

## INTERNATIONAL OMBUDSMAN INSTITUTE (IOI)

### BANGKOK DECLARATION

**adopted unanimously by all present and voting**

**at the General Assembly held on 15<sup>th</sup> November 2016**

**in Bangkok, Thailand**

**WHEREAS** Ombudsman institutions offer independent and objective consideration of complaints, aimed at correcting injustices caused to an individual as a result of maladministration; and

**WHEREAS** a further important objective of Ombudsman institutions is to improve services provided to the public by ensuring that systemic failings are identified and corrected; and

**WHEREAS** the Ombudsman concept has now been adopted and extended across the world, and includes the promotion and protection of human rights; and

**WHEREAS** the Ombudsman concept has proved extraordinarily adaptable and innovative while remaining true to its original core principles of independence, objectivity and fairness; and

**WHEREAS** the Wellington Declaration states that Ombudsman institutions form an integral part of Good Governance and make an important contribution to the Rule of Law, Transparency, Democracy and Human Rights.

On motion duly made by the International Ombudsman Institute (IOI), bearing in mind current developments worldwide and unanimously carried, it:

1. *Reiterates* that an Ombudsman diligently fulfilling their mandate, shall not be subject to any form of physical, mental or unjustified legal coercion.
2. *Opposes* any restrictions which would limit the independence of Ombudsman institutions and restrict their ability to protect the fundamental rights of all persons.
3. *Calls upon* all nations, states and territories to give constitutional status to Ombudsman institutions.

4. *Calls upon* national governments to recognize the importance of strong and independent Ombudsman institutions in order to guarantee that the fundamental rights of all persons are respected and to contribute to a transparent and accountable democracy.
5. *Condemns* any intimidation and reprisals, such as restrictions of budget, staff or mandate against the independent work of Ombudspersons around the world.
6. *Takes* threats against Ombudsman institutions very seriously and supports members facing restrictions through all available means.
7. *Calls upon* national governments to promptly and thoroughly investigate cases of alleged intimidation and reprisals against Ombudsman or staff of Ombudsman institutions and take appropriate action.
8. *Encourages* all Ombudsman institutions to call upon their governments to protect and promote human rights irrespective of their mandate.
9. *Supports* Ombudsman institutions in their efforts to uphold in particular the rights to freedom of speech, freedom of assembly and freedom of the press.
10. *Reiterates* the important role Ombudsman institutions play in the protection of the rights of migrants and refugees in the countries of origin and transit as well as in the countries of destination.