

*A Civil Society Democracy
Agenda
for 2007-2009*

Recommendations of

The International Steering Committee
for the Nongovernmental Process
of the Community of Democracies

Endorsed by Civil Society Participants at their
November 15, 2007 meeting in Bamako

presented at the

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Bamako Ministerial Conference of the Community
of Democracies

Recommendations of the International Steering Committee of the Community of Democracies

The Council for a Community of Democracies (CCD) transmits herewith on behalf of the International Steering Committee to the Convening Group of the Community of Democracies the preliminary recommendations of civil society to be amended prior to the Bamako Ministerial. The proposals are drawn from those made in six regional democracy roundtables:

5-6 September, 2006: [African Regional Roundtable, Bamako, Mali](#)

Host: International Nongovernmental Secretariat of the Community of Democracies

22-23 January 2007: [First Asian Regional Roundtable, Taipei, Taiwan](#)

Host: World Forum for Democracy in Asia and the Taiwan Foundation for Democracy

26-27 April 2007: [Americas Regional Roundtable, Santiago, Chile](#)

Host: Corporacion Participa, Santiago

18-19 May 2007: Second Asian Regional Roundtable, New Delhi, India

http://ccd21.org/pdf/CCD_Asia_2007.pdf *Host: India Habitat Centre and the Institute of Social Sciences*

11-12 June 2007: Regional Roundtable on European Support of Global Democracy, Brussels, Belgium <http://ccd21.org/pdf/EuroRoundtableReport.pdf>

Host: Netherlands Institute for Multiparty Democracy and with the sponsorship of the International Centre for Democratic Transition (Budapest)

18-19 June 2007: Middle East/North African Regional Roundtable, Amman, Jordan

Host: Kawakibi Democracy Transition Center and the Arab Institute for Human Rights
http://ccd21.org/pdf/Amman_Roundtable_Report.pdf

The roundtables were organized by the Council for a Community of Democracies (CCD) on behalf of the International Steering Committee. Additional proposals, based on broad consultations have been incorporated by members of the ISC on behalf of representatives of civil society from around the world. The roundtables and the consultation process conducted during 2006-7 were funded through a grant from the United Nations Democracy Fund (UNDEF) with assistance from the National Endowment for Democracy (NED) and the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor (DRL). With the exception of the European roundtable which focused mainly on donor funding for democracy assistance, and the New Delhi roundtable which had as its focus the theme "democracy and development" the roundtables all had parallel objectives: panels on such issues as press freedom, gender equality, strengthening electoral management, democracy education and democracy and development. The second objective was the building of civil society regional networks in support of democratization and the Community of Democracies process. Each is the subject of a report to the Convening Group.

This draft reflects a process of civil society consultation that culminated at the September 25-26 ISC meeting in New York and continued thereafter resulting in recommendations

conveyed to the Convening Group throughout October 2007. It was the consensus of the ISC that major attention be paid by the Community of Democracies to youth as vital to the future of democracy.

We give the highest priority to the recommendations on the issues of:

- the invitation process,
- the Diplomat's Handbook,
- Democracy Education and the Global Strategic Plan,
- creation of the European Foundation for Democracy through Partnership,
- the need to study the proposal on a creation of creation of a Bank and Fund for poverty reduction,
- the creation of a mechanism to identify and act upon threats to democracy,
- the need to support the Defenders of Democracy Initiative (Defending Civil Society),
- and the Hungarian "state and civil society" project.

I. Institutionalize the "invitation" process

1. **The ISC affirms the value of the process devised by the nongovernmental, independent International Advisory Committee for the Community of Democracies Invitations Process (IAC), coordinated by the Democracy Coalition Project for the CD's Convening Group. We urge the Convening Group to request the IAC to continue to provide advice on further strengthening the Community of Democracies process, including by identifying steps to encourage states to meet the criteria for participation. We believe it is essential that the standards for participation in the Community of Democracies be upheld and respected and that civil society be regularly consulted on an ongoing basis regarding country participation.**

II. Democracy and Development:

2. **CD Bank – We recommend that CD governments explore the proposal to establish a "CD Fund /Bank for Poverty Reduction," which provides government-funded development assistance only through civil society and voluntary organization channels. The CD Permanent Secretariat should work in close collaboration with the India Habitat Centre and its Director Raj Liberhan to work out administrative/financial/operational modalities of managing the fund. The objectives of the fund which would provide a unique link between rural development and information technology in order to overcome poverty.**

