

## 2024 BRASILIA MINISTERIAL DECLARATION

### “Digital Transformation towards a Sustainable, Secure and Inclusive Digital Government”

The ministers and high-level authorities of digital government of the Americas, gathered in Brasilia, Brazil, on November 26 and 27, 2024 on the occasion of the VIII Ministerial Meeting on Digital Government and the XVIII Annual Meeting of the Inter-American Digital Government Network, GEALC Network (hereinafter the Network):

CONSIDERING that the Network is the working space of the Americas for sharing experiences and for planning digital transformation policies, a framework within which our countries can strengthen their national actions and agree on the technical aspects of cross-border digital services.

RECOGNIZING that 20 years ago, in this same city, Brasilia, the third meeting of the Network took place, during which the process that had been initiated a year earlier in Santiago de Chile was given the name Gealc Network, and that we are, therefore, facing a historic event that highlights the sustained will of the region to share the journey of digital transformation with equity.

EMPHASIZING that within this framework there have been not only exchanges between countries to improve digital transformation at national level, but also regional efforts that have resulted in technical agreements on public software, emerging technologies, cybersecurity, interoperability, data, public innovation and cross-border digital signature.

RECOGNIZING the commitments of the Regional Program for Digital Transformation approved by the Heads of State and Government on June 9, 2022, in the context of the IX Summit of the Americas, and the need to continue deepening regional commitments on digital government;

WHEREAS, the 54th General Assembly of the Organization of American States (OAS), held in Asunción, Paraguay, approved the resolution on Strengthening Democracy AG/RES. 3029 (LIV-O/24), which encourages member states to actively participate in the Network, especially in its working groups, and to attend the VIII Ministerial Meeting on Digital

Government of the Americas and the XVIII Annual Meeting of the GEALC Network;

NOTING that resolution AG/RES. 3029 (LIV-O/24) requests the OAS General Secretariat, in collaboration with other actors such as the Inter-American Development Bank, to continue to strengthen the Network in order to implement and promote the best digital government practices and to promote policies and the use of digital technologies to foster transparency, citizen-centered digital public services, and the simplification of procedures;

EMPHASIZING that resolution AG/RES. 3029 (LIV-O/24) requests the General Secretariat, through the Department for Effective Public Management, to work on the development of guidelines for the inter-American reference framework on data governance and artificial intelligence with a focus on people and the inclusive and sustainable development of our region, taking as background the discussions held in the Ad Hoc Working Group on Data Governance and AI (Gealc Network);

CONTINUING the agreements reached in previous annual and ministerial meetings that have been stated in the declarations and commitments of Santo Domingo (2007 and 2017) Montevideo (2009), San Jose de Costa Rica (2012 and 2020), Cartagena de Indias (2014), Mexico City (2015), Santiago de Chile (2016 and 2023), Panama City (2018 and 2021), Buenos Aires (2019) and Lima (2022);

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

1. In the context of the rapid global technological evolution, which has affected all aspects of human life in the 21st century, we recognize that the digital transition presents remarkable opportunities, as well as significant challenges for sustainable and secure development and for the inclusive actions of States. It is critical, moreover, to recognize the role of governments in promoting a digital transformation of their public processes and services that ensures that the transformative potential of technology becomes a catalyst for inclusive and sustainable economic development, leaving no one behind.

2. Gealc Network member countries seek a digital government that makes extensive use of technologies, including emerging ones, and that is capable of providing greater security, effectiveness, responsiveness, accessibility, innovation and transparency in government and society relations, as well as generating public value for its population. We express the importance of making efforts to improve the quality of digital public services, seeking to consider the user experience in their design, as well as security, so that they meet the needs of people in the simplest and friendliest way possible, providing confidence in such technologies, reflecting the diversity of the social, racial, cultural, linguistic and geographical context and including face-to-face or hybrid services complementary to digital ones, when necessary.

3. We believe that the concept of Digital Public Infrastructures (DPI) favors the articulation between knowledge, institutional arrangements and technological solutions, with the potential to contribute to the evolution of digital government, to take advantage of opportunities in the digital economy and to promote digital inclusion. The countries of the American continent can further appropriate this concept and imprint their visions on it to enrich it, as well as implement it to improve the provision of national and cross-border public services.

4. We recognize that Digital Identity, one of the core DPIs, is an entry point to digital inclusion. Trusted digital identity and effective authentication policies have the potential to reduce barriers to access public services and business opportunities, promoting security, reliability, transparency, sustainability and efficiency in both government services and the digital economy, without discrimination. We also express our commitment to advance the regional agreements on the mutual recognition of digital signatures and identities that the Network has been promoting.

