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Collective Actions on Climate and Sustainable Development through the Open Government Partnership

A product of collaboration between the Government of France and World Resources Institute

Co-chairs of the Open Government Partnership

The Open Government Partnership (OGP) is an international platform that convenes leaders from government, civil society and the private sector to work together to make their governments more open, accountable and responsive to citizens. Thus far, 75 countries have voluntarily joined and created National Action Plans (NAPs) with over 2,500 commitments made on open government.

As OGP co-chairs, the Government of France and World Resources Institute (WRI) have identified **climate change and sustainable development** as two of their core priorities for **the coming year**. Specifically, the Government of France and WRI will (a) encourage OGP countries to make commitments on open government, climate and sustainable development; (b) support members to implement these new commitments by sharing expertise on transparency and open data; (c) encourage civil society organizations focused on implementation of the Paris Agreement and 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development to engage with OGP; and (d) catalyze innovation around open data to better plan, track and report on climate and sustainable development policies.

Open government has enormous potential to advance progress on climate action through greater access to data, transparency and public participation in the development and implementation of climate policies in OGP countries. The modalities of OGP—joint government and civil society working groups, a collaborative NAPs process and an Independent Reporting Mechanism—support implementation of the Paris Agreement and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development by building capacity and promoting cooperation.

At the OGP Global Summit 2016, countries made contributions to **collective actions on climate and sustainable development** that will advance cooperation and build momentum for creating and implementing ambitious climate commitments in OGP NAPs.

Why should OGP be used as a forum to make commitments on climate?

The Paris Agreement provides a framework for strengthening the global response to climate change in the context of sustainable development and efforts to eradicate poverty. Under the Agreement, countries are expected to enhance the transparency of action and support and progressively increase the ambition of their national climate actions over time in order to hold the increase of global temperatures to below 2°C. This will require transparency on:

- Emission levels (national, sub-national and sectoral);
- Progress made on the implementation of national climate actions;
- Climate change impacts and adaptation efforts; and
- Financial support, technology transfer and capacity building needed, provided or received.

Achieving the objectives of the Paris Agreement will depend on mobilizing broad constituencies, driven by ambitious, transparent and accountable national climate actions. Decision-makers must be open and inclusive as they make choices about the future of economies, cities and landscapes, and prioritization of climate finance. National and subnational authorities (states/provinces, cities and other local authorities) will need to develop new capacities for collecting, processing and sharing information so that policymakers, communities, businesses and individuals are able to assess risks and make robust decisions in a changing climate. Cooperation among actors, including access to information and exchange of good practices, is central to effective implementation. However, the ability of stakeholders and government agencies to access relevant information and participate in policymaking processes varies widely across the Parties to the Agreement.

OGP can help national and subnational actors overcome these governance barriers, improve public participation in decision-making processes, promote open data and provide a platform to share experiences, good practices and appropriate tools to build institutional capacity.

Open data is a driver for climate innovation, allowing for informed sectoral policy development and creating opportunities for civil society to hold government authorities accountable. It allows the private sector to identify investment opportunities to drive transformation and enables cutting-edge research to be applied to decision-making. Similarly, open data can help to build the capacity of the most vulnerable countries to use the best available tools to adapt to short- and long-term climate impacts, assess risks and make robust decisions in a changing climate.

While implementation of the Paris Agreement will remain under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), **governments can accelerate progress on implementation of the Paris Agreement by making climate commitments in their OGP NAPs. Municipal and regional governments can adopt a similar approach at the local level under the OGP Subnational Government Pilot Program.**

Current OGP climate commitments

A number of OGP members have already incorporated climate commitments in their respective NAPs, which serve as examples for other countries. These include:

