



SPECIAL COMMISSION ON FUTURES

(Session held on August 26, 2021).

MR. PRESIDENT. -If there is a quorum, the session is open.

(It's 12:14).

- Be aware of an entered matter.

(It is given as follows).

«The Directorate General of Cultural Affairs of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs invites you to the 12th session of the Intergovernmental Committee on Bioethics (ICB), which will be held online on 23 and 24 September 2021.»

- I would like the committee to discuss three issues today.

One of them is more urgent, which is related to the event of Future Day, which, by law, is on Monday, September 27. As you may recall, the law established that its celebration takes place on the last Monday of September; therefore, we cannot change that date.

Secondly, I would like to exchange ideas on a proposal for capacity building for this work in the Special Commission on Futures. At the School of Government we have decided that the members of this commission –of course, also through party quotas– have priority in registering people who will undergo this training.

Thirdly, we have a proposal, on which I would at least like to have an initial exchange, regarding the possibility of holding a first meeting of futures commissions in the region; in principle, it could be in Latin America, where there are some futures commissions. Many members of other parliaments, when they found out that we were launching this commission, proposed to us to hold a first meeting. With this, we would also be ahead of other international meetings that are going to take place next year. For example, we have an invitation to participate in the European autumn of next year - I think it would be in September - in a first world meeting of futures commissions to be held in Helsinki. We received the invitation and it said "autumn", so I suppose it will be in September or October of next year. With this meeting we would have a preview and

We would hold a first meeting of Latin American commissions here in Uruguay. This depends on the health issue, but I think it is a good idea to be implemented.

On Future Day, to be celebrated – I repeat – on September 27, according to the law, that is, the last Monday of September. Before the commission was set up, this celebration was organised by the presidents of the chambers - I believe that at one point it was the president of the House of Representatives and, at another, the president of the General Assembly, continuing with a habitual practice - and now it is our turn. In this sense, we informed both the president of the General Assembly and the president of the House of Representatives of our idea of taking charge and, of course, of counting on their support and the participation they wish to have.

In this regard, we brought a draft that would serve as a proposal to commemorate that day. We asked accountant Bruno Gili to help us put together the draft, taking into account that he represents Uruguay in a world forum that holds this type of event on a daily basis. Given his experience, we thought it appropriate and useful to ask for his collaboration. In short, we were working on this plan – draft – a copy of which we delivered to each of the legislators.

Basically, it would be a full day, starting at 09:00 and The forum would end at 19:00. We would have one-hour panels; the first would start at 09:30, the second at 10:30 and the third at 11:45. There would be three panels in the morning and three in the afternoon, in which the topics of this type of forum would be addressed. As you can see in the material provided, the panels would be the following. First: “Challenges for Uruguay in the face of globalization; the scientific-technological revolution and climate change”; second: “The fourth industrial revolution: the knowledge economy”; third: “Opportunities and risks of the agro-export industrial chain and development potential of a life sciences industry in Uruguay”; fourth: “Tensions and trends of globalization. Challenges in terms of sustainability, equity, efficiency and governance”; fifth: “Society and human capital”. We have highlighted the topic in red because we thought it would be a more appropriate title: “Sociocultural transformations and the challenges they present to society. Uruguay in action to adapt to a world in profound and rapid change”; and the sixth and last panel would be: “Opportunities and challenges of social and environmental sustainability for Uruguay in a context of worrying climate change and demographic challenges”. We would end with a space for final reflections, as a kind of conclusion or as a way of recapitulating the main points of each panel.

These are the areas relating to future issues on which discussion is taking place. chatting.

There we made a proposal for panelists that, as you will see, is very varied and plural in every sense, or at least that was what we tried to do. It is also plural and diverse in what has to do with the different generations, the areas of knowledge, and the public and the private. The legislators will see that we included the

Rector of the University, scientists from GACH who have been leading the pandemic issue, academics and experts who have worked in previous governments on these issues of foresight, such as Fernando Isabella, who was leading prospective planning at the OPP during the previous five years, and Sebastián Torres, who was working on prospective issues in the planning of agro-industrial chains. As you can see, we also included technological entrepreneurs, people from science, from the Pasteur Institute and others.

