

A T L A N T A C A R T E R C E N T E R A F F A I R S A D P A
A C T I O N P L A N
R I G H T O F A C C E S S T O I N F O R M A T I O N

We, 115 participants from 18 countries in the Americas, representing governments, civil society organizations, international and regional bodies and financial institutions, donor agencies and foundations, the private sector, media outlets and scholars, gathered in Lima, Peru from April 28-30, 2009, under the auspices of The Carter Center, in collaboration with the Organization of American States, the Andean Commission of Jurists and the Knight Center for Journalism in the Americas, to advance the right of access to information in the region.

P A R A G R A P H

Endorsing the principles, global findings and plan of action set out in the Atlanta Declaration and Plan of Action for the Advancement of the Right of Access to Information, including the international conventions referred to therein;

Reiterating that the right of access to information is a fundamental human right, universal, indivisible, interdependent and interrelated with the full-range of rights, and necessary for the fight against corruption, improved development, increased security, and good governance as well as being related to health, education, quality of life, and other essential rights;

Acknowledging the need to engage a more “citizen-centered approach” to the right of access to information that encourages governments to provide the range of information that individuals need to exercise their full spectrum of rights;

Recognizing that in many States in the Americas, citizens chronically lack confidence in the political system and that the lack of transparency in processes, public administration and political parties serves to deepen this mistrust;

Reminded that secrecy has been a major contributing factor to crises globally and in our region;

Emphasizing that in the Americas region, the lack of knowledge, capacity, and understanding of the benefits of the right of access to information hinders the ability of the region’s people to demand information and exercise this fundamental right;

Agreeing that the quality of institutions, regulations and practices related to the right of access to information should be monitored, supported, and enhanced;

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e. Help requesters to use the information received; and

f. Build and develop a community of practice network.

34. The Carter Center will work with others in the Americas Region to disseminate the Americas Regional Findings and Plan of Action through high level communications, publications, conferences and meetings.

We call upon all regional and international bodies, States, and the regional access to information community to establish, develop and nurture the right of access to information in the Americas, in accordance with the principles, findings and global plan of action enunciated in the Atlanta Declaration and in the Americas Regional Findings, and to commit to the Americas Regional Plan of Action in furtherance use

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To give effect to the Atlanta Declaration and the Americas Regional Findings, we call upon the relevant stakeholders to undertake the following actions:

For Regional and International Community

1. All regional intergovernmental organizations and international and regional financial institutions should assume a significant role in setting regional norms, improving state capacity and educating people about the right of access to information.
2. The Organization of American States should adopt Inter-American instruments on the right of access to information with special emphasis on the implementation of regional standards, such as model laws and benchmarks, and include areas such as archives, technology, information production, and indicators.
3. The Organization of American States, with broad civil society engagement and in accordance with the Atlanta Declaration principles, should draft and implement an internal information disclosure policy.
4. All regional intergovernmental organizations and international and regional
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- a. Formal education through curriculum-building and training in public and private elementary and secondary schools and education programs in law and journalism schools;

- b. Private sector bodies that provide public services or receive public funding;
 - c. Political parties and movements registered in the electoral system; and
 - d. Judicial and Legislative branches of government.
12. States with access to information regimes should ensure full and effective implementation in accordance with the Atlanta Declaration and specifically including:
- a. Designating a specific budget for each public body covered under the law to implement and sustain the necessary procedures;
 - b. Increasing capacity and resources for Information/Access Officers and Archival and Records Managers, including training and professionalization;
 - c. Assuring the generation (supply) of accurate and understandable information, including key documents relevant to indigenous peoples translated into non-official languages;
 - d. Affording specialized training for all public officials in the areas of record-making, storage, retrieval and delivery;
 - e. Ensuring clear guidelines for classification of documents to minimize discretion;
 - f. Sustaining proactive disclosure measures;
 - g. Strengthening reporting requirements related to operation of the law;
 - h.