ANNEX B. ACTION PLAN ON ENHANCING REPRESENTATION, PARTICIPATION AND OPENNESS IN PUBLIC LIFE[1]

The following are the key public governance areas for governments in OECD countries to reinforce their efforts in order to enhance representation, participation and openness in public life, building on the PGC's work and on existing and future work of relevant OECD committees.

Key Area 1 – Creating Opportunities for Inclusive Public Participation and Deliberation

Promote a more structured and institutionalised approach to participation and deliberation by:

- Identifying opportunities, areas and levels of government where participative and deliberative processes can be established in policymaking, public decision making, and service design and delivery, and enhancing existing mechanisms, such as social dialogue;

- Encouraging the involvement of citizens and stakeholders in such a way as to ensure that their contributions have more transparent and measurable impacts, and by regularly evaluating those processes;

- Moving away from an ad hoc approach towards identifying appropriate opportunities to institutionalise participative and deliberative processes so as to ensure effective and quality support to existing policymaking and decision-making mechanisms of the executive and elected bodies;

- Designing citizen participation and deliberation processes in a way that breaks down barriers to participation and encourages people to take part;

- Fostering a culture of, and building capacities for, participation and deliberation in the civil service and in society at large by, for example, including relevant objectives in existing Open Government Action Plans or, when relevant, developing a national Democracy Strategy;

- Providing up to date, useful and reliable data to citizens, ensuring that access to information requests are answered quickly and completely with a transparent use of exceptions, a clear appeals process; and

- Communicating with and listening to citizens through online and offline channels, while using the same channels to foster dialogue.

Protect and promote civic space as a precondition for public participation and deliberation by:

- Advancing a comprehensive approach to protecting civic space guided by a clear policy position on the value and importance of engaging with civil society in policymaking and decision-making, to ensure that actions across government are co-ordinated;

- Strengthening the implementation of civic freedoms and rights in line with relevant international standards, and fostering accessible and independent oversight and complaints mechanisms to counter and reduce violations of civic space rights;

- Enabling access to redress mechanisms to ensure protection of civic freedoms and rights linked to democratic participation and empowering citizens to claim their rights;

- Addressing discrimination, exclusion, and marginalisation, that disproportionately affect certain groups and act as an obstacle to equal participation; and

- Fostering informed and vibrant public debate by supporting and protecting healthy online and offline information ecosystems, including by safeguarding and promoting the right to access data and information, supporting national and local media and protecting journalists (see action plan on Combating Mis- and dis-information).

Key Area 2 – Strengthening Democratic Representation

Make executives and elected bodies more diverse and representative of the population by:

- Facilitating better representation of women, young people and other under-represented groups through the identification of barriers to their representation and the implementation of appropriate measures, including by assessing the impact of electoral systems to inclusive representation.

Promote integrity in democratic institutions and elected officials by:

- Strengthening government integrity systems, including in electoral processes by increasing transparency of the financing of political parties and election campaigns and countering foreign interference; and

- Cultivating a culture of political integrity, in particular by setting clear standards, oversight and accountability mechanisms for elected and appointed officials.

Address undue influence on government policy by:

- Ensuring transparency on who is influencing government policies through lobbying and all other forms of influence, including through digital means;

- Strengthening integrity standards for public officials tailored to the risks of undue influence; and

- Engaging with the private sector and civil society to promote their adherence to transparency and integrity standards in their relationship with government.

Foster a diverse, representative, and responsive civil service by:

- Strengthening diversity in the public sector workforce, as well as inter-generational learning between older and younger employees;

- Providing training and skills, as well as developing concrete and applicable goals for an open and participatory civil service that would enable it to be more responsive;

- Taking stock of barriers in the pipeline for senior management positions and horizontal segregation to enable balanced representation of diverse societal groups across all decision-making levels; and

- Monitoring progress through concrete targets measured through more data collection and use.

