

these are the standards that we now must meet. Yet even as we're guided by the commitments that we make here today, let me close by stating the obvious. Resolutions alone will not be enough. Promises on paper cannot keep us safe. Lofty rhetoric and good intentions will not stop a single terrorist attack.

The words spoken here today must be matched and translated into action, into deeds, concrete action, within nations and between them, not just in the days ahead, but for years to come. For if there was ever a challenge in our interconnected world that cannot be met by one nation alone, it is this: terrorists crossing borders and threatening to unleash unspeakable violence. These terrorists believe our countries will be unable to stop them. The safety of our citizens demand that we do. And

I'm here today to say that all of you who are committed to this urgent work will find a strong and steady partner in the United States of America.

I now would like to resume my function as President of the Council. And I will now give the floor to the other members of the Security Council.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:11 p.m. at United Nations Headquarters. In his remarks, he referred to Hervé Gourdel, a French mountaineering guide who was killed by members of the Jund al-Khilafa terrorist organization in Kabylia, Algeria, on September 24; and Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi of Iraq. He also referred to the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) terrorist organization.

## Remarks at a Meeting of the Open Government Partnership in New York City *September 24, 2014*

Well, thank you very much. And thank you, Rakesh, for your introduction. It is wonderful to see all of you here today. And I still remember your eloquent words when we launched this effort 3 years ago, and I'm very grateful for the role you've played and NGOs have played and all the leadership that is represented here has played in making this a reality, which is making a real difference in the lives of so many countries that are participating.

I want to thank my good friend, President Yudhoyono, for your leadership and the example that Indonesia has tried to set as a country that has transitioned from a difficult past to a full-blown democracy. And I also want to thank Minister Kuntoro for hosting us here today. Both of them have shown extraordinary leadership in this partnership over the past several years.

President Yudhoyono will be—this will be the last time, I think, that we see each other in his official capacity, but not in terms of our friendship. And I think that it's fitting that he's participating here today and leading it, because it reflects the legacy of his work. And I also want to acknowledge my dear friend President Peña Nieto of Mexico, as well as President Zu-

ma of South Africa, who have agreed to lead the partnership in the coming year.

I'm thrilled to see so many leaders from civil society, men and women who stand up for equality and opportunity and justice and freedom every single day. And it's not always easy to do. Yesterday I had a chance to speak about the importance of supporting civil society across the globe, because throughout history, progress has always been driven by citizens who have the courage to raise their voices and imagine not just what is, but what might be, and that are willing to work to bring about the change that they seek.

Three years ago, the United States and seven other nations launched this Open Government Partnership to represent the other side of that equation, because when citizens demand progress, governments need to be able to respond. And in a new millennium flush with technology that allows us to connect with a tweet or a text, citizens rightly demand more responsiveness, more openness, more transparency, more accountability from their governments.

In just 3 short years, this partnership has grown from 8 nations to 64. It's helped to

transform the way governments serve their citizens. Together, we have made more than 2,000 commitments, improving how governments serve more than 2 billion people worldwide. More citizens are petitioning their governments online, and more citizens are participating directly in policymaking. More entrepreneurs are using open data to innovate and start new businesses. More sunlight is shining on how tax dollars are spent. And more governments are partnering with civil society to find new ways to expose corruption and improve good governance.

Here in the United States, we've been trying to lead by example. We're working to open up and share more data with entrepreneurs so they can pursue the new innovations and businesses that create jobs. We're working to modernize our Freedom of Information Act process so that it's easier for Americans to use, so that they can see the workings of their Government. And today I'm proud to announce a series of new commitments to expand and broaden our open government efforts.

We're going to work more closely with the health care sector and State and local law enforcement, not just to improve public health and safety, but to better protect the privacy and personal information of the American people. We're going to improve transparency with our upgraded website, [usaspending.gov](http://usaspending.gov), to make it easier for Americans to access and understand how the Federal Government spends their tax dollars.

We're going to collaborate more closely with the private sector and the best minds in our country so that when we design websites or technologies to better serve the public, we're benefiting from the best of American ingenuity and the latest technologies. And because we know that education is a cornerstone for progress—if we want good governance, we need a educated and informed citizenry—we're going to do more to help people in other countries, especially students, access the incredible online educational tools and resources that we have here in the States.

