**STATKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT ON IMPLEMENTATION OF OPEN GOVERNMENT PARTNERSHIP (OGP) COMMITMENTS IN THE FOURTH NATIONAL ACTION PLAN (NAP-4)**

**REPORT**

**VENUE: TOMREIK HOTEL**

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# **BACKGROUND**

The Open Government Partnership (OGP) as a global initiative was founded in September 2011 and brings together national leaders and civil society advocates with a shared goal of promoting transparency, empowering citizens, fighting corruption, and encouraging the use of new technologies (digitalisation) to improve governance and service delivery. Through the OGP process, members address issues that need reform to make a positive impact in their nations and communities.

Action plans are at the core of participation in OGP. They are the product of an open co-creation process in which government and civil society work together to create ambitious reforms. Every two years, each member submits an action plan co-created with civil society that outlines concrete commitments to enhance transparency, accountability and public participation in government. Current issues being addressed in OGP at the global level include access to justice, gender and inclusion, digital governance, public service delivery, right to information, protection of civic space and natural resources, and anti-corruption and integrity.

Ghana signed up to the OGP from inception and since then, has developed and implemented its OGP National Action Plans (NAP) in 2012, 2015 and 2017with a fourth action plan currently in the implementation phase. Previous plans have been consistently implemented with modest success in the attainment of commitments due to broad framing of some commitments which hinders implementation, lack of integration of commitments into priority plans and strategies of the government and civil society advocacy, and overloading of commitments which reduces the effectiveness of implementation efforts.

Lessons from the implementation process have fed into the development of Ghana’s fourth action plan which was completed in October 2021 and spans the period 2021-2023. This Fourth National Action Plan (NAP-4) contains 14 commitments, many of which are reforms continued over successive action plans. Some of these commitments include access to information, beneficial ownership transparency, open data, and transparency in the extractive sector.

Several activities have been undertaken in fulfilment of commitments in NAP-4. In July 2022 for instance, after years of Beneficial Ownership (BO) implementation efforts, a one-day Multi-Stakeholder Forum on Beneficial Ownership Disclosure themed “*taking stock of progress made and challenges to government’s efforts at reducing corruption and improving domestic revenue mobilisation*” was organised to assess the nature and extent of challenges and progress made thus far under the OGP commitment to BO.

Despite, the modest progress, significant challenges remain. To address gaps in previous plans and improve implementation of commitments in NAP-4, an elaborate list of activities was outlined under each commitment. The implementation plan clearly identifies each commitment, problem to be addressed, the relevance of commitment to OGP values, start and end dates, lead implementing agency including a focal person and contacts, supporting state and civil society actors among others. Regardless of the level of detail of this implementation plan, the progress of implementation appears to be slow. Implementing MDAs and collaborating institutions often know next to nothing about the Open Government Partnership and the OGP National Action Plans. Commitments are often not budgeted for, thus affecting smooth implementation.

It is on this basis that the OGP Secretariat under the Office of the Senior Presidential Advisor (also Chairman of the OGP Steering Committee) with support from the Natural Resource Governance Institute (NRGI) brought together stakeholders to sensitize them on the various commitments, implementation roadmap in the NAP-4 and agree on steps to accelerate implementation. Stakeholders will also be sensitized later on a monitoring framework developed to track implementation process.

The engagement took place on Wednesday 19th October 2022 at the Tomreik Hotel. The meeting brought together representatives from public institutions, academia, civil society organization and the media. The meeting was graced with the presence of Hon. Yaw Osafo Maafo, A Senior Presidential Advisor and Chairperson of OGP, who delivered the keynote address.

