

Open Government Partnership

Full Steering Committee Call

Working Level

21 November 2024 | 8:00AM- 10:00AM EST

MEETING MINUTES

Attendees:

- Governments- Government of Brazil, Government of Chile, Government of Germany, Government of Indonesia, Government of Spain, Government of Morocco, Government of Philippines, Government of United Kingdom, Government of United States
- Civil Society- Anabel Cruz, Barbara Schreiner, Blair Glencorse, Cielo Magno, Doug Rutzen, Eka Gigauri, Laura Neuman, Natalia Carfi, Niki Dutta, Steph Muchai, Zuki Kota
- OGP Support Unit

Apologies- Government of Estonia, Government of Kenya, Katerina Hadzi-Miceva Evans

1. Welcome from the Chairs - 5 min

- *Government Co-Chair, Lazaro Tunon, on behalf of the Government of Spain*, called the meeting to order and welcomed new members of the SC
 1. Government of Brazil
 2. Government of Philippines
 3. Laura Neuman, Senior Advisor, Office of the Vice President of Peace Programs, The Carter Center
 4. Katerina Hadzi-Miceva Evans, Executive Director, European Center for Not-for-Profit Law
- Civil Society Co-Chair Cielo Magno introduced herself and provided an overview of the agenda and call logistics.

2. SC endorsement of CEO finalist candidate - 15 minutes

- a. Steph Muchai, member of the Steering Committee and the Board of Directors, provided an update on the CEO selection process:
 - i. The Selection Committee met with the finalists the week of November 11 and had a first round of deliberations. Due to the high caliber strengths of the finalists and the complex travel schedules of the selection committee members, the Selection Committee has not yet

made a final choice. The Selection Committee will meet again on Monday November 25 with the aim to reach consensus on the finalist candidate. Following questions from members about the selection process, Steph Muchai confirmed that the timeline for the new CEO onboarding has not been adjusted. The plan is still for the new CEO to join OGP by early 2025.

- ii. *Next Steps: When a decision is made, the Selection Committee will share the profile of the final candidate with the SC via circular for endorsement. The SU will offer an opportunity to engage with the Selection Committee for questions before the endorsement deadline.*
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3. SC statement on the humanitarian crisis in Gaza - 45 min

- In response to suggestions by SC members, the chairs tabled a collective discussion on the humanitarian crisis in Gaza and the actions of the Israeli government –a member of OGP– and their impact on OGP’s values and principles. The objective of the discussion was to explore if and how OGP should address the situation in Gaza, including potential responses from OGP, if deemed appropriate by the SC.
- The chair of this session, Cielo Magno, shared that OGP and the Leadership Subcommittee have been closely monitoring the unfolding events since the October 7 attacks on Israel, and their potential implications on OGP. The chair also acknowledged the calls received from the OGP community urging the Partnership to speak out and take a stand on the issue. Additionally, Cielo Magno acknowledged that some SC members had also raised concerns over the past year including i) the lack of transparency and accountability in handling the humanitarian crisis in Gaza; ii) erosion of civic space in Israel, including restrictions on fundamental freedoms of assembly, association, and expression, including in the handling of anti-war protests; iii) attacks on journalists and media freedom in Israel and Gaza; and iv) reputational concerns for the partnership.
- The chair invited SC members to share their views on whether OGP should publicly express a position on this matter, taking into consideration OGP’s values and principles, and any perceived reputational risks for the partnership. The SC explored various options and shared divergent perspectives on how to approach this issue:
 1. Some government and civil society members encouraged the SC to put out a statement calling for humanitarian support in Gaza and condemning Israel’s actions. SC Members emphasized that OGP must not remain silent in the face of OGP country members’ perceived violations of OGP’s values.

2. Other government and civil society members encouraged and preferred OGP to consider a response through its existing formal procedural accountability mechanisms, including either the Rapid Response Protocol or the Response Policy, as appropriate. Members emphasized the importance of adhering to existing protocols and mechanisms that have been established by the SC. However, several SC members also raised questions about whether this situation could be adequately addressed through existing OGP mechanisms in a timely manner.
 3. Some SC members also expressed concerns about handling matters of international security through the OGP platform as they perceived this to be outside the remit of the OGP. Members also cautioned about the precedent that it could set if a formal positioning or statement would be pursued within or especially outside formal existing mechanisms. They emphasized that it would not be feasible nor desirable for the SC to issue statements in response to all situations that may require international attention.
 - SC members unanimously expressed deep concern over the ongoing humanitarian crisis in Gaza and the severe impact on the civilian population.
 - Views were divergent on if and how OGP institutionally should respond and on the precedent it would set. While the SC ultimately did not reach consensus on an institutional response, including publishing a statement on the issue, the group did agree next steps:
 1. The SC decided to create a task force to carefully assess, and if necessary, revise OGP's current accountability mechanisms to ensure they remain fit for purpose and equipped to respond to situations like this one.
 2. The SC recommended that the SU and select SC members to speak with Israeli civil society to discuss what support, if any, would be most helpful to navigate the concerns regarding the erosion of fundamental rights and shrinking civic space in the country.
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4. Strategy Spotlight: The Open Gov Challenge - 25 min

- The Support Unit provided an update of the [Open Gov Challenge](#), including an overview of spotlights, challenges and opportunities, and approaches to continue promoting the initiative.
- Government and civil society members discussed different options on how to support the Challenge, both domestically and internationally.

5. Manila Retreat (5 mins):

- Cielo Magno reminded everyone to RSVP for the full SC working level retreat in Manila, which will take place on Feb 3-4.
- SC members were invited to provide input in writing on draft objectives, suggested topics, and timeline for the retreat by December 12 to shape plans for Manila.

6. AOB and closing

- Cielo Magno thanked Sanjay Pradhan for his leadership of the partnership, bidding him a farewell at his last SC meeting.
- Lazaro Tunon closed out the meeting.

