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SPECIAL COMMISSION ON FUTURES

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**UNITED NATIONS PROGRAMME EXECUTIVE BOARD
FOR DEVELOPMENT (UNDP)**

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Shorthand version of the day's session
December 12, 2023

ATTENDANCE

Preside : Mr. Legislator Rodrigo Goñi (President)

Member : Mrs. Legislator Carmen Sanguinetti

Guests : By the Executive Board of the United Nations Development Programme
Development (UNDP):
Mahsa Jafari, Dalita Balassanian, Horst Rutsch, Tanvi Mani, Maritza Chan
Valverde, Martin Kimani Mbugua, Muhammad Abdul Muhith, Sergiy
Kyslytsya and Alfonso Fernández de Castro

Secretariat : Mr. Vladimir De Bellis (Secretary) and Mrs. Sofia Martorano
(Assistant Secretary)

SPECIAL COMMISSION ON FUTURES

(Meeting on December 12, 2023)

(The Board of Directors of the United Nations Development Programme, UNDP, attends)

MR. PRESIDENT (Rodrigo Goñi Reyes).-If there is a quorum, the meeting is open.

(It is 12:30 p.m.)

— — We have a fifteen-minute presentation and then we will visit the Vice President of the Republic, who also presides over the General Assembly. It is the same person.

First of all, thank you very much for your support, which was very important and relevant to developing our experience - let me introduce Lydia Garrido, who is our consultant - and also for the support of the UNDP.

I asked Lydia to give us a brief presentation on our process, which has been a short process. The Special Committee on the Futures of Parliament started in 2021; it has only been two years. We believe that we have been able to gain rapid experience. We have had very good results, not only within this Parliament but at the level of other parliaments, for example at the recent Summit that we held in September.

I present to you Senator Carmen Sanguinetti.

MRS. GARRIDO (Lydia) (English language interpretation).-The presentation is in Spanish, but we are going to do it in English.

(The exhibition is accompanied by a Power Point presentation)

— — This is a very brief presentation on the activities from 2021 until now.

The main objective of the Futures Commission is to contribute to the Parliament of the 21st century, focusing on anticipatory governance as a collective intelligence system. The basis is that decision-makers have quality information, as well as strengthening anticipatory skills. For this purpose, we have strong innovative methodologies to build on a scientific basis. These are processes that aim intensely, in their methodology, to create collective knowledge and to design products that allow us to show how we articulate people and purposes, trying to build knowledge and information as the key to the approach.

This is something that started in September 2021 and here we are immersed in that process.

Here is a photo from the Summit. We called all 2022-2023 parliamentarians from the world's parliaments for the Futures Commission and we are very proud of the results. We have more than three hundred parliamentarians and experts from almost seventy countries and also six hundred participants in parallel activities. We also have

representatives of academia from our country and other countries, companies, actors expert in artificial intelligence and multilateral organizations.

In this map we can see the countries that participated and we can see that we have a very strong participation from all over the world.

We will go through this very quickly to show you that we started organizing the Summit in October last year. So, we had a year to organize it. It was an extremely important process of collective intelligence to strengthen networks and raise awareness of anticipatory skills, the practice of anticipatory governance.

Just so you can see the images: here, apart from working on the Summit, we are working in parallel to achieve some kind of strong knowledge for the study of the Futures Commission regarding what is being developed on the future of work and the work of the future, in this case, on the theme of the Summit - which was artificial intelligence - under the title of the Futures Commission in the context of the evolution of artificial intelligence.

So, we have a lot of ideas to contribute to the study of work, including artificial intelligence.

A new Summit is planned for 2024 with the systematization of all the knowledge we were able to collect.

During the Summit we also had keynote speakers and organised workshops and meetings, which are also important.

We will be finishing up by obtaining the latest publications on the work and also with a program to continue training in anticipatory governance.

MRS. SANGUINETTI (Carmen) (English language interpretation).-First of all, thank you for being here, and sorry for the delay, because I just finished another Commission.

I would like to add a couple of things. I think it is important to have the perspective that in the Uruguayan Parliament the Futures Commission is one of the commissions where the best practices are taking place. We have a scale as a country that allows us to maintain very fluid conversations with the academy. I think it was an excellent example for all the work we do here and, certainly, I would like to support what Lydia Garrido and Rodrigo Goñi said in the Summit commission, with people from so many countries. What we were able to see in Finland was an open invitation. It was very inspiring and the level of conversation was very interesting. I think that the bar we set was very high. It is very interesting that we are working with a view to next year.

