

## 2018 Panama City Declaration

We are some of the 1.8 billion young people between the ages of 15 – 35 in the world today—the largest generation of youth the world has ever known. We know first-hand the ways in which youth are affected by global political, social and economic developments and believe that positive youth engagement in civic and political processes is more important than ever.

Generation Democracy is a global coalition of more than 400 young people and organizations located in 75 countries around the world, united by the desire to give voice to the aspirations and needs of young people, and to ensure that the world's youth are better served by local, national, regional and international institutions.

We, as young leaders from 15 countries across Latin America, are dedicated to advancing the voices of youth in civic and political processes and recognize that there are different challenges facing youth across the region, including:

- Widespread distrust in politicians and political systems as a result of systematic corruption at the local and national levels;
- Lack of knowledge about politics, political proposals and general civic knowledge among youth;
- The rise of autocratic regimes that lead to declining participation, and increase fear among youth and impunity for human rights violations, including gender-based violence;
- Obstacles to political participation, including but not limited to weak and inaccessible political parties and legal barriers to political participation such as the voting age and the minimum age to run for office; and
- A lack of opportunities for youth to build their capacity to lead and meaningfully participate in decision-making processes and the political system.

In order to overcome these challenges, we, the youth of Generation Democracy, as part of the #UnitingYouth campaign, commit ourselves to:

- **Uniting** youth across the political and economic spectrum to advocate for legal reforms to prevent corrupt politicians from seeking re-election, and support anti-corruption initiatives;
- **Promoting** civic education for youth at an early age, reviewing the national education curriculum and developing innovative projects that instill civic and political responsibility;
- **Investing** in the next generation of leaders to ensure they are committed to democratic reform, and will work together, despite political differences, to challenge the emergence of autocracy, and advocate for universal human rights, including the rights of marginalized communities, including, but not limited to, women, persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples, refugees, LGBT, and the economically disadvantaged;

- **Engaging** political parties to advocate for legal and/or constitutional reform to eliminate barriers to youth participation in political processes; and
- **Identifying** mentors, partners and career development opportunities to help young leaders champion reform and build more resilient and inclusive democracies.

We pledge to defend and support members of the network from political harassment and repression, and in solidarity, commit to protecting the freedoms of expression and association.

Positive change for a more effective government begins with us. We will exchange best practices, and replicate effective actions to confront the challenges we face. We are the generation to solve these challenges.

We are Generation Democracy!