

**Document for Ministerial Consideration
April 2005**

Recommendations and Proposals

by

**The Non-Governmental Process of the
Community of Democracies**

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Introduction

After the second Ministerial Meeting in Seoul, November 2002, there was a consensus among Non-Governmental actors that there was a need to (i) implement a follow-up process from the meeting in Seoul to the third meeting in Santiago and beyond, (ii) involve different social and political actors in the process and, (iii) significantly increase government implementation of commitments.

With these needs in mind, an Executive Secretariat (ES)¹ was created in order to work with other significant partners to start preparing for the third Ministerial meeting, to be held in Santiago, Chile. The President of the Secretariat is Genaro Arriagada and Andrea Sanhueza is its Executive Secretary. Throughout 2003, 2004, and 2005, several national, regional, and global meetings and conferences about the Community of Democracies have taken place. Specifically, seven regional workshops were held in Asia, Europe, Russia and the CIS, Latin America and the Caribbean, Middle East and North Africa, North America and Sub-Saharan Africa. Around 200 people participated in these workshops. Furthermore, in March 2005, a Final Meeting of this preparatory process was organized in Santiago. It convened 90 participants from 35 different countries from all the regions.

The main objectives of these regional workshops, which have been adapted in response to regional priorities and needs, were:

- To evaluate the progress and the setbacks of democracy in its political, economic, and social dimensions, discussing main challenges to democratic governance and development
- To make proposals related to the strengthening of democracy that can then be presented to governments of the Community of Democracies at the Santiago Ministerial Meeting
- To encourage a substantive dialogue among NGOs, political parties, political foundations, and think tanks to promote a greater mutual understanding for collaborative work on democracy building.

¹ The Executive Secretariat is hosted in Participa, a Chilean NGO.

The proposals that came out of the workshops were discussed and finalized at the Final Meeting in Santiago.

This document contains:

- the **Global Proposals**, which address the proposals about the CoD itself, and other common democratic issues that emerged in the regional workshops:

1. International Cooperation to Promote Democracy
2. Political Systems
3. Corruption, Transparency and Accountability
4. Civil Society
5. Human Security

- and the **regional proposals**, which are the results of the discussions at the Final Meeting and the recommendations from the regional workshops that have been held over the last year.

This document compiles what was discussed in a participatory process in which the proposals were initially formulated by the regional participants, circulated among them again for revisions and systematization, and then discussed and finalized in the discussions that took place during the Final Meeting of the Non-Governmental Process of the CoD at Santiago de Chile March 3rd and 4th, 2005.

We submit this document to the Governments of the Community of Democracies for their consideration during the elaboration of the Santiago Declaration. We urge governments to also incorporate these recommendations as priorities in their democracy strengthening plans at the national level as well as in their foreign policies.

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We also want to recognize the work of hundreds of participants of this Non-Governmental process, for their commitment with democratic governance and human rights.

This process could not be sustainable without the valuable help of those who have financially supported the Non-Governmental Process:

Council for the Community of Democracies
Freedom House
Government of Chile
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International IDEA
Open Society Institute
Organization of American States
Qatari National Committee on Human Rights
Taiwan Foundation for Democracy

U.S. State Department

USAID

Westminster Foundation for Democracy

The proposals we have outlined are based in our recognition that in this new era fundamental human rights are not an internal issue for respective states but an issue of concern for all states and all peoples in the international community.

We the representatives of the Non Governmental Process of the Community of Democracies representing Civil Society and Non State actors from the six global regions of the Community, unanimously call upon the Foreign Ministers and Governments participating in the Ministerial meeting of the Community of Democracies to institute within each of the common themes we have identified the following recommendations:

A. International Cooperation to Promote Democracy

The Community of Democracies, the only global association of democratic and democratizing governments, has agreed to work together to strengthen and promote democratic governance at the national and international levels. To fulfill this commitment, its members should carry out the following actions:

1. The UN Democracy Caucus

1.1 The UN Democracy Caucus should become the key forum for governments which qualify as full participants of the Community of Democracies to coordinate common positions on democracy and human rights issues before UN bodies.

