

PHOTOS OF THE EVENT



Sierra Leone Delegation



Field visit to the Salt Valley



Awardees of Certificate



Chairman and the CEO of OGP Global



Chairman NaCCED participating in group work at the Summit

NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR CIVIC EDUCATION AND DEMOCRACY (NACCED)

REPORT OF THE 9TH OGP GLOBAL SUMMIT 2025 HELD IN VITORIA GASTEIZ, SPAIN

1. BACKGROUND OF THE OPEN GOVERNMENT PARTNERSHIP (OGP)

The Open Government Partnership (OGP) is a multi-stakeholder initiative focused on improving government transparency, accountability, and responsiveness to citizens with the aim of improving services and reducing poverty. OGP brings together government and civil society champions who recognize that governments are more likely to be effective and credible if they open their doors to public input and oversight. The OGP is a voluntary process by which governments commit to innovative open government reforms as part of a “race to the top.” Local civil society plays an important role in consulting with their government around potential commitments and will also be monitoring government performance once commitments have been publicly announced.

The OGP was launched in 2011 to provide an international platform for domestic reformers committed to making their governments more open, accountable, and responsive to citizens. Since its inception, OGP has grown from 8 countries to 74 countries and 150 local governments – representing more than two billion people – and thousands of civil society organizations across the globe. In all of these countries, government and civil society are working together to develop and implement ambitious open government reforms. OGP aspires to support both government and civil society reformers by elevating open government to the highest levels of political discourse, providing ‘cover’ for difficult reforms, and creating a supportive community of like-minded reformers from countries around the world.

Openness and accountability are principles worth championing not just for their own sake, but also as great enablers for honest delivery of public services and management of scarce public resources. This is a principle which anchors a lot of the work being promoted by the Open Government Partnership (OGP). The OGP recognized at its inception, more than 14 years ago, that efforts aimed at advancing openness and accountability should be directed at helping countries address what the OGP calls “the five grand challenges;

- Improving public services,
- Increasing public integrity,
- Effectively managing public resources,
- Creating safer communities and
- Increasing corporate accountability.

The Open Government Partnership (OGP) presents a significant opportunity to advance the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development (2030 Agenda). This unique international partnership of 74 governments and hundreds of civil society organizations aligns closely with commitments contained in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) on transparency, public participation, and accountability – and ultimately on improving public services and reducing poverty.

This commentary, after providing an overview of the 2030 Agenda, sets out the purpose and ambition of the OGP, showing how it provides a powerful vehicle for accelerating SDG implementation. It identifies many areas of complementarity and shows where OGP adds value and potentially strengthens SDGs commitments. It affirms that the development benefits arising from integrating governance into the SDGs could be significant, especially when supported by stronger evidence. The OGP provides a ready-made vehicle to help countries begin implementing the SDGs. The 2030 Agenda reinforces many of OGP's key messages on transparency and open government and will give greater visibility to their importance, with a view to attracting more countries to sign up to the OGP Declaration and deepen their commitments. It might also encourage greater focus within OGP country commitments that tangibly improve lives, reinforcing the credibility and impact of the OGP.

2. SIERRA LEONE OPEN GOVERNMENT PARTNERSHIP

Sierra Leone joined the OGP in November 2013, a month after it passed the Right to Access Information (RAI) law which additionally emboldened its commitment to transparency and strengthens the country's eligibility to the open government partnership. At the moment Sierra Leone has made remarkable progress in the areas of fiscal transparency, access to information. Citizens engagement and fight against corruption which are the OGP principles and standards a country must fulfil for recognition into the partnership.

Sierra Leone joined the OGP with clear understanding and purpose in making sure that government will be substantially, more transparent, more accountable, inclusive and more responsive to the citizens, with the ultimate goal of improving the quality of governance, as well as the quality of services that citizens receive. This will require a shift in norms and culture to ensure genuine dialogue and collaboration between government and civil society.

The OGP process in Sierra Leone was initially under the Office of the Secretary to the President who provided overall supervision to the process and served as the official Point of Contact (POC) between the OGP Global Secretariat and the Sierra Leone Government and the coordinating office was the Open Government Initiative (OGI). The process was being led by Steering Committee members (17 from government and 17 from Civil Society Organizations). The role of the Steering committee is to co-create the National Action Plan, monitor the implementation of the commitment and provide technical leadership in the overall OGP process. (See the terms of reference)

With support from the World Bank and the Campaign for Good Governance, Sierra Leone developed its first National Action Plan (NAP1) after conducting series of consultations both within and outside Sierra Leone. Since then Sierra Leone has developed and implemented four national action plans and currently implementing its

After a lull in activity before the 2018 elections, the OGP process was revitalized under His Excellency, President Dr. Julius Maada Bio, reaffirming Sierra Leone's commitment to open governance. The Minister of Information and Communications, Mr. Mohamed Rahman Swaray, was designated as Ministerial Lead, while the Chairman of NaCCED, Mr. Kalilu Totangie, was appointed as the official OGP Point of Contact (POC).

