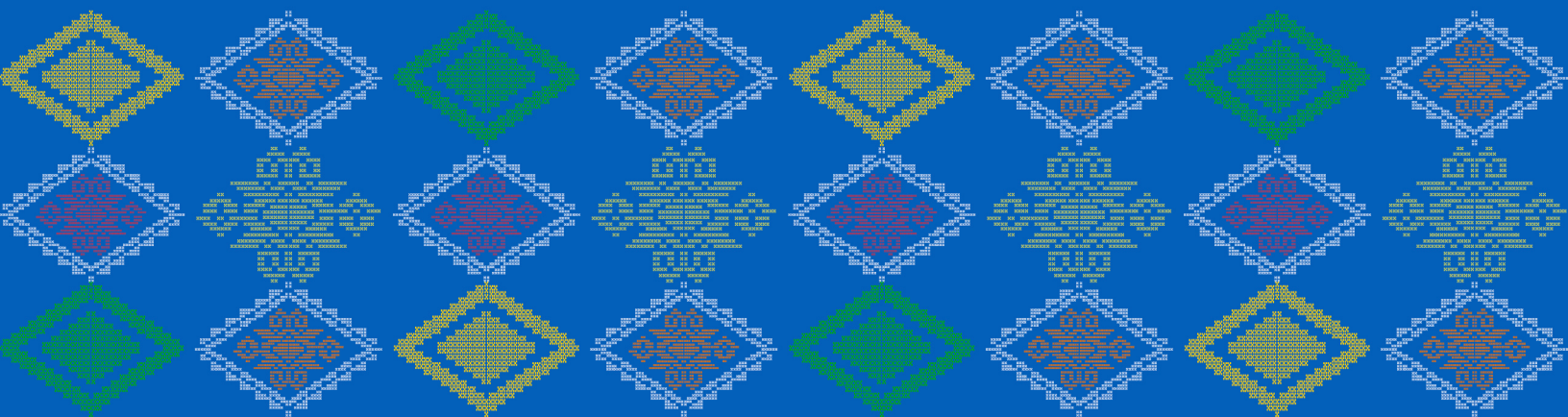


ICIC

PHILIPPINES

2023

14th Edition of the International
Conference of Information Commissioners



Bridging Information Across Nations: Concretizing the Global Role of Access to Information for Democratic Preservation, Inclusivity, and Development

The members of the International Conference of Information Commissioners, gathered on June 21, 2023, during the 14th Edition of our Annual Conference, held virtually and in the City of Manila, Philippines, issue the following statement:

Recalling that, in accordance with the Johannesburg Charter, the International Conference of Information Commissioners (ICIC) is a global network which allows international cooperation between member authorities responsible for protecting and promoting people's Access to Information (ATI), through capacity building and the exchange of experiences and best practice on basis of the principles of inclusion, universality, maximum publicity, responsibility, ethics and accessibility, respect and accountability.

Considering that the ATI is enshrined in several international and regional human rights treaties, including: the Universal Declaration of Human Rights; the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights; the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child; the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities; the United Nations Convention against Corruption; the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights; the American Convention on Human Rights; the European Convention on Human Rights; the Association of Southeast Asian Nations Human Rights Declaration; the Convention on Access to Official Documents from the Council of Europe; the Regional Agreement on Access to Information, Public Participation and Justice in Environmental Matters in Latin America and the Caribbean (Escazú Agreement), the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union; the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, among others.

Noting the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development adopted by all United Nations Member States in 2015, which provides a shared blueprint for peace and prosperity for people and the planet, includes the target 16.10 which aims to ensure ATI and the protection of fundamental freedoms, in accordance with national legislation and international agreements, urging countries to adopt and implement constitutional, statutory and/or policy guarantees for ATI.

Recognizing the importance of guaranteeing ATI and the protection of fundamental freedoms, such as freedom of expression, in accordance with national legislation, policies, and international instruments, as fundamental pillars to social, economic and democratic governance.

Recalling that the Tashkent Declaration on Universal Access to Information highlighted the important role played by independent oversight bodies, such as information commissioners, in ensuring the implementation of legal frameworks for ATI.

Highlighting that the successful implementation of ATI requires that guarantor bodies operate independently at every level of jurisdiction, as this ensures that all individuals, regardless of their location or position, have ATI.

Emphasizing that building the capacity of public authorities and strengthening civil society and individuals to exercise their rights are crucial for promoting the ATI and transparency.

Recognizing that the emergence and use of new technologies, while bringing many great economic and social benefits, have the potential to create new governance challenges including the potential to exacerbate inequality gaps between various sectors of the population. In addition, it also recognized the challenges that come with using the Internet and digital platforms to create an enabling, secure, and inclusive environment for the ATI.

Recognizing the role played by civil society and media in promoting and supporting the effective implementation of ATI to empower the citizens.

Recognizing that all ATI guarantor bodies have a crucial role to play in contributing to the bigger community of ATI practitioners.

