

7th Ministerial Meeting on Digital government and
16th Annual Meeting of the Inter-American Network of
Digital Government (GEALC Network)
November 10-11, 2022

LIMA MINISTERIAL DECLARATION

Digital Transformation for Equity
and Cross-Border Services

The Ministers and High-ranking Digital Government Authorities of the Americas, gathered in Lima, Peru, on November 10 and 11, 2022, on the occasion of the 7th Ministerial Meeting on Digital Government and the 16th Annual Meeting of the Inter-American Network of Digital Government, GEALC Network (hereinafter the Network):

CONSIDERING that this 7th Ministerial Meeting promotes and fulfills the commitments and agreements made by the Heads of State and Government at the 9th Summit of the Americas, held in Los Angeles (United States), on June 8-10, 2022; as well as the 52nd Regular Session of the Organization of American States (OAS) General Assembly, held in Lima on October 5-7, 2022 through the Resolution on Strengthening Democracy;

HIGHLIGHTING that, during the aforementioned Summit of the Americas, the Heads of State and Government approved for the first time in the continent's history a Regional Program for Digital Transformation, in which they committed to advancing in innovative digital ecosystems, in open digital government, in cybersecurity and in promoting “inclusive, resilient, efficient and equitable economic and social recovery, making use of digital technologies”.

BEARING IN MIND that these principles are consistent with the work that has been carried out by the Network during the 19 years of its establishment, in its annual meetings, within its working groups and through its cross-cutting cooperation activities;

RECOGNIZING, in this regard, the commitment of the digital government teams of the Network's member countries to promote these principles, the constant technical and financial support of the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), as well as the action of the OAS Department for Effective Public Management in its role as Technical Secretariat of the Network, and the contributions of experts and extra-regional countries, such as the Republic of South Korea;

BEARING IN MIND the progress made by the Network's working groups on Open Data, Innovation, Measurement, Public Software, Emerging Technologies and Digital Signature and Interoperability;

EMPHASIZING that the progress achieved in the area of digital signature is essential in moving towards cross-border digital services; and that the work of the Network in the process of developing instruments at the regional level is a critical step as it facilitates verification of the validity of a country's digital signature of another country through use of the Master List of Trusted Lists.

NOTING the enormous challenge posed by the COVID-19 pandemic to the Ministries and Agencies responsible for digital government in the countries of the Network and the digital government tools developed to address the ensuing health and social crises, provide examples of the technical capacity and political willingness to pursue regional digital transformation for all.

AKNOWLEDGING the Lima declaration of the 52nd OAS General Assembly “Together Against Inequality and Discrimination” in which the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the OAS Member States declared “the importance of reducing the digital divide in our countries, including the gender gap and stressing the importance of equitable access to information and communication technologies (ICTs), cybersecurity, digital literacy and the protection of personal data, as well as the harnessing of new technologies with an equitable and neutral vision to promote the development of our societies, in particular for groups that have traditionally been underrepresented, such as women and vulnerable populations or groups”.

REAFFIRMING the vision of the World Summit (WSIS) of a people-centred, inclusive and development-oriented information society, in which everyone can create, access, use and share information and knowledge, so that individuals, communities and peoples can make full use of their potential to promote their sustainable development and improve their quality of life, based on the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and fully respecting and upholding the Universal Declaration of Human Rights; as well as the Panama Commitment assumed by the Network in 2021, which points out the importance of digital government having to be in tune with the essential and permanent respect for Human Rights, balancing the values of privacy and autonomy with the values of safety and protection of people.

BEARING IN MIND that the Network has coordinated the technical and public policy efforts in the Americas, for which it has been recognized by the OAS General Assembly as the Inter-American Digital Government Network through the Resolution on the Strengthening of Democracy (AG/RES. 2931, XLIX-O/19), and by the IDB as Regional Policy Dialogue;

CONTINUING the agreements included in the declarations of previous ministerial meetings of the Network held in Montevideo (2009), San José de Costa Rica (2012), Cartagena de Indias (2014), Santiago de Chile (2016), Panama City (2018) and the second declaration of San José of Costa Rica (2020);

WE, THE DIGITAL GOVERNMENT MINISTERS AND HIGH-LEVEL AUTHORITIES OF THE REGION, DECLARE THAT:

- 1- Digital transformation is vital for inclusion, equity and social and productive recovery of the countries of the Network, for which we reaffirm the common will to advance at the highest level in this process.
- 2- Cross-border digital services are a critical challenge for the region in terms of digital transformation and a path to strengthen our democracies and to achieve social and to promote the productive integration.
- 3- We renew, once again, our commitment to the GEALC Network as a regional mechanism to promote this path and as a meeting point for joint work among the agencies and ministries in charge of digital transformation in each of the member countries.
- 4- We state that it is of great importance that all government agencies, not only digital government departments, double their commitment to the transforming power of information and communication technologies (ICTs) to promote more efficient, transparent, and participatory administrations, understanding that from Governments we work for citizens. In this sense, the strengthening of each of the agencies and/or ministries responsible for digital government in each country will have positive effects on their public administration and on the region, facilitating people's lives, promoting transparency and access to public services.

