





ADOPTION OF PARLIAMENTARY INITIATIVES ON COMMUNICATION AND CITIZEN PARTICIPATION

EXPERIENCES FROM THE NATIONAL CONGRESS OF HONDURAS

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- ▶ Our Constitution establishes that sovereignty belongs to the people from whom emanate the powers of the State. The system of government is democratic and representative, rights of association and petition are guaranteed as a basis of participation.

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- ▶ Citizen Participation implies involving citizens in the formulation, execution, and evaluation of all of the policies and activities of the State, making the citizen a protagonist and agent in shaping their own destiny. As the social auditor of the actions of the Public Authority, the citizen should evaluate that the norms and procedures are followed and results are obtained according to the overall goals of the society.



- ▶ **Law on Citizen Participation.- (Decree No.3-2006)**

- ▶ The provision of this law is aimed at promoting, regulating, and establishing the applications and mechanisms that allow for the organization and functioning of citizen participation and its relationship with State bodies, in accordance with the Constitution of the Republic



▶ It is guided by the principles of:

▶ Participatory democracy

▶ Shared responsibility

▶ Inclusion

▶ Solidarity

▶ Legality

▶ Respect

▶ Tolerance

▶ Continuity





▶ Citizen Participation Mechanisms

▶ Plebiscites

▶ Referenda

▶ Open municipal councils

▶ Citizen initiatives






Vision


- ▶ Consolidate spaces with civil society, the labour sector, the corporate sector, and International Cooperation to strengthen integrity, citizen participation, and the implementation of technological tools in order to fulfill the commitments enshrined in the Open Government Plan, which proposes a continuous process of initiatives undertaken to reinforce and improve communication and coordination between all of the sectors involved.



▶ **Organic Law of the High Court of Auditors:**


- ▶ Derived from article 222 of the Constitution of the Republic of Honduras, a **High Court of Auditors** was created, as the governing body of the Public Resources Monitoring System, with Functional and Administrative autonomy, subject only to compliance with the Constitution and the laws.


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- ▶ Its constitutional role is the Post-Audit of the funds, goods, and resources administered by the State Powers, decentralized and deconcentrated Institutions, including Banks and Insurers, the Municipalities, and whichever other Special Body or public or private entity that receives or administers public resources from internal or external sources.



▶ **Law on Transparency and Access to Public Information:**

- ▶ The right to access public information guarantees transparency so that citizens can oversee and hold public servants accountable at each step in the process and in whichever moment. It is also an efficient measure against Corruption.


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- ▶ The greater citizens' knowledge of state actions, the greater their participation in decision-making will be and the greater their confidence in the role of the government, because our citizens also have a right to accountability in public governance,


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- ▶ Meanwhile our State has ratified the Inter-American Convention against Corruption, in which citizens' rights are expressly acknowledged.
 - ▶ This is a law of public order and in the public's interest, its purpose is development and a national policy on transparency, as well as every person's right to access public information for the strengthening of the Rule of Law and the reinforcement of democracy by means of citizen participation.





- ▶ **Law on Citizen Participation Mechanisms: (Decree 190-2012)**

- ▶ **Special Law** that elaborates the types of citizen participation in topics of national, regional, subregional, departmental, and municipal interest for citizen practices and consultations, because the decisions of the population expressed through mechanisms like Referenda and Plebiscite is the most direct way for the public to express their will on one or more specific topics submitted for consideration. It is a law of public order and its purpose is to regulate the Citizen Participation Mechanisms: Referenda, Plebiscite, and citizen participation, noted in article 5 of the Constitution of the Republic.

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- ▶ **Referendum:** Process by which citizens by way of a vote express their approval or disapproval of an ordinary law or constitutional rules or reforms that have been approved and issued by the National Congress of the Republic.

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- ▶ **Plebiscite:** A consultation with citizens so that they can vote in favour or against Constitutional, Legislative, or administrative aspects, about which constituent powers have **not** yet taken any decision, insofar as these aspects are considered to be of fundamental importance to national life.


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- ▶ **Citizens have Legislative Initiative** in all cases when three thousand (3,000) citizens present a Legislative Initiative before the National Congress of Honduras, for discussion and approval, or not, of the plenary, in accordance with the Constitution of the Republic, this law, and what is established in the Internal Regulations of the National Congress.

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- ▶ Since the State through the Supreme Electoral Court (TSE) contributes to the organization and promotion of trainings for Professional, Civic, Union, Community, youth, charity or non-governmental public utility Associations without compromising their autonomy, with the goal of contributing to or building democratic representational mechanisms in the different participatory settings outlined here.





▶ **IN CONCLUSION:**

- ▶ The National Congress of Honduras, through the Legislative Advisory Body (CIEL) Legislative Studies Research Centre, is currently working on the following Projects:

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- ▶ Constituting an Advisory Council made up of NON-POLITICIANS from Civil Society whose profile is that of an ethical citizen with great cultural, scientific, or social significance, which will serve as an advisory body to the National Congress, NOT BINDING but still RELEVANT. The goal is to guide the congress towards legislation with greater impact and efficacy for the nation. It will be made up of 15 people, who will benefit from logistical services in the National Congress.

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- ▶ In accordance with the Law on Access to Public Information, the National Congress of Honduras reports monthly on all of the Legislation and occurrences in the National Congress.

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- ▶ In accordance with the Accountability Legislation, in the National Congress there is an Audit Committee, in which the following are audited: the Legislation, Agreements signed with International, national and private bodies in the course of each year, among them: approved budgets, current budgets, budget liquidations by group and by purpose of the expenditure corresponding to the relevant year for the audit, payments, contracts, tenders, manuals of procedures, current bank accounts during the audit period.

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- ▶ Apart from this, the National Congress through its television channel, Canal 20, informs the Honduran public through live transmissions of the ordinary sessions of the Legislative Chamber and about the legislative work accomplished during the period. Citizen Consultations take place in the 8 regions of the country for relevant laws. They have or form Opinion Committees, which can be technical opinions issued by bodies or views or opinions from civil society organizations.

THANK YOU