The meeting started with an opening prayer, a welcome remark by Mrs Thelma Ohene-Asiamah, OGP point of contact for Ghana, an address from Ms. Nafi Chinery, West Africa Regional Manager, NRGI & OGP Steering Committee Member; the Executive Director of Ghana Integrity Initiative (GII), Mrs. Linda Ofori-Kwafo; the Chairperson of OGP Steering Committee and a Senior Presidential Advisor, Mr. Yaw Osafo-Maafo; an overview of OGP was presented by Mrs Thelma Ohene-Asiamah, a presentation by Dr. Steve Manteaw, Co-Chair, Ghana Extractive Industry Transparency Initiative (GHEITI) and a Monitoring & Evaluation Consultant, Mr. Kwasi Agyei Boateng. This was followed by a breakout session based on the four thematic areas of OGP: Accountability, Transparency, Innovation and Technology and Citizen’s Participation. These discussions were facilitated by Mrs. Mary Awelana Addah and Mr Denis Gyeyir, for Transparency Group; Dr. Steve Manteaw for Accountability Group; Mr. Musah Issah for Innovation and Technology Group and Mr. Patrick Stephenson for the Citizen’s Participation Group.

# **WELCOME REMARKS-****MRS THELMA OHENE-ASIAMAH, DIRECTOR, F&A, PSRS & OGP POINT OF CONTACT**

The welcome address was delivered by Mrs Thelma Ohene-Asiamah, Director, F&A, PSRS & OGP point of Contact, Ghana. She welcomed stakeholders and expressed her appreciation to them for their participation and support. She indicated that the broad objective of the engagement was to create awareness of the various commitments, develop an implementation roadmap in the NAP-4 and agree on steps to accelerate implementation.

Mrs. Ohene-Asiamah explained that the journey towards the preparation of the 4th Action Plan was not an easy one especially in view of the Covid-19 restrictive protocols and containment measures. However, regardless of the restrictions, the process moved forward. She, therefore, urged participants to take particular interest in the presentations and discussions and bring their experiences to bear to make the engagement a success.

# **BRIEF REMARKS** **BY MS. NAFI CHINERY, WEST AFRICA REGIONAL MANAGER, NRGI&OGP STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBER**

Mr. Denis Gyeyir, the Africa Program Officer at Natural Resource Governance Institute (NRGI) delivered a brief remark on behalf of Ms. Nafi Chinery, the West Africa Regional Manager, NRGI & OGP Steering Committee Member. In his address, he also welcomed participants to the meeting and expressed his appreciation to the OGP secretariat for bringing together the diverse stakeholders. Mr. Gyeyir indicated that the engagement was necessary given that the timelines set for the implementation of the NAP4 action plan were halfway gone. As such, there is a sense of urgency in working to achieve these commitments. He stated that his organisation had been part of a number of activities since the beginning of NAP4 including a series of engagements with stakeholders such as the latest conference on beneficial ownership. He, therefore, urged participants to take note of actions and responsibilities that have been listed in the commitment and assigned to their institution so that they can facilitate their implementation immediately after the meeting.

# **BRIEF REMARKS BY MRS. LINDA OFORI-KWAFO, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, GII & CO-CHAIR, OGP STEERING COMMITTEE**

Mrs Mary Addah, the Programmes Manager at Ghana Integrity Initiative (GII) also delivered an address on behalf of Mrs. Linda Ofori-Kwafo, the Executive Director of GII and member of OGP board. Mrs. Addah stated that Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) have spearheaded the OGP process since its inception. She explained that over the past decades, organisations such as the commonwealth secretariat and the GII have worked towards the progress of open government process. She also took the opportunity to acknowledge the hard work of the former co-chair Dr. Steve Mantew for his commitment and good job in pushing the OGP process.

Mrs Addah further stated that for OGP to work well, there is a need for all stakeholders to play a critical role. She explained that the commitments in the action plan require follow-up by both the collaborating and the implementing institutions. She ended her address by indicating that the monitoring division will teach stakeholders how to document their achievements regarding the commitments in NAP-4 and in monitoring them.

# **BRIEF STATEMENT-HON YAW OSAFO-MAAFO, SENIOR PRESIDENTIAL ADVISOR, CHAIRMAN OGP STEERING COMMITTEE**

The keynote address for the meeting was delivered by the Senior Presidential Advisor and Chairman, OGP Steering Committee, Mr. Yaw Osafo-Maafo. He expressed his appreciation to the participants for honouring the invitation to be part of the meeting. He further stated that the OGP is a global initiative that brings government leaders and civil society advocates together for the purpose of promoting transparency, empowering citizens, fighting corruption and encouraging the use of new technologies to improve governance.

