

# International Steering Committee



# The Nongovernmental Process of the Community of Democracies

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

July 23, 2009

## International Civil Society Leaders Meet at Lisbon Ministerial of Community of Democracies

Nearly 80 democracy and human rights activists from around the world met in Lisbon, Portugal from July 10-12 in conjunction with the Fifth Ministerial of the Community of Democracies (CD) to discuss with governments the ways in which civil society and democratic governments can work together to promote democratic development. Citing the need to maintain support for democratic values through the current economic and financial crisis, nongovernmental leaders urged governments to pay greater attention to recent trends curtailing the rights of civil society and voiced their solidarity with democratic activists who are currently the targets of increasingly innovative and sometimes violent repression.

Welcoming the opportunity to consult with governmental representatives in the global forum provided by the CD, civil society leaders nonetheless expressed their concern at the presence in Lisbon of many governments that fall short of meeting the standards outlined in the CD's founding document, the Warsaw Declaration. In a statement endorsed by the NGO participants in Lisbon, the invitations of 28 countries were identified as being at odds with the recommendations of the International Advisory Council, which issued an April report to the CD on invitations to Lisbon. They said that "the fact that all of these deviations are in the direction of giving a more favorable status to the governments in question – notably on Angola, Egypt, Iraq, Nicaragua, and Russia – indicates a trend of declining standards."

NGO participants also detailed recent actions by governments to restrict the rights of civil society. Leading democracy scholar Larry Diamond of the Center on Democracy, Development, and the Rule of Law at Stanford University described the emergence of an authoritarian backlash that is becoming more sophisticated. Many present testified to this backlash, including Cambodian human rights activist Theary Seng, who learned upon arrival to Lisbon that the Cambodian government had taken action to remove her from her leadership of the Center for Social Development in Phnom Penh, and the prominent Egyptian activist Saad Eddin Ibrahim, who continues to face the threat of arrest in his home country for defamation of the government. Dr. Chee Soon Juan of the Singapore Democratic Party was not present, instead represented by attorney Robert Amsterdam, as Dr. Chee was prevented from attending by the Singaporean government.

NGO leaders present endorsed a statement on Iran, calling for the respect of rights of assembly, association, and expression for Iran's people as guaranteed under Iran's constitution and expressing solidarity with the Iranian people in their "indigenous struggle to achieve democracy, rule of law, and fundamental freedoms."

Articulating a series of opportunities for strengthening the capacity of the CD to support democracy, including through partnership between governments and civil society, the nongovernmental International Steering Committee of the CD (ISC/CD) expressed its hopes that through a planned tenth anniversary meeting in 2010 and the chairmanship of the Lithuanian government following the Lisbon Ministerial, the CD will assume a more active role protecting and promoting democratic values throughout the world.

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**Statement by the Participants of the Non-Governmental Process  
of the Community of Democracies**

**On the Invitation Process to the Community of Democracies**

Lisbon, July 10, 2009

We, participants of the nongovernmental International Steering Committee of the Community of Democracies (ISC/CD), meeting in Lisbon in conjunction with the Fifth Ministerial Meeting of the Community of Democracies (CD), express our concern about the invitation process for this meeting, having been notified of the actual list of invited countries at the last minute. In the future, we encourage the Convening Group (CG) to make the invitation decisions in a more timely and transparent way.

The CD process depends for its legitimacy on maintaining the standards that the governments adopted in Warsaw, and applying them in a fair and transparent manner. In this light, we strongly welcome the attention given by the Convening Group to the recommendations of the International Advisory Committee (IAC) composed of prominent democracy experts and leaders; these recommendations were earlier endorsed by the ISC/CD. We believe the IAC process is extremely valuable and needs to be continued.

However, the large number of deviations from the IAC recommendations has caused our surprise and disappointment. A total of 28 CG decisions are contrary to the IAC recommendations, which is substantially more than for the Fourth Ministerial Meeting. The fact that all of these deviations are in the direction of giving a more favorable status to the governments in question -- notably Angola, Egypt, Iraq, Nicaragua, and Russia -- indicates a trend of declining standards.

