

***12th Annual Meeting of the Network of e-Government Authorities
of Latin America and the Caribbean, Red GEALC***

City of Panama, November 15 and 16, 2018.

DECLARATION OF PANAMA

The ministers and high authorities on electronic government of Latin America and the Caribbean have gathered in the City of Panama on November 15th and 16th, 2018, on the occasion of the 5th Ministerial Meeting of e-Government and the 12th Annual Meeting of the Network of e-Government Authorities of Latin America and the Caribbean (Red GEALC).

UNDERSCORING the fifteenth anniversary of the creation of Red GEALC this year and its consolidation as a regional mechanism for dialog, cooperation and promotion of digital government,

RECALLING the Declaration of Santo Domingo of 2006 by the General Assembly of the Organization of American States (OAS) on Good Governance and Development in the Knowledge-based Society (AG/DEC.46 (XXXVI-O/06)), and the ministerial declarations of Red GEALC: Montevideo 2009, San Jose 2012, Cartagena de Indias 2014 and Santiago de Chile 2016,

ACKNOWLEDGING commitments made by the heads of State and Government of the Americas in the mandates of the 8th Summit of the Americas held in April 2018, in particular, commitments in reference to digital government plans and policies, open government and open data to promote transparency, interaction with citizens and accountability, with the purpose to strengthen cooperation and the exchange of good development practices,

TAKING INTO ACCOUNT the Digital Agenda for Latin America and the Caribbean (eLAC2020) adopted during the 6h Ministerial Conference on the Information Society in Latin America and the Caribbean, in particular, commitments made in the areas of action “Digital Government” and “Emerging technologies for sustainable development,”

EMPHASIZING the relevance that countries have given to digital government, as a component of digital plans and agendas of regional integration mechanisms, as the Pacific Alliance, CARICOM, MERCOSUR and the Central American Integration System (SICA), with specific actions to advance on issues such as cross-border digital government services, open data and the use of shared services and public software, elements addressed by Red GEALC through its different working groups, therefore it is extremely important to continue with this articulation in line with the efforts made by the different instances of cooperation and integration,

BEARING IN MIND that the 47th General Assembly of the OAS (AG/RES.2905 (XLVII-O/17)) underscored the need to expand the reach of Red GEALC to all the Member States of OAS,

REMEMBERING that the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) recognizes a new stage of maturity in the use governments make of digital technologies and a transformation from electronic to digital government, in pursuit of openness, innovation and modernization of the public sector (recommendation C(2014)88),

AWARE of the need to raise the public value of digital government to strengthen democratic governance with greater transparency and openness, competitiveness in our countries and wellbeing for our people, using data and innovation in strategic ways, to bring the State closer to citizens, to improve governments' response capacity and make access to quality services more democratic, promoting citizens as engines driving public policies, in pursuit of an inclusive and sustainable future for all,

EMPHASIZING the positive impact of the working groups of Red GEALC which, with the active involvement of officials from the countries of the region, have managed to strengthen the exchange of public software among the countries of the region, to develop a Regional Metadata Profile, to implement their own regional indicators of digital government, to advance with the Repository of methodologies and best practices of government innovation, to survey initiatives on emerging technologies, and to prepare a regional proposal for improving cross-border electronic transfers in Latin America and the Caribbean,

WE, THE MINISTERS AND HIGH AUTHORITIES ON DIGITAL GOVERNMENT OF THE MEMBER STATES GATHERED IN THE CITY OF PANAMA, DECLARE THAT:

1. We are committed to strengthening Red GEALC as a mechanism for dialog, cooperation and promotion of digital government in the Americas to continue with the digital transformation of governments.
2. We entrust the Executive Committee to advance with the necessary actions to expand the reach of the mechanism into an Inter-American Network on Digital Government, which would include participation from all the Member States of OAS, and to analyze ways of working with non-state actors.
3. We approve the 2018 Annual Report, 2019 Work Plan and the composition of the Executive Committee for the 2019 period which shall be:

