

**MINUTES OF THE VIRTUAL OPEN GOVERNMENT PARTNERSHIP STEERING
COMMITTEE (OGP-SC) MEETING HELD ON MONDAY, 26th SEPTEMBER, 2022
AT THE CONFERENCE ROOM OF THE OFFICE OF THE SENIOR
PRESIDENTIAL ADVISOR AT 11:00 AM**

MEMBERS PRESENT

1. Hon. Yaw Osafo-Mafo	Senior Presidential Advisor (Chairman)
2. Hon. Emmanuel Bedzrah	Member of Parliament, Ho West Constituency
3. Hon. Ama Pomaa Boateng	Member of Parliament, Juaben Constituency
4. Mrs. Thelma Ohene-Asiamah	Director, F&A and OGP PoC, PSRS
5. Ms. Domtie Sarpong	Principal State Attorney, ORC
6. Ms. Mary A. Addah	Programmes Manager, GII
7. Mr. Mawuli Segbefia	Director, PPMED, Ministry of Information
8. Ms. Eunice Osae	Director, CMD, OHCS
9. Dr. Emmanuel Ayifah	SEND-Ghana
10. Mr Richard Ebo Amuah	Chief Budget Analyst, MoF
11. Mr Isaac Aidoo	OGP PoC, STMA
12. Dr. Eric Oduro Osae	Director General, Internal Audit Agency
13. Ms. Regina O. Amanfo	Senior Programmes Officer, CDD-Ghana
14. Ms. Esther Ahulu	Programmes Manager, CHRI/RTI Coalition
15. Mr. Kwabena Denkyira	Director, HRMD, MLGRD
16. Mr. Dennis Gyeyir	Africa Program Officer, NRG

ABSENT WITH APOLOGY

1. Mrs. Halima S. Yakubu	Chief Director, PSRS
2. Ms. Mina Mensah	Director, CHRI, Africa Office
3. Dr. Kwesi Jonah	Senior Research Fellow, IDEG
4. Ms. Kathy Addy	Deputy Chair, NCCE
5. Dr. Steve Manteaw	Co-Chair, GHEITI
6. Ms. Linda Ofori-Kwafo	Executive Director, GII
7. Ms. Nafi Chinery	West Africa Regional Manager, NRG
8. Charles Nana Antwi	Deputy Executive Secretary, EOCO

IN ATTENDANCE

1. Ms. Annette O. Boateng	Programmes Officer, PSRS
2. Mr. Ato K. Bessa-Simons	Assistant Programme Officer, PSRS
3. Nana Kwabena Nketia	IT/IM Officer, PSRS

NO.	SUBJECT	ACTION BY
1.0	<p>OPENING</p> <p>The meeting was called to order at 11:10 am with a prayer by Mrs. Thelma Ohene-Asiamah, Director F&A and OGP PoC, PSRS.</p> <p>The meeting was chaired by Hon. Yaw Osafo-Maafo, Senior Presidential Advisor and Chairman of the Open Government Partnership (OGP) National Steering Committee.</p>	
1.1	<p>OPENING REMARKS</p> <p>The Chairman, Hon. Yaw Osafo-Maafo welcomed all members to the virtual meeting and indicated that the purpose of the meeting was to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Present the revised Commitments in the 4th OGP NAP in accordance with the recommendations from the Action Plan Review Report by leaders and conveners of core groups working on commitments. • Inform Members about Ghana's participation in the 2022 OGP Africa and Middle East Regional Meeting • Update Members on The Conference on Beneficial Ownership Disclosure and discussion on way forward. 	
2.0	<p>CORRECTION AND ADOPTION OF PREVIOUS MINUTES</p> <p>The minutes of the previous meeting was read, and the following corrections were made:</p> <p>Page 4, first paragraph, last line, sentence “She added that Ghana had up to October to submit a revised 4th OGP NAP” was corrected to read “She added that Ghana had up to 4th October to submit a revised 4th OGP NAP”.</p> <p>In the absence of any further corrections, Ms. Mary A. Addah Programmes Manager, GII moved for the adoption of the minutes and was seconded by Dr. Eric Oduro Osae, Director General, Internal Audit Agency.</p>	
3.0	<p>MATTERS ARISING</p>	
3.1	<p>Presentation of revised Commitments in the 4th OGP NAP with recommendations from the Action Plan Review Report by leaders and conveners of core groups working on commitments.</p>	

