

Parliamentary Engagement in OGP

Regional Focus: Africa and the Middle East

OVERVIEW

Since OGP launched, parliamentary engagement has been an integral part of the open government philosophy and a key element to achieve ambitious open government reforms. Parliamentary engagement in OGP ranges from parliaments actively participating in national multistakeholder fora and leading commitments in the national action plan to convening their own co-creation processes. Parliaments can implement open government reforms through their national or local OGP process, by submitting standalone Open Parliament Plans, or by promoting openness beyond the OGP platform.

Recommendations

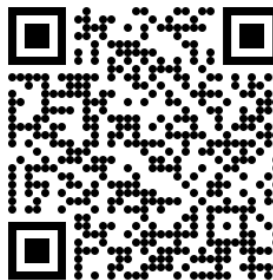
In the open government context, parliaments specifically have a role to play in:

- **Taking legislative action:** Championing open government values by introducing, reviewing and ratifying legislation relevant to open government or approving budgets for open government reform.
- **Ensuring parliamentary oversight:** Holding governments accountable for open government reforms and opening up their own oversight processes to public scrutiny.
- **Opening up parliamentary processes:** Adopting open government principles – transparency, accountability, participation and inclusion – in the parliamentary institution and processes.
- **Creating space for dialogue:** Fostering cross-party dialogue and support needed to advance and institutionalize open government reforms.

RESOURCES

In-depth information on parliamentary engagement in OGP can be found on the [Parliaments in OGP webpage](#), including:

- Guidance for OGP Parliamentary Action Plans (EN, FR)
- Parliamentary Engagement in National OGP Processes: Menu of Options (EN, FR)
- Parliamentary Engagement in Local OGP Processes: Menu of Options (EN)
- Parliaments in OGP – Recommendations (EN)
- Parliamentary Engagement in OGP: Learning from the Evidence (EN)



COMMITMENTS IN AFRICA AND THE MIDDLE EAST

Open Parliaments

Nearly half of OGP countries in the region (40%) with an active action plan are currently implementing an open parliament commitment, the highest rate since 2011. Six countries in Africa and the Middle East have made a total of 14 commitments related to open parliaments.¹

Legislation

Since 2011, 12 countries in Africa and the Middle East have made 61 commitments that involve drafting or passing legislation. However, parliaments have led implementation on few of these commitments.

OGP's **Open Parliaments fact sheet** contains information on open parliament commitments globally – including popular topics, commitment examples, and performance measures from the Independent Reporting Mechanism.



LESSONS FROM REFORMERS



Liberia

For many years, Liberia had no constitutional or other legally mandated land rights. However, in 2015, the government began passing new laws and collaborating with civil society to increase citizen access to commercial land use information. In 2018, Liberia passed the landmark Land Rights Act, working with the World Bank to post policies, laws, and government activities on land use online.



Morocco

In January 2020, the House of Representatives launched a new website that publishes bills and proposals that are subject to legislative procedures. The public can provide comments, which can then be compiled and presented to parliamentary groups and committees. In this way, the Parliament can be more responsive to citizen needs and feedback.



Sierra Leone

In its 2019-2021 action plan, Sierra Leone committed to opening Parliament by increasing access to information and strengthening mechanisms for civic participation, focusing on women and marginalized groups. For example, the commitment would create a standing platform for CSO-parliamentary engagement and make the physical parliamentary space more accessible for persons with disabilities.



South Africa

After the end of apartheid, the right to access information was embedded in the Constitution in 1994. In 2001, Parliament then passed the Promotion of Access to Information Act. The act established the constitutional right of access to any information necessary for the exercise or protection of rights. As a result, all legislation is publicly available through the Parliament's website.

¹ Countries with an open parliament commitment are Ghana, Kenya, Liberia, Morocco, Nigeria and Sierra Leone.