- 1. France:** Its **2015–2016 NAP** committed to involve civil society in the COP21 conference and promote transparency regarding the agenda and negotiations; invest in opening datasets and creating visualizations related to climate and sustainable development; provide data, models and simulators regarding climate and energy transition on **the platform**; release and publish data from impact assessment; initiate new collaborations with civil society to develop innovative solutions to meet the challenges of climate change; and organize open dialogue between stakeholders in climate change. France has created **DRIAS**, a Météo-France-led project that opens data, models and simulations related to adaptation to climate change effects.
- 2. Honduras:** Its **2016–2018 NAP** commits to ensuring citizen participation and collective action in the design and implementation of the National Plan on Climate Change. Honduras also intends to build an electronic platform, where citizens will be able to submit proposals to its next climate action plan. It also commits to strengthening community resilience by leveraging technology to improve early warning systems, to identify threats in consultation with affected populations and to monitor disaster risk.
- 3. Kenya:** Its **2016–2018 NAP** commits to create a transparent, participatory environment for the implementation of its recently enacted Climate Change Act 2016. This will include the establishment of the multi-stakeholder Climate Change Council and Climate Change Directorate. The Kenyan government will open up its forestry datasets to civil society and promote the development and public use of accessible, data-drive applications.
- 4. Macedonia:** Its **2016–2018 NAP** commits to developing national climate policies in a transparent, participatory manner. Macedonia will also provide open access to national databases that show the amounts and sources of greenhouse gas emissions, including: information and data on climate change effects, relevant climate scenarios and climate change mitigation. It also commits to establish appropriate legal and regulatory frameworks for the private sector to deliver data relevant to climate change.
- 5. Mexico:** Mexico has made climate commitments in each of its last two NAPs.
 - a. In its 2013–2014 NAP, Mexico committed to** strengthening the collection of data on the environment and climate change to improve public policy decision-making, prioritizing the availability of statistical and geographical information in open formats.
 - b. In its 2016–2018 NAP, Mexico committed to** reducing vulnerability and risks associated with climate variability by publishing all relevant information related to climate change impacts, including the Ministry of Interior’s risk atlas, the National Institute of Ecology and Climate Change’s vulnerability atlas, projects registered with the National Infrastructure Program, assessments of environmental change, permits changes in land use, etc., through the Inter-ministerial Commission on Climate Change.
- 6. Sierra Leone:** Its **2016–2018 NAP** commits to provide user-friendly open data and information on climate-related action, including early warning information and a publicly available database to track implementation of its commitments.
- 7. United States:** Its **2015–2016 NAP** commits to promote open climate data around the globe by (a) working with other arctic council member countries to “inventory relevant government data and publish a list of datasets that are public or can be made public”; (b) stimulating partnerships and innovation by leveraging climate-relevant open data to support national climate change preparedness; (c) filling critical data gaps such as the publicly available high-resolution Digital Elevation Model of the Arctic and other landscapes while looking towards creating similar resources

for areas of the world where high-resolution publicly available data do not yet exist; and (d) creating a National Integrated Heat Health Information System, a heat early-warning system that will enable public preparation and response.

8. **Jordan:** Its **2016–2018 NAP** commits to developing transparent and participatory policies regarding climate change challenges to improve access to relevant climate change information, build the capacity of its institutions to respond, and better enable the Jordanian public to hold the government accountable in providing services and limiting risks.
9. **Tunisia:** Its **2016–2018 NAP** commits to developing a geographic information system (GIS) on environment and sustainable development, including spatial data on air quality, water quality, coastline conditions and the marine environment, waste, industrial pollution, forests and pastoral land use, biodiversity and climate change impacts.
10. **Chile:** Its **2016–2018 NAP** commits to continuing to lead a regional agreement to develop a working instrument on access to information, public participation, and access to justice in environmental matters in Latin America and the Caribbean.

The Independent Reporting Mechanism evaluated Mexico’s 2013–2014 commitment as “substantially complete;” the rest of the commitments were too recent to have been reviewed. Still, these commitments are a promising start, demonstrating leadership within OGP to advance climate action and sustainable development. But there are still plenty of untapped opportunities for ambitious action and for more members to adopt climate commitments.

