

Community of Democracies (Santiago)

**Document for Ministerial Consideration
April 2005**

Recommendations and Proposals

by

**The Non-Governmental Process of the
Community of Democracies**

MARCH 2005

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Introduction

After the second Ministerial Meeting in Seoul, November 2002, there was a consensus among Non-Governmental actors that there was a need to (i) implement a follow-up process from the meeting in Seoul to the third meeting in Santiago and beyond, (ii) involve different social and political actors in the process and, (iii) significantly increase government implementation of commitments.

With these needs in mind, an Executive Secretariat (ES)¹ was created in order to work with other significant partners to start preparing for the third Ministerial meeting, to be held in Santiago, Chile. The President of the Secretariat is Genaro Arriagada and Andrea Sanhueza is its Executive Secretary. Throughout 2003, 2004, and 2005, several national, regional, and global meetings and conferences about the Community of Democracies have taken place. Specifically, seven regional workshops were held in Asia, Europe, Russia and the CIS, Latin America and the Caribbean, Middle East and North Africa, North America and Sub-Saharan Africa. Around 200 people participated in these workshops. Furthermore, in March 2005, a Final Meeting of this preparatory process was organized in Santiago. It convened 90 participants from 35 different countries from all the regions.

The main objectives of these regional workshops, which have been adapted in response to regional priorities and needs, were:

- To evaluate the progress and the setbacks of democracy in its political, economic, and social dimensions, discussing main challenges to democratic governance and development
- To make proposals related to the strengthening of democracy that can then be presented to governments of the Community of Democracies at the Santiago Ministerial Meeting
- To encourage a substantive dialogue among NGOs, political parties, political foundations, and think tanks to promote a greater mutual understanding for collaborative work on democracy building.

¹ The Executive Secretariat is hosted in Participa, a Chilean NGO.

The proposals that came out of the workshops were discussed and finalized at the Final Meeting in Santiago.

This document contains:

- the **Global Proposals**, which address the proposals about the CoD itself, and other common democratic issues that emerged in the regional workshops:

1. International Cooperation to Promote Democracy
2. Political Systems
3. Corruption, Transparency and Accountability
4. Civil Society
5. Human Security

- and the **regional proposals**, which are the results of the discussions at the Final Meeting and the recommendations from the regional workshops that have been held over the last year.

This document compiles what was discussed in a participatory process in which the proposals were initially formulated by the regional participants, circulated among them again for revisions and systematization, and then discussed and finalized in the discussions that took place during the Final Meeting of the Non-Governmental Process of the CoD at Santiago de Chile March 3rd and 4th, 2005.

We submit this document to the Governments of the Community of Democracies for their consideration during the elaboration of the Santiago Declaration. We urge governments to also incorporate these recommendations as priorities in their democracy strengthening plans at the national level as well as in their foreign policies.

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Acknowledgements

We express our thanks to the following regional co-coordinators that have participated and enriched this process:

FORUM 2000 (Czech Republic), Electoral Institute of Southern Africa (South Africa), International IDEA (Sweden), PARTICIPA (Chile), MÁS VOCES (Chile), Organization of American States (USA), Taiwan Foundation for Democracy (Taiwan), PANORAMA Centre (Palestine), North-South Centre of the Council of Europe (Portugal), Arab Institute for Human Rights (Tunisia), Middle East Citizens Assembly (Tunisia), Qatari National Committee on Human Rights (Qatar), Freedom House (USA), The Yemeni Human Rights Information and Training Center (Yemen), AISHA Network on Women's Rights, and the Arab NGO Network for Development (Lebanon), the Center for Democracy and Election Management/American University (USA), Council for a Community of Democracies (USA), Center for American Progress (USA), Democracy Coalition Project (USA), Elections Canada (Canada), Rights and Democracy/Droits et Democratie (Canada), and Alianza Civica (Mexico).

We also want to recognize the work of hundreds of participants of this Non-Governmental process, for their commitment with democratic governance and human rights.

This process could not be sustainable without the valuable help of those who have financially supported the Non-Governmental Process:

Council for the Community of Democracies
Freedom House
Government of Chile
Government of the Czech Republic
International IDEA
Open Society Institute
Organization of American States
Qatari National Committee on Human Rights
Taiwan Foundation for Democracy

U.S. State Department
USAID
Westminster Foundation for Democracy

The proposals we have outlined are based in our recognition that in this new era fundamental human rights are not an internal issue for respective states but an issue of concern for all states and all peoples in the international community.

We the representatives of the Non Governmental Process of the Community of Democracies representing Civil Society and Non State actors from the six global regions of the Community, unanimously call upon the Foreign Ministers and Governments participating in the Ministerial meeting of the Community of Democracies to institute within each of the common themes we have identified the following recommendations:

A. International Cooperation to Promote Democracy

The Community of Democracies, the only global association of democratic and democratizing governments, has agreed to work together to strengthen and promote democratic governance at the national and international levels. To fulfill this commitment, its members should carry out the following actions:

1. The UN Democracy Caucus

1.1 The UN Democracy Caucus should become the key forum for governments which qualify as full participants of the Community of Democracies to coordinate common positions on democracy and human rights issues before UN bodies.

