

Resolution of the OGP Steering Committee regarding the status of the government of Azerbaijan in OGP, May 4th, 2016, Cape Town, South Africa

The Steering Committee recognizes and appreciates recent positive steps taken by the government of Azerbaijan, including the submission of a new National Action Plan. However, the core issues of concern raised in the original letter, validated by the Criteria and Standards subcommittee, remain unresolved, specifically regarding constraints in the operating environment of NGOs.

As a consequence, the OGP Steering Committee resolves that the government of Azerbaijan will be regrettably designated as “inactive”, under the terms of the Policy on Upholding the Values and Principles of OGP as articulated in the Open Government Declaration.* The Steering Committee further resolves to offer all necessary support to the government of Azerbaijan to address the concerns raised, and requests regular progress updates from the Criteria and Standards subcommittee.

** Under the Policy on Upholding the Values and Principles of OGP as articulated in the Open Government Declaration, the inactive status of an OGP participating country - if designated as such by the full Steering Committee - lasts until the concerns raised in the original complaint letter are resolved, up to a maximum of one year (note: this rule derives from the original Policy as well as the Steering Committee decision on inactivity agreed on April 23, 2015). To ascertain that steps were taken to remedy the situation that triggered the Policy, the government in question would have to undergo a new Criteria and Standards subcommittee review process. Specifically in this case, “the concerns raised in the original letter” are reflected in the areas highlighted in the subcommittee’s recommendations to the government, primarily to address the operating environment for civil society. These areas (summarized in the subcommittee’s February 2016 resolution) would need to be adequately addressed for the Criteria and Standards subcommittee to recommend to the Steering Committee that the government’s active status be restored.*

- *The government of Azerbaijan will have a period of one year to demonstrate that the original concerns have been addressed. This one-year remediation policy was agreed in the April 2015 Ministerial Level Steering Committee Meeting held in Mexico City.*
- *If at any point during that year the Criteria and Standards subcommittee determines that the original concerns have been addressed by the government of Azerbaijan, it shall recommend to the full Steering Committee that the country be placed back in active status immediately.*
- *While inactive, Azerbaijan will continue to receive Steering Committee and Support Unit assistance, including from OGP Working Groups and peer exchange visits.*
- *While inactive, the government of Azerbaijan will be able to submit a revised National Action Plan as evidence of progress made (should it so choose), and will be advised to develop new ambitious commitments (whether as part of a revised NAP or as standalone reforms) in order to address all the original Criteria and Standards subcommittee recommendations, particularly around the civil society operating environment.*
- *While inactive, no new recommendations or requirements for reactivation would be made to the government of Azerbaijan by the Criteria and Standards subcommittee or the Steering Committee regarding the addressed issues.*
- *While inactive, the Azerbaijan government will not be eligible to vote in Steering Committee elections, and can only attend OGP events as observers for learning purposes.*
- *While inactive, Azerbaijan’s inactivity will be noted on the OGP website and public information materials, where appropriate (e.g., in a list of participating OGP countries).*