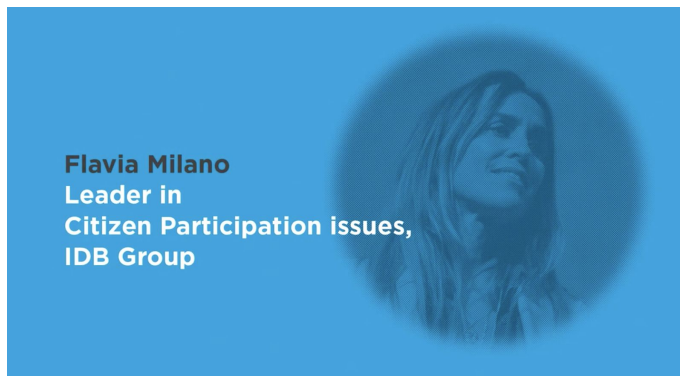




Click on each expert's name to read their answers to the audience's questions:

- [Flavia Milano, Leader in Citizen Participation Issues, IDB Group](#)
- [Graham Watkins, Climate Change Division Chief, a.i., IDB](#)
- [Laura Secada, General Director of Climate Change and Desertification, Ministry of the Environment of Peru](#)
- [Jairo Quiros-Tortos, Professor and Expert in Electric Mobility, University of Costa Rica](#)



Flavia Milano
Leader in
Citizen Participation issues,
IDB Group

Could you mention an experience in which a civil society organization has successfully alerted or stopped harmful effects on the planet?

This happens daily at a local level.

Thanks to Artificial Intelligence, we can find scalable climate initiatives [shared by people](#) and mobilize human and financial resources. The

perception of a problem as real is what makes the efforts to flatten the COVID-19 curve work out. As long as the climate threat is perceived as remote, the behaviors will not change. People's behaviors change when they feel that something in their own lives is being compromised. Understanding perceptions around climate issues and people's need to [coordinate a sustainable effort](#), starting in one's own community, will make the difference. Other examples would be movements like #FridaysForFuture in which activists have organized and generated momentum to influence decision-making processes.

You mention that technologies can be a powerful tool to advance climate agendas. How can we be a part of this from my hometown, avoiding the State's or companies' control through the technologies I use?

The ethical use of data is a shared concern and matter of debate. We work with governments, private sector, and civil society to keep the highest standards. The fact that we have a visible civic identity, and now a digital identity, is not necessarily a bad thing. During the pandemic, people turned massively to the internet, [sharing data](#), which allowed for listening and structuring the emergencies in real time. Issues like the "para-pandemic" of domestic violence or food security, and the positive impacts on the environment, came to light. The way is long, the risks require constant updates. However, this new virtual closeness is critical to flatten the other curve, the climate change curve.



It could be argued that times of crises are not for open discussions and seeking the participation of a wide pool of stakeholders. Instead, we may need clear, top-down direction from decision-makers. What is your take, in the context of climate change emergencies and the current pandemic?

Times of crisis need direction from decision-makers, but they are the most important times to listen to people's needs and concerns to deliver the right decisions. Listening to those that need support and using knowledge from multiple sources including academia and other civil society organizations gives decision-makers information to respond to crises. What may need to change in a crisis are the decision-making structures—e.g., shifting from hierarchical to non-hierarchical networks—to allow rapid and fluid two-way flows of information.

On climate change issues, big companies have a very strong lobbying power. Also, not all companies have the financial conditions to readapt to technological change. How do you think the citizens can help reverse climate change in this context?

The citizenry has a lot of change-making power. With a good scientific base and organization, citizens, civil organizations and universities have the power to generate awareness about behaviour and consumption changes regarding services and products that contribute to climate change. Changes in the demand structure can impact both the type and scale of business in which the private sector decides to invest. This can also impact the regulatory and institutional structures that will enable the entrance and financing of private projects aligned with a resilient, zero-emissions economy. But these changes may give rise to new resistances that must be managed to ensure a just transition.



Laura Secada
General Director
of Climate Change
and Desertification,
Ministry of the
Environment of Peru

What would you say to colleagues from other countries or institutions about the budgetary tensions involved in institutionalizing processes of citizen engagement? It is not always feasible, even if it is "the right thing to do".

Citizen engagement is not only the right thing to do, it is also a right that provides legitimacy and

support for integrated climate change management. This right is recognized in the Peruvian national Framework Law on Climate Change and its Regulations. Internationally, the Paris Agreement promotes people's participation and public access to information. At the regional level, we have the Escazú Agreement, which is expected to be ratified soon in the case of Peru.

In this regard, we share some best practices to address the budgetary tension of citizen engagement:

- Promoting collaborative work with all government levels, so that we can share the costs of participation.
- Promoting articulation with NGOs so that they support in calls and specific actions.
- Generating spaces for participation in a decentralized way. Before the COVID-19, through the Dialoguemos ("Let's talk") Program, we have brought the State closer to the different regions in order to avoid long distances of travel.
- Seeing the generation of virtual participation brought to us by COVID-19 as an opportunity and proposing virtual processes, so as to reduce costs. The elaboration process of the National Adaptation Plan of Peru is a clear example of this, since it is the first participatory, multi-sector, multi-level and multi-stakeholder process that has been built entirely in a virtual way.
- Within the framework of the COP on Climate Change, various public stakeholders (other than the environmental authorities) and non-State stakeholders (such as representatives of indigenous peoples) have participated in parallel events, thereby strengthening the ties of the multi-stakeholder process. In this area, international cooperation has been a strategic ally.



Jairo Quiros-Tortos
Professor and Expert
in Electric Mobility,
University of
Costa Rica



In my country, universities have a lot of knowledge that can guide public policy in this area, but there is not the necessary political will to move forward. What do you recommend?

Political will is important to link academia with government. In our case, we are pleased to be able to help the Ministry of the Environment

and Energy. My suggestion is to seek an approach that shows the potential benefit for both parties. While academia develops methodologies, algorithms, models, and other tools to inform decision makers, institutions receive input on the latest science for decision making. Another aspect to consider is the scientific support that a study developed by universities can provide to governments. The academia-government partnership is a win-win for everyone, which leads to global benefits for the country.

Find the videos with the full speeches of the four experts at [WiConnect](#)