<p>4.0</p> <p>4.1</p>	<p>The OGP Point of Contact, Mrs Thelma Ohene-Asiamah indicated that she completed the assigned task to consult other members and create groups around each commitment together with their conveners by Friday 30th June, 2022.</p> <p>She mentioned the Leaders and Conveners of the core groups as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ghana Integrity Initiative –Mrs. Linda Ofori-Kwafo • Ghana Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative- Dr. Steve Manteaw • SEND Ghana- Dr. Emmanuel Ayifah <p>MAIN BUSINESS</p> <p>Presentation of revised Commitments in the 4th OGP NAP in accordance with the recommendations from the Action Plan Review Report by leaders and Conveners of core groups working on commitments.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commitment 1: Public Accounts Committee and Audit Report <p>Ms. Mary Addah, the Programmes Manager of Ghana Integrity Initiative (GII) informed the committee that activities were not specific.</p> <p>According to her, Audit reports had consistently showed that Ghana was losing huge sums of money through corruption and weak financial management systems. This issue persisted as audit recommendations were largely not implemented.</p> <p>She further indicated that Government had to ensure effective implementation of recommendations of the Public Accounts Committee by Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDA's) as well as Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies (MMDA's), State Owned Enterprises (SoEs) and Independent Constitutional Bodies(ICBs).</p> <p>The Programmes Manager, GII, in her presentation stated that during implementation, Ghana would continually strengthen capacity building framework in various Internal Audit Agencies (IAA's).</p> <p>She indicated that the team put down some milestones to ensure effective implementation. The milestones were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Internal Audit Agency(IAA) should build capacity through trainings and support measures of at least 70% of Audit Committees of the various MDA's, SOE's and ICB's to implement the various recommendations in the Public Account Committee. 	
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The IAA and CSO's will be working on commitments and carry out one assessment with the various recommendations from PAC during the lifetime of the NAP to cover 30% of MDA's, MMDA's, SOE's and ICB's. • The Audit Committee will work with management to implement the OGP findings in specific trust areas identified by the Auditor General and from the various internal reports that comes in. Issues were cited around cash, contracts, procurement, outstanding loans, tax irregularities, paid and unretired imprest that are stated in the Auditor General's report. <p>• Commitment 3: Witness Protection Act According to her, in the 4th NAP the government will provide effective protection for persons who were exposed to danger for witnessing in criminal prosecutions and make these measures and mechanisms more accessible to all citizens.</p> <p>She further stated that, they should to advocate for the establishment of the Witness Protection Agency by the end of the current NAP which is 2023.</p> <p>In her presentation, she said there would be the need for nationwide education and awareness creation to promote the establishment of the Witness Protection Act and its utilization through the media. Another milestone was they will commit to the agency with logistical support through annual budget of the office of the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice.</p> <p>• Commitment 4: Asset Declaration by Public Officers According to Ms. Mary Addah, the Government commits to the passage of the Conduct of Public Officers Bill that provides for a transparent and verifiable asset declaration regime.</p> <p>She indicated in her presentation that the Committee wanted to make it open and therefore suggested the following milestones;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government to approve the appointment of new officer's role engagement on the new draft bill by the end of 2022. • A bill has been submitted to Government for consideration and hopes that by the end of 2022, it will be sent to parliament so that the process can be completed. • Parliament should create platforms for stakeholders including private sectors, civil societies and citizens to make submissions to ensure a strong regime when passed by 2024. • The need for intensive media campaign to sensitize and educate citizens on the relevance of the Asset Declaration regime that provides for verification and how they can make complains critical. 	
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CHRAJ and OSP to promote mechanisms for citizens to bring their complaints. • Also Parliament to pass the bill by 2024. <p>The Chairman commented that Asset Declaration was a complicated issue and that the Committee needed to distinguish between assets which belongs to individuals and assets which were inherited by individuals.</p> <p>The Programmes Manager, GII reiterated that Act 550 clearly spelt out what an individual was supposed to declare and who was supposed to declare.</p> <p>Mrs. Thelma Ohene-Asiamah, OGP PoC however indicated that the timeframe for Milestone 3 and 6 of the Public Officials' Asset Declaration went beyond the lifespan of the 4th NAP which was problematic.</p> <p>The Programmes Manager responded that the Committee could go by 2023 with the hope that the Bill would be passed.</p> <p>Hon. Emmanuel Bedzrah, Member of Parliament for Ho West Constituency brought to the attention of the meeting that the African Parliament against Corruption was trying to come out with a Private Members Bill to make Asset Declaration clearer.</p> <p>He further stated that they would like to collaborate with other members to come out with the Bill.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commitment 6: Citizens' Complaint Center <p>The OGP Point of Contact stated that when the 4th NAP was submitted and during the sensitisation of the 4th NAP, she visited Ministry of Information together with Dr. Steve Manteaw and it was brought to their notice that the Citizens' Complaint Center was not being implemented by the Ministry.</p> <p>A decision was therefore taken at a Steering Committee meeting to investigate who actually was in charge of the Citizens' Complaint Center. From various checks, it was realised that it was an institution that was set up by the former government under the Office of the President. The team checked and that institution was non-existent.</p> <p>At a Steering Committee Meeting, a decision was taken that the Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice (CHRAJ) would be responsible for this commitment because they were mandated to deal with such complaints.</p>	