1.2 CoD governments should mobilize under the auspices of the UN Democracy Caucus to support country specific resolutions on the most urgent cases of gross human rights violations.

1.3 CoD governments should support each other as candidates for the UN Commission on Human Rights (UNCHR), the UN Economic and Social Council and any other UN body responsible for monitoring respect for democracy and human rights.

1.4 CoD governments should work for approval of the UN Secretary-General's proposals to reform the UN human rights system, specifically to replace the Human Rights Commission with a smaller Human Rights Council composed of states which "undertake to abide by the highest human rights standards." Toward that end, CoD governments should support criteria for membership on the main UN human rights bodies. Governments responsible for gross human rights violations should be excluded from participation on such bodies until the violations have been remedied.

1.5 Membership of the UN Democracy Caucus should be limited to governments invited as full participants to the CoD.

1.6 Civil society should be invited regularly to meet with the UN Democracy Caucus. In addition, CoD governments should support extending NGO consultative status with ECOSOC to the new Human Rights Council.

2. Transitions to Democracy

2.1 Defenders of human rights and democratic governance are under continuous attack and harassment by authoritarian regimes as they pursue their non-violent campaigns for transitions to democracy. There is an urgent need for the Community of Democracies to speak out collectively on their behalf and to support politically and financially those working toward fulfillment of democratic and human rights norms.

2.2 CoD governments should endorse Hungary's establishment of a Democracy Transition Centre with a commitment by the CoD governments to support, fund and lend expertise to the Centre. The Centre will be an important international vehicle to satisfy the demand for expertise in transitions to democracy, as well as helping the CoD implement its mission of promoting peaceful transitions to democracy.

2.3 CoD governments, with civil society participation, should create ongoing working groups to exchange information and coordinate common approaches regarding countries of concern which are undergoing a transition to democracy, backsliding away from democratic norms or governed by non-democratic regimes.

3. The Invitation Process

3.1 The Community of Democracies, in its Seoul Plan of Action, has adopted criteria for participation that excludes those countries "where there is currently a disruption of constitutional rule or severe persistent erosion of or lack of essential elements of representative democracy." We urge CoD governments to reaffirm this criteria, especially the Seoul Plan of Action's comprehensive definition of "the essential elements of representative democracy."

3.2 The Convening Group has applied the criteria for participation in the CoD selectively to include governments which do not meet the criteria for participation. It has also failed to explain the rationale for its decisions, thereby undermining the credibility of the intergovernmental process.

3.3. In order to overcome the deficiencies of the invitation process, the Community of Democracies should adopt an independent transparent mechanism to monitor and assess on an ongoing basis which governments meet the democratic standards set forth in the Warsaw Declaration, the Seoul Plan of Action and the Convening Group's Criteria for Participation.

3.4 Such a mechanism should be headed by independent experts and individuals of stature and integrity from civil society including former heads of state and government

and other leaders of good democratic standing. This independent body would be responsible for reviewing the performance of governments according to the Criteria for Participation in order to determine eligibility for continued CoD participation.

3.5 Governments participating in the Community of Democracies have committed themselves to promote democracy domestically and at the regional and international levels. Therefore, governments have a responsibility to conform their behavior outside their borders to international standards of democracy, human rights and the rule of law. The Community of Democracies, in collaboration with civil society, should establish standards for international behavior of democratic states that reflect their obligations to promote and defend democracy. Such standards should become part of the criteria for participation in the CoD process.

3.6 The meetings of the Community of Democracies should include not only government officials, but also representatives of opposition parties, civil society, foundations and the private sector as part of a multi-stakeholder approach, particularly those from countries experiencing deterioration of democratic standards.

3.7 Participation in the Community of Democracies should not be limited to UN member states but should also include political entities meeting the democratic standards of the Community of Democracies.

