

Mexico

MEMBER 5

**Item 3**

**Joint Statement on Access to information and Transparency**

Mr. President,

1. I have the honor to read this statement on behalf of a cross-regional group of XX countries. We wish to express our commitment to the promotion of transparency and the access to information as important tools to achieve accountability and to ensure the full promotion and protection of human rights.

2. We reaffirm everyone's right to freedom of expression and underline that freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds, regardless of frontiers, either orally, in writing or in print, in the form of art, or through any other media of his choice are components of the freedom of expression.

3. We recognize that the effective exercise of the right to freedom of opinion and expression, including through access to information, as enshrined in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, is essential for the enjoyment of other human rights and freedoms as well as for citizens' full and active participation in public affairs and constitutes a fundamental pillar for building a democratic society and strengthening democracy, bearing in mind that all human rights are universal, indivisible, interdependent and interrelated.

4. We further recognize that transparent, open, accountable and responsible governments are necessary to achieve the full enjoyment of human rights, and that ensuring access to public information is key for promoting transparency and accountability.

5. In order to give effect to the right to seek and receive information, States should ensure that information held by public authorities is proactively disclosed and take adequate steps to make Government information of public interest available in the public domain, including online, and make every effort to ensure easy, prompt, effective and practical access to such information, including on grave violations of human rights

6. States should enact transparent and clear laws and policies that provide for a general right to request and receive such information, for which public access should be granted, except for narrow and clearly defined limitations and duly protecting privacy.

7. To make this right effective States should also promote the rule of law and good governance at all levels and to build transparent, effective and accountable institutions, in line with Goal 16 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

8. We welcome that over 100 countries now have adopted comprehensive laws on access to information; that 2016 is the 250th anniversary of the first freedom of information act in 1766. (UNESCO Global trends); and that 69 countries have now joined the Open Government Partnership (OGP).

9. In the framework of the Human Rights Council, we aim to identify challenges; exchange best practices and lessons learned and reflect on ways to enhance the protection and promotion of transparency and access to information.