Statement Adopted by Participants at the International Day for Universal Access to Information and the International Conference of Information Commissioners, Freetown, Sierra Leone, 29 September 2026

Access to Information as a Pillar of Information Integrity

The participants at the Global IDUAI-ICIC Conference 2026 on Access to Information as a Pillar of Information Integrity:

Recalling Article 19 of both the 1948 *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* and the 1966 *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights*, which guarantee the right to seek, receive and impart information and ideas, which includes the right to access information held by public authorities (the right to access information), as well as the *United Nations Global Principles for Information Integrity*;

Noting that robust implementation of the right to access information through both proactive and reactive channels is a key means of promoting information integrity, including by helping to crowd out falsehoods and rumours with reliable, accurate information; by giving others – including public interest media, civil society organisations, fact-checkers and academics – access to timely, reliable information thereby improving the quality of their communications and contributing to more informed public debate; by increasing trust in government and helping to counter disinformation; and, through open data disclosures, by supporting the ability of tech providers to develop public interest apps;

Recognising the important role of international cooperation and collaboration among information commissioners and other oversight bodies, including through the International Conference of Information Commissioners (ICIC), in sharing experiences, good practices and approaches to strengthening the right to access information and addressing emerging challenges, including those arising from artificial intelligence;

Stressing the important contribution that the right to access information makes to sustainable development, as reflected in Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) Indicator 16.10.2, which calls on States to adopt and implement access to information laws in accordance with international standards;

Reiterating the need for transparency in relation to environmental matters and climate change, as set out in the *Statement Endorsed by Participants at the International Day for Universal Access to Information*, held in Manila, Republic of the Philippines, 29 and 30 September 2025;

Aware of the significant potential for information and digital literacy, where it is widespread among the population, to promote information integrity and to help people, including children and youths, mitigate the negative effects of information disorder;

Convinced of the mutually supportive role played by the right to access information and artificial intelligence (AI), whereby the former can help ensure the responsible, human-rights aligned use of AI, while the latter can support robust, technologically enhanced implementation of access to information laws, as well as facilitate the making of well-designed requests for information, including by those who might otherwise find this challenging;

Highlighting the power of AI both to undermine information integrity, in particular by lowering the cost and other barriers to producing and disseminating high-quality disinformation, and to support information integrity, including by identifying disinformation.

Reaffirming the importance of engaging young people in public affairs and the supportive role that the right to access information can play in that regard; and

Concerned about the facts that, as we approach the final years of the SDGs, 54 UN Member States have still not adopted access to information laws and that the laws of many States require strengthening independence, while the political will required for robust implementation of even stronger laws is often lacking.

1. **Call on States to:**

    a. Adopt , promote or maintain their access to information legislation, as needed, to ensure that it reflects international standards and better comparative practice, including in terms of systems for both proactive and reactive disclosure, as well as oversight by an autonomous or independent administrative body (information commission), and to mobilise the necessary political will and resources to ensure that implementation of these laws is robust.

    b. Ensure that outreach regarding access to information is directed at individuals, vulnerable groups and young people, and that the systems for making requests are widely accessible to all of these groups, including through the ability to make requests electronically and via mobile phones.

    c. Put in place or update proactive disclosure requirements so that they:
        i. Include lists of categories of information which are required to be disclosed, augmented by an open-by-default approach, whereby public authorities are required to disclose public interest information;
        ii. Require public authorities to provide information, where relevant, on when and for what purposes AI is used in the delivery of public services and in decision-making, and to disclose to those affected, as applicable, when AI has been used in decision-making processes which affect the rights, liabilities, benefits and obligations of the community;

iii. Provide reliable, user-friendly and real-time or at least rapid information as needed, especially in the context of disasters and crises, so as to limit the spread of confusion and harmful rumours; and
iv. Otherwise reflect better practices in an AI-driven world.

d. Provide information and digital literacy training for women, men, young people and vulnerable groups in society, which includes a focus on combatting information disorder.

e. Integrate AI tools, with appropriate guardrails and human oversight, into access to information systems so as to improve the quality of disclosure and the efficiency of these systems. Areas to consider here include records management, preparing records for proactive disclosure, searching for records which are responsive to requests, assisting with redactions, exemptions and extensions.

f. Adopt appropriate transparency requirements for private companies about the use of AI, including to let people know whenever they are interacting with a machine, as opposed to a human being, to provide prompt notification to the appropriate authorities whenever they become aware of any unintended adverse consequences of AI and to embed, as feasible and appropriate, AI tracking into the automated production of content in a manner which can be verified later on by human beings.

g. Develop systems and laws to require immediate notification by providers and deployers to a central government repository of unintended consequences or adverse outcomes of AI.

2. Call on information commission(er)s and other oversight bodies to:

a. Integrate AI tools, as appropriate, into their own operations so as to benefit from its power and efficiency gains, while also putting in place appropriate safeguards to ensure that such tools are used in an appropriate and human rights-compliant manner.

b. Raise public awareness about the important role of the right to access information in general, as well as in supporting information integrity, as well as about how to make use of access to information laws in promoting and enhancing integrity and rights preservation advocacy including advice to government regarding legislative and systems change to ensure rights preservation in the use of AI.

c. Continue to collaborate with civil society actors, the media, academics and others so as to strengthen the right to access information and its role in promoting information integrity.

3. Call on UNESCO to:

a. Work with all relevant actors to promote robust right to access information systems, with a focus on supporting information integrity.

b. Continue to provide support to States, including Small Island Developing States (SIDS), to adopt and implement access to information legislation, and to take advantage of AI to support the implementation of this legislation.

c. Research and help develop a better understanding of the ways AI can be used to promote the right to access information