

## **22<sup>nd</sup> session of the Committee of Experts on Public Administration**

### **Written statement by Foundation for the Development of Sustainable Policies (Fundeps Argentina)**

#### *Agenda item 8: Public financial management in times of emergency and implications for the credibility of budgets*

The declaration of the emergency by COVID-19 implied facing both economic and social consequences, which impacted on the use of public resources by the state. In the document Public procurement in Argentina during the state of emergency, together with other CSOs, we made a series of recommendations applicable to both the national government and four provinces of Argentina, in terms of access to information, control mechanisms and citizen participation in the use of public funds for the response to the pandemic. We highlight some of them, which are still useful after the end of the emergency period:

- The aim should be to unify the systems for publishing information on national, provincial and municipal purchases by creating a single procurement platform. The first step towards this should be to have a uniform publication scheme at different levels of government.
- Publish in all cases and at all levels of government the complete electronic file on procurement and contracting processes. Likewise, it is necessary that the information published on public procurement portals is easy to understand for citizens, since most of the time it is aimed at those who are interested in participating as bidders.
- Provide for government bodies to be able to carry out control processes concomitant with public spending.
- Regulate the procedures for detecting conflicts of interest in procurement processes and the necessary tools to prevent and sanction such cases at all levels of government.

Then, in budgetary matters in general, certain common challenges can be observed in different jurisdictions of the country. For the sake of brevity, we will highlight the need for all budgets, both national, provincial and municipal, to link the execution of public spending to physical targets. In other words, citizens should have easy and clear access to how the budgets defined at each level of government are being executed, linked to the progressive guarantee of their human rights. We also highlight the need to establish greater instances of citizen participation throughout the budget cycle, such as Public Hearings or the opening of the work of the Commissions within the legislative Congresses.