

**APPEAL TO THE MINISTRIES OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS
OF THE COMMUNITY OF DEMOCRACIES FOR THE CREATION OF A DEMOCRACY
GROUP AT THE UNITED NATIONS**

March 15, 2004

- After a series of non-governmental initiatives undertaken by eminent persons and leaders of groups dedicated to promoting democracy and by representatives of a Steering Group of NGOs¹, the Chilean Government held on September 26, 2003, a meeting of the Convening Group of the Community of Democracies at the UN headquarters in New York to discuss the creation of a UN Democracy Group at the United Nations.
- As a result of the September 2003 meeting, the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the 10 Convening Group countries (Chile, the Czech Republic, India, the Republic of Korea, Mali, Mexico, Poland, Portugal, South Africa, the United States) and invited participants (Italy, Romania and Peru) issued a joint statement in which they reaffirmed the importance of establishing a Democracy Group inside the UN system, stating that:

“The members of the Convening Group recalled the Warsaw Declaration commitment that the Community of Democracies will collaborate on democracy-related issues in existing international and regional institutions, forming coalitions and caucuses to support resolutions and other international activities aimed at the promotion of democratic governance...”

In close consultation and cooperation with the Community of Democracies’ interested participants, the Convening Group encourages the formation of coalitions and caucuses within the UN and other multilateral fora to support democracy. The members of the Convening Group of the Community of Democracies have decided to strengthen a process of consultation and coordination at the UN in order to encourage and facilitate the Community of Democracies’ interested participants’ actions dedicated to promote and defend democracy, and the human rights and fundamental freedoms protected under democracy. The Convening Group members will consult and coordinate actions, as appropriate, at the UN General Assembly, the ECOSOC and the Commission of Human Rights...

[...] they would meet during the 58th session of the UN General Assembly.”

- This declaration reinforces and is consistent with the view contained in the UN Secretary General’s 2003 Report on the “Implementation of the United Nations Millennium Declaration”, namely that “Democracy and human rights, though distinct concepts, are closely interlinked. Democracy, as a human right in itself, is implied in article 21 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, but it only functions in its fullest sense when other human rights are respected.” We believe this statement should become a fundamental and guiding principle in all the activities of the UN in the field of electoral activities, democracy promotion, protection of human rights, peace building, peacekeeping operations and conflict prevention;
- More than three years after the launching of the Community of Democracies - an association of states acting jointly to protect and strengthen democracy and human rights around the world – this

¹ The group of NGOs is composed by the Campaign for UN Reform, Council for a Community of Democracies, the Democracy Coalition Project, Freedom House, Human Rights Watch, the International League for Human Rights, the Open Society Institute and the Transnational Radical Party.

Community more than ever offers great promise for promoting democratic development and respect for human rights, guaranteeing international peace and security, and providing coordinated responses against threats to democracy, including coups d'état.

- The United Nations, as conceived by the UN Charter, remains a crucial institution for discharging this mandate and addressing these challenges. The Community of Democracies, therefore, should work in coordinated and cohesive fashion with the relevant UN bodies and agencies to ensure the Organization becomes the global forum for promoting and advancing respect for democratic principles and international norms.

We urge the Convening Group of the Community of Democracies to involve other interested states in taking the following steps during the current 58th Session of the General Assembly, starting with the upcoming 60th session of the Commission on Human Rights:

1. To establish a permanent Democracy Group at the United Nations to promote the values of democracy and human rights within the UN system. The UN Democracy Group should convene to coordinate international support of Member States' efforts to deepen democratic governance, reinforce human rights, and promote democratic practices throughout the UN system.
2. To agree that membership in the UN Democracy Group should consist of States formally invited to take part in the Community of Democracies meeting in Seoul as full participants². The Convening Group must be vigilant, on an ongoing basis, and apply its agreed-upon criteria for Community of Democracies membership as agreed in Seoul, to ensure that democratizing States are added to the Group and the Community, and that backsliding States - particularly states that commit significant human rights violations - are removed from the Group and the Community.
3. To establish procedures through the UN Democracy Group to govern its activities. It should be convened by the Chair of the Convening Group during the sessions of all the relevant bodies of the UN that address issues related to the promotion and protection of democracy and human rights (e.g. General Assembly, Commission on Human Rights, ECOSOC, etc.). Meetings of the UN Democracy Group should also be held at a regional level, as an integral part of the implementation of the Seoul Plan of Action, and should be convened by the members of the Convening Group from each region.
4. To develop procedures for acting on these commitments in the months leading up to the next Community of Democracies gathering in Santiago in 2005;
5. To consider expanding the membership of the Convening Group to ensure that it is broadly representative of democracies around the world and of those nations that have taken concrete steps towards democratic governance.
6. To meet on a regular basis with NGOs that have been active in advocating the establishment of the UN Democracy Group to facilitate an exchange of views about how best to build, strengthen, and shape its work.

