

**MINUTES OF THE AFRICAN ALLIANCE FOR ACCESS TO DATA HELD ON 27TH
FEBRUARY 2026 VIA ZOOM AT 12:00 PM SAST**

MEMBERS PRESENT

S/No.	NAME
1.	Guy Berger
2.	Angela Minayo
3.	Bulanda T. Nkhowani
4.	Belinda Matore
5.	Christopher Musodza Fungai
6.	Francis P. Crawley
7.	Jerry Sam
8.	Kwami Ahiabenu
9.	Marystella Simiyu (IPI)
10.	Mercy Abiro
11.	Mukelani Dimba
12.	Nnenna Nwakanma
13.	Olunifesi Suraj
14.	Ompa Tshamano
15.	Osei Kagyah
16.	Rosemary Wolson
17.	Stephen E. Moore
18.	Viola Ochola
19.	Vusumuzi Sifile
20.	Rosemary Okello-Orlale
21.	Christine Ajulu
22.	John
23.	Tshepiso Hadebe

AGENDA

Chair: Guy Berger

1. Welcome, new participants' introduction, adoption of Jan 2026 minutes
2. Report back on Guidelines process with Rapporteur (Guy)
3. Report back on Alliance at the UNESCO conference on digital governance (Alfred and Zoe on the AAAD panel session, Pria or Hlengiwe on the meeting with Tech companies)
4. Next steps: action plan discussions in Lusaka after UNESCO World Press Freedom Day May 4–5, 2026. Who will be there? Possible survey for expressions of interest for target countries (Guy)
5. Report back on UN's CSTD working group on data governance (Olunifesi)
6. Report back on 2026 Africa Editors' Congress, 23–24 Feb (Rosemary, Izak, Churchill)
7. Any news on proposals for Alliance at Digital Rights and Inclusion Forum (Hlengiwe)
8. AOB and Closure

MIN 1/FEBRUARY: WELCOME, INTRODUCTIONS, AND ADOPTION OF MINUTES

The meeting was chaired by Guy Berger with apologies from Hlengiwe Dube who usually chairs the monthly engagements. Belinda Matore agreed to take minutes. New members Osei Kagyah (West African Youth IGF) and Christine Ajulu (Open Institute Nairobi) introduced themselves. [The minutes of the January 2026 meeting](#) were reviewed and adopted, with a correction to the reference on the Guidelines version (should be 4, not 34).

On news, Guy reported representing the Alliance at the council of the African Open Science Platform in February, [with a link to an article](#) on this. He also [drew attention to a recent article](#) highlighting international business interest and controversy over access to colonial era African data. William posted a link to a [recent article on data sovereignty](#) challenges from the US. Guy also flagged how the chair of South Africa's Independent Election Commission had [recently called for access to platform data](#).

Francis P Crawley mentioned the concept of “data visitation” raised by the Human Genome Project II at the India AI summit. A related paper is [online here](#). Further reference was [BioVault: A privacy-first data visitation platform for equitable global collaboration in biomedicine](#). There were possible plans to follow up at an African Regional Forum ([ARSTIF](#)) Sunday to Monday 26-27 April 2026. He also flagged as relevant to the Alliance the 28-30 April [Twelfth Session of the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development](#).

Action Points arising:

- Marystella Simiyu to share IPI's environmental information guidelines draft and updates before the next meeting.
- Guy to add the IPI guidelines link to future agenda.
- The Agenda document reference to “Recently published: toolkit on Data governance compiled for the G20 in 2025 by Guy” lacked a URL. The link is [here](#).

MIN 2/FEBRUARY: REPORT BACK ON GUIDELINES PROCESS WITH RAPPORTEUR

Guy reported the formal submission of the draft Guidelines to the Rapporteur, also thanking Ernesto Nhanale of Misa and Alfred Bulakali of Article 19 for translations into Portuguese and French. He noted the upcoming March 9 ACHPR presentation and a likely three-month consultation period thereafter. Members were encouraged to prepare comments. The Rapporteur has been mandated by the ACHPR to update the Model Law on Access to Information, and may request the Alliance for support.