We also suggested that the event be moderated by journalists who are addressing these issues in their programs, so they are interested and they know them. We are simply putting forward names. We have spoken with them and we count on their acceptance. Of course, we are *ad referendum* of this commission and open – as it cannot be otherwise – to include others that you think can help us moderate these panels, and it does not have to be just one. For the conclusions we can also include other journalists that you consider can give an account of what was raised there.

As you can see, for each panel we made a summary of what the topic to be discussed would be or what it would consist of. The panels would last one hour, so the panelists would not have more than ten minutes – a very short time – to present, meaning that a more provocative dynamic would be followed, tending to contribute topics to an agenda that we would then have to collect as input for the work of the commission.

Also, as a proposal – we will see today if we can do it or leave it for another time – during the break, between 12:45 and 15:00, a working lunch would be held with the commission and the UNESCO Chair expert, Lydia Garrido – based on the framework agreement we have signed – would enlighten us on the methodological proposal that the Chair is using for the future topic. We are talking about a proposal and, therefore, the opportunity to learn, exchange, ask questions and begin to perfect and put together. It may happen that there is part of the methodological proposal that we agree with and another that we find more difficult to apply or even understand, but we will adapt it, naturally, to what seems possible, viable and convenient. In short, as it will be a full-day session, we propose to hold the working lunch in which the UNESCO expert, Lydia Garrido, will be able to make a presentation and we will exchange opinions. We think this idea might be useful or convenient.

In turn, we could take advantage of the opportunity to invite other organizations that have shown interest in participating, such as, for example, the UNDP, the United Nations Office – which is naturally working on these issues as it does every year –, Ambassador Alejandra De Bellis – who until a few weeks ago represented Uruguay at UNESCO in Paris and is very well versed in these issues – as well as some representative of the IDB or the CAF who, naturally, are always preparing this type of study. I repeat that we can invite them and exchange opinions or, otherwise, we can exchange opinions with Lydia Garrido in a meeting.

our own sphere, let's say. It just seems to me that we could take advantage of that space to dialogue.

I would like to know what you think about this proposal. We don't have to close the issue today, but we should have an idea of whether we are going down this path.

We can also integrate the participation of each one of us into the panels. Personally, I put together this outline because I thought it was perhaps better to listen than to intervene, but the proposal is open. It is quite dense due to the number of topics, but if we left one out, they would ask us why this one and not that one. The only one that we did explicitly leave out and that I would like to be able to address quickly in this commission is the one that has been called algorithmic democracy. It is, in some way, about how all this digitalization is affecting democracy, from the choice of topics for public debate to all those topics where, undoubtedly, today the large platforms and digitalization are having an impact. These are very recent issues, very incipient, and it seems to me that we have to be the first to address them. At the same time, it seems to me that it is a topic that requires an exclusive approach, so we could leave it for that meeting of the Latin American Futures Commissions, where that would be an important issue to deal with and, even, some expert in that matter could be brought in. I repeat that it is very recent, but I think it is something we should analyze.

I leave this topic to you for consideration.

MR. OLMOS. -I just read the proposal. I think it is a good starting point for a first meeting. In addition, I see that it is organized from the general to the specific, branching out at the end into several areas; therefore, there is a very general beginning and then it gradually becomes more focused. I think that our participation should perhaps be – and very limited – in the final reflections; there two or three of us could speak. In short, I think it is worth listening and I agree that there is a good academic-political balance of thematic areas in what is proposed.

In principle, I would go ahead with this and empower the president to make the adjustments that may be necessary, given that I do not know if all these people will be able to participate on the date in question. Perhaps we should have some degree of agility in that regard.

(Supported).

MR. PRESIDENT. -We welcome those who are joining us via Zoom: legislators Melazzi and Valdomir and legislator Rodríguez.

MR. VALDOMIR. -Greetings to my colleagues on the committee.

