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*Patron, Sir Don McKinnon*

**TINZ Media Release**

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Transparency International New Zealand  
Wellington New Zealand

**Government warned not to squander critical partnership opportunity.**

“If the Government is serious in its pledge for New Zealand to have a truly open and accountable government, then it’s time for it to walk the talk” says Transparency International’s New Zealand Chair Suzanne Snively.

New Zealand signed up to the Open Government Partnership (OGP) in late 2013 and is obliged to consult citizens, but Ms Snively says the 24-day window proposed for public feedback is insulting and, if anything, undermines the principle of “Open Government”.

“The grand challenge of the Open Government Partnership is for governments to re-engage with the people in an open and democratic way. It offers a precious opportunity to cement New Zealand’s place in the front rank of the world’s democracies.

“The OGP and its National Action Plan empower New Zealanders to deliver to the Government their priorities and concerns about Government initiatives and policies, whatever they may be – including such core public policy issues as affordable housing or the health spend.

“So, a three week on-line consultation period looks like they're just “ticking the box” rather than engaging in meaningful consultation”, Ms Snively says.

“Unlike New Zealand’s membership of the Security Council, few New Zealanders know what the OGP is. That’s a real issue, because the Open Government Partnership stands to have a much more marked long term impact than New Zealand’s brief, two- year term on the UN Security Council” she says.

“Importantly, the OGP mustn’t be allowed to degenerate into a charade. We’d like to see something of the same intent, energy and resources dedicated to breathing life into the Open Government Partnership that the Government put into securing New Zealand’s seat on the Security Council. “ she said.

“Transparency International New Zealand has been supporting and promoting New Zealand’s involvement in the Open Government Partnership since the inception of the OGP in 2011.”

“TINZ welcomes the long awaited appointment of the OGP Stakeholder Advisory Group announced this week by State Services Commissioner, Ian Rennie. TINZ director, Fuimaono Tuiasau, has been appointed Chair of the Group,” says Ms Snively.

“We earned our place on the Security Council in large part because of our international reputation for being an open, inclusive, engaged democracy.”

“Let’s not squander that reputation and good will by paying mere lip service to the principles of open government.”

“Instead, we should provide sufficient time and resources for meaningful consultation within the framework of the Open Government Partnership – and then base a National Action Plan on it” she said.

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## BACKGROUND

- State Service Commission Press Release on Appointment of the OGP Stakeholder Advisory Group, 4 August 2015 <http://www.ssc.govt.nz/advisory-group-open-government-partnership-appointed>
- *Reference to public engagement in the 4 August 2015 release* “The State Services Commission will also run an online engagement process through <https://www.govt.nz/browse/engaging-with-government/ogp/> to collect further feedback from New Zealanders about our OGP commitments. All New Zealanders are encouraged to participate in the discussion, which will take place from 4 August to 28 August.”

### ***Open Government Background information***

- Open Government Partnership 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 then, OGP has grown from 8 countries to the 66 participating countries indicated on the map below. In all of these countries, government and civil society are working together to develop and implement ambitious open government reforms. <http://www.opengovpartnership.org/>
- Open Government in New Zealand website <http://www.opengovpartnership.org/country/new-zealand>
- Open Government Partnership New Zealand Action Plan, refer <http://www.ssc.govt.nz/nz-ogp-action-plan>
- 1 November 2013 Press release from the National Government announcing NZ is a signatory to Open Government Partnership <http://www.beehive.govt.nz/release/nz-join-open-government-partnership>

### **Notes to editors:**

1. **About Transparency International New Zealand:**

Transparency International New Zealand (TINZ) is the local chapter of the global organisation - <http://www.transparency.org.nz/>. TINZ works to actively promote the highest levels of transparency, accountability, integrity and public participation in government and civil society in New Zealand and the Pacific Islands.

Transparency International New Zealand provides a free [Anti-Corruption Training Tool](#) designed by leading experts in the field, and enables organisations to provide training for their personnel. This was developed in partnership with the Serious Fraud Office and BusinessNZ

Transparency International New Zealand published the [Integrity Plus 2013 New Zealand National Integrity System Assessment](#) and is actively engaged in the implementation of its recommendations.

## 2. **About Transparency International**

Transparency International is the global civil society coalition leading the fight against corruption - <http://www.transparency.org/>.

## 3. **For further enquiries please contact:**

Note- recommended contact is TINZ Chair, Suzanne Snively. She can be reached by email, Skype or cell phone.

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