

**MINUTES OF THE AFRICAN ALLIANCE FOR ACCESS TO DATA HELD ON 27TH
FEBRUARY 2025 VIA ZOOM AT 2:00 PM SAST**

MEMBERS PRESENT

S/No.	NAME
1.	Guy Berger
2.	Ivy Gikonyo
3.	Aurelia Ayisi
4.	John Tshinseki
5.	Alison Gillwald
6.	Anriette Esterhuysen
7.	NMT Media Foundation
8.	Rosemary Okello-Orlale
9.	Penplusbytes New Media Hub
10.	Alfred Bulakali
11.	Janet Gbam
12.	Maxwell Kadiri
13.	Izak Minnaar
14.	Stephen Moore
15.	Gilbert Sendugwa
16.	Laeed Zaghlami

AGENDA

Chair: Prof Guy Berger

Hlengiwe Dube, Centre for Human Rights

1. Welcome and new participant introductions (2 mins each = 6 mins)
2. Approval of previous minutes (10 minutes)

Concrete follow-up issues:

- a. Article 19 engagements on the upcoming joint statement of the Rapporteurs (Alfred)
- b. Sessions featuring ACHPR resolution on ATD at DRIF, African Media Summit, OGP, African media festival: Updates from (respectively Thobekile and John; Churchill; Gilbert, Izak).

3. Formalising the Alliance (15 mins) - (Chair)
4. Update from volunteers to develop a position paper on taking forward the ATD instrument (Edet), and responses to Online form for taking forward the ATD instrument as per ACHPR resolution (Guy)

5. Fundraising update (5 mins) – (Liz, Guy)
6. Updated Calendar of events 2025 where ATD and the ACHPR Resolution could be advocated (4 mins) - (Chair)
7. AOB (5 mins)

MIN 1/FEB: WELCOME

The meeting was called to order at 2:00 PM by Guy who acted as Chair due to Hlengiwe having an unexpected commitment in another meeting. After welcoming members, he requested for suggestions on new members that can be approached and requested for contacts [Data For Governance Alliance](#) via Afrobarometer and the [Africa Open Data and Internet Research Foundation](#)). He also gave apologies from Mukelani and Vusumuzi.

Action points: Alliance members to kindly suggest additional members.

MIN 2/FEB: APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MINUTES

The minutes of the previous meeting were read and approved as accurate.

a. Article 19 engagements on the upcoming joint statement of the Rapporteurs to include access to data.

Alfred explained that he shared with colleagues who work with the Rapporteurs on the joint statement for World Press Freedom Day, and they were excited about the Alliance's work and will reach out to the Rapporteurs although they could not commit to a timeline within which they would give feedback. He suggested that the African rapporteur also be encouraged to raise it with the other rapporteurs.

b. Sessions featuring [ACHPR resolution on ATD](#) at DRIF, African Media Summit, OGP, African media festival

John explained that they had put in two session proposals for DRIF and were expecting feedback by 7 March. Guy thanked Hlengiwe for doing the Alliance proposal.

Alfred said that he was aware that Article 19 East Africa had been in touch with Gilbert, about Alliance participation in the upcoming Open Government Partnership meeting in Nairobi.

Izak reported that he had got an opportunity to talk about the Alliance at the African Media Festival in Nairobi.

Guy recognized Ivy and thanked her for putting the minutes together.

Action points: Rapporteur to be contacted, Colleagues to update further at next meeting.

MIN 3/FEB: FORMALISING THE ALLIANCE

Guy shared [the document formalizing the Alliance](#). He explained the various classes of members, in the steering committee, and associate members, and the possible sub-committees to show how individuals and organisations can be involved. Guy explained that once the structure was approved, suggestions of names could be given by members. He also asked for members' input on the steering committee's proposed structure and composition. Alfred expressed support.

Rosemary proposed the inclusion of people living with disabilities. The idea was well received as an inclusionary criterion for participants from the different regions.

On the sub-committees, Ivy proposed the addition of a subcommittee on Artificial Intelligence and data. Anriette suggested that some sub-committees be merged, and that provision be made for ad hoc task force groups responding to particular issues.

Action points: Alliance members are asked to check with their organisations concerning formal representatives for the Steering Committee, and to suggest names to propose for possible committee members coming from the 5 regions (candidacies from disabled communities encouraged). A new proposal for sub-committees to be presented for the next meeting. (Update: Alliance members [asked to complete the form here](#) on these topics.)

