



## Federal Ministry of Justice

### FG APPROVES COUNCIL MEMO TO SET UP OGP UNITS IN MDAs

The Federal Executive Council in June 2018 approved a Council Memo seeking to deepen the reforms in the Open Government Partnership (OGP) process and also ensure that Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) set up an OGP Unit under the department of reform coordination and service improvement. The Honorable Attorney General of the Federation and Minister of Justice, Abubakar Malami, (SAN), disclosed this during the 4th National Steering Committee Meeting of OGP Nigeria on Tuesday August 7, 2018 in Abuja.

Represented by the Minister of State for Budget and National Planning,



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Hajiya Zainab Ahmed, explained that, “with this in mind, the Open Government Partnership Secretariat has been directed to work with the Head of Service of the Federation to ensure that a Service-Wide Circular is issued with a view to implementing the directives from the Federal Executive

Council”. In addition, “the Secretariat has also drafted an Executive Order on Open Government Partnership for your review and comments. The Executive Order seeks to strengthen the capacity and the structure of the OGP Secretariat, ensure that it is fully embedded within the Federal Government’s reform agenda and provide it with a quasi-legal mandate pending when a legal framework can be developed and

approved”. “This is with a view to ensuring that OGP remains an agenda of the Government of Nigeria beyond 2019”, he explained.

He noted that for the first time, the Office of the Auditor General published the full 2016 Audit Report of the Federal Government with far reaching recommendations. He assured that the work being done by the Ministry of Budget and National Planning, Budget Office of the Federation and Office of the Auditor General of the Federation would see Nigeria’s ranking improve in the next Open Budget Index. Malami commended CAC for working closely with the OGP Global Support Unit, the OGP National Secretariat and the Open Ownership in updating the Annual Return Form to include disclosure of information on beneficial ownership. “I want to specially thank the Open Ownership for the capacity building training extended to CAC and the OGP Secretariat in Tblis, Georgia.”

Moreover, “the progress we have made so far confirms our faith that the collaborative platform that the OGP offers will engender participatory governance that will deliver the change President Buhari promised Nigerians.” He mentioned that the current National Action Plan would end in June 2019. He urged the National Steering Committee to proactively set up a committee that would begin the process of consultation and drafting of the new National Action Plan based on current socio- economic and political development in Nigeria, to an extent to which it would continue the implementation of the commitments in the first National Action Plan.

The Special Adviser to the President on Justice Sector Reforms and Coordinator of OGP Nigeria, Mrs. Juliet Ibekaku -Nwaigwu, told newsmen during a media chat, that the recently concluded OGP Global Summit witnessed more countries, many leaders increased interest in working with their citizens in order to improve governance having realized that without the support of the citizens, there is no governance. She explained another interesting aspect noted in the use of technology, giving instance of the South Africa that has deployed a government chat that allows interface on a daily basis in different Sectors.

Furthermore, she said, “the essence of the OGP is about interaction with citizens, this is why over the years we are looking at how we can



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use technology to interface with citizens especially because everybody is not living in Abuja, for example today, we also have States that are joining the partnership. The OGP can only become relevant in this country if more States should come on board. We are talking to the Nigerian Governors forum to make sure that more

states come on board. We have 7 States today that have joined; Kaduna, Enugu, Ebonyi, Kano, Abia and Niger”. In his keynote address, the Executive Director, Media Rights Agenda (MRA) and CSO Co-Chair of the National Steering Committee (NSC) OGP Nigeria, Edetaen Ojo said Nigeria over the last two years as a member of the OGP, has made lots of progress both in the international and national levels. According to him, “As you all know, earlier this year, despite the fact that we are still relatively new to the OGP, Nigeria was elected to the International Steering Committee to serve for a term of three years, beginning from October 1, 2018.

This is clearly in recognition of the fact that Nigeria has a lot to contribute to the global family given its size and influence internationally but also as a result of the many innovations that are already evident in our participation within the OGP”. “The role of the National Steering Committee is to oversee the development of the OGP in Nigeria, provide guidance and direction for the process, maintain high standards for the initiative and ensure that it is sustainable”, he added.