The observer category raises particular questions. Of 25 countries invited as observers to Lisbon, 17 had received non-invitation recommendations by the IAC. Moreover, many of these are countries in various stages of backsliding. This fact confuses the original purpose of the observer category to encourage countries demonstrating progress. We are further disturbed that observers are apparently to participate on an equal footing at this Ministerial Meeting. We call on the Convening Group to clarify the meaning of observer status and the criteria for granting it.

Finally, we regret that the Convening Group has not found a suitable mechanism to enable participation of the government of Taiwan in any meetings of the Community. Taiwan is a thriving democracy which fully meets all criteria laid down by the Community. Moreover, through the Taiwan Foundation for Democracy, it has played a very constructive role in supporting and developing the Non-Governmental Process.

## **Appendix: Countries whose Invitation Status at the Lisbon Ministerial Meeting Differs from the Recommendation of the International Advisory Committee**

Governments invited as participants which had been recommended by the IAC as “Do Not Invite”:

1. Angola
2. Bahrain
3. Iraq
4. Jordan

Governments invited as participants which had been recommended by the IAC as observers:

1. Bangladesh
2. Bhutan
3. Haiti
4. Kenya
5. Liberia
6. Malaysia
7. Thailand

Governments invited as observers which had been recommended by the IAC as “Do Not Invite”:

1. Afghanistan
2. Algeria
3. Armenia
4. Azerbaijan
5. Burkina Faso
6. Cambodia
7. DR Congo
8. Djibouti
9. Egypt
10. Guinea-Bissau
11. Nicaragua
12. Nigeria
13. Oman
14. Qatar
15. Russia
16. Rwanda
17. Uganda

# Statement of the International Steering Committee of the Nongovernmental Process of the Community of Democracies on Iran

Lisbon, Portugal  
*July 12, 2009*

We, the International Steering Committee of the Community of Democracies, and nongovernmental organizations from around the world participating in the Fifth Ministerial Meeting of the Community of Democracies in Lisbon, Portugal:

- Condemn the indiscriminate use of violence by regular and irregular state security forces against peaceful protesters in Iran in the aftermath of the disputed June 12 presidential elections that has led to deaths and injuries.
- Call on the Iranian authorities to respect the rights of its citizens to peaceful assembly, freedom of association, and freedom of expression as guaranteed under Iran's constitution and international human rights law.
- Call on Iranian authorities to respect the rule of law, to refrain from the use of force, and to release detained opposition figures, human rights defenders, journalists, and protestors.
- Call on Iranian authorities to stop interrupting internet and mobile phone services, and to respect the rights of citizens to access information freely.
- Call on Iranian authorities to provide for independent monitoring of the election process.
- Recognize the Iranian people's century-long, indigenous struggle to achieve democracy, rule of law, and fundamental freedoms.
- Recognize the important role of Iranian women in the civil society movement demanding non-discrimination and respect for human rights.

We declare our support for the Iranian people in their peaceful and nonviolent protests and pay respect to those who have lost their lives in the struggle for democracy.

## STATEMENT OF THE INTERNATIONAL STEERING COMMITTEE of the NONGOVERNMENTAL PROCESS of the COMMUNITY OF DEMOCRACIES

The International Steering Committee (ISC) applauds the decisions of the Convening Group (CG), as approved by the Ministerial meeting held in Lisbon on July 12, 2009, to give a new impetus to the Community of Democracies (CD). In particular we look forward to the high level meeting in Poland on the occasion of the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Community. We offer the support of the ISC and look forward to full civil society participation in the meeting. We continue to urge that the meeting be held at the head of government level, that it reaffirm the Warsaw Declaration as the founding document of the CD, and that the meeting approve steps to strengthen the CD's effectiveness and action-oriented features.

We welcome the reforms enabling the CG troika to speak out on developments affecting the struggle for democracy, as it has done by issuing a strong statement on Honduras. We urge further reforms to permit the Presidency to speak for the CD when appropriate.

We welcome the adoption of procedures which could lead to rotation of members of the CG. We call upon major democracies from each region to join the CG. If current members are not in a position to abide by the principles of the CD, we urge them to withdraw from the CG.

We welcome the decision to fund the Secretariat and to direct it to begin implementing operational programs for the CD. We call upon member states to provide significant funding to the secretariat and appreciate the expressed desire of the secretariat to provide funding for activities of the ISC.

