

preparation, presentation, auditing and oversight of public accounts, with technical assistance where appropriate from multilateral organizations and multilateral development banks (MDBs), and support exchanges of information on oversight activities related to the collection, allocation and expenditure of public funds;

Encourage cooperation and exchange of experiences and parliamentary best practices between national legislators of the Hemisphere, while respecting the separation and balance of powers, through bilateral, subregional and hemispheric vehicles such as the Inter-Parliamentary Forum of the Americas (FIPA);

Work jointly to facilitate cooperation among national institutions with the responsibility to guarantee the protection, promotion and respect of human rights, and access to and freedom of information, with the aim of developing best practices to improve the administration of information held by governments on individuals and facilitating citizen access to that information;

Create and implement programs with the technical and financial support, where appropriate, of multilateral organizations and MDBs, to facilitate public participation and transparency, using information and communications technologies where applicable, in decision-making processes and in the delivery of government services, and to publish information within time-limits established by national legislation at all levels of government;

Media and Communications

Noting that access to existing and emerging information and communications technologies has an increasingly significant impact on the lives of individuals and offers important opportunities for democratic development, and that the media has an important role to play in promoting a democratic culture:

Ensure the media is free from arbitrary interventions by the state and, specifically, work to remove legal or regulatory impediments to media access by registered political parties including by facilitating, where possible, equitable access during election campaigns to television and radio;

Encourage cooperation among public and private broadcasters, including cable operators, and independent broadcast regulatory bodies and governmental organizations, in order to facilitate the exchange of best industry practices and technologies at the hemispheric level, to guarantee free, open and independent media;

Encourage media self-regulation efforts, including norms of ethical conduct, to address the concerns of civil society with regard to, *inter alia*, reducing the dissemination of extreme violence and negative stereotypes of women and ethnic, social and other groups, contributing in this way to the promotion of changes in attitudes and cultural patterns through the projection of pluralistic, balanced and non-discriminatory images;