

AG/RES. 1932 (XXXIII-O/03)

ACCESS TO PUBLIC INFORMATION: STRENGTHENING DEMOCRACY

(Resolution adopted at the fourth plenary session, held on June 10, 2003)

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY,

EMPHASIZING that Article 13 of the American Convention on Human Rights establishes that the right to freedom of thought and expression includes freedom to seek, receive, and impart information and ideas, regardless of frontiers and through any medium;

EMPHASIZING ALSO that Article 4 of the Inter-American Democratic Charter states that transparency in government activities, probity, responsible public administration on the part of governments, respect for social rights, and freedom of expression and of the press are essential components of the exercise of democracy;

RECALLING that, according to the Plan of Action of the Third Summit of the Americas, held in Quebec City in 2001, the governments will ensure that national legislation relating to freedom of expression is applied equitably to all, respecting freedom of expression and access to information by all citizens;

CONSIDERING that access to public information is a requisite for the very functioning of democracy, greater transparency, and good governance and that, in a representative and participatory democratic system, the citizenry exercises its constitutional rights, *inter alia*, the rights to political participation, the vote, education, and association, by means of broad freedom of expression and free access to information;

RECOGNIZING that the goal of achieving an informed citizenry must sometimes be rendered compatible with other societal aims such as safeguarding national security, public order, and protection of personal privacy, pursuant to laws passed to that effect;

TAKING NOTE of the Declaration of Principles on Freedom of Expression of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights; and

RECALLING initiatives recently taken by civil society regarding access to public information, in particular the Declaration of Chapultepec, the Johannesburg Principles, and the Lima Principles,

RESOLVES:

1. To reaffirm that everyone has the freedom to seek, receive, access, and impart information and that access to public information is a requisite for the very exercise of democracy.
2. To reiterate that states are obliged to respect and promote respect for everyone's access to public information and to promote the adoption of any necessary legislative or other types of provisions to ensure its recognition and effective application.
3. To urge member states to take into consideration the principles of access to information in drawing up and adapting national security laws.

4. To encourage member states, through their respective national legislation and other appropriate means, to take necessary measures to facilitate the electronic availability of public information.

5. To instruct the Permanent Council to promote seminars and forums designed to foster, disseminate, and exchange experiences and knowledge about access to public information so as to contribute, through efforts by the member states, to fully implementing such access.

6. To instruct the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, through the Special Rapporteur for Freedom of Expression, to continue including in its annual report a report on access to public information in the region.

7. To request the Permanent Council to report to the General Assembly at its next regular session on the implementation of this resolution, which will be carried out in accordance with resources allocated in the program-budget of the Organization and other resources.