

September 13, 2004

TO FOREIGN MINISTERS OF THE CONVENING GROUP OF THE COMMUNITY OF DEMOCRACIES: CHILE, CZECH REPUBLIC, INDIA, MALI, MEXICO, POLAND, PORTUGAL, SOUTH KOREA, SOUTH AFRICA, UNITED STATES

Dear Foreign Minister:

This September at the United Nations General Assembly, the Foreign Ministers from the Community of Democracies (CD) will meet to discuss the role of democratic states at the UN. We write in advance of that meeting to urge you and the other Convening Group ministers to take specific steps that would firmly establish a permanent United Nations Democracy Caucus.

We are encouraged that at last year's meeting of Foreign Ministers on September 26, 2003, the CD Convening Group endorsed "the formation of coalitions and caucuses within the UN and other multilateral organizations to support democracy." We also welcomed your statement last year indicating that "Convening Group members will consult and coordinate actions, as appropriate, at the UN General Assembly, the ECOSOC, and Commission on Human Rights." These decisions reconfirmed commitments made by CD governments in the Warsaw Declaration and the Seoul Plan of Action.

We further commend the leadership of Chile, the Convening Group's current chair, and other CD delegations, which took steps to advance the process of the UN Democracy Caucus by convening CD member states at the last session of the UN Commission on Human Rights in Geneva. We were especially heartened by the fact that the Chilean Ambassador took the floor in Geneva to speak in the name of the CD Convening Group on resolutions pertaining to the promotion of democracy and human rights, as the Chilean Permanent Representative to the UN did at last year's UNGA session.

These first steps represent modest progress toward the creation of a UN Democracy Caucus. We now urge you to take a leading role to ensure human rights and open discourse at the UN are more effectively upheld by the world's democracies in the coming year.

As you know, May 2004 saw the unacceptable election to the UN Commission on Human Rights of Sudan, a country now cited by UN officials as supporting deadly attacks that have killed and injured many thousands and displaced hundreds of thousands in a human rights disaster currently unfolding in Darfur.

The year also witnessed renewed pressures against rights and democracy groups at the UN through unreasonable attempts to suspend such groups at the NGO Committee of ECOSOC and at ECOSOC proper. In votes to avert the three-year suspension of a respected Italian-based NGO (Transnational Radical Party)—among whose leaders is former European Union Commissioner for Humanitarian and Human Rights Affairs Hon.

Emma Bonino—democratic solidarity was weak. A number of CD participant states abstained or supported the request by Vietnam to censure and suspend the NGO. This request, it must be noted, lacked the corroboration of any evidence acceptable to a democratic country that upholds the rule of law and is part of the Community of Democracies.

Disappointingly, in Geneva at the UN Commission on Human Rights last April, many votes on key issues related to human rights violations underscored the absence of a consensus among the democracies represented at that important body. Moreover, too many human rights violations and disruptions of democratic processes and principles remain underreported or are not dealt with by the UN Commission of Human Rights. This deficit raises serious concerns about the Commission's capacity to carry out its mandate effectively.

In this troubling context, we write to urge you to pursue effective and ongoing consultation and cooperation among UN democracies through a systematic effort to establish and consolidate a working UN Democracy Caucus. It is a concrete step that would improve the capacity of the United Nations to address the lack of freedom and democracy that still affects a large part of the world population.

We urge that at upcoming meetings this fall, the Community of Democracies:

- Adopt a statement calling for the UN Democracy Caucus to meet under the leadership of the Ambassadors from the CD Convening Group states throughout the UNGA this fall.
- Ensure that there is an active convening chair of the UN Democracy Caucus.
- Endorse resolutions before the UNGA that advance democracy and human rights, for example, the resolution on democracy and racism that was adopted in Geneva by the UN Commission on Human Rights.
- Make a commitment to work toward the establishment of specific criteria for states that serve on the UN Commission for Human Rights.
- Affirm the commitment of the democratic countries to the aims of the Millennium Declaration, emphasizing the importance of democratic governance to sustainable development.
- Call for the convening of regular meetings of UN Democracy Caucus members (states that are full participants in the Community of Democracies) before and during meetings of the UN General Assembly, ECOSOC, and the UN Commission on Human Rights.
- Assign a small team of diplomats to serve as staff for the UN Democracy Caucus at UN Headquarters to ensure timely consultations and consensus-building on key issues related to democracy and human rights matters at the UN.
- Establish transparent procedures related to the governance of the UN Democracy Caucus, including the selection and composition of its Convening Group.
- Ensure that, at the May 2005 CD Ministerial in Santiago, Chile, the Community of Democracies further institutionalizes the UN Democracy Caucus.

We further urge you to endorse the call by the government of Hungary for the creation of a CD Democracy Transition Center designed to foster democracy worldwide by drawing on the resources and know-how of new and long-time democracies to assist those working to build democracy in their countries.

Finally, we urge that the CD meeting during the 59<sup>th</sup> UN General Assembly session adopt a clear and forthright resolution on the human rights and humanitarian emergencies in Sudan that specifically condemns the role played by the Khartoum government.

We remain hopeful that the Community of Democracies process will fulfill the promise of strengthening cooperation to advance democracy embraced in Warsaw in 2000 and urge that this same principle find effective expression this year at the United Nations.

Respectfully,

**Charles J. Brown, President, Citizens for Global Solutions**  
**Richard C. Rowson, President, Council for a Community of Democracies**  
**Theodore Piccone, Executive Director, Democracy Coalition Project**  
**H. Emma Bonino, Former European Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid, MEP**  
**Jennifer L. Windsor, Executive Director, Freedom House**  
**Kenneth Roth, Executive Director, Human Rights Watch**  
**Louise Kantrow, Executive Director, International League for Human Rights**  
**H. Marco Pannella, Founder, Transnational Radical Party, MEP**  
**Mr. Sergio Stanzani, President, Transnational Radical Party**  
**Hillel C. Neuer, Executive Director, United Nations Watch**

Cc: Foreign Ministers of Italy, Peru, Hungary and Romania

Cc: Permanent Representatives to the United Nations of the Above Countries

Cc: Permanent Representatives to the UN of Host Countries of the New and Restored Democracies Process: Mongolia, the Philippines, Benin

Cc: Ambassadors to the US from the CD Convening Group Count

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