MIN 4/FEB: UPDATE FROM VOLUNTEERS TO DEVELOP A POSITION PAPER ON TAKING FORWARD THE ATD INSTRUMENT AND RESPONSES TO ONLINE FORM FOR TAKING FORWARD THE ATD INSTRUMENT AS PER ACHPR RESOLUTION

Guy thanked members for their feedback the publicization of the ACHPR Resolution noting that 15 responses had been received, with many saying they could use the Resolution in training and webinars. He also pointed out a mixed display of preferences for different instruments to advance Access to Data, as per the mandate of the Resolution to the Rapporteur. People had added the suggestion of "Guidelines" in addition to options for "Declaration", "Statement", "Model Law", and amendments to existing ACHPR instruments.

Maxwell pointed out that a Declaration was relatively low-hanging fruit, but another option was for aim for a Protocol, which would however require a lot of work from the Commission to take forward to be signed by heads of state. He explained this is ambitious but doable given the importance of data. He also noted that other options, like Guidelines, are within the remit of the ACHPR itself, are good even though not binding like a protocol. He noted that because a protocol is negotiated by state actors, the Alliance would not be directly able to help shape the outcome.

Gilbert suggested that the options were not mutually exclusive, meaning that it would be possible to work for Guidelines in the shorter-term and for a Protocol in the longer term.

Anriette proposed the importance of explaining to information regulators/DPAs what the Resolution means. The need was not for new normative standards, but for what can be implemented, drawing also from what exists from the ACHPR. For many people working on

ATI/FOI, how the Resolution applies to them and how they should implement it might not be clear. She suggested a simple easy to use FAQ and a set of Guidelines on what it means in practical terms for these specific groups. This could also be used as a tool in data literacy training. She also pointed out the risk that some ACHPR instruments are not known or implemented, noting like Maxwell that the Alliance would need to undertake advocacy whatever instrument was envisaged. She also encouraged research into how existing ATI laws could be used or amended to encompass data access.

Guy requested Maxwell, Gilbert and Anriette to draft a position paper on the pros and cons of the different possible approaches. Gilbert agreed to do a draft which would then be improved on by the others.

Action points: G, M and A to do a draft within a week, that can be put online for other members to comment on, and a second version can be discussed with the Rapporteur on the sidelines of DRIF.

MIN 5/FEB: FUNDRAISING UPDATE

Guy and Liz had asked Luminate if they could help sponsor interested Alliance members to attend DRIF in Lusaka where an in-person side-meeting of the Alliance could plan further on taking forwards the ACHPR resolution. Interested members to share their names with Guy. Liz had also written a concept note to Carnegie Endowment Africa Programme, suggesting a joint event.

Action points: Members to propose for sponsorship to go to DRIF, to advise Guy. Liz to follow up on Carnegie.

MIN 4/FEB: CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Members looked at, and added to, the updated [calendar of events](#) of relevance to the Alliance:

Month	Date	Event
February	26-27	Africa Media Festival (Nairobi)
March	1-7	Open Data Day
	First 2 weeks	Meeting of ACHPR 82nd session
	25-27	2025 OGP Africa and the Middle East Regional Meeting
April	7 -11	UN Commission on Science and Technology, Data governance working group.
	29 – 1 May	DRIF - Digital Rights and Inclusion Forum (Lusaka)
May	3	World Press Freedom Day
	28-31	Africa IGF (Arusha)
	29-31	African Media Convention (Marakesh)
	29-31	Cybertech conference (Lusaka)
June	13-14	G20 – UNESCO High Level workshop on Data Governance, consultation on Issue Brief

September	3-5	Media viability conference (GIBS, Johannesburg)
	TBA	M20 media conference
	24-25	Planned launch of G20 Digital Economy Working Group guidelines on Data for MSMEs, startups and researchers to promote data sharing with and by the public and private sectors
	25	Possible AI conference on AI with G20, AU, UNESCO and others
	28	International Day for Universal Access to Information
October	1-2	African Fact-Checkers Summit
November	5-7	African Investigative Journalism Conference (Johannesburg)
	TBA	African IGF

MIN 6/JAN: AOB

Guy asked members to share with him suggestions for the next meeting's agenda.

MIN 7/JAN: ADJOURNMENT

The meeting ended at 3:03 pm.