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## **The Open Governance Partnership; Kenya embraces Open Government**

ICJ-Kenya with other Kenyan partners met under the auspices of the World Bank Institute to review progress on the Open Governance Partnership on the 20 March 2012. The meeting entailed a tele conference with other country partners in Tanzania, Ghana, Liberia, London and New York.

Status updates were done by the various countries on the progress of OGP compliance and implementation initiatives. Kenya was well represented through progress reports by Gladwell Otieno (Africog and a member of the International Steering Committee of the OGP), a member of the Secretariat of the Kenya Open Data Initiative/ICT Board and other participants from the National Tax Payers Association, Transparency International, and Ushahidi.

### **Kenya status under the Open Government Partnership**

Kenya launched the open data initiative in July 2011 but only signed its commitment to the Open Governance Partnership in December 2011. There are various steps that a country requires to do to be a member of the OGP.

1. Embrace an Open Government Declaration  
A cabinet Memo was approved giving Kenya the go ahead to sign the declaration. A letter of intent to participate in the OGP was sent to the OGP Steering Committee by Kenya in December 2011.
2. Deliver a concrete action plan, developed with public consultation and feedback. (

A draft has been developed by the Ministry of Information but is yet to be subjected to public participation. It was suggested that Civil Society needs to meet as soon as the draft is complete so that we may subject the same to comments within our networks.

3. Commit to independent reporting on their progress going forward.

#### Best Practice

Mexico and India were singled out as countries that are implementing access to information law as a tool for citizen participation. For example India has managed to use mobile technology to support Freedom of Information requests under the law in communities that are largely plagued by illiteracy.

Use of mobile technology was singled out as a new platform for engaging with citizens, and *Ushahidi* in Kenya was lauded as an active organization using the medium.

## **OGP Annual Conference 2012 - Brasilia, Brazil**

The Annual High-Level Conference in April 2012, hosted under President Dilma Rousseff's leadership, will be the opportunity to showcase the progress made so far in these key areas of governance, and to formally welcome 42 new countries into the partnership. Before the global media and the growing open government community, governments will formally join the Open Government Partnership by presenting their commitments to the world and endorsing the OGP Declaration of Principles.

The April meeting will gather over 400 high-level government officials, civil society, private sector and multilateral actors in Brazil to celebrate OGP members' tremendous progress to date, and continue stimulating a global platform for collaboration, networking and exchange of best practice. The high-level event will include inspirational presentations, small group discussions and innovative exhibits that highlight government officials in charge of spearheading the open government processes, civil society experts in fields such as open data, access to information, budgeting and service delivery, and technology and other private sector companies at the cutting edge of transparency, accountability and public engagement strategies.

Since the official launch of the OGP last September in New York, over 50 governments have come together with civil society and the private sector to further develop and implement the Open Government Partnership, in a new global effort to promote transparency, empower citizens, fight corruption, and harness new technologies to strengthen governance and support the implementation of our multilateral commitments.

The Delegates from 53 countries will come together and will use the opportunity to announce their action plans to achieve greater openness in order to bring governments and citizens closer together, cultivate shared understanding and help solve practical problems.

Useful website:

<http://www.opengovpartnership.org/>

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