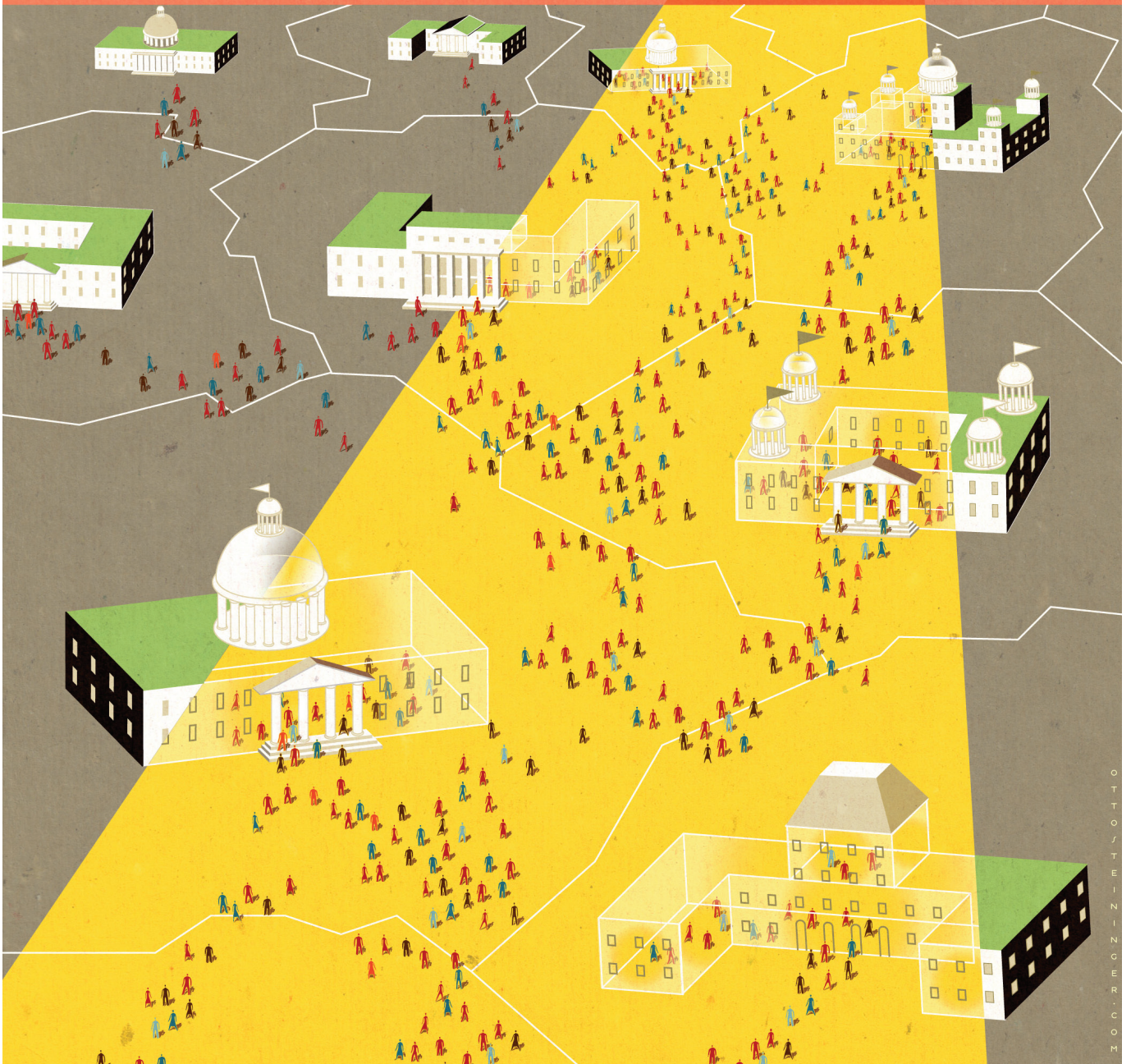


INNOVATING GOVERNMENT ON A GLOBAL STAGE



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This sponsored supplement, “Innovating Government on a Global Stage,” was produced by the *Stanford Social Innovation Review* for the Open Government Partnership. OGP is a new effort to foster greater transparency and accountability, improve governance, and increase civic engagement worldwide.

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Transforming Multilateralism: Innovation on a Global Stage

BY JEREMY M. WEINSTEIN

The Open Government Partnership seeks to build more transparent, effective, and accountable governments that empower citizens and respond to their democratic aspirations.

Inside the Dwight D. Eisenhower Executive Office Building, across the driveway from the West Wing, hundreds of White House staffers work endless hours, glued to their desks inside small cramped offices, covering everything on the president's agenda, from housing and education to non-proliferation and terrorism. Amid the daily routine of meetings, memos, and more meetings, it can be easy to overlook the significance of the work and to ignore the historical grandeur of the physical surroundings. But there are days that stand out from the blur of time on the White House staff—when the power of what's possible at the highest levels of government is visible in the kernel of a new idea.

I remember one of those days very clearly: January 21, 2011. We were gathered in the Secretary of War Room, seated around an ornate mahogany table. We had cleared our schedules for what seemed like an unprecedented day and a half of time, just to think. And we were joined by an amazing cast of characters from across the developed and developing world—government ministers shorn of their staffers and talking points, leaders of international movements with networks spanning the continents, and grassroots activists car-

rying their experiences of pressing for social change into the halls of power.

The first few hours of our time were dedicated to storytelling. The focus was on governance, an opaque, sometimes fuzzy topic that could be boiled down to something quite simple: how to build more transparent, effective, and accountable governments that empower citizens and are responsive to their aspirations.

Jorge Hage, the Comptroller General of Brazil, shared the story of Brazil's fight against corruption. He told of the transformation of a government bureaucracy known for patronage, bribe taking, and inefficiency into one that today is widely viewed as a model of innovation and reform. New laws and bureaucratic institutions have been central to the change, but so have a set of unique Brazilian innovations: random, public audits of municipal expenditures; participatory budgeting that engages citizens in priority setting; and the creative use of technology to promote extraordinary levels of openness.

Kuntoro Mangkusubrato,

head of the President's Delivery Unit in Indonesia, provided a powerful example of harnessing transparency and technology to ensure that funds provided to Indonesia in the aftermath of the 2004 tsunami reached those who most desperately needed support. Every dollar received in aid could be tracked to the individual recipient, the house that was built, or the school or health clinic that was restored—and the fact that people could access this information on an online dashboard generated an unparalleled level of citizen oversight and monitoring of the reconstruction.

Nikhil Dey, a leader of the right-to-information movement in India, described how even the simplest technologies could be used to reduce corruption and ensure that social programs benefit intended recipients. He showed pictures of locally produced murals that record the beneficiaries of government programs in each rural community, making fully visible, for example, people who had moved to urban areas but were still receiving a guaranteed payment for rural employment.

Over several hours, we heard inspiring stories from around the globe: initiatives to



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rebuild a social compact and give citizens a stake in government in the Philippines; steps to end a culture of secrecy in Mexico; policies to prevent corruption in the natural resources sector in Norway; efforts to institutionalize public participation in post-apartheid South Africa; and reforms to open up government in the United States and United Kingdom. All contribute to reaching the goal of harnessing the ingenuity and expertise that exists outside of the government to solve shared problems.