Thank you for the support and the impact of the work you are doing. Of course this transcends our country and was very inspiring for the rest of the world.

MR. PRESIDENT.-We did a short process, because we started it in 2021, but as you saw in the presentation, it has been very intense and productive. The objectives we set were met. We were

We are learning positive effects that we had not anticipated as the most important. One of them is the one we started during lunch: at the parliamentary level, being able to incorporate other actors that are very important in today's world - for example, the entire ecosystem of artificial intelligence, new technologies, which we permanently integrate into the Committee - but also the new generations that - we are convinced - push a lot. They push politically. They have a lot of strength. And since these are the issues that matter most to them, they have really managed to make an extension at the level of society, which I believe is an example to follow. In the committees on futures, we must integrate more of the new generations, because they know more than us about everything that is coming and, in addition, because today they have that impressive strength at the level of communication.

The other issue we shared with you is the following. In a polarized world - parliaments are very polarized - this Futures Commission allows us to put forward issues that force us to come to an agreement. That is one of the great advantages we have seen here.

Finally - and for this we would like the UNDP to continue to support us - anticipating is not possible by improvisation. A methodology must be used that must be learned. Some can learn it more easily. There are parliaments in developed countries that may have an easier time learning this. In Latin America, for example, many parliaments have asked us to transmit to them what we have been learning. Why? To carry out this dynamic of anticipation that, I repeat, has methodology requirements that we have been learning and, above all, applying. In other words: we have demonstrated in two years that it is a real possibility to do what we are doing. We are going to continue. Right now, in 2023, the evolution of artificial intelligence exploded. This allows us to address a huge number of parliamentary and social issues in terms of anticipation. Uruguay has been promoting, especially at the UN level, that parliaments, as you said, join this discussion. It is key. Why? Because of what is happening to us in Latin America. When some issues are discussed only at the level of executive governments, there are perspectives that are not on the table and what was discussed at a wonderful Summit does not reach the rest of society. Parliaments have that possibility. That is why Uruguay, I repeat, made a proposal on Monday, December 11, for parliaments to be integrated through committees for the future. There are already parliamentary groups in several countries that are working in this way and they are spreading.

That is our experience. We are especially grateful that the UNDP supported us from the very beginning. Why was it important? Not only for the economic reasons, but because it was key to carry out these processes with an external actor who could advise us, not just from Parliament. That is why Lydia Garrido was hired by the UNDP, which gave all the parties a guarantee that the process was being led from there.

That is why we want, at least for one more year - hopefully more - to be able to continue this process with the UNDP, which we could complete by the end of 2024.

MR. FERNANDEZ DE CASTRO (Alfonso).-First of all, I would like to thank President Rodrigo Goñi and Senator Carmen

Sanguinetti. It is a pleasure and an honour for us to be able to accompany this process. As our UNDP Administrator Achim Steiner always says, *A matter of choice* Development is a matter of decisions and in this case Uruguay decided and its decision was to prepare for the future. With that vision it began to walk that path, which in itself has uncertainties, as Lydia Garrido told us. Clearly, we must provide methodology but also courage to be able to venture into a new space. For us, since 2021, the truth is that this has been an honor and, in truth, a learning experience. I think it is important to highlight this fundamental element. It is as we have talked about many times. We hope to be able to contribute but we learn a lot in this joint work that is then part of what we can take to other places, just as we can bring here some other experiences that we have learned in other places.

I believe that today, the lessons we have learned together, such as the approach of bringing in different, differentiated voices - in the first cycle the topic was the future of work and the work of the future - is something that will be under construction. That construction is ongoing and we have to find a way to synthesize it and share it. At the last Futures Summit, one of the elements that was already being worked on was the topic of the guide. It is a guide that, as such, will be under construction, according to the lessons learned and the network. There is a commitment to put it at the service or disposal of other countries, through the UNDP, which is still a development network that belongs to the countries and that is nourished by the experiences and visions of the different countries. So you can count on our commitment to continue supporting you.

Thank you so much.

MR. KIMANI MBUGUA (Martin) (English interpretation).-I do not want to go on too long, but I do want to thank the legislators for their presence in the People's House.

I think I do politics and you do politics. In another sense, when politics becomes politicking, there can be problems.

