Open
Government
Partnership

How Can the Open Government Partnership Accelerate Implementation of the 2030 Agenda

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I. INTRODUCTION

This paper explores how the Open Government Partnership (OGP) relates to and can help advance the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development (2030 Agenda). OGP, a unique international partnership of 66 governments and hundreds of civil society organizations aligns closely with commitments contained in the 2030 Agenda's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) on transparency, public participation, and accountability – and ultimately on improving public services and reducing poverty. This document provides background on OGP and the SDGs, describes how the two agendas complement each other, and then discusses how to leverage both to achieve a shared ambition to tangibly improve people's lives.

II. OPEN GOVERNMENT PARTNERSHIP

What is the Open Government Partnership?

OGP is a multi-stakeholder initiative focused on improving government transparency, accountability, and responsiveness to citizens with the aim of improving services and reducing poverty. OGP brings together government and civil society champions who recognize that governments are more likely to be effective and credible if they open their doors to public input and oversight. In just four years since OGP's launch, its membership has grown from eight to 66 countries, with hundreds of civil society organizations (CSOs) participating in the OGP process at the country level. OGP countries represent one-third of the world's population and have made more than 2,000 open government reform commitments. In their initial years as OGP members, five countries passed new or improved Freedom of Information legislation, four undertook reforms to improve transparency in public expenditure, two enacted political finance reforms, and three developed new initiatives to strengthen corporate accountability.

III. THE 2030 AGENDA FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

What is the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development?

The 2030 Agenda establishes a set of global priorities to help eradicate extreme poverty and shift all countries toward inclusive, sustainable development.

In 2000, world leaders launched the Millennium Declaration, a shared

commitment to reduce extreme poverty and improve human well-being in the developing world. The resulting eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) helped address income poverty, hunger, access to drinking water, maternal mortality, and other deprivations. Yet as these goals expire at the end of 2015, much remains unfinished. There is increasing recognition that a new approach is needed to tackle current economic and environmental challenges including issues which require global collective action, such as climate change.

Over the past three years, governments have come together to craft a new agenda for 2030. This new agenda builds on the MDGs, but goes much further in providing a more ambitious and comprehensive vision for sustainable development in the post-2015 period. The new agenda departs from the MDGs in four fundamental ways:

- It is universal: unlike the MDGs, it will apply in its entirety to all countries, rich and poor alike;
- It is comprehensive: it elevates economic and environmental issues that were not included in the MDGs, including
- Stand-alone goals on energy, infrastructure, cities, sustainable consumption and production, and inequality;
- It is integrated: it weaves together the three dimensions of sustainable development – environmental, social, and economic – to avoid a stovepipe approach; and
- It is transformative: it goes beyond symptoms to tackle the root causes of poverty and unsustainability, focusing on eradicating extreme poverty by 2030 and ensuring our collective development trajectory respects planetary boundaries.

What are the ingredients of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development?

Transforming our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development includes the following core elements[1]:

- A **Declaration** explaining the context for and shared purpose that led to the development of the new agenda. It summarizes the key elements and priorities of the agenda and their importance.

- A set of universal **Sustainable Development Goals** encompassing 17 goals and 169 targets. The goals address many dimensions of sustainable development, including inter alia meeting essential basic needs such as food, water, and healthcare while building infrastructure, reducing conflict, and protecting the environment. Each goal has a set of accompanying targets that must be met in order for the goal to be attained. While all targets will not be equally relevant to all countries, each country is expected to fully implement the goals. (See Annex I for a list of the goals.)

- **Means of Implementation and the Global Partnership** conveys how the agenda will be delivered, with "nationally owned sustainable development strategies" as the principal guide for implementation. It describes the agreed role for international financial support, the private sector, trade, initiatives to improve debt sustainability, as well as a new Technology Facilitation Mechanism. Means of Implementation also incorporates the recent Addis Ababa Action Agenda, agreed in July 2015.

1 United Nations (2015) Draft outcome document of the United Nations summit for the adoption of the post-2015 development agenda, A/69/L.85. Available at: http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/69/L.85&Lang=E

- A **Follow-up and Review** system explains how progress will be measured and evaluated. At the global level, the UN Secretary-General will produce annual progress reports, and the UN's High Level Political Forum will meet every four years at the head-of-state level to review progress. Regions and countries are encouraged to develop their own systems of national review to assess what is working and what is not.