Deliver on the promise of more inclusive policies by:

- Developing explicit provisions to support the integration of the needs of underrepresented groups into policy making through strengthened mainstreaming processes; and

- Improving the availability and use of diversity-related data and evidence, and documenting the policy impacts of and lessons learned from its use.

Working collectively through the OECD

- Collect data, regularly take stock of progress and undertake comparative analyses of the experiences and good practices of countries (at national, regional and local level) in strengthening participation representation and openness, including, for example, by furthering the forthcoming **OECD Open, Participatory and Representative Government Index** and the analysis in specific public governance areas.

- Monitor people's perception of opportunities for participation and representation and assessment of government's responsiveness and openness to people's needs and wants through the **OECD Survey on the Drivers of Trust in Public Institutions**.

- Strengthen the professionalisation of the public communication function by connecting policy analysis, data collection, training and peer-to-peer exchange for an effective, citizen-centred public communication function.

Box A. Pillar 2 Additional focused Action Plan on Gender Equality

To support the implementation of the relevant OECD Gender Recommendations [C/MIN(2022)7], and with a view to enable women's full representation and participation in public life:

Establish adequate capabilities, expertise and capacities within public institutions to close persistent gender gaps that hamper women from diverse backgrounds from fully participating in public life, by:

- Collecting high-quality, timely and reliable data and evidence disaggregated by gender and other characteristics under a strategic framework and through a co-ordinated approach between various data producers and users;

- Applying such evidence to inform public policy decisions and adapt governance tools to reduce barriers to gender equality, and address potential gender bias and all forms of discrimination, with an intersectional lens;

- Improving the understanding of how public policy decisions are influencing gender equality outcomes, based on gender stereotypes, negative social norms and biases;

- Ensuring the implementation of gender equality objectives, including in the area of full, equal and meaningful participation, leadership and representation at all levels, by enhancing transparency, accountability, monitoring and oversight; and

- Assigning clear responsibilities and establishing the necessary structures to improve access to redress mechanisms and justice, to tackle overt or implicit gender bias and all forms of discrimination in all government action.

Eliminate all barriers to women and girl's full, equal and meaningful representation, leadership and participation in public life and potential bias and discrimination, by:

- Ensuring fair pay and transparency;

- Taking measures to tackle all forms of violence and harassment both online and offline;

- Undertaking concrete steps to remove structural barriers and systemic disadvantages faced by women and girls;

- Developing innovative behavioural responses in addressing social biases and negative social norms within public institutions; and

- Adopting inclusive laws, policies and practices in public institutions, including in elected bodies.

Facilitate equal access to leadership in public life, including in politics, by:

- Strengthening leadership skills to promote gender equality and empower women and girls;

- Using a mix of mandatory and voluntary measures, incentives, and sanctions; and

- Making public commitments to promote women's leadership.

Remove all barriers, both overt and implicit, from legal or policy frameworks to close gender gaps and compounding inequalities as well as address all stereotypes, gender-based violence and sexual harassment, which hamper women's and girls' representation and participation in public life.

Working collectively through the OECD

- Continuing supporting Members through a whole-of-government lens to implement the OECD Gender Recommendations in particular on Gender Equality in Public Life through strengthening existing lines of work including comparative analyses and tailored country work; as well as by strengthening work to build government capacities for the collection and use of data and evidence disaggregated by gender and other characteristics, gender analysis and robust recourse and measurement mechanisms;

- Deepening analysis and mainstream gender across all pillars and horizontal themes of the Reinforcing Democracy Initiative;

- Strengthening collaboration between OECD committees, as relevant, to advance gender mainstreaming across all policy areas with a view to reinforce governments' capacities and capabilities to address gender gaps in all spheres of professional life, in leadership, in green and digital governance, in care economy, and eliminate gender-based violence, negative social norms and all stereotypes with an intersectional lens, including by hosting annual flagship events; and

- Integrating a gender perspective across all the Public Governance Committee's surveys and reports.