



African Platform on Access to Information (APAI)

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Mr. Jan Walliser
Vice President
Equitable Growth, Finance & Institutions
The World Bank

RE: Access to Information at the World Bank

The above subject matter refers.

Thank you for your response of June 18, 2016 regarding civil society concerns on the closure of access to information central unit at the World Bank. We would like to share feedback of civil society leaders from all regions.

We welcome World Bank's reassurance that it remains committed to the advancement of citizens' access to information as a key pillar for good governance, fiscal transparency, sound public financing management, and citizen engagement in the development process which are vital for boosting shared prosperity and realization of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Further, we appreciate the World Bank's invitation to civil society's continued engagement and collaboration in its support to countries to achieve open governance, greater citizen engagement and prosperity for all.

We note with appreciation the initiative of the Global Partnership for Social Accountability which has enabled civil society access funding and technical assistance to advance various social accountability issues including citizens' access to information. We recommend that the World Bank and other donors should continue to support and scale up this important initiative.

However, while noting that transfer of certain ATI support roles from the centre to regional units may increase accessibility to the bank's support by CSOs and clients, a number of areas remain unclear:

- a) Will the World Bank continue to effectively engage on ATI at global level on key platforms like SDGs, open government and open contracting without staff at the centre, how will this work from regional units?
- b) Civil society appreciates the bank's support for ATI in 20 operations in Africa and other regions. Do these cover specific technical assistance for governments to implement ATI or funding for civil society to demand transparency accountability?
- c) One of the World Bank's strategic support has been facilitating Special Rapporteurs, government and civil society leaders to engage key process to augment ATI, will this continue and how effective will this be with coordination being at regional centres?
- d) With more countries enacting ATI laws, the World Bank started an important initiative of elaborating ATI implementation methodology. This is timely in relation to SDG 16.10.2. How

this will be transmitted to regional offices for their use and deployment, will there be dedicated staff and budget for ATI?

Civil society ATI advocates are deeply concerned that while they have had long standing valued collaboration with the World Bank, they were not consulted on the closure of the bank's ATI central unit despite its likely negative impact on national, regional and global transparency agenda.

Finally, recent civil society efforts to obtain information regarding the World Bank's new ATI strategy have so far not yielded fruits.

In view of the above civil society request:

- i. Copy of the World Bank's new ATI strategy
- ii. A meeting to obtain clarity on the above issues and discuss the World Bank's ATI agenda

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