



REGIONAL ROUNDTABLE 2 : ASIA AND OCEANA

There was general agreement that the Asia and Oceania region had experienced remarkable economic growth but the full realisation of democracy, good governance and human rights remains a challenge.

There is no single model for democracy: diversity of starting points (based on history, culture and levels of development).

There was consensus that the concepts of development and democracy were compatible and mutually reinforcing.

Poverty, illiteracy, and terrorism are the biggest regional challenges to democracy. It was recognized that globalization presents opportunities but also has potential negative impacts, making it imperative for the Doha Development Round to succeed.

Strengthening of national institutions is essential, along with the development of local government initiatives and grassroots organizations for empowerment of people.

There was an ongoing debate with regard to Asian values. In some cases, democracy and development had been achieved simultaneously. There is need for research on any exceptional cases to better understand the causality.

There was a recognition that countries were at different stages of democratic governance and a many challenges remain. It was recognized that mature democracies could help those in transition.

Information technologies and the internet can serve as specific enablers to information access and transparency. It was recommended that the Community of Democracies establish a Task Force on Internet Governance.

International aid has been used for implementing legal reforms. Caution was raised on the need to ensure such reforms did not restrict human rights.

It was suggested that existing regional mechanism could be used as building blocks for greater regional cooperation on institution building for democracy, including the implementation of specific international charters linked to democracy.