

OGP Countries Need to Take the Right to Information Seriously

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Global right to information organisations Access Info Europe (AIE) and the Centre for Law and Democracy (CLD) today called on Open Government Partnership (OGP) Participating Countries to make serious commitments to strengthen their right to information laws in the next round of action plans, due to be presented in April 2014.

One of the biggest concerns at the London OGP summit is that governments are not making commitments which will move them beyond the current situation and that they are not being ambitious or “stretching” with planned reforms. This concern is particularly acute in relation to the right to information, one of the eligibility criteria for joining the OGP.

CLD and AIE will release a report shortly which highlights the fact that seven OGP members – namely Costa Rica, Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Paraguay, Philippines, Spain and Tanzania – still do not have any law guaranteeing the right to information. Two of these are on the OGP Steering Committee, a position the Philippines has held since the beginning.

Another 13 have legal frameworks with scores in bottom of the global RTI Rating (www.rti-rating.org), i.e. scores of less than 75 points out of a possible total of 150.

“It is unacceptable for countries to sign up to a open government initiative which has transparency at its core and yet fail to put in place a proper legal framework to guarantee the right to information,” commented Toby Mendel, Executive Director of Centre for Law and Democracy. Mendel suggested that modern access laws should aim to score at least 100 points.

“With the RTI Rating we have identified precisely what countries need to do, we are calling for immediate commitments to strengthen access to information laws, bringing them up above the 100 points out of 150 level,” said Helen Darbishire, Executive Director of Access Info Europe.

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