



OPEN LETTER TO CHANCELLOR ANGELA MERKEL

Better, smarter and timely open data on infrastructure and services spending is essential to generate real benefits for Africans

Dear Chancellor Merkel,

We are pleased to see you making inclusive growth and sustainable development in Africa, as laid out by the African Union in its agenda for 2063, a priority of this year's German G20 Presidency, including a G20 Compact with Africa to promote private investment and investment in infrastructure.

Across Africa, half of all government spending is on public contracts. This spending is central to delivering public benefits: the roads, schools, and clinics that Africa vitally needs. It is also government's number one corruption risk.

As leading innovators in this area, mostly based in and working in Africa, we want to propose that you support better, publicly accessible and timely data on government contracts for infrastructure and services as a key part of your wider strategy. By supporting open contracting and the use of the Open Contracting Data Standard, you can help transform the trillion-dollar world of public procurement into better deals for governments, more opportunities for business, improved public integrity, and quality goods and services for citizens.

An open and efficient procurement process will foster innovation, boost local economies and provide quality jobs. Germany can work with its partners in Africa and around the world through the individualized investment compacts with specific countries, to include **Open Data** and registers of public contracts, transparency of public-private partnerships as well as open registers of company ownership.

Information needs to be provided in open and re-useable formats to allow users to connect it to other relevant data sets and across the different stages of a project. Open contracting, and the Open Contracting Data Standard is a critical tool to facilitate interconnectivity and ensure governments receive value for money on their investments and companies have a fair chance at winning government business. When bureaucracy is slow, and competition closed, small and medium-sized firms tend to lose out.



Transparency and linked up data matters to account for the billions of dollars required for often complex, multifaceted and multi-year infrastructure projects.

A key safeguard should be to implement measures that enable a transparent process for monitoring investments and a proactive screening of corruption red flags to avoid funds being mismanaged. Ad hoc er-based disclosures may give little meaningful information whether the project overall is on track and budget. For example, Mexico's largest infrastructure project in this decade, the new international airport in Mexico City, is employing open contracting to increase transparency and accountability and we think that the proposed investment compacts should do likewise.

To ensure infrastructure investments serve the needs of the people, **effective feedback channels should be established.** Smarter analytics based on quality open data can be used to engage business and citizens in improving the contracting process by monitoring and reporting critical issues.

We note that our suggestions are in line with prior G20 commitments on Open Data for Anti-Corruption and the High-Level Principles for Promoting Integrity in Public Procurement, and reflect recommendations by the Business 20 to mitigate the risk of corruption and increase efficiency in infrastructure.

G20 members Canada, Mexico and the UK are already implementing open contracting. Argentina, Australia, France, Italy, Mexico, and the US have taken steps to follow suit. In Africa, Ghana, Kenya, Sierra Leone, and Uganda have committed to open contracting. Nigeria is fulfilling President Buhari's pledge to publish to the Open Contracting Data Standard. France, Mexico and the UK are founding members of the Contracting 5, a group of innovators and leading implementers of open contracting, that can provide guidance and best practice to other G20 leaders.

In the spirit of the Sustainable Development Goals, Germany should set an inspiring example by implementing open contracting at home too.

The Open Government Partnership has been a prominent forum for making progress on open contracting globally. Mindful that 14 countries of the G20 are already participating, we would encourage you to use your global leadership to accelerate and deepen the partnership.

We are excited to see how these efforts will promote development in Africa. Support for open contracting will help deliver better results for governments, businesses and citizen.

We think that open contracting could be a game-changer for development in Africa.

Sincerely,



National signatories

1. **ACTION Namibia Coalition**, Namibia
2. **Africa Freedom of Information Centre**, Uganda
3. **AfroLeadership**, Cameroon
4. **AnnPeters Global Humanitarian Foundation (APGHF)**, Nigeria
5. **BudgIT**, Nigeria
6. **Center for Media Studies and Peace Building**, Liberia
7. **Centre for Sustainable Investment in Africa**, Burkina Faso
8. **Centre for Youths Integrated Development (CYID)**, Nigeria
9. **Cercle de Réflexion et d'Information pour la consolidation de la démocratie (Cri-2002)**, Mali
10. **Childlink Foundation**, Ghana
11. **Chile Transparente**, Chile
12. **Civil Society Advocacy Network on Climate Change and the Environment**, Sierra Leone
13. **Connected Development (CODE)**, Nigeria
14. **CSYM HUDUMA Christian Spiritual Youth Ministry**, Tanzania
15. **Development Dynamics**, Nigeria
16. **ECD Manyara**, Tanzania
17. **Elgeyo Marakwet County Human Rights Network (EMCHurinet)**, Kenya
18. **ePaństwo Foundation (EPF)**, Poland
19. **Fisayo Alo - Good Governance Africa**, Nigeria
20. **Fundación para el Desarrollo de la Libertad Ciudadana**, Panama
21. **Global Network of Civil Societies on Disaster Reduction (GNDR)**, Kenya
22. **Health For All Coalition**, Sierra Leone
23. **Initiative pour la Justice Sociale la Transparence et la Bonne Gouvernance (Social Justice)**, Côte d'Ivoire
24. **Institute for Youth Socio-Economic Development (IYSED)**, Tanzania
25. **Kejibaus Youth Development Initiative (KYDI)**, Nigeria
26. **Ligue Congolaise de Lutte contre la Corruption**, DR Congo
27. **Media Institute of Southern Africa**, Namibia
28. **Namibia Media Trust**, Namibia
29. **New Line Social Organization (NLSO) Afghanistan Youth**, Afghanistan
30. **Observatoire d'Etudes et d'Appui à la Responsabilité Sociale et Environnementale (OEARSE)**, DR Congo
31. **Open Knowledge Foundation Deutschland e.V.**, Germany
32. **Pamoja Youth Initiative**, Tanzania
33. **Policy Alert**, Nigeria
34. **@ProfessorUNCAC**
35. **Public and Private Development Centre**, Nigeria
36. **Rencontre pour la Paix et les Droits de l'Homme**, Congo-Brazzaville
37. **Social Watch Bénin**, Benin
38. **Society for Economic Empowerment and Entrepreneurship Development (SEEED)**, Nigeria
39. **Socio-Economic Rights and Accountability Project (SERAP)**, Nigeria



40. **Stefan Batory Foundation**, Poland
41. **TCPI Group**, South Africa
42. **The Kenyan Section of the International Commission of Jurists**, Kenya
43. **The Open Democracy Advice Centre**, South Africa
44. **The South African History Archive**, South Africa
45. **Tools for Solidarity**, Ireland
46. **Transparency Deutschland e.V.**, Germany
47. **Transparency International Cameroon**, Cameroon
48. **Triumphant Hand of Mercy Initiative (THOMI)**, South Africa
49. **Youth Network for Reform (YONER-LIBERIA)**, Liberia

International signatories

1. **Article 19**
2. **Development Gateway**
3. **Hivos Open Contracting Program**
4. **ONE**
5. **Open Data Institute**
6. **OpenCorporates**
7. **Open Contracting Partnership**
8. **World Wide Web Foundation**
9. **Transparency International**
10. **UNCAC Coalition**

Coordination

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