Congratulations on the first preview that you are presenting for September 27th.

In the same sense of what legislator Olmos said, I believe that the synthesis, As a suggestion, it has to be done by the politicians, as the closing of the day. If it is not possible with more than one or two people, we think it is right that it is you as the president of the commission and the vice-president who can officiate as the closing or summary of a day that, as we see, is very rich and powerful. I think that we, as politicians, have to take up the challenge – let's say – of making the general summary of a very extensive day, rich in diverse approaches.

As a second point, on the understanding that this is a working draft – Since we consider that 90% or 95% of the discussion is quite broad and balanced, we suggest that the last panel of the day, which is very complete –because it not only addresses the issue of climate change, but also demographic challenges–, should include the vision of another demographer, which would be ideal. I would suggest the name of the economist Juan José Calvo, who specializes in economic demography. He has been a representative of the United Nations in matters of population in the region and was the one who wrote about the demographic scenarios of Uruguay in 2050, a 2011 study that was also done with the support of the United Nations. There, some scenarios of the demographic pyramid of Uruguay are proposed in different scenarios –birth rate, mortality, etc.–, I repeat, in 2050. I believe that he is one of the people who knows the most about demographic structure, so it seems to me that he could be a good name –if he were here– to include in the last panel.

It is clear that names can be added or modified later depending on the availability of the panelists, because we know that they have a busy schedule and it is difficult for them to be there on September 27. Now, as a start to work, it is a good draft and a good proposal.

We leave these two ideas to the consideration of the members of the commission.

MR. PRESIDENT. -I think both of the legislator's assessments are very good.

I agree that the final part should be done with several members; we have to see how many we can include, it will probably be more than one, maybe even three. To the extent that everyone should be brief, we should be too, because the previous panelists will have a maximum of ten minutes. I think it is a very good idea to invite the economist Juan José Calvo. I don't know if he is in Uruguay, but if not, we could arrange his participation via Zoom. We will try to make it in person, but the exception confirms the rule, so I consider that this is good and I will note it. If anyone has direct contact or access to the economist, I will be grateful; otherwise, we will do it ourselves.

MR. CAL.-I do not know if the proposal is yours, Mr. President, but I congratulate the idea because I think it is a very good start for this commission, as it sets out the main points that we all expect from the Special Commission on Futures, or at least what I expect.

I support the two suggestions made by legislators Valdomir and Olmos. Firstly, I think it is good to keep this list open in case any more speakers can be added.

Secondly, I understand that the ideal would be for the closure to be carried out by the members of this commission and for you to lead it as president.

Thank you so much.

MRS. MATO. -I appreciate the work that has been done; the President has certainly had a lot to do with this.

I am going to make some considerations regarding the exhibitors, beyond I must admit that I do not know all the names – they have just arrived – but I see that the colleagues from the Frente Amplio bench already know who they are because they made contributions, as is the case of legislator Valdomir.

In my opinion, especially in the first presentation, I think that in the present and the future, the topics and the people who are in front of that presentation must be taken into account, that is to say, women must be present. I say this because, specifically, in this case, they are all men and a female moderator; and being a moderator is not the same as speaking. Some similar issues are seen, but at the beginning I think that this issue, which is not minor, should be taken into account.

On the other hand, I think it is important to have a working lunch during the break so that we can also have exchanges. I understand that it is very good to work with Lydia Garrido and, perhaps, with some others, like the ones you suggested. In any case, we should moderate the number of guests, try to make sure that there are not too many of us so that the exchange is juicy without generating a conflict due to the number of people present and that this does not allow us to take advantage of it. I think that it is good to have a day of listening and also of thinking, and to engage in it during the break.

On the other hand, I also agree with the change of the name "Society and "human capital" to "Sociocultural transformations and the challenges they present to society", which is much better, because I believe that society and human capital do not speak of the future and it would be like being stuck in time. Therefore, I think the name change is correct.

Regarding the final reflections, I fully agree with the legislator. Valdomir, in the fact that, without a doubt, the reflection must be political. Obviously, after all this day, each one of us must generate a synthesis. I think the list of people proposed by legislator Valdomir, the president and vice-president of the commission, is correct.