In many ways, this was an atypical White House meeting: high-level government officials were swapping stories with civil society activists at the same table; officials from developed countries were furiously taking notes on the innovations deployed in emerging economies and vice versa; and officials and activists whose focus is primarily domestic were talking about their reforms on an international stage, not through diplomatic channels but gathered as a community of practitioners doing the real work on the ground.

We found ourselves together in Washington, D.C., because President Barack Obama had issued a simple challenge when he addressed heads of state at the General Assembly of the United Nations in 2010. The president said, “And when we gather back here next year, we should bring specific commitments to promote transparency, energize civic engagement, fight corruption, and leverage new technologies so that we strengthen the foundation of freedom in our own countries, while living up to ideals that can light the world.” After sharing stories, our task was to figure out how, collectively, we could respond to the president’s call to action.

Fast forward 18 months: the Open Government Partnership (OGP) is a robust and growing global effort to make governments better. Launched by eight governments and nine civil society organizations in September 2011, OGP intends to secure concrete commitments from governments to promote transparency, empower citizens, fight corruption, and harness new technologies to strengthen governance. The founding governments announced national action plans at the launch, and 38 new participating countries presented their commitments in Brasilia in 2012. Political leaders representing 2 billion people have made more than 300 commitments to reform and have pledged to be held accountable for their progress by an independent body.

This supplement tells the story of OGP—

how it came about, the impact it is having, and the challenges it faces—and speaks to the possibility of social innovation in the multilateral space, as policy entrepreneurs actively seek to redefine and transform how governments and citizens relate to one another across borders. Multilateralism is not an arena that has been known for experimentation, given the cautious nature of governments. But this new form of partnership demonstrates the kind of transformative multilateral engagement that is possible, at the same time exposing the challenges of making multi-stakeholder initiatives work in practice.

Changing Models of Multilateral Engagement

For many people, international institutions, such as the World Bank, IMF, United Nations, and European Union, are the paradigmatic examples of international cooperation. Designed to facilitate cooperation among states on issues that transcend national boundaries,

civil society groups, the private sector, philanthropy, international organizations—around specific initiatives that may or may not lead to the establishment of formal organizations.

A focused, achievable goal is at the center of mixed coalitions, and the ambition is to identify governments, organizations, and groups that are willing to take actions that, collectively, will demonstrate success and make the case for broader international engagement. This form of international cooperation prioritizes flexibility and agility, dispensing with universal, binding commitments in favor of voluntary pledges that enable participants to lead by example. Recent examples of initiatives that fit this model include the Global Fund Against AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria and the International Campaign to End Landmines.

Traditional approaches to international cooperation have delivered important successes, especially in the period since the end of World War II. The standards and rules con-

We felt a need to reclaim the language of democracy promotion—to put the focus on people’s aspiration to have a say in how they are governed, and on the challenge of political leaders’ response to that desire.

these institutions establish rules and actions that are considered binding on participating governments. The legitimacy and authority of these international institutions often stem, at least in part, from their broad or near-universal membership. Yet to secure agreement among a diverse set of countries, significant compromise is typically required. As a result, the laws or rules promoted by these organizations often reflect the preferences of the least cooperative country—a “lowest common denominator” outcome—potentially blunting their impact. In addition, as a model of multilateral engagement, international institutions are often seen as opaque, highly bureaucratic, and resistant to change. This is not surprising, given how challenging it is to establish these institutions in the first place.

Contrast this approach with a totally different paradigm, what William Savedoff of the Center for Global Development has called “the mixed coalition” and what *Philanthrocapitalism* authors Matthew Bishop and Michael Green have termed “the posse.” This approach involves gathering together a wide variety of interested parties—governments,

tained in the General Agreement on Trade and Tariffs (GATT) and its successor organization, the World Trade Organization (WTO), have contributed to significant growth in international trade. A set of interlocking international treaties and monitoring bodies, including the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), have enabled progress on nonproliferation in nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons. Important treaties and international organizations have emerged to manage climate change, promote global development, ensure global financial stability, and advance basic human rights norms.

But the international environment is changing in consequential ways, and with it, the form that international cooperation is taking. Most international institutions were constructed in a period in which Western countries had nearly unrivaled power. They used their influence to secure near-universal participation and to incentivize compliance. But with the United States now, in the words of New York University politics professor Bruce Jones, “the world’s largest minority shareholder,”

international institutions are struggling to manage a far greater diversity of preferences among their members. Emerging powers, including Brazil, India, and China, are making their views known and seeking influence consistent with their growing economic clout. The challenge of seeking unanimity or consensus on international issues is becoming all too apparent, as evidenced by the difficulty of advancing climate change negotiations. And the difficulties of securing compliance with international treaties and agreements

are hard to ignore in the face of growing trade disputes and other actions by national governments that flout international rules and laws on proliferation and human rights.

Of course, the old paradigm of international cooperation is not dead—it is being modernized. The emergence of the G-20 is recognition that global cooperation on economic issues cannot happen without the major emerging economies at the table. Commitments to shift the voting shares of countries at the World Bank and IMF and pressure to reform the UN Security Council provide further evidence that a redistribution of influence and power is under way.

At the same time, new forms of cooperation—mixed coalitions or posses—are increasingly important. Tackling issues that are not being adequately addressed by existing institutions, mixed coalitions are playing by a new set of rules. Their membership is not universal, but instead focuses on governments that need to be at the table to get something started. They are often able to set higher standards because they are not universal. They rely on voluntary and collaborative means of generating action, prioritizing meaningful actions over binding commitments that are routinely ignored. And they incorporate the expertise and active participation of nongovernmental players.

As we gathered in Washington in January 2011, we knew of examples where these mixed coalitions were forming to promote cooperation in a wide variety of issue areas, from climate change to nonproliferation and from global development to counter-



terrorism. The question before us was simple: Could we fashion a fresh, dynamic, and impact-oriented approach to strengthening governance that would capture the attention and commitment of governments, civil society, the private sector, and philanthropy around the world?

Transforming the Promotion of Democracy and Governance

Around the table, our conversation shifted quickly from stories of domestic progress to the possibilities of working together to advance a common agenda. Because we began with concrete experiences of reform from around the world, a number of conclusions were already clear.

First, in the realm of governance, old divisions between East and West or North and South were no longer relevant. Political leaders around the world confront a similar set of challenges: how to be responsive to citizens whose expectations have been transformed by the real-time, on-demand revolution in information technology; how to open up the workings of government to strengthen accountability, but also to harness the expertise of people on the outside; and how to build (or rebuild) the sense among citizens that government exists to represent their interests and meet their needs.

