

offers nothing but death and destruction. As Libyans rebuild, let those efforts tap the experience of all those with the skills to contribute, including the many Africans in Libya. And as Libyans forge a society that is truly just, let it enshrine the rights and role of women at all levels of society. For we know that the nations that uphold the human rights of all people, especially their women, are ultimately more successful and more prosperous.

Which brings me to the final area where the world must stand with Libya, and that is restoring prosperity. For too long, Libya's vast riches were stolen and squandered. Now that wealth must serve its rightful owners, the Libyan people. As sanctions are lifted, as the United States and the international community unfreeze more Libyan assets, and as the country's oil production is restored, the Libyan people deserve a government that is transparent and accountable. And bound by the Libyan students and entrepreneurs who have forged friendships in the United States, we intend to build new partnerships to help unleash Libya's extraordinary potential.

Now, none of this will be easy. After decades of iron rule by one man, it will take time to build the institutions needed for a democratic Libya. I'm sure there will be days of frustration, there will be days when progress is slow, there will be days when some begin to wish for the old order and its illusion of stability. And some in the world may ask, can Libya succeed? But if we have learned anything these many months, it is this: Don't underestimate the aspirations and the will of the Libyan people.

So I want to conclude by speaking directly to the people of Libya. Your task may be new,

the journey ahead may be fraught with difficulty, but everything you need to build your future already beats in the heart of your nation. It's the same courage you summoned on that first February day, the same resilience that brought you back out the next day and the next, even as you lost family and friends, and the same unshakeable determination with which you liberated Benghazi, broke the siege of Misurata, and have fought through the coastal plains and the western mountains.

It's the same unwavering conviction that said there's no turning back, our sons and daughters deserve to be free.

In the days after Tripoli fell, people rejoiced in the streets and pondered the role ahead, and one of those Libyans said, "We have this chance now to do something good for our country, a chance we have dreamed of for so long." So to the Libyan people, this is your chance. And today the world is saying with one unmistakable voice, we will stand with you as you seize this moment of promise, as you reach for the freedom, the dignity, and the opportunity that you deserve.

So congratulations. And thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:12 a.m. at United Nations Headquarters. In his remarks, he referred to Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon of the United Nations; Chairman Mustafa Mohammed Abdul Jalil of the National Transitional Council of Libya; Chairman Mahmoud Jibril of the Executive Board of the National Transitional Council of Libya; and Col. Muammar Abu Minyar al-Qadhafi, former leader of Libya.

## Remarks Prior to a Meeting With President Hamid Karzai of Afghanistan in New York City

September 20, 2011

*President Obama.* Well, I want to welcome President Karzai and his delegation. We have a lot of important business to do. And I very much appreciate the efforts that he's been tak-

ing in rebuilding Afghanistan and proceeding on the transition path that will ensure that Afghans are ultimately responsible for their security and their prosperity.

We received some tragic news today that President Rabbani, who had been heading up the reconciliation process, was killed in a suicide attack. He was a man who cared deeply about Afghanistan and had been a valued adviser to President Karzai, had made enormous contributions to rebuilding the country. So it is a tragic loss. We want to extend our heartfelt condolences to you, his family, and the people of Afghanistan.

But, Mr. President, I think we both believe that despite this incident, we will not be deterred from creating a path whereby Afghans can live in freedom and safety and security and prosperity and that it is going to be important to continue the efforts to bring all elements of Afghan society together to end what has been a senseless cycle of violence.

So we very much appreciate your presence here today. I know that you're going to have to leave after our meeting. But we want to give you an opportunity to speak to the press as well.

*President Karzai.* Thank you very much, Mr. President, for your message of condolence and support to myself and to Afghan people on the very tragic loss and martyrdom of Professor

Burhanuddin Rabbani, the chairman of the Afghan Peace Council, the former Afghan President, and Afghan patriot, who, as we see, has sacrificed his life for the sake of Afghanistan and for the peace of our country.

The mission that he had undertaken was vital, Mr. President, for the Afghan people and for the security of our country and for peace in our country. We will miss him very, very much. I don't think, Mr. President, that we can fill his place easily. He was one of the few people in Afghanistan with the distinction that we cannot easily find in societies, a terrible loss. But as you rightly say, this will not deter us from continuing on the path that we have, and we'll definitely succeed.

Thank you, Mr. President, for condemning this act of brutality and cowardice against President Rabbani. I will take that message from you to the Afghan people. This is a sad day for us in Afghanistan, but a day of unity and a day of continuity of our efforts.

Thank you.

*President Obama.* Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:06 p.m. at the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel.

## Remarks at the Opening of an Open Government Partnership Event in New York City *September 20, 2011*

Good afternoon, everyone. And welcome to this inaugural event of a partnership that's already transforming how governments serve their citizens in the 21st century.

One year ago, at the U.N. General Assembly, I stated a simple truth: that the strongest foundation for human progress lies in open economies, open societies, and in open governments. And I challenged our countries to come back this year with specific commitments to promote transparency, to fight corruption, to energize civic engagement, and to leverage new technologies so we can strengthen the foundations of freedom in our own countries.

Today we're joined by nations and organizations from around the world that are answering

this challenge. In this Open Government Partnership, I'm pleased to be joined by leaders from the seven other founding nations of this initiative. I especially want to commend my friend, President Rousseff of Brazil, for her leadership in open government and for joining the United States as the first cochairs of this effort.

We're joined by nearly 40 other nations who've also embraced this challenge, with the goal of joining this partnership next year. And we're joined by civil society organizations from around the world, groups that not only help hold governments accountable, but who partnered with us and who offer new ideas and help us to make better decisions. Put simply,