Leaders gathered to celebrate the first anniversary of the Open Government Partnership

Launched by Presidents Obama and Rousseff of The United States and Brazil as well as a range of civil society actors, including Twaweza Head Rakesh Rajani, the Open Government Partnership (OGP) is supporting governments to create new ways to engage with citizens and tap into their expertise to make better decisions.

In just one year, the OGP has grown from eight founding countries to 57 participating nations. The governments of Tanzania and Kenya have all committed to opening up to their citizens. Tanzania is now a member of the Steering Committee that guides the ongoing development and direction of the OGP.

Open Government in Tanzania

- Citizens’ budget document developed and posted on websites
- Joint forum between government and CSOs to monitor OGP commitment established
- Web-Based water point mapping system for local government
- Online publication of orders and receipts of medical supplies
- Disbursement of capitation grants to schools published

Some success has been achieved in implementation, particularly in terms of the publication of citizens’ budgets online and in the transparency with which Parliament conducts business. However the government and civil society in Tanzania, including the media, will need to ensure they continue to keep the momentum going.

The OGP advocates a smarter, more effective and more efficient approach to governance.

**Transparency and Accountability** – New technologies are catalysing citizens’ access to information and the OGP promotes this even further. More transparent government means more accountable government, giving people power and a stake in public affairs.

**Participation** – when citizens can monitor developments and participate meaningfully in the decisions that affect their lives, they can exert positive influence on their country’s progress.

**Partnership** – civil society, businesses and governments have come together as equals in open government. Each has a different role, and challenges the others, to propel reforms forward.

**Economic** – open government can generate revenue for businesses and support governments to make smarter and more efficient decisions, saving money and generating greater value.

At the first anniversary event Tanzania was represented by Minister Chikawe, country OGP leader, and Twaweza’s Rakesh Rajani who made closing remarks. [http://bit.ly/UvSp6C] Noting that the OGP could be a breakthrough if governments organised to respond to citizens, Rajani underlined “[We need] to
create a new collaborative way of doing government, a way that is less about issuing directives and more about creating conditions in which governments and citizens come together to solve common problems.”

The first anniversary of the OGP was celebrated in New York on the sidelines of the United Nations General Assembly. The first anniversary event featured a high-level reception with remarks from OGP leaders and representatives from key civil society organisations. The event also marked the launch of the Independent Reporting Mechanism (IRM) – a panel of experienced international personalities and policy experts – who will track progress and ensure strong accountability of OGP participating governments. The event saw the transfer of Chairmanship of the OGP to the UK and Indonesia, together with civil society co-chair Warren Krafchik of the International Budget Partnership.

In its first year OGP has demonstrated that, across the world, the will exists to make governments more open. But, according to many participants at the first anniversary event, the time for declarations is over, and the time for action and accountability is now. Citizens of the world are watching and time will tell whether the OGP was able to rise up to the challenge.

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An infographic about the OGP is available for publication alongside any coverage of the first anniversary. Download it at http://blog.opengovpartnership.org/2012/09/open-government-partnership-first-year-infographic/

Notes to Editors

• The Open Government Partnership (OGP) was launched in September 2011 with the two first co-chairs, Presidents Obama and Rousseff of the United States and Brazil, declaring a collective commitment by participating countries to make their administrations more transparent and accountable.

• At the first annual meeting, held in Brasilia in April, representatives from Tanzania joined counterparts from across the world, to share national visions and plans for opening the doors of government for citizens. Collectively OGP governments have made over 300 diverse commitments.

• Participating countries (57) now cover two billion people, 30% of the world’s population.

• For further details about the OGP, including a list of countries participating, visit www.opengovernmentpartnership.org

• For details about Tanzania’s commitments and delivery to date, visit www.opengovpartnership.org/countries/tanzania and http://blog.opengovpartnership.org/2012/09/tanzania-ogp-update/