

Community of Democracies

Chile Progress Report as Chair of the Convening Group (March 2003-September 2004)

General Background

The Community of Democracies (CoD) is an international coalition of nations. Its objective is to promote democratic principles and consolidate democratic institutions all over the world. Its most important event is a biennial meeting of Foreign Ministers, the Ministerial Conference of the Community of Democracies.

So far, two Ministerial Conferences have been held: Warsaw (June 2000) and Seoul (November 2002). Representatives of over 100 democratic nations attended both meetings. The next ministerial meeting will be held in Santiago, from 4-6 May, 2005.

The CoD has a managing and coordinating board named the Convening Group (CG) currently composed of ten countries (Chile, the Czech Republic, India, Mali, Portugal, Poland, Korea, United States, Mexico, and South Africa). Its mission is, among other things, to define the agenda of the Ministerial Conferences; to decide on the criteria for inviting a participant to the CD; to adopt initiatives for the promotion and consolidation of democracy; and to resolve on procedural and administrative matters. The representative of the organizing country of the respective Ministerial Conference presides as the chairperson of the GC.

At the Ministerial Conferences of the CoD, the countries attend upon invitation, as the concept of Permanent Membership does not exist. The invitation is extended by the government of the host country, subject to prior acceptance by the Convening Group of the CoD.

The CG meets every quarter at the level of ambassadors and/or special representatives; during Chile's chairmanship (since March 2003), these meetings have been held alternately in Santiago and Washington, D.C.

The main activities developed by the Convening Group and by the Community of Democracies during the last 18 months include:

1. Meeting of the CD Convening Group (March 31, 2003)

On March 31, 2003, Chile took over the chair of the Convening Group through its Ambassador Carlos Portales, Director General of Foreign Policy, in a meeting held at the Chilean Embassy in Washington, D.C. Under Chile's chairmanship of the CG, the work has focused on the effective implementation of the "Seoul Plan of Action", adopted during the Second Ministerial Conference, held in Seoul, in November 2002. Special emphasis has been placed on regional meetings that promote the principles and purposes of the CoD. Focus is also placed on highlighting the role of civil society organizations in the scope of the CoD.

In the course of this meeting, it was resolved that the work of the CG in the 2003-2004 period would be aimed at implementing the various aspects of the "Seoul Plan of Action." Since its adoption, the "Seoul Plan of Action" has been implemented through a number of initiatives of different natures: regional meetings, activities of civil society organizations, public diplomacy, and a mission to East Timor, among others. In addition, the CoD has encouraged and supported initiatives from different sectors like CG's member and non-member countries, international organizations, NGOs, and others.

2. Seminar AMERICA-AFRICA "Dialogue on Democracy" (Coral Gables, Florida, June 5-6, 2003)

The seminar "Dialogue on Democracy" was an initiative under the mandates of the "Seoul Plan of Action", focusing particularly in the area of regional cooperation. Governmental and non-governmental Representatives of 14 countries attended the seminar from American and African regions, as well as by delegates from regional organizations. This seminar made it possible to gather together representatives from African and American countries, which represents an important and innovative methodology of sharing best practices and lessons learned on each continent in order to cooperate in promoting democracy and countering threats to democracy.

The main conclusions of the seminar include: developing more advanced and coherent strategic actions in promoting democracy and respect for human rights; employment of both regional incentive and actions in support of weakened democracies with a view to creating favorable conditions for democratic development or reaching political consensus among political groups; encouraging the adoption of democratic clauses in regional agreements facilitating further application of preventive or reactive actions, within the framework of democratic deterioration in a given country; and supporting regional agencies to publicly and unequivocally condemning human rights abuses and authoritarian acts.

3. Initiative on East Timor

There are efforts underway to follow up on the Seoul Plan of Action's call on the countries of the Community of Democracies to share their knowledge and experiences with emerging democracies, such as East Timor. Such an initiative resulted in sending, on May 10-14, 2004, a CoD mission to East Timor at the request of its government, in order for democracy practitioners from various CD countries to share the experiences of nations that have previously undergone similar transitions to democracy. It also provided the opportunity for representatives of other nations to learn from their Timorese colleagues, particularly about the challenges that may be encountered in trying to build up democratic institutions from their very foundations. The CD delegation included an election official, head of a public defenders office, staff of an Ombudsman for Human Rights, judge and others, and represented Europe, North and South America, Asia, Africa, and the Middle East.

It is worth mentioning that this initiative received the enthusiastic support of the East Timor authorities, particularly its Minister of Foreign Affairs, José Ramos-Horta, who in November 2003 sