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INTER-AMERICAN ACTION PLAN ON DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE

(Adopted by the Heads of State and Government on June 9, 2022)

We, the Heads of State and Government of the Americas, meeting in Los Angeles, California, United States of America, June 8-10, 2022, for the Ninth Summit of the Americas,

UNDERSCORING that upholding our commitment to democracy has been an essential component of each Summit of the Americas, beginning with the first Summit in 1994 in Miami;

UNDERSTANDING that the effectiveness of democratic governance and democratic institutions is based on transparent, sustainable, and inclusive public administration for the population of our States as a whole, and that this includes the protection and promotion of all human rights;

ENCOURAGING increased attention with respect to members of groups that have been historically marginalized, discriminated against, and/or in vulnerable situations, as well as all women and girls, taking into account their diverse conditions and situations, in a manner consistent with national legislation and international law;^{1/2/}

PLEDGE to implement by the Tenth Summit of the Americas the following actions, in coordination with civil society, the private sector, and other social actors, with the support of the Joint Summit Working Group, to strengthen confidence in our democracies by fulfilling our commitments on democracy, human rights, transparent governance and good regulatory practices, anticorruption, and the rule of law:

A. Democracy and Human Rights

1. Strengthen existing regional mechanisms for political dialogue to analyze and address challenges to democracy.
2. Strengthen regional cooperation in support of the Inter-American Democratic Charter, including through the following measures, among others:
 - a. Encourage regular multilateral meetings and foster inclusive discussions among countries in our Hemisphere about challenges to democracy that have arisen in the region over the past two decades since the adoption of the Inter-American Democratic Charter;

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1. The Republic of Panama reiterates the importance of promoting national legislation to advance the human rights of all persons who are members of groups that have been historically...
 2. The Governments of Argentina, Bolivia, Canada, Chile, Costa Rica Mexico, and Uruguay support the phrase “women and girls in all their diversity” and consider that references in this document...

- b. Develop, strengthen and/or consolidate, in accordance with national legislation, the role of the Office of Ombudsperson (Public Defender, Citizen's Advocate or Human Rights Prosecutor or Commissioner) and/or other relevant national authorities with a view to strengthening democratic governance and respect for and promotion of human rights in the countries of the region;
 - c. Recognize the provisions adopted by States Parties to the Escazú Agreement and invite the countries of the region to join efforts to act in keeping with it, as appropriate.^{3/4/}
3. Support free and fair elections with full respect for state sovereignty, through the following measures, in accordance with domestic law:
- a. Facilitate conditions for all eligible voters in the Americas to vote in the elections organized in their respective countries, and also facilitate the participation of citizens residing abroad in general elections of their countries of origin, consistent with domestic law;
 - b. Recognize the importance of the independent, impartial, and autonomous character of electoral bodies that certify election results;
 - c. Implement measures to protect and strengthen the integrity of the electoral process and promote its accountability to the citizenry, transparency, and impartiality in domestic electoral institutions and oversight mechanisms, as well as transparency in the funding of political parties, electoral campaigns and candidatures for public office;
 - d. Promote the rights of citizens to choose their leaders in free and fair elections, which are periodic, based on universal suffrage and the secret ballot, and carried out in a transparent manner, by implementing measures to facilitate the ability of all political parties, including those in opposition, to stand for election, promoting the full and equal participation of women, and removing, where applicable, barriers to women running for political office;
 - e. Promote and encourage throughout the Hemisphere conditions such that candidates and elected officials better reflect the diverse composition of society without discrimination;
 - f. Eliminate measures that create direct or indirect limitations in accessing the electoral process for members of specific groups, particularly opposition political parties and groups in vulnerable situations and/or historically discriminated against;

3. Guatemala dissociates itself from paragraph 2.c. because the Republic of Guatemala does not adhere to any commitment or mandate established with respect to the Escazú Agreement, as it is ...

4. Colombia understands that all references to the Escazú Agreement are only binding for the States Parties to that agreement.

