

XVII Annual Meeting of the Inter-American Digital Government Network (Red GEALC)

November 20-22, 2023

2023 DECLARATION OF SANTIAGO DE CHILE

"Digital Transformation for Development with Equity"

The Digital Government Directors of the Americas, meeting on November 20 to 22, 2023, in Santiago de Chile, on the occasion of the XVII Annual Meeting of the Inter-American Digital Government Network, Red GEALC (hereinafter referred to as the Network) states as follows:

WHEREAS, this Meeting of Digital Transformation Authorities is a follow-up to the agreements of the VII Ministerial Meeting of the GEALC Network held in Lima in 2022 and in compliance with the commitments made by the Heads of State and Government at the Ninth Summit of the Americas, held in Los Angeles (United States) from June 8 to 10 of that same year, at which the Regional Program for Digital Transformation was approved.

WHEREAS, as part of that cycle of summits, the 53rd General Assembly of the Organization of American States (OAS), held on June 23, 2023 in Washington, D.C., comprised of the Ministers and High-level Authorities of Foreign Affairs of the Member States, approved the Resolution on Open, Digital, Inclusive and Transparent Government. This resolution is incorporated into the projects contained in the Resolution on Strengthening Democracy AG/RES. 3004 (LIII-O/23), in which the actions were aligned with the tasks of the Network;

CONSIDERING that the aforementioned Resolution requested the OAS General Secretariat to work on the continued development of an Inter-American Agenda related to emerging technologies in the digital governments of the Americas, specifically with regard to the ethical use of artificial intelligence policies, algorithms and data governance, and that the Digital Policy Dialogue of the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), of which the Network is a member, has adopted a similar approach;

CONSIDERING our commitment to the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and international law, the resolutions of the United Nations General Assembly, the Human Rights Council and the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), which recognize that existing "offline" rights must also be protected in digital environments. As well as the Ibero-American Charter of Principles and Rights in Digital Environments of the Ibero-

American General Secretariat, adopted at the XXVIII Ibero-American Summit of Heads of State and Government in March 2023 in the Dominican Republic.

FURTHER NOTING that the Network has been incorporating similar considerations into its outlook for the immediate future of digital transformation, with special focus on transparency, all forms of equity and the contribution of information and communication technologies (ICTs) in addressing the challenge of climate change;

EMPHASIZING that in addition to the strategic direction set by the Digital Government Authorities, the commitment of their teams through the Network's working groups involving more than 150 officials from all member countries, is essential;

RECOGNIZING that, without the technical and financial support of the IDB to Red GEALC activities, and the action of the OAS Department for Effective Public Management in its capacity as Technical Secretariat of the Network, it would not be possible to execute this task at the regional level;

FOCUSING this recognition on the recent approval of the IDB's Regional Public Goods Initiative (RPG) project “Deepening the Program for Strengthening Cross-Border Electronic Transactions”, which will facilitate extension of the work on cross-border digital services for three more years. This program initiated the technical development for cross-border digital signatures and has achieved historic outcomes for the region; and it will now reach more countries and will include work on cross-border digital authentication;

ALSO MODELING this momentum in the creation of the new Working Group on Data Governance and Artificial Intelligence, led by the OAS with the support of the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) of Canada;

RECALLING that 20 years ago, in this same city, a group of Latin American officials responsible for e-Government, invited by the OAS to learn about Chilean experiences, and later joined by Caribbean countries thanks to the support of the IDB and the IDRC, created the GEALC Network, which is now an Inter-American network;

IN KEEPING WITH the agreements contained in the Declarations of the previous Annual and Ministerial Meetings of the Network held in Santo Domingo (2007 and 2017), Montevideo (2009), San José de Costa Rica (2012 and 2020), Cartagena de Indias (2014), Mexico City (2015), Santiago de Chile (2016), Panama City (2018 and 2021), Buenos Aires (2019) and Lima (2022);

WE, THE DIRECTORS OF DIGITAL GOVERNMENT OF THE REGION, DECLARE THAT:

1- The road travelled over the past 20 years substantiates the importance of the mechanism that brings us together, as the GEALC Network, to optimize the public resources of our countries and achieve goals related to digital transformation aimed at improving the quality of life of our citizens;

2- Although we are proud of this experience, challenges remain and new ones are arising. At this time, and more than ever before, the region must work together to carry out a digital transformation with a gender perspective that is aware of its multiple facets focused on equitable development that respects human rights; that is safe, secure, inclusive; and based on more efficient, innovative, transparent and sustainable public administrations;

3- Our region faces great challenges in terms of legitimacy, trust and democratic stability, all of which depend largely on the perception of the effectiveness of the State in meeting its goals and the quality of its services. Such effectiveness finds in digital transformation, a unique opportunity to improve, for example, the integration and quality of digital services for people and businesses in a cross-cutting and sustainable way.

