

INTERNATIONAL OMBUDSMAN INSTITUTE (IOI)

Dublin Declaration

WHEREAS Ombudsman institutions form an integral part of good governance and make an important contribution to transparent public administration, the protection and promotion of human rights and the rule of law; and

WHEREAS Ombudsman institutions offer independent and objective consideration of complaints, aimed at correcting injustices caused as a result of maladministration and improve public services by ensuring that systemic failings are identified and corrected; and

WHEREAS Ombudsman institutions around the world are well connected through the IOI as well as various regional Ombudsman networks to share knowledge and best practice, drive up standards and support each other in a multitude of ways; and

WHEREAS Ombudsman institutions play an important role in the implementation of the United Nations' 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development, especially Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) N° 16 on access to justice for all and strong, effective, and accountable institutions at all levels

On motion duly made by the International Ombudsman Institute (IOI) and unanimously carried, the IOI General Assembly 2021:

1. *Acknowledges* that Ombudsman institutions are often the first to identify systemic issues in public administration, thus being able to highlight shortcomings.
2. *Underlines* the important contribution Ombudsman institution make to the transformative objective of the UN's Agenda 2030 and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), i.e. to "leave no one behind" and ensure that all human beings can fulfil their potential in equality.
3. *Recognizes* that the emergence of the global Covid-19 crisis has posed new, distinct challenges to Ombudsman institutions around the world, while at the same time illustrating that Ombudsman services are more important than ever in the context of a pandemic.

4. *Takes note* and pays tribute to the great work provided by first responders and frontline workers in public services around the world, who work hard to save lives and tackle the impact during the Covid-19 pandemic.
5. *Understands* that the pandemic has not respected equality of opportunity and has disproportionately affected vulnerable groups; especially those in institutional care, such as persons cared for in nursing homes or psychiatric facilities, detainees in prison and correctional institutions, persons with disabilities, children and adolescents, asylum seekers and refugees, the unsheltered etc.
6. *Recognizes* that the post-Covid-19 world will be different from before; thus, Ombudsman institutions should seek to promote resilience by embracing new methods of working, especially through innovations in digital technology to better engage with the public, who have been greatly affected by the pandemic.
7. *Encourages* Ombudsman institutions to “give voice to the voiceless” by being vigilant on behalf of these vulnerable groups and exploring the issues around those, who have less opportunity to access the Ombudsman’s services, while at the same time greatly relying on them.
8. *Commits to* working towards achieving equality of access to vaccination, urging that vaccines have to be treated as a global public good to be made available equally around the globe; particularly against the backdrop of the on-going Covid-19 health crisis and the apparent inequalities in Covid-19 vaccination strategies and to supporting the work of the United Nations and the World Health Organization in making vaccines widely available.
9. *Calls upon* Ombudsman institutions to maintain the values, which underpin their mission and to make sure that fundamental rights do not cease to apply, that good governance, accountability, and transparency are upheld, to limit the risk of corruption, misconduct and maladministration even in times of a global crisis and states of emergencies.
10. *Calls upon* Ombudsman institutions to support peaceful resolution of all conflicts and to protect the rights of all people who are affected by them.

Dublin, 25 May 2021