4. Strengthening the Community of Democracies Process

4.1 The Community of Democracies process should be institutionalized by:

- Establishing a permanent Community of Democracies secretariat.
- Expanding and formalizing the rotation of the members of the Convening Group taking into account a government's demonstrated commitment to the objectives and standards of the CoD process.
- Providing adequate funding for the Community of Democracies and its activities.
- Institutionalizing regular consultations with civil society organizations interested in monitoring governmental commitments and exchanging views with the Convening Group and other CoD governments.

4.2 In order to make the Community of Democracies more transparent and accountable, the participation of nongovernmental actors should be institutionalized through an independent, international non governmental secretariat, which is adequately funded by democracy foundations and other donors. The expertise gained by the current Executive Secretariat of the Non-Governmental Process for the Community of Democracies, the members of the Global Issues Group and the regional coordinators participating in the meetings of the Community of Democracies should be shared with new groups interested in participating in the process with the hope that these organizations can become more involved in the future.

4.3 The international non governmental secretariat should be responsible, inter alia, for serving as a clearinghouse for information about the Community of Democracies; monitoring implementation of the commitments made at the Warsaw, Seoul and Santiago ministerial meetings; design and implementation of an independent review mechanism for evaluating participation in the CoD process; coordinating civil society participation in CoD activities; and generating proposals for future ministerial meetings and activities.

4.4 Initiatives and activities sponsored or endorsed by the Community of Democracies should always include non governmental actors as active participants. These include, inter alia, regular Convening Group meetings, the proposed UN Global Democracy Fund, the Hungarian Democracy Transition Center, and the UN Democracy Caucus.

4.5 EU member states must take a more active role in the CoD process in order to strengthen this multilateral process.

4.6 The CoD should also work closely with the International Civil Society Forum for Democracy (ICSFD), which is the civil society partner of the International Conference of New or Restored Democracies (ICNRD). We also encourage governments to take the opportunity to work with UN-supported ICNRD in preparation for the next ICNRD Conference that will be held in 2006 in Doha, Qatar.

5. Democracy and Development Assistance

5.1 Recognizing the positive correlation between democracy and development, CoD governments and international donors should preferentially reward with debt relief, trade and

aid, those developing democratic governments effectively investing in poverty reduction, education and health care, judicial reform and anti-corruption reforms. In addition, they should fulfill the commitments made in the *Millennium Declaration* and the *Monterrey Consensus* on financing for development. Governments which systematically abuse the rights of their citizens should not qualify for increased assistance until such violations have been remedied.

5.2 CoD governments should coordinate and expand democracy assistance funding to support democracy-building efforts around the world, including through the proposed UN Global Democracy Fund, the UN Development Program and the UN Electoral Assistance Division.

5.3 In development assistance programs, bilateral and multilateral donors should provide increased support to strengthen democratic political parties and party systems. These international efforts should directly engage, rather than exclude, political parties in the design, debate, and implementation of assistance and reform.

6. Responding to Threats to Democracy

6.1 In line with the Seoul Plan of Action, each regional governmental organization should establish and apply mechanisms to respond quickly to threats to democratic governance.

6.2 Regional governmental organizations should consider a menu of options in this area, including creation of advisory bodies composed of recognized leaders of established integrity including former heads of state and government, statesmen and non-governmental leaders, who can offer good offices to facilitate diplomatic resolution of political crises.

6.3 The Community of Democracies should coordinate common diplomatic strategies by working with regional organizations to oppose and counteract threats to democracy and to facilitate the establishment of democratic governance. A special effort should be made to intensify bilateral and multilateral efforts to reach peaceful resolution of violent and “frozen” conflicts around the world.

B. Political Systems

1. Political Parties

Governments should:

- 1.1 Allow and encourage political parties to undertake capacity and leadership training programmes internationally and locally, upon registration.
- 1.2 Recognize the important role of opposition parties for strengthening democracy, and therefore guarantee their freedom of expression.
- 1.3 Review the legal and regulatory framework for party financing. Special attention should be paid to the regulation of private funding.
- 1.4 Examine the systems of public financing of political parties to guarantee a level playing field for the competitors in the elections. We recommend the adoption of a mixed system of financing in which public financing is used specifically to give political parties the possibility to reach out to the citizens, instead of becoming a permanent and exclusive source of funding.
- 1.5 Create the necessary environment for strengthening political parties, both those in power and those in the opposition through capacity building focused on agenda building.

