

# ANTICORRUPTION COMMITMENT AMONG CANDIDATES FOR THE PRESIDENCY OF THE REPUBLIC

San José, January 8, 2014

We, candidates for the Presidency of the Republic of Costa Rica, meeting at the headquarters of the Autonomous University of Central America for the debate, "Agreements and Disagreements: the Anti-Corruption Agenda," organized by the *Asociación Costa Rica Integra*, in partnership with Transparency International, assume with a sense of patriotism this anticorruption commitment, reflecting citizen demand for more accountable and transparent governance and, with higher levels of openness, access to information and public participation, express our clear determination to take concrete actions to contain and reduce corruption while promoting regulatory systems, institutions and public procedures that are more transparent and open to public scrutiny.

## **Whereas:**

1. Corruption and impunity are scourges that threaten the democratic system, deeply weaken the bond of trust between state and society, reduce the effectiveness of public policies, and foster the development of a culture of illegality.
2. Costa Rica has faced in the past decades a process of attrition and loss of institutional effectiveness; although not explained solely on grounds of corruption, this has been one of the most relevant explanatory factors.
3. Governability in the country and the real possibilities of advancing essential reforms to the political system require the construction of broad, inter-party and multi-sectorial agreements, among which the fight against corruption and for transparency is a basic component.

## **We agree to:**

1. Convene the construction of a national anti-corruption agreement involving the public and private sectors, academia, civil society organizations and other interested actors in promoting an active and concrete agenda against corruption and for transparency.
2. Appoint without exception, as ministers, deputy ministers, directors, diplomats, executives, and managers of autonomous entities, among others controlled by the presidency, people of integrity, whose backgrounds dignify public service, prioritizing public over partisan interests.
3. Promote electronic government as a means of transparent management of the executive branch, implementing an electronic system for state purchases, continuously updating government institution websites, and undertaking a policy of openness to facilitate citizen access to all relevant information.

4. Facilitate the work of public oversight entities by providing them with timely and complete information, respecting their functional and budgetary autonomy, and promoting interagency coordination for greater effectiveness.
5. Respect and protect journalism as a means of societal oversight of public institutions, facilitating journalists' role as guarantors of transparency and agents in the fight against corruption.
6. Report all cases of suspected corruption in public office about which information is received, following constitutional due process, seeking not only to uncover allegedly corrupt public officials, but also the actors allegedly corrupting them.
7. Sponsor anticorruption efforts from academia, non-governmental organizations and the private sector, and in general, the participation of an active citizenry in favor of transparency and integrity.
8. Promote legal reforms deemed necessary to prevent, detect and punish corruption, seeking coherence between international instruments and national legislation.
9. Foster a culture of legality to emphasize the importance of the rule of law as an anchor of democracy.
10. Recover public service as a means for service and not as an end serve oneself.
11. As head of state, lead by example against corruption.

**José María Villalta Flores-Estrada**

**Otto Guevara Güth**

**Luis Guillermo Solís Rivera**

**Rodolfo Piza Rocafort**

Note: The National Liberation Party candidate, Johnny Araya Monge, was invited to join in this agreement as part of the debate organized by the *Asociación Costa Rica Integra*, held at UACA and broadcast on channel 9; however, at the last minute, he declined participating.