- **A simple yet robust indicator framework** to be agreed at the global level will "preserve the political balance, integration and ambition" of all the SDGs and targets.

What happens next?

Following adoption by world leaders at the UN General Assembly in September 2015, the 2030 Agenda will go into effect on January 1, 2016. Yet for the 193 members of the United Nations, the process of adapting the global goals and targets to their national contexts will have only just begun. Some of the challenges ahead include:

- **Adapting the global agenda for national implementation:** Each country will need to consider how the 2030 Agenda applies in their specific case and how it can be best adapted to reflect national needs and priorities. This may include new national sustainable development strategies or incorporating the agenda into the current national development plan as well as other local or regional development plans.

- **Engaging the private sector and civil society.** The 2030 Agenda cannot be achieved through government actions alone, so governments will need to engage the private sector and civil society as partners in new ways to implement the new agenda successfully.

- **Measuring progress.** A process is currently underway to select a set of global indicators to measure progress against the 169 targets and 17 goals. Collecting data for such a wide range of targets is a major undertaking. Over the next several years, governments and the international system must consider how to meet this need, including the use of new and emerging technologies.

IV. THE ROLE OF TRANSPARENCY AND GOVERNANCE IN ACHIEVING THE 2030 AGENDA

The evolution of governance in the Sustainable Development Goals

Sustainable development is often considered to consist of three pillars – social, economic, and environmental. Governance, however, has been increasingly recognized as central to sustainable development – both as an enabler as well as a goal in its own right. Governance, specifically a call for "effective, transparent, accountable and democratic" institutions, was included in the Outcome of the Rio+20 Conference on Sustainable Development[2] in 2012.

"An honest and responsive government" has remained the fourth highest priority for over 7 million participants in the UN's My World 2015 survey.[3] A governance goal was included in many of the major proposals put forward by member states and others, such as the High Level Panel on the Post-2015 Development Agenda, the Sustainable Development Solutions Network, and the European Commission.

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2 General Assembly Resolution 66/288, The Future We Want, A/RES/66/288 (July 27, 2012). Available at http://www.uncsd2012.org/thefuturewewant.html
3 After education, health care, and better job opportunities. See full survey results at data.myworld2015.org. Accessed August 18, 2015.
4 Many authors and institutes contributed to this scholarship. These include Global Integrity, Institute for Global Environmental Studies, International Budget Partnership, Open Society Foundations, Overseas Development Institute, Stockholm Environment Institute, and coalitions such as the Project on Sustainability Transformation beyond 2015. See under Selected Resources.

Civil society and academic institutions have also examined the importance of governance for the SDGs.[4] Nevertheless, there was much discussion of the elements of what is now SDG 16 in the early negotiations and it is a major achievement to have recognition of the importance of peaceful, just, and inclusive societies in the final 2030 Agenda Outcome Document.

What is improved governance expected to achieve?
Improved governance is associated with two sets of objectives: efforts to advance democracy and human rights versus improved development outcomes centered on improvements in income, food security, or health.[5] In principle, these objectives can be viewed as complementary in that stronger democratic institutions and respect for civil and political rights offer strong foundations for improving development outcomes.[6]

The SDGs speak to both approaches but without making a clear and consistent case for democracy and human rights through dedicated targets. The 2030 Agenda itself was developed with a strong emphasis on a wide and deep consultative process, including a survey allowing participants to select from a list of priorities (My World 2015 Survey). Similarly, emphasis on universal access to services, and involvement in economic and social life may be seen to imply a democratic form of government, but this is left unsaid and offset by an emphasis on allowing for diversity between countries and respecting sovereignty in policy making.

A narrower approach to governance focuses on the power of transparency and open government to advance development outcomes. This is at the core of the approach advocated by the OGP. Freedoms of information and association, and participation in decision-making are central to OGP. These freedoms are expected to contribute to improved development outcomes by providing citizens with the means to access information held by governments to extract greater accountability. Improved access to information and greater accountability can result in better use of scarce development resources by ensuring these are directed to positive outcomes rather than being misallocated or squandered. But skeptics of a narrow focus on improving access to data and freedom of information argue that this approach will not motivate collective action or enhance public sector performance without efforts that improve the enabling environment for citizen engagement, and strengthen state capacity to respond to demands for greater accountability.[7]

What does the evidence tell us about governance impacts?
The case for focusing on improved governance and transparency should ideally be informed by strong and compelling evidence on systemic policy change (respect for human rights, improved civil and political liberties, etc.) and development impacts (growth, poverty reduction, improved health and education outcomes, etc.).

