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CLD Submits Ideas for Open Government in Canada

The Canadian government is currently preparing its third Action Plan on Open Government for the Open Government Partnership (OGP), which will run from 2016-2018. As part of this, the government has invited the public to submit ideas for the Plan, in line with OGP rules, which require governments to consult with the public when developing commitments on improving open government. Today, the Centre for Law and Democracy (CLD) released six recommendations for improving openness.

“CLD has been critical of the first two Action Plans for failing to address areas where reform is badly needed and for not paying sufficient attention to stakeholder inputs,” said CLD’s Senior Legal Officer, Michael Karanicolas. *“Nonetheless, we are hopeful that this Action Plan will incorporate strong and ambitious commitments.”*

The document notes shortcomings in Canada’s OGP participation up to this point, and urges the government to improve consultations both for developing its commitments and for implementation and monitoring of those commitments, once adopted. CLD’s leading suggestion remains reform of the Access to Information Act, something virtually every major stakeholder has called for since the OGP was launched. The present government has committed to improving the Act, but is proposing a delay until 2018, something CLD strongly objects to, given the urgency of reform needs.

CLD also recommends that the government:

- Do away with crown copyright and publish all materials produced by the government.
- Create a central registry of the beneficial owners of companies.
- Publish all government contracts over \$5,000.
- Publish the reasons underlying any competitive award above \$10,000.

CLD’s full Submission is available at: www.law-democracy.org/live/cld-submits-ideas-for-open-government-in-canada/.

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