



Minutes of the 2023 IOPD General Assembly

On November 8, 2023, the General Assembly of the International Observatory on Participatory Democracy (IOPD) took place within the framework of the 22nd IOPD Conference in Rio de Janeiro. The meeting was attended by prominent representatives and members of local and regional governments. It was chaired by the Mayor's Office of Rio de Janeiro and facilitated by the Technical Secretariat of the IOPD.

Participating delegations:

- Prefeitura do Rio de Janeiro - IOPD Presidency 2023
- Ville de Grenoble - IOPD Co-Presidency 2023
- Câmara municipal de Valongo - IOPD Presidency 2024
- Ayuntamiento / Diputación de Barcelona - IOPD General Secretariat
- Prefeitura Municipal de São Paulo
- Ville de Rennes
- Instituto Distrital de Participación y Acción Comunal, Alcaldía de Bogotá
- Mairie de Cocody
- Municipalidad de Córdoba
- Provincia de Córdoba
- Municipalité de Nancy Métropole du Grand Nancy
- Município de Maputo
- Câmara Municipal de Cascais
- Secretaria Nacional de Participação social do Governo Federal do Brasil
- Prefeitura Municipal de João Pessoa
- Governo do Estado de Santa Catalina
- Gobierno del estado de Jalisco
- Município de Matola
- Prefeitura Municipal de Belém
- Prefeitura de Niterói
- Conselho Municipal de Saúde de Niterói
- Communauté Urbaine de Bafoussam Cameroun
- Mairie de Cotonou
- Municipio de Ocoyoacac
- Office de participation publique de Longueuil
- União das Freguesias de Massamá e Monte Abraão
- Communes et Villes Unies du Cameroun (CVUC)
- Asociación de Autoridades Locales de México AC
- ANAMM - Associação Nacional dos Municípios de Moçambique
- IOPD Afrique
- UCLG



Resolutions adopted:

- Adoption of the 2024 work plan.
- Creation of the position of IOPD Co-President to promote gender equality in participatory democracy.
- Adoption of a Permanent Scientific Committee: to be composed by the IOPD Technical Secretariat with validation from the Coordination Committee.
- Re-launching the selection process for the venue of the 2025 conference with a deadline by the end of January 2024.

Welcome to the Assembly

Lucas Padilha, Coordinator of International Relations for Rio de Janeiro, and **Jean Caris**, Deputy Secretary for Planning in Rio, representing the IOPD President, **Eduardo Paes**, Mayor of Rio de Janeiro, along with IOPD Co-President **Éric Piolle**, Mayor of Grenoble, and IOPD Acting General Secretary, **Marc Serra**, from the City Council of Barcelona, opened the session.

Jean Caris inaugurated the 2023 IOPD General Assembly in Rio de Janeiro, thanking the membership for their contribution to effective participatory democracy through public policies and involvement in the IOPD's international network.

On behalf of Mayor Paes, Caris expressed gratitude to all present, especially to the Mayor of Grenoble, the previous host, and Valongo, the upcoming host, as well as to Marc Serra, the Acting General Secretary.

Éric Piolle mentioned that visiting Rio de Janeiro is an opportunity to draw inspiration from the feminist and anti-racist movements that are profoundly present in the city's democratic life.

Marc Serra highlighted Barcelona's historical commitment to shared leadership within the IOPD, emphasizing the importance of the Coordination Committee as an open space for deciding on the IOPD's work plan and execution.

IOPD 2023 Management Report

Presidency

Jean Caris (Rio de Janeiro): Secretariats participated in the event, addressing topics such as women's inclusion, the environment, and participation. It was proposed to use Universal Charters as parameters for evaluating the declaration, emphasizing respect for International Humanitarian Law (IHL) in diverse regions.



Technical Secretariat

Adriá Duarte presented the management report, highlighting the introduction of award categories, member surveys, the hosting of three webinars, and the publication of their respective policy papers.

IOPD Africa

Bachir Kanouté reported on progress in advocacy, budgets, and events held and planned, such as the Fourth Participatory Democracy Forum in Mozambique, as well as other activities in Ivory Coast and Senegal, including cooperation with the Senegalese diaspora in France and an upcoming forum in Cotonou.

[Read the document on IOPD Africa's activities in 2023](#)

Political Declaration of Rio de Janeiro

Presentation of the text, deliberation, and adoption

Speakers highlighted the significance of participatory democracy in a challenging global context. The need to adopt a human rights framework to assess the declaration was stressed, promoting the inclusion of all individuals through democratic mechanisms like participatory budgets, addressing misinformation, and polarization.