MR. PRESIDENT. -I think it's a good idea. We're going to integrate women into the panels, because, as the lady legislator says, that first panel was made up of only men. We're going to work along those lines.

As for the working lunch, I agree with limiting the number of participants to give us more opportunities to understand the proposal and to be able to ask all the questions about the proposed methodology and to see how we can adapt it to our reality. Perhaps there could be an extra person; I gave the example of Ambassador De Bellis because she represented us, at least in the last five years on this topic, before UNESCO in Paris, and she is very well versed in the subject, so she would also help us. I think the current ambassador is Gabriela Civila, who replaced her, and it is much better for the ambassador to do it directly than for us to do it. So, perhaps, we could include her, since she likes these topics very much. In fact, she was the one who sent us an invitation, which you will have seen, for the Ibero-American Bioethics Conference and, perhaps, she could accompany us that day, and not much more. The idea is to be able to work and if it takes an hour or a little more, we will handle it and not invite anyone else, except someone who occurs to us who can help us with that issue.

MR. CARBALLO. -Regarding the first point on the agenda, I think that the proposal we are receiving today is a good initiative, because, ultimately, it is where some of the issues should go.

Personally, I would like to focus on issues related to work, because this is not reflected in the big titles, although it does appear in the workshop from 16:00 to 17:00 when, at the end of the description, work and employment of Uruguayan citizens are mentioned. I think this is one of the central issues and we should look for a way to give it a little more strength. Although I do not know all the panelists, I assume that they have already made contact or confirmed their presence.

MR. PRESIDENT. -That is quite correct. Sometimes I take some things for granted, but we must bear in mind that this is the first meeting. As you will remember, we initially announced that in the first year of the commission's work we were going to focus on the future of work or the work of the future, so I did not want to give it too much strength here and I did not include any expert – of those who will probably work with us during the year – in this event. That was the reason and, in fact, what the deputy says is perfect in terms of the lack of emphasis on a key issue. As I said, I took away emphasis because we are going to be on that issue all year. At the same time, I did not want to "burn out" – in quotation marks – people who are going to be working with us at that event, even because of a question of protagonism and sensitivities. In any case, if the legislator Deputy Carballo thinks it is better to give it more emphasis, we do so.

MR. CARBALLO. -I just wanted to put it on record regarding this particular issue.

I would now like to address another matter, but in this case I would ask that no shorthand be taken.

(The shorthand version is temporarily suspended.)

MR. PRESIDENT. -We can continue to move forward with this draft framework plan, integrating some of the adjustments that have been raised at this meeting. Of course, we still have time to invite the panelists we deem appropriate.

Naturally, we should already begin with the organizational part to prepare for that day. The day would take place in the Senate's Antechamber and lunch would be held somewhere else, which could be a large room, such as the Events Room of the Salón de los Pasos Perdidos or the Pasaje Acuña de Figueroa, which has been arranged for a work of this nature.

We should hold, if you like, a special session of the commission, prior to September 27, to make the final adjustments. We are now convening the commission on the last Thursday of each month, but this time we should set a meeting for the week prior to the 27th, on Tuesday 21st or Thursday 23rd, which are the least complicated days for the members of this commission. Personally, I think it would be best if we voted on the WhatsApp group; we are talking about those of us who can meet doing so on Tuesday 21st or Thursday 23rd to finish defining the details of the organization.

MR. CAL.-Some members of the group and individually have already expressed their opinion, so I would like to point out that Tuesday would be better for me personally. I don't know if the idea is to establish the working regime of the commission, but if the majority of the members find it better to meet another day, I will adapt.

MR. PRESIDENT. -In principle, we have set this extraordinary meeting for Tuesday 21st at 12:00. I think it would be better to have more days in case any adjustments are necessary and that way we would have a week.

