

## CONCEPT NOTE<sup>1</sup>

The Inter-American Meetings of Electoral Management Bodies (RAE for its Spanish acronym) promote the exchange of knowledge, experiences and successful practices in electoral administration within the region. These meetings facilitate horizontal cooperation in order to continuously strengthen the institutional capacities of electoral bodies and further improve the way elections are conducted in the Americas. The XV RAE, the only forum that brings together all the authorities of the hemisphere, seeks to provide an established space in which those authorities can identify and discuss the challenges they face.

To date, fourteen Inter-American Meetings of Electoral Management Bodies have been held, the most recent of which took place in Panama in 2019. The fifteenth meeting offers, once again, an opportunity for the representatives of electoral management bodies to share and evaluate various experiences.

Each panel will be preceded by an expert presentation that will allow authorities to share their knowledge and challenges regarding each topic, encouraging a substantive discussion among the delegates. On this occasion, the hosts are also pleased to offer a workshop that seeks to strengthen the capacity of electoral authorities to fight disinformation, with particular reference to providing tools for combating this phenomenon. The topics that will be addressed during the meeting are discussed below.

**KEYNOTE SPEECH: “Democracy in danger: how to combat disinformation and safeguard elections”  
Tuesday, November 29 – 8:30 am**

With the advent of mass communication and broadening access to information with online content, new challenges have surfaced for democracies. While citizens have faster and broader access to information, this creates a risk of data manipulation and a challenge in discerning between true and false information due to the over-abundance of data available online.

Especially in the past few years, the widespread propagation of disinformation, misinformation and malinformation have become a particular concern for democratic systems, as it is understood that they have the potential to undermine citizens’ faith in the institutions representing them.

In a democracy, access to factual information is crucial for citizens to make well informed decisions, and if they are not able to trust their institutions, laws, or representatives as a result of them being perceived to be based on false or manipulated beliefs, the consequences for the system can be grave. A recent study argues that “democratic processes are only viable when citizens have a sufficient degree of epistemic trust in their main sources of political information and in each other’s epistemic competence” and that “the fear that others will believe fake news is already sufficient to cause problematic damage to the democratic process”<sup>2</sup>.

False information is not the only issue regarding easier access to information, as the dissemination of violent content or hate speech has proliferated in recent years. Therefore, a particular challenge that democracies face in this realm is how to establish limitations to the spread of these communications without undermining one of its valuable principles, namely freedom of speech and expression, and the role of media and news outlets.

While all of the abovementioned challenges are sources of continuous concern, their ability to impact the foundation of political organization in a democratic society – particularly during electoral processes – argues

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<sup>2</sup> Reglitz, Merten (July 2022). Fake News and Democracy. *Journal of Ethics and Social Philosophy*, Vol. 22, No. 2.  
<https://doi.org/10.26556/jesp.v22i2.1258>

strongly for the specific focus of this panel on how to safeguard elections.

A 2020 study on Taiwan's 2018 local elections, which was based on surveys performed immediately after the elections, confirmed that false news did affect voting decisions.<sup>3</sup> In the same vein, other investigations have shown that disinformation affects elections indirectly. For example, there is evidence indicating that disinformation may affect the determination of the information agenda, which can amplify the coverage of certain news items in the media, including those that erode trust in democratic institutions.<sup>4</sup> A very recent study on social media and polarization in the United States also demonstrated that although social media networks are not the original cause of polarization, they do tend to intensify divisiveness, and one contributing factor thereto is disinformation on elections, public health, and discrimination.<sup>5</sup> Based on this, the study notes the correlation between polarization and political disinformation on social networks. Although it does not prove causality, it does posit that disinformation is associated with polarization, which does affect the electoral context.

The debate on the effect of disinformation on electoral processes and results is far from settled. What is clear, however, is that disinformation is on the rise, especially since the pandemic, and that it affects elections by weakening public debate and, according to some recent studies, spurring polarization.

#### Disinformation during elections: conceptual definitions

In elections, the information ecosystem can be influenced or distorted by various types of content designed to manipulate existing information, namely:

- **Misinformation:** false, inaccurate, or misleading information, regardless of the intent to deceive;<sup>6</sup>
- **Disinformation:** false information, with the intent to deceive the public and with the knowledge of its falsehood;<sup>7</sup>
- **Malinformation:** genuine information that is shared with an intent to cause harm;<sup>8</sup> examples of malinformation would be classified information that is shared illegally and the dissemination of personal data.

