

# **Manifesto of the General Assembly of the Global Alliance of Local Ombudspersons (AGOL)**

*From the Right to the City to the Right to Live Well in the City*

Barranquilla, Colombia, 10 September 2026

The member institutions of the Global Alliance of Local Ombudspersons (AGOL), gathered in General Assembly under the theme “Right to the City”, reaffirm their shared commitment to the defence, promotion and protection of human rights at the local level, recognising that cities are the places where rights become tangible in people’s everyday lives and, equally, where they are often most vulnerable to violation.

At a time of profound social, economic, environmental and technological change, we believe it is necessary to move beyond the traditional claim for the Right to the City towards a broader and more ambitious vision: the Right to Live Well in the City. Access to urban spaces alone is no longer sufficient. What must be guaranteed is the ability of all people to pursue their life plans and aspirations in conditions of dignity, equality, inclusion, safety, well-being, and the full enjoyment of their rights.

Cities today face increasingly complex challenges, including access to affordable housing, territorial inequalities, migration and human mobility, climate change, social cohesion, demographic ageing, social exclusion and the accelerating digitalisation of everyday life. Addressing these challenges requires strong local institutions. Local authorities and institutions dedicated to safeguarding the rights of citizens are the public bodies closest to communities and are therefore uniquely positioned to provide effective responses grounded in a human rights and Rights of Nature approach.

Within this context, we, the Local Ombudspersons, reaffirm our role as independent institutions entrusted with oversight, accountability and the continuous improvement of public administration. Our mandate extends beyond the handling of complaints and the resolution of disputes. It includes issuing recommendations, preventing violations of rights, monitoring compliance with human rights obligations, promoting transparency and accountability, and contributing to the development of public policies that advance the common good and collective well-being.

We advocate for the concept of proximity human rights, understood as the basic needs and legitimate aspirations that must be guaranteed to enable a life of dignity at the local level.

This includes access to adequate housing, quality public services, transparent and accessible institutions, safe and sustainable public spaces, and effective protection for individuals and groups facing situations of vulnerability.

We further affirm that the city model we seek to promote rests upon four interdependent pillars: an inclusive city, a diverse city, a liveable and sustainable city, and a rights-based city, approached through an intersectional perspective that recognises and responds to the diverse realities and inequalities present within our communities.

The on going digital transformation requires the extension of human rights protections into the technological sphere. Local Ombudspersons have an increasingly important role to play in protecting and promoting digital rights through the protection of personal data, transparency and accountability in automated decision-making systems, universal access to digital services, the reduction of digital divides, and the development and deployment of artificial intelligence in ways that respect human dignity, fundamental rights and democratic values.

Building on the commitments established during the preparatory meeting held in Bogotá, we reaffirm our determination to advance a shared AGOL agenda on territorial mediation, strengthening the capacity of Local Ombudspersons to prevent and manage conflicts through a human rights and Rights of Nature approach.

This agenda will foster the exchange of experiences, peer learning and the collaborative development of guidance, methodologies and practical tools incorporating human rights education, ethics, equity and a gender-sensitive approach. It will also address the protection of socio-environmental rights and the emerging challenges associated with digital transformation. Through this work, AGOL commits to translating the knowledge and experience of its members into collective capacities for more preventive, inclusive and effective territorial mediation, always in service of the protection and fulfilment of rights.

For these reasons, the AGOL General Assembly calls upon local governments, public institutions, international organisations and civil society to advance a common agenda aimed at guaranteeing the Right to Live Well in the City, while strengthening local democracy, social justice, environmental sustainability and the effective protection of human rights.

We further affirm that the effective protection of rights requires the protection of those entrusted with defending them. We therefore call upon States and local governments to safeguard the independence, autonomy, impartiality and security of Local Ombudsperson institutions and those who serve within them, particularly in challenging contexts. Equally, it is essential that Local Ombudsperson institutions are provided with the human, technical, technological and financial resources necessary to fulfil their mandates effectively and to maintain a close and trusted relationship with the communities they serve.



Our cities should aspire to more than merely enabling people to reside within them. They should enable everyone to live with dignity, participate fully in community life, exercise their rights effectively, and pursue lives that are meaningful, secure and fulfilling.

Because there can be no effective protection of human rights without independent, adequately resourced and properly safeguarded institutions capable of defending them, the Global Alliance of Local Ombudspersons (AGOL) renews its commitment to strengthening Local Ombudsperson institutions as essential pillars of democracy, social justice and the Right to Live Well in the City.