He indicated that, in fulfilment of its requirements for member countries to co-create Action Plans every two years, Ghana has developed and implemented its OGP National Action Plans (NAP) in 2012, 2015 and 2017 with a fourth Action plan currently in the implementation phase. Hon. Osafo-Maafo explained that as the spirit of co-creation demands, Government and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) came together to identify, discuss and validate key priority commitments for the 4th National Action Plan (NAP) which was submitted in October 2021 spanning the period 2021-2023. He stated that some of the highlighted commitments are the Right to Information, Beneficial Ownership Disclosure, Open Parliament and the Ghana Open Data Initiative.

He however noted that, previous plans have been consistently implemented with modest success in the attainment of commitments due to the broad framing of some commitments which hinders implementation, lack of integration of commitments into priority plans and strategies of the government and civil society advocacy, and overloading of commitments which reduces the effectiveness of implementation efforts. In addition, Hon. Osafo-Maafo explained that implementing Ministries, Departments Agencies (MDAs) and collaborating institutions often know nothing about the Open Government Partnership and the National Action Plans as well as and commitments are budgeted for, thus affecting smooth implementation.

Despite these challenges, he stated that the OGP initiative had demonstrated Ghana's desire to further expand and deepen the scope of open and accountable governance through the implementation of these Action Plans. As such, the numerous policy and legislative reforms spurred by the Initiative to combat corruption and improve accountability and transparency attest to this.

Key among them include the enactment of the Office of the Special Prosecutor Act, 2017 (Act 959), the enactment of the Fiscal Responsibility Act, 2018 (Act 982), the enactment in 2019 of Companies Act, 2019 (Act 992), the enactment of the Right to Information Act, 2019 (Act 989), the enactment of the State Interests and the implementation of the Ghana Open Data Policy which has led to increased access of government data for various data needs.

He further noted that since the submission of the 4th National Action Plan in 2021, there had been an effort to sensitize stakeholders particularly implementing MDAs on their commitments and roles at their locations to surmount some of the challenges in the implementation of National Action Plans. Hon. Osafo-Maafo explained that there was therefore the need to meet key stakeholders in the implementation of the 4th Action Plan to sensitize them on the various commitments, and its implementation roadmap in the NAP-4, agree on steps to accelerate implementation and inform them about a monitoring framework developed to track implementation. He stated that it is refreshing that the Natural Resource Governance Institute (NRGI), a CSO representative on the OGP National Steering Committee is collaborating with the OGP Secretariat to organise such an engagement.

He outlined the objectives of the consultative process as follows:

1. Sensitize Implementing Ministries, Departments, Agencies (MDAs) and collaborating institutions on the Open Government Partnership.
2. Review commitments and implementation roadmap in the 4th National Action Plan as well as agree on modalities for accelerating the implementation of outstanding commitments.
3. Review and agree on a Monitoring Framework to track the implementation of commitments NAP-4.
4. Facilitate collaboration among state and non-state actors towards the implementation of commitments

He also noted that at the end of the discussions, it is expected that:

1. Implementing MDAs would be sensitized on the OGP to secure their buy-in.
2. Implementing MDAs and collaborating state and non-state actors would be apprised of their roles and responsibilities as contained in the NAP-4 including agreements on steps to fast-track implementation.
3. A clear modality/framework to hold each other accountable for the implementation of the NAP-4 would be developed

He concluded his address by pledging the government’s commitment to supporting the activities of OGP in order to achieve better governance for all citizens.

# **OVERVIEW OF OPEN GOVERNMENT PARTNERSHIP-** **MRS THELMA** **OHENE-ASIAMAH, DIRECTOR, F&A, PSRS & OGP POINT OF CONTACT**

The presentation on the overview of the state of implementation of OGP was delivered by Mrs Thelma Ohene-Asiamah, Director, F&A, PSRS & OGP point of Contact. In her presentation, Mrs Ohene-Asiamah stated that Ghana signed onto the OGP at its formal launch in Washington DC, in September 2011 demonstrating the country’s desire to expand and deepen the scope of open and accountable governance. She explained that since then, OGP members have grown from 8 to 78 national level membership, and 106 local authorities with 6 from Ghana.