² The complete list of the States invited to attend the 2002 Community of Democracies Conference as full participants is available at <http://www.cd2002.go.kr/about/list.htm>

We believe the time is ripe to bring renewed attention and resources to these vital tasks. Toward that end, we will be working to build an international campaign of civic non-governmental groups to urge all the world's democratic governments to participate actively in a UN Democracy Caucus.

Signatories

Dr. Madeleine Albright, former U.S. Secretary of State
Hon. Mohamed Al-Tayeb, Chairman of the HR Commission of the Shura Council, Yemen
Genaro Arriagada, former Minister of the Presidency, Chile
Alfredo Biondi, Vice Chairman of the Chamber of Deputies, Forza Italia, Italy
Hon. Emma Bonino, Member of the European Parliament, Transnational Radical Party, Italy
John Brademas, President Emeritus, New York University
Enver Can, President of the Eastern Turkestan National Congress, Germany
Cecilia Cortes, Executive Director, Fundacion del Servicio Exterior para la Paz y la Democracia, Costa Rica
Larry Diamond, Hoover Institute, Stanford University
Hon. David Dreier, Chairman, Rules Committee, U.S. House of Representatives
Yuri Dzhibladze, President, Center for the development of Democracy and Human Rights, Russia
Penelope Faulkner, Vice President Vietnam Committee on Human Rights, France
Lee Feinstein, Fmr Principal Dep. Director Policy Planning, Department of State
Bronislaw Geremek, former Minister of Foreign Affairs, Poland
Gustavo Gorriti, Journalist, Peru
Morton Halperin, Director, Washington Office, Open Society Institute
Hon. Lee Hamilton, Director, Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars
Hon. Sheik Hasina, Opposition Leader, MP, Bangladesh
Ali Hassan, Political Development Forum, Yemen
Ciping Huan, Executive Director, Wei Jinsheng Foundation, China
Tolekan Ismailova, Executive director, Public Association "Civil Society against corruption", Kyrgyz Republic
Wei Jinsheng, President of the Oversee Democracy Coalition, China
Amb. Max Kampelman, former Counselor, U.S. Department of State
Louise Kantrow, Executive Director, International League for Human Rights
Adrian Karatnycky, Counselor, Freedom House
Amb. Jeane J. Kirkpatrick, former U.S. Representative to the United Nations
Shakodi Fazili Kitshindja, Foundation for the Strengthening of Capacities of Populations, Democratic Republic of Congo
Kok Ksor, President of the Montagnard Foundation
Don Kraus, Executive Director, Campaign for U.N. Reform
Michael Ledeen, American Enterprise Institute
Antonio Maccanico, Member of the Italian Parliament, Margherita
Riad Malki, Director, Panorama Center for the dissemination of information, Palestine
Adam Melaku, Program Director, Ethiopian Human Rights Council, Ethiopia
Antoine Messarra, Lebanese Foundation for Civil Peace, Lebanon; Augusto N. Micalat Jr., Executive Director, Initiatives for International Dialogue, Philippines
Ilona Mihaies, Executive President, Euroregional Center for Democracy, Romania
Baramy Mitthivong, United Lao Action Center, Laos
Amb. Alfred H. Moses, Chairman, United Nations Watch
Hryhoriy Nemyria, Chairman, International Renaissance Foundation, Ukraine
Hon. Marco Pannella, Member of the European Parliament, Transnational Radical Party, Italy
Amb. Mark Palmer, Vice Chairman, Freedom House
Robert A. Pastor, Vice President of International Affairs, American University
Tsering Penpa, Tibetan Parliamentary Policy Research Center, Tibet
Sonia Picado, former Justice of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights, Costa Rica
Ted Piccone, Executive Director, Democracy Coalition Project
Surin Pitsuwan, Member of Parliament, Thailand

Thomas Pojar, Director, People in Need Foundation, Czech Republic
Kenneth Roth, Executive Director, Human Rights Watch
Richard Rowson, President, Council for a Community of Democracies
Charles Sampford, Foundation Professor of Law, Griffith University, Australia
Andrea Sanhueza, Executive Director, Participa, Chile
Jourchi Slaheddine, Vice President, Tunisian League of Human Rights, Tunisia
Nancy Soderberg, Former U.S. Ambassador
Kem Sokha, Cambodian Center for Human Rights, Cambodia
George Soros, Chairman, Open Society Institute
Sergio Stanzani, President of the Transnational Radical Party, Italy
Debbie Stothard, Alternative Asean Network Coordinator, Burma
Arnold Trebach, Professor, Chairman of the International Antiprohibitionist League
Vo Van Ai, President of the Vietnam Committee on Human Rights, Vietnam
Jusuf Wanandi, Chairman, Centre for Strategic and International Studies, Jakarta, Indonesia
Jennifer Windsor, Executive Director, Freedom House
Professor Ahmed Ziauddin, Convenor, Asian Network for the ICC, Bangladesh