5- We highlight the commitment to reduce the digital divide between and within countries, including the digital gender divide, through initiatives to improve connectivity, affordability, access to information and knowledge, multilingual content, skills and digital literacy, recognizing the specific problems faced by people with disabilities and specific needs, as well as groups in situations of vulnerability;

6- We support countries' efforts to develop and use accessible digital tools that can be shared through the GEALC Network, towards the creation or expansion of cross-border digital services. In the same way, we support the efforts to carry out practical activities, exchange of experiences and horizontal cooperation, for example, but not only, in digital identity, digital rights for citizens, capacity building and digital skills for digital government, omnichannel public services, adoption of good practices for the development of State Digital Architectures in the countries of the region, artificial intelligence (with special attention to its ethical principles), measurement and open data (with a possible platform that allows the visualization of the situation in the countries).

7- We reaffirm, as indicated in the 2021 Panama Commitment, the importance of facilitating the full exercise of digital citizenship, promoting universal access and the adoption of information and communication technologies (ICT) by governments and citizenship, promoting the ethical and responsible use of ICT.

8- We will promote open government and open data strategies through instances of exchange of best practices and regional dialogue within the framework of the Open Data Group, to promote transparency, innovation and citizen participation.

9- We approve the document on cross-border digital signature presented at this meeting, with the name of "Regional Agreement of the Americas on Cross-Border Digital Signature", to create the Master List of Trusted Lists, prepared within the framework of the Program to Strengthen Cross-Border Electronic Transactions in Latin America and the Caribbean, with the technical and financial support of the IDB's Regional Public Goods Initiative and with the work of the digital signature teams of the countries that belong to the Network. The foregoing, in accordance with the internal regulations and the applicable institutions of each country.

10- We celebrated the progress made in the Digital Signature and Interoperability Working Group, which approved the Brazilian International Validator, enhanced through the support provided by the Network's Program to Strengthen Cross-Border Electronic Transactions in Latin America and the Caribbean.

11- We approve the 2022 Work Plan Execution Report presented to this Assembly, and the 2023 Work Plan and commit to participating actively in realising the objectives of the Work Plan.

12- We recall the importance of coordination between international mechanisms born from the proposal of the member countries, and acknowledge that since 2013 within the framework of the Ibero-American General Secretariat (SEGIB), Red GEALC as a space for collaboration on digital government, cause of the inclusion of Andorra, Spain and Portugal as observer countries of our Network (15th Ibero-American Meeting of Ministers of the Presidency and Equivalents). This need to avoid duplicating efforts meant that, since 2014, the digital government area of eLAC was connected with the work of the countries that belong to Red GEALC (according to the resolution of the Ibero-American Forum of National Digital Strategies and recommendations for the 5th Ministerial Conference on the Society of Information), which we recommend continuing and deepening.

13- We acknowledge the work of the IDB, for its provision of technical and financial support and

the contribution of the Department for Effective Public Management of the OAS as Technical Secretariat of the Network, and we ask them once again to double their collaboration for the execution of the Work Plan approved in this meeting for 2023.

- 14- We reiterate our request to other international and multilateral organizations, such as the OECD, UN, ECLAC, SEGIB, CARICOM, ALADI, SICA, and others, to deepen the engagement with the GEALC Network as a regional mechanism to coordinate the digital transformation efforts of governments.
- 15- We welcome the introduction of the Digital Transformation Government Guide, prepared by the IDB, with the understanding that it is an instrument to support the efforts of the countries in the region in this subject.
- 16- We approve the proposal to modify the bylaws as follows:
In chapter 1, to change the Network's name to Inter-American Digital Government Network, keeping the acronym GEALC and the name Red GEALC; and in section 4.2, to rename area 3 as Central and North America plus Panama.
- 17- We approve the Network's Executive Committee for 2023, which shall be composed of:
Mercosur: Brazil and Uruguay.
Andean Community plus Chile: Bolivia and Perú.
Central America plus Panama and Mexico: Guatemala and Dominican Republic.
Caribbean: Dominica and Suriname.
Where Peru is the president country for the aforementioned year.
- 18- We congratulate the governments of Argentina and Uruguay for winning the excelGOB 2022 Awards for Excellence in Digital Government, and the Governments of Brazil and Peru for winning the special mentions in said awards.
- 19- We also welcome the Spanish version of the United Nations e-government ranking, prepared by Uruguay on behalf of Red GEALC.
- 20- We acknowledge the work carried out by the representation of Ecuador, as the Network's President in 2022, as well as the work of the Executive Committee in the same period, composed also by representatives of Bolivia, Brazil, Dominica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Paraguay, Trinidad and Tobago, the OAS, the IDB and the Network Manager.
- 21 - We salute the nomination of the Electronic Government and Knowledge Society Agency (AGESIC), of Uruguay, as the host country for the Abrelatam Condatos Open Data Regional Conference in 2023.
- 22- We request the OAS Committee on Juridical and Political Affairs (CAJP), which reports to the OAS Permanent Council, to take note of this Ministerial declaration and that it be taken into account by this committee for the organization of the 53rd OAS General Assembly, as well as the IDB Board of Governors Assembly in 2023.
- 23- We thank the People and Government of Peru, especially the Secretary of Government and Digital Transformation, reporting to the Presidency of the Council of Ministers of that country, for

the excellent efforts made for this summit, which was declared of national interest by the host country per the Supreme Decree 111-22022-PCM. We also thank the Government of the Republic of South Korea for the technical and financial support to convene this meeting.

Approved by the delegations of: Argentina, Bahamas, Belize, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Suriname, Trinidad & Tobago, Uruguay.