She clarified that the OGP is a multi-stakeholder initiative that requires state-civil society collaboration and governed by a steering committee comprising of representatives in government and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) both at the global and national levels. In the case of Ghana, Mrs Ohene-Asiamah explained it is governed by a 20-member Steering Committee (SC) with membership drawn from relevant Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) and CSOs which was established in August 2012, currently chaired by the Senior Presidential Advisor, and co-chaired by a CSO representative, GII. She noted that the multi-stakeholder SC has responsibility for the development of the national action plan, which captures the country’s OGP commitments and these action plans are required to be co-created, with a shared responsibility for their implementation. She further explained that the OGP is designed to provide a platform for domestic reformers who are committed to making their government more open, accountable and responsive to citizens and not intended to reinvent the wheel or compel governments to implement unrealistic reforms.

She listed the terms of reference for OGP Steering Committee as follows:

1. To ensure that the core ideas, policies and rules of partnership between Gov’t and Civil Society, as established by the OGP are upheld;
2. To set the agenda and direction for OGP in Ghana;
3. To educate and create awareness on OGP by conducting regular outreach programmes with both Gov’t and CSOs;
4. To identify the grand challenges that Ghana needs to address with regards to open government, and to identify the responsible institution;
5. To facilitate the preparation of National Action Plans in collaboration with these agencies by providing technical support and coordination, including specific commitments that Gov’t plans to undertake, and an implementation strategy;
6. Develop an M&E framework for the implementation of the National Action Plans;
7. Report to the Annual Conference of OGP on planned activities and expected outputs of the Annual Action Plan for each year and achievements to date; and
8. Set and secure the OGP budget

She indicated that since the inception of the initiative, Ghana had produced 4 National Action Plans (NAP) and with the 4th NAP prepared and adopted in 2021 and its commitments expected to be accomplished in 2023. Mrs. Ohene-Asiamah explained that the commitments are organized around the 4 pillars of the OGP i.e. Transparency, Accountability, Citizens Participation, and Technological innovation to bring governance to the doorstep of the citizenry, and an additional commitment on Parliamentary Participation in the OGP. She also informed stakeholders about the effort at implementation which included bilateral meetings with implementing agencies. She concluded her presentation by stating that the OGP initiative affords Ghana the opportunity to stay the course of governance reforms, deepen its fledgling democratic culture, document achievements and share experiences with the international community.

# **PRESENTATION ON COMMITMENTS IN OGP NAP-4 AND ROLES OF STATE AND NON-STATE ACTORS.** **DR.** **STEVE MANTEAW, CO-CHAIR, GHEITI**

Dr. Steve Manteaw, Co-Chair, GHEITI presented on the commitments in NAP-4 and roles of state and non-state actors in its implementation. He started his presentation by stating that the various commitment under the NAP-4 are not new commitments but rather based on ongoing institutional and governance reforms. He explained that the commitments are based on promises that the incumbent government has made in party manifestos, national budgets that guided the drafting of NAP4.

Dr. Manteaw indicated that the OGP secretariat and the steering committee engaged some of the stakeholders and implementing agencies like the attorney general, during the 4th quarter of 2021 and 1st quarter of 2022. He clarified that the intention of the engagement was to get these implementing agencies to include their various commitment in their budget. He however, noted that since most of the engagement took place during 4th quarter of 2021 and 1st quarter of 2022, the feedback was that the OGP missed the last budget commitment and therefore must be added to the next budget.

Dr Manteaw stated that the commitments are organised around the 4 pillars of OGP comprising transparency, accountability, citizen participation and innovation and technology. Under the transparency track, he detailed the commitments as follows: establishing citizens complain centre; open and transparent tracking of public investment; restoring the fiscal responsibility rule; ensuring ownership transparency in Ghana’s extractive industry and ensuring transparency in petroleum sales.

