

## **Civil Society Joint Communiqué to the Asia Pacific OGP Regional Meeting**

Taking the momentum of the upcoming Open Government Partnership (OGP) Asia Pacific Regional Conference in Nusa Dua Bali on May 6-7, 2014, we, 183 representatives of civil society organizations coming from 31 Asia Pacific countries and beyond came together on the Civil Society Day in Nusa Dua on May 4, 2014 to discuss key issues relating to the OGP.

We acknowledge that the OGP is a new multilateral initiative that aims to secure concrete commitments from governments to promote transparency, empower citizens, fight corruption, and harness news technologies to strengthen governance. These commitments respond to four key values: transparency, accountability, participation and innovation.

We honor and support the spirit of OGP and efforts to create openness of governments, engaging civil society and giving space to reformers and innovators as the key actors of democracy, good governance and development.

Having considered the progress and achievements OGP so far, we considered three following issues to be relevant and timely for consideration by the Chair and co-Chair, Steering Committee, and OGP country members: **First**, the importance and need for establishing, expanding and consolidating civic space; **Second**, the formulation of the post 2015 agenda including sustainable development goals and the fundamental needs to incorporate good governance; and **third**, the need for OGP to establish and maintain civil society participation mechanism and standard for compliance with OGP's values.

In the end, we call chair and co-chair to give special attention to the above mentioned issues. Issues and recommendation are explained below:

### **A. Civic Space**

In some democratic states, civil society space has been declined or severely restricted. Civil society space should be guaranteed and promoted in all OGP countries through the relevant legal framework, institutional arrangement and decision-making practices.

Therefore, we call;

- OGP country members to extend the open data program covering both government and private sectors.
- OGP country members to ensure the provision of infrastructure for communication especially for vulnerable groups, including person with disabilities, indigenous people, LGBT groups, and women.
- OGP country members to establish laws and ensure its implementation that recognize freedoms of expressions, association, assembly and freedom of information, whistleblower protection and removing restrictions and controls on civil society organizations.
- OGP country members to establish law that provide opportunities for civil society to participate in decision making process and oversee its implementation.
- Civil society leaders in OGP country members to claim their legitimate space in decision making process and oversee its implementation .

### **B. Governance in Post-2015 Development Agenda**

We are in the position that governance should be a standalone goal in the Post-2015 agenda. Governance as a standalone goal will lead to the necessary indicators and targets to measure

government bodies in their performance of being efficient, open, transparent, accountable and effective institutions. Placing governance as a cross-cutting theme diminishes its importance, whereas a standalone goal will heighten it as a critical component to sustainable development.

As OGP country members there is an obligation to support governance as standalone goal in the Post 2015 agenda. In doing so, OGP country members will fulfill its mandate by setting forth the steps necessary to ensure full respect of the right to freedom of expression and information, transparency, and accountability worldwide. By endorsing governance as a standalone goal, the OGP will ensure the effectiveness of public institutions internationally, and set a framework to enhance inclusive and meaningful public participation in decision-making processes, all of which will lead to and reinforce the sustainable development that we all seek.

Therefore, we call:

- The OGP Chair and country members to support governance as a standalone goal in Post 2015 agenda.
- The OGP steering committee to release a formal letter to OGP country members to support governance as a stand-alone topic in post-2015 agenda.
- The Asia Pacific leaders to start incorporating governance goals, targets, and indicators into their national planning, and to ensure that OGP country members are actively working towards achieving the targets.

### **C. Country mechanism/compliance**

Many OGP country members yet to embrace the full extend of partnership in advocating OGP values at country level mechanism. Poor quality of participation resulted in low impact from country commitments for their people. We believe that future improvement of OGP in terms of partnership could be achieved if all stakeholders are committed in realizing the following recommendations:

Therefore, we call:

- Country Members to ensure their commitments to be specific, strong, and enable deeper transparency in national and subnational levels in alignment with international levels. Countries shall set clear outcome indicators agreed by Government and the civil society for each commitment and shall ensure the sustainability of commitments. Countries shall consider the varying domestic circumstances and ensure that release of information through modern infrastructure such as internet or mobile phones, does not left behind the disadvantage and marginalized people who are not under coverage of such modern infrastructure.
- Country Members to set standards of governance in national level. Countries shall create a platform in which there are equal representatives from government and civil society. Non-involvement of civil society in the making and implementation of country commitments should be considered as violations to OGP values. Each OGP country should made clear and explicit mechanism to facilitate civil society consultation in making, implementing and monitoring of Action Plan, and together with the civil society set mechanism to enable equal position in decision making. Countries should elaborate in its self-assessment the nature of multi-stakeholder consultation as mandated by OGP Requirements.
- Country members to take into account performance on human rights as stipulated in the OGP Declaration. Country members shall demonstrate in its self-assessment report that it has taken sufficient measures to guarantee its citizen's rights to exercise their access to information and participation freely, either by effective implementation of Access to Information laws, such as protecting whistle blowers, as well as ensuring adequate

response laws/provisions that are potential to violate the access to information of its citizen. Steering committee must take holistic approach on country compliance, taking into account other independent reports on violations of OGP Values other than IRM.[]

**Participants of the Civil Society Day,**  
CSO Day May 4, 2014 - Bali