8. Work with civil society, workers groups, and employer sector representatives to eliminate forced labor, child labor, and violence, harassment, and discrimination in the workplace; to decrease informality in the labor market; and to protect freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining, including the protection of workers from reprisals for exercising these rights.
9. Recognize, respect, and protect the rights of all, in accordance with those international treaties to which each state is party and in accordance with its domestic legislation, with a particular emphasis on:
 - a. Indigenous and tribal peoples and their inherent rights, cultures, and traditions, as affirmed in treaties and other agreements or arrangements with States and, consistent with domestic legislation and international law, through their own representative institutions, and in accordance with their own procedures;
 - b. Persons of African descent, taking into account their inherent human rights, history, cultures, and traditions, and taking into account, where applicable, and according to domestic law, public policy arrangements for their empowerment, inclusion, participation, and representation.

B. Democracy and Sustainable Development^{5/}

10. Deepen the relationship between inclusive, democratic governance and sustainable development by:
 - a. Intensifying hemispheric cooperation to support implementation of the 2030 Agenda and achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals;
 - b. Pursuing implementation of expanded hemispheric cooperation and investment programs to promote sustainable development as a key pillar and objective of democratic governance;
 - c. Promoting the development of policies and programs to expand opportunities for economic and social empowerment and advancement for all peoples of the Hemisphere;
 - d. Promoting policies and programs that address the structural causes of poverty and inequality and foster strengthened cooperation and the exchange of experiences and best practices in that regard;
 - e. Promoting the creation of employment and decent work, as well as entrepreneurship, particularly among youth, and expanding opportunities for ongoing training and occupational retraining;
 - f. Promoting the strengthening of supply chains, the facilitation of investments in the Americas, and the increase of commercial integration.

5. Colombia, Canada, and Chile recognize the need to promote the economic autonomy of women by creating conditions for their access to the labor market and their participation in the generation of...

11. Generate initiatives that arise from the priorities of indigenous peoples, persons of African descent, women and girls and other historically marginalized groups, as well as groups in vulnerable situations, to promote development for all persons, within the framework of intercultural dialogue.

C. Transparency and Anticorruption

12. Continue meeting the commitments undertaken at the Eighth Summit of the Americas, in particular the Lima Commitment on Democratic Governance Against Corruption, while reaffirming our commitment to treaties such as the UN Convention against Corruption, the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, and the Inter-American Convention Against Corruption, and taking the following actions:
 - a. Promote gender equity and equality and the empowerment of women and girls, and anti-corruption measures, from the planning process through to implementation, follow-up, and assessment;
 - b. Establish measures, systems, and public awareness campaigns that generate incentives to improve the conditions for reporting of possible irregularities and acts of corruption, including the laundering of the proceeds generated by acts of corruption, as well as measures that provide effective protection from potential retaliation or intimidation, use of physical force or threats for reporting persons, victims, whistleblowers, witnesses, and justice and law enforcement officials, consistent with international obligations;
 - c. Promote the use of open data to increase transparency, integrity, accountability, and citizen participation to prevent and fight corruption, particularly through the implementation of the Inter-American Open Data Program developed and approved in the framework of the Organization of American States;
 - d. Implement key government policies, platforms, and tools for open, transparent, and accessible public procurement processes, in line with globally recognized practices, such as the OECD Recommendations on Public Procurement, and explicitly address anti-corruption in relevant public contracts, as appropriate;
 - e. Establish and implement measures that enable the identification of conflicts of interest, ensuring their application in all stages of the process in question;
 - f. Establish procedures and programs aimed at guiding, educating, and raising the awareness of public officials on challenging ethical situations, and public procedures in situations of potential conflict of interest;
 - g. Identify, develop, and maintain statistics, including disaggregated statistics on gender and other relevant variables to evaluate the effectiveness and impact of transparency and access to information policies and provide for public access to these statistics for independent evaluation;