2. Electoral Systems and Electoral Processes

Governments should:

- 2.1 Endorse the principle of “one person one vote” as a fundamental prerequisite of democratic governance.
- 2.2 Institutionalize regular multiparty elections and set fixed term limits for heads of state and those in political office.
- 2.3 Implement electoral and constitutional reforms in order to broaden representation of key and minority political stakeholders and ensure political stability.
- 2.4 Encourage election observation and utilize local and international election monitors. Governments should ensure that the recommendations issued by election monitoring teams are duly and promptly enforced.

- 2.5 Guarantee that Electoral Management Bodies (EMBs) are sufficiently resourced, broad based, independent and transparent. The management and administration of elections should be the sole mandate of EMBs.
- 2.6 Institute electoral finance reform and discourage the growing spending in electoral propaganda, financial dependency, lack of transparency. Oversee the management of party resources to create fair conditions for electoral races, both at the inter-partisan level and the intra-partisan level.
- 2.7 Assure parties' equal access to low cost media, especially television, one of the main sources of propaganda expenditure for electoral races.
- 2.8 Take measures to ensure ballot secrecy and also to promote voter education programmes to foster confidence in the electoral system.
- 2.9 Ensure the centralization and regularity of the national electoral calendar.
- 2.10 Release detailed information about campaign expenditures before elections take place.
- 2.11 Where necessary, create mechanisms to limit the number of existing political parties, without excessively closing the system and losing representatives.
- 2.12 Endorse parliamentary systems rather than semi presidential systems, as the most effective means of democratic governance, as academic studies show that semi presidential systems can relapse or become ineffective in developing democracies.
- 2.13 Promote the formalization and increase the cohesion of political systems to avoid the concentration of power in an individual.
- 2.14 Ensure gender equality in the democratic process, if need be, through affirmative action where historically there have been gender imbalances.

3. Transitions to Democracy

Governments should:

- 3.1. Build capacity for participation in public sphere through training sessions for citizens about elections, civil and political rights, dialogue and negotiation techniques, and peaceful conflict resolution.
- 3.2. Establish awareness raising programmes for the youth to increase their involvement and responsibilities in networks, associations and organizations; with a goal of

widening grassroots participation and reinforcing democracy and the culture of dialogue.

- 3.3. Empower the media to uncover corruption and look for the truth.
- 3.4. Spread knowledge through training and publications by reinforcing the national, regional and international experiences of *transitional justice*.
- 3.5. In their engagement with less democratic countries, continuously strive to promote respect for basic human rights and democratic principles. Non-interference cannot be used by governments as a shield to prevent scrutiny of a State's failure to uphold universally accepted norms, such as those enumerated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.
- 3.7. Together with donors, sponsor capacity-building programmes for exiled and refugee communities, above and beyond humanitarian assistance and protection, so that they will be better equipped to develop democratic institutions when they return to their home countries.
- 3.9. Launch initiatives to ensure that, during transitional periods, political elites stay responsive to the needs of the people.

C. Corruption, Transparency and Accountability

1. Corruption and Transparency

Governments should:

- 1.1 Enact public service reforms to streamline procedures, improve efficiency, ensure access to public information and effective delivery of services, in order to reduce both the opportunities and incentives for corruption.
- 1.2 Create systems to protect whistleblowers who bring to light corrupt practices of the government.
- 1.3 Examine and improve the mechanisms of accountability regarding international development assistance which is often a “black box” that leaves both donors and recipients exposed to corruption. In particular, aid money to third world countries should be based on transparency of decision making, flow of funds, review of the anti-corruption programmes and anti-corruption performance.
- 1.4 Social public policies should be protected from clientelistic manipulation and corruption. Given that the most vulnerable sectors of society are often the most affected by corruption, social public policy should be formulated to give those sectors additional protection.
- 1.5 Along with other political leaders, hold themselves to a high standard of integrity and responsibility, in order to encourage and foster a culture of accountability and transparency among the people.
- 1.6 Make a commitment to fully implement anti-money laundering measures to inhibit the corrupt individuals and organizations from transferring their assets.
- 1.7 Tackle corruption both in the public and the private sectors. Special attention must be given to public contracting review and oversight.
- 1.8 Review rules of lobbying, conflict of interest and disclosure.
- 1.9 Finance anti-corruption research.
- 1.10 Safeguard the independence and autonomy of judiciaries.
- 1.11 Ensure oversight mechanisms of the legislative branch as a means of combating corruption.