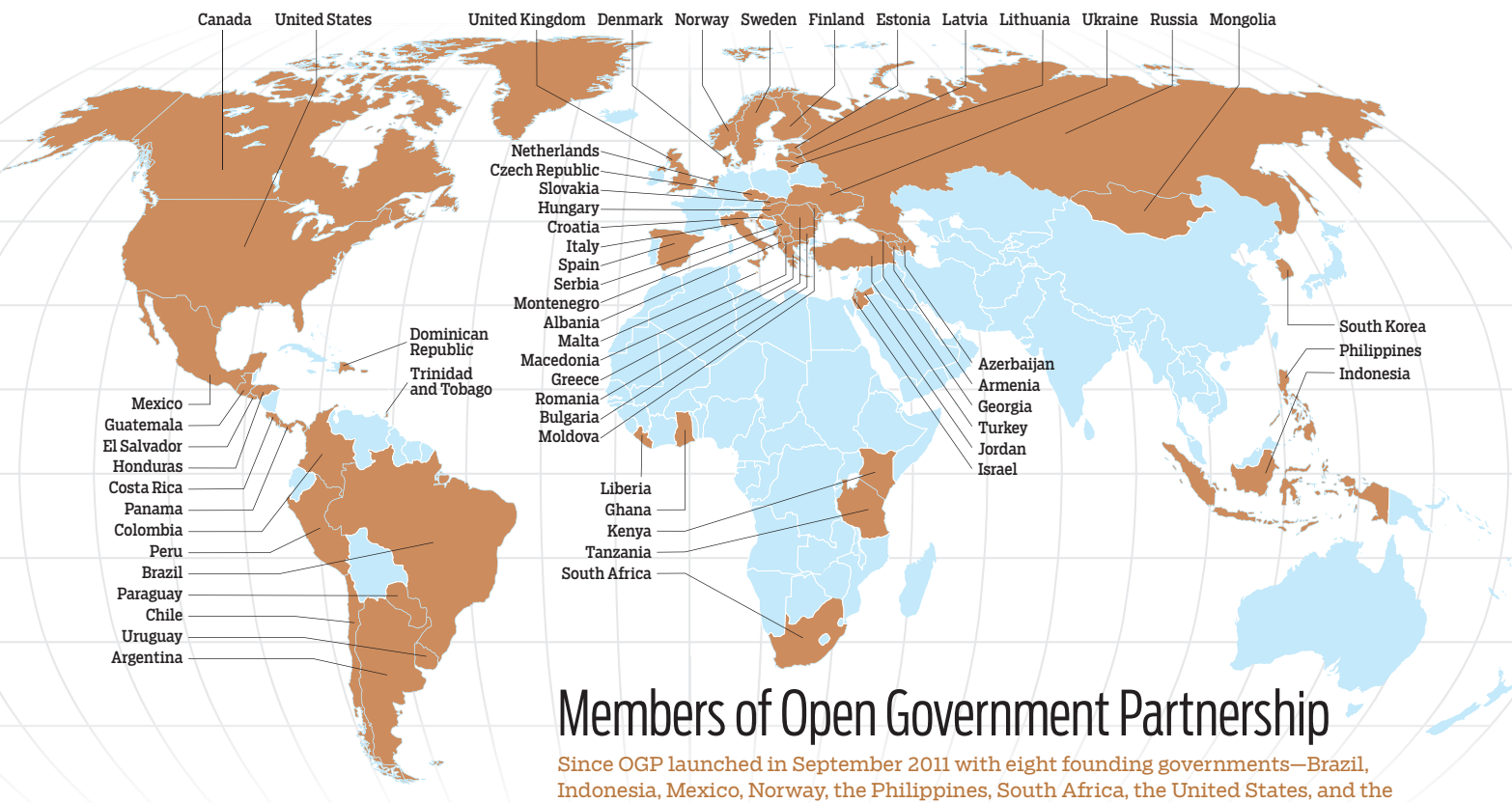
At the same time, one could not escape the conclusion that the locus of innovation had shifted: reformers in new and emerging democracies are at the forefront of efforts to reimagine how government engages citizens, and grassroots groups, especially in develop-

ing countries, are making the case for even deeper and more fundamental changes to the ways in which government operates. Developed countries have much to learn from developing countries, and the most powerful advocates for change are those working these issues every day. These realities called for a fundamentally different approach to promoting democracy and governance in the 21st century.

Many around the table welcomed the opportunity to rethink the multilateral approach to promoting more effective and

accountable governance. In the aftermath of the US-led invasion of Iraq and the human rights abuses committed in the war on terrorism, there had been an international backlash against the very idea of democracy promotion, not only in the United States but also among international democracy supporters who did not want to be associated with a tarnished agenda. The prospects for further democratic progress were also grim: analysts were speaking of a “democratic recession,” with new democracies struggling to perform and authoritarian regimes promoting themselves as alternative, non-democratic models of development.

Together, we saw a different way forward, a way of breaking the mold and diversifying the coalition working to advance this agenda. We felt a need to reclaim the language of democracy promotion—to put the focus on people’s universal aspiration to have a say in how they are governed, and on the common challenges of political leaders in responding to that desire. The emerging concept of “open government” was loose and flexible, not attached to any particular ideology. It allowed everyone to bring his own agenda to a common goal. It was essential to place innovation at the front and center of any new effort, moving away from a framework in which developing countries were under pressure to adopt the “best” practices of the West, toward one in which domestic reformers and activists were empowered to share their stories, and countries were encouraged to learn from one another and take further actions in a meaningful race to the top. Last, it was crucial that we find



Members of Open Government Partnership

Since OGP launched in September 2011 with eight founding governments—Brazil, Indonesia, Mexico, Norway, the Philippines, South Africa, the United States, and the United Kingdom—it has been joined by 50 additional governments.

ways to harness and support the momentum for democratic change and improved governance within countries. Sustainable progress was possible, in our view, only if governments were making commitments at the highest level and being held accountable by their own citizens, rather than by organizations, governments, or groups on the outside.

Pivotal Decisions

We had agreement on the need for a new approach, but the real challenge lay in working out the details. With a diverse group around the table—government and civil society, North and South—the debates were contentious, but the ambition to achieve substantive consensus around a new model was shared by all.

Three central issues had to be resolved. Would this initiative seek universal participation, or would it be selective in determining which countries could participate? There were strong advocates for a universal initiative, given the scope of the governance challenges globally and the need to establish international legitimacy. On the other hand, civil society groups and governments spoke forcefully of the need for credibility. An initiative on governance could be credible only if the

participating countries were truly committed to making demonstrable progress. Second, would participating countries be expected to commit to an identical set of reforms, or would the initiative provide space for countries to make political commitments that reflected their own unique circumstances?

Participants recognized the value of uniform commitments, as then we would be able to identify high priority issues and set high standards for participating countries. On the other hand, the stories that we shared suggested the value of encouraging countries to develop reform strategies consistent with the aspirations of their citizens and the priorities of their governments. And how would we ensure that countries actually followed through on their commitments? No one was proposing the establishment of a legally binding treaty, because such treaties already exist—for example, the UN Convention Against Corruption—and we shared a sense that treaties alone are insufficient to generate compliance. Others proposed the notion of independent and objective evaluations of country progress, challenging the standard international practice in which governments provide self-assessments of their progress.

Over the course of two days, the idea took

shape, and we forged a hard-fought consensus on the outlines of a truly novel multilateral initiative. Together, we would create the Open Government Partnership as a forum in which governments, working with their civil society partners, could make far-reaching political commitments to promote transparency, energize citizen participation, increase public integrity, and harness new technologies.

To become a participating country, governments would need to meet a set of minimum criteria, evaluated by objective third-party organizations—demonstrating their basic commitment to open government and a record of practice consistent with their rhetoric. They would embrace collectively a high-level declaration of principles and deliver an individualized country action plan, developed with broad public consultation and feedback, outlining how they plan to put the principles into practice. And governments would agree to have their progress monitored by an independent body, which would report publicly and annually. Our approach was designed to avoid the fate of other governance initiatives that had set lofty goals yet failed to deliver meaningful change. In OGP, governments are expected to make new and concrete political commit-

ments that will have a measurable impact on people in real time.