These types of content, along with hate speech and propaganda, are typically spread for a number of purposes that include undermining citizen confidence in democratic processes and institutions, authorities, and the media; furthering certain political and/or narrative agendas; amplifying polarization; exacerbating

<sup>3</sup> Wang, T.-L. (2020). Does Fake News Matter to Election Outcomes?: The Case Study of Taiwan's 2018 Local Elections. *Asian Journal for Public Opinion Research*, 8(2), <https://www.ajpor.org/article/12985-does-fake-news-matter-to-election-outcomes-the-case-study-of-taiwan-s-2018-local-elections>.

<sup>4</sup> Cited in the Guide to guarantee freedom of expression regarding deliberate disinformation in electoral contexts of the Office of the Special Rapporteur for Freedom of Expression of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, p. 15. Cf. L. Bandeira, D. Barojan, R. Braga, J.L. Penarredonda, M-F. Perez Arguello. (March 28, 2019). *Disinformation in Democracies: Strengthening Digital Resilience in Latin America*.

<sup>5</sup> Barrett, Paul M., Justin Hendrix, and J. Grant Sims. (September 12, 2021). *Fueling the Fire: How Social Media Intensifies U.S. Political Polarization – And What Can Be Done About It*. NYU Stern Center for Business and Human Rights, <https://bhr.stern.nyu.edu/blogs/2021/report-fueling-the-fire>.

<sup>6</sup> Arnaudo D., Samantha Bradshaw, Hui Hui Ooi, Kaleigh Schwalbe, Amy Studdart, Vera Zakem, and Amanda Zink. (2021, September). *Combating Information Manipulation: A Playbook for Elections and Beyond*. IRI, NDI, Stanford Internet Observatory, p. 6, <https://www.ndi.org/publications/combating-information-manipulation-playbook-elections-and-beyond>.

<sup>7</sup> The Guide to guarantee freedom of expression regarding deliberate disinformation in electoral contexts of the Office of the Special Rapporteur for Freedom of Expression of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights specifies that this is a provisional definition. Office of the Special Rapporteur for Freedom of Expression of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights. (2019, October), p. 13, [https://www.oas.org/en/iachr/expression/publications/Guia\\_Desinformacion\\_VF%20ENG.pdf](https://www.oas.org/en/iachr/expression/publications/Guia_Desinformacion_VF%20ENG.pdf).

<sup>8</sup> Claire Wardle. (2020, September 22). *Essential Guide To Understanding Information Disorder*, p. 9, <https://firstdraftnews.org/long-form-article/understanding-information-disorder/>.



political and electoral violence; stirring up resentment, hate and fear; weakening public debate; obtaining economic gain; and attacking vulnerable and marginalized groups like women and migrants; among others. Misinformation, disinformation, and malinformation are designed to spark emotional responses like anger, surprise, rejection, and fear. These responses in turn leave strong impressions on citizens, triggering changes in how they think or behave with regard to certain issues, as well as the desire to share the content with others, which makes it go viral.

Although all the types of content that affect the information ecosystem are usually present during electoral processes, political disinformation stands out due to its volume and pervasiveness during elections. Therefore, the XV Inter-American Meeting of Electoral Management Bodies will specifically analyze political disinformation during the election cycle and will seek to provide tools to electoral authorities.

The Digital Forensic Research Lab (DFRLab) defines “political disinformation” as disinformation with a political or politically adjacent ends, which means it is the principal type of disinformation spread during the course of elections, protests, and military operations.<sup>9</sup> Notably, during the COVID-19 pandemic, in countries that held elections, political disinformation coexisted and was combined with health disinformation, leading to an unprecedented level of information pollution in the general public during the elections held in 2020, 2021, and early 2022.

The literature has found the primary promoters of disinformation to be extremist groups, foreign governments, private actors with commercial aims, non-independent media, political parties, and campaigns,<sup>10</sup> all of which can act individually or in coordination with others and spread false content on their own or through third parties.