2. Access to Public Information

Governments should:

- 2.1 Guarantee the permanent release of information which is relevant for civic participation and monitoring, such as: existing institutional channels for participation in public sphere or adequate ways that citizens can access public information.
- 2.2 Enact freedom of information laws, which are a critical tool to enable civil society to play a constructive role in public affairs.
- 2.3 Where freedom of information laws already exist, governments should ensure that they carry out their obligations under such laws in a timely and affordable manner for the interested public.
- 2.4 Train public servants in rules and procedures of freedom of information.
- 2.5 Provide adequate resources for the implementation and maintenance of freedom of information norms.
- 2.6 Institute and maintain transparency in the budgetary debates and implementation process.

3. Freedom of Expression and Media

Governments should:

- 3.1 Reform laws and practices to eliminate the abuse of sedition and defamation laws that stifle democratic debate. Governments must also refrain from using financial pressures (e.g. tax inspections, public advertising, subsidies) as means of interfering with media independence.
- 3.2 Guarantee and protect the rights and freedoms of independent media, since it has a critical role in increasing public awareness about corruption.
- 3.3 Promote self-regulation of the media and, in particular, work with the media sector to enhance editorial independence, transparency of media ownership and journalists' labor rights.
- 3.4 Act to end impunity for physical attacks and intimidation of journalists, by vigorously investigating such incidents and bringing their perpetrators to justice.

- 3.5 Commit to promoting or defending the existence of at least one public and non-governmental television channel.
- 3.6 Enforce or approve legislation that impedes monopolies in the ownership of media.
- 3.7 Assure universal access to public media irrespective of region or location, and make sure that public strategies of programming respect regional diversity.
- 3.8 Take into account the best practices of international standards when guiding the functioning of public channels.
- 3.9 Refrain from obstructing -through any medium- civil society organizations to express and enhance their solidarity in support of their peers in other countries where they are being persecuted or under threat.

D. Civil Society

1. Civil Society and Public Affairs

Governments should:

- 1.1 Ensure a favorable framework for the healthy development of civil society beyond fully realizing the right to freedom of association. In particular, the regulatory regime should encourage private philanthropy for promotion of democracy and abstain from interfering unnecessarily.
- 1.2 Guarantee rights of freedom of expression and freedom of assembly.
- 1.3 Take concrete steps to ensure equality for women in law and practice, and full representation and participation of women in political decision making processes.
- 1.4 Ensure that access to funding for NGOs remains unimpeded and the existing restrictions by governments on access to foreign funds are crafted in line with internationally recognized standards.
- 1.5 Promote, increase, and institutionalize citizens' participation in the phases of public policy, specifically definition, decision-making and implementation.
- 1.6 Consider ways to create equivalent civil society mechanisms like the CoD Non Governmental process at the regional and national levels
- 1.7 Allow the establishment of a regular monitoring mechanism to track the development of the relationship between the civil society and authorities; and to publish periodic study reports on the same subject.
- 1.8 Ensure civil society institutions are represented in official regional institutions and organizations.

2. Democratic Culture/Education for Democracy

Governments should:

- 2.1 Promote increased participation of citizens in political and social affairs by incorporating education for democracy and social responsibility in the education system and by supporting NGOs' public awareness-raising activities.

