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Agenda items 39 and 114 (b)

**Support by the United Nations system of the efforts
of Governments to promote and consolidate new or
restored democracies****Human rights questions: human rights questions,
including alternative approaches for improving
the effective enjoyment of human rights and
fundamental freedoms****Letter dated 20 September 2000 from the Permanent
Representative of Poland to the United Nations addressed to
the Secretary-General**

Upon instructions from my Government and on behalf of the Permanent Representatives of the following Member States: Chile, Czech Republic, India, Republic of Korea, Republic of Mali, Portugal and the United States of America, I have the honour to transmit to you herewith the joint statement of the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the Convening Group of the Community of Democracies, issued in New York on 12 September 2000 (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex distributed as a document of the fifty-fifth session of the General Assembly, under agenda items 39 and 114 (b).

(Signed) Janusz **Stanczyk**
Ambassador

Permanent Representative of the Republic of Poland
to the United Nations

Annex to the letter dated 20 September 2000 from the Permanent Representative of Poland to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Joint statement of the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the Convening Group of the Community of Democracies

The Ministers for Foreign Affairs of countries that comprise the Convening Group of the Community of Democracies met in New York on 12 September 2000 during the Millennium Assembly of the United Nations. In a session chaired by Poland, host of the inaugural meeting of the Community of Democracies, which was held in Warsaw from 25 to 27 June 2000, the Ministers jointly:

- Thanked countries from all the world's regions and major cultures that accepted their invitation to participate in the Warsaw meeting and expressed gratitude to the leaders of many international organizations for their attendance, especially to Secretary-General Kofi Annan for his moving statement of support;
- Thanked the United Nations Secretariat for circulating the Warsaw Declaration and the list of the 106 countries that endorsed it in Warsaw, together with the Warsaw Communiqué, as a document of the General Assembly (A/55/328);
- Announced their intention to convene the informal "democracy caucus" at the United Nations, which was discussed by the many countries that participated in the Warsaw conference and endorsed in its official Communiqué. The "democracy caucus" will meet during the fifty-fifth session of the General Assembly and will comprise those countries that have endorsed the Warsaw Declaration of democratic principles;
- Invited participants in the "democracy caucus" to exchange information, support resolutions and undertake other activities that encourage and assist countries that have chosen the democratic path;
- Offered support for those resolutions that promote and strengthen democracy, such as the resolution adopted by the United Nations Commission on Human Rights earlier this year in Geneva, which called for participation in the Fourth Conference of New or Restored Democracies to be convened in Benin on 5 December 2000;
- Welcomed the offer of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to sponsor an ongoing forum to assist, at their request, Governments and non-governmental organizations that seek more effective means of cooperation and assistance in strengthening the values and institutions of democracy;
- Welcomed support offered by the Secretary-General of the Organization of American States for a conference of multilateral and regional organizations to discuss the ways in which such organizations are cooperating to promote democracy and address threats that may arise against it;
- Considered ways to encourage other meetings and activities at which the "best practices" of countries taking the democratic path can be presented and discussed;

- Directed their senior officials to prepare proposals that will delineate the criteria to enable countries to participate in the Community of Democracies and establish procedures to govern its activities, as well as those of the informal “democracy caucus”;
- Recognized that, in situations in which regional procedures fail to produce a consensus candidate for a United Nations body, it would be appropriate for participants in the Community of Democracies, in casting their votes, to take into account, among other considerations, whether countries contesting the seat have endorsed the Warsaw Declaration;
- Agreed to meet regularly at the ministerial level, including at the annual meetings of the United Nations General Assembly.

Recalling the support expressed in the Communiqué of the Warsaw conference for a second conference to be held in Seoul, the Convening Group welcomed a presentation by the Republic of Korea of its plans to host this meeting at the Convention and Exhibition Center (COEX) on 21 and 22 October 2002.

The Convening Group reaffirmed its belief that the Community of Democracies has a valuable role to play in strengthening the United Nations system, in improving understanding between nations and in helping to overcome divisions that too often impede cooperation for peace, respect for human rights and the eradication of poverty.

The members of the Convening Group of the Community of Democracies are: Chile, Czech Republic, India, Republic of Korea (represented by the special envoy of the Minister for Foreign Affairs), Mali, Poland, Portugal and the United States of America.
