

# Summit Of Leaders for Democracy

## Management commitments submitted by Uruguay

### 1. Fight against Corruption.

For the period of its administration, the government of Uruguay promotes a set of broad strategic lines agreed between the political parties that make up the government coalition (called "Commitment for the country"), which contains firm actions to fight corruption.

Thus, in **Strategic Line 1, A government with accounts in order**, it has been arranged "to carry out during 2020 a management audit, within the current constitutional framework, which allows identifying spaces of inefficiency and possible irregularities in the management of public resources".

In turn, in **Strategic Line 2, An Intelligent and Transparent State**, the Uruguayan government pledged to promote these measures:

- Create an Agency for Monitoring and Evaluation of Public Policies, linking them with existing agencies such as the Internal Audit of the Nation and the National Public Investment System (SNIP).
- Strengthen the Board of Transparency and Public Ethics (JUTEP)

- Prioritize the Budget Transparency Portal and
- Strengthen and improve the public procurement system

In addition, in **Strategic Line 3, Public companies at the service of the people**, the following commitments are assumed:

- Review the criteria for the presentation of the economic-financial statements
- Establish strict and effective control mechanisms for subsidiary companies under private law, with management audits.

Systematized corruption erodes the very foundations of democratic institutions of government, by facilitating the misappropriation of resources that must be legitimately used for the benefit of the general interests of the country, thus eroding citizen confidence in the management of its rulers.

This is the most visible effect within a country. But corruption also has a negative impact on international relations, since it devalues the level of dialogue and negotiation with other States and organizations in the face of suspicion or distrust in the management of resources committed in an international trade negotiation.

The **Framework Agreement on Trade and Investment (TIFA)**, signed between Uruguay and the United States in 2007, seeks

among its objectives "to promote transparency and eliminate corruption in international trade and investment."

The actions promoted since the TIFA Agreement, uninterruptedly until now, have paid preferential attention to this pillar. To such an extent that at the Ninth Meeting of the Council, held on August 5-6 in Montevideo, the two countries agreed to start negotiations to sign an anti-corruption protocol as part of the renewal of the TIFA Agreement. This and other protocols that will be negotiated during the next 3 months, will constitute a qualitative leap in the bilateral relationship with the United States.

## **2. Defense of Human Rights and against Authoritarianism.**

Respect for constitutional precepts is the best guarantee to avoid overflows of power and authority in democratic societies. The defense of republican and democratic values is a constant in the Uruguayan government and has as its fundamental pillars: the separation of powers, the support for human rights and also the non-election of the President of the Republic.

- Restrictions on individual freedom due to Covid-19. During the current situation of the Covid-19 pandemic, the Uruguayan government has conducted its actions through the exercise of a "responsible freedom", leaving in the hands of citizens the majority of decisions on ambulatory freedom and has adopted minimum limitations when public health

has had to prevail, as a protected legal good. At present, and added to the excellent results of the vaccination plan in Uruguay, this policy has proven to be correct.

- Free elections. The holding of national, departmental and municipal elections every 5 years constitutes for Uruguay one of the characteristic notes of its democratic system, instances indicated for citizens as a whole and reason for expectation and celebration (beyond the results). The Electoral Court, one of the longest-standing bodies of electoral justice in the world, ensures the transparency and guarantees of electoral processes, constituting the pillar of electoral justice.
- Limited presidential terms. By constitutional rule, in Uruguay presidential terms are limited to 5 years and their immediate re-election is not admitted. Initiatives to reform this provision do not have the appreciation of the public.
- Protection of civil society. The role of civil society in democracy is vital. For this reason, the regulatory framework in Uruguay favors the registration and activity of non-governmental organizations (NGOs). This trait is also promoted internationally and Uruguay has demonstrated it during its presidency of the NGO Committee of ECOSOC for 4 consecutive years, through actions that favored its participation and confronting the restrictions on its actions

coming from the authorities of their countries. During his presidency of the Human Rights Council (2011 to 2012), one of the guidelines for action was precisely to strengthen the role of civil society in the work and activities of the Council.

- Attacks and retaliation against opponents. As a defender of democratic culture, Uruguay opposes any measure that authoritarily limits the exercise of activities of opposition leaders or human rights defenders. These practices violate human rights and must be banished or at least denounced. One of the postulates in Uruguay's candidacies for the Human Rights Council, which has become 3 members since 2006, is to defend and guarantee the work of human rights defenders and those who collaborate with the council's mechanisms, opposing attacks on their physical integrity or work performance.

### **3. Advancing in Human Rights**

The Uruguayan government defends and promotes the enjoyment of human rights to the fullest extent. Strategic **Line 10, Agenda for Rights** clearly contemplates the protection of human rights against any abuse within the national territory and outside borders.

This task, as we conceive it, must permeate all government action, including, among others, social policies, educational policy, prison policy and foreign policy.

It is expressly developed through:

- Frontal combat violence in general and in particular against women, children, and adolescents, as well as all forms of discrimination based on gender, race, religious confession, political affiliation or sexual orientation, among other causes. Strengthening actions that promote equal rights and opportunities
- Promotion of public policies to reconcile work and domestic life, as a way to reduce the gender opportunity gap
- Redesign and strengthening of support programs for Afro-descendants, victims of violent crime, migrants, refugees, disabled people, homeless people, older adults and any other vulnerable group that is subject to postponement, injustice or discrimination.
- Commitment to truth and justice with respect to persons subject to enforced disappearance.
- We are committed to carrying out public policies in accordance with the standards of the International Human Rights System of the United Nations, ratified by Uruguay (Universal Declaration and main universal and regional Conventions in this area), as well as the recommendations of the Treaty Committees and the Universal Periodic Review in

which Uruguay participates as part of the global commitment to defend a dignified life for all people.

The decision of the Joe Biden Administration to return to the work of the Human Rights Council is positively valued by Uruguay, which has supported his candidacy.

As already mentioned, Uruguay has been emphatic in applying a broad criterion in the accreditation of NGOs before the UN ECOSOC Committee to counteract the negative influence of authoritarian regimes.

Uruguay will maintain its commitment to lead, on behalf of the Latin American and Caribbean Group (GRULAC) and jointly with the European Union, both in the Third Committee of the UN General Assembly and in the Human Rights Council, the negotiation and presentation of the Resolution on the Rights of the Child. These are the main manifestations of the UN system in the protection of children's rights, which have earned Uruguay great recognition.

The same can be said about the instructions to our delegates in areas related to: legal status of women, right to peaceful demonstrations, freedom of expression and journalistic work, rights of vulnerable people and groups (LGBTQI+, different abilities, older adults, ethnic and religious minorities, etc.), as well as the fight against hate speech and violent actions based on beliefs and religions (anti-Semitism, Islamophobia, etc.).

In all these areas, the Uruguayan government intends to strengthen public policies, improve the legislative framework in all aspects that are necessary and ratify international conventions aimed at raising protection standards.

The convening of a Summit of Leaders for Democracy is a timely and propitious instance for those governments that share the same values regarding democracy, the rule of law and the protection of human rights, to renew their commitments and express their vocation to honor and defend them.

Montevideo, September 10, 2021.