- 2.2 Incorporate the concepts of “culture of democracy” and “human rights” in school curricula.
- 2.3 Ensure that gender equality is part of governmental programmes and strategies.
- 2.4 Foster a culture of democracy and human rights and allow dialogues and cooperative relationships between actors such as parliamentarians, media personalities, local and international unions and religious organizations.
- 2.5 Cooperate with civil society organizations in civic education programmes to combat public disillusionment with politics, as reflected for example in declining voter turnouts in many countries.
- 2.6 Recognize non violent opposition activities as a legitimate part of political life.

E. Human Security

Governments should:

- 1.1. Govern according to the principle of civilian supremacy over the military and all other security agencies. It is important that there is effective civilian oversight of the military and other security forces, specifically through parliamentary procedures.
- 1.2. Take responsibility and recognize that the people within their state borders and the issue of fundamental human rights protection is relevant to all the human beings and not an internal state matter.
- 1.3. Be careful of using the threat of global terrorism as a way to justify undemocratic changes in their laws, policies and violations of human rights.
- 1.4. Review internal security and anti-terrorism legislation to ensure compliance with international human rights law.
- 1.5. Promote a more pro-active role for continental and sub-regional bodies in the prevention and management of conflicts.
- 1.6. Allow civil society organizations to play a more effective role in conflict management and human security interventions.
- 1.7. Recognize *poverty, disease and environmental degradation* as critical human security issues and take action accordingly.
- 1.8. Clearly communicate issues of national security to the public, so that civil society can voice their concerns properly. National security policy should be based on a broad public consensus, enabling mutual trust between the government and the public.
- 1.9. Enable both ruling and opposition parties to participate in control mechanisms to oversee National Security agencies.
- 1.10. Cease providing military equipment and expertise to those governments that are likely to use them to suppress democracy and human rights.
- 1.11. Support the creation of research centers that would study the links between fundamentalism, extremism and terrorism.
- 1.12. Endorse the High Level Panel Report on 'Threats Challenges and Change' and work in cooperative mechanisms to address common security concerns outlined in the report.

Regional Proposals

ASIA

Governments should:

1. ensure that any policy, legislative, judicial or institutional barriers or other measures that undermine the rule of law and civil liberties, be reviewed and, if necessary, amended or abolished. This matter is particularly significant in Asia and, as such, it is proposed that the CD organize a conference in the region to highlight the situation. An objective of the conference would be to formulate a program for the CD to work with governments that have authoritarian tendencies to adhere to democratic principles and practices.

2. urge countries to refrain from any threat or use of force vis-à-vis peaceful democratic movements. In addition, they should bring to attention (or raise voices of concern) in bilateral consultations or in regional fora with regard to polities where persistent and systematic human rights violations or political oppressions take place, beginning with problem areas highlighted in the country-specific statements (please see below).

3. provide direct assistance, financial or otherwise, to civil society in non-democratic countries. It is proposed that CD governments contribute to setting up a mechanism to promote democracy in the region by working with civil society groups, including existing regional NGOs.

Country-specific statements:

I. Nepal.

We are highly alarmed by the rapid reversal of democracy in Nepal since the beginning of this year. Recognizing the deep-seated roots of the conflict in Nepal we:

1. Condemn the continuing acts of violence by both the Maoist rebels and the security forces,
2. Call for an immediate ceasefire and resumption of dialogue,
3. Reject the 1 February proclamation by King Gyanendra suspending the civilian government and the "non-suspendable" fundamental rights in the Constitution,

4. Call for the immediate and unconditional restoration of the Constitution, the reconvening of the legally elected parliament, and commencement of preparations for genuinely free and fair elections.

II. Singapore.

We are deeply concerned about the continued suppression of democracy in Singapore and urge the Community of Democracies to actively work to ensure that the Singapore Government:

1. Respects Singaporeans' rights to freedom of speech, assembly and association by removing laws and policies that ban peaceful protests and demonstrations,
2. Looks into the reform of election laws and regulations, including the setting up of an independent elections body, that will ensure that elections in Singapore are genuinely free and fair,
3. Reviews the Newspaper Printing and Presses Act to allow private ownership of newspaper and broadcasting companies, and renounce the monopoly of the domestic media in Singapore,
4. Upholds the independence of the judiciary especially in cases involving defamation suits taken by ruling party officials against opposition leaders,
5. Relinquishes its hold on the National Trades Union Congress and allows the formation of free and independent unions.