4- To address these challenges, it is necessary to advance cooperation between our countries, collective reflection and tangible action, through the joint development of enablers for cross-border digital services that facilitate the strengthening of democracy and development with equity while meeting the specific needs of citizens;

5- The new issues that are currently on the international agendas should be added to the existing pillars of our Work Plan: Cybersecurity, National and International Data Governance, Open Government, Measuring the Impact of Digital Government, Interoperability, Public Innovation, a careful and responsible approach to Emerging Technologies, Public Software and related cross-cutting aspects;

6- We encourage all international organizations and mechanisms across countries with a mandate or action related to digital transformation to coordinate tasks to avoid the duplication of efforts in terms of time and resources of the digital government agencies or ICT ministries of the countries.

7- In this regard, we will continue to promote synergies and information exchange. In particular, the coordination of activities and work plans and technical cooperation instruments with the Digital Agenda for Latin America and the Caribbean (eLAC), recognizing the agreements of the Eighth Ministerial Conference on the Information Society and the Digital Agenda for Latin America and the Caribbean (eLAC2024), held in the city of Montevideo in November 2022.

8- We invite other State stakeholders, such as Foreign Ministries, Parliaments and the Judicial Branch, to create synergies with the digital government agencies and ICT ministries of their countries to follow up and implement the international agreements following the technical consensus on common areas of interest;

9- We acknowledge the IDB for its technical and financial support in the execution of the GEALC Network 2023 activities, and the Department for Effective Public Management of OAS, as the Technical Secretariat of the Network, and, once again, we encourage them to redouble their collaboration in the execution of the Work Plan approved at this XVII Meeting for the 2024 period.

10- We are honored by the synergy established once again with the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), this time further deepened by the joint activities carried out by this GEACL Network Annual Meeting with the OECD e-Leaders meeting, and we are confident that this collaborative relationship will continue to grow stronger in the future;

11- We approve the 2023 Work Plan Execution Report submitted to this Assembly, and the 2024 Work Plan with the incorporation of the working groups on Digital Inclusion and Green Digital Transformation, and we commit to actively participate in their activities; at the same time, we take note of ITU's GovStack synergy proposal, and instruct the Public Software Working Group to report thereon to the Executive Committee;

12- We approve the composition of the Executive Committee of the Network for the year 2024 which shall be:

Mercosur: Argentina and Uruguay.

Andean Community plus Chile: Chile and Perú.

Central America plus Panama and Mexico: Costa Rica and Dominican Republic.

Caribbean: Belize and Surinam.

Chile as the president country for the mentioned year.

13- We acknowledge the work carried out by Perú during its tenure of the presidency of the Network in 2022, as well as the work of the Executive Committee during the same period of time. The Executive Committee comprised Bolivia, Brazil, Dominica, Guatemala, Dominican Republic, Suriname, Uruguay, OAS, IDB and the Manager of the Network.

14- We thank the Agency of Electronic Government and Knowledge Society, AGESIC, of Uruguay, for hosting the Regional Open Data Conference Abrelatam/Condatos in 2023.

15- We thank the government of Brazil for its proposal to host the VIII Ministerial Meeting on Digital Government of the Americas in 2024;

14- We thank the People and Government of Chile, in particular the Digital Government Division of the Ministry of the General Secretariat of the Presidency for the warm welcome and the excellent organizational work for this Annual Meeting of the 20th Anniversary of the GEALC Network. We also thank the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) for its collaboration in allowing the use of its facilities for the event. We also thank the Government of the Republic of South Korea for the technical and financial support for the execution of the activities of GEALC Network.

The undersigned delegations: Argentina, Bahamas, Barbados, Belice, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Suriname, Trinidad y Tobago, Uruguay.