Mercosur	Paraguay and Uruguay
Andean Community plus Chile	Ecuador and Chile
Central America plus Panama and Mexico	El Salvador and Costa Rica
Caribbean	Bahamas and Dominican Republic (Presidency)

4. We approve the working groups for the 2019 period and we encourage the members of Red GEALC to appoint representatives in them: (A) cross-border digital services, (b) digital identity and digital signature, (c) open data, (d) emerging technologies, (e) public innovation, (f) measurements and studies, (g) public software.
5. We entrust the Department for Effective Public Management of OAS to prepare, with the Executive Committee of Red GEALC, the proposal on the "Inter-American Open Data Program" to be submitted in front of the Permanent Council, through the Committee of Juridical and Political Affairs (CAJP), for the consideration of Member States.
6. We entrust the Presidency of Red GEALC to coordinate with the eLAC2020 General Committee, in order to report on progress in the achievement of the objectives of the work areas on "Digital government" and "Emerging technologies for sustainable development" of the Digital Agenda for Latin America and the Caribbean.
7. We entrust the Executive Committee of Red GEALC to make progress with the necessary measures so that, when the draft resolution on "Strengthening Democracy" is prepared for consideration by CAJP and for approval during the 49th Regular Session of the OAS General

Assembly, special consideration is given to the decisions adopted in this ministerial meeting, in particular, to support the Inter-American Network on Digital Government as a mechanism of the Inter-American system.

8. We call on international and multilateral organizations, such as IDB, OECD, OAS, Ibero-American General Secretariat, UN and others, to continue working in synergy through Red GEALC in the development of regional programs, projects and initiatives for the digital transformation of governments, in particular, those referring to governance of digital governments and its various components, such as digital services, data management, interoperability and open data in the public sector, privacy, digital security, digital identity, digital signature, public innovation and measurements and studies on digital government.
9. We thank the governments of South Korea, Estonia, Italy and Portugal for their support during the 5th Ministerial Meeting and the 12th Annual Meeting of Red GEALC contributing with their experience and best practices to the development of digital governments in the Americas.
10. We congratulate the governments of Brazil and Colombia for winning the Awards for Excellence in Electronic Government excelGOV 2018, the governments of Mexico, Panama and Uruguay for winning the special mentions of said awards, and the 12 governments distinguished with the horizontal cooperation recognitions.
11. We acknowledge in particular the work of the Organization of American States as Technical Secretariat, of the Inter-American Development Bank as driver of Red GEALC and of Mr. Roberto Lopez as manager of the network; and we urge them to redouble their efforts in the execution of the 2019 work plan approved in this meeting. Likewise, we express our gratitude to the Republic of Korea for their continuous and valuable support.
12. We underscore the leadership of Panama, in particular, of Mr. Irvin Halman, General Manager of the National Authority for Government Innovation (AIG, in Spanish), during the Presidency of Red GEALC, as well as the work of the Executive Committee for the 2018 period, composed of representatives from Argentina, Bahamas, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guyana, Paraguay and Peru.
13. We congratulate the government of Dominican Republic as the President-elect of Red GEALC for 2019, requesting its support in communicating, with the collaboration of the Technical Secretariat, the results of this meeting in the different instances of regional and international cooperation on this area.
14. We thank the people and government of Panama, in particular the National Authority for Government Innovation, for their valuable work in the execution of this 5th Ministerial Meeting and 12th Annual Meeting of Red GEALC.
15. We thank, once again, the government of Argentina for offering to host the 13th Annual Meeting of Red GEALC in 2019, and the Government of Peru for its proposal to host the 6th Electronic Government Ministerial Meeting and the 14th Annual Meeting of Red GEALC in 2020.

(Approved in plenary session held on November 16th, 2018).

Delegations signatories: Argentina, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Guyana, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay and Venezuela.