Under the accountability track, commitment boarders on issues such as: ensuring effective of parliamentary oversight over public financial resources; anti-money laundering and counter terrorism financing (AML/CTF); passage of the Witness protection; strengthening asset declaration regime by public officers and resourcing the office of the special prosecutor. Dr Manteaw further explained that gender and social inclusion is the only commitment made under citizen participation track whilst implementation of the open data initiative remains the main commitment under the innovation and technology. He concluded that parliamentary involvement in OGP process was also a commitment that was made in the NAP-4 ensure open parliament in Ghana.

In responding to the presentation on the commitments under the NAP-4 as presented by Dr. Manteaw, Hon. Osafo Marfo stated that the government instructed the office of the chief of staff to collect the receipts from the declaration of assets which all ministers except two deputy ministers had complied. He, however, noted that if asset declarations are not publicized then it defeats their purpose. Hon. Osafo Marfo explained that the current asset declaration regime was made confidential during the consultative assembly due to concerns raised by people based on the inheritance system in Ghana. It is therefore important for CSOs and NGOs to push for transparency in asset declaration.

A participant also underscored the need to promote open parliament so that the public is given access to parliamentary committee meetings and documents. In responding to the issue of open parliament, Hon. Osafo Marfo in as much as there is the need to promote transparency and open parliament, it is not every document that parliament works on that can be made public due to national security consideration

# **PRESENTATION OF MONITORING FRAMEWORKS-** **MR. KWASI AGYEI BOATENG. MONITORING AND EVALUATION CONSULTANT, M&E SECRETARIAT**

Mr. Kwasi Agyei Boateng. Monitoring and Evaluation Consultant, M&E Secretariat delivered a presentation on OGP monitoring frameworks. In his presentation, he indicated that the monitoring framework is a tabular representation of the various commitments in the NAP-4. He stated that the framework was developed in line with the thematic areas of the commitments with indicators that allows measuring the progress of each commitment. He explained that under each commitment, there is an indicator that can be used to track progress and the baseline which captures the status of implementation as well as the target which measures the expected goal or achievement of that indicator. Mr Boateng further explained that the framework also lists the institutions responsible and the source of data as well. He indicated that since he didn’t know the status or the baseline figures, it will be difficult to do a proper assessment. As such it will be the responsibility of implementing institutions and agencies to populate the template on the progress of each commitment.

Mr. Boateng clarified that there is another template for the thematic areas which captures the specific commitments, the outcomes and output, the indicators and the status of implementation as of the end of 2021. He, therefore, urged participants to help review the frameworks in order to have a realistic template that they work. He further tasked participants to give the status of implementation on the commitments by the end of 2021 so that they can be populated.

In response to the presentation, Dr. Steve Manteaw, Co-Chair, GHEITI-Accountability suggested that the draft M&E framework should be discussed at the steering committee meeting for further review which was accepted by the meeting. It was also suggested that every thematic area must have a focal person and implementing agencies and institutions should be given timelines for reporting.

# **BREAKOUT SESSIONS**

After the presentation by the M&E consultant, the meeting was divided into four (4) groups based on the four thematic areas of OPG for discussions on the presentation. The facilitators for the thematic areas led the discussions in the various groups. The facilitators include Mr. Denis Gyeyir for Transparency Group; Dr. Steve Mathew for Accountability Group; Mr Musah Issah for Innovation and Technology Group and Mr. Patrick Stephenson for the Citizen’s Participation Group.

# **PRESENTATION OF ISSUES FROM THE BREAKOUT SESSION**

The following are the issues discussed and presented by the four groups.

## **Accountability**

The accountability group discussed the commitments in the NAP4 listed under their group. On implementation of Auditor General’s and PAC report, it was clarified that it is not the responsibility of the Internal Audit Agency (IAA) to implement recommendations/findings but rather to pursue management to implement such findings through establishment of audit committees. In that regard, it was suggested that the IAA should provide data on committees established so far and those that are yet to be established. It must also provide report on implementation including the number of reports received and those that are yet to be established. The group further recommended that there should be internal audit units in all government institutions to prevent misappropriation of funds and where audit committees are not performing, they should be dissolved. As such the IAA was tasked to provide update on the number of audit committees that have been dissolved till date. It was also noted that some cases of the Auditor General and PAC report are referred to the EOCO for further investigation.