As for the other two points, we do not need to define them; I just wanted to share that information. You have already received a proposal – and now we will send it to those who are connected via Zoom – which has already been agreed upon and defined by the School of Government, through which training on future issues is offered. It is a very demanding training, of very good quality, which basically has to do with the methodologies that exist today to anticipate and have knowledge of everything that futures commissions are doing in the world. There will even be some virtual interventions with experts who are working on these issues and can give us a review of the points, how far they are being studied and how far the studies on the subject go. It is a very, very good proposal that the School of Government finances. What we defined was that the members of this commission would have priority. So, the idea is to start the first week of October with the same integration quota that we have here. There is a kind of quota standard for parties and sectors and, first of all, we would take the quotas, in principle, there is a maximum of twenty, which we could stretch a little more, but the fifteen members who are here would have priority.

The course is really, really good. It is demanding, but those who take it know what we are talking about. So, you can take a look at it.

On the other hand, there is already a proposal for about fourteen sessions that I will send you because I do not have the copies now. Since we have flexibility, we could start the first or second week of October; we have time to think about it.

The other issue, which I think is a good idea, is something we are thinking about. We would be the first to hold a meeting with the future commissions of Latin America. Probably, later on, some Europeans would want to join as guests, but it would be the first meeting of this nature. We would be planning to hold it for mid-November and it does not have to be very formal. We would have to move forward with the inquiries. The future commissions that are already formed are very few, but there are several in formation. We could also issue an open invitation to each Parliament to hold a day or a day and a half of work.

MR. CARBALLO. -As I said a moment ago, I agree with both issues in particular. I think that the courses and the School of Government will be good. I find it interesting to have greater knowledge of the issues that we are going to address and that there is a criterion for giving priority to the members of the commission. That seems right to me.

I also agree that an activity of this nature could be carried out in November. It is true that there are some committees that have been working for some time, so they are a few months or years ahead of us. I think it would be good if we had this accumulated knowledge in the country and that this rich exchange that takes place between legislators would be very interesting. It would also be interesting for the parliaments that are forming this type of committee. I share this opinion and I look favorably on the possibility of generating a meeting environment with these characteristics.

MR. OLMOS. -I agree with the idea of doing it, but I warn that we would have to resolve it now, because if we leave it for the 20th of September, when we hold the meeting, it will already be October and we will not get anything done in November. Doing something like this, however small, requires organisation. In addition, the guests will have to reserve the date. Therefore, I would be inclined to approve the idea, to authorise the presidency to consult with the members of the commission and to move forward with its execution. Otherwise, I think we will not get there in time.

MR. PRESIDENT. -Based on the proposal of Mr. Olmos, legislator, and with the consent of the other members of the commission, we would approve the holding of the event, naturally, subject to the health issue, since the presence would be very important to be able to freely exchange ideas.

(Supported).

– So, the presidency is entrusted with advancing organizational issues and Set the date. In principle, it would last a day and a half, so it would start in the afternoon and end the next day. The members of the commission will be kept informed about the progress of the event.

MRS. RODRIGUEZ. -I fully agree with what was said by those who spoke before me.

I would like to congratulate you on the work carried out and on the programme, which has been very well prepared.

I agree that the closing should be political and be carried out by Mr. President and Madam Vice President – that would be ideal – and, at the same time, leave on the agenda the possibility of incorporating some points, subject to consensus among the members of the commission.

The panel scheduled between 4:00 and 5:00 p.m. to address the topic “Society and Human Capital” is extremely in-depth. I do not have any names to propose at this time, but I do think that someone with a more human rights perspective could be added, because the changes in the dynamics of our societies constitute an extremely profound issue and we are all committed to and involved in that regard.

I would like to clarify that I have just become aware of the material. I propose to continue moving forward and most likely later we will be able to present some name that can be agreed upon.

Overall, I fully agree with what has been proposed and I congratulate the President for the work done.

MR. PRESIDENT. -I think it is a good idea to give a human rights focus to this panel and to look for a panellist who identifies with the topic. Of course the list is open, but I also take on the task.

The meeting is adjourned.

(It is 1:08 p.m.)

Montevideo, Uruguay.Legislative Branch.