

Santo Domingo Declaration on Open Justice in Latin America and the Caribbean

*I International Conference on Open Justice
Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, August 27–28, 2025*

Preamble

We, representatives of civil society organizations, judiciaries, academia, and international organizations, gathered at the I International Conference on Open Justice in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic:

- Convinced of the importance of judicial independence and of the key role of judicial institutions in the functioning and consolidation of our democracies;
- Aware that openness, transparency, citizen participation, and accountability are indispensable conditions to legitimize justice systems, strengthen their independence, and foster public trust;
- Recognizing the central role of civil society organizations in promoting and supporting judicial reforms through institutional engagement and technical expertise;
- Persuaded of the need to weave strong and collaborative inter-institutional networks to strengthen justice systems;
- Alert to the fact that access to effective justice is a fundamental human right and an essential pillar of the democratic rule of law;
- Acknowledging the centrality of involving all levels of the justice administration and all institutional actors that make up the justice systems.

Principles

We declare our intention to work in a sustained and collaborative manner to promote and implement open justice reforms in accordance with the following guiding principles:

1. **Citizen Participation:** Promote in-person and/or digital channels so that civil society, academia, and citizens can contribute substantively to the design, monitoring, and evaluation of justice policies, as well as the definition of strategic priorities, thus fostering people-centered justice systems.
2. **Transparency and Access to Information:** Promote the proactive publication, in open formats, of processes, judicial rulings, judgments, statistics, and both administrative and jurisdictional information, guaranteeing the right of access to public information and the protection of personal data.

3. **Accountability:** Adopt mechanisms, platforms, and tools that enable clear and understandable reporting on the functioning, results, and impact of judicial institutions, using plain language and facilitating comprehension by all sectors of society.
4. **Collaboration and People-Centered Innovation:** Implement institutional and technological innovation spaces and tools that foster collaboration, such as innovation labs, artificial intelligence, and open data, to enhance the openness of judicial institutions and the quality of their services, with a focus on people and the necessary ethical and human rights safeguards.

Commitments

We commit to:

1. **Promote the development and implementation of open justice policies and/or programs in justice sector institutions at national and subnational levels**, with clear goals, indicators, and budgets, designed in a participatory manner, and by strengthening the institutional capacities of judicial institutions to design, manage, and implement open justice policies.
2. **Promote the adoption of legal frameworks and public policies** that facilitate and contribute to the implementation of open justice policies and reforms, with corresponding budget allocations.
3. **Mobilize financial and technical resources**—both domestic and international cooperation—for innovative projects on transparency, citizen participation, and accountability in the justice sector.
4. **Harness and/or strengthen the capacities and knowledge of civil society organizations** to promote open justice initiatives, policies, and projects.
5. **Encourage the measurement and dissemination of progress** in open justice policies through comparable indicators and independent evaluations open to public scrutiny.
6. **Deepen the generation, systematization, and dissemination of technical knowledge** to support and facilitate the implementation of evidence-based open justice reforms.
7. **Foster regional cooperation and mutual learning** through networks for exchanging experiences, training, and defining standards and good practices among Latin American and Caribbean countries, as well as with other regions.
8. **Promote and/or strengthen the participation of judicial institutions and civil society organizations in national and/or subnational open justice co-creation**

spaces within the framework of the Open Government Partnership.

9. **Encourage the inclusion of gender equality and intersectionality perspectives**, incorporating differential approaches in open justice programs to address the needs of women, LGBTIQ+ populations, Indigenous peoples, Afro-descendant communities, persons with disabilities, and other historically marginalized groups.

Call to Action

We invite justice system institutions, civil society organizations, academia, governments, international organizations, regional judicial cooperation and integration bodies, donors, technology companies, and the media to support and join this agenda, convinced that open, independent, integrity-based, and inclusive justice—centered on people—is an essential condition for strengthening democracies and achieving sustainable development in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Signed in Santo Domingo, on the 28th day of August, 2025.

Follow-up Mechanism

A **Regional Open Justice Committee (ROJC)** is hereby established, with equal representation of judiciaries, civil society organizations, and international organizations, with the support and accompaniment of the International Open Justice Network (RIJA), with the following functions:

- Coordinate the implementation of this Declaration.
- Publish annual progress reports.
- Convene regional dialogues and thematic forums.
- Facilitate technical assistance and mobilize resources.