

all work together for greater transparency so that taxpayers receive every dollar they're due from the extraction of natural resources.

So these are just some of the steps that we're taking. And today is just the beginning of a partnership that will only grow, as Secretary Clinton leads our effort on behalf of the United States, as these nearly 40 nations develop their own commitments, as we share and learn from each other and build the next generation of tools to empower our citizens and serve them better.

So that's the purpose of open government. And I believe that's the essence of democracy. That's the commitment to which we're committing ourselves here today. And I thank all of you for joining us as we meet this challenge together.

I want to thank you very much for your participation. And with that, I would like to turn over the chair to my cochair, President Rousseff.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:35 p.m. at the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel.

Remarks at the Closing of an Open Government Partnership Event in New York City

September 20, 2011

Well, thank you, Rakesh, for that wonderful testimony. Thank you all to the leaders who shared their action plans and the steps that they're taking and your willingness to participate in this initiative. We are extraordinarily grateful.

As I said earlier, today is just the beginning of this partnership. Those who are the founding members have to go back home and work to meet the commitments that we've made and to be held accountable. The 38 nations joining us today will be working on their own action plans. And we look forward to our next meeting in Brazil next year, when our partnership welcomes more countries who share our commitment to open government.

I want to thank all the participants. I particularly want to thank the civil society organizations that are doing extraordinary work.

I very much appreciated the statement by the representative from the United Kingdom that this is not always comfortable, if done right, because governments are human institutions, which means that even with the best of

intentions we are flawed and we make mistakes, and it's a natural human impulse to try to cover up mistakes and to resist the kind of openness that's been discussed here today.

But as Rakesh, I think, said so well, the more open we are, the more willing we are to hear constructive criticism, the more effective we can be. And ultimately, governments are here to serve the people, not to serve those in power.

And so I'm very grateful for all of you for participating. Thank you for embracing this challenge to make sure our governments are as open and accountable and as effective as they can be so that we can meet the aspirations of all our citizens.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:30 p.m. at the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Rakesh Rajani, head, Twaveza; and Francis Maude, chairman, Open Government Partnership.

Remarks Prior to a Meeting With Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan of Turkey and an Exchange With Reporters in New York City

September 20, 2011

President Obama. Well, I want to welcome Prime Minister Erdogan and his delegation to

New York City and to the United States. Turkey is a NATO ally, a great friend and partner