

## PUBLIC STATEMENT

*"The technological impulse in access to information as a tool for inclusion, citizen participation and accountability in democratic societies"*

The Assembly of the Transparency and Access to Information Network (RTA), meeting in Panama City, on November 8, 2022 in the framework of its XXIII Meeting, issues the following Declaration:

**Considering** that the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the American Declaration of the Rights and Duties of Man determine that everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression, and that this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference, to seek, and to receive information and opinions, and to disseminate them, without limitation of frontiers, through any means of expression.

**Considering** that the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the American Convention on Human Rights provide that the right to freedom of expression includes freedom to seek, receive, and impart information and ideas of all kinds, regardless of frontiers, whether orally, in writing, in print, or in the art, or by any other procedure of your choice.

**Recognizing** that the right of access to information is not only indispensable to promote more just, peaceful and inclusive institutions, but is also a key element to advance in the fulfillment of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations (UN).

**Recalling** the relevance of various international instruments that protect the rights of persons in vulnerable situations, such as the International Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Migrants, the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Inter-American Convention on the Protection of the Human Rights of Older Persons, as well as the Convention of Belém do Pará.

**Recalling** the importance of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, the Guiding Principles on Extreme Poverty and Human Rights and the Yogyakarta Principles.

**Recalling** that this situation of violation of rights has increased as a result of the negative effects and impacts that the multiple global crises have had on the progress of human development, which, according to the United Nations Development Program, has faced significant setbacks to reach the levels of 2016.<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> <https://report.hdr.undp.org/es/intro>

**Recalling** that in the joint statement issued by the International Conference of Information Commissioners (ICIC), within the framework of the XIII Edition of the ICIC, access to information was highlighted as the guiding axis of the use of the digital age for the guarantee of Human Rights, the inclusion of groups in vulnerable situations and the strengthening of democratic institutions in the twenty-first century.

**Considering** that in the framework of the commemoration of the International Day of Universal Access to Information 2022, the Tashkent Declaration was discussed, which seeks to address the new challenges posed by the impact of digitalization, calling on governments to accelerate and improve efforts to close digital gaps and ensure affordable access, Open, secure and high quality to the Internet without restrictions or discrimination. While recognizing the importance of covering the principles of good governance to ensure that public domain information is generated and preserved by developing a sound legal framework.

**Emphasizing** that technological platforms offer important opportunities for sustainable development, the competitiveness of nations and the guarantee of human rights, so that their use in the public sector should be governed by the principles of universality, maximum publicity, responsibility, ethics and accessibility.

**Recalling** that access to information is a democratic tool that allows monitoring and promotes accountability of authorities since it facilitates citizens to know the decisions taken, the activities undertaken and the destination of public resources exercised, as well as participate in decision-making processes and influence performance and public decisions.

**Emphasizing** that the right of access to information is an instrumental prerogative that allows people to obtain reliable, truthful and timely sources of information, as well as to form an opinion on matters of public interest, promoting the integrity, effectiveness and accountability of the authorities.

**Considering** that the adoption and implementation of digital technology tools has the potential to favor the widening of channels and/or mechanisms so that all sectors of the population in equal circumstances know, exercise and appropriate the right of access to information.

## **DECLARE**

1. That the members of the RTA ratify their commitment to consider the importance of innovation and technological developments as tools capable of contributing to ensuring the effective exercise of the right of access to information among citizens of Ibero-America.
2. That the inclusion of collectives/groups in vulnerable situations is an imperative of any regime that prides itself on being truly fair, open and democratic, as well as an essential piece in the construction of equitable, inclusive and more transparent institutions.
3. That the incorporation and innovation of technological schemes and tools are essential for the full exercise of accountability in the Ibero-American region.
4. That, in this context, the members of the RTA ratify the importance of providing effective and timely access to data and information held by the State through the use of innovative technologies and tools that promote monitoring by citizens through accountability.
5. That, the commitment of the members of the RTA to address the challenges in terms of governance and sustainability in our countries, which have impacted on the progress of human development indicators, emphasizing communities and groups in vulnerable conditions with a perspective of multichannel and omnichannel.
6. That, we recognize the importance of accelerating and improving efforts to close digital gaps and ensure that the citizens of Ibero-America have open and quality access to new technologies, without restrictions or political, socioeconomic and cultural barriers that couldn prevent or limit the equal exercise of the right of access to public information.
7. That, in the work of the guarantor bodies, the proper implementation and use of technological instruments has a positive impact on accountability, facilitating the attention of petitions, claims and requirements by citizens, being that the technological transition is a focus of attention to safeguard effective access to information and improve the implementation of public policies in this area.

November, 2022.-