

# Summit for democracy Spain

## Compendium of announcements, Commitments, and Initiatives

### 1. For a New Social Contract. Renewing Democracy with the Objective of Leaving No One Behind.

- **Thematic axis:** Defense of Democracy against authoritarianism
- **Rationale:** Democratic political systems, based on the Rule of Law and checks and balances, are under strong social discussion in many Latin American countries, as they are in other parts of the world. Beyond the non-democratic course taken by some specific countries in the region, others are putting under strong discussion their whole constitutional systems while others are witnessing strong street protests against social inequalities.

This could be the tip of the iceberg of a more general social and intellectual movement showing the loss of legitimacy of democracy as their political model. The paradox of the possibility of using democratic tools to destroy democracy has been a well-known case study for social scientists for decades.

Spain wishes to contribute to this debate by launching a reflection process about the current challenges to democracy in Latin America in relation to those existing in other parts of the world. This initiative will include a series of discussions and workshops in different countries during a period of one year.

This programme will be implemented in two different phases: a diagnostic phase, with an introductory meeting in Madrid; and a second phase, called thematic fora, to be developed in a series of different meetings in the Spanish Cooperation Official Training Centres in Latin America.

These meetings and workshops will work as open forums for dialogue and exchange of experiences among members of civil societies (youth organizations, NGOs, etc.), think tanks and political and economic leaders.

Spain believes that our Western, close friends and allies, the European Union and the United States, share our worries about the future of democracy in Latin America. Therefore, this initiative will be open to the participation of experts coming not only from Latin America, but also from Spain, European countries and the United States.

- **Objectives:** Opening a discussion on the present and the future of democracies in Latin America by sharing common experiences in different countries can be a tool for helping the internal reflection in some countries about possible ways to improve the functioning of their democratic systems. It may also help to raise awareness on the dangers of losing the democratic advances already achieved by the region.

The possibility of meeting with representatives of other countries suffering the same kind of problems can help the participants to open their views and learn from the experiences of other people in similar situations. The opening of these contacts can also help them to find foreign support and in establishing networks.

This discussion will help to better define the objectives and instruments of the Spanish Cooperation in Latin America and its engagement with those countries.

- **Actions:**
  - First quarter 2022: diagnostic phase. Latin American, Spanish, European and United States experts will meet in Madrid in order to draw up a diagnostic overview of the democratic situation in Latin America. This will also be the occasion for the presentation of an independent report on Spanish Cooperation for Democratic Governance in that particular region.
  - Throughout 2022: Thematic dialogues will be held in the different Training Centers the Spanish Development Cooperation has in Latin America, located in the cities of Antigua (Guatemala), Cartagena de Indias (Colombia), Santa Cruz de la Sierra (Bolivia) and Montevideo (Uruguay).

Discussion subjects can be, according to the results of the diagnostic phase:

- The role of Civil Society in a democracy in order to restore confidence among social and political stakeholders, including gender perspective and diversity in institutional strengthening.
  - Democratic Political Institutions, such as constitutional reform processes and judicial independence, political party functioning, election transparency and fairness, public accountability.
  - Democratic Governance Institutions, Fiscal systems and social cohesion, fight against corruption.
- Implementation phase: lessons learnt in this series of discussions can help to renew programs and projects of the Spanish Cooperation in Latin America in the framework of United Nations Sustainable Developments Goal 16 (Peace, justice and strong institutions). According to the exchange of experiences in this series of dialogues, a new regional Institutional

Strengthening Program of the Spanish Cooperation Agency could be drafted.

## 2. “Meeting our Commitments”. Accountability report

- **Thematic axis:** Defense of Democracy against authoritarianism
- **Rationale:** The President of the Government of Spain assumed, at the beginning of his mandate, an explicit commitment on establishing a regular accountability mechanism on the progress of the government action.

As a result of this commitment, on December 29th 2020, the “[Meeting our Commitments](#)” report was presented to the public and on the website of the Spanish Presidency of the Government, which meant that, for the first time in the history of Spanish democracy, an assessment on government performance was done, based on the systematized analysis of the fulfilment of the commitments made since the beginning of the mandate, thus putting value not only on the work and management carried out in that year, but also the importance of respecting and valuing the given word.

- **Objectives:** The public, periodic and systematized presentation of the acquired commitments and the evolution of their fulfilment, including details of the measures carried out by the Government.

The purpose of accountability, inspired by the principles of compliance and reporting, is to vindicate the value of the given word and with it:

- Make progress in terms of democratic quality and in the culture of public governance;
- Combat political discontent, submitting the government action to the scrutiny of the public; and
- Develop an institutional learning process enriched by public debate.

The Government intends to consolidate the position of Spain at the forefront of the global accountability efforts with a unique and pioneering exercise that explains the Government’s actions from the perspective of meeting the expectations generated.

It includes a publication of open-access data on (i) the commitments made since the inauguration and throughout the legislature, (ii) the initiatives created to comply with those commitments and (iii) the progress statements.

Likewise, work is being done to establish, even institutionally, a new tool aligned with democratic values and principles and with the fundamental rights to political participation as established by the Spanish Constitution, and in doing so offering systematized information to citizens, political forces, public institutions, the media and social intermediaries.

