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Conclusions from the Thematic Round Tables

1) Implications of the current Financial and Economic Crisis for domestic democratic governance

- Democracy is better equipped than other systems to deal with the challenges of the current financial and economic crisis; the crisis is not the result of a failure of democracy, but it produces new challenges that democracies must deal with;
- The shape democracy will take depends on the particular setting and therefore specific institutional arrangements will be context-dependent. Democracy everywhere has certain common features, but there is no single dogmatic recipe;
- In relation to consolidated democracies in the developed world, the challenge is not so much “representativity”, but how to increase “participation”, so as to bridge the gap between the elected and their constituencies



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- Civil society embodies today many of the aspirations at the core of the idea of democracy. Therefore developing mechanisms to ensure that the voice of NGOs, Think tanks and other actors is heard is essential to foster the democratic ideal
- There is a need to broaden and deepen the concept of democratic governance, that goes beyond periodic elections and encompasses a socio-economic component, as shown by the examples presented of Cape Verde and Slovakia (in the former case, equality of opportunities was highlighted and, in the latter case, emphasis was put on the need to decentralise governance).
- At present time, there is a need to give priority to economic and social development and to fight unemployment; both of those have implications for democratic governance;
- Promote the accountability of Governments in the management of the current economic and financial crisis;

2) Reform at the international level – for a more inclusive system

- Need to avoid nationalistic impulses; there is no real alternative to the global economy;



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- However, we must face what has been described as the “democratic deficit of globalization”
- There is a need to make the decision making process on economic and financial issues at the international level more democratic, legitimate and inclusive. In this context, regional integration processes and institutions can play a key role in ensuring broader representation; therefore, the promotion of multilateral consultative mechanisms in which regional groupings could participate should be a priority;
- Priority should also be placed on the reform of the UN Security Council and other parts of the UN system, as well as on the Bretton Woods institutions;
- Our Community should also support the initiatives taken in the framework of the Alliance of Civilizations, namely in the context of intercultural dialogue

3) Democratic Governance and Development

- Democracy and Development are mutually interdependent concepts in a “symbiotic” relationship



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- The challenges faced by developing countries are particularly daunting because they are, in most cases, young democracies and face a higher risk of setback
- Inclusiveness of the new international institutions means a greater role for the developing world in shaping international institutions and policies;
- Globalization has been managed in a way which is not consistent with democratic principles and has, in some cases, led to further inequality at the domestic level. The parable of the Tragedy of the Commons gains a renewed significance in the context of globalisation
- Member States of the CoD should also ensure the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals, with a particular focus on the most fragile countries; promote a breakthrough in the Doha Development Round;

4) Future Challenges for the Community of Democracies

- Democratisation effort of the CoD should translate into a more pragmatic, transparent and inclusive approach; in this sense, the new rules for the



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Convening Group and for decision-making process as well as issuance of Declarations under the Portuguese Presidency were welcomed;

- The Community should become more proactive in its task of democratization – “it is our common responsibility”, not only by promoting democracy but also by securing the boundaries of democracy – and should raise its profile and visibility in the international arena
- The participation and role of the non governmental process within the Community should be better defined and enhanced
- The Community of Democracies can contribute in developing ties between Governments and Civil society and reinforcing regional and interregional partnerships in a coordinated and coherent fashion
- Concrete proposals for revitalizing the Community: more frequent meetings and action by the Democracy Caucus at the UN; launch the second edition of the Diplomat’s Handbook; use the opportunity of the 10-year meeting in Poland to adopt agenda for action; review, revitalize the Working Groups with country and regional-specific agendas; send electoral observation missions; reinforce relationship with the International Conference on New and Restored Democracies; need for more coherence,



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communication and information among the Community and to the “outside world”; strengthen the Permanent Secretariat; more focus on education for Democracy and human rights

- There is also a view that the CoD should prepare to launch a Democracy Audit project as well as a periodic bi-annual report on the State of Democracy;