


Webinar: Inter-American Model Law 2.0 on Access to Public Information for the Parliaments in the Americas and the Caribbean

#ParlAmericasOPN

 **THEME:** Transparency, access to information

 **DATES:** May 7, 2021

 **LOCATION:** Virtual

 **PARTICIPANTS:** More than **100** parliamentarians, parliamentary staff, experts, and representatives of enforcement bodies from the Americas and the Caribbean

 **ORGANIZING PARTNER:** Organization of American States (OAS), Transparency and Access to Information Network (RTA), and EUROsociAL+



This activity is aligned with SDG 16.

This meeting offered a presentation of the new OAS Inter-American Model Law 2.0 on Access to Public Information and created a space for strengthened collaboration between parliaments and enforcement bodies in the Americas and the Caribbean to address access to information and transparency issues. The session was based on an understanding that these are fundamental democratic principles which are further essential to achieving the 2030 Agenda.

Presentation of Inter-American Model Law 2.0 on Access to Public Information

The presentation of Model Law 2.0 provided an account of its background, the extensive consultation process undergone for its development, its main concepts and characteristics, and some of the most important advances it introduces; for example, the principle of active transparency and the recommendation that the legislature be a binding subject of the law. The presentation also addressed issues related to access to information in the context of political oversight functions as well as aspects concerning the institutional design that guarantees the autonomy and independence of the enforcement body.

Panel: Reflections on National Experiences

The discussion offered a space to exchange good national practices on transparency and access to information, to learn about the institutional structure and main functions of the enforcement bodies operating in some countries of the hemisphere, and to promote collaboration between enforcement bodies and parliaments with the aim of advancing the agenda of access to information in the Americas and the Caribbean.

Among the key references and documents presented in the gathering were:

- [Inter-American Model Law 2.0 on Access to Public Information](#). Organization of American States – OAS, 2021.
- [Inter-American Model Law on Document Management](#). Organization of American States – OAS, 2021.
- [Application Guide for the Inter-American Model Law on Document Management](#). Organization of American States – OAS, 2021.
- [Legislative Transparency Toolkit](#). ParlAmericas, EUROsociAL+, and Transparency and Access to Information Network, 2020.
- [The Importance of Parliamentary Oversight during the COVID-19 Pandemic](#). ParlAmericas, 2021.

AGENDA HIGHLIGHTS

Opening remarks by:

- Senator **Bertha Alicia Caraveo Camarena** (Mexico), Vice-President of the ParlAmericas Open Parliament Network for North America
- Mr. **Felice Zaccheo**, Head of Unit for Mexico, Central America, Caribbean and Regional Operations, DG International Partnerships, European Commission
- Mr. **Gabriel Delpiazzo Antón**, President of the Transparency and Access to Information Network

Presentation of the Inter-American Model Law 2.0 on Access to Public Information:

- Mr. **Dante Negro**, Director of the Department of International Law, OAS

Panel on reflections of national experiences:

- Moderator: Ms. **María José Méndez**, consultant, EUROsociAL+

Panellists:

- Ms. **Caroline Maynard**, Information Commissioner of Canada
- Ms. **Gloria de la Fuente**, President of the Council for Transparency of Chile
- Senator, the **Honourable Ranard Eric Henfield** (The Bahamas), Vice-President of the ParlAmericas Open Parliament Network for the Caribbean

Closing remarks by:

- Mr. **Borja Díaz Rivillas**, Head of Good Governance, EUROsociAL+, FIIAPP
- Mr. **Adrián Alcalá Méndez**, Executive Secretary of the Transparency and Access to Information Network
- Member of the Legislative Assembly **Ana Lucía Delgado** (Costa Rica), VicePresident of the ParlAmericas Open Parliament Network for Central America

About the Inter-American Model Law 2.0 on Access to Public Information of the OAS

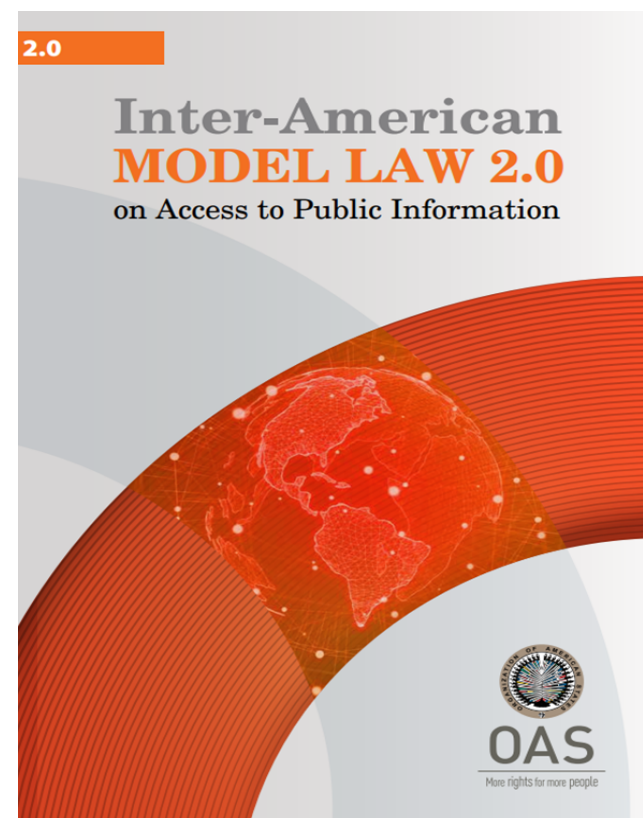
The OAS General Assembly approved the Inter-American Model Law 2.0 on Access to Public Information in October 2020, during its 50th Regular Session.

The development of this law included an extensive consultation process with enforcement bodies, legislators, academics, civil society representatives, and other stakeholders.

The document, which consists of eight chapters, addresses key aspects for promoting access to information, such as measures to promote openness, the process for requests for access to information held by public authorities, exception regimes, appeals, the main characteristics and functions of an enforcement body, and advancement and enforcement measures.

It is worth noting that Model Law 2.0 is one of the first legal instruments of the Inter-American System to incorporate a gender-based perspective in its design.

This law offers OAS member states an advanced frame of reference that integrates the most important international standards on transparency and access to public information.



MAIN CONCLUSIONS:

- Transparency and access to public information are fundamental democratic principles for the fight against corruption, encouraging citizen participation in public affairs, and promoting accountability and the strengthening of public management.
- Strengthening legislative frameworks for access to information is crucial to the effectiveness of parliamentary political control, particularly during crisis situations such as that caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.
- As parliaments adopt or amend legislative frameworks for access to information, it is crucial that enforcement bodies be guaranteed the autonomy, independence and budgetary muscle necessary to carry out the functions within their competence in accordance with the standards contained in the Model Law.
- Strengthening the practices of access to information in accordance with the recommendations of the Model Law requires the advancement of modernization processes, both technological and archival, that serve to improve the management and conservation of documents to help respond adequately to the rights of citizens.

The complete [agenda](#), [press release](#), [podcast](#) of the Model Law presentation (in Spanish) and [presentations](#) from this activity can be accessed on the ParlAmericas website.

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