



## Session Report

*Please know you may design the structure of this report to better suit the session. It's important to capture the key outcomes and solutions proposed for the future.*

**Session Title:** Building Resilience against Foreign Covert Influence through Open Government

**Date & Time:** Thursday, 08.12.2022, 5:30 pm - 7:00 pm GMT -5

**Report prepared by:** Corina Rebegea, Anti-Corruption Advisor, National Democratic Institute (NDI)

**Moderated by:** Kristen Sample, Director of Democratic Governance, National Democratic Institute (NDI)

### **Panellists:**

- Rueben Lifuka - Vice Chair, IACC Council and & Transparency International Advisory Board
- Jorge Valladares - Policy Lead, Political Integrity, Transparency International
- Solvita Denisa-Liepniece - Principal Media Literacy Advisor, Baltic Center for Media Excellence
- Joseph Foti - Open Governance Framework

### **Main outcomes of session (include quotes/highlights and interesting questions from the floor)**

Open government and transparency are key elements to building resilience against foreign covert influences. The steady autocratization in the past decade, as well as other challenges to democracy requires retooling our approaches. This includes responses to increasingly aggressive interference in democratic processes by authoritarian governments. The throughline of all these challenges is opacity and the use of covert tools of influence.

In response, there is a need for new efforts to uphold democratic principles.

Transparency measures can be a gateway reform and a safeguard against malign influences.

NDI, together with OGP and TI reflected on three main areas where opacity and authoritarian influences are extremely pernicious and where transparency and open governments can make a difference: public debt, information influence operations and political finance. Panelists discussed the scope of the problem under each category of threats, emerging challenges and possible interventions to close the opportunity for covert malign influence in these areas.

In discussing potential responses to these challenges, experts and audience members flagged:

- The interrelatedness of these challenges and the need for holistic approaches
- The importance of transparency and disclosures
- The need for cross-sectoral cooperation and for empowering citizens, particularly local communities
- The need to redefine the rules of what foreign interference constitutes and to consider the impact on the participation of democratic forces in elections
- The implementation of the rules we already have and giving oversight institutions the power to act
- The preservation of an open civic space and the need for genuine participatory processes in decision making and in monitoring/oversight
- The important role of safeguards to ensure our protective measures do not reach too far

## **Rapporteur's name and date submitted**

**Kristen Sample, 10.12.2022**