

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

The International Steering committee applauds the decisions of the Convening Group, as approved by the Ministerial meeting held in Lisbon on July 12, 2009, to give a new impetus to the Community of Democracies. In particular we look forward to the high level meeting in Poland on the occasion of the 10th 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 intensify the CD's effectiveness and action-oriented features.

We welcome the reforms enabling the CG the troika to speak out on developments affecting the struggle for democracy, such as the strong statement on Honduras. We welcome the Ministerial 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 fully endorse the principles of the CD, they should withdraw from the CG.

We welcome the decision to fund the Secretariat and to direct it to begin to implement operational programs for the CD. We call upon member states to provide significant funding to the secretariat and appreciate the undertaking that the secretariat 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 and association. We urge the Democracy Caucus meeting both in Geneva and New York to vigorous 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 up the CG to create an operational committee which, working with the secretariat, would send delegations to states that face threats to democracy and undertake appropriate action including suspension from the CD. 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 more faithfully enforce its criteria for participation.

We urge the states participating in the CD to continue to support the Diplomats 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.