But despite some important findings and a growing body of research and evaluation, existing evidence remains partial in scope, fragmentary in coverage, and the findings are often contested. This is not surprising since the field of governance is still relatively new and its impact is hard to measure. This can make it challenging for governments and external partners to sustain a firm evidence-based case for governance and open government. Governance reforms often take a long time to generate measurable benefits and it is not easy to measure results over a short time span.

5 Thomas Carothers and Saskia Brechenmacher (2014) 'Accountability, Transparency, Participation and Inclusion: A New Development Consensus?' Washington DC: Carnegie Institute for International Peace. http://carnegieendowment.org/2014/10/20/accountability-transparency-participation-and-inclusion-new-development-consensus/hsao
6 See, for example, Daron Acemoglu and James A. Robinson (2012) Why Nations Fail: The Origins of Power, Prosperity, and Poverty, London: Profile Books.
7 Jonathan Fox (2014) 'Social Accountability: What Does the Evidence Really Say?' GPSA Working Paper No. 1, Washington, DC: The World Bank.

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Given the powerful political momentum behind the SDGs, there is an urgent need to build stronger empirical support for the expected results from improved governance, especially from the targets under SDG 16, and there are signs that stronger evidence is beginning to emerge.[8]

However, there is less evidence on impact in the transparency and accountability field and very few studies demonstrate a clear relationship, despite a wealth of insights from practical experience on the ground. Some studies highlight positive outcomes in budget transparency, service delivery outcomes, and on the wider impact of fiscal openness, but most do not permit wider generalizations to be made as they are mostly confined to a single initiative in one locality.[9] Despite these limitations, an emerging body of impact evaluations seeks to measure the relationship between social accountability initiatives and development outcomes.[10]

V. COMPLEMENTARY AGENDAS

How are OGP principles reflected in the 2030 Agenda?
The 2030 Agenda incorporates OGP principles of transparency, civic participation, accountable public institutions, and technological innovation in three ways: directly, through goals and targets that specifically focus on open government; indirectly, recognizing that these principles are crucial to achieving a much broader range of sustainable development goals and targets, by linking advances in transparency and open government more directly to progress in the lives of poor people; and in implementation, specifically in the design of the 2030 Agenda's monitoring and review mechanisms.

First, open government principles are explicitly addressed in Goal 16, which aims to "build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels," and in other targets across other goals. These targets provide some of the most specific language on what governments and their citizens need to do to advance open government specifically and good governance more broadly. They are especially valuable for the connection between OGP and SDGs as they cement the importance of open, responsive government as an end in itself. Table 1 maps some of these targets to key OGP commitments.

8 The United Kingdom's Department for International Development (DFID) review of its governance portfolio highlights some positive findings: "better governance is positively associated with increasing primary education and adult literacy, and reducing infant mortality; effective political governance is critical to economic growth including through improved investment and productivity; and improved governance is essential for achieving the MDGs." Department for International Development (2011), 'Governance Portfolio Review Summary: Review of DFID's Governance Portfolio 2004 – 2009.' London: UK Department for International Development. https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/67458/governance-portfolio.pdf, p.3.
Recent research drawing on the World Bank's Worldwide Governance Indicators finds a positive correlation between a country's performance on governance quality and its economic development. Thomas Carothers and Saskia Brechenmacher (2014) 'Accountability, Transparency, Participation and Inclusion: A New Development Consensus?' Washington DC: Carnegie Institute for International Peace.
9 John Gaventa and Rosemary McGee (2013) 'The Impact and Effectiveness of Transparency and Accountability Initiatives', *Development Policy Review*, Volume 31, Issue Supplement s1, pp. s3–s28.
10 Jonathan Fox (2014) 'Social Accountability: What Does the Evidence Really Say?', *GPSA Working Paper* No. 1, Washington, DC: The World Bank.

