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CIVIL SOCIETY PLAYS KEY ROLE IN KRAKÓW MEETING

KRAKÓW, July 1, 2010 – Over 100 civil society leaders and democracy activists from every region of the world are convening in Kraków, Poland to commemorate the 10th Anniversary of the Community of Democracies (CD) at the High Level Democracy Meeting, organized by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland, Radoslaw Sikorski, and attended by U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, President of the European Parliament Jerzy Buzek and many other high level representatives of the democratic countries of the world. The International Steering Committee (ISC), a global network of 25 leading democracy activists who each represent networks in their own countries and regions of the world, and the Council for a Community of Democracies, as the ISC secretariat, have helped organize the participation and integration of civil society throughout the conference in addition to a civil society meeting being convened today.

Civil society representatives will be participating in the CD Working Group meetings, the CD Convening Group meeting, the thematic panels on such topics as women for democracy, activists for democracy and new technologies for democracy and ISC Chairman, Paul Graham, will deliver a speech to all participants during the High Level Political Segment of the meeting on July 3. These opportunities afforded to civil society demonstrate the true partnership between democratic governments and civil society within the Community of Democracies.

This conference also coincides with the publication of the Second Edition of *The Diplomat's Handbook for Democracy Development Support*, a resource published by CCD, which is a fact-based account of what diplomats from democratic member states have done over the last few decades to support democracy activists, human rights defenders, and civil society trying to operate in non-democratic countries, and assist democratic transition generally. In addition to presenting a wide variety of case studies documenting and explaining specific country experiences, it further identifies creative, human, and material resources available to embassies, the ways in which embassies of democratic governments and their diplomats have supported democracy movements in the past, and describes how such support has been applied. It further provides civil society with a history of past diplomatic support, a compendium of international laws that grant civil society the space in which to carry out their work and a resource list, which includes potential donors and other democracy support organizations.

The Council for a Community of Democracies (CCD) is the only nongovernmental organization in the world with an exclusive focus on the CD. Since 2001, CCD has devoted itself to advocating for democratic change and international cooperation by working with civil society and governments around the world to making the CD a strong, democratic institution capable of addressing the needs of an ever-changing world. In efforts to strengthen the role of civil society within the Community of Democracies, CCD established the International Steering Committee, a global network of civil society organizations committed to democracy and human rights, and currently serves as its secretariat. In this capacity, CCD represents the views of civil society to governments within the CD framework and works to build civil society support networks, which in turn serve as a source of ideas, proposing and undertaking projects and participating in the CD's Working Groups.

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