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**UNDER EMBARGO UNTIL: 26 March 2015 (EDT)**

**WORLD JUSTICE PROJECT RELEASES NEW INDEX MEASURING GOVERNMENT OPENNESS  
FROM GENERAL PUBLIC'S PERSPECTIVE**

- *Sweden top performer in the World Justice Project (WJP) Open Government Index 2015*
- *Less than half (40%) of global survey respondents knew of any laws supporting their right to access to government-held information*
- *Country-specific data & key findings available at: [worldjusticeproject.org/opengov](http://worldjusticeproject.org/opengov)*

WASHINGTON, DC (26 March, 2015) – The World Justice Project (WJP) today released the *WJP Open Government Index 2015*, the first effort to measure government openness based on the general public's experiences and perceptions. The top three overall performers in the index are Sweden (1), New Zealand (2), and Norway (3); the bottoms three are Myanmar (100), Uzbekistan (101), and Zimbabwe (102). Regional leaders also included India (S. Asia), Georgia (E. Europe & Central Asia); South Africa (Sub-Saharan Africa); Chile (Latin America & Caribbean); and Tunisia (Middle East & North Africa).

Scoring for the *WJP Open Government Index 2015* is derived from more than 100,000 household surveys and in-country expert questionnaires. The index covers a total of 102 countries and jurisdictions, and is organized around four dimensions: publicized laws and government data, right to information, civic participation, and complaint mechanisms

In addition to scores and rankings, the *WJP Open Government Index 2015* tracks the experiences of ordinary people as they request information from the government. Worldwide, less than half (40%) of survey respondents knew of any laws supporting their right to access to government-held information. Of the 11% of respondents who requested information from the government, only 72% reported receiving it—of those, 32% were unsatisfied with the process.

Detailed, experienced-based data by country (with gender and socio-economic breakouts), as well as dimensional rankings and global key insights, are available at: [worldjusticeproject.org/opengov](http://worldjusticeproject.org/opengov)

"Government openness is vital for both the government and the governed," said Juan Carlos Botero, WJP Executive Director. "Openness helps improve public service delivery, promotes government legitimacy, and encourages citizens to collaborate with their government and monitor its performance."

In addition to the Index, an accompanying report provides global insights on the relationship between open government and other aspects of governance and development, such as participation in the Open Government Partnership, gender equality, and economic development. Insights include:

- **Socio-Economic Status:** In 80% of countries low-income respondents are less aware than high-income households of their right to information. In 68% of countries low-income respondents are less likely to request information from the government. In 58% of countries low-income respondents are less likely to attend a local community meeting, and in 66% of countries low-income respondents are less likely to file an official complaint against the government.

- **Open Government and Gender:** In 76% of countries women are as likely as men to request information from a government agency. In 64% of countries women are as likely as men to attend a community meeting, and in 86% of countries women are as likely as men to file an official complaint about the quality of a public service. However, in half of all countries surveyed, women tend to be less aware than men of laws supporting their right to access government-held information.
- **Open Government Partnership:** For all levels of economic development, countries that participate in the Open Government Partnership attain higher *WJP Open Government Index 2015* scores than non-member countries.

“The WJP Open Government Index examines practical, everyday situations, such as whether people can receive public information when they request it, and whether people can raise their voice and participate in decision-making processes,” said Alejandro Ponce, WJP Chief Research Officer. “It’s our hope that this report will encourage policy choices that enhance openness, promote effective public oversight, and increase collaboration amongst public and private sectors.”

To access the *WJP Open Government Index 2015* and accompanying report—including individual country data, report methodology, and global insights— visit the website at: [worldjusticeproject.org/opengov](http://worldjusticeproject.org/opengov)

#### **TOP 10 WJP OPEN GOVERNMENT INDEX 2015 PERFORMERS**

<u>Country</u>	<u>Score</u>	<u>Global Ranking</u>
Sweden	0.81	1
New Zealand	0.81	2
Norway	0.81	3
Denmark	0.78	4
Netherlands	0.76	5
Finland	0.76	6
Canada	0.75	7
United Kingdom	0.74	8
Australia	0.74	9
Republic of Korea	0.73	10

#### **BOTTOM 10 WJP OPEN GOVERNMENT INDEX 2015 PERFORMERS**

<u>Country</u>	<u>Score</u>	<u>Global Ranking</u>
Cote d'Ivoire	0.40	93
Ethiopia	0.39	94
Cameroon	0.39	95
Sierra Leone	0.39	96
Venezuela	0.38	97
Cambodia	0.36	98
Iran	0.35	99
Myanmar	0.32	100
Uzbekistan	0.32	101
Zimbabwe	0.32	102

**ABOUT THE WORLD JUSTICE PROJECT:**

The World Justice Project® (WJP) is an independent, multidisciplinary organization working to advance the rule of law around the world. Effective rule of law reduces corruption, combats poverty and disease, and protects people from injustices large and small. It is the foundation for communities of peace, opportunity, and equity—underpinning development, accountable government, and respect for fundamental rights.

The World Justice Project engages citizens and leaders from across the globe and from multiple work disciplines to advance the rule of law. Through our mutually-reinforcing programs of Research and Scholarship, the WJP Rule of Law Index, and Engagement, WJP seeks to increase public awareness about the foundational importance of the rule of law, stimulate policy reforms, and develop practical, on-the-ground programs. Learn more at: [www.worldjusticeproject.org](http://www.worldjusticeproject.org)

**MEDIA CONTACT:**

Matthew Harman, Communications Director  
[press@worldjusticeproject.org](mailto:press@worldjusticeproject.org)  
(206) 792-7670