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Table 1. Governance Targets Related to OGP Commitments

OGP Commitments[11]	Relevant Targets	
Increase the availability of information about governmental activities	16.6	Develop effective, accountable and transparent institutions at all levels
	16.10	Ensure public access to information and protect fundamental freedoms, in accordance with national legislation and international agreements
Support civic participation	16.7	Ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels
	5.5	Ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life
	11.3	By 2030, enhance inclusive and sustainable urbanization and capacity for participatory, integrated and sustainable human settlement planning and management in all countries
Implement the highest standards of professional integrity throughout our administrations	16.5	Substantially reduce corruption and bribery in all their forms
	16.b	Promote and enforce non-discriminatory laws and policies for sustainable development
	12.7	Promote public procurement practices that are sustainable, in accordance with national policies and priorities
Increase access to new technologies for openness and accountability	5.b	Enhance the use of enabling technology, in particular information and communications technology, to promote the empowerment of women
	9.c	Significantly increase access to information and communications technology and strive to provide universal and affordable access to the Internet in least developed countries by 2020
	17.18	By 2020, enhance capacity-building support to developing countries... to increase significantly the availability of high-quality, timely and reliable data disaggregated by income, gender, age, race, ethnicity, migratory status, disability, geographic location and other characteristics relevant in national contexts
	17.19	By 2030, build on existing initiatives to develop measurements of progresson sustainable development that complement gross domestic product, and support statistical capacity-building in developing countries

11 OGP Commitments are contained in the OGP Declaration (2011). See http://www.opengovpartnership.org/about/open-government-declaration.

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Second, the principles of open government are embedded across numerous SDGs where transparency, public participation, and accountable public institutions are instrumental to achieving a particular target. For example, goals related to income poverty, water, education, energy, and cities all include targets for the provision of public services and universal access to these services (see Table 2). Open government is often an essential element of high quality and universal service provision. Services from education to infrastructure, which are indispensable for poverty eradication, are strengthened by citizen input and oversight. Similarly, professional integrity is essential to public management, and new technologies can help improve transparency and deliver services more efficiently.

The connection between OGP and the SDGs in improving the lives of poor and vulnerable communities through improving access to services and decreasing poverty is sometimes underplayed and is one of the areas where OGP has made less visible progress relative to transparency and participation. A stronger link between OGP and the SDGs might help to sharpen the focus and performance of OGP on these metrics. This is not to argue for less emphasis on open government and related transparency goals, but for more attention to the goals of both initiatives that pertain to quality of life, and an acknowledgment of what the SDGs might help to bring out more explicitly in OGP.

Table 2 - Selected Targets Requiring Effective and Responsive Delivery of Public Services

Goal 1 - End poverty in all its form everywhere
1.3 Implement nationally appropriate social protection systems and measures for all, including floors, and by 2030 achieve substantial coverage of the poor and the vulnerable
1.4 By 2030, ensure that all men and women, in particular the poor and the vulnerable, have equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to basic services, ownership and control over land and other forms of property, inheritance, natural resources, appropriate new technology and financial services, including microfinance
Goal 3 - Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages
3.7 By 2030, ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health-care services, including for family planning, information and education, and the integration of reproductive health into national strategies and programmes
3.8 Achieve universal health coverage, including financial risk protection, access to quality essential healthcare services and access to safe, effective, quality and affordable essential medicines and vaccines for all
Goal 4 - Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all
4.1 By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education leading to relevant and effective learning outcomes
4.2 By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys have access to quality early childhood development, care and pre-primary education so that they are ready for primary education

Table 2 (cont.)- Selected Targets Requiring Effective and Responsive Delivery of Public Services

Goal 6 - Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all
6.1 By 2030, achieve universal and equitable access to safe and affordable drinking water for all
6.2 By 2030, achieve access to adequate and equitable sanitation and hygiene for all and end open defecation, paying special attention to the needs of women and girls and those in vulnerable situations
Goal 7 - Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all
7.1 By 2030, ensure universal access to affordable, reliable and modern energy services
Goal 11 - Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable
11.1 By 2030, ensure access for all to adequate, safe and affordable housing and basic services and upgrade slums
11.2 By 2030, provide access to safe, affordable, accessible and sustainable transport systems for all, improving road safety, notably by expanding public transport, with special attention to the needs of those in vulnerable situations, women, children, persons with disabilities and older persons
11.7 By 2030, provide universal access to safe, inclusive and accessible, green and public spaces, in particular for women and children, older persons and persons with disabilities

Third, implementation of the 2030 Agenda rests on core OGP principles. The 2030 Agenda calls for follow-up and review processes that are "open, inclusive, participatory and transparent for all people and [that] will support the reporting by all relevant stakeholders." At the national level, it calls on countries to conduct regular evaluations of progress against the goals and targets and incorporate input from all stakeholders. The UN High Level Political Forum encourages countries to participate in reviews at the global level, along with civil society and the private sector. To ensure that data and analysis informs policy design and investment flows, the 2030 Agenda intends to "exploit the contribution to be made by a wide range of data, including earth observation and geospatial information."[12] By promoting more open, inclusive, and participatory decision-making, OGP can help create the right enabling environment for successful implementation of the SDGs.