III. Taiwan.

We are gravely concerned about China's promulgation of the Anti-Secession Law on March 15, 2005. The enactment of this Law not only completely disregards the fact that the people on both sides of the Taiwan Strait have been administered by separate governments since 1949, but also the rights and wishes of the Taiwanese people to determine their political future through an open, democratic, and peaceful process. Mindful of the lack of democratic process and legitimacy of the Anti-Secession Law vis-à-vis the people of Taiwan, and disturbed by the Law's negative implications for Taiwan's human rights and democratic future, we call upon members of the Community of Democracies to:

1. Express concern about the Law, and insist on the unacceptability of any threat or use of force in the Taiwan Strait,

2. Refrain from arms sales to China until China's human rights conditions are significantly improved, since building democracy requires a strong human rights base,
3. Encourage China to engage in peaceful and constructive dialogue with Taiwan to resolve their differences and promote mutual understanding,
4. Urge China to halt military assistance to non-democratic regimes in Asia.

IV. Vietnam.

We are deeply concerned by the grave violations of freedom of religion, expression, the press, peaceful assembly and association in the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, and call upon the members and observers in the Community of Democracies to urge the Vietnamese government to:

1. Release all prisoners of conscience, notably Buddhist dissidents Thich Huyen Quang and Thich Quang Do, detained for over 23 years for their non-violent advocacy of democracy and human rights, and cyber-dissidents Pham Hong Son, Nguyen Khac Toan and Nguyen Vu Bin,
2. Repeal all legislation restricting the right to freedom of expression and the press, rights enshrined in the Vietnamese Constitution, and allow the establishment of privately-run newspapers and media as a forum for democratic debate; repeal Decree 31/CP on administrative detention which is routinely invoked to detain democracy advocates and critics without trial; incorporate the recommendations of the UN Human Rights Committee into Vietnam's 10-year Legal Reform Strategy, so that Vietnamese citizens may enjoy the effective exercise of the freedoms embodied in the UN International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights,
3. Re-establish the legitimate status of the Unified Buddhist Church of Vietnam (UBCV) and all independent, non-State-sponsored religious bodies, and guarantee their full freedom of religious activity; cease repression against Buddhists, Christians and all peaceful religious followers. In the absence of opposition political parties and independent NGOs, religious movements have emerged as vital actors in civil society for voicing the democratic aspirations of the people of Vietnam.

Europe, Russia and the New Independent States (NIS)

1. Considering the invitation of Russia as full participant in the CoD process, we call on the democratic nations and intergovernmental organizations to recognize the democratic and human rights crisis as one of the most serious problems of international development. We urge them to engage in frank and open dialogue with governments in the region using various political and economical tools to prevent the erosion of democracy and restore democratic governance.
2. We call on the members of CoD to provide support to pro-democracy forces in Russia, including independent media, democratic politicians and NGOs.
3. We recommend the CoD members to intensify bilateral and multilateral efforts to reach peaceful resolution of violent and “frozen” conflicts in the region.
4. EU member states must take a more active role in the CoD process in order to strengthen this multilateral process.
5. Governments should make democratic assistance a key part of their foreign policy.
6. EU member states should reform their policies on foreign aid to direct funds specifically towards democracy assistance such as to the political parties.
7. EU member states should refuse funding to non democratic governments. They are urged to develop mechanisms for preventing corruption and the embezzlement of assistance funds.