An 18-member steering committee was formed with equal representation from government, civil society organizations, private sector and the media, while NaCCED serves as arbiter and convener. The steering committee in collaboration with staff of MDAs co-created commitments and milestones and implemented the third and fourth national action plan (NAP3 & NAP4).

Currently, Sierra Leone is implementing the fifth national action plan (NAP5) – 2024 – 2028. The commitments and milestones on NAP5 are aligned to the Government’s big 5 development priorities. This will not only ensure a smooth implementation of OGP commitments and upholding the values and principles of OGP but also enhancing and accelerating the achievement of objectives and goal of the Government.

3.0 THE 9TH OGP GLOBAL SUMMIT 2025

The 9th OGP Global Summit was hosted by the Government of Spain in partnership with civil society from the 6th to 10th October 2025 in Vitoria-Gasteiz, under the theme:

“Restoring Trust and Strengthening Democracy through Open Government.”

The Summit brought together over 2,000 participants from more than 70 countries, including heads of state, ministers, policymakers, technologists, and civil society leaders. It focused on three strategic pillars:

- People – Placing citizens, rights, and civic space at the center
- Institutions – Reinforcing transparency, accountability, and integrity
- Technology and Open Data – Leveraging digital tools for inclusion and innovation

The summit aims to promote open government practices, share best practices, and facilitate collaboration on civic participation, digital governance and transparency initiatives.

The main events of the Summit were held from 7 to 9 October, while number of sectoral and regional meetings took place on the margins of the Summit on 6 and 10 October.

3.1 SIERRA LEONE DELEGATION AT THE SUMMIT

The Sierra Leone delegation was led by Mr. Bockarie Abdel Aziz Bawoh, Deputy Minister of Information and Civic Education, and included:

- I. Mr. Joseph Munda Bindi – Chairman, NaCCED & OGP Point of Contact, Secretariat Lead
- II. Mr. Ibrahim Sakie Jabati – OGP Officer
- III. Mr. Abdul Fatoma – Executive Director, CHRDI
- IV. Mr. Shahid M. Korjie – Executive Director, Justice Sector Coordination Unit

3.2 KEY SESSIONS AND HIGHLIGHTS OF THE SUMMIT

The opening session took place on the 7th October and featured remarks from:

Maidar Etxebarria, Mayor of Vitoria-Gasteiz and OGP Co-Chair, Clara Mapelli, Secretary of State of Spain

Paul Massen, OGP Steering Committee Member.

Tribute was paid to the late Helen Darbishire, human rights activist and OGP pioneer, with the announcement of the Helen Darbishire Found to support civil society initiatives.

The OGP Steering Committee member, Laura Neman welcomed the governments of Benin, Zambia, Timor Leste, Maldives, and 55 local authorities/governments as new members that have joined the Open Government Partnership.

The opening session ended with a high-level panel discussion on the topic: **LEADERSHIP IN COMPLEX TIMES: ADVANCING DEMOCRATIC RESILIENCE AND SOCIETAL TRUST** which explored strategies for rebuilding trust between citizens and their governments. Panelists included Rakesh Rajani (moderator from USA), José Ulisses de Pina Correia e Silva (Prime Minister of Cabo Verde), Melanie Hui (Luminate), Maíra Martini (Transparency International), Steph Muchai, (incoming OGP Civil Society Co-Chair), Vinicius Marques de Carvalho (Minister of the Comptroller General of the Union, Brazil), Tomás Vodanovic (Mayor of Maipú, Chile) as speakers.

The summit broke in various sessions, group works and side events for the period of three days.

3.3 THE SIERRA LEONE GOVERNMENT DELEGATION

The Sierra Leone Government delegation and the CSO representatives took part in the following sessions:

- Promoting OGP in local and regional governance - Open Local Government to Transform Democracy,
- Open justice – people center justice,
- Combatting Disinformation,
- Leadership in Complex Times: Advancing Democratic Resilience and Societal Trust
- Powering reform -Advancing Open Government Strategies, and

a field trip to Valle Salado de Affiana – (a historic heritage site in Spain) a community where salt production has taken place for over 7,500 years.

Misters Mohamed S.Korji and Abdul Fatorma of CHRDI participated in panel discussions on open justice.