More specifically, open data, which is closely related to the transparency objectives of the OGP, has been increasingly recognized as important for development. Widespread calls for a Data Revolution, furthered by the UN Secretary General's Independent Expert Advisory Group on a Data Revolution for Sustainable Development, have brought ideas of open data and open government to the fore – discussions that will continue as implementation evolves.[13] Several of the Expert Advisory Group's recommendations focus on how governments can make information more widely accessible to the public and what resources (both financial and technical) will be needed.

12 United Nations (2015) 'Draft outcome document of the United Nations summit for the adoption of the post-2015 development agenda', A/69/L.85. Available at: http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/69/L.85&Lang=E
13 Independent Expert Advisory Group on a Data Revolution for Sustainable Development (IEAG) (2014) 'A World that Counts: Mobilizing the Data Revolution for Sustainable Development', New York: United Nations. Available at www.undatarevolution.org; accessed August 20, 2015.

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Examples of existing OGP commitments that are aligned with the SDGs

Early OGP success stories demonstrate how improved transparency and accountability, often leveraging new technologies, can improve life for citizens. For example, Indonesia's LAPOR! Initiative allows citizens to submit complaints or reports on public services throughout the country via text message, e-mail, or apps.[14] A centralized system tracks and reports on the responsiveness of individual ministries to complaints, thereby enhancing the quality of public institutions, a key element of SDG 16 (to build effective, accountable, and inclusive institutions at all levels). Tanzania has introduced a Water Point Mapping service to make information on the status of rural water supplies more available to citizens.[15] This service, which supports SDG 6 (to ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all), will help the government manage water systems more effectively and give citizens the opportunity to provide input and improve the accountability of water managers. Mexico created a specific commitment (FONDEN Transparente) that systematizes all actions related to natural disaster prevention, relief, and reconstruction; creates a transparent and accountable method that guarantees the proper allocation and monitoring of resources for affected communities; and empowers communities to follow up and report progress on implementation through the use of digital technology. (See Box 1 for additional examples of current commitments.)

Box 1: Examples of existing OGP country commitments that are aligned with SDGs

Brazil: Brazil has introduced a Health System Letter, a survey that lets patients evaluate their care. This type of initiative can support SDG 2 by providing rapid feedback on strengths and weaknesses throughout the health system. Brazil has also committed to strengthening the ombudsman unit within its health system.

Macedonia: Macedonia will implement an Open Budget Initiative that makes public information about the national budget publicly available and easily accessible. This initiative directly supports SDG 16 by enhancing the accountability of public institutions.

Mexico: Mexico has created an open and unique registry of all the social welfare programs under the "National Crusade Against Hunger." This registry provides a transparent and accountable tool that allows timely monitoring of the 7 million beneficiaries of the 90 different programs by location and by amount, guaranteeing accurate and updated information that also allows identification of the most vulnerable groups, more focused social interventions policy, and more open and timely monitoring and evaluation.

Philippines: The Philippines has committed to require fiscal transparency in extractive industries and to disclose both companies' revenues as well as those that the government has received. This aligns with SDGs addressing sustainable energy, natural resources, and sustainable consumption and production patterns.
South Africa: South Africa is developing an integrated and publicly accessible portal providing information on environmental management. This will contribute to South Africa's progress on SDGs focused on combatting climate change, attaining sustainable food security for all, and sustainable management of terrestrial and ocean ecosystems and natural resources.

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14 Hasan, Munyama (2013) 'Soliciting Feedback on Public Services.' Open Government Partnership. Available at: http://www.opengovpartnership.org/country/indonesia/case-study/soliciting-citizen-feedback-public-services.
15 'Inspiring Story – Water Source Monitoring.' (2013). Open Government Partnership. Available at: http://www.opengovpartnership.org/country/tanzania/case-study/inspiring-story-water-point-mapping

What is absent from the current goals and targets, and what challenges remain?

While covering an immense amount of ground, a few key OGP priorities are not well reflected in the final set of goals and targets.