- h. Strengthen and guarantee spaces for citizen participation, such as citizen observatories or other social control and participation mechanisms, where appropriate, for the implementation of measures for prevention of and fight against corruption and impunity;
 - i. Foster, as appropriate, measures to strengthen mechanisms aimed at preventing, detecting, and punishing acts of corruption, fraud, or unethical conduct, including those that are transnational in scope;
 - j. Strengthen transparency and accountability mechanisms or processes regarding access to information related to the environment, in accordance with national legislation;
 - k. Strengthen, as appropriate and according to domestic legislation, the entities responsible for preventing and combating corruption, as well as the normative frameworks and mechanisms that relate to access to public information, facilitating access and implementing policies on open data;
 - l. Strengthen and promote the use of digital systems to ensure and improve transparency, dissemination, public accountability, and the fight against corruption;
 - m. Actively participate in the Mechanism for Follow-up and Implementation of the Lima Commitment, contributing relevant information on the progress made towards delivering on the commitments outlined therein, and using the Database of Best Practices and Regional Capacities in Preventing and Combating Corruption.
13. Continue implementing recommendations received through the Follow-Up Mechanism for the Implementation of the Inter-American Convention against Corruption (MESICIC); reporting annually to MESICIC on progress made addressing these recommendations; and fostering the participation of civil society, the private sector, and social actors in the prevention of and fight against corruption, including initiatives that encourage public consultations, education and awareness, promote citizen participation in decision-making processes, and enable civil society to engage in monitoring and oversight, as appropriate and according to domestic legislation.
14. Integrate commitments emanating from the Summit of the Americas and from other relevant forums relating to the promotion of transparency and combating corruption into Open Government Partnership National Action Plans, as applicable, including: actions to strengthen fiscal transparency and prevent financial crimes, and strengthen openness of public information and data in open formats from the design stage.
15. Seek to integrate in National Action Plans of the Open Government Partnership commitments by the legislative and judicial branches, constitutional bodies, and subnational governments, where appropriate, and in accordance with domestic legislation.

16. Carry out actions identified in the resolutions adopted by the IX Conference of States Parties (COSP) to the UN Convention against Corruption (UNCAC), held in December 2021, to effectively follow up on the Sharm el-Sheikh Declaration on strengthening international cooperation in the prevention of and fight against corruption during times of emergencies and crisis response and recovery, including by developing, putting in place and, where appropriate, improving and strengthening anti-corruption policies and strategies, consistent with domestic law, to provide for emergency preparedness and address corruption during times of emergencies and crisis response and recovery, as well as the resolution “Our common commitment to effectively addressing challenges and implementing measures to prevent and combat corruption: follow-up to the special session of the General Assembly against corruption”.
17. Adopt appropriate measures to address the political commitments in the UN General Assembly Resolution A/RES/S-32-1, which approved the political declaration “Our common commitment to effectively addressing challenges and implementing measures to prevent and combat corruption and strengthen international cooperation,” as well as continue to advance the outcomes achieved in the preparatory process for this special period of this General Assembly, including, as appropriate and according to domestic legislation, to:
 - a. Develop and implement regulations and measures to collect and exchange information on the beneficial ownership of legal persons and legal arrangements to facilitate the investigation and prosecution of corruption, consistent with domestic law;
 - b. Criminalize the solicitation and acceptance of bribes and the bribery of national public officials, foreign public officials, and officials of public international organizations;
 - c. Establish, where necessary, a clear policy on gifts and substantial benefits, as well as an effective regulation on conflicts of interest;
 - d. Develop and implement measures consistent with the UN Convention against Corruption that establish criminal or, when applicable, civil administrative liability of legal persons that engage in acts of transnational bribery offenses;
 - e. Strengthen, as appropriate, and according to domestic legislation, the capacities of central authorities responsible for international legal cooperation and the processing of requests for asset recovery, and continually take advantage of and expand relevant knowledge of experts and officials, in order to improve electronic processing of requests for international legal cooperation aimed at tracing, freezing, restraining, seizing, confiscating, and returning of proceeds and instrumentalities of crime, with a view to more effectively responding to requests relating to asset recovery;
 - f. Analyze the applicability of exclusion or inadmissibility clauses to deny safe haven to persons who are administratively and/or criminally convicted for acts or

crimes of corruption, consistent with each State's domestic and international legal obligations;