Although disinformation is not a new problem, new technologies have made its volume, scope, and the speed at which it spreads into a more complex challenge than previously. Information pollution still exists in traditional media like television, print, and radio. However, the immediacy of communications over the internet, social media, and messaging services makes it easier for content to go viral.

Furthermore, the digital tools used by the actors who create and spread disinformation make it increasingly more sophisticated and difficult to detect. These tools include:<sup>11</sup>

- **Artificial intelligence**, used to create fake profiles and content, including “deepfake” videos, which look real but are entirely false, and are usually used to impersonate authorities or candidates;
- **Manipulation of visual content** through basic editing;
- **Search engine manipulation** to place disinformation at the top of search engine queries;
- **Fake websites** to generate disinformation;
- **Trolling**, or bullying or harassing, typically aimed at specific groups like women, female candidates, members of indigenous communities, journalists, and activists;
- **Computational propaganda** through, for example, the use of “bots” to amplify content to cause harm;
- **Fake accounts on social networks**, which also amplify content;
- **Hacking**, whether into key organizations to then leak sensitive information, or into private accounts in order to spread disinformation;
- **Advertising and microtargeting**, by using platforms to collect data in order to target more receptive users;

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<sup>9</sup> Emerson T. Brooking. (February 2020). Dichotomies of Disinformation. Atlantic Council’s Digital Forensic Research Lab, <https://github.com/DFRLab/Dichotomies-of-Disinformation>

<sup>10</sup> Arnaudo D., et al., op. cit., p. 5.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., pp. 6-7.

- **Censorship**, to block, redirect, or throttle access to certain kinds of information.

Since technology is constantly evolving, it is to be expected that the tactics used to produce and spread disinformation online are becoming increasingly sophisticated and difficult to detect.

**PLENARY I: The right to be elected: legal and conventional restrictions**  
**Tuesday, November 29 – 12:00 pm**

In recent years there has been an intense debate regarding the right to be elected and re-elected, and the possible limitations, particularly in Latin America. This issue affects not only domestic legal affairs by generating constitutional controversies, revisions, and amendments, but also involves the regional and international community through conventionality control<sup>12</sup>.

The desire for presidential reelection has been a key factor in this debate, as leaders in office try to remain in power, by altering the rules that prevent them from doing so<sup>13</sup>. Some of the mechanisms employed to modify term limits include: a) the establishment of a new Constitution via direct democracy mechanisms; b) proposals for Constitutional Amendments that extend the incumbent’s terms in power, increase the number of terms a person can be in power or eliminate limits to reelection entirely; c) via judicial interpretations, in which high courts authorize new term limits.

Currently, 16 out of the 20 OAS Member States with presidential systems have adopted some kind of limitation to presidential reelection. Nonetheless, in recent years there have been some attempts and/or consultations in an effort to ease or eliminate term limits.<sup>14</sup> The outcomes of these discussions vary across the region: while in some cases efforts were successful in abolishing limits, in others, the restrictions were maintained -or reversed- either by a vote or demand of its citizens, or by regional Courts. This discussion is so polarizing that some countries have seen multiple changes in the constitutional article that regulates re-election in the last decades.

There has been a tendency to resort to judicial instances to allow indefinite reelection by interpreting term limits as a violation of human rights protected by the American Convention on Human Rights (known as the Pact of San José). This led our region to a profound debate regarding the interpretation of Article 23 of the Pact of San José, which refers to the “Right to Participate in Government”. The article establishes that every citizen has the right and the opportunity:

- “a. to take part in the conduct of public affairs, directly or through freely chosen representatives;
- b. to vote and to be elected in genuine periodic elections, which shall be by universal and equal suffrage and by secret ballot that guarantees the free expression of the will of the voters; and

<sup>12</sup> Conventionality control can be defined as an international legal obligation that requires all the authorities of the States parties to the American Convention to interpret domestic law in accordance with the Inter-American Corpus Juris, which is integrated by the American Convention, treaties of similar nature, the interpretations of these treaties made by the Inter-American Court and other sources of soft law in the Inter-American System (i.e. the Inter-American Democratic Charter). In accordance with this doctrine, State authorities must avoid the enforcement of anti-conventional laws in case that no consistent interpretation is legally possible, although they must always act within their competences and the corresponding procedural regulations as defined by domestic law. See González-Domínguez, P. (2018). General Introduction. In *The Doctrine of Conventionality Control: Between Uniformity and Legal Pluralism in the Inter-American Human Rights System* (pp. 1-12). Intersentia. doi:10.1017/9781780686660.002