- **Budget transparency:** the goals and targets fail to specifically mention the importance of timely access to information on public revenues, plans, allocations, expenditures, and performance that would allow citizens to evaluate how the government's actions reflect national priorities.

- **Natural resource governance:** the goals and targets do not mention the importance of governance of extractive industries – generating revenues which will be essential to financing the new agenda but which often risk mismanagement and fail to benefit the public.

- **Human rights:** While the SDGs do not include an explicit commitment to civil and political rights, target 16.10 references fundamental freedoms, and economic and social rights (such as the rights of women, children, and labor) are reflected in several goals and targets. Environmental rights – including access to information, public participation, and protection of rights – do not feature in the final outcome document.

Although absent, OGP and other similar initiatives should not lose sight of these priorities as they are crucial to realizing the broader aspirations contained in the 2030 Agenda.

Furthermore, there are several challenges for effective implementation of SDG 16 and open government-related targets more broadly, including:

Resources: Successful implementation of governance-related targets will require political commitments matched by the availability of financial and technical resources. The Outcome Document from the Financing for Development Conference in Addis Ababa in July 2015 affirms the importance of furthering the transparency and accountability of financial institutions and the corporate sector, as well as the probity and efficiency of public administrations, including transparency in the budgeting process. It takes particular note of the work of OGP in promoting "the transparency, accountability, and responsiveness of governments to their citizens, with the goal of improving the quality of governance and government services," but does not offer firm financing proposals on how this can be achieved.[16]

Measurement: A key outstanding question, as mentioned earlier, rests on the indicators to be adopted to monitor progress in implementing the 2030 Agenda. Despite recent innovations in how to measure governance, there are still challenges around data availability and consistency, the use of official versus unofficial datasets, as well as metrics that truly capture good governance.

The UN's Statistical Commission has tasked the Inter-Agency and Expert Group (IAEG) on the SDGs with developing the indicator framework for formal endorsement at the next meeting of the Statistical Commission in March 2016. There have been requests from certain governments and other stakeholders to limit indicators to one per target (or fewer).

16 UN General Assembly, Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development (Addis Ababa Action Agenda), A/RES/69/313, 27 July 2015. http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/69/313; accessed 1 September, 2015.

For the relevant targets under SDG 16 and elsewhere, capturing progress with just one indicator will be challenging (for example, measuring the 'universal access' and 'quality' dimensions of a public service requires two indicators). Yet while the number of global indicators is likely to remain limited, countries will need to supplement these with additional indicators developed to fit best with national and regional circumstances. Data used by OGP and OGP members (such as the Open Budget Survey used to determine member country eligibility) can help countries develop a more robust approach to implementing SDG targets. Platforms such as OGP can also help to establish confidence in the use of unofficial datasets to measure progress. Mexico, along with other governments, has led the effort of adopting an international open data charter as the set of foundational principles for the promotion of greater coherence and increased use of open data for measuring and monitoring development throughout the world.

Political Will: The SDGs set out ambitious priorities in all areas, and rely on countries taking the lead and embracing the full agenda. While the targets related to governance were agreed by all and are in theory indivisible from the rest of the agenda, this does not necessarily indicate that countries intend to take meaningful action on all goals and targets – particularly those such as governance that could require overcoming strong vested interests and promoting far-reaching reforms within the public sector. Strong and sustained political commitment will be needed if the governance-related targets are to be achieved.

VI. THE ROLE OF OGP IN ACCELERATING IMPLEMENTATION OF THE 2030 AGENDA

What is the "Open Government for the Implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development" Declaration?
The "Open Government for the Implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development" Declaration is a political statement endorsed by Open Government Partnership steering committee members including Mexico, the lead government co-chair of OGP, along with Brazil, Chile, Croatia, France, Georgia, Indonesia, Philippines, Romania, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Tanzania, United Kingdom, and the United States and their civil society counterparts. Many more (if not most) OGP countries are expected to sign the Declaration over the coming months. The Declaration (see Annex II) affirms that the rule of law, principles of transparency and open government, and citizen participation are important tools for effectively implementing the 2030 Agenda.

How, concretely, can OGP support implementation of the 2030 Agenda?