1.2 CoD governments should mobilize under the auspices of the UN Democracy Caucus to support country specific resolutions on the most urgent cases of gross human rights violations.

1.3 CoD governments should support each other as candidates for the UN Commission on Human Rights (UNCHR), the UN Economic and Social Council and any other UN body responsible for monitoring respect for democracy and human rights.

1.4 CoD governments should work for approval of the UN Secretary-General's proposals to reform the UN human rights system, specifically to replace the Human Rights Commission with a smaller Human Rights Council composed of states which "undertake to abide by the highest human rights standards." Toward that end, CoD governments should support criteria for membership on the main UN human rights bodies. Governments responsible for gross human rights violations should be excluded from participation on such bodies until the violations have been remedied.

1.5 Membership of the UN Democracy Caucus should be limited to governments invited as full participants to the CoD.

1.6 Civil society should be invited regularly to meet with the UN Democracy Caucus. In addition, CoD governments should support extending NGO consultative status with ECOSOC to the new Human Rights Council.

2. Transitions to Democracy

2.1 Defenders of human rights and democratic governance are under continuous attack and harassment by authoritarian regimes as they pursue their non-violent campaigns for transitions to democracy. There is an urgent need for the Community of Democracies to speak out collectively on their behalf and to support politically and financially those working toward fulfillment of democratic and human rights norms.

2.2 CoD governments should endorse Hungary's establishment of a Democracy Transition Centre with a commitment by the CoD governments to support, fund and lend expertise to the Centre. The Centre will be an important international vehicle to satisfy the demand for expertise in transitions to democracy, as well as helping the CoD implement its mission of promoting peaceful transitions to democracy.

2.3 CoD governments, with civil society participation, should create ongoing working groups to exchange information and coordinate common approaches regarding countries of concern which are undergoing a transition to democracy, backsliding away from democratic norms or governed by non-democratic regimes.

3. The Invitation Process

3.1 The Community of Democracies, in its Seoul Plan of Action, has adopted criteria for participation that excludes those countries "where there is currently a disruption of constitutional rule or severe persistent erosion of or lack of essential elements of representative democracy." We urge CoD governments to reaffirm this criteria, especially the Seoul Plan of Action's comprehensive definition of "the essential elements of representative democracy."

3.2 The Convening Group has applied the criteria for participation in the CoD selectively to include governments which do not meet the criteria for participation. It has also failed to explain the rationale for its decisions, thereby undermining the credibility of the intergovernmental process.

3.3. In order to overcome the deficiencies of the invitation process, the Community of Democracies should adopt an independent transparent mechanism to monitor and assess on an ongoing basis which governments meet the democratic standards set forth in the Warsaw Declaration, the Seoul Plan of Action and the Convening Group's Criteria for Participation.

3.4 Such a mechanism should be headed by independent experts and individuals of stature and integrity from civil society including former heads of state and government

and other leaders of good democratic standing. This independent body would be responsible for reviewing the performance of governments according to the Criteria for Participation in order to determine eligibility for continued CoD participation.

3.5 Governments participating in the Community of Democracies have committed themselves to promote democracy domestically and at the regional and international levels. Therefore, governments have a responsibility to conform their behavior outside their borders to international standards of democracy, human rights and the rule of law. The Community of Democracies, in collaboration with civil society, should establish standards for international behavior of democratic states that reflect their obligations to promote and defend democracy. Such standards should become part of the criteria for participation in the CoD process.

3.6 The meetings of the Community of Democracies should include not only government officials, but also representatives of opposition parties, civil society, foundations and the private sector as part of a multi-stakeholder approach, particularly those from countries experiencing deterioration of democratic standards.

3.7 Participation in the Community of Democracies should not be limited to UN member states but should also include political entities meeting the democratic standards of the Community of Democracies.

4. Strengthening the Community of Democracies Process

4.1 The Community of Democracies process should be institutionalized by:

- Establishing a permanent Community of Democracies secretariat.
- Expanding and formalizing the rotation of the members of the Convening Group taking into account a government's demonstrated commitment to the objectives and standards of the CoD process.
- Providing adequate funding for the Community of Democracies and its activities.
- Institutionalizing regular consultations with civil society organizations interested in monitoring governmental commitments and exchanging views with the Convening Group and other CoD governments.

4.2 In order to make the Community of Democracies more transparent and accountable, the participation of nongovernmental actors should be institutionalized through an independent, international non governmental secretariat, which is adequately funded by democracy foundations and other donors. The expertise gained by the current Executive Secretariat of the Non-Governmental Process for the Community of Democracies, the members of the Global Issues Group and the regional coordinators participating in the meetings of the Community of Democracies should be shared with new groups interested in participating in the process with the hope that these organizations can become more involved in the future.