3. **We recommend that high priority be given to efforts to reform existing donor and development institutions by incorporating considerations of democracy with development concerns.**
4. Civil society encourages the CD governments to elevate the critical role of local grass roots structures in delivering services related to development projects.
5. **Expand Incentives for Developing Democracies – The proposal is not to set up a new international aid program, but to adopt/adapt the principle of preferential treatment for countries genuinely committed to the path of democracy. This concept has been employed by a number of donors based on the “*principle* that democracies should receive more development assistance than autocracies.” Given the vital importance of economic development to sustaining young democracies, established CD members should commit to supporting developing country CD members with relatively higher shares of official development assistance (ODA), trade benefits and debt relief. Establishing the principle of making democracy (as defined by CD membership) a criterion in the allocation of development assistance will help create a tangible “democracy dividend” for societies undergoing democratic transitions, while deepening incentives for reform. It will also contribute to improved development effectiveness by directing a relatively higher share of resources to countries with commitments to transparency and accountability. This principle would be applied by CD members both in their bilateral aid relationships as well as through their influence with multilateral agencies. In the process, the CD can simultaneously help ensure the survival of new democracies while advancing development.**
6. **We affirm our belief that democracy and development are compatible and mutually reinforcing and that economic gains under authoritarian or non-democratic regimes are unsustainable.**
7. However, support to new and fragile democracies should not be limited to economic projects alone but assistance programs need to give important attention to the consolidation of democratic institutions including funding strengthening those institutions themselves (rule of law, the legislature and the judiciary among others).
8. We propose that the Community of Democracies support the concept of Democracy Audits and an Accountability Mechanism, suggested at the Mexico City Working Group #2 meeting in March 2007. We ask that civil society be included in those audits. This is a function, which the proposed Permanent CD Secretariat could undertake.
9. Special consideration should be given to prioritizing energy resources needed for poverty reduction. Energy policy must be linked to development strategies in ways that take into account the plight of the poorest levels of societies.

10. Link regional organizations to development/democracy efforts – We believe that significant sources of development funding can be made available by tapping this source. CD should seek the cooperation of the UN’s Private Sector program. CCD’s organization on behalf of the International Steering Committee of “regional networks” at the six Regional Roundtables funded by a grant from UNDEF, has created a civil society structure in parallel with governments in the Community of Democracies That structure is committed to working with regional inter-governmental organizations in collaborative efforts, such as the African Democracy Forum’s support of the proposed African Democracy Charter.
11. A way must be found to focus on “effective delivery” on economic promises made during the democratic electoral process, but often not realized, thereafter. Good politics often makes for bad economics: while political logic prefers direct methods of poverty alleviation because of electoral advantages, economic logic is concerned with the financial sustainability of such programs.
12. We wish to stress that neither the state nor the market can answer all needs and that civil society is a third, crucial partner in this area. Civil society organizations in many cases can reach further into the society than the government. The CD governments must formally recognize their contribution and, therefore, create liberal legislative and administrative environments so that voluntary organizations can function freely, rather than under severe constraints as is now often the case, particularly in developing countries.
13. It should be acknowledged within the CD framework that access to information about economic policies is critical, especially as a mechanism to reduce corruption in development projects as well as in other areas. In the interest of transparency CD members should establish a database to help the media and civil society organizations understand where aid is coming from, and who the recipients are.
14. We call on the CD members to encourage the use of existing conventions ratified by member countries of the UN, the OECD, OAS and NEPAD and make recommendations to improve the functioning of mechanisms that foster transparency and combat corruption without which development is undermined. For example: publication of reports by specialists, more clearly articulated and with a civil society component.
15. We call to the attention of the international community that corruption undermines both democracy and development and is a threat to democratic institutions. The CD must find ways to counter such a threat.
16. We also call for greater advocacy within and with the International Financial Institutions (IFIs) and the UN to integrate democracy objectives into development and equitable growth policies, initiatives and funding and place high on the agenda the need for IFI research conferences on the subject.

