

**AFRICAN ALLIANCE ON ACCESS TO DATA AND INFORMATION
MEETING MINUTES: 20 APRIL 2026**

Meeting Type : Alliance Monthly Meeting (Virtual / Zoom)
Date : April 2026
Chair : Prof. Guy Berger
Minutes Taken By : Mukelani Dimba (with support from Belinda Motori)

1. Attendance and Apologies

Key participants included representatives from civil society, regulatory authorities, academia, and media organizations across Africa.

Apologies were noted from several members including:

- 1.1 John Okande from UNESCO,
- 1.2 Izak Minnaar SA National Editors Forum,
- 1.3 Pria Chetty and Mpho Moyo from Research ICT Africa.

The meeting noted the participation of new members, namely:

- Isha Mujumba, Commission on Administrative Justice, Kenya
- Winston Male, Editor-in-chief of Africa Brief, Malawi
- Emmanuel Okwi, Centre for Multilateral Affairs, Uganda.

Also present:

Lorraine Mwanza Chisanga (Chair, Misa, Zambia)

Guy Berger

Athandiwe Saba

Bulanda T Nkhowani

Christopher Musodza FungAI

Edetaen Ojo

Emmy Okwir Ogule

Esha Mwijuma

Gilbert Sendugwa

Jerry Sam
MaryStella Simuye
Mercy Abiro
Mukelani Dimba
Olunifesi Suraj
Ompa Tshamano
Osei Kagyah
Peace Oliver Amuge
Rosemary Okello-Orlale
Raymond B Amumpa
Sam Chibiya
Taryn de Vega

2. Opening and Adoption of Agenda

The Chair opened the meeting, welcomed participants and the agenda as circulated through the calendar invite was adopted without objections.

3. Adoption of Previous Minutes (February Meeting)

The [minutes of the February meeting](#) were reviewed. Key updates included the engagement with the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR), [publication by the ACHPR of the Guidelines](#), and engagements with UNESCO and other partners. The minutes were formally adopted without objections.

4. Matters arising

The Chair reported that limited funding had been obtained from UNESCO to facilitate the participation of the Commission on Administrative Justice (Kenya) at the RightsCon summit in Lusaka, Zambia on 05-08 May 2026. There was a chance for a West African equivalent. Luminare which previously supported attendance was not responsive. Peace Amuge reported on the Alliance's panel on data sovereignty at the Digital Rights and Inclusion Forum, in which issues of gender inclusion were discussed and Alliance member Alfred Bulakali had spoken in French for linguistic inclusion. Kimal Harvey of LRC had addressed legal aspects of implementation (news report [here](#))

5. Draft ACHPR Guidelines on Access to Data – Call for Comments

The Chair highlighted the official publication of the revised Draft Guidelines on Access to Data by the African Commission on Human & Peoples Rights (ACHPR) which encouraged submissions ahead of the July deadline. He acknowledged significant

contributions by members of the Alliance, particularly around translation into French and Portuguese, while noting the absence of Arabic translations.

Mukelani Dimba emphasized the need to broaden participation beyond civil society to include state actors and regulatory bodies. The proposed outreach targets included networks of information commissions, data protection authorities, communications regulators (CRASA – which now includes data protection authorities in southern Africa, NADPA, ACRAN), and community-centred connectivity initiatives/community networks.

Action by: Mukelani Dimba can contact ANIC and NADPA (based in Morocco); Anyone available to alert CRASA and ACRAN?

5. Outreach to Strategic Networks

Members committed to reaching out to their own and other networks including APC, community networks, networks of election management bodies, media associations, pan-African legal associations, strategic litigators, and scientific and health research communities to encourage submissions on the draft guidelines.

Francis Crawley briefed the meeting on the 12th session of the [African Regional Forum on Sustainable Development](#). He indicated that they have a side event on [data visitation](#)* for health and precision medicine or public health as part of working with the African Open Science Platform and the Human Genome Project 2. He indicated that this could be a very good opportunity to talk about access to data.

**Data visitation means using code to go to data, rather than moving the data to a central place or having to go personally and visit the data, but using AI and code to visit the data, which will be area of major concern with regard to data access in the future.*

Lastly, Francis Crawley indicated that he knows two colleagues who would probably be happy to assist with the translation of the Guidelines into Arabic.

Francis stressed the need for law and cultural awareness on data access, Gilbert the need for awareness raising, Rosemary on addressing data literacy as well as serving marginalized communities and ensuring safety of citizens' data held by governments. The importance of addressing data silos and data management in governments was raised by Esha Mwijuma.

Action by: Peace Amuge (Community networks), Gilbert Sendugwa (electoral observer missions), Francis Crawley (invitation to AOSP event, Raymond Amumpaire (legal networks incl Lawyers Hub).

6. Proposed Implementation Planning Survey

[A draft survey for Alliance members](#) aimed at guiding post-adoption implementation planning was presented. The survey focuses on country priorities, stakeholder engagement, legal and advocacy strategies, institutional capacity, and funding opportunities.

Members recommended strengthening the survey to address national data management frameworks, data literacy, citizen data rights, sovereign data governance, and integration with African Union processes. Members were encouraged to complete the survey. This would help ensure the Guidelines were not a lion without teeth.

Action: The Chair undertook to revise the survey accordingly.

7. Forthcoming Events and Engagements

Members reported on recent and upcoming events including the Digital Rights and Inclusion Forum (DRIF), RightsCon, World Press Freedom Day, Africa Media Convention (Lusaka), and AI Governance Day Zero events. A side event on the Guidelines implementation planning is scheduled for 5 May in Lusaka. Bulanda Nkhowani advised the relevance to the Alliance of the regional dialogue on building meaningful AI governance to be held by Cipesa and the Global Centre on AI Governance, 5 May, 9-4pm, Grand Palace Hotel.

8. ACHPR Resolution on Access to Environmental Information

An update was provided by Dr Mary Stella Simuye on a recently adopted ACHPR [resolution](#) linking access to information with the right to a healthy environment, including protections for environmental journalists and recognition of SLAPPs. Members were encouraged to review and align ongoing advocacy with this resolution.

9. Communications and Awareness

It was agreed that a short position statement linking the Draft Guidelines to World Press Freedom Day would be drafted and circulated. Rosemary Okello-Orlale volunteered to prepare the draft for member review.

10. Closure and Next Steps

The Chair thanked participants and emphasized the importance of sustained engagement ahead of the final adoption of the guidelines in October. Members were requested to confirm attendance for Lusaka meetings where there would be a joint session on 5 May with organisations promoting the ACHPR Resolutions 630 and 631, as well as a session to develop the implementation plan for the Guidelines*. Members were requested to continue mobilizing networks for submissions on the current draft Guidelines before deadline of 14 July.

The meeting adjourned after approximately one hour.

* Members who said they will be in Lusaka: Lorraine Mwanza Chisanga,; Gilbert Sendugwa.