4.3 The international non governmental secretariat should be responsible, inter alia, for serving as a clearinghouse for information about the Community of Democracies; monitoring implementation of the commitments made at the Warsaw, Seoul and Santiago ministerial meetings; design and implementation of an independent review mechanism for evaluating participation in the CoD process; coordinating civil society participation in CoD activities; and generating proposals for future ministerial meetings and activities.

4.4 Initiatives and activities sponsored or endorsed by the Community of Democracies should always include non governmental actors as active participants. These include, inter alia, regular Convening Group meetings, the proposed UN Global Democracy Fund, the Hungarian Democracy Transition Center, and the UN Democracy Caucus.

4.5 EU member states must take a more active role in the CoD process in order to strengthen this multilateral process.

4.6 The CoD should also work closely with the International Civil Society Forum for Democracy (ICSFD), which is the civil society partner of the International Conference of New or Restored Democracies (ICNRD). We also encourage governments to take the opportunity to work with UN-supported ICNRD in preparation for the next ICNRD Conference that will be held in 2006 in Doha, Qatar.

5. Democracy and Development Assistance

5.1 Recognizing the positive correlation between democracy and development, CoD governments and international donors should preferentially reward with debt relief, trade and

aid, those developing democratic governments effectively investing in poverty reduction, education and health care, judicial reform and anti-corruption reforms. In addition, they should fulfill the commitments made in the *Millennium Declaration* and the *Monterrey Consensus* on financing for development. Governments which systematically abuse the rights of their citizens should not qualify for increased assistance until such violations have been remedied.

5.2 CoD governments should coordinate and expand democracy assistance funding to support democracy-building efforts around the world, including through the proposed UN Global Democracy Fund, the UN Development Program and the UN Electoral Assistance Division.

5.3 In development assistance programs, bilateral and multilateral donors should provide increased support to strengthen democratic political parties and party systems. These international efforts should directly engage, rather than exclude, political parties in the design, debate, and implementation of assistance and reform.

6. Responding to Threats to Democracy

6.1 In line with the Seoul Plan of Action, each regional governmental organization should establish and apply mechanisms to respond quickly to threats to democratic governance.

6.2 Regional governmental organizations should consider a menu of options in this area, including creation of advisory bodies composed of recognized leaders of established integrity including former heads of state and government, statesmen and non-governmental leaders, who can offer good offices to facilitate diplomatic resolution of political crises.

6.3 The Community of Democracies should coordinate common diplomatic strategies by working with regional organizations to oppose and counteract threats to democracy and to facilitate the establishment of democratic governance. A special effort should be made to intensify bilateral and multilateral efforts to reach peaceful resolution of violent and “frozen” conflicts around the world.

7. Democratic Culture/Education for Democracy

Governments should:

- 2.1 Promote increased participation of citizens in political and social affairs by incorporating education for democracy and social responsibility in the education system and by supporting NGOs' public awareness-raising activities.
- 2.2 Incorporate the concepts of “culture of democracy” and “human rights” in school curricula.
- 2.3 Ensure that gender equality is part of governmental programmes and strategies.
- 2.4 Foster a culture of democracy and human rights and allow dialogues and cooperative relationships between actors such as parliamentarians, media personalities, local and international unions and religious organizations.
- 2.5 Cooperate with civil society organizations in civic education programmes to combat public disillusionment with politics, as reflected for example in declining voter turnouts in many countries.
- 2.6 Recognize non violent opposition activities as a legitimate part of political life.

Regional Proposals

North America

Governments should:

1. Support and expand civic education in the school systems and at the adult level in North America and worldwide in order to better prepare citizens for participation in the democratic process as called for in the Warsaw Declaration, the Seoul Plan of Action, the “Global Strategic Plan for Democracy Education” of the first Pocantico Conference on Democracy Education (www.ccd21.org), June 2003, and in the Statement of the second Pocantico Conference, March 2005, submitted to the Third Biennial Ministerial in Santiago, entitled, “Recommendations from the European-American Pocantico Conference on Democracy Education in the Middle East and Muslim Africa”.
2. Call for general electoral reform in the North American region and in the member states of the Community of Democracies by capitalizing on the recent establishment

of the Carter-Baker Commission on Federal Election Reform managed by The Center for Democracy and Election Management at American University and charged with assessing “issues of inclusion and integrity” and “defining an electoral system for the 21st century” – and other electoral reform efforts underway in Canada and Mexico. Relate these efforts to the need for national legislation authorizing nonpartisan and independent election administration. In addition, all governments should provide a legal framework, which would allow for unrestricted access to the entire electoral process for domestic and international observers in accordance with guidelines in the Copenhagen Declaration.

3. Equate advocacy of “democracy abroad” with the practice of “democracy at home,” which in the case of North America translates into the need for election reform, education in the culture of democracy and compliance domestically with international legal standards, especially regarding established international norms and conventions forbidding torture and inhumane and cruel treatment of prisoners of war.
4. Combat in collaboration with other nations international criminal networks involved in drug and people trafficking, which undermine governance systems and corrupt the political process. Reform criminal justice systems in North America, which have a discriminatory effect on minorities and the poor and undermine the civil and human rights progress of the past fifty years.