The outcome did not meet everyone's needs and desires, and the concept had to be sold to political leaders, foreign ministries, civil society networks, and grassroots activists. But it was a new model: in the words of Susan Crawford, professor at Yeshiva University's Benjamin N. Cardozo School of Law, "a forum not a court; a nudging engine, not a ranking system; a mash-up of personal initiative and entrepreneurship with the stately dance of foreign relations." And the idea reflected the kind of creativity that is possible when officials and activists come together, free of the need to get clearances and manage constituencies, to think collectively about a new way of working together.

The timeline between idea and implementation was exceptionally short. We had eight months before the United Nations General Assembly was to meet again in September, and we would need to deliver on President Obama's challenge. The first step was determining the set of countries that would be eligible to participate—a process that raised enormous diplomatic sensitivities for each of the founding governments. We ultimately selected a set of valid, widely used third-party indicators—capturing, for each country, its degree of fiscal transparency, access to information, public financial disclosures, and citizen engagement—and secured agreement among the founders on a set of criteria for participation. Seventy-nine countries cleared the minimum hurdle for eligibility, decreasing the chances that the initiative would attract governments that were interested only in getting credit for open government without taking any action. Our decision signaled our commitment to focus attention on a set of governments that were really committed to doing things differently. We were prepared to accept that the initiative might not affect the behavior of the most closed governments in the world, as long as OGP provided a platform for countries with the political will to take ambitious new steps.

Second, the founding governments needed to demonstrate the seriousness of their own commitments to OGP by preparing far-reaching action plans that could be announced at the launch. We understood that the initial commitments by the founding governments would set the standard that all other countries would follow. But instead of the yearlong process envisioned for developing commitments in OGP countries,

the founding governments would have only half that time. In the United States, we initiated a White House-led interagency process to develop and refine a set of crosscutting initiatives that would build on and extend the reach of President Obama's Open Government Initiative. As with officials of other founding governments, President Obama, too, would make a set of new political commitments to the American people—underscoring the point that improving governance is a priority for countries no matter how wealthy or developed.

At last it was time to unveil the partnership and secure the agreement of other eligible countries to announce their participation at the formal launch in September. US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, joined by Foreign Minister Antonio Patriota of Brazil, invited representatives of the eligible governments to Washington for a jam-packed, day-long event in July to introduce the partnership, begin substantive conversations on important thematic areas such as service delivery and public integrity, and showcase amazing innovations from civil society and the tech sector.

For government representatives, the event transgressed all sorts of norms. We reached out to important domestic officials, rather than to foreign ministries, because our goal was to have people in the room who are responsible for making their governments work better at home. Foreign dignitaries were seated next to civil society activists and next to technologists. No flags demarcated who would sit where, and no hierarchy determined who would get the floor when. As you might imagine, this was a bit of a shock for some of the participants, but it was a true test case of what it would be like to do business differently on the international stage.

Delivering Results

We now have a mixed coalition—a posse if you will—that has mobilized the attention of governments, civil society groups, the private sector, and philanthropy on the challenge of promoting open government. An initiative that was launched with eight governments and nine civil society groups now includes 58 governments and a network of hundreds of grassroots activists around the world. This new model is demonstrating the power of a new multi-stakeholder approach: the ability to move quickly and focus attention on a concrete goal; the possibility of building a diverse coalition that cuts across traditional divides; the opportunity to harness the energies and

attention of domestic champions for reform, and to give them the high-level political backing they need to get their work done; and the prospect that a voluntary, collaborative initiative can generate a meaningful race to the top on an issue as contentious, but as important, as the quality of governance.

We also have reason to believe, even at this early stage, that OGP commitments will have a powerful impact. President Obama committed the United States to implement a significant set of reforms to the management of domestic extractive industries through the Department of the Interior, pledging to participate in the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative. The United States is the first developed country to embrace these standards, which have been promoted for developing countries for nearly a decade. President Rousseff of Brazil secured the passage of a Freedom of Information law that has languished in the Brazilian Congress for years, finally overcoming the resistance of officials of prior governments who feared the consequences of shedding light on the internal workings of government. And President Benigno Aquino III of the Philippines embraced a set of ambitious reforms throughout his government, designed to increase transparency, enshrine public participation in budgeting, and root out corruption in procurement.

At the same time, OGP—as a new model of international cooperation—raises a number of challenging questions, many of which the contributors to this supplement consider: How do governments benefit from their participation in OGP, and what will keep them engaged over time? How can civil society balance its role as a critical ally, where it must play the roles of both advocate and monitor? Where does philanthropy fit in this new framework of international cooperation? And how can we bridge the gap between countries that embrace participation in these new, mixed coalitions, and those that remain on the outside?

This is a make-or-break year for the Open Government Partnership, as this new model of international cooperation can no longer be judged simply by its success in mobilizing participation and focusing attention on the challenges of governance. The ambition of this new approach is impressive—bringing about a transformative change in how governments relate to their citizens—but the measure of its achievement will be quite simple: how many citizens experience concrete improvements in their lives. ●

Shattering Decades of Diplomatic Protocol

BY MARIA OTERO & CAROLINE MAULDIN

On September 20, 2011, 46 world leaders, including US President Barack Obama and Brazilian President Dilma Rousseff, lined up for a “family photo.” Diplomats are accustomed to such things—an awkward three-minute shuffle when the world’s most powerful stand shoulder-to-shoulder and smile for the camera. But this photo op was different: Standing together with leaders of nations were leaders from civil society organizations from around the world.

The moment’s symbolism was not lost on those who had spent the previous 12 months working toward the launch of the Open Government Partnership (OGP), an initiative that has shattered decades of precedent in diplomatic protocol.

When the idea of OGP first made its

centurystatecraft, OGP has broken the mold of international engagement primarily in two ways: first, by creating a global platform for interaction among domestic reformers; and second, by establishing an unprecedented principle of parity between government and civil society in the management and direction of a major policy agenda.

Everyone involved understood that for OGP to succeed, it needed to go beyond the US State Department and foreign ministries, to the agencies and reformers immersed in the sticky challenges of battling domestic corruption, enhancing transparency, and supporting citizen participation. In early 2011, we at the State Department had a skeleton list of our own reformers, but not every government was able to identify a roster as quickly. Many reformers are ca-

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OGP has broken the mold of international engagement by creating a global platform for domestic reformers and by establishing parity between government and civil society.

way through the corridors of the US State Department in the early days of 2011, many were skeptical. Multilateral initiatives are ubiquitous and often ineffective. Open government is a relatively new term in the vocabulary of foreign policy. And questions of corruption and accountability are older than democracy itself. The possibility of creating an initiative that would catalyze government transparency and accountability was, understandably, a long shot.

For OGP, the stars aligned, and it went from an idea to an international headline to a good governance roadmap in less than a year. Today, 58 OGP countries have joined OGP, making commitments that will affect two billion people. A testament to US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton’s vision of 21st-

reer public servants buried deep in bureaucracy. And their location varies greatly from one country to the next. In Brazil, Minister Jorge Hage leads his government’s battle against corruption from the Office of the Comptroller General, whereas in the Philippines, Minister Florencio “Butch” Barsana Abad is advancing government transparency from the Ministry of Finance and Budget.

OGP’s challenge, and its goal, is to identify champions within government agencies and elevate them to an international stage through a network of like-minded reformers committed to improving the transparency and accountability of governments. OGP offers a second pathway for international engagement: It is a partnership not just among nations, but also between governments and civil society. From the governance of OGP

to the development, implementation, and monitoring of country commitments, civil society sits side-by-side with governments at every stage of the initiative. This shift is a break with the past—in which accountability advocates had a critical, even antagonistic, relationship with governments. OGP affirms through its structure and its work that sustainable progress on critical issues can be made only by working pragmatically across sectors.