III. Threats to Democracy:

17. We propose that the CD create a mechanism for dealing with “threats to democracy.” Based on the example set by EU, CD’s Secretariat should establish an “early warning” system, perhaps initially among Convening Group members, linking their embassies throughout the world to this system, which would issue “alerts” or “Democracy response accounts” to the CG and its Secretariat when such “threats” occur. The mechanism should include regional consultations of CD members when such threats arise.
18. The ISC declares its support for work toward universal implementation of a world program on human rights especially through regional cooperation.
19. We urge that the Community of Democracies commit itself to assisting with the consolidation of transitions in “backsliding” democracies and other new democracies. In a “Brainstorming” memo dated June 1, 2007 based on ideas generated at the Bamako Seminar, it was noted that assistance during the first five years of transition is crucial and that “CD is well-positioned to transfer lessons learned from other democratization experiences to new democracies.” As the consolidation process is vital to sustaining new and fragile democracies, CD commit themselves to lending support to institutions devoted to consolidating democratic institutions such as the International Centre for Democratic Transition (ICDT) in Budapest.
20. We encourage CD governments to expose the violations of human rights by aggressive organizing of voting action by CD’s UN Democracy Caucus; CD needs to maintain a close check on violators and follow up on countries, which do not fulfill their promises. It is imperative to the CD that the Democracy Caucus achieves greater coherence and that CD members increasingly vote on the basis of their shared democratic values. Major attention of the Caucus should be given to the organization and functioning of the U.N. Human Rights Council to avoid the problems of its predecessor organization, the Human Rights Commission.
21. The propose that the CD focus on some key countries (Burma, Zimbabwe) where CD concerns should be expressed in order to support democracy activists in those countries and exert the moral pressure of the international democratic community.
22. The CD is asked to endorse, and take action to promote, a report entitled *Defending Civil Society*. The report, co-authored by the Secretariat of the World Movement for Democracy (a global network of democracy activists, practitioners, scholars, and public officials) and the International Center for Not-for-Profit Law (ICNL), will articulate the widely accepted principles that ought to inform proper government-civil society relations (such as rights of association, speech, and advocacy, and the right to receive cross-border

assistance), but that new restrictions on civil society, such as some new NGO laws, increasingly violate. To help advance the promotion and adoption of these internationally-recognized principles that protect civil society (hereafter ‘international principles’), the World Movement has assembled an Eminent Persons Group that includes former U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, former Canadian Prime Minister Kim Campbell, former Brazilian President Fernando Henrique Cardoso, His Holiness the Dalai Lama, former Czech President Vaclav Havel, former Malaysian Deputy Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim, and Egyptian scholar and activist Saad Eddin Ibrahim, and Archbishop Desmond Tutu.

23. An action program designed to measure outcomes over a two year period, from one ministerial to the next should be developed by the CD Secretariat linked to the Working Groups and the ISC.

IV. Regional Cooperation:

24. We are committed to cooperation for the promotion and defense of democracy and human rights. Toward that end it seeks to create a regional advisory committee to apply the OAS Inter-American Democratic Charter; generate standards and systems to assess its fulfillment; make it possible to sanction countries that do not meet the standards; establish the possibility that countries can, through legislative initiatives, independent of the executive branch, request help from the OAS in the Americas during times when democracy is threatened. We seek to have this process followed also by the African Union and other regional bodies as feasible. We welcome the imminent establishment of an ASEAN charter that will especially include a regional human rights mechanism and the institutionalization of civil society engagement with the inter-governmental body.
25. Regional charters similar to that of the OAS are important, but need to be based in effective regional organizations, which the Asian region lacks. The CD should encourage the building of such regional organizations made up of democracies.
26. We encourage the ratification process of the African Union Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance at this critical moment so that at least fifteen countries ratify the Charter within 2008. That process can be helped by supporting a study of the ratification process within each African country.
27. We recommend that the CD commit itself to making greater efforts at engaging in outreach and communication with sub-regional organizations. Working with such groups (e.g. SADC, ECOWAS, CARICOM, MERCOSUR, and others) could help promote democratic development, prevent backsliding, and address challenges to democracy.
28. We note that the CD framework is ideal for the promotion of the institutionalization of autonomous voices in regional organization policy development: a number of

29. Regional organizations could also identify and disseminate information about indigenous traditions rooted in universal democratic norms. In African cultures these can include the practices of *ganwaa* in the Oromo of Ethiopia, *khotla* in Botswana, *gacacca* in Rwanda, and *indaba* in South Africa. To the extent that they can be accepted, adapted and utilized in conjunction with more “modern” democratic practices, this can help democracy take root in the various regions. It can also play a central role in the development of curricula for democracy education.
30. We affirm that democracy must be recognized as an international principle, applicable to international organizations and to states in their international relations. The principles of democracy must also be applied by states and multilateral organizations in the management of issues of global interest and human security such as the environment, trade, anti-terrorism measures, and sustainable human development. We recommend a mechanism for action be developed.