Action Points:

- Guy to keep members updated on the ACHPR guidelines process (ongoing).
- Members to consider additional comments for the expected upcoming ACHPR consultation after the March 9 presentation.
- Francis to share an article on data visitation as part of data access.
- Members to consider proposing references to data visitation in the Guidelines

MIN 3/FEBRUARY: REPORT BACK ON ALLIANCE AT THE UNESCO CONFERENCE

At the UNESCO conference in Pretoria in February, on Governance of Digital Platforms, the AAAD held [a well-attended panel](#) along with the ACHPR Rapporteur, Commissioner Geereesha Topsy Sonoo. Mukelani highlighted discussion on how the draft Guidelines promoted trust and openness in data sharing, and Guy spoke about discussions on co-operation between the public sector (Statistics agencies) and the private sector. There was also a side meeting, organised by RIA, between the Alliance and tech companies (Google, Meta, TikTok, MTN) which showed strong tech interest in the Guidelines.

Action Points:

- RIA's Tshepiso Hadebe to alert tech companies on opportunities to give comment on Guidelines concerning the expected upcoming ACHPR consultation (ongoing).

MIN 4/FEBRUARY: LUSAKA EVENTS AND ACTION PLAN

The Alliance plans to use the Lusaka events (May 4-5 for World Press Freedom Day and May 6-8 for RightsCon) to advance its action plan and select five target countries for focused activities. Viola noted that it could be an occasion to discuss AI Accountability and/or Creating a community of activists and tech co. representatives to discuss concrete steps for implementing/improving human rights/data access issues.

Confirmed attendees who will be there, and possibly available for a panel, include Vusumuzi Sifile, Nompilo Simanje, Bulanda T. Nkhowani, and Ompha Tshamano. Alliance members Osei Kagyah, Viola Ochola Commissioner Dorothy Jemator, Christine Ajulu, Stephen E. Moore, and Nnenna Nwakanma could possibly attend pending travel support.

It was mentioned that RightsCon had a panel by the Datasphere NGO which might be interested in including an Alliance speaker.

A survey will be sent to all members to identify further interest and possible target countries. Planning for side events and public panels is underway and securing funding for participation remains a priority.

Mukelani flagged the IDUAI-ICIC conference in Sierra Leone (28-30 September), saying that a call for expression of interest to organise panels and identify plenary topics will be issued in the next 2 to 3 weeks.

Action Points:

- Vusumuzi Sifile will seek to gather and share Lusaka event programs as soon as possible.
- Members to indicate attendance/support needs for Lusaka as soon as possible.
- Guy Berger will ask Luminare for support (as soon as possible).
- Survey to be sent for broader participation and target country selection.

MIN 5/FEBRUARY: REPORT BACK ON UN'S CSTD WORKING GROUP

Olunifesi Suraj reported on his input representing the Alliance as observer at the UN's CSTD working group on data governance. It covered data sovereignty issues from the Nigerian experience, and was well-received. Guy encouraged that the "other side of the coin", namely access to data, also be injected into the Working Group discussions.

Action Points:

- Olunifesi to share a document on Chinese data policy when available.
- Olunifesi and Liz Orembo to maintain liaison with the CSTD (ongoing).

MIN 6/FEBRUARY: AFRICA EDITORS' CONGRESS REPORT

Rosemary described the Congress as a success, with strong media interest in data access and potential partnerships. A panel by the Alliance was convened with Article 19's Sarah Wesonga as moderator, and featuring Rosemary, Guy and Cipesa's Juliet Nanfuka. An article is [here](#).

Action Points:

- Rosemary to write and share an article on the congress as soon as possible.
- Guy to add a link to an article on the panel to the minutes.
- Marystella and Rosemary to coordinate bi-laterally on environmental journalism collaboration.

MIN 7/FEBRUARY: DIGITAL RIGHTS AND INCLUSION FORUM (DRIF) PROPOSALS

No new updates were reported.

Action Points:

- Hlengiwe asked to update.

MIN 8/FEBRUARY: AOB AND CLOSURE

Christine Ajulu invited Alliance participation in the [East Africa Data Governance Conference](#) (March 10–11) and will share outcomes.

Rosemary urged integrating the Guidelines more into AU discussions on technology and linking to Agenda 2063. She further suggested activities to produce monthly analytical intelligence for the Alliance.

Olunifesi suggested a focus on data governance for elections at the next meeting. The meeting closed with thanks and confirmation of the next meeting in a month.

Action Points:

- Christine to share outcomes from the East Africa Data Governance Conference after March 10–11.
- Rosemary to liaise with Tshepiso on possible ongoing research that could for example lead to monthly analytical information for the Alliance.
- Guy Berger to add data and elections to the next agenda and invite relevant speakers for the next meeting.
- Rosemary to provide info/contact for the US public data policy initiator before the next meeting.
- Guy to invite the US policy initiator to the next meeting.