Of course, we cannot expect this shift to happen overnight, nor will it succeed in every country. Even at the level of OGP’s 18-member steering committee—where you will find OGP’s most committed champions—challenges persist. Governments and civil society organizations operate within distinct cultural norms. Bureaucrats rotate to other jobs, making it difficult to retain institutional memory and enthusiasm. Meanwhile, civil society representatives are more consistent and often very well informed about critical issues. The result is a delicate, ever-shifting dynamic among representatives who together drive OGP forward. But no matter the sensitivities, the reward already has proven to be far greater: a thoughtful policy agenda followed by action and accountability.

Although it remains to be seen whether OGP will create long-term impact through country action plans, the initiative has already succeeded in setting new, high expectations for results-based collaboration. We hope that its example of leveraging domestic champions and including civil society has set a new precedent for future international efforts. ●

Innovating Modern Democracy, in Brazil and Globally

BY JORGE HAGE

On April 17, 2012, Brazil hosted the first High-Level Conference of the Open Government Partnership (OGP)—a partnership that grew in a mere six months from eight founding countries to 55 participating governments. As I write, the number of participants has grown to 58 countries, and I am certain it will rise again by the time this article is published.

Brazil was one of the founding countries and the first co-chair of the initiative, side by side with the United States, because OGP's rationale and its objectives converged with the government directive of transparency implemented at the very beginning of the first term of President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva's government in 2003. So in January 2011, when the White House approached the Office of the Comptroller General, which I head, about the Brazilian government's interest in this new idea, we were immediately authorized by President Dilma Rousseff to join the endeavor.

Since then, and with support from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and other Brazilian ministries, the participation and the commitments to be adopted under OGP have coincided with our government's aims. OGP has augmented goals and projects already under way or in initial phases of development.

I imagine that Brazil's experience is not so different from other OGP member countries, because the partnership was created to build on transparency and good governance reforms being carried out domestically—to greater or lesser degree—by governments around the world. The project has great appeal: it is a global challenge for government and civil society stakeholders to address, very directly, the concept of democracy—modern democracy. It has provoked positive reactions in many countries, even in nations where previously there had not been much engagement with the issue of open government.

On the other hand, there is little doubt

that civil society pressure influenced some governments to join the project, and this is one of the benefits of civil society organizations' participation in the initiative and on OGP's steering committee. Another important aspect of OGP is the way it highlights innovative projects in developing and developed countries. For example, Brazil's online Transparency Portal publishes expenses incurred by the government on a daily basis in easily understandable terms, enabling anyone to monitor budget execution and

The leadership roles of Brazil, Mexico, Indonesia, and South Africa, which all are on OGP's steering committee, sent an important signal to countries in the South that the playing field is changing.

help prevent corruption. The portal also publishes the paychecks of all public officials, from President Rousseff to the humblest public employee. It shows that there is no monopoly on cutting-edge solutions for common governance issues. This type of innovation has encouraged a wide range of countries to join the partnership.

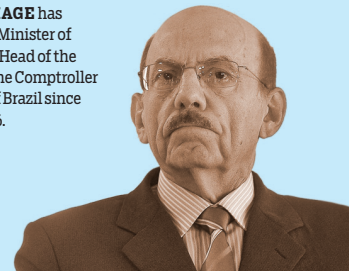
An equally important aspect of OGP is that it is a voluntary government commitment. The fact that it is non-mandatory makes it markedly different from other international initiatives, such as the United Nations Convention against Corruption, which requires governments to adopt measures to increase transparency in the public sector and to engage society and the private sector to prevent and fight corruption. At the same time, OGP differs from other international mechanisms in that no distinction is made between developed or emerging countries and underdeveloped or economically modest nations.

Brazil's early and active participation in the partnership has encouraged other countries—both emerging economies and more

economically modest nations—to join OGP. The possibility of exchanging experiences and sharing learning seems more feasible in this environment. And the leadership roles of countries like Brazil, Mexico, Indonesia, and South Africa, all of which are on OGP's steering committee, sent an important signal to countries in the South that the playing field is changing.

Having said this, I would equally stress that there is a wide distance among countries on the steering committee and in the

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partnership: they are not, by any means, a homogeneous group. Some of them, usually referred to as emerging economies, such as Brazil, South Africa, and Russia, are not necessarily emerging democracies. Either their democratic institutions are already beyond the stage of "emerging," or they are not yet democratically robust, despite their nations' economic strength. For OGP, promoting solid democratic institutions is what counts most.

Fortunately, with the support of UNDP and OECD, countries of the so-called Arab Spring (Middle Eastern and North African nations), such as Tunisia, seem to be willing to prepare their institutions for future adherence to OGP.

OGP has barely completed its first year. It might be premature to make any thorough evaluation of its results. It is, however, clear that OGP has been able to generate some concrete changes in attitudes in such sensible government areas as transparency and openness. And this accomplishment surely deserves special attention, even outright celebration. ●

Advocacy from the Inside: The Role of Civil Society

BY WARREN KRAFCHIK

The Open Government Partnership's (OGP's) commitment to a partnership between government and civil society at international and national levels—and its accent on domestic as opposed to international accountability—distinguishes it from many international initiatives promoting open government.

As a September 2012 survey of civil society organizations (CSOs) engaged in OGP shows, there is widespread recognition that OGP represents a great opportunity for leveraging transparency and accountability in countries around the world. All the organizations are energized by the early victories that have been achieved, such as the new Access to Information Law in Brazil and greater transparency of military and police budgets in the Philippines. Most also acknowledge that OGP has helped to bring together civil society advocates working across multiple sectors, helping to break through the silos that often undermine civil society effectiveness. But many CSOs are still cautious about OGP, particularly about how partnerships with governments will play out at the country level.

What can we learn from the experience of the eight founding countries about effective CSO-government collaboration?

At the international level, the partnership between CSOs and governments on the steering committee is working well. The two parties' candid and often vigorous discussions—as well as their willingness to challenge one another (between and within caucuses)—has significantly refined the overarching concept and policies driving the initiative.

CSO participation in OGP at the international level, in turn, has supported stronger country-level processes and outcomes in many of the eight founding countries. As Juan Pardinás, CEO of the Mexican Institute for Competitiveness and a colleague on the steering committee, argues, Mexican

civil society was initially disappointed by the lack of consultation and weak commitments in the initial Mexican action plan. But having Mexican civil society and government representatives on the steering committee—together with strong CSOs on the ground—empowered reformers in the government. The result was a redrafted, stronger Mexican action plan, which included exciting progress on consumer protection and greatly expanded access to school budget information.

Tom Blanton, director of the National Security Archive at George Washington University and a steering committee member from US civil society, tells a similar story. OGP's design process offered an opportunity to marshal pressure on the US government to close the gap between strong open government policy commitments and slow or weak implementation of them. The US action plan

ultimately reflected several CSO priorities, such as US participation in the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative.

The key to these successes was a sophisticated insider-outsider strategy adopted by experienced activists from countries with robust civil societies. The test we faced as CSOs on OGP's Steering Committee was to help incubate a powerful idea while staying connected to our civil society partners. Pardinás and Blanton, among others, avoided this potential problem by combining active engagement on the steering committee with building or maintaining strong relationships to local civil society coalitions. In Mexico, a new coalition was assembled; in the United States an existing coalition—OpenTheGovernment.org—was adapted for this purpose.