<sup>13</sup> See Negretto, G.L. *Making Constitutions: Presidents, Parties, and Institutional Choice in Latin America*. New York: CUP (2013); *apud* David Landau, Yaniv Roznai and Rosalind Dixon, *Term Limits and the Unconstitutional Constitutional Amendment Doctrine: Lessons from Latin America*. In: *The Politics of Presidential Term Limits*. Edited by Alexander Baturo and Robert Elgie, Oxford University Press (2019).

<sup>14</sup> David Landau, Yaniv Roznai and Rosalind Dixon, *Term Limits and the Unconstitutional Constitutional Amendment Doctrine: Lessons from Latin America*. In: *The Politics of Presidential Term Limits*. Edited by Alexander Baturo and Robert Elgie, Oxford University Press (2019).



- c. to have access, under general conditions of equality, to the public service of his country.

This issue, in short, has become a bad practice and a legal debate that has divided the continent. In this context, two important documents have become an invaluable reference in the matter: the 2018 report on presidential term limits of the Venice Commission<sup>15</sup> and the 2021 Advisory Opinion of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights (IACHR).

Regarding whether reelection admits restrictions, the report from the Venice Commission is conclusive: presidential re-election is not a human right and preventing it does not limit the rights of candidates or voters. The Commission considers that the establishment of presidential term limits is a sovereign decision of the citizenry and constitutes a legitimate means of preventing inappropriate concentrations of power. They also maintain that the people are the only ones who have the sovereign power to modify the restrictions that they have set for the exercise of political power.

On the other hand, the IACHR document responds to Colombia's request for an advisory opinion on "indefinite presidential reelection in the context of the inter-American human rights system"<sup>16</sup>. Colombia's inquiry led to the discussion of a) whether indefinite presidential reelection is a human right on its own, and b) whether its prohibition is contrary to the American Convention as it constitutes a restriction of political rights.

The Court's response, the Advisory Opinion OC-28/21 of June 7, 2021, concluded that:

- Presidential reelection without term limits does not constitute an autonomous right protected by the American Convention on Human Rights or by the corpus iuris of international human rights law.
- Prohibiting reelection without term limits is compatible with the American Convention on Human Rights, the American Declaration of the Rights and Duties of Man, and the Inter-American Democratic Charter.
- Enabling presidential reelection without term limits is contrary to the principles of representative democracy and, therefore, to the obligations established in the American Convention on Human Rights and the American Declaration of the Rights and Duties of Man.

The arguments presented by the Court recall the Declaration of Santiago de Chile of 1959 that states that "[t]he perpetuation in power, or the exercise of power without any term and with the manifest purpose of perpetuation, are incompatible with the effective exercise of democracy". This is explained by the understanding that the perpetuation of a person in power can favor hegemonic tendencies or the collective feeling that only one person is able to rule a country, which undermines the plurality of regime of political parties and organizations.

Hegemonic tendencies may also hinder the rights of minority groups, weaken the opposition, and, consequently, endanger the representative aspect of democracy. For this reason, the Court advised that the suppression of presidential term limits should not be decided by majorities, nor by their representatives in their own interests. The fact that permanence in power strengthens the figure in charge of the executive power, giving them access to a disproportionate advantage and a larger pool of resources to compete in the political scenario is also part of the argument that considers indefinite reelections as harmful for democracy.

The Inter-American Court of Human Rights finally warned that "the greatest current danger facing the region's democracies is not the abrupt breakdown of the constitutional order, but the gradual erosion of democratic

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<sup>15</sup> Comisión Europea para la Democracia a través del Derecho (Comisión de Venecia). Informe sobre los límites a la reelección. Parte I- Presidentes (2018). Disponible en: [https://www.venice.coe.int/webforms/documents/default.aspx?pdffile=CDL-AD\(2018\)010-spa](https://www.venice.coe.int/webforms/documents/default.aspx?pdffile=CDL-AD(2018)010-spa)

<sup>16</sup> Inter-American Court of Human Rights. Advisory Opinion OC-29/21. See: [https://www.corteidh.or.cr/docs/opiniones/seriea\\_28\\_eng.pdf](https://www.corteidh.or.cr/docs/opiniones/seriea_28_eng.pdf)

safeguards that can lead to an authoritarian regime, even if it is popularly elected. Consequently, democratic safeguards should provide for prohibiting presidential reelection without term limits”<sup>17</sup>.

