

IRIAD – THE ELECTORAL HUB COMMEMORATES OPEN GOVERNMENT PARTNERSHIP WEEK 2023

..... calls for Open National Assembly characterised by a transparent, inclusive, participatory, and fair legislative process where citizens can make demands for Openness, access information, and participate actively in government. We also call for an Open Electoral Judicial Process that is impartial, unbiased and fair as the electoral tribunals proceeds.

The Initiative for Research, Innovation and Advocacy in Development and The Electoral Hub commemorates the Open Government Partnership (OGP) Week 2023 with a strong call for an open government, particularly in the National Assembly (NASS) as the 10th NASS is inaugurated June 13, 2023. We recognize that an Open NASS is an essential component of the OGP. We note that the NASS, as an important arm of government representing the citizens, should not threaten openness and public accountability. Secrecy in legislative practices negates democratic ideas of openness, transparency, accountability, inclusiveness, and accessibility which are the main characteristics of democratic governance¹. These inform our ‘streetview of the 10TH NASS project with activities focusing on knowledge production and dissemination, community engagements and sensitization across urban poor neighbourhoods and rural areas of the FCT.

Recent global events have further shown the need to open up governments and allow for increased public engagement and access to information relating to government activities and processes. This is the rationale for the forming of the OGP and its adoption in Nigeria. OGP is a multilateral initiative aimed at securing concrete commitments from national and sub-national governments to “promote open government, empower citizens, fight corruption, and harness new technologies to strengthen governance”. OGP is based on four fundamental principles:

- **Transparency:** Information on government activities and decisions are open, timely and freely available to the public.
- **Accountability:** Rules and regulations are in place to hold the government responsible for their actions.
- **Citizens’ participation:** Citizens make contributions that lead to good and effective governance.
- **Technology and Innovation:** Government embrace the importance of new technologies in driving innovation, providing citizens with open access to technology and increasing their capacity to use technology.²

In showing commitment to the objectives and principles of the OGP, Nigeria joined the Partnership in 2016 and initiated three National Action Plans (NAP) from 2017 to 2023.

¹ Nigeria OGP (2019-2022). Nigeria Action Plan II. Page 5. <http://www.opengovernmentpartnership.org/wp>

² Ibid

The NAPs represent the institutional, coordination, planning and implementation framework for delivering Nigeria's OGP commitments. NAP III is an enhancement of the previous NAPs, and it focuses on five thematic areas namely: Fiscal Transparency, Environment and Climate Change, Governance, Access to Information, and Civic Participation³.

Specific concerns have been raised by the Open Alliance members and other CSOs in Nigeria on the secrecy surrounding legislative processes, practices and conducts of National Assembly (NASS) through the Open NASS Campaign. Despite initiating the NAPs, evidence points to the lack of *openness* in the conduct of government in Nigeria, particularly the NASS. An Open NASS that ensures access to legislative information and creates mechanisms for public participation and accountability is critical to building public trust.

IRIAD -The Electoral Hub reiterates the demand for an Open National Assembly in line with our commitment to promoting public accountability, and strengthening electoral governance in Nigeria. The incoming 10TH NASS can lead by example by adopting open government principles within its own processes and practices, including establishing measures to improve its transparency and accountability to citizens. Nigerians deserve a legislative process and practice that is transparent, inclusive, and participatory. Citizens should be able to engage all arms of the government, demand for accountability, inclusion, transparency, and access information as needed. As we commemorate the OGP Week 2023 and prepare to welcome the 10th Assembly on June 13th, 2023, IRIAD and The Electoral Hub call on all stakeholders, including citizens to actively engage elected public officials for an open legislature and governance that conforms to the nation's democratic aspirations, and expectations. We also call for an open judicial electoral process as the 2023 electoral tribunal proceeds.

**#OpenGovernmentPartnership #OGP #OGPWeek2023
#OpenNASS #Open10THNASS #10THNASSAccountability
#OpenJudiciary #Open2023PEPT/C #OpenAlliance**

#Naija4Openness #CitizensRights #Accountability&IntegrityMatters

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³ <https://www.ogpnigeria.gov.ng/action-plan>