- g. Empower young people to propose ideas with a view to preventing and combating corruption based on outcomes of the Youth Forum in the framework of the preparatory process of the 2021 special period of sessions of United Nations General Assembly Against Corruption.
18. Support young people's inclusion, as appropriate, in decision making, oversight, control, and supervision in all levels of public administration processes in order to improve good management practices with a view to preventing and combating corruption.
19. Promote transparency and reliance by our governments on good regulatory and administrative practices that protect people, increase accountability, predictability and inclusion, and support strong and resilient economies, through measures such as:
 - a. Establishing, maintaining, or improving our respective processes and mechanisms to develop regulations in an open and transparent manner with citizen participation, and take concrete steps to implement good regulatory practices across the region, including through cooperative activities, sharing best practices, engagement with the private sector, and bilateral and multilateral initiatives;
 - b. Using good practices for the development and implementation of regulations and processes, including through public consultations, analysis of regulatory impact, and stakeholder engagement.
20. Strengthen the public procurement and acquisition policies at the national, regional, and international levels, to include:
 - a. Promoting strategic actions to ensure implementation of the recommendations made by the Inter-American Network on Government Procurement (INGP) via the declaration of "Public Procurement as a strategic area for the generation of greater public value and better access to citizens' rights," issued by its member states in 2021;
 - b. Implementing, using open data, methodologies and technological resources to identify and mitigate risks of corruption;
 - c. Establishing regulatory frameworks, measures, and indicators that are effective for countering conflicts of interest, favoritism, and corruption;
 - d. Developing and implementing effective measures that address informality and job insecurity, and prevent and combat corruption and abuses, including forced labor and child labor in global supply chains, by developing transparent public procurement standards and compliance requirements or codes of conduct, related to the sustainable procurement of goods and services, as applicable and in keeping with domestic legislation and international obligations of States.

- e. Developing and implementing, as appropriate and in accordance with domestic legislation, mechanisms to prevent, investigate, or, where necessary, punish corruption, including bribery, trading in influence, child labor and forced labor in the procurement of goods and services of the public and private sectors in collaboration with the authorities responsible for law enforcement and other actors.
- 21. Consider the establishment or strengthening of solid regulations on lobbying.
 - 22. Ensure, as appropriate, that the framework for upholding public integrity is based on, among other criteria, the risks of corruption, and is applied to all public servants and employees, in keeping with domestic legislation, independent of their contractual situation, and take measures so that the results of risk management are used to make strategic decisions and to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of oversight activities.

D. Citizen Participation and Inclusion

- 23. Promote regional mechanisms to facilitate meaningful participation of civil society and social actors, including women's and youth organizations in monitoring the implementation of the Summit commitments.
- 24. Foster multi-stakeholder forums for dialogue among the public sector, the private sector, and civil society, including women's and youth organizations and social actors, to strengthen democratic practices, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, anticorruption, and open government efforts, including:
 - a. Participatory processes to promote government accountability and public trust in government, such as the development of informative communiques, social public commitments or citizen charters, as appropriate, which set forth what inhabitants can expect from public services and how to access them;
 - b. Community development planning processes, taking into account, in particular, the existence of inclusive processes, with a gender perspective, particularly with regard to post-COVID recovery and resilience to climate change that are inclusive of groups in vulnerable situations and/or historically discriminated against, and provide community members agency and oversight in the use of development resources;
 - c. Open, free, informed, and prior consultations with indigenous communities, leaders, and authorities, as appropriate and in accordance with domestic legislation, especially in the development, planning, follow-up, and assessment of policies that affect their way of life;
 - d. Establishing or effectively implementing laws or regulations to make consultation with stakeholders a systematic and essential part of the process of drafting laws and regulations, consistent with the domestic laws of each State;