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<p>5.0</p>	<p>The OGP Point of Contact, Mrs. Thelma Ohene-Asiamah and Dr. Steve Manteaw Co-Chair, GHEITI visited CHRAJ and met the Commissioner and his team. They accepted that since CHRAJ was the Ombudsman appointed to do that, they were ready to implement it.</p> <p>According to the Point of Contact, CHRAJ is also on the Public Sector Reform for Results Project (PSRRP) which is a project under the Office of the Senior Presidential Advisor/ Public Sector Reform Secretariat. It was then concluded that the team would put what they were implementing on the PSRRP as a commitment in the OGP NAP.</p> <p>She further stated that the Commitment was to commit to strengthen CHRAJ to discharge its administrative justice delivery mandate in accordance with law and internationally recognized obligations, principles and commitments by reviewing the grievance redress and complaint handling policies, procedures and actual practices of CHRAJ by June 2023.</p> <p>She reiterated that it would go beyond June 2023 but because the 4th NAP terminates in 2023, there was the need to put it there so that by June 2023, the team would report what CHRAJ had done.</p> <p>Participation of Ghana in the 2022 OGP Africa and the Middle East Regional Meeting.</p> <p>The OGP Point of Contact informed members that the Chairman had been invited to participate in the 2022 OGP Africa and the Middle East Regional Meeting to be held in Marrakech, Morocco from 1st November to 3rd November, 2022.</p> <p>The OGP Point of Contact also informed the meeting that she had also been selected as part of some twenty-five (25) people within the Africa and the Middle East Region to partake in an Open Government Leadership Collaborative (OGLC) which would be launched on 31st October, 2022 in Marrakech, Morocco.</p> <p>She again indicated that a CSO representative and the Point of Contact for OGP Local at Secondi Takoradi Municipal Assembly on the Steering Committee would also be participating in the Open Government Leadership Collaborative.</p> <p>As part of the agenda, there would be a Ministerial Meeting Conversation on; how to Strengthen and deepen the OGP movement and reforms in Ghana. She called on members to suggest some of the solutions.</p>	
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6.0	<p>Mr. Mawuli Segbefia Director, PPMED, Ministry of Information suggested that there was the need for a dedicated funding for implementing OGP Action Plans since delays could occur if funds for implementation was solely coming from MDA's.</p> <p>The Programmes Manager, GII suggested that there should also be increase in awareness on the OGP subject matter.</p> <p>Ms. Esther Ahulu, Programmes Manager, CHRI/RTI Coalition suggested working groups should be formed around the NAPs so that periodically, reports could be sent to the Steering Committee Members.</p> <p>The OGP Point of Contact asked members for some spotlight commitments and best practices that had come out from the implementation of OGP in Ghana;</p> <p>Members mentioned some of the best practices as follows: Through OGP,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Push for the passage of the RTI Act • Recruitment of 250 RTI Officers by the Office of the Head of Civil Service • Setting up of the RTI Commission • Ghana Open Data Initiative that led to Ghana placing 3rd at the 2021 OGP Impact Awards • Open Parliament • Achievements in Beneficial Ownership Disclosure implementation • Creation of the Office of the Special Prosecutor • Vibrant Steering Committee made up of Government Representatives and Civil Society Organisations. • Government had procured a software that would enable the Ministry of Information (MoI) manage data and also assist in assessing information remotely. <p>Update on Conference on Beneficial Ownership Disclosure and discussion on way forward</p> <p>Regarding the Conference on Beneficial Ownership Disclosure, the OGP Point of Contact informed members that it was successfully organized on 27th July, 2022 at Labadi Beach Hotel.</p> <p>She indicated that a Planning Committee was set up and they delivered their mandate excellently.</p> <p>She further stated that there was the need to put together a Committee within the Steering Committee to work on the issues and recommendations that came out of the Conference.</p>	
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<p>7.0</p> <p>7.1</p> <p>8.0</p>	<p>The Chairman suggested that the committee should consist of a minimum of five (5) people and mentioned the following as members.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dr. Steve Manteaw, GHEITI • Ms. Dometie Sarpong, ORC • Mrs. Mary A. Addah, GII • Dr. Eric Osae, IAA • Ms. Nafi Chinery, NRG • Ms. Regina Amanfo, CDD • Mrs. Thelma Ohene-Asiamah as the Convener <p>ANY OTHER MATTERS</p> <p>Stakeholder Engagement On Implementation of the Open Government Partnership (OGP) 4th National Action Plan</p> <p>The OGP Point of Contact informed members that there would be a sensitisation workshop on 19th October, 2022 at the Tomreik Hotel. She mentioned that the Natural Resource Governance Institute was collaborating with the OGP Secretariat to organise the workshop.</p> <p>CLOSING</p> <p>The Chairman thanked all members for honoring the invitation to the meeting and for their active participation.</p> <p>In the absence of any further deliberations, the meeting came to a close at 1:06pm with a closing prayer by Ms Esther Ahulu Programmes Manager, CHRI/ RTI Coalition.</p> <p>.....</p> <p>Hon. Yaw Osafo-Mafo Senior Presidential Advisor (Chairman)</p> <p>.....</p> <p>Thelma Ohene-Asiamah (Mrs.) (Secretary)</p>	
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