

**Interim meeting of the International Steering Committee of the NGO process for the
Community of Democracies
Istanbul, April 3 and 5, 2006**

Background

Members and alternates of the ISC and Executive Secretariat (Mali) were present at the World Movement for Democracy Assembly in Istanbul, Turkey. The opportunity was taken to convene and members met twice. The minutes identify which items were dealt with at which time and have appended attendance registers for the two sessions.

Attendance

See appendices. Dr Oumar Makolou took the Chair and the minutes were recorded by Paul Graham.

Apologies were received from Mort Halperin, Matteo Mecacci and the Participa secretariat.

Notice of meeting and agenda

An electronic notice of meeting and preliminary agenda was circulated by Bob la Gamma on March 28, 2006.

1. Review of the Bamako meeting

Dr Makolou summarised the process and outcomes of the various meetings held in Bamako in March for those who were not present. He also reported on recent developments including the CD convener's commitment to NGO participation in the official theme working groups. It was noted that the outgoing secretariat had circulated a report and newsletter, and they were thanked particularly for this, for arranging the Mali meeting and for their work in the handover process.

2. Statement on the UN Human Rights Council

A statement had been circulated by Matteo Meccaci and with amendments it was adopted as a statement of the ISC. The statement reads:

We call on the CG Governments to work together in the General Assembly on the occasion of the elections to the newly established Human Rights Council next May 9, to elect Governments that have shown a clear commitment to the respect of human rights, both at the national and international level. In particular, CD Governments should cooperate **within the framework of the UN Democracy Caucus**, inside the regional groupings and in the General Assembly to oppose the candidacies of Governments, which do not meet the basic international human rights standards, such as those contained

in the UN Universal Declaration on Human Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, **and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights**. An improved membership of the new Human Rights Council is an essential element to ensure that country specific situations of human rights violations and violations of democratic practices are properly addressed by the United Nations.

3. Report of the Transition to Democracy working group

A written report was circulated to members by Dick Rowson, who spoke to a number of amendments. The meeting adjourned.

The meeting reconvened with Dr Makalou still in the chair and took up the discussion of the working group. It was recommended that a further draft be prepared and circulated taking into account the comments of the members, including removing references to the IAC, the inclusion of attention to political parties in post transition countries, and the use and support of existing networks, institutions and individuals in the early warning processes.

ACTION: Members should provide electronic acceptance of the circulated revision

4. Report of the Participation of Political Parties working group

The working group would circulate a draft within the next two weeks after its final internal consultations.

Political parties in Mali were being informed about the CD.

It was pointed out that the international principles for inclusion of political parties and the process for ownership and inclusion of parties in Mali were two separate matters and the protocols for both would be different.

ACTION: Members should provide electronic comments on the circulated draft

5. Statement on cross-border democracy assistance

The ISC was reminded that the WMD had an increasing concern for the restrictions being placed on the receipt of cross-border assistance for NGO's in some member countries of the CD. The Warsaw and Seoul declarations would provide a base for a statement, but the Santiago statement on threats to democracy had not foreseen this recent phenomenon. Yuri Dzhibladze was asked to draft a statement for electronic circulation and possible endorsement by the ISC.

ACTION: Members should provide comments and/or assent to the circulated statement

6. Report on membership of the Community of Democracies

A report was given on the process introduced in Bamako in March regarding the International Advisory Committee for the Community of Democracies under the acronym – IAC. It was pointed out that this was in an early stage of operation and had not yet been presented to Convening Group governments. Therefore it would be wise to not refer to it specifically by name in the final statement.

7. Statement from Bamako

A draft statement had been prepared in Bamako and circulated. It will be re-circulated with minor amendments for electronic assent after which the Executive Secretariat would forward it to the relevant bodies.

ACTION: If no comments are received within two weeks of transmission, the statement will be deemed to be adopted and will be publicised.

8. Next meeting of the ISC

The next meeting of the ISC will take place at the time of the Convening Groups Ministerial level meeting in New York in September. After some discussion, it was agreed that Dick Rowson and Mort Halperin would consult one another on the most appropriate means for obtaining from the CD Convening Group the date of this meeting and participation by civil society including ISC issues to be included on the agenda, and alert ISC accordingly.

ACTION: Date will be circulated. Members to diarise.