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How might these initial experiences translate into effective civil society engagement in the broader set of OGP countries?

First, our experiences to date show that productive collaboration between governments and CSOs in OGP is certainly possible. Indonesia and the Philippines, for example, have included civil society in the action plan drafting committee. Mexico and the United States have multi-stakeholder teams at both the national and sector levels driving action plan development. Still, in many countries government has yet to find the appropriate balance of roles and is more hesitant about working with civil society. This challenge is as great in several European countries as in Africa and Latin America.

Second, a critical ally role is not an entirely new concept, particularly for organizations in countries with a vigorous civil society. But in many parts of the world, where

Civil society organization participation in OGP at the international level has supported stronger processes and outcomes at the country level.

strictly adversarial roles between governments and CSOs have been the norm, or where civil society is less robust, such a dual role for civil society will be quite new and challenging.

Third, and perhaps the greatest challenge for both civil society and government going forward, will be reaching out within participating countries to involve those who live outside urban areas, speak in local dialects, and have little access to the Internet. Both governments and CSOs will have to dig deep to transform open government into a cause that will galvanize the participation of the poorest and drive real development.

OGP's progress to date in piloting a new approach to CSO-government collaboration makes me optimistic that we will meet these challenges at the country level. ●

The UK's Transparency Agenda

BY JANE DUDMAN



FRANCIS MAUDE (left) serves as the UK Minister for the Cabinet Office and Paymaster General, and as a Member of Parliament representing the constituency of Horsham, West Sussex, England.

SIMON BURALL (right) is the director of Involve, and also serves as chair of Democratic Audit of the United Kingdom, an ambassador for WWF UK, and head of dialogue at the UK's ScienceWise Expert Resource Centre.

Minister Francis Maude and Simon Burall, a British civil society leader, discuss the potential impacts of the Open Government Partnership in the UK.

On September 26, 2012, to mark the first anniversary of the Open Government Partnership (OGP), UK Minister Francis Maude wrote on the *Guardian* Public Leaders Network: “Data is the raw material of the 21st century and a resource for a new generation of entrepreneurs. But transparency is not just about economics. Transparency shines light on underperformance and inefficiencies in public services. It allows citizens and the media to hold governments to account, strengthening civil society and building more open societies.”

The United Kingdom is a world leader in open government. Since May 2010, it has made almost 9,000 datasets of government information available at data.gov.uk, from school performance tables to pricing information about large government capital projects.

Maude heads the Cabinet Office, the department at the heart of the UK government's efficiency and reform program, where he has set up a new, central efficiency and reform group to keep an eagle eye on budgets and procurement. Transparency and the release of government information have been critical to Maude's reform program, and he has been particularly active in developing the independent review mechanism of OGP members' national action plans. The next iteration of the UK action plan will be released in 2013, and Maude's department has been working closely with civil society partners to ensure that they take a vital part in the review process.

This message was exactly what Simon Burall wanted to hear when he met with the minister in November 2012 in Maude's

elegant offices in central London. Burall is director of the think tank Involve, which specializes in how new forms of public participation can strengthen democracy in Britain and elsewhere. Burall says the partnership between the government and civil society in the United Kingdom is significant in enhancing local democracy.

“OGP is a useful umbrella organization to pull together what's happening here,” he says, adding that the loose network between government and civil society is both a strength and a potential weakness. If the collaboration is to have real teeth, says Burall, it must involve civil society partners in the peer review of the 2013 national action plan. Civil society organizations, he adds, may want to go further than the government in some cases, such as not just consulting with citizens about existing policies but getting them involved in policy making and in the government's public services reform program.

Maude agrees on the need for OGP to be more than just talk. “By the end of the UK's time as co-chair, we want the OGP to have real authority, resilience, and credibility,” he says. These are high aims, both internationally and domestically, and Maude acknowledges the challenges in the United Kingdom, where the coalition government has driven through a radical reform program of big cuts to public sector budgets and jobs since it came to power in May 2010.

In a more diverse and dispersed world of public service provision, it will be vital to

provide better information about public services if citizens are to make informed choices, says Maude. Some in the United Kingdom believe this fragmentation of public services, particularly in health and education, and the introduction of more providers, will make it difficult to compare services. But Maude insists that all providers will have to produce comparable data on outcomes.

He acknowledges, however, that the UK's transparency program, which includes publishing all local authority spending over £500, has not been welcomed by everyone in government. And there remains the wider challenge, acknowledged by both Burall and Maude, of getting all public service providers—not just those whose main focus is handling data—involved with OGP's agenda. The challenge, explains Burall, is “how to make the stuff about datasets seem important to organizations that are interested in outcomes.” He says the agenda is about forcing the government to move from “talking inwards to turning outwards.”

One of the UK government's grandest aims is to make as much as possible of its public sector data available for free or priced cheaply. “If I compare the UK to the US, we've made more useful datasets available than the US,” notes Maude. “But the US has a more liberal policy in terms of making datasets available free. It has taken public sector data as a public good.” The United Kingdom has had a more restrictive approach, because it has required government organizations

like Ordnance Survey and the Met Office to use their mapping, weather, and other data as an asset, which they have sold to companies, to cover their costs. Now, though, the government would prefer to make raw government data freely available and let others add value to it through services and products. ●

JANE DUDMAN is editor of the *Guardian* Public Leaders Network.



Tanzania's Transparency Agenda

BY ELSIE EYAKUZE



RAKESH RAJANI (left) is the founder and head of Twaweza East Africa. He has been involved with setting up Open Government Partnership from the outset. His work and research interests include basic education reform and the role of information in citizen-driven change and public accountability.

MATTHIAS CHIKAWA (right) is a member of the Parliament in the National Assembly of Tanzania and has served as Minister of Justice and Constitutional Affairs since February 2008.

Minister Matthias Chikawe and Rakesh Rajani, a Tanzanian civil society leader, discuss the potential impacts of OGP in Tanzania.

Matthias Chikawe, Tanzanian Minister for Justice and Constitutional Affairs, does not mince words when he talks about his country's participation in the Open Government Partnership (OGP). "It's something that is not in our culture," says Chikawe. "Our government has always been run on confidentiality, so this is a big change. You need a big change of attitude by civil servants."

"It's one thing to say, 'Let's do it and make a plan.' But it's quite another to change a culture," adds Rakesh Rajani, head of Twaweza, a government accountability NGO in East Africa. Rajani goes on to stress that the Tanzanian government, known for its lack of transparency, is not monolithic: there are those who support change, and those who might need coaxing into it.

Chikawe and Rajani are sitting in adjacent chairs at the Twaweza offices in Dar es Salaam in a rarely seen instance of government and civil society collaboration. It is a hopeful sight, considering the checkered history of Rajani's relationship with his government. In 2005, while he was executive director of Haki Elimu, an education advocacy NGO, the government banned the organization from "undertaking and publishing any studies on Tanzania schools." The situation was resolved in 2007. Chikawe admits that there are still many in government who are suspicious of civil society. Yet both men are members of the steering committee of OGP.

Tanzanian President Jakaya Kikwete is keen on OGP, says Chikawe. "The president said to me: 'Go out there and see if we

can use the Open Government Partnership for our own development. This is not about foreign policy.'" OGP, says Chikawe, is about using transparency for Tanzanian democracy building and economic growth.