On the witness protection, the group stated that the only challenge comes from prosecution where the witness has to give evidence in open court. It was however noted that some Judges have agreed to hold in camera hearing to protect witnesses. The witness protection agency was tasked to provide feedback on recent activities concerning witness protection. Due to the absence of representative from the attorney general’s department, there was no feedback provided on the asset declaration bill. Concerning the office of the special prosecutor, it was reported that recruitment of staffs is ongoing and the office is working independently. However, the main challenge confronting the office is inadequate resources especially in the area of budgetary allocation.

Finally, on the implementation of the anti-money laundering act 2020, it was reported that the office of the registrar of companies (ORC) and FIC have been able to put together measures to collect beneficial ownership information which is also accessible by all. Also, the Non-Profit Organization (NPOs) secretariat has been established to supervise the activities of NPO’s in Ghana. These measures are to ensure that Ghana is not blacklisted again.

The group proposed the following additional measures to facilitate the implementation of the commitments:

I. The establishment of the regulator’s forum

II. The establishment of the law enforcement agencies plus banking community forum.

III. Capacity building for LEAs, regulators among others

IV. Passage of the real estate agency act 2020 (1047)

Dr. Steve Mantew clarified that the beneficial ownership register is accessible to competent authorities. He further stated that there are also discussions with Office of the Registrar of Companies to make it available to CSOs that need the information for work. He also stated that the Office of the Registrar of Companies is working on a protocol that will make information available for them.

## **Transparency**

The transparency group also discussed commitments that were listed under them. The group identified that the inability of people CSOs to freely access the beneficial ownership register is a challenge. It also stated that the online platform for the beneficial ownership register is not user-friendly hence majority of the people are not able to access information on the platform.

Concerning the Fiscal Responsibility Regime, the group listed as challenges the lack of public awareness and understanding of the fiscal responsibility regime as well as lack of information about government steps to restore compliance with achieving acceptable fiscal deficits. The group proposed the following step to accelerate the restoration of the fiscal responsibility regime: embarking on public education on the Act; provision of regular should provide regular updates on steps to restore compliance with the fiscal deficit role in the Act by the government as well as the reduction of the fiscal deficit from 9.6% of GDP in 2021 to 7.4% in 2022, 5.5% in 2023, 4.5% in 2024 and 4.2% in 2025

The challenges identified under the right to information include budgetary constraints, lack of ownership of the law by the supply side, lack of Legislative Instrument (LI) to support the implementation of the Act and lack of capacity by institutions to implement the law. Regarding the steps to accelerate implementation, the group proposed that RTI Commission should start with a desk officer at the regional/district offices of the Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice (CHRAJ). It also stated that the Public Services Commission, Head of Civil Service and local government should come together with a plan towards adherence to provisions in the Act by their staff. In addition, there should be public sensitization on the Act and a passage of an LI to support the Act

The group also discussed that records management is key to transparency and therefore there is a need for government to improve the capacity of the Public Records and Archives Administration Department (PRAAD) to be able to carry out its mandate effectively. Challenges with PRAAD include logistical constraints, financial constraints, and lack of Legislative Instrument (LI) to back the implementation of the PRAAD Act and this limit PRAAD’s ability to enforce the provisions in the Act.

## **Citizens Participation**

The group discussed the inclusion of women and people living with disabilities (PLWDs) in the political process and concluded that inclusion and PLWDs should be holistic at all levels of governance and society. To achieve this, it was suggested that there should be sensitization and education of the public, particularly in rural areas. However, the group recognized that there might be a possible challenge of stigmatization of PLWDs due to cultural orientation.

Regarding the election of MMDCEs, it was stated that the main issue had to do with whether political parties should be allowed to participate in local governance and elections. However, it was mentioned that research has shown that most Ghanaians are not in support of political parties participating in local government and there is no political consensus on it. As a result, it was suggested that government should engage the NDC to reach a consensus on the appropriate reforms.