OGP National Action Plans can help identify and advance open government commitments that are central to both the OGP and the Sustainable Development Goals
The core of a country's participation in the OGP is the biennial National Action Plan, and in OGP's short four-year history these plans have been used to tackle a broad spectrum of public policy challenges. These have ranged from core open government issues such as access to information and fiscal transparency to increasing public participation in public services such as health and education. Many of the issues addressed in OGP plans closely correlate with the SDGs (see Box 1).[17]

The Declaration commits OGP countries to include measures that advance transparency and open government targets under Goal 16 and other relevant goals during their next action plan cycle. It is clear that governments and civil society view enhanced transparency, accountability, public participation, and use of new technology as critical to addressing a range of citizen concerns, reaching the poorest and most vulnerable, and building stronger institutions.

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17 See an explanation of the OGP's National Action Plans at: http://www.opengovpartnership.org/how-it-works/action-plans

The OGP Summit in Mexico City in October 2015 provides the perfect opportunity to suggest examples of the types of commitments that could be included in National Action Plans. These could range from improving educational and health services to improving access to ICT to reducing corruption. At the Summit, OGP is launching an Open Government Guide focused on the SDGs with the aim of inspiring governments and civil society to broaden the types of issues they choose to tackle in their plans, and to kick-start SDG implementation.

OGP can lead in the transparent, participatory, and accountable implementation of the SDGs

The OGP Declaration commits participating governments to provide public access to timely, disaggregated information and open data on government activities related to the implementation and financing of the SDGs. OGP governments also commit to support citizen participation in implementing the SDGs.

OGP countries may choose to go even further, and commit to publishing all of their spending related to meeting the SDGs on a regular basis. This would place OGP countries at the forefront of efforts to hold governments accountable for their commitment and progress on the 2030 Agenda as a whole. If you can't follow the money, government isn't open. And being able to follow the money through to results will sharpen accountability for progress toward the SDGs.

The OGP Declaration also encourages integrating open government principles into the official indicators that will measure the Agenda's progress. A welcome consensus has developed around the need for better, more open data to monitor progress toward the SDGs. A Global Partnership for Sustainable Development Data has recently been launched.[18] This overlaps with what many OGP countries are trying to achieve. A true data revolution requires the hard, often unheralded, work of strengthening national statistics offices, improving access to information, proactively publishing government datasets, and ensuring a coherent records management system is in place.[19] Policies to achieve those things are to be found in many OGP National Action Plans. This is the data revolution in action.

Although not mentioned explicitly in the Declaration, OGP's independent reporting mechanism (IRM) can also be used to monitor and review progress toward commitments made in National Action Plans. The IRM provides regular, independent progress reports on how each country is doing in co-creating (with civil society) and implementing their OGP commitments.[20] It also provides recommendations on how countries can improve implementation of each individual commitment and the national action plan as a whole. What makes the IRM unique is that it is not subject to government or civil society approval, meaning the reports are truly independent assessments.
By demonstrating an open, inclusive, and accountable approach, OGP governments can lead by example not only on the substance of the Agenda but also on the way the Agenda is implemented.

VII. CONCLUSION

The Declaration signals OGP's intent to assume a strong leadership role in implementing some of the most crucial and challenging dimensions of the 2030 Agenda. OGP could enable an economically and geographically diverse group of countries to drive ambition and openness in the SDGs and help set a positive precedent as peer (non-OGP) governments also begin their processes of implementation. The community actively engaged in the 2030 Agenda should, in turn, embrace OGP given how central open government is to eradicating extreme poverty and accelerating sustainable development.

18 Joe Powell (2015) 'What does the Financing for Development Framework mean for OGP?' OGP blog at: http://www.opengovpartnership.org/blog/joe-powell/2015/07/28/what-does-financing-development-framework-mean-ogp.
19 To complement official data, the recently launched Governance Data Alliance seeks to improve the availability, use, and salience of high-quality governance data from a range of sources. See http://r4d.org/blog/2015-06-17/introducing-governance-data-alliance.
20 The IRM produces independent reports on progress of each member of OGP. It is composed of technical experts and national advisors overseen by a combination of the OGP Steering Committee and an independent committee of experts. See additional information and all reports to date at the OGP IRM website: http://www.opengovpartnership.org/independent-reporting-mechanism.