Rajani points out that these statements signal a new way of governing—one in which "government doesn't just rule, it actually seeks to solve problems collaboratively. It recognizes that it doesn't have all the answers. In that sense, it can also be very liberating for government, to not have to feel it has to shoulder all the responsibility and fix all the problems."

Tanzania's OGP plan focuses on health, water, and education—services through which citizens and government interact every day, and where the impact of improved governance would be felt most immediately. Rajani and Chikawe emphasize that citizen participation begins with access to information. Yet according to 2010 World Bank data, only 11 percent of Tanzanians are Internet users (although 20 million use mobile phones). OGP-Tanzania is drafting a communications strategy to use modern information technology, and the anticipated Freedom of Information Act will be used to support OGP-Tanzania's transparency agenda.

When the two men are asked if the social media community has been approached to assist with OGP-Tanzania's agenda, uncertainty creeps into the conversation, because social media are still new, and public institutions are in the initial phases of trying to harness them for

their work. For several years now, however, young Tanzanians have been using various social media with some success to push for increased transparency. Plus, says Rajani, the issue of communication goes beyond new technologies. What OGP-Tanzania must figure out is how to spread the culture of open government throughout the public sector, right down to service providers on the ground.

Chikawe says that citizen participation is being sought through two main approaches: public meetings, with a focus on where local government projects are planned and how they are monitored; and access to the Internet, to make information available. Twaweza is interested in creating opportunities for citizens to engage more effectively in their day-to-day interactions with the government, such as at public schools and clinics.

"Practical accountability on the ground is important," says Rajani. "Citizens have to have some level of confidence that there will be consequences."

Rajani points out that government accountability and confidence are also beneficial for the public sector. If government

employees are rewarded or disciplined according to how they perform—as verified by their "clients," citizens—it could motivate an overall improvement in services.

"Open Government Partnership is about helping government to create an environment in which citizens can get things done," says Rajani. ●

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Philanthropy Can Catalyze an Open Government Movement

BY MARTIN TISNÉ

The initial phase of Open Government Partnership (OGP) illustrates how philanthropic funding can catalyze and help build sectors. In September 2010, a small group of private organizations—under the aegis of the Transparency and Accountability Initiative, a donor collaborative including funders such as Omidyar Network, Open Society Foundations, the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, the Ford Foundation, and Hivos (as well as two leading international NGOs, International Budget Partnership and Revenue Watch Institute)—recognized the opportunity OGP presented. They backed the government and civil society reformers with funding, connections, and intellectual support.

This funder engagement was vital in giving OGP instigators the external validation

not all—of these communities of practice have developed their own, somewhat siloed, international standard-setting initiatives. The net result is a veritable alphabet soup of international initiatives: EITI, IATI, GIFT, META, COST, ODC. All are dedicated to increasing transparency, participation, and accountability in their specific sub-sectors (oil, gas, mining, budgets, medicine, construction, open data).

OGP itself is not a standard-setting body. It provides a forum for the standard-setters to use as a policy hook for their work. It has provided—in the words of John Wonderlich, policy director of the Sunlight Foundation—a “softball” to the civil society community, to develop new open government norms and standards and energize existing ones. Civil society groups that seek to build, or are on the verge of developing, in-

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open government discussion, leading to the creation and development of new norms and standards. The Global Initiative for Fiscal Transparency (GIFT), which aims to develop standards related to budget transparency and participation of citizens in the budget process, was directly inspired by OGP and includes two prominent OGP government members (Brazil and the Philippines) in its founding stewards group. The Open Data Charter (ODC) aims to provide a tool for civil society to benchmark the many open data commitments coming out of OGP as well as for government reformers developing—at a frenetic pace—new open data initiatives.

Third, OGP is beginning to influence large-scale standard-setting bodies and groups. The High Level Panel on the post-2015 development agenda (the rethink of the Millennium Development Goals) is co-chaired by three prominent OGP governments: Indonesia, the United Kingdom, and Liberia. Civil society and governments have spoken of an Open Development Goals approach to “open up” the UN-led process. Within the G8, G20, and OECD, OGP governments are caucusing and engaging with civil society in new ways to push forward “the power of open.”

Last and fascinatingly, standards are being developed by OGP from the bottom up in ways that we cannot yet imagine. As 58 governments make hundreds of commitments, norms will bubble up to the surface. If 25 governments start instituting citizen budgets, as the government of the Philippines recently did, a new way for governments to engage with citizens will emerge.

We are witnessing an incredibly exciting array of international initiatives, and OGP is energizing them and putting them into practice. At its heart, OGP holds the promise of bringing together these myriad communities and building a truly global open government movement. The philanthropic community’s challenge now is to catalyze this innovation while building a joined-up sector, and resist the temptation to fund in silos. ●

OGP is energizing the global open government discussion, while developing new norms and standards—something donors should support.

and confidence they needed to take the idea full steam ahead. OGP was initiated by the United States, Brazil, and six other international governments, and early and flexible philanthropic support helped ensure the full participation of civil society—at a global level—and its eventual representation in OGP’s governance structure.

The myriad constellations and communities of practice that make up the global open government sector are fascinating and the object of very little study. There are well over a dozen distinct open-government related communities of practice: freedom-of-information activists, open-data geeks, fiscal-transparency zealots, service-delivery monitors, financial-sector reform advocates, and many more. (A good overview is available on the Transparency and Accountability Initiative website.) Many—though

international norms can do so and then work with governments to include these norms in their open government partnership action plans. As of late 2012, OGP is contributing to international standard setting on open government in four ways.

First, governments are using OGP to adhere to existing standards. For example, the United States, Ukraine, and Colombia became signatories to the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI) as part of their OGP action plans. The United States also became a signatory to the International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI) as part of its action plan. In fact, EITI has received significant interest from OGP countries, whose governments are signing up as well as pledging progress on EITI implementation as part of their country action plans.

Second, OGP is energizing the global

India in Open Government and Open Government in India

BY NIKHIL DEY & ARUNA ROY

US President Lyndon Johnson and UK Prime Minister Tony Blair were not the only ones with strong regrets about the freedom of information legislation enacted when they were leaders of their democracies. The landmark Right to Information (RTI) law, enacted in 2005 in India, has been the cause of similar distress for the ruling class.

Beyond the rhetoric of transparency, accountability, and participation lies an uncomfortable adjustment to redrawing the fault lines of power. This discomfort perhaps explains why the Indian government passed a powerful RTI law and then made repeated attempts to amend and dilute it.

It also may explain why the government of India withdrew from the Open Government Partnership (OGP) after being part of its formative discussions. Indian bureaucrats raised valid concerns about the unconventional nature of OGP as a multilateral organization. They argued that it went beyond the norms of a voluntary partnership. It is

the Public Procurement Bill—all have been tabled in Parliament in the last year and are in various stages of enactment.

India owes many of these systemic reforms to a vibrant, bottom-up demand for opening up government. The RTI movement in India has changed the discourse of transparency and accountability by connecting these seemingly esoteric issues to basic entitlements, empowerment, and meaningful participation by ordinary citizens in the planning, monitoring, and decision-making processes of government. The Delhi High Court remarked in a recent landmark order that the Indian RTI movement has demonstrated that the Right to Information is not only part of Freedom of Expression under Article 19 of the fundamental rights enshrined in the Indian Constitution, but also a part of Article 21 (the Right to Life) and Article 14 (the Right to Equality). In countries where poverty and marginalization are important concerns, India's experience with the practical application of transparency and participatory em-

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nurtured and sustained?