On the Affirmative Action Bill (AAB), the group identified no pending challenge and was hopeful that the bill would be passed as soon as parliament reconvened back from recess. It was also suggested that political parties should review their party constitutions and electoral rules to reserve seats in their strongholds for women aspirants. However, it was indicated that this may be met with resistance from party leadership and members and therefore there is a need to engage with the leadership of political parties to discuss it with them.

Regarding the inclusion of PLWDs, the group noted it is not on the order paper of parliament and therefore the deadline that has been given in the NAP4 for its implementation may not be feasible. As such, it was suggested that the process needs to be fast-tracked to ensure its implementation. On decentralizing the national council for PLWDs, the group questioned why the NAP4 limited the decentralization to only eight regions. It was also suggested that the department of social welfare can used instead of creating new structures in the regions.

In addition, it was recommended that there is the need to resource the offices in the regions when established and build the capacity of staff to educate the community on PLWDs issues in order to change the narrative in society. The group further identified the absence of a comprehensive database on specific disabilities in Ghana as a challenge. To address this, it was proposed that the NIA should make provisions for disability data which will be shared with the council on disability.

Additional collaborating agencies that were identified by the group include the National House of Chiefs, the Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative, Parliament political parties, multilateral agencies such as UNICEF, and other related agencies. On ways in which collaborating institutions could work together, the group suggested the following:

1. Sharing of information to ensure they are all on the same page.
2. Establishment of internal monitoring and evaluation to assess and track progress
3. Convening periodic meetings between stakeholders to serve as medium.

## **Technology and Innovation**

The Innovation and Technology group identified the following challenges: absence of appropriate technological infrastructure, inadequate focal persons, retention of trained staff, budget constraints, regulatory governance challenges, lack of data integration and harmonization and inadequate training of focal persons. To address these issues, the group recommended setting up the appropriate technical infrastructure and training of focal persons.

It was also suggested exploring other means of funding such as getting development partners who are interested in funding technological activities rather than sole reliance on the government. In addition, it was proposed that there is a need to get a standard format for data collection and storage by all institutions to ensure data harmonization and integration. Moreover, the group mentioned the need to amend regulatory governance to facilitate the smooth implementation of commitments.

The group further suggested that the Ministry of Communication and Digitization (MCD) should work keenly with the national identification authority to ensure data integration from all the institutions. This collaboration should also focus on how to effectively train staff to run the data system. Again, the Ministry must work with all institutions to frequently update their data and upload current data in a timely manner. In terms of timelines, the group stated that the training of focal persons should take place by December 2022 whilst the remaining commitments are expected to be implemented between November 2022 to June 2023. The group also proposed monthly briefing meetings to discuss matters arising and the lessons learnt.

Dr Abdul Garmin stated that the discussion on technology should be about how to improve service delivery, reduce cost and time without compromising the quality of the data. He explained that proper and common identity enhances transparency and accountability. As such the NIA is in the process of building comprehensive database as it has register over 90% of Ghanaians 15 years and above. He further noted that the NIA is embarking on data harmonisation between state agencies such as SSNIT, NHIA so that there is no more issue with identity card. In this case, the personal identification number will become the SSNIT, NHIA and tax identification number as well. Therefore, at any point of service delivery, the Ghana card will be required in order to ensure transparency and prevent fraud. He also stated that Ghana is in the process of achieving comprehensive open data before the end of the SDGs.

It was suggested that there are institutions that are ready to support technological issues and therefore they should be contacted to assist. It was recommended that in the process of building infrastructure for database, the leapfrogging should be built using local base resources. It was stated that the interoperability framework helps to store data and therefore participants were urged to work together with the relevant institutions for data protection. Particularly, it was suggested participants were encouraged to work with the NIA to help secure and authenticate the data. A representative from the NIA encouraged participants to acquire the Ghana card as it a mandatory card for acquiring important documents and transacting businesses. These include acquiring passport, voter IDs and driver’s license, opening bank accounts, purchasing of land, payment of taxes, registration of sim card among others.

The Senior Presidential Advisor also stated that technology and innovation facilitate information delivery in a timely manner and therefore people who have been trained should be allowed to operate in their field. He cited the case of a court judgement where two people who were trained in a particular field were transferred to other places where their skills will not be utilised. However, court direct them to be transferred back to the place where their skills will be used efficiently. As such he recommended that institution should make people work where they will be most efficient.

