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CONTRIBUTION

by

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on

**“Challenges and opportunities for the digital transformation of parliaments:
the case of Argentina, with special reference to artificial intelligence
technologies”**

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Taking up the words of my colleague and Secretary-General of the Argentine House of Deputies, Juan Manuel Cheppi, I agree that several milestones can be identified as part of the digital transformation process we started in 2019. I will explain them in more detail as their analysis may allow us to outline future work lines to make further advances.

Technology and new tools should make decision making easier for us and contribute to the formulation of better public policies. Therefore, we are working to build an agile and inclusive House. In this pursuit of more efficient management, three primary pillars lead the way towards progress undertaken by the Directorate-General of Innovation, Planning and New Technologies. They are innovation, transparency and participation. It is in connection to each of these pillars that I would like to highlight certain milestones in our transformation.

Regarding innovation, one of the most relevant events has been the creation of the Laboratory of New Technologies (DipLab), a place where ways of addressing identified needs can be tested; research, encouraged; and training, promoted. In DipLab, we not only test disruptive technologies that could be applied, but also examine their implications for our society, economy and politics in general, and the legislative field in particular. The lab is where the Intelligent Parliament, through which artificial intelligence was introduced in the Argentine House of Deputies, was conceived.

Another milestone is the celebration of the first remote sitting in Argentine history. The coronavirus pandemic forced us to develop a system that allows deputies to work without coming together physically. This eventually led to a new system for members to cast their votes in the chamber. Once the in-person work was resumed and sanitary conditions allowed it, the old voting system, which had not been updated for over ten years, was replaced by one in which deputies log in using their fingerprint to cast their votes.

In this context, the full implementation of the digital signature, a process that started during the previous administration, was also achieved. All deputies and House authorities currently use this technique.

In addition, for the first time in the history of the Argentine House of Deputies, we have started a digitalization process of over 15 million documents, including

parliamentary records with information from the period between 1854 and 2019. Five hundred and eighty-five thousand employee files will be digitized and stored in twelve thousand archive boxes, resulting in more than 18 million images. This is equivalent to more than 70 tons of paper converted into digital files.

In terms of transparency, the House live streams committee meetings and recordings are available online so that citizens can watch the debates whenever they wish. In this regard, a platform was created where over 700 presentations delivered by experts and leaders during the discussions held in 2018 and 2020 on the law on access to voluntary termination of pregnancy can be found.

Open data must be available and made public so that those who are interested can access the resource. In this regard, we have co-created spaces to reflect and carry out tasks with public universities, such as the National University of Buenos Aires (UBA) and the National University of San Martín (UNSAM), and have invited them to use the data obtained by the House and analyze it to find ways to improve our functioning and to formulate public policies.

Progress has also been achieved in terms of communication, social media and technology. As we understand that they foster access to public information, we have been working jointly with the Service Office for Deputies to authenticate social media accounts of all deputies and validate official communication channels to access safe and verified content. By means of the platform “Diputados 2.0,” a friendly dashboard that includes all official accounts, users are able to get to know what their representatives speak of and feel safe from possible fake accounts.

The third pillar, participation, is of extreme importance in terms of management. This is why we have focused on improving the Open Legislation Portal, which has been available for almost three years, to increase the amount of visits and the interaction with the deputies for the co-drafting of bills. The portal constitutes a virtual platform where deputies can upload draft bills for citizens to access them and make concrete contributions to the texts. The goal is to create a synergy that leads to more inclusive bills.

This summary only includes some of the advances we have accomplished. We work every day to create the Congress of the future: more open, transparent and inclusive.