In its opinion, the Court states that the inter-American system does not impose a political system on the States, and that they are free to regulate presidential reelection “according to their historical, political, social and cultural needs”<sup>18</sup>. Nonetheless, it further acknowledges, that “American states have sovereignly consented that the effective exercise of democracy constitutes an international legal obligation and have agreed to comply with the human rights obligations derived from the international instruments that are part of the inter-American human rights protection system.”<sup>19</sup>

This panel proposes a high-level discussion of experts and the exchange of experiences and interventions by electoral authorities on the legal and conventional restrictions on the right to be elected.

### **Issues to consider**

- What elements of the current democratic systems are encouraging representatives to try to perpetuate their exercise of power?
- What tools are there for electoral authorities to support the right to be elected while guaranteeing democratic elements as political alternance in this context?
- How are these documents useful to electoral management bodies to prevent potential discretionary decisions on exclusions/disqualifications of candidates?
- How does the Opinion of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights affect future efforts to amend term limits in the region?

## **WORKSHOP I: Electoral bodies’ impact and challenges to fight disinformation** **Tuesday, November 29 – 03:00 pm**

The task of organizing an election is extremely complex and challenging. This complexity has been exacerbated by the growing threat of disinformation. The disinformation spread during electoral processes is primarily meant to undermine trust in the integrity of elections (which includes questioning the election procedures, security, and results) as well as the electoral management bodies and their authorities.

The role of electoral bodies in countering disinformation, and their actions to that end, vary according to their institutional mandates, the available resources and capacities, and the political context, among other factors. Electoral bodies with legal mandates to act against disinformation have a broad range of potential responses they can implement, including normative action (like publishing codes of conduct for election stakeholders); technological solutions (monitoring of social networks and social media listening); and the strengthening of communications during elections.

This workshop will give particular attention to counteracting disinformation, through a theoretical-practical approach in two stages. First, the facilitators will offer some conceptual definitions, including the different types/strategies of disinformation, how it is amplified, and what are its potential effects. The session will also address strategies to identify, prevent and provide rapid responses to this phenomenon. The workshop will incorporate examples, with the goal to analyze their characteristics, and propose recommendations and courses of action to counter each scenario.

<sup>17</sup> Inter-American Court of Human Rights Advisory Opinion OC-28/21 of June 7, 2021, section VII, 145, p. 38.

<sup>18</sup> Inter-American Court of Human Rights Advisory Opinion OC-28/21 of June 7, 2021, section VII, 147, p. 38.

<sup>19</sup> Inter-American Court of Human Rights Advisory Opinion OC-28/21 of June 7, 2021, section VII, 147, p. 38-39.



During the practical exercise, participants will be divided in groups to analyze a fictitious case study with the goal to discuss what actions or decisions could be taken to fight disinformation in each case.

**PANEL II: Challenges to achieve a parity democracy**  
**Wednesday, November 30 – 08:30 am**

Throughout history, women have suffered discriminatory treatment in different areas of public and private life, political participation is one of them, despite being a fundamental right enshrined in the instruments of the inter-American system.

Although in the Americas the participation of women in legislative bodies is higher than in other regions, including Europe,<sup>20</sup> this reality is not uniform in all OAS Member States. In 21 countries of the region there is less than 30% representation of women in the legislature, seven countries are between 30% and 40%, another five countries between 40 and 50% and only one country is above 50%.<sup>21</sup> On the other hand, if the positions held by women at the municipal level are analyzed, the regional average is 15.5%<sup>22</sup> and at the Head of State and/or Government level, only 4 women occupy these leadership positions: three in the Caribbean and one in Latin America.

These data reflect that the underrepresentation of women in different areas of deliberation and decision continues to be one of the manifestations of structural gender inequalities in the dispute and exercise of power.