# **CLOSING REMARKS**

The closing remarks was delivered by the Senior Presidential Advisor, Hon. Yaw Osafo Marfo. In his remarks, he stated that a lot of interesting presentation has been made and suggested that the various papers should be arranged and be made available to all the institutions so that they continue with the discussion among themselves.

Because those in the room have are public servant that provide services. Therefore, it is important to look at how these services are finances and provided to the public. As institutions we must explore other sources of funding to support our work. Thank you very much for this and we will meet again to ensure that open governance is improved upon and transparency and accountability is brought to its logical conclusion.

# **APPENDIX 1: UPDATE FROM SIGA**

* 1. SIGA’s COMMITMENTS

The government commits that:

1. SIGA will publish, beginning December 2022, the register of specified entries i.e., State owned enterprises, joint venture companies’ other companies and other entities in which the state has interest.
2. SIGA will publish evaluation reports of entities by December 2022.
3. Develop a code of corporate governance by December 2022.

2.0 RESPONSIBLE INSITUITIONS:

Ministry of Finance and State Interests and Governance Authority (SIGA)

Collaborating Institutions: Centre for budget Advocacy (CBA) Ghana Integrity Initiative (GII) Institute for Economic Affairs (IEA) Institute for Fiscal Studies (IFS) Centre for Democratic development (CDD) and Ghana Anti-Corruption Initiative (GAI).

* 1. ACTIONS TAKEN SO FAR
  2. TRANSPARENCY
  3. The state ownership report

The number of entities reporting were 18, forty-nine (49), seventy-seven (77), one hundred and six (106) and one hundred and thirty-two (132) in 2016, 2017,2018,2019 and 2020 state ownership report respectively.

* 1. 2021 SOR preparation under way targeting 75% of the SEs on register
  2. Signing performance contract (entities that signed) 30(2017), 35(2018), 35(2019), 47(2020), 94(20210 entities. Target for 2022 is 116.
  3. Performance contract evaluation report (20 entities 2020)
  4. Public enterprises league table (PELT) FOR 2020 released in July 2022 for 47 entities.
  5. PELT Awards for 2020 held in July 2022 involving 47 entities.

1. Inclusion of SOEs in the national public accounts prepared by the CAGD and audited by the AG (19 out of 88 in 2020 and 47 SOEs out of 85 targeted in 2021.) Note that the 2019 national accounts did not cover the SOEs. The scope was expanded to include SOEs/GBE from 2020.
2. Publication of the specified entities register by end of 2022

List of specified entities.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 71 | Ghana Broadcasting Corporation | 100% |
| 72 | Ghana Highway Authority | 100% |
| 73 | Ghana Meteorological Agency | 100% |
| 74 | Ghana News Agency | 100% |
| 75 | National Theatre of Ghana | 100% |
| Total |  |  |

**DEFUNCT ENTITIES**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 6 | Ghana Community Network (GCNET) | 20% |

* 1. ACCOUNTABILITY

1. Parliamentary select committee on employment, social welfare and SOEs have started regular sitting to enquire into the operational and financial performance of SOEs to decide on their economy, efficiency and effectiveness.
2. Monitoring of Annual general meetings (AGM) of SOEs by SIGA.
   1. CONCLUSION

We as an Authority are very much on course to fulfilling our commitments under the National Action Plan of the Open Governance Partnership. The DG of SIGA believes that accountability and transparency are key in governance be it corporate and non-corporate especially when one is entrusted with resources to be used in a way that should result in the benefits of all but not few.

Hence, SIGA commitment to track government’s investments in SOEs, JVCs and OSEs to demand efficiency and where applicable, profitability through the principles of accountability and transparency. Some challenges include

1. Poor record keeping
   1. Accounts
   2. Fixed and register
   3. Audited accounts
2. Audited accounts
3. Late submission
4. Publishing of SE register @ 2022
5. Annual policy forum
6. Stakeholders’ meetings annually
7. AG, IAA, SIGA, M.F, OGM, SOEs, meet regularly to address problems