V. Role of Political Parties:

- 31. The ISC is committed to the representation of political parties as essential partners along with civil society in the Community of Democracies. In consultations between the ISC and the Convening Group political parties will be integrated into the CD nongovernmental process and therefore into the biennial Ministerial meetings by adopting the model for party participation developed by the Netherlands Institute for Multi-Party Democracy (NIMD) and the National Democratic Institute (NDI) for selecting representatives to the Bamako Ministerial from party coalitions. At a future date, the ISC plans to include representatives of party internationals in the nongovernmental representation.**
32. We encourage the creation, publication and application of behavior codes of ethical conduct inside the parties and encourage the publication and application of behavior codes of ethical conduct inside the political parties.
33. The countries that make up the Rio group agreed to strengthen the political party system as a means of strengthening democracy. Presidents of countries in that group have signed that agreement, so it would be appropriate for the CD to support it as a model.

VI. Democracy Education:

- 34. Of fundamental importance to the revitalization of democracy everywhere is the need to create a culture of democracy through education. We urge that a major initiative be launched within the CD framework to implement the “The Global Strategic Plan for Democracy Education” that emerged from the Seoul Action Plan and was formulated at a June 2003 meeting at the Pocantico Conference Center. We call for a joint civil society/government working group to determine an action agenda for the next two years and propose regional consultations between government and civil society to discuss implementation of the strategy.**
35. We ask that the CD appeal to UNESCO and the World Bank to launch a special concerted initiative for the Americas in collaboration with the OAS to reform teaching about democracy in the Hemisphere’s schools as a model and a first step toward a more global effort.
36. Cooperation between civil society, government and regional and multi-regional organizations is needed to provide education that allows people to understand their responsibilities as citizens and which combines citizenship with liberty.
37. Ministries of Education should ensure that education for democracy has an important place in their school curricula.
38. Special efforts should be made to assist with book translations for the Middle East and North Africa to help alleviate the isolation of the Arabic speaking world and enable citizens of the region to better participate in the debate about democracy.
- 39. Donor countries should make education for democracy a priority in their assistance programs.**
40. Since its inception in Warsaw in 2000 the CD has highlighted the importance of democracy education as a means of strengthening and consolidating democracy around the world. Special attention must be given to implementing reforms consistent with its pronouncements, especially in Africa.

VII. Gender Equality:

- 41. Gender quotas can be an effective way of granting women a chance to participate, such as in India’s local government system. Therefore, governments and political parties should consider quota policies for decision-making positions at all levels of government.**
- 42. The ISC notes the need to allocate resources for political education of women, especially at the grassroots, so that they will be effective as candidates for office and as elected officials. Guidance and financial assistance should be granted so**

that women can participate in training/workshops on politics, leadership and democratic governance designed to enhance their skills and know-how. Likewise, a process should be developed for dissemination of information, including at the village level, about these opportunities to ensure that women and the public are aware of them. Women should participate in developing this process.

43. Adequate protection measures need to be implemented for those who participate in the women's movement; this should become a major concern of governments in cooperation with human rights defenders.
44. Budgeting at every level of government should be elaborated from a gender perspective.
45. Women's rights issues need to be incorporated in the early stages of democratization initiatives and not mid-way or at the end of the transition.
46. We encourage the CD to work to reduce discrimination against women in the labor market and sustained efforts must be made to ensure and guarantee women's economic and property rights and to strengthen opportunities for girl-child education (especially in secondary education).
47. We strongly support access to sexual and reproductive health information and recommend services be increased.
48. We declare that governments must combat violence and abuse against women and that women's participation in decision-making (in the public service) must be strengthened and boys and men need to be involved and sensitized in order to break the generational transfer of attitudes and norms perpetuation gender discrimination.
49. With respect to Africa, we encourage sustained advocacy for the ratification and domestication of international charters, conventions, declarations, particularly the Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality adopted by African Heads of State in 2004.