In addition to the above, the Covid-19 pandemic has had a differential impact on women. In the political sphere, different ways were adopted to carry out electoral campaigns through social networks, making women easy targets of violence. Added to this is the fact that during the current economic crisis it is more difficult for women to obtain financing or self-finance their campaigns, and they may need to prioritize care and household tasks instead of participating in an electoral contest. At the current rate, according to the *Global Gender Report*, it will take more than 145 years to close the gender gap exacerbated by the differentiated impact that the pandemic had on women's political participation.<sup>23</sup>

The OAS has incorporated a gender approach in electoral observation, which allows Missions to evaluate the norms, institutions, practices, and structural aspects that affect equality between men and women in the exercise of their political rights. Based on this analysis, the OAS issues specific recommendations aimed at encouraging member states to intensify efforts to carry out electoral processes that aim directly and progressively at equal opportunities in political participation for men and women.

Between 2011 and June 2022, 263 recommendations were made regarding: parity, quotas, and other affirmative actions; political violence; public financing; training; inclusion and empowerment within political parties; incorporate/strengthen the gender perspective in the institution in charge of the electoral process; and the inclusion of the gender perspective in the media and access to public information.

Based on regional experience, some of the many challenges to achieving parity democracy include:

- **The lack of access to financial resources** both inside and outside their political parties. Historically, women have encountered obstacles in achieving their financial autonomy, causing them to have less economic resources and time for fundraising activities to be used in their campaigns. At the same time, despite the fact that in many electoral systems public financing is allocated for electoral purposes, many parties give priority in assigning this financing to male candidates, which results in unequal treatment even within the

<sup>20</sup> Female representation in the legislature in the Americas is 33.8% while in Europe it is 31.1% (IPU, 2022).

<sup>21</sup> ECLAC. (2022). Legislative power: percentage of seats held in national parliaments. <https://oig.cepal.org/es/indicadores/poder-legislativo-porcentaje-escaños-ocupados-parlamentos-nacionales>

<sup>22</sup> ECLAC. (2022). Elected women mayors. <https://oig.cepal.org/es/indicadores/mujeres-alcaldesas-electas>

<sup>23</sup> Global Gender Gap Report. (2021).



same party.

- Media coverage that is biased, sexist and that makes women's skills or work invisible. Media frequently use comments that accentuate the traditional roles attributed to women, perpetuating stereotypes that show them weak, emotional, or indecisive and that focus their coverage on areas of private life, physical appearance, attitude and behavior of the candidates, instead of their political proposals or their achievements, influencing the social perception of who can be part of political power. Likewise, media frequently carry out unbalanced news coverage with a greater presence of men than women, which influences the citizen's vision regarding the role of women in the political sphere.
- **Discrimination and violence.** Women are often perceived as violators of the *status quo*, which is why different forms of violence are generated against them (physical, sexual, psychological, moral, economic, or symbolic) that seek to limit their access to power and affect their political rights. The use of sexual violence against female candidates for public office, the pressure to resign from their positions, the non-allocation of financial resources for their campaigns, the exclusion of them from key decision-making meetings or insulting them through social networks constitute some of the violent acts against female politicians that have been recorded in recent years.
- **Gender roles, stereotypes and biases** place women in care and domestic work tasks, instead of positions of political leadership. The burden of domestic care constitutes an obstacle for their political participation. Likewise, those women who enter the political field are expected to reconcile work and family life efficiently – something that is not expected of men.

#### *Good practices implemented in the region*

The Inter-American Democratic Charter (2001) establishes in Article 28 that "States shall promote the full and equal participation of women in the political structures of their respective countries as a fundamental element for the promotion and exercise of a democratic culture."

Although challenges persist, it is important to recognize that most of the OAS Member States have shown their commitment to the equal exercise of political rights through the implementation of new regulatory frameworks that seek the full inclusion of women in the political sphere.

Currently, ten countries<sup>24</sup> in the region have opted for parity in elected positions and eight<sup>25</sup> have incorporated quotas of between 20 and 40%. Data shows that the affirmative actions implemented play a fundamental role in improving the political participation of women. In those countries that have some type of quota, the average number of women elected in 2021 was 31.9%, while in countries without this type of measure it was 19.5%.<sup>26</sup>

Other measures that have been successful are the introduction of position mandates and alternation, through which efforts are made to regulate the placement of female candidates within the lists, ensuring that they are not left in places with few or no options to be elected.

