

11 April 2006

To: Foreign Ministers, Community of Democracies

Cc: U.N. Permanent Representatives in New York, Community of Democracies
U.N. Missions in Geneva, Community of Democracies

Re: Elections to the U.N. Human Rights Council

We, the undersigned organizations, call on the governments of the Community of Democracies (CD) to work together in the U.N. General Assembly on the occasion of the elections to the newly established Human Rights Council on May 9, to elect governments that have demonstrated a clear commitment to the promotion and protection of human rights, both within their own borders and internationally. An improved membership of the new Human Rights Council is essential in ensuring that human rights violations and breaches of democratic practices are properly addressed by the United Nations.

In particular, CD governments should cooperate inside the regional groupings and within the U.N. Democracy Caucus at the General Assembly to oppose candidacies of governments that do not meet the basic international human rights standards contained in the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other relevant human rights treaties. We urge democratic states to show leadership by announcing their candidacies in advance, supporting governments based on their merits, and considering countries' public commitments and pledges regarding future actions on the Human Rights Council, as well as their past records on human rights promotion at the United Nations. We call on CD nations to oppose candidates that have poor human rights records or that fail to make sufficient pledges and commitments. CD governments are also strongly encouraged to pledge against engaging in vote trading.

Now is the time for the Community of Democracies to fulfill the commitment made at the Santiago Ministerial Meeting to support the candidacies of countries contributing effectively to the promotion and protection of democracy and human rights. In doing so, democratic governments will set a new standard for international human rights monitoring and ensure that this critical reform of the UN's human rights system is realized.

Sincerely,

Thandi Henson, Coordinator
African Women in Developing Economies, South Africa

Fatiha Azzabi, Director
Africa Women in Development Southpanafrican International, Morocco

Debbie Stothard, Coordinator
Alternate ASEAN Network on Burma

Albert Musliu, Executive Director
Association for Democratic Initiatives, Macedonia

Abdulhadi Alkhwaja, President
Bahrain Center for Human Rights

Lauryn Oates, Director
Canadian Women for Women in Afghanistan

John D. Podesta, CEO and President
Center for American Progress, U.S.A.

Ahmed Jazouli, President
Center for Democracy, Morocco

Yuri Dzhibladze, President
Center for the Development of Democracy and Human Rights, Russia

Todd Howland, Director
Center for Human Rights Robert F. Kennedy Memorial, U.S.A.

Mukhtar Ahmad Ali, Executive Director
Centre for Peace and Development Initiatives, Pakistan

Abukar Abdukadir Thabit, Director General
Center for Youth and Democracy, Somalia

Tolekan Ismailova, Director of Human Rights Center
Citizens Against Corruption, Kyrgyzstan

Charles J. Brown, President and CEO.
Citizens for Global Solutions, U.S.A.

Vicente García-Delgado, UN Representative
CIVICUS World Alliance for Citizen Participation

Dick Rowson, President
Council for a Community of Democracies

Alfredo Mesa, Executive Director
Cuban American National Foundation

Ted Piccone, Executive Director
Democracy Coalition Project

Wasef Tubishat, Director
Democracy Watch, Jordan

Samuel Bizen, Chairperson
Eritrean Movement for Democracy and Human Rights

Inna Pidluska, President
Europe XXI Foundation, Ukraine

Iлона Mihaies, Executive President
Euroregional Center for Democracy, Romania

Oumar Makalou, President,
Executive Secretariat Non Governmental Process Community of Democracies, Mali

Djingarey Maiga, Executive Director
Femmes et Droits Humains, Mali

Omar Lopez, Executive Director
Foundation for Human Rights in Cuba, U.S.A.

Jennifer Windsor, Executive Director
Freedom House

Mukete Tahle Itoe, Global Secretary General
Global Network for Good Governance, Cameroon

Jamils Richard Achunji Anguaseh, Program Director
Global Welfare Association, Cameroon

Mrinmoy Das, Coordinator
HUMAN Network, India

Zohra Yusuf, Vice-Chairperson (Sindh)
Human Rights Commission of Pakistan

Iain Levine, Program Director
Human Rights Watch

Irena Lasota, President,
Institute for Democracy in Eastern Europe

Nadezhda Mihaylova, Chairperson of the Managing Board
Institute for Democracy and Stability in South-East Europe

Robert Arsenaault, President
International League for Human Rights

Hassan Al-Ukaily, Executive Director
Iraqi Organization for Human Rights Coordination

Nozima Kamalova, Chairperson
Legal Aid Society of Uzbekistan, Uzbekistan

Alfredo Libombo Tomas, National Director
Media Institute of Southern Africa, Mozambique

Amina Bouayach, President
Moroccan Organisation for Humans Rights

Phil ya Nangoloh, Executive Director
National Society for Human Rights, Namibia

Morton H. Halperin, Director of US Advocacy
Open Society Institute

Riad Malki, Director General
Panorama Center for Dissemination of Democracy and Community Development, Palestine

Andrea Sanhueza, Executive Director
Participa, Chile

Isagani R. Serrano, Senior Vice President
Philippine Rural Reconstruction Movement

Natalia Taubina, Director
Public Verdict Foundation, Russia

Vo Van Ai, President
Quê Me: Action for Democracy in Vietnam

Carol Bower, Executive Director
Resources Aimed at the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect, South Africa

Abdinasir Nur, Director
Somali Youth for Peace and Democracy, Somalia

Augusto N. Miclat Jr., Regional Initiator
South East Asia Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict

Atamao B. T. Kane, President
South Panafrikan International, Germany

Aleksander Smolar, Chairman of the Board
Stefan Batory Foundation, Poland

Charlie Szrom, President
Students for Global Democracy International

Michael Ying-mao Kau, President
Taiwan Foundation for Democracy

Matteo Mecacci, UN Representative
Transnational Radical Party

Roberts Putnis, Executive Chairperson
Transparency International, Latvia

Hillel Neuer, Executive Director
UN Watch Geneva

Bo Tedards, Coordinator
World Forum for Democratization in Asia

Seng Xiong, Executive Officer
World Hmong People's Congress

Byron D.S. Wilson, Executive Director
YAEHD, Liberia