5. Ministers emphasize the fundamental role of data as a valuable and strategic asset for society and governments, being essential for regional and global discussions on digital and technological asymmetries. In this context, we highlight the central role of policies and structures aimed at data governance, which should be fair, inclusive, secure, accountable and effective, to enhance governments' capacity to collect, access, process, share and reuse data, even with non-governmental sectors of public interest, while respecting applicable legal frameworks related to privacy, personal data protection and security. To this end, it is important to promote the exchange of regional practices and lessons learned on data policies and to discuss the

possibilities of cross-border data flows with regards to public policies and government services, respecting national and international legal agreements and recognizing the role of data for sustainable development.

6. We declare that the data governance and artificial intelligence guidelines defined by the digital government agencies participating in the Network constitute necessary precedents for the construction of an inter-American framework of reference on the subject;

7. That adopting an inter-American reference framework on data governance and artificial intelligence is fundamental for the future of the digital transformation in the region, for which we express support for the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and the Heads of State and Government to work so as to adopt these guidelines through the 55<sup>th</sup> OAS General Assembly and the 10<sup>th</sup> Summit of the Americas;

8. That we will continue to deepen our open data initiatives and those aimed at preventing and fighting corruption as established by the Inter-American Open Data Program (PIDA).

9. We thank the Organization of American States (OAS) for undertaking the role the Technical Secretariat of the Network through the Department for Effective Public Management, and the Inter-American Development Bank for its support as the driving force behind the Network, especially through the Regional Public Goods Initiative (RPG) mechanism. We urge both institutions to continue to deepen their support to the Network, and we urge the OAS General Secretariat to strengthen the Technical Secretariat by providing a position in the Department for Effective Public Management to be paid with the regular fund.

10. We welcome the launch of the Mercosur Digital Citizen, a cross-border digital authentication mechanism between Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay, enabled by the IDB's RPG project implemented by the Network with the support of the Julio Ricaldoni Foundation. We also underscore the joint action taken by Chile, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic and Uruguay in interoperability and cross-border digital signature, developed within the framework of the virtual and face-to-face meetings of the Network's digital signature and interoperability working group.

11. We also welcome the path taken by the working group on Data Governance and Artificial Intelligence towards the Inter-American Reference Framework on Data Governance and Artificial Intelligence.

12. We recognize and underscore the work done by the Network's working groups on Cybersecurity, Data, Measurement, Public Software, Emerging Technologies and Public Innovation, as well as this year's launch of the working groups on Digital Equity and Green Digital Transformation.

13. We congratulate member countries' digital government agencies for their progress in the United Nations e-government index, as well as for their continued work towards digital transformation with equity.

14. We congratulate Argentina for receiving the excelgov 2024 award in Digital Transformation with the "Tina: Virtual Assistant to the National State" solution; Uruguay for receiving the excelgov 2024 award in Cross-border Digital Services with the "Cross-border digital identification or Mercosur Digital Citizen" solution. We also congratulate Brazil, Guyana and Costa Rica for receiving the special mentions in Data, Gender Focus and Emerging Technologies, respectively.

15. We approve the Report on the execution of the 2024 Work Plan and the 2025 Work Plan, submitted by the Network's Executive Committee.

16. We thank Chile for holding the 2024 Presidency of the Network. We also thank Argentina, Belize, Costa Rica, Peru, Suriname, Dominican Republic and Uruguay, as well as the IDB, the OAS and the Gealc Network Management for being part of the 2024 Executive Committee of the Network.

17. We congratulate Chile for having been elected as the 2025 President of the Network, as well as the following countries that (together with the IDB, the OAS and the Gealc Network Management) will be part of the 2025 Executive Committee: Bolivia and Chile for the Andean Area, Belize and Guyana for the Caribbean, Brazil and Paraguay for Mercosur, Costa Rica and Guatemala for Mesoamerica.

18. We urge the President of the Network and the Technical Secretariat that the output of this VIII Ministerial Meeting on Digital Government of the Americas and XVIII Annual Meeting of the GEALC Network be presented to the Committee on Legal and Political Affairs (CAJP) of the OAS.

19. We request that this Ministerial Declaration on Digital Government be applied in the commitments and documents resulting from the 10<sup>th</sup> Summit of the Americas to be held in the Dominican Republic in 2025, in response to the Regional Program for Digital Transformation, adopted by the Heads of State and Government on June 9, 2022, as well as by the mandates of the 55<sup>th</sup> OAS General Assembly.

20. We thank the Presidential Commission on Open Government and of Guatemala, for having proposed his country as the venue for the XIX Annual Meeting of Red Gealc in 2025; and we thank the OAS and the IDB for having jointly proposed Washington DC as the venue of the IX Ministerial Meeting on Digital Government in the Americas and XX Annual Meeting of Red Gealc.

21. We thank the people and government of Brazil, in particular the Digital Government Secretariat of the Ministry of Public Services Management and Innovation for being outstanding hosts of this Ministerial Meeting.

Signatory delegations: Argentina, Bahamas, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Guyana, Honduras, Jamaica, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Saint Lucia, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, Uruguay.