Annex I – The Sustainable Development Goals

Goal 1. End poverty in all its forms everywhere

Goal 2. End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture

Goal 3. Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages

Goal 4. Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all

Goal 5. Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls

Goal 6. Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all

Goal 7. Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all

Goal 8. Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all

Goal 9. Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation

Goal 10. Reduce inequality within and among countries

Goal 11. Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable

Goal 12. Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns

Goal 13. Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts*

Goal 14. Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development

Goal 15. Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss

Goal 16. Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels

Goal 17. Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development

Annex II – OGP Declaration

Open Government for the Implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

September 2015

As participants in the Open Government Partnership, committed to the principles enshrined in the Open Government Declaration, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the United Nations Convention Against Corruption and other relevant international instruments related to effective and inclusive institutions and human rights, we:

Recognize the importance of harnessing our efforts and championing the principles of transparency and open government as crucial tools for ensuring the effective implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. This is an ambitious global plan of action for achieving inclusive sustainable development in its economic, social and environmental dimensions, in a balanced and integrated manner to end poverty and combat inequality within and among countries.

Welcome the inclusion in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development of goals and targets related to transparency, accountability, integrity, and citizen participation. They are essential for promoting the rule of law, reducing corruption, and promoting public access to information and the development of effective and accountable institutions.

Applaud the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development for recognizing that peaceful and inclusive societies are vital components of sustainable development.

Value and welcome the participation of civil society organisations in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Promote the Open Government Partnership as a platform for voluntary cooperation and peer exchange and learning. The experience of its participating governments and civil society organisations can be drawn on to encourage transparent, accountable, participatory, and technology-enabled implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Together, we declare our commitment to:

1. Promote the rule of law at the national, regional and international level through transparency, openness, accountability, access to justice and effective and inclusive institutions. This is consistent with Goal 16 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

2. Promote public access to timely and disaggregated information and open data on government activities related to the implementation and financing of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, in line with national legislation and international agreements. We support the International Open Data Charter and will explore its implementation in our countries.

3. Support citizen participation in the implementation of all the goals and targets in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including decision-making, policy formulation, follow up and evaluation processes.

4. Uphold the principles of open government, as described in the Open Government Declaration, when defining international, regional and national indicators for measuring the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, taking into account national circumstances and development priorities. We will identify and share lessons learned and good practices to strengthen country capacity for implementation.

5. Use our Open Government Partnership National Action Plans to adopt commitments that serve as effective tools for implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Annex III - Illustrative Open Government Tools that Enable Sustainable Development

The Environmental Democracy Index: The Access Initiative (TAI) is a network of over 250 civil society organizations for which WRI serves as global secretariat. TAI's Environmental Democracy Index (EDI) measures 'procedural rights' such as access to information, public participation, and access to justice through an environmental context in 70 countries. These mutually-reinforcing rights are directly referenced in SDG targets 16.10, 16.7 and 16.3 respectively, and when they are upheld, decisions on natural resources and land use are less likely to negatively impact on the environment and human well-being.

As a web-based tool, EDI allows anyone to view and compare countries' performance against a set of 99 indicators. By enabling civil society organizations and concerned citizens to understand the strengths and weaknesses of their national legal systems with respect to environmental democracy, EDI helps facilitate more effective engagement strategies and campaigns to promote inclusive, sustainable development as outlined in Goal 16. Similarly, the tool assists government officials in identifying areas where legal reform is needed, and can inform the measurement of target 16.7, as one of the officially-proposed indicators under consideration (16.7.2) is "percentage of [the] population who believe decision-making at all levels is inclusive and responsive."

The Adaptation Finance Accountability Initiative: The Adaptation Finance Accountability Initiative (AFAI), led by Oxfam, ODI and WRI is a collaborative research project that enables civil society to monitor adaptation finance flows – of which governments are often the primary recipients – from global down to local level. By developing tools that support citizens and CSO groups to identify and track climate adaptation funding, AFAI empowers them to advocate for improved financial transparency and policy coherence, thereby ensuring community involvement in climate adaptation projects and making progress on a range of SDGs, including: target 11.b on integrated policies and plans towards climate change adaptation; target 13.2 which calls for the integration of climate change measures into national policies; and target 16.6 mandating the development of effective, accountable and transparent government institutions at all levels. Target 13.b commits member states to "promote mechanisms for raising capacity for effective climate change-related planning and management."

The impact of AFAI's tools is two-fold: 1) they enhance civic coordination on projects within a certain area or region, reducing the risk of fund misappropriation or otherwise poor, non-participatory governance, and 2) they safeguard the prioritization of local adaptation needs, targeting the most vulnerable and at-risk populations to ensure that no one is left behind. The experience of using these tools provides a better understanding of the enabling environment and policies necessary for achieving resilient sustainable development at scale.

Open Government Partnership

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