



INTERNATIONAL BUDGET PARTNERSHIP
Open Budgets. Transform Lives.

A New Compact between the Citizens and their States

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[Welcome]:

Ladies and Gentlemen:

Thank for the opportunity to speak with you today.

I want to talk about the challenge that countries face in implementing their action plans and in working with civil society.

[OGP captures the Age of Open Government]:

We have achieved a lot, quickly. We built an international initiative that, defying standard models, centers around a fundamental partnership between governments and civil society right down to its governing structure and that favors real action over words.

We've grown so fast because we didn't start from scratch. We built on a foundation of almost 20 years of work by thousands of people around the world.

For years, citizens and civic organizations have claimed the rights of citizens to access information, participate in public budgeting, monitor revenues from natural resource extraction, and make services work for the poor. The movement exploded on the streets of Tunis and Cairo, and it lives on in the struggles for transparency in banking and in the demands of citizens for decent public services in the face of recession.

Inside government too, civil servants, legislators, and auditors have struggled to change the way government does business, provide more information to citizens, create open spaces for participation, address corruption, and strengthen accountability.

OGP builds on and seeks to amplify this momentum. It's ambition is to build a new social compact that honors the dignity of citizens and restores trust in government, drives public resources to meet public priorities, and spurs innovation.

[Now is the time for accountability]:

The years ahead will be critical. Each OGP government has the huge challenge of delivering on its ambitious action plans. So, we must shift our focus to the country level and work together to translate plans into action.

Citizens, especially poor and marginalized citizens, care less about declarations than about the quality of their lives. The miner in Peru wants to know that the natural resources he is mining will mean wealth for his community. The pregnant woman in the Philippines wants to travel quickly to a clinic and safely deliver a healthy baby. And the young activist wants to download data so that she can analyze what it means for the miner and woman about to give birth, or any fellow citizen.

Now, it's our turn. In the coming years, we must be accountable for delivering on our commitments in ways that citizens can feel in their daily lives.

[Civil society is ready to engage]:

But OGP is about more than meeting individual commitments — it's about changing the very nature of how government and citizens interact.

In joining OGP, we made a commitment to come together to identify common problems and find innovative solutions. That's our most important pledge, and the basis of building relationships that will both generate practical solutions now and in the future well beyond the time frame of the action plans.

A significant number of CSOs are deeply engaged in OGP. Several groups have critiqued the international and country level processes to date, and have concrete ideas for more vital commitments. Many view OGP on balance as a big opportunity to embolden allies and speed reform.

Specifically, civil society can help governments by being a resource and ally to government in fulfilling country commitments, and by being a critic in evaluating a government's delivery on its commitments.

Both of these roles for civil society – the resource and the critic – are vital to the dynamic dialogue between government and citizens, and to establishing feedback loops that help government improve services and make them work better for citizens.

Civil society also faces challenges in participating in OGP.

It will need to work across its traditional sectors to help push for reforms under a broad open government agenda, to draw out the vital contributions of the most marginalized citizens beyond the capital city. Civil society will have to identify and work with allies in government instead of treating government as a monolith. Civil society must work together to be more strategic, more creative and more open to learning so as to be effective partners.

[The IRM]:

Today, we are launching a pivotal piece of OGP's global architecture: the Independent Reporting Mechanism.

The idea for independent reports came from the founding governments and CSOs themselves who recognized the importance of outside feedback to improving government performance.

The IRM faces many challenges in producing reports that capture the complexity of open government and the feedback of citizens. An independent and impartial review and robust reports are fundamental signs of our commitment to openness. My colleagues in civil society are watching this process keenly.

[Closing]:

In closing, I would remind us that open government demands tremendous humility. It proceeds from the assumption that no one agency or person has the all the information and expertise necessary to solve complex problems of development. It requires us to bring together all stakeholders, pool their information and expertise, and move forward together to identify a new best practice.

OGP commitments are bold, and development is complex. What we do expect is that each government will stretch itself to reach new frontiers in open government, that each is open to criticism and learning, and that each will engage citizens and civil society meaningfully on its path to becoming more open and accountable to citizens.

If we can make OGP work, its true legacy may be cultivating a new compact between citizens and their state. As civil society we will play our part in making this happen. And we will count on, and watch, that governments do the same.

Thank you.