9. Working procedures of the ISC

a. Tracking of CD processes

It was agreed that between meetings, the convenors of the working groups established in Bamako would be responsible for tracking any developments, especially in the Convening Group, which might provide opportunities for interaction and participation by the NGO process. These convenors are:

CD liaison – Mort Halperin

Party participation – Marieke van Doorn

Transition to democracy – Dick Rowson

Poverty & development – Paul Graham

UN caucus and HR Council – Matteo Mecacci

b. Website

The African Democracy Forum would provide support through Kabissa for the transfer and hosting of the site. The Executive Secretariat was presently negotiating this transfer.

c. Access to meetings

It was agreed that meetings of the ISC would be open to observers and to alternates.

Appendices

Statement of the ISC from Bamako – March 10th, 2006
Attendance register

Statement of the International Steering Committee of the Non-Governmental Process of
the Community of Democracies to the Convening Group governments

(March 10th, 2006 with amendment April 5, 2006)

Bamako, Mali

Following the transfer of the Executive Secretariat, Corporación PARTICIPA to the coalition of civil society organizations in Mali and the first meeting of the International Steering Committee (ISC) of the Non-Governmental Process of the Community of Democracies, the ISC wishes to inform the Convening Group that:

1. We welcome the commitment that has been shown by the Mali government in chairing the CD process and call on other CD governments to show their support to Mali.

2. We welcome the choice of Poverty, Development, and Democratic Governance as the theme of the IV Ministerial Conference and will be conducting regional dialogues on this issue in preparation for the Conference.

3. We are going to work actively to expand the participation of political parties in the Non-Governmental Process.

4. We welcome the inclusion of the Executive Secretariat of Mali in the entire CG meeting on March 1st, 2006. We ask to be informed in advance of CG meetings, including related meetings held at the United Nations, and ask to have the agendas of those meetings as soon as possible so that we can offer suggestions and prepare for those meetings. We ask that the non-governmental delegates participate fully in these meetings, recognizing that there may be some exceptional circumstances when the governments must meet in private.

5. The International Steering Committee has decided that there will be a designated representative of the NGP responsible for coordinating with each CG country. We ask that each CG governments, in turn, establish a point of contact for the NGP.

6. Regarding the CD Invitations Process: We express support for a credible and transparent process regarding invitations to governments to participate in the Community of Democracies. To this end, we express support for the creation of a high-level group of independent experts to advise the Convening Group on the invitations process as an important step to institutionalize the CD process. We call on the CG to welcome this initiative and to consider the experts' recommendations in a transparent and careful manner.

7. We call on the CG Governments to work together in the General Assembly on the occasion of the elections to the newly established Human Rights Council next May 9, to elect Governments that have shown a clear commitment to the respect of human rights, both at the national and international level. In particular, CD Governments should cooperate inside the regional groupings and in the General Assembly to oppose the candidacies of Governments, which do not meet the basic international human rights standards, such as those contained in the UN Universal Declaration on Human Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. An improved membership of the new Human Rights Council, is an essential element to ensure that country specific situations of human rights violations and violations of democratic practices are properly addressed by the United Nations.

8. Welcome the Working Group Paper from the CG governments that was adopted by the CG in their meeting on March 1st, 2006. We appreciate the indication that five NGP participants would be included in these working groups and stand ready to nominate appropriate participants as each group is formed.

9. We favor the principle discussed by the CG of the creation of a permanent CD Secretariat. We have been discussing if and when it would be appropriate to establish a permanent Secretariat of the NGP.

10. We note that the experience in Santiago of non-governmental participation in the III Ministerial Conference in Santiago marks an important precedent. We expect that this participation will be expanded on in the Bamako Ministerial Conference.

Attendance register

April 3, 2006

Name	Organisation
Ayesha Imam	ADF
Dieudonne Zognong	ADF
Bob Lagamma	CCD
Dick Rowson	CDD
Claudia Caldeirinha	Club of Madrid
Dokhi Fassihian	DCP
Paul Graham	IDASA
Gus Miclat	IID
Roel von Meijenfeldt	IMD
Mariekie van Doorn	IMD
Ivan Doherty	NDI
Riak Malki	Panorama Centre/ Palestine
Vo Vanai	QM/Vietnam
Ouma Makalou	Secretariat
Djingarey Maiga	Secretariat
Michael X M Kau	TFD
David French	WFD
Bo Tedards	WFDA

April 5, 2006

Name	Organization
Augustin Cisse	
Dieudonne Zohong	ADF
Ayesha Imam	ADF
Bob Lagamma	CCD
Dick Rowson	CCD
Yuri Dzhibladze	CDDHR
Claudia Caldeirinha	DCP
Ted Piconne	DCP
P Graham	IDASA
Gus Miclat	IID
Marieke van Doorn	IMD
Ivan Doherty	NDI
Ouma Makalou	Secretariat
Djingarey Maiga	Secretariat
Bo Tedard	TFD