Enforcing OGP standards will remain a big challenge. Even if there are gross and repeated failures by some countries, OGP can only name and shame, or threaten suspension. The threat of suspension is seen by many in civil society as an essential provision to enforce accountability. Yet as an enforcement mechanism it is at best a paper tiger. Suspending a country from a voluntary partnership like OGP is impractical and counterproductive.

There is also the tension of a suddenly powerful and increasingly influential international civil society. As civil society organizations become active within OGP to ensure compliance with commitments by governments, questions will arise about their own transparency and how they determine to whom and how they are accountable.

It remains to be seen whether a treaty-like approach to enforcement will work. The moral pressure of “practicing what you preach” might in fact prove to be OGP's most useful aspect. Domestic groups can and will use their leaders' OGP commitments to demand more openness at home. Even civil society organizations, including donors, will have to live up to the rhetoric and become more transparent, accountable, and democratic. The complexities of doing so should not be a deterrent.

Nevertheless, OGP leadership could concentrate more on fostering participation and consultation and leave enforcement of OGP commitments largely to domestic groups. The platform of mutual support offered by OGP for institutionalizing domestically driven transparency aspirations is itself of immense utility. The dialogue, debate, and interactions that OGP is generating are far too important to lose at the altar of impractical and unenforceable standards. ●

Ironically, just as India was withdrawing from the fledgling OGP, the Indian government and Parliament were actively considering a slew of new transparency and accountability legislation.

equally probable that the Indian experience with RTI laws, and the subsequent anti-corruption movement, made the political establishment wary of any new “open government” commitments abroad for which it would be held accountable at home.

Ironically, just as India was withdrawing from the fledgling OGP, the Indian government and Parliament were actively considering a slew of new transparency and accountability legislation. The LokPal Bill (Anti-corruption Commission), the Grievance Redress Bill, the Whistle-blower Protection Bill, the Judicial Accountability Bill,

powerment has fundamental value.

Nevertheless, India's absence underscores the larger challenges OGP may face in the months and years ahead. This tension is endemic to the OGP process. OGP defines itself as a “voluntary partnership” that attempts to push the envelope every year. It seeks to evaluate governments against their own standards, with equal participation from an increasingly demanding civil society. Opening up governments at home and abroad will often result in redistributing power. Hostility from the establishment is logical. How creatively can this tension be

Building a Global Norm on Open Government

BY ARYEH NEIER

The Open Government Partnership (OGP) is a partnership in two respects. First, it is a partnership between governments that have committed themselves to practice and to promote the transparency of government operations. Second, it is a partnership between substantial components of global civil society, to collaborate with governments that are willing to bring about the enhanced transparency of government operations.

Such a partnership is not entirely without precedent. At least two worldwide institutions that were established about a decade earlier, the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria and the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative pioneered bringing together governments and civil society in pursuit of shared goals. Most observers of these institutions would agree that their effectiveness is in substantial measure a consequence of these collaborations.

OGP builds on the examples of these predecessors and more explicitly asserts that its mission can best be advanced through the ongoing interaction of governments and civil society. It seems fitting that such a collaboration should be constructed around the question of open government. In the past two decades, issues relating to governmental transparency have risen to the top of the agenda of civil society in all parts of the world. A number of new civil society institutions operating globally—among them Transparency International, Global Witness, and the International Budget Partnership—were established in the 1990s to campaign in different ways for enhanced transparency and against corruption. They were followed in the first decade of this century by the formation of a host of additional civil society institutions that have identified and focused on particular aspects of government transparency. The rapidly growing identification of civil society with the cause of open govern-

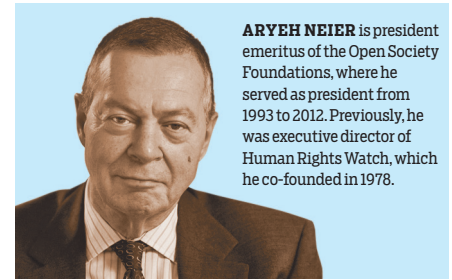
ment during this period has been backed by a significant number of leading philanthropic institutions, which have recognized that transparency is the key to advances in other areas of concern. The philanthropies also have become important constituents for the engagement of civil society in OGP.

In the same era, generally in response to strong pressure from civil society, a large number of governments have adopted new laws to further government transparency.

The great majority of the approximately 90 countries that now have freedom of information laws have adopted them since 1990.... Open government has become a global movement.

The great majority of the approximately 90 countries that now have freedom of information laws, for example, have adopted them since 1990. Although the movement for open government had its roots much earlier, it acquired the characteristics of a global movement in the 1990s—in much the way that other global movements, such as the women's movement, the environmental movement, and the international human rights movement, developed two decades earlier. Just as those earlier movements have taken hold in all parts of the world except in a handful of the most repressive countries, the same is now true of the open government movement. In the short space of about two decades, it has become a global movement. The establishment of OGP shows how far it has come.

Of course, each of those earlier global movements has suffered significant setbacks from time to time, even as they continue to try to make progress in achieving their goals. No doubt the same will be true of OGP. Even governments that join OGP are likely to resist some proposals for heightened transparency, citing other govern-



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mental interests that may be compromised. In some cases, working out how far it is appropriate to go in the direction of transparency, while safeguarding national security, law enforcement confidentiality, trade secrecy, and individual privacy, will raise difficult issues. Some variation in the way that such questions are resolved at various times and places may be appropriate because of differing circumstances.

Yet the establishment of OGP suggests

the emergence of a new norm for governance. It presumes that government operations should take place transparently and should be vigorously promoted both by the governmental members of OGP and by their civil society collaborators. That presumption can be achieved, but only if deviations from transparency are individually justified. That norm is the reverse of what had previously been the prevailing global practice. Although concealment was not often specifically articulated, in much of the world, government operations were previously expected to be hidden from view. The burden rested on the proponents of transparency to demonstrate that government operations should be visible. OGP represents the shift of that burden.

One of the early champions of transparent government in the United States, Supreme Court Justice Louis D. Brandeis, once wrote, "Sunlight is the best disinfectant." Today, Justice Brandeis's words could be a slogan that epitomizes the emerging norm of open government and its embrace by a global partnership of governments and of civil society. ●



The Open Government Partnership (OGP) is a global effort to make governments better. We all want more transparent, effective, and accountable governments—with institutions that empower citizens and are responsive to their aspirations. But this work is never easy.

It takes political leadership. It takes technical knowledge. It takes sustained effort and investment. It takes collaboration between governments and civil society.

The Open Government Partnership is a multilateral initiative that aims to secure concrete commitments from governments to promote transparency, empower citizens, fight corruption, and harness new technologies to strengthen governance. In the spirit of multi-stakeholder collaboration, OGP is overseen by a steering committee of governments and civil society organizations.

To become a member of OGP, participating countries must embrace a high-level Open Government Declaration, deliver a country action plan developed with public consultation, and commit to independent reporting on their progress going forward.

The Open Government Partnership formally launched on September 20, 2011, when the eight founding governments—Brazil, Indonesia, Mexico, Norway, the Philippines, South Africa, the United Kingdom, and the United States—endorsed an Open Government Declaration and announced their country action plans. Since September 2011, OGP has welcomed the commitment of 50 additional governments to join the partnership.

We invite you to stand with us, commit to the principles of open government, and deliver your action plans before the world.

www.opengovpartnership.org