



## CCO REVEALS CHALLENGES FOR PANAMA IN THE FIGHT AGAINST CORRUPTION

- *Strengthening democratic governance was the worst valued issue by civil society organizations.*
- *In the measurement, only eight of the 19 agreements on Democratic Governance Against Corruption signed by Panama at the Lima Summit obtained a score greater than 1.5 on an evaluation scale from 0 to 3.*

**Panamá, October 26, 2021.** The Fundación para el Desarrollo de la Libertad Ciudadana [Foundation for the Development of Citizen Freedom], Capítulo panameño de Transparencia internacional [Transparency International – Panama Chapter]; Alianza Ciudadana Pro Justicia (ACPJ) [Citizen Alliance Pro-Justice], Asociación Centro de Estudios y Acción Social Panameño (ACEASPA) [Association for Studies and Social Action Center of Panama]; Centro de la Mujer Panameña (CEMP) [Woman Center of Panama]; Colegio Nacional de Investigación Criminal y Seguridad de Panamá (CNICSP) [Security and Criminal Investigation National School of Panama]; Fundación Espacio Cívico [Civic Space Foundation]; Movimiento por la Defensa de Territorio y Ambiente de Bocas del Toro (MODETEAB) [Movement for the Land and Environment Defense of Bocas del Toro], and Red de Mujeres Afro Panameñas (REMAP) [African Descendent Women of Panama], as part of the Citizen Corruption Observatory (CCO), presented the report results of the follow-up on 19 -prioritized- out of 57 commitments to fight corruption contained in the Lima Agreement “**Democratic Governance against Corruption**”, signed at the VIII Summit of the Americas in 2018, which aims at keeping a direct fight against corruption in the Americas.

The National Report reveals that Panama has not effectively complied with the commitments established at the Lima Summit. “The follow-up shows the reality of a country in which the government has not developed pro-transparency and anti-corruption public policies yet, and they have a debt to a population that requires more information and articulation to be a protagonist in demanding and participating in those anti-corruption policies,” it reads in the document.

On the other hand, the results obtained in the commitment related to the strengthening of democratic governance are critical, this being the worst valued by the organizations that participated (1.07 points out of a maximum of 3).

And although the issue of prevention of corruption reached the highest valuation (1.65), it does not reach an average index on the scale of the methodology.

One of the great challenges of this follow-up is found in the fact that there is no public mechanism officially in charge of reviewing compliance with said agreements, as it makes it extremely difficult to determine the obstacles that arise in order to improve the indicators of compliance with said commitments.

### About the Citizen Corruption Observatory (CCO):

The Citizen Corruption Observatory (CCO) is an alliance between civil society organizations and social actors of the continent, created with the purpose of allowing the follow-up to the agreements adopted by the governments of the hemisphere at the VIII Summit of the Americas, held in Lima, Peru in 2018. It also promotes citizen participation in the fight against corruption.



In this sense, the information collected by the OCC shows that defining the body that must coordinate nationally and locally the process of compliance with the agreements is not only necessary, but also urgent.

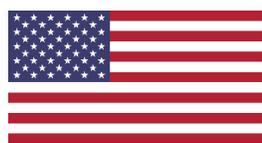
During the pandemic, the 19 prioritized commitments to follow up on the Lima Commitment took on special importance, since if each country had defined the fight against corruption as a State policy, that would have prevented opportunism and situations such as states of emergency, non-existent or abbreviated controls, which have resulted in abuses in the administration of resources and authoritarianism in the security forces.

The Citizen Corruption Observatory proposes two calls to action, with the purpose of promoting a higher transparency and efficiency:

- *To guarantee the independence* and real separation of the three organs of the state so that there is a true balance in the exercise of power and possible abuses by one of the organs to the detriment of the others are controlled.
- The administration of justice must be strengthened through the implementation of the new Judicial Career Law that establishes the incorporation of judicial officials based on meritocracy. In addition, financial independence must be guaranteed so that justice is not subject to the will of the political or economic class.

The analysis was done by identifying the regulatory and practical developments in order to comply with the Lima Agreement in 19 countries of the region. Subjects related to the reinforcement of democratic governance were considered; transparency, access to information, protection of whistle-blowers, and human rights, including freedom of expression; financing of political organizations and election campaigns; prevention of corruption in public works and public procurement and contracting; and international legal cooperation, the fight against bribery, international corruption, organized crime, and money laundering, and asset recovery.

The CCO is a shared effort between the **Citizen Forum of the Americas (CFA)**, the **Latin American and Caribbean Network for Democracy (LACND)**, **national chapters of Transparency International (TI) in Latin America and over 150 Civil Society Organizations** in the Americas to promote citizen participation and to monitor the progress of the governments measures and their challenges, as well as to research, document and systematically analyze evidence on the effectiveness of the anti-corruption efforts in the region.



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