



## **REGIONAL ROUNDTABLE 2 : AMERICAS**

The Regional Roundtable on the Americas was presided over by Mr. Deeprak OBHRAI, Parliamentary Secretary of Canada's Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Ambassador José Viegas FILHO, Head of the Brazilian Delegation, acted as co-chair and rapporteur, and Raul ALCONADA, senior Director of the OAS, as facilitator. Representatives of Argentina, Chile, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay, United States and Uruguay have also attended the meeting, alongside with NGOs from the region.

The debate was focused on ways to promote and defend democracy. Concern was expressed about cases of concentration of power, as well as about the need to find ways to reintegrate countries currently considered undemocratic. Questions were raised about how to best promote the implementation of the Inter-American Democratic Charter. Opinion were given that the Community of Democracies members should be ready for constructive engagement with Governments, in order to better respond to demands for external support.

Haiti was singled out by many participants as a successful example of international cooperation in fostering democracy and development. Attention was drawn to the fact that he efforts of the UN Stabilization Mission in Haiti to promote development, alongside with security, were crucial to consolidate democracy in the country.

It was highlighted by a number of participants that a key issue in defending democracy in Latin America as a whole is to tackle the region's structural social and economic problems, which might erode people's support for democracy. Cooperation is needed for this purpose. It was considered that a successful conclusion of the Doha Development Round can play an important role in this regard.

A number of initiatives were mentioned as possible ways to improve the effectiveness of the Community of Democracies work in promoting democracy. The importance of NGO's participation was stressed. It was also suggested by a number of delegations to take on board political parties' representatives, irrespective of their ideologies, in the Community of Democracies meetings.

Better coordination among Community of Democracies members in multilateral fora was urged. The central role in the United Nations as a coordinator of multilateral efforts was stressed in this regard. The UN peace building efforts, including economic reconstruction and institution building, were said to play a pivotal role in promoting democracy.

The creation of a regional fund to promote democracy in the Americas, complementary to the United Nations Democracy Fund, was put forward. The establishment of a regional mechanism of dialogue and cooperation on democracy was also proposed.