same lines as the previous afternoon.

At 13:00, we have lunch. The great advantage is that it will be here, on the ground floor, throughout the area behind the elevators. It is quite spacious, but we will add a tent as a precaution. That means that, even if it rains, we can remain outside, in a space where people can move around easily. Here, too, we must plan access to the restrooms; we will use those in the basement and the second basement level. This is not a minor matter, because people go to the restroom during these breaks. We must make an effort to signpost their locations, otherwise we will have to answer many people who will be asking where the restrooms are. The clearer the signs, the better.

For your information, at the same time as the main lunch for 250 people— a substantial number—there will be a UNDP event in the Sala Acuña de Figueroa for the organization's special guests and a few legislators, but there will be no more than twenty people. Therefore, we should expect 90 % of those participating in the summit, whether parliamentarians or delegates, to attend the official lunch on the ground floor. From a security standpoint, I think everything is fairly clear.

In the afternoon, we will start at around 14:00 or 14:30 with an activity that will also take place in the Chamber of the House of Representatives, continuing until 15:00 or 15:30, followed by a break.

We expect attendance to start dwindling during the third round of group work. In any case, if the fall in numbers is significant, rather than seven groups, there would be six; we will assess that at the time.

Finally, we have the plenary session, applying the approach I mentioned earlier. In principle, we expect the meetings to take place in the Chamber of the House of Representatives, but since we will have the Salón de los Pasos Perdidos as a meeting place, if the flow of people suggests that the Chamber

will be too large for the numbers remaining, we will move to the Salón de Eventos Especiales for the final declaration.

There is just one change to the agenda you have been given. We are considering—and will very probably do this—holding, instead of dinner at the Hyatt—once people go back to the hotel, we cannot find them again— a reception at 19:00 in the Salón de los Pasos Perdidos. As Representative Viviano says, that would be the most sensible option, because, at that time, most people on this planet have their dinner. Therefore, it could be very appropriate to hold a reception at 19:00 with everyone present, say a few words, express our thanks, read the declaration and wish them all the best for their journey home. Then we take them to the Hyatt hotel to sleep, and the summit is over. Let us bear in mind, then, that it will be a reception in the Salón de los Pasos Perdidos, similar in format to the first day's reception, but with fewer people.

To give us an overview, that is the agenda and everything we must try to accomplish in those two and a half days.

Are there any questions about this agenda, about the overall picture? If not, let us move on to specific matters.

We have asked the Medical Service staff to join us because this is an intensive schedule, with many people who have traveled very long distances. As for meals, we will have special meals for those who request them; we will not proactively offer them. Anyone who requests a special meal will receive one, because some people have dietary restrictions or special diets. In those arrangements, we must always anticipate possible health issues, which may often be very minor, but factors such as fatigue can come into play. So the sooner we can deal with them, the better, especially during the

meetings in the Chamber of the House of Representatives, which may be rather intense.

As regards security, the work is progressing very well, in a highly coordinated manner.

The work on visas is progressing very, very well.

As for communications, we have been doing everything we said we would do, providing updates on everything that is happening.

In the remaining days, we must finish all the signage, as they call it, including the pull-up signs that were ordered; we hope to see them in place as soon as possible so that we can test the arrangements.

As regards restrooms, we must make the signs as clear as possible, because if those of us who work here find them difficult to locate, it will be even harder for people unfamiliar with the building. We must avoid the inconvenience of having people constantly ask where they are; therefore, the best approach is to have signs that point the way.

That is the overall picture. Any questions?

MR. MONES.— Regarding the signage, given that many people will be coming from abroad, will the signs be in Spanish and English?

THE CHAIR.— In both languages. All the signage we provide will be in both languages: Spanish and English.

As for accreditation, we will make every effort to complete it in advance. There will always be someone at the Hyatt hotel providing information. And here, naturally, we must put together the largest possible team to support the event. Within our departments, apart from the work on the Senate Budget Committee's joint sittings with the Finance Committee to consider the budget execution

accounts, we will need all the remaining resources to assist the nearly 300 people we will be welcoming, including parliamentarians and delegates.

We will also resolve the internet issue. As of the summit, we will have that problem resolved. There will also be a screen available to show videos or display information. I mean the medium-sized screen—still quite large—that Lourdes mentioned earlier.

MR. VIVIANO.— Obviously, we, the national legislators, will help direct people. When will we have that information: which meeting is in which room, and where the other meetings are? I ask so that we can prepare to direct people, knowing in advance in which room each activity will take place.

THE CHAIR.— The committee members will participate in all the activities. We have not yet arranged the workshops; we will do so starting on Monday, when we will have the final list of participants. Today, we asked the IPU to confirm who will be attending. In that regard, we must make a distinction: some countries bring many members, and we will suggest dividing up those delegations, so we must arrange the membership of each group individually. Of course, people will be free to move around afterwards. For example, if the representatives from India all want to stay together, they can, but, in principle, since theirs is a large delegation, we will suggest that they split up.