Also, the implementation of protocols to prevent, punish and combat political violence against women; the delivery of financing for female candidates; the adoption of sanctions for non-compliance with quotas; as well as the creation of gender units in electoral bodies for mainstreaming programs dedicated to increasing the political participation of women.

Finally, from multilateral organizations such as the OAS, flagship programs have been established such as the *High-Level Group* for the strengthening of women's political participation, which seeks to foster rapprochement with authorities, political parties and civil society, with the objective of advancing the development and consolidation of administrative or legal reforms that support a long-term transformation in

<sup>24</sup> Argentina, Bolivia, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama and Peru.

<sup>25</sup> Brazil, Chile, Guyana, El Salvador, Haiti, Paraguay, the Dominican Republic and Uruguay.

<sup>26</sup> Interparliamentary Union. (2022). Women in parliament in 2021, annual perspective. <https://bit.ly/3TaPS68>





terms of women's political participation.

This panel offers an opportunity for the electoral authorities of the hemisphere to share with their peers the challenges that persist in their respective countries, as well as those practices that have proven to be effective in advancing towards parity democracy.

#### ***Issues to consider***

- What can the countries of the region do to move towards a parity democracy?
- What institutional and cultural barriers impede equal political participation?
- How to promote the financing of women's political campaigns?
- How to prevent, denounce, punish and redress political violence based on gender?

### **WORKSHOP II: Communication Tools on Digital Platforms Wednesday, November 30 – 10:15 am**

This session of the workshop is focused on strategic partnerships with digital platforms and using tools provided by them to help electoral bodies combat disinformation in the electoral context.

To ensure their efforts to counteract disinformation and reach different audiences have the maximum impact possible, electoral bodies should coordinate with other stakeholders who are equipped to handle other facets of the disinformation problem. Some of the existing coordination strategies entail establishing partnerships and cooperation agreements with social media and technology companies.

Around the world there is currently a trend toward establishing cooperation agreements with these companies. However, the companies' interest in joining forces with electoral bodies varies by platform, from country to country, and in the degree of formality. The agreements typically include the enabling of tools to amplify the reach of electoral information (notifications, chatbots, redirection to the electoral body's web page); the provision of spaces for publishing electoral information or educational materials on the election and on how to detect disinformation; electoral body training sessions on how to utilize the platforms; direct communication channels to remove highly problematic content; etc.

Representatives from Meta, Twitter, and TikTok will discuss the tools available on these platforms that the electoral authorities can use to communicate with citizens during election processes.

### **WORKSHOP III: Assertive communication with a gender perspective Wednesday, November 30 – 02:00 pm**

For a communication strategy to achieve its goals, the messages conveyed by the electoral organ must be brief, memorable, and straightforward. In the electoral field, it is important to use simple and direct language, properly focused on its audience, which includes political parties, the media, civil society, and the general public.

In this workshop, electoral authorities will have the opportunity to discuss theoretical and practical cases regarding the following topics:

- How to prepare a message?
- How to build a message based on its targeted audience?
- How to present said message?
- How to relate with journalists and the media

Finally, considering the relevance of including a gender perspective in communications, this workshop will also incorporate practical recommendations on how to build gender-sensitive messages, taking into consideration the required language and other relevant issues in their formulation, in order to eliminate all forms of discrimination and stereotypes when addressing the public.

**PANEL III: *Trends and tools to combat disinformation***  
**Thursday, December 1 – 09:00 am**

International non-governmental organizations are important partners and provide invaluable resources to electoral management bodies all over their world, as they contribute not only financial support but also technical experience, credible research and field expertise through training and guides that aim to improve electoral processes and systems across the world.

This panel will offer participants the latest tools and trends, as well as access to recent results and developments on work done by the Carter Center, the National Democratic Institute, the International Foundation for Electoral Systems and the Community of Democracies, with the purpose of empowering participants to improve practices, exchange experiences and explore possible synergies for the implementation of new strategies to combat disinformation.

***Issues to consider***

- How can international non-governmental organizations support the work electoral management bodies carry out in combating disinformation?
- How can electoral management bodies create effective inter-institutional synergies?