Given the growing threat to NGOs at the UN and in states participating in the CD as well as in non-democratic states, we call upon the CD to express unequivocal support for the right of all persons to participate in civil society activities and the obligation of states not to interfere with the rights of persons to freedom of speech, press, assembly and association. We urge the Democracy Caucus, meeting both in Geneva and New York, to vigorously support the rights of NGOs at the United Nations. We call upon the CD to initiate a process which will lead to the adoption by the CD of standards of state obligations to NGOs.

Recalling the commitments in the Warsaw Declaration and other ministerial statements to assist democratic states under threat, we call upon the CG to create an operational committee which, working with the secretariat, would send delegations to states that face threats to democracy and report to the CG on appropriate steps to be taken to address these threats. We also call upon the CG and the secretariat to respond to requests for assistance from states undergoing a transition to democracy and for the CG to invite such a state to participate in the activities of the CD as an observer or participant when appropriate without waiting for a new ministerial meeting.

We welcome the careful attention given to the recommendations of the IAC regarding invitations to the CD. Nonetheless we regret that in a number of cases the recommendations of the IAC, which were endorsed by the ISC, were not supported by the CG. We call upon the CG to give greater weight to these recommendations and to enforce its criteria for participation more faithfully.

We urge the states participating in the CD to continue to support the Diplomat's Handbook, efforts to strengthen democracy education and to promote cultural exchanges on best practices to support democracy.

Recalling commitments for states to meet in caucus in multilateral and regional organizations, we call upon states participating in the CD to revitalize the UN democracy caucus and to organize caucuses as appropriate in regional organizations.

We urge the creation of a working group to facilitate cooperation between donors and democratic recipients of funding to more effectively work to eliminate poverty in democratic states.

# Signatories to Nongovernmental Declarations of the Fifth Ministerial of the Community of Democracies

Lisbon, Portugal | July 11-12, 2009

## Nongovernmental International Steering Committee of the Community of Democracies (ISC/CD)

<b>Hoda Chalak</b>	Lebanon	Organization for Civil Action
<b>Chee Soon Juan</b>	Singapore	Singapore Democratic Party
<b>Yuri Dzhibladze</b>	Russia	Centre for the Development of Democracy and Human Rights
<b>João Carlos Espada</b>	Portugal	Institute for Political Studies, The Catholic University of Portugal
<b>Hannah Forster</b>	The Gambia	African Democracy Forum
<b>David French</b>	United Kingdom	Convener Associates
<b>Paul Graham</b>	South Africa	IDASA
<b>Morton Halperin</b>	United States	Open Society Institute
<b>Sameer Jarrah</b>	Jordan	Arab World Center for Democratic Development
<b>Michael Kau</b>	Taiwan	Taiwan Foundation for Democracy
<b>Robert LaGamma</b>	United States	Council for a Community of Democracies
<b>Oumar Makalou</b>	Mali	Center of Studies and Research for Democracy, Economics and Social Development
<b>Mohsen Marzouk</b>	Tunisia	Arab Democracy Foundation
<b>George Mathew</b>	India	Institute for Social Sciences
<b>Matteo Mecacci</b>	Italy	Transnational Radical Party
<b>Gus Miclat</b>	Philippines	Initiatives for International Dialogue
<b>Iлона Mihaies</b>	Romania	Euroregional Centre for Democracy
<b>Carlos Ponce</b>	Venezuela	Latin American and Caribbean Network for Democracy
<b>Andrea Sanhueza</b>	Chile	Corporación PARTICIPA
<b>Vo Van Ai</b>	Vietnam/France	Vietnam Committee on Human Rights
<b>Roel von Meijenfeldt</b>	Netherlands	Netherlands Institute for Multiparty Democracy
<b>Dieudonné Zognong</b>	Cameroon	Humanus International