Latin America & the Caribbean

Governments should:

1. View democracy as a framework to stimulate development and socio-economical well-being of all citizens that allows the exercise of their political rights, by fighting against unequal access to opportunities and uneven distribution of wealth.
2. Ensure democratization of public decisions by developing programs and policies to strengthen civil society and political parties` critical role in building democracy

3. Coordinate with non governmental organizations regional and national mechanisms to measure progress of democracy in each in each country, for example, by analyzing the existence and/or absence of constitutional reforms, the relationship between minorities and majorities, and an adequate allocation of resources to implement legislation and strengthen democratic institutions.
4. Design and implement democratic mechanisms to ensure human security in the solution of terrorist threats, violence, post conflict situations, transitional justice and persecutions due to political reasons.

Middle East & North Africa (MENA)

1. There is a need to use democratic mechanisms to solve terrorist threats, violence, post conflict situations and political persecution.
2. Out of the MENA countries that have been selected as full participants, despite some steps forward, none have fully met the standards of the Warsaw Declaration and all need significant reform to become genuine democracies.
3. For those on the observer list, the Community of Democracies should expect continued meaningful forward progress before they are considered to be eligible for full participant status.
4. The CoD should not be satisfied with cosmetic actions by the governments of the Middle East that do not result in a sustained, genuine political transformation in the region. The process of reform will not succeed if it is a top down process, there must be meaningful opportunities for engagement of society in that process.
5. Fundamental rights are still not fully respected in any country in the MENA region and the threat of extremism and terrorism has been used by those in power to restrict all forms of democratic action.
6. Any meaningful reform process should include:
 - A political system based on multipartism and opportunities for a genuine alternation of power, based on democratic popular participation.

- Reform of current associative laws to guarantee associative rights and not restrict independent associations from obtaining funding from local, regional or international sources.
7. Governments should guarantee freedom of expression, including ending censorship and all other restrictions that prevent a free media.
 8. To promote regional democratic transformation and to counter extremism, governments should undertake national action plans on human rights education, based on universal human rights standards.

North America

Governments should:

1. Support and expand civic education in the school systems and at the adult level in North America and worldwide in order to better prepare citizens for participation in the democratic process as called for in the Warsaw Declaration, the Seoul Plan of Action, the “Global Strategic Plan for Democracy Education” of the first Pocantico Conference on Democracy Education (www.ccd21.org), June 2003, and in the Statement of the second Pocantico Conference, March 2005, submitted to the Third Biennial Ministerial in Santiago, entitled, “Recommendations from the European-American Pocantico Conference on Democracy Education in the Middle East and Muslim Africa”.
2. Call for general electoral reform in the North American region and in the member states of the Community of Democracies by capitalizing on the recent establishment of the Carter-Baker Commission on Federal Election Reform managed by The Center for Democracy and Election Management at American University and charged with assessing “issues of inclusion and integrity” and “defining an electoral system for the 21st century” – and other electoral reform efforts underway in Canada and Mexico. Relate these efforts to the need for national legislation authorizing nonpartisan and independent election administration. In addition, all governments should provide a legal framework, which would allow for unrestricted access to the

entire electoral process for domestic and international observers in accordance with guidelines in the Copenhagen Declaration.

3. Equate advocacy of “democracy abroad” with the practice of “democracy at home,” which in the case of North America translates into the need for election reform, education in the culture of democracy and compliance domestically with international legal standards, especially regarding established international norms and conventions forbidding torture and inhumane and cruel treatment of prisoners of war.
4. Combat in collaboration with other nations international criminal networks involved in drug and people trafficking, which undermine governance systems and corrupt the political process. Reform criminal justice systems in North America, which have a discriminatory effect on minorities and the poor and undermine the civil and human rights progress of the past fifty years.

Sub Saharan Africa

1. Continental / regional election observation should be encouraged in line with the African Union declarations and protocols, in addition to the regional protocols, local and international election monitors should be utilized.
2. The practice of constitutional manipulation and opportunistic constitutional amendments should be discontinued by states and be discouraged by regional organizations.
3. HIV /AIDS is a concern for African security and governance and should be acknowledged as such and acted upon accordingly by governments.
4. Desist from the practice of politicization of military and security forces and take measures to constitutionally limit the mandates of these forces to defense by outlawing the practice of armies being used as agents of political control.