I would like to understand what the Futures Commission does, what specific legislation is like when it comes to finding answers to what people want today, with a view to the future, how they navigate politically and with what means they operate.

MRS. SANGUINETTI (Carmen) (English language interpretation).-It's an interesting question. When I started participating in the Futures Commission, I remember that at many events this idea arose of thinking about the quickest way to connect with the future of the people, not just with the people who are in the street, with their children and grandchildren, but with the generation of the future. At the UNDP level, there is interesting work around the need to support an agenda of issues that impact future generations. There are other things that can be said in relation to your question, but that is the most concrete way to connect with the future.

MR. PRESIDENT.-There are two major areas to bring the future to the present, for example in terms of the laws that are being discussed. In this year 2023, we discussed and approved the reform of social security. We had worked in the Futures Commission on what a reform implies.

a society that is living longer and longer. This was one of the conclusions of the first report. If we had seen that we are living longer and longer in society - this was the case in the first report - when we discussed the reform of social security, the whole Parliament had already had access to this evidence and had a clearer idea of the need to see how to address social security in societies where people are living longer and longer.

So, we imbued many of the laws that are being discussed with that vision of what is to come. What did we bring? We had societies that live longer and longer, therefore, the reform of social security was tinged with this report.

Another of the conclusions we had in our work was that we had to necessarily move, in society, towards permanent learning. So, we were involved in bills that reformulate the learning institutions that Uruguay already has for retraining - which was more partial, for workers who become unemployed, who are a very small segment - so that it is for society as a whole and on a permanent basis, that is to say: what was a small institute to retrain workers who fell into unemployment, today we are reformulating it so that they are institutions that have to be in permanent service of learning for the whole society.

Many people have been here. The first report had more than 150 of the most relevant actors in Uruguay who signed it. All these truths, from the future to the present, allowed us to have that basis for the legislation that was already in place and other legislation that had to be created. It is very important, because we began to discuss the legislation with that view of what is coming, with emerging trends. All the legislation in progress for digital regulation, including to establish a framework linked to artificial intelligence, is because our reports from the Futures Commission also showed that what is coming very soon are these great changes or trends.

I would say that it ends up having a much greater impact than we would have thought on important reforms, which would otherwise have been blocked. In addition, since all the political parties are part of it, we are more willing to tackle more ambitious legislation that, without these reports, would be more daring. Proposing important investments by the State, when apparently they are not the most immediate need, if they appear here, worked on by all the parties, we take it as a very close reality. I don't know if I could answer.

The vice president is waiting for us.

MRS. CHAN VALVERDE (Maritza).-Costa Rica and Uruguay have an extremely low birth rate, but when we talk about future generations, we are not talking, in our case, about young people or children, but about older adults, who will be the majority. How have you incorporated this dimension into the Futures Commission, in relation to a population that will be predominantly elderly?

From what I have observed, you are heading towards a National Plan for Artificial Intelligence, with the capacity to become the Center of

Artificial Intelligence in the Americas, as indicated by the UNDP Artificial Intelligence Readiness Index. How have you been able to work towards that Index and consolidate it by reducing the digital divide? From what we saw and heard, with the Ceibal Plan and the Ibirapitá Plan, you now have 83% internet connection throughout the country. You are working towards reducing the gap. Those are very high numbers. What lessons could the rest of the countries have to do what you are doing?

MRS. SANGUINETTI.-With *One Laptop per Child* Uruguay has taken the lead and has become a case study for the rest of the world. I think we have a success story there.

In relation to long-lived societies, the truth is that we learned with Lydia that it is not necessarily a bad thing, like the stigma it has. I am speaking here in a personal capacity, because I have studied a lot about the issue of policies that have failed almost everywhere in the world in relation to the attempt to increase the birth rate. I think that France is the only country that has not managed to reverse without stabilizing. I think that the solution there has more to do with immigration. We should aim in that direction. Obviously there is a certain number of people in the world and there will be many countries with the same policy, but this government has given some signals in that sense, which I personally think should be further investigated. I think it is going in that direction.

I also believe that there is a paradigm shift with regard to long-lived societies. We have made some timid progress since this Commission, but there is still a long way to go.

MR. PRESIDENT.-The Vice President of the Republic is waiting for us, and we asked her to take a break from her schedule to receive us. So, if you like, we can continue talking with the Vice President.

Thank you so much.

The meeting is

adjourned. (It is 15:53)