Commitments on climate and sustainable development through OGP

The following thematic areas provide examples of commitments that OGP members, both national and subnational, can integrate into their current or future NAPs:

1. Transparent and participatory development of climate and sustainable development policies at the subnational and national levels, including (but not limited to) climate plans, mid-century low emission strategies and other national submissions requested under the new transparency framework:
 - **Create public participation processes** that are gender-responsive and that provide early, adequate and accessible opportunities for the public to engage
 - **Ensure a breadth of consultation** with relevant ministries, civil society, scientists, trade unions, marginalized and vulnerable groups, local authorities and the private sector

- **Build trust by publishing public inputs and government responses** to these processes in formats and media that are accessible to the wider public.

2. Track and publicize climate-relevant policy implementation and results:

- **Develop, track and publish nationally-relevant milestones and indicators** of climate and sustainable development policies, such as those associated with Nationally Determined Contributions, 2020 pledges, long-term low greenhouse gas emission development strategies and green growth/sustainable development strategies relevant for the SDGs. In cases where capacity is limited, an open process could help determine which policies would be prioritized for tracking.

3. Provide greater transparency of information on climate and sustainable development in national budgets:

- **Improve the consistency, comprehensiveness and comparability** of timely and public reporting by all providers of climate finance, including information on the status, sources, financial instruments and thematic focus of financing provided to developing country partners.

- **Implement cross-government budget systems and processes** that enable the identification, tracking and regular reporting of domestic resources mobilized for low- and high-emission activities. This can align revenue and expenditure decisions with low-emission, climate-resilient national development strategies.

- **Map the receipt, use and outcomes of international and domestic climate change financial resources**, ensuring transparency and enabling the monitoring of collective global goals

4. Disclose climate-related investment risks and corresponding mitigation measures:

- **Require national financial institutions and private sector investors, insurers and banks to publicly disclose relevant information** on the climate- and natural resources-related financial risks of their investments, measures adopted to manage these risks and investments that contribute to climate solutions. This can help align public and private financial flows with a zero-carbon and climate-resilient development trajectory, while also increasing companies’ and investors’ integration of climate and natural resource risks, related commodity price volatility and other shocks into decision-making. The French example of the law on energy transition, with Article 173 related to the mandatory disclosure of climate-related information by companies, offers a good practice to be shared more widely.

5. Open up data to meet user needs for sustainable development and climate risk resilience:

- **Open up the most relevant climate and development related datasets** that can enable innovation, improved mitigation and adaptation planning and accountability. This data can include in-depth sectoral information on a country's energy, industry, transport, agriculture and forestry sectors as well as impact, climate risk and climate scenario information. Data can go beyond emissions to include information on a country's power sector, satellite imagery and transport infrastructure.
- **Develop the necessary legal, regulatory or institutional mechanisms** to enable the collection, management and proactive disclosure of climate and sustainable development data
- **Make datasets publicly available in open data formats** with an accessible explanation of uncertainty levels to help educate, empower and engage all stakeholders. When it is possible to do so without violating citizens' privacy, governments should disclose, in open data format, available data used to undertake gender-disaggregated assessments of vulnerability.

Recommendations and Next Steps

These recommendations target countries that have joined OGP; however, countries outside of OGP are encouraged to join or explore how they can use information provided in this brief to inform their own national processes.

- Follow through on contributions to collective actions in the 2016 OGP Paris Declaration;
- Join the new Open Climate Working Group to participate in peer knowledge exchange that develops ideas for commitments and address implementation challenges.
- Use web-based platforms and tools to share open climate-relevant data with the rest of the world, demonstrating progress towards these commitments. WRI and the Government of France can help facilitate data-sharing on these platforms.
- Invite a wide array of civil society to participate in OGP and the NAPs process.
- Develop a strong and accountable process for co-creation of commitments with civil society and robust reporting through the Independent Reporting Mechanism.

ABOUT WORLD RESOURCES INSTITUTE

WRI is a global research organization that turns big ideas into action at the nexus of environment, economic opportunity and human wellbeing.

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