The ICIC Members are committed:

- 1** To endorse the commitment to safeguard fundamental rights as institutions in charge of guaranteeing ATI and transparency, as well as promoting their importance, so that all the citizens know about these actions, in order to have a common international position.
- 2** To strengthen the institutionalization of ATI guarantor bodies through relevant national legislation, policies, and statutes.

- 3 To improve the practice of information disclosure in alignment with the principles of transparency, accountability, open government, accessibility and universality through collective efforts that strengthen the effectiveness and efficiency of bodies, ultimately leading to greater ATI for all.
- 4 To invite the civil society to be actively involved in safeguarding the protection of the ATI and work collaboratively with ICIC.
- 5 To invite the international governmental organizations to make ATI one of the major agendas in its proceedings.
- 6 To increase cooperation among information regulators by making further efforts in terms of sharing resources and expertise. This can be achieved by organizing joint capacity building workshops and training sessions to improve knowledge and know-how for ATI professionals.
- 7 To address common challenges and finding solutions to complex cases we are dealing with to significantly enhance ATI right and help Commissioners, Ombudspersons, and oversight bodies to better fulfill their mandate.
- 8 To promote the correct and autonomous functioning of ATI guarantor bodies and oversight institutions given their key role in maintaining transparency and accountability with regards to the disclosure and the dissemination of information. By doing so, we can ensure that the public has access to accurate and reliable information, which is essential for informed decision-making.
- 9 To ensure that we continue to provide effective and efficient services to our stakeholders we will remain adaptive and innovative in our implementation practices, while also considering the latest norms, concepts, and innovations that impact ATI. Delivering our services, will adapt to the ever-changing landscape of governance.
- 10 To be attentive to how ATI mechanisms, and their implementation, interrelate with cultural, social and cognitive dynamics and how implementing fair and efficient ATI mechanisms can support improved quality of life of all individuals.

- 11 To enrich our institutions' capabilities to fulfill our mandates, equip our personnel with relevant skills, and encourage exchange of knowledge, opportunities, and challenges within our networks to constantly advance our ATI agenda across local, regional, and global landscapes.
- 12 To emphasize the importance of ATI as an instrumental right, especially for groups in situations of vulnerability such as women, children and adolescents, people with disabilities, the elderly, ethnic minorities, people living in poverty, people discriminated for their sexual orientation or gender identity, among others, to ensure the guarantee of other human rights and the access to better living conditions. Therefore, ATI guarantor bodies must have an active role in promoting actions to narrow the gap between ATI and groups in situations of vulnerability.
- 13 To promote the exchange of good practice in order to consolidate worldwide adoption, urging more oversight institutions to take part in our global network and that it serves as a universal reference in the promotion and defense of the right of access to information.

July 2023.

Endorsement for the Public Statement

Bridging Information Across Nations: Concretizing the Global Role of Access to Information for Democratic Preservation, Inclusivity, and Development

#	COUNTRY / JURISDICTION	ICIC MEMBER
1	Albania	Information and Data Protection Commissioner
2	Argentina	Agency for Access to Public Information
3	Argentina Buenos Aires	Guarantor Body for the Right to Access the Information
4	Australia New South Wales	Information and Privacy Commission NSW
5	Australia Victoria	Office of the Victorian Information Commissioner
6	Australia Western Australia	Office of the Information Commissioner
7	Bangladesh	Information Commission
8	Bermuda Island	Information Commissioner's Office
9	Brazil	Secretariat for Access to Information at the Office of the Comptroller General
10	Canada	Office of the Information Commissioner of Canada

#	COUNTRY / JURISDICTION	ICIC MEMBER
11	Canada Alberta	Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner of Alberta
12	Canada Quebec	Access to Information Commission of Quebec
13	European Union	European Ombudsman
14	Germany	Federal Commissioner for Data Protection and Freedom of Information
15	Germany State of Brandenburg	Brandenburg Commissioner for Data Protection and Access to Information
16	Ghana	Right to Information Commission
17	Hungary	National Authority for Data Protection and Freedom of Information
18	Ivory Coast	Commission for Access to Public Interest Information and to Public Documents
19	Maldives	Information Commissioner's Office
20	Mexico	National Institute for Transparency, Access to Information and Personal Data Protection
21	Mexico State of Mexico	Institute for Transparency, Access to Public Information and Personal Data Protection of Mexico State and Municipalities
22	Nepal	National Information Commission

#	COUNTRY / JURISDICTION	ICIC MEMBER
23	 North Macedonia	Agency for Protection of the Right to Free Access to Public Information 
24	 Peru	National Information Commission 
25	 Peru	Court for Transparency and Access to Public Information 
26	 Philippines	Freedom of Information - Program Management Office 
27	 Portugal	Commission for Access to Administrative Documents 
28	 Scotland	Scottish Information Commissioner 
29	 United Kingdom	Information Commissioner's Office 
30	 Uruguay	Access to Public Information Unit 
#	COUNTRY / JURISDICTION	NO ICIC MEMBER
1	 Sri Lanka	Right to Information Commission 