VII. Press Freedom and Free Flow of Information:

50. The adoption and implementation of freedom of information laws as well as access to information laws to facilitate in-depth reporting on policy issues must be promoted within the framework of the CD.
51. We encourage the development of Regional Associations of Journalists. Such an association was formed in 2005 in Cameroon with CCD support. Others could be organized, adapting this model and drawing upon UNDEF funding if CD lent its endorsement. Also, the June 1st "Brainstorming" meeting following the Bamako Seminar called for a "venture capital fund," "training of journalists in new democracies" and CD's support of a "UN resolution making harassment, torture, or

killing of journalists an international crime” to “strengthen an independent, sustainable media essential to new democracies.”

52. We believe it important to foster public education on the importance of media, the need for press freedom and the characteristics and value of independent, professional journalism. Carry out public campaigns to raise awareness of the right of access to information and train the public in how to exercise this right, so that citizens can find a way to turn this right into a useful tool.
- 53. To advance freedom of expression, in cases of democratic transitions, it is necessary to declassify documents relevant to the investigation of human rights violations. Governments in transition can support the process by making such information public. Community of Democracies governments are encouraged to set up working groups to formulate a transparency or “freedom of information” law in all countries so long as this process is regulated in accordance with democratic standards. In this respect, the declassification of documents should be one of the issues addressed.**
- 54. Community of Democracy governments are urged to carry out public campaigns to raise awareness of the right of access to information and train the public in how to exercise this right, so that citizens can find a way to turn this right into a useful tool.**
- 55. Throughout the developing world provision of a broad range of training programs for journalists are essential if the media is to be truly free and capable of playing a role in strengthening democracy.**
56. We wish to join with the CD to encourage the formation of citizen organizations and civil society networks, which work for access to information. And to help train public officials to be active not only in responding to requests for information as well as orienting citizens in exercising their right to access to information. Journalists and judges should also be involved in this task.
57. CD governments are encouraged to create a data base, which tracks access to information and ways in which cases have been resolved.
58. To counter corruption, so deadly to democracy, governments are urged to establish or utilize existing norms making all votes in all chambers of the legislative branch public and require authorities, judges and political candidates to declare their holdings, guaranteeing, thereby creating transparency for citizens and donors to electoral campaigns.
59. As access to information is critical to a free press and informed citizenry train public officials to be active not only in responding to requests for information, but also in orienting citizens in exercising their right to access to information. Journalists and judges should also be involved in this task.

60. It is vital that governments establish ways of protecting journalists from harassment.
61. **It is important that the CD establish a working group devoted to increasing transparency and accessibility of public information via the Internet if the force of globalization is to work in favor of promoting democratic values.**

IX. Free and Fair Elections:

62. We urge that the CD promote the criterion that election results should reflect the votes cast in a given election and the responsibility of leaders to overcome distrust by conforming to democratic principles. We recognize the necessity of creating and ensuring the viability of independent and powerful electoral management bodies, crucial for conducting free and fair elections at all levels. To improve electoral management, independent electoral services in each country should be provided the authority and resources to carry out efficient monitoring.
63. Elections must be organized regularly, honestly and on a calendar that is well known to all in advance.
64. Electoral standards should be included in the texts of constitutions.
65. Electoral codes should regulate the conduct of elections.
66. **Electoral observers should be accepted during all phases of elections. In addition to allowing domestic and international observers, we recommend that the Community of Democracies urge each country preparing to organize elections to adopt the Declaration of Principles for Election Observation and the Code of Conduct for International Observers (UN October 2005).**
67. Electoral law and the Constitution must be available to civil society and citizens for a better understanding of the electoral process and citizens' rights and responsibilities
68. While universal standards for free and fair elections should be the bottom line, adoption of regional standards can help to mitigate the feeling that such standards are not suited to regional conditions. The Association of Asian Election Authorities (AAEA) should be encouraged to be more proactive in this regard.
69. Strengthen the secrecy of the ballot both in practice and in perception, and enforce related regulations, provide training of election staff and appropriate space and equipment for polling, all as part of an ongoing program of civic education.
70. **It is important that the CD reaffirm the importance of election observation activities as set forth in the United Nations Declaration of Principles for International Election Observation and the Code of Conduct for International Election Observers adopted in 2005. Election observers need to be particularly**

sensitive to large gaps, whether cultural or material, between themselves and the citizens. An emphasis should be placed on supporting election observation by civil society nationals of the country in question. Such an emphasis, with the support of and regional organizations, is particularly valuable, bringing election observation much closer to the ordinary voters, such as has been the practice of the Asian Network for Free Elections and in keeping with the SADC guidelines on elections.