## Other Nongovernmental Participants in the Lisbon Ministerial

<b>Aly Abuzaakouk</b>	Libya	Libya Human and Political Development Forum
<b>Selima Ahmad</b>	Bangladesh	Bangladesh Women Chamber of Commerce and Industry
<b>Badiul Alam Majumdar</b>	Bangladesh	SHUJAN -- Citizens for Good Governance
<b>Michael Allen</b>	United States	National Endowment for Democracy
<b>Oscar Alvarez</b>	Costa Rica	Latin American and Caribbean Network for Democracy
<b>Robert Amsterdam</b>	Canada	Amsterdam & Peroff
<b>Henok Assefa</b>	Ethiopia	AmCham Ethiopia
<b>Sugeng Bahagijo</b>	Indonesia	Prakarsa
<b>Sarwar Bari</b>	Pakistan	Pattan Development Organization
<b>Kurt Bassuener</b>	United States	Democratization Policy Council
<b>Mokhtar Benabdallaoui</b>	Morocco	Center for Humanities Studies and Research, Hassan II University
<b>Francesca Bomboko</b>	Democratic Republic of Congo	Bureau d'Etudes and Consulting International

<b>Shari Bryan</b>	United States	National Democratic Institute
<b>Ihsan Dagi</b>	Turkey	Middle East Technical University
<b>Larry Diamond</b>	United States	Center on Democracy, Development, and the Rule of Law
<b>Mamadou Diouf</b>	Senegal	Columbia University
<b>Dokhi Fassihian</b>	United States	Democracy Coalition Project
<b>Penelope Faulkner</b>	Vietnam/France	Vietnam Committee on Human Rights
<b>Georges Fauriol</b>	United States	International Republican Institute
<b>Boudjema Ghechir</b>	Algeria	Algerian League for Human Rights
<b>Istvan Gyarmati</b>	Hungary	International Center for Democratic Transition
<b>Han Dongfang</b>	China	China Labour Bulletin
<b>Robert Herman</b>	United States	Freedom House
<b>Daniel Hollingsworth</b>	United States	Council for a Community of Democracies
<b>Amy Hsieh</b>	Taiwan	Taiwan Foundation for Democracy
<b>Robert Hunter</b>	United States	Director of Council for a Community of Democracies
<b>Saad Eddin Ibrahim</b>	Egypt	Carr Center for Human Rights Policy
<b>Zanaa Jurmed</b>	Mongolia	Center for Citizens Alliance
<b>Arjun Karki</b>	Nepal	RRN/LDC Watch
<b>Jeremy Kinsman</b>	Canada	Diplomat's Handbook for Democracy Development Support
<b>Edmond Kwam Kouassi</b>	Togo	École Supérieure des Science Politiques Economique et Juridique
<b>Ellie Larson</b>	United States	Solidarity Center
<b>Jung Ok Lee</b>	Korea	Korea Democracy Foundation
<b>Raj Liberhan</b>	India	The Habitat Centre
<b>Abraham Magendzo</b>	Chile	Universidad Academia de Humanismo Cristiano
<b>Radwan Masmoudi</b>	Tunisia	Center for the Study of Islam and Democracy
<b>Hugo Maul</b>	Guatemala	National Economic Research Center
<b>Marina Narnor</b>	United Kingdom	Westminster Foundation for Democracy
<b>Mohammed Nasib</b>	Afghanistan	Afghan NGO Coordination Bureau / Center for International Private Enterprise
<b>Enrique de Obarrio</b>	Panama	Alianza por un Sí Social e Integral (Así Sí)
<b>Arief Patramijaya</b>	Indonesia	Indonesia Legal Aid Foundation
<b>Adilur Rahman Khan</b>	Bangladesh	Odhikar
<b>Jean Rogers</b>	United States	Center for International Private Enterprise
<b>Ruby Sandhu</b>	United Kingdom	Amsterdam & Peroff
<b>Theary Seng</b>	Cambodia	Center for Social Development
<b>Emad Shahin</b>	Egypt	Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies, University of Notre Dame
<b>Hassan Shire Sheikh</b>	Somalia	East and Horn of Africa Human Rights Defenders
<b>Debbie Stothard</b>	Thailand	Alternative ASEAN Network on Burma
<b>Abdi Suryaningati</b>	Indonesia	YAPPIKA
<b>William Tedards</b>	Taiwan	Taiwan Foundation for Democracy
<b>Jan Tuit</b>	Netherlands	Netherlands Institute for Multiparty Democracy
<b>Jaime Vintimilla</b>	Ecuador	Centro sobre Derecho y Sociedad
<b>Gregg Willhauck</b>	United States	Center for International Private Enterprise

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