- e. Improving access to information to respond to the needs and capacities of stakeholders in order to improve understanding of the problem in question and garner well-grounded observations;
 - f. Promoting parliamentary engagement as an integral part of the Summits process through ParlAmericas, the interparliamentary organization of the Hemisphere, and other parliamentary organizations.
25. Promote strategic partnerships among the different sectors of civil society and social actors, and national and local governments, to prevent and fight against corruption, including anti-bribery and anti-corruption policies and programs, and to implement international best practices of transparency and accountability.
26. Increase efforts to ensure inclusion and diversity in all aspects of governance, through the following actions:
- a. Increasing the use of tools that incorporate gender perspective in assessing and drafting legislation so that laws and policies are responsive to differential impacts on men, women, boys, and girls, including in efforts to address climate change, the digital economy, and healthcare, among others;
 - b. Ensuring that pandemic prevention, preparedness, and response are inclusive processes, including but not limited to the equitable and fair distribution of the provision of care, physical safety, equal digital access, and access to decent employment and wage equity and other economic opportunities;
 - c. Reducing social, cultural, structural, economic, and legal barriers to full and equitable economic participation and opportunity, including but not limited to, access to financial markets and credit, access to natural and productive resources, non-discrimination in hiring and employment, and access to safe and reliable care;
 - d. Addressing the impacts of sexual and gender-based violence on women's access to job opportunities, their ability to move and travel freely, and their opportunities to reach political, legal, social, and economic equality;
 - e. Establishing and/or strengthening mechanisms and providing sufficient ongoing training and resources for the review and enforcement of anti-discrimination policies and laws in hiring practices, access to justice, finance, housing, employment, social protection, infrastructure, and services, and other social and economic opportunities;
 - f. Facilitating access to public information and the internet for all individuals to enhance effective citizen participation, reducing the digital divide.
27. Collect and report municipal and/or local level demographic data through qualitative and quantitative mechanisms to inform and improve equitable access to community development planning processes and public resources and services, particularly among populations at risk and in vulnerable situations and that are underserved.

28. Collect data on corruption through qualitative and quantitative tools, originating directly from users of public services, and report them with a view towards identifying and preventing different modalities and corruption practices.

E. Follow-up and Implementation

29. Request that the Joint Summit Working Group assist States with resources and technical capacity-building to implement the commitments undertaken at the Ninth Summit.
30. Take note of the recommendations of the Civil Society and Social Actors Forum, the Young Americas Forum, and the CEO Summit of the Americas.
31. Recognize the role of the Summits of the Americas Secretariat in support of the Chair of the Summits of the Americas process in following up on and facilitating the implementation of the mandates and initiatives stemming from the Ninth Summit of the Americas and prior Summits, as well as that of the Technical Secretariat, which provides institutional memory of the process and serves as the coordinating body of the Joint Summit Working Group.
32. Instruct the Summit Implementation Review Group (SIRG) to report through the Chair of the Summits of the Americas process on the implementation of this Action Plan.

FOOTNOTES

1. ...marginalized, discriminated against and/or are in vulnerable situations, especially women in all their diversity – forums for multilateral dialogue being ideal vehicles for this purpose.

2. ... to “all women and girls, taking into account their various conditions and situations” fall short of the language that leaders should support at a Summit of the Americas which must aim for inclusiveness. “Women and girls in all their diversity” acknowledges the fact that women and girls are not a homogeneous group and embraces their different identities, including, for example, as part of the indigenous Afro-descendant, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and of two spirits (LGBTIQ2), as well as other dimensions and communities. Likewise, it recognizes the need to adopt an intersectional and multidimensional approach to meaningfully respond to the needs of women and girls of different backgrounds, respecting and valuing the full diversity of their identities and realities. This approach underlines the interconnectedness of multiple forms of discrimination, exclusions and inequalities that impede their empowerment and the full enjoyment of their rights. Diversity as a concept has been recognized in numerous international and regional texts, including the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the 2001 Quebec Summit of the Americas Plan of Action.

3. ...not yet a State Party to the aforementioned instrument.

5. ...wealth and employment in the region. To that end, multilateral financial institutions must promote greater direct funding to large, medium, and small female-owned businesses and encourage the inclusion of clauses that allow traceability in the financing they extend to governments in order to ensure that part of that funding is invested in women’s education, housing, financing, and participation in government procurement and other sectors.

Only with greater participation by women in the economy will the Hemisphere be able to increase its GDP, reduce poverty, improve security, prevent violence, and achieve sustainable development through the full exercise of the rights of women and girls and, through them, attain benefits for society as a whole.