71. We take special note of the role of the legislatures in assuring democratic accountability. State institutions have to act within defined parameters of constitution, law and custom. Civil society and public opinion need access to the tools and instruments required for them to actively participate in the implementation of executive and parliamentary mandates received through free, universal and fair elections.
72. The ISC affirms that there should be a systematic study, under the auspices of the Community of Democracies, of national elections should serious malpractice be discovered through observation by the international community. The findings of such a study should be published by CD and follow-up action taken, as appropriate to the circumstances of each “failed election” that is identified.

X. Civil Society/Government Partnership:

73. **Diplomat’s Handbook:** We endorse the project proposed by the CD’s Working Group on Democratic Governance and Civil Society to produce a “Diplomat’s Handbook for Democratic Development Support.” Building on an initial draft provided to the Bamako Ministerial which is being made available to CD participant governments for comment, the handbook will be further expanded, published and disseminated in early 2008 to CD Foreign Ministries for their use in assisting diplomats. The Handbook seeks to help diplomats in providing guidance and reference information that will enable them more effectively to support efforts to advance and consolidate democracy by civil society representatives in the countries of their assignment. Subsequently, the Handbook will be used for the training of diplomats.
74. We strongly support efforts to strengthen the practical and result-oriented approach of the Community of Democracies initiated by the government of Hungary and the International Centre for Democratic Transition through a project in the Working Group on Democratic Governance and Civil Society. The objective of the project called “State and Civil Society – Working Together for a Better World” is to provide an assessment of government policies regarding the status of civil society in order to eliminate barriers to their effectiveness and stimulate civil society’s ability to encourage the growth of democracy. It is aimed at achieving this goal by creating a mechanism to assess the practice of governments in fostering civil society. The results of such assessment, with a special focus on best practices, would be summarized in reports to the

Ministerial Meetings of the Community of the Democracies. The project is also aimed at providing the Community of Democracies with a new tool to play an increasingly important role in promoting democracy.

- 75. All CD governments are urged to contribute to the United Nations Democracy Fund (UNDEF) to sustain efforts to expand funding for civil society initiatives in support of democracy.**
- 76. We strongly endorse the creation of a European Foundation for Democracy through Partnership which would symbolize Europe's commitment to democracy as a core objective and an underlying principle of the continent's policy.**
77. We are committed to work with the newly established Permanent Secretariat in of the CD in Warsaw to assure civil society coordination with governments and to continue our close cooperation with the CD Convening Group.
- 78. Building on the regional constituencies produced by ISC Regional Roundtables and the previous work carried out by nongovernmental partners of the process, the place for civil society within the CD process must be protected and expanded to overcome the traditional mistrust between civil society and governments, and must transform this relationship into one of mutual respect and full partnership. The experience of sitting together with the governments, for the first time, to discuss issues of common concern at the Santiago 2005 Ministerial was very valuable, although subject to improvement. We look forward to a renewal of that process in Bamako 2007, and making it a more interactive dialogue.**
79. Inclusion of parliamentarians and political parties in CD consultations would help bridge some of the communication gaps between civil society and governments, but first more groundwork needs to be done to improve communication between this sector and civil society.
- 80. ISC should be included in CD missions (fact-finding, solidarity) to countries in crisis to determine action that might be taken.**
81. The regional civil society networks emerging from the ISC roundtable process should be more fully engaged in the Working Group process.
- 82. Before ministerial meetings government delegations of each participant country should hold consultations with civil society at both national and local levels.**
- 83. We are in favor of appealing to the United Nations to designate an International Day of Democracy and suggest it be held on June 26, the anniversary of the Warsaw Declaration.**