Our idea is for committee members to take part in all the workshops. On Monday, we will have a request setting out the organizing committee's proposed assignments, asking us to participate in particular groups. The groups, especially the largest ones, will have interpreters. For example, today we noted that very few participants speak French, so they will probably be put in the same group. In that case, we will simply

send someone who speaks French. We will try to avoid every group necessarily requiring interpretation throughout; we will seek to arrange groups by language, while also trying to mix people as much as possible. So, there will be predominantly Latin American groups, predominantly European groups and African groups. We will try to achieve the best possible mix, knowing that, in the end, everyone can join the group of their choice. Of course, the two largest groups will be in the anterooms.

If there are no questions, let me mention that there will be activities in addition to those we have discussed. One will be coordinated by Representative Melazzi.

MR. MELAZZI.— I was asked to act, in a sense, as the liaison with ANEP to help bring some of these workshops beyond the summit, so that they reach secondary and tertiary education; Senator Sanguinetti is handling the latter.

I know that Lydia Garrido has been working with ANEP officials, so I simply want to inform you that we are in contact with her and with someone else who will help us ensure that this very important initiative does not remain confined to Parliament, but reaches educational institutions and the country's interior, thereby reaching more people overall.

MS. SANGUINETTI.— We agreed to encourage universities to make use, in some way, of what is already happening around this summit. Together with Lydia, we spoke with Udelar, ORT, UM, Claeh, UDE and UCU to tell them what would be happening over these three days: the themes, the profile and the activities planned. We also invited them to join online because, as we know, space is limited.

We see this as a very good opportunity for academics and students alike to benefit from the presence of all these experts. The various universities,

depending on how far they have progressed in their work on artificial intelligence, are exploring the possibility of participating online in certain specific sessions while also organizing an activity, workshop or similar event, then sending us their comments so that we can incorporate them into the final discussion.

The conversations we have had have been very positive. The event has generated considerable interest. I think one positive aspect is that it is creating opportunities, because this is such a cross-cutting subject, to deepen the work on these issues.

If I remember correctly, we gave them until next Friday to tell us how they intend to approach this, simply so that we can share that information.

MS. GARRIDO.— On the point just raised, this is proving very interesting because, in a sense, Parliament's walls have come down and the initiative has spread throughout Uruguay. We have more than twenty ANEP educational institutions and five universities that would be participating. In addition, people abroad have begun asking to use this approach: to work in these spaces in hybrid formats—online and in person—and simultaneously. This is the case in Paraguay: the Universidad de Asunción, together with students from the Centro de Estrategia de Paraguay, will invite some parliamentarians who will not be traveling with the delegation to participate via livestream in a series of activities they will organize there.

Something similar has been discussed with the Universidad del Externado de Colombia, because, as a result of what we have encouraged through this summit, that country's Parliament

approved, a couple of months ago, the creation of what they call an ad hoc committee— using a quick procedure—on futures.

We are doing the same in Mexico, with Tecnológico de Monterrey and the Universidad de México—and also with the Universidad de Costa Rica— encouraging and generating enthusiasm for those parliaments to establish their own futures committees.

THE CHAIR.— I will mention a few things we forgot, simply so that they are noted.

We will have some guests: a group of around twenty-five young people who have been specially invited through the political parties to participate. If there is room for them in the first gallery, fine; otherwise, that is no problem, because there will be some summit-related side events, duly identified, which may be organized by civil society organizations. They will have a separate category and, as I said, if they fit in the first gallery, fine, but there is no problem if we have to seat them in the second. These are people who are also included in the summit's activities.

Any questions about operational matters? Today's meeting is about operations.

MR. BRANDO.— I must admit that I do not understand what is meant by platforms and panels.

THE CHAIR.— In the Chamber of the House of Representatives, there are, along the sides, what you might call curved rows of seats, where ministers sit. When we use those platforms or curved rows for panels, we will need three microphones for the four or five panelists. For sessions such as the opening ceremony, we will have the fifteen places on each side for the officials who normally sit there.

This team will be working full time next week, available to answer any questions. I see Flavio Caiafa and Rafael Sotelo here; they will give us a great deal of help in preparing the group moderation. That is an issue outside this operational group's remit, but it will be essential to the event. The moderators will play an absolutely decisive leading role in capturing the contributions made when parliamentarians actually take part. We should also say that parliamentarians will have very few opportunities to participate in the other activities, given the time available. So the main opportunity for parliamentarians to contribute will be in the groups, the workshops. Naturally, moderating an ordinary group is different from moderating parliamentarians, who have their own customs and prerogatives. That is why we have asked a carefully selected group of leading organizations in our country to help us organize and conduct the group work. I thank them in advance and wish to place that on record in the verbatim transcript. Their participation is essential. At 15:00, we have our first meeting with the moderators, and another tomorrow at 11:00. That is a separate matter, which we did not include in this group because it will be primarily technical.

With that, I declare the meeting closed. I remain available for any clarifications, questions or inquiries.

*(The time is
14:06).*

