**ANNEX A:**

**CANDIDACY OF PARAGUAY TO THE OPEN GOVERNMENT PARTNERSHIP (OGP) STEERING COMMITTEE 2017-2020**

**CONTEXT**

OGP was launched in 2011 to provide an international platform for domestic reformers committed to making their governments more open, accountable, and responsive to citizens. Since then, OGP has grown from 8 countries to 75 participating countries. In all of these countries, government and civil society are working together to develop and implement ambitious open government reforms. OGP’s vision is that more governments become sustainably more transparent, more accountable, and more responsive to their own citizens, with the ultimate goal of improving the quality of governance, as well as the quality of services that citizens receive.

For the first time in history, the Republic of Paraguay will be running to be a member of the Open Government Partnership Steering Committee (Executive Board). It will be one among 12 countries running for five spots, and will competing for two possible vacant positions (Americas and one extra-regional). If elected, The Republic of Paraguay will serve a three-year term, with the possibility of being re-elected.

Your support is key to securing a position in the OGP Steering Committee and we would like to show you how the Republic of Paraguay can be a key asset in building the Open Government Partnership.

In December 2016, The Republic of Paraguay sent a very-high level delegation to the OGP Summit, led by President Horacio Cartes and comprised of the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Minister of Finance, Minister of Education, Minister of Social Affairs, Minister of Housing, the Cabinet's Chief of Staff and yourself. Mention as well that one of the two female Supreme Court Justices accompanied the delegation.

President Cartes is committed to an agenda promoting transparency, access to information, citizen participation, technology and innovation. Paraguay's adherence to the Open Government Partnership began in 2011, under (Socialist) President Lugo´s government, continued with (Liberal) President Franco and were deepened and improved under (Colorado) President Cartes´s tenure, with the passage of two landmark transparency laws.

Open Government in Paraguay is not a temporary program, nor one with a partisan agenda, but a State policy accepted and implemented by the Executive and Legislative branches and with pilot programs being explored in the Judicial branch and municipal governments.

**Paraguay will be an asset to the OGP Steering Committee:**

**a.** **The strength that the Republic of Paraguay brings to the Open Government partnership reside in its experience working with local governments and civil society organizations through the creation of more than 217 municipal and 13 departmental local development councils (within a universe of 250 municipalities and 17 departments), which bring together members of civil society with local government leaders in jointly formulating and implementing local public policy decisions.**

**b.** **The Republic of Paraguay has a clear vision on how OGP principles concretely improve the standard of living of citizens because we are committed to eradicating poverty and we have aligned our government programs to achieve this. Therefore, we aligned our OGP National Action Plan (NAP) to our 2030 National Development Plan and to the United Nations 2030 Sustainable Development Objectives.**

**c.** **We plan to contribute to OGP´s leadership by leading the way in implementing innovative ideas on how to increase public participation and accountability. Specifically, the Republic of Paraguay is exploring how to facilitate stronger public participation in the selection of its next National Action Plan (NAP) commitments. In the elaboration of its third NAP 2016-2018, 47 public institutions and 62 civil society organizations (a total of 600 citizens) actively participated. For its fourth plan 2018-2020, the Republic of Paraguay is exploring mechanisms to allow at least 10% of its citizens (600,000) to directly vote on NAP commitment options, simultaneously with the celebration of its national elections in April 2018.**

**d.** **On a local level, we plan to continue innovating in strengthening our local municipal and departmental councils and sharing with other countries the best practices we have learned. We believe that a higher degree of public participation increases the sustainability of reforms linked to transparency, accountability and access to technology.**

**e.** **We also plan to contribute to the OGP institutions by finding mechanisms to: 1) Improve peer learning and collaboration among OGP countries. 2) Support the Point of Contact manual and conference designed to create opportunities for lead officials in OGP governments to share ideas, network, and receive training. 3) Strengthen OGP thematic working groups and support the creation of new working groups, if needed.**

**Annex to Nomination Letter:**

**1) Transparency and access to information.**

The Law No. 5282/2014 on Open Citizen Access to Public Information & Government Transparency and Decree No. 4064/2015 ensure the effective exercise of the right on access to public information through the implementation of the respective modalities, deadlines, exceptions and sanctions. Offices of Access to Public Information were created and are up and running in different institutions. To June 2016 a Unified Portal for Access to Public Information (www.informacionpublica.gov.py) centralizes over 1,300 requests for access to information and includes over 80 government institutions that have joined the Unified Portal. The law triggered cases of corruption and nepotism at all levels and in all Branches of the Government. The press named this process “the information spring".

In addition, different mechanisms have been established that allow citizens to exercise their rights and express their concerns and complains. To this end, an Access to Public Information Offices and a Unified Portal to Access Public Information were created in order to generate a constant dialogue between government and citizens: Digital channels were created to promote active transparency (availability of public information towards the Citizenship) and to receive complaints against corruption by protecting the identity of the complainant. The Unified Access to Public Information Portal guarantees access to public information where the citizen can make any type of request for information derived from public management. Http://informacionpublica.paraguay.gov.py/portal/ To date, it has 92 institutions.

**2) Accountability**

With the access to public information law, citizens can participate in the process of accountability of the different programs implemented by the government. Thus, in the area of combating poverty, the Control Panel has been made available to citizens in the form of monthly Citizen Reports on the actions of the National Program for Poverty Reduction. (Http://rc.stp.gov.py/descargas/201512.pdf). This board systematizes the most relevant information on the delivery of services and benefits and contributes to detect deficits in coverage, late deliveries, targeting problems, among others, for various initiatives.

**3) Efficient Public Management**

In order to establish mechanisms to combat corruption and promote accountability to citizens, a patrimonial control of public officials is carried out. As of December 2015, more than 135 public institutions of the Central and Decentralized Administration, including 17 Governments, updated their data before the Comptroller General of the Republic.

The challenge in terms of transparency is that 100% of the public institutions of the three branches of government, in addition to the decentralized governments, comply with the standards of compliance with the legal framework. These challenges are covered in the Third Open Government Action Plan 2016-2018.