Thus, this instrument reinforces the possibilities of control of the Executive, added to those already in place, and facilitates the analysis and assessment of the work of the Government.

- **Actions:**

- Semi-annual publication of the “*Meeting our Commitments*” report, reflecting the progress of the fulfilment of the commitments made by the Government from the beginning of the term until the corresponding publication date.
- Disclosure and contrast of accountability with a dual purpose: first, to publicize the initiative and its vocation of permanence and, second, to contrast, in specific forums, the methodological foundations on which it is based, thus meeting its aspiration of continuous improvement.
- Development of visualization and interaction mechanisms of accountability that allow citizens to obtain information from different perspectives, classifications and interests, offering easily understandable, visual and configurable information.

### 3. Quality infrastructure in Latin-America and the Caribbean

- **Key axis:** Addressing and fighting corruption
- **Rationale:** Over the last few years, political and social stability have deteriorated in Latin American with a clear impact on its investment climate and economic growth. COVID-19’s economic consequences have inflicted extra pain throughout the region. Some actors, favored by their State-led-capitalism models, have taken advantage of the situation, to the detriment of democratic law-abiding institutions and companies long-present in the region.

As geopolitics increasingly shapes economics, we must play our part and make sure that countries in the region can afford to reject easy money and projects delivered by authoritarian regimes that more often than not come with strings attached, including conditions on aspects such as global governance and decisions at multilateral bodies.

Reinforcing democracy and creating economic growth through Infrastructure building on the basis of common values and existing standards must be the overarching goal of a multilateral endeavor, reflecting a clear political commitment to the region.

This initiative would emulate efforts already in place for other regions or following similar patterns, like the Blue Dot Network, the Three Seas

Initiative or, most recently, the Build Back Better for the World and the EU Global Gateway Partnerships.

Therefore, it would envisage:

- The construction of both physical and digital infrastructures in an orderly manner.
- It would also aim to provide quality services through the operation of those infrastructures.

Hence the necessity of a multi-faceted approach where a clear regulatory framework and strong law-abiding institutions would provide an adequate environment for investment, construction and management.

Consumers (individuals and companies) would benefit from quality services and would be willing to afford associated costs. As the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) has pointed out, much of the social unrest the region has experienced in recent years reflects a growing dissatisfaction with the quality and cost of services.

- **Objectives** :
  - Institutional Strengthening. Confirmation/Adoption/Promotion of Standards and Good practices through Infrastructure Building in Latin America
  - It would also favour intra-regional trade, taking into account current bottlenecks and divergences in the economic integration processes of the region; as well as the state of play of trade and economic relations with extra-regional countries and blocs.
- **Actions:**
  - Sharing the idea with interested parties (countries plus International Financial Institutions) at a political level.
  - Political dialogue with the region or specific countries aimed at finding a common approach to pursue the above-mentioned goals.
  - Further details to be jointly finalised at a technical level.
- **Financing:** Through International Financial Institutions (this initiative was informally presented to the IDB's President), national financial institutions with different approaches and schemes. In the case of Spain COFIDES (the government's main public-private instrument promoting direct and indirect investment abroad and financing sustainable development) would play a

main role, though other Funds could also participate (like FIEM or FONPRODE).

Financing being of great importance (talking values must be accompanied by concrete support in a region drained of public financial resources), emphasis must be put on legal aspects and transparency.

#### 4. Ellas + fund: women's political empowerment

- **Thematic axis:** Defense of Human Rights
- **Rationale:** Spain conducts a feminist foreign policy and has always been very sensitive to gender issues, which are present in the policies and instruments of our foreign action, including development cooperation. The pandemic has underlined once more structural and gender inequalities in our societies, and therefore we consider it essential to work with our partners in promoting the achievement of goal 5.5 of the 2030 Agenda -Full participation of women and equal opportunities-.

With this goal in mind, we are seeking coordinated action with our partners aimed at fostering women participation in politics and democratic institutions. As part of our contribution to this common effort, Spain intends to develop a fund, which is well aligned with action 5.c "Adopt and strengthen sound policies and enforceable legislation for the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls at all levels", whose objectives and actions are detailed below.

- **Objectives:** The Ellas + Fund promotes women's effective participation in political life and thus establishes, and accelerates, women's real leadership. The Fund will not only benefit female leaders and women more broadly, but also democratic institutions and processes by injecting greater diversity and inclusion, bringing them closer to the societies they intend to represent.

More specifically, the fund will finance projects in the following ways:

- Promotion of initiatives that allow women to participate and benefit equally from governance systems.
  - Promotion of actions to strengthen women's leadership and participation in public life and decision-making processes.
  - Support to the establishment of legal frameworks to promote greater participation of women in democratic decisions-both at a central and decentralized/local level.
- **Actions:** projects are identified and funded by AECID (Spain's development cooperation agency). Several projects have already been selected and are

currently being implemented in different countries in Africa, the middle East and Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) region.

In the LAC region, projects have been selected for Bolivia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Haiti, Peru, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador and Uruguay. For instance, in Peru and Ecuador, the projects will focus on the empowerment of indigenous women; and in Uruguay, AECID will work with the Uruguayan Cooperation Agency to create a Political Training Centre for female leaders.