In addition, as part of our leadership in the global fight against corruption, we intend to

partner with American businesses to develop a national plan to promote responsible and transparent business conduct overseas. We already have laws in place; they're significantly stronger than the laws of many other countries. But we think we can do better. And we think that ultimately, it will be good for everybody, including business. Because when they know there's a rule of law, when they don't have to pay a bribe to ship their goods or to finalize a contract, that means they're more likely to invest, and that means more jobs and prosperity for everybody.

As we look ahead, I believe that continuing this global fight against corruption has to remain a central focus in this partnership. It's an area where we can expand our efforts. Corruption is not simply immoral. From a practical perspective, it siphons off billions of dollars from the public and private sectors that could be used to feed children or build schools or build infrastructure that promotes development. It also promotes economic inequality. It facilitates human rights abuses. It fuels organized crime and terrorism and ultimately instability.

Passing anticorruption laws is necessary, and then those laws have to be enforced so that those who steal from their people are held accountable and so citizens have faith that the system is not rigged and that justice will be done. We need to do more to track down the proceeds of corruption and prevent our legal and financial systems from becoming safe havens for money gained through bribes or fraud. And we need to do more to ensure transparency and accountability in industries that can be especially vulnerable to corruption, such as the extraction of natural resources. That's not just good for businesses, it helps support development in countries that depend on these industries for growth and for jobs.

In all of these efforts as governments, we're going to have to deepen our partnerships with civil society. As I announced yesterday, I've directed the U.S. Government to elevate its engagement with civil society groups around the world. After all, the Open Government Partnership is not simply a partnership between

governments; it's between governments and their citizens. At times, this can be frustrating. At times, it can be contentious. I think it's fair to say that all governments think they're doing what's right and don't like criticism. And it's shocking to say that not all criticism from civil society is always fair. [*Laughter*] But, as leaders, making our governments more open does mean that as a consequence of that criticism, there's self-reflection. And it means that questions are asked that might not have otherwise been asked and that groupthink doesn't develop inside of a government and that people don't start as easily rationalizing behavior that, if shown in the light of day, people would object to.

And what—as we've seen through the leadership of Rakesh and so many others who are here today, open and honest collaboration with citizens and civil society over the long term, no matter how uncomfortable it is, makes countries stronger, and it makes countries more successful, and it creates more prosperous economies and more just societies and more opportunity for citizens.

So the achievement of these first 3 years are an example of the kind of steady, step-by-step progress that is possible for people and countries around the world. No country has all the answers. No country has perfect practices. So we have to continue to find new ways to learn from each other, to share best practices, and most importantly, to turn the commitments that we've made into real and meaningful action that improves the daily lives of our citi-

zens. I'm confident that if we do that, we can ensure that we're living up to the basic truth that governments exist to serve the people and not the other way around.

Let me just close by saying this: When we started this, we didn't know if it was going to work. And I could not be more proud to see the enormous changes that are taking place all around the globe, in small increments sometimes. It's not flashy. It doesn't generate a lot of headlines. But the work you're doing here is a steady wave of better government and a steady wave of stronger civil societies. And over time, that means that not only will individual countries be stronger and not only will the citizens of those countries have greater opportunity and less—and are less prone to experience injustice, but that translates into a world that is more just and more fair. And that's the kind of world that I want to leave my children.

So congratulations on the good work. But don't let up—as I'm sure you won't, because I know some of you. [*Laughter*] Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:35 p.m. at United Nations Headquarters. In his remarks, he referred to Rakesh Rajani, head, Twaweza initiative in East Africa; President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono of Indonesia, in his capacity as the 2014 chairman of the Open Government Partnership; and Kuntoro Mangkusubroto, Head, Indonesian President's Delivery Unit for Development Monitoring and Oversight.

## Remarks Prior to a Meeting With Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn of Ethiopia in New York City *September 25, 2014*

*President Obama.* Well, I want to extend a warm welcome to Prime Minister Hailemariam and his delegation. When I spoke previously at the Africa Summit about some of the bright spots and progress that we're seeing in Africa, I think there's no better example than what has been happening in Ethiopia, one of the fastest growing economies in the world.

We have seen enormous progress in a country that once had great difficulty feeding itself. It's now not only leading the pack in terms of agricultural production in the region, but will soon be an exporter, potentially not just of agriculture, but also power because of the development that's been taking place there.