4. THE CLOSING CEREMONY

In his closing address, **President Pedro Sánchez of Spain** reaffirmed that open, responsible, participatory, and transparent government is democracy's most powerful defense.

Heads of State and Government from Cabo Verde, Albania, Norway and the United Kingdom also delivered in-person addresses and video remarks, echoing a shared call to defend democratic values, expand civic space and deliver more ambitious reforms.

The 2025 Open Government Partnership (OGP) Global Summit concluded with a powerful call from **His Majesty the King Felipe VI of Spain**, who underscored the importance of open government as a

cornerstone of democracy and trust in institutions and further emphasized that openness must deliver not just transparency, but fairer, better government for all.

5. ADOPTION OF THE VICTORIA-GASTEIZ DECLARATION

The Summit's major outcome document reaffirmed five commitments:

1. Protect democracy and human rights.
2. Advance open government at all levels.
3. Align with global agendas (SDGs, climate, AI ethics).
4. Mobilize political leadership for delivery.
5. Use OGP as a peer-learning platform.

Sierra Leone joined as an endorser, signaling renewed national commitment to open governance and press freedom.

6. OGP AWARDS AND RECOGNITIONS

Nine national and local governments—including Kenya, Nigeria, Brazil, the Philippines, Croatia, and the United Kingdom—received awards for exemplary and impactful open-government initiatives from among 160 commitments submitted by 42 countries.

The Helen Darbshire Found also awarded grants to selected CSOs to support implementation of their national action plans.

7. KEY TAKE-AWAY OF THE 9TH OGP GLOBAL SUMMIT

In the abundance of issues discussed at the summit, the Sierra Leone delegation recorded the following for note in advancing Open Government Partnership;

- Citizens trust in their governments continues to diminish due to unmet expectations.
- Civil society space is shrinking and confidence in institutions is eroding rapidly.
- Citizens agitation for inclusion and participation in governance issues are critical which are causes for protests against governments across the world.
- Open Government Partnership is the platform that provides the pathway to rebuild democracy, citizens trust and confidence in their governments.
- Transparency, accountability, and inclusion are central to democratic resilience. Transparency is making the right information available to the people as information is power.
- Combating disinformation in the face of AI and other social medial platforms should be a major business of government by been more open, transparent and accountable and legal reforms.
- OGP remains the most effective global platform for aligning national governance with citizen priorities.

8. CHALLENGE FACE BY THE SIERRA LEONE GOVERNMENT DELEGATION

A three-man delegation led by the Deputy Minister of the Ministry of information and Civic Education was approved by His Excellency, President Dr. Julius Maada Bio to attend the 9th OGP global summit in Spain. The ministry of Information and Civic Education and the Chairman of the National Council for Civic Education and Democracy (NaCCED) did all they could to ensure the participation and representation of Sierra Leone at the OGP global summit in Spain. The delegation went and participated in the summit and had the following challenges:

- The Sierra Leone delegation to the OGP Global Summit was lean as other major MDAs and CSOs did not attend.
- The delegation was not equipped with gadgets (communication) to fully follow debates.

9. SUGGESTIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS

From the experiences gained and best practices learned at the summit, the following suggestions/recommendations are proffered for consideration by Government:

- To renew Sierra Leone's commitment to Open Government Partnership by signing the **Vitoria – Gasteiz declaration**
- To strengthen and provide adequate support for the development and implementation of the OGP national action plans.
- Enhance collaboration with civil society organizations to ensure inclusivity and effective monitoring.
- Increase the number of participating MDAs and CSOs at subsequent summits.
- Institutionalize open-government principles within NaCCED and the Ministry of Information and Civic Education as part of ongoing civic engagement reforms.
- Use radio, TV and social media to popularize the **Vitoria-Gasteiz Declaration** and its implication for citizens

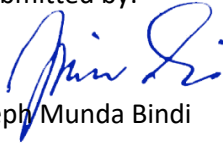
10. CONCLUSION

The 2025 OGP Global Summit in Vitoria-Gasteiz re-energized the global movement for open, accountable, and inclusive governance.

Sierra Leone's active participation underscored its commitment to transparency and citizen empowerment as drivers of national transformation under President Bio's Big Five Game Changers.

Our endorsement of the Vitoria-Gasteiz Declaration cements Sierra Leone's standing as a progressive reform leader in Africa — where open government is not just policy, but practice.

Faithfully submitted by:



1. Joseph Munda Bindi

Chairman

National Council for Civic Education and Democracy (NaCCED) &

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2. Bockarie Abdel Aziz Bawoh

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