Speaker Interventions:

- **Lucas Padilha:** Emphasized the threat facing democratic values worldwide, stressing the need to promote transparent governments, representative democracy, freedom of expression, and civil society involvement in participatory democracy. He mentioned challenges posed by the spread of fake news and lack of trust in the accuracy of information within an increasingly sophisticated media and algorithmic context.
- **Bachir Kanouté:** Considered the declaration as mobilizing for local governments and proposed opening the debate to other governance actors at different levels.
- **Marc Serra:** Praised the declaration for establishing concrete commitments and highlighted IOPD's work against misinformation, polarization, and anti-democratic drifts. Advocated for concrete proposals to defend freedom of expression and counter misinformation, urging support for ceasefires in humanitarian crises and international conflicts, such as those between Russia and Ukraine and Israel and Hamas. Called for an amendment to reinforce the role of the UN and support its Secretary-General António Guterres.
- **Patricia Marques:** Proposed a modification to the text concerning commitments for cities, emphasizing the inclusion of all groups, transparency, and open governance.
- **José Manuel Ribeiro:** Proposed changing "commitments" to "promote" and advocated for increased IOPD contributions and greater promotion of human rights respect.



- **Marc Serra:** Read the paragraph of the amendment, which was approved. Subsequently, the modification proposed by Mr Kanouté and the declaration proposed in the General Assembly were approved.

IOPD 2024 Conference Presentation

Valongo presented the proposal for next year's conference, scheduled to take place from October 17th to 19th under the theme "Populist Threats: Building Democratic Resilience with Participatory Communities." Mayor **José Manuel Ribeiro** of Valongo emphasized the need to counter polarization and hate speech through effective citizen participation and invited the entire IOPD network to join the upcoming annual meeting.

IOPD 2024 Work Plan

Proposals and discussions regarding events and activities for the upcoming year were presented. **Éric Piolle**, Mayor of Grenoble, mentioned a future event to be held in Toulouse that IOPD could coordinate. **Marc Serra**, Acting General Secretary, highlighted an event in March focusing on democratic innovation as part of Barcelona's activities as the European Capital of Democracy. **Juan Domingo Viola**, Secretary of Citizen Participation at the Municipality of Córdoba, requested IOPD's participation in organizing a future national Congress on democratic reforms in Argentine participation institutes.

The creation of a Permanent Scientific Committee to promote research and innovation in participatory democracy was approved.

IOPD Leadership

The technical secretariat explained the need to reinforce political leadership through the involvement of more local and regional governments in the coordination committee to strengthen the organization's presence and action in different geographic areas.

Alex Reina, director of IDPAC in Bogotá, requested more pre-conference information to ensure greater productivity. He urged Valongo for a more effective information team and additional media resources. He highlighted the lack of analysis and reflection on the state of participatory democracy at the Conference.

The amendment of the regulations for creating a Permanent Scientific Committee to support IOPD activities was approved. However, the committee's composition was not decided, but a participatory selection process was promised, inviting proposals for its members.

Additionally, the amendment of the regulations to promote the election of a female IOPD Co-President to drive gender equality in participatory democracy was approved:



- **Adrià Duarte:** Proposed the election of a female IOPD Co-President to promote gender equality. The creation of the position was approved, not necessarily the immediate election of the woman leading the gender agenda.
- **Marc Serra:** Expressed support for the proposal due to the parity issue. Encouraged any interested candidate to step forward and seize the opportunity.
- **Bachir Kanouté:** Proposed the Deputy Mayor of Cocody **Nelly Ouassenan** for the position, preferred to wait for more information before putting herself forward.

These interventions occurred in a constructive and collaborative debate atmosphere seeking solutions to enhance participation and representation in the IOPD.

IOPD 2025 Conference Venue

The technical secretariat informed that no formal candidature was received within the formal call to organize the 2025 conference, opening the matter to the General Assembly.

The Municipality of Córdoba, Argentina, represented by Secretary of Citizen Participation Juan Domingo Viola, presented its candidacy as the venue for the 2025 event, pending validation in the coming months.

It was agreed to address pending issues during the second week of January in a subsequent meeting to continue advancing the established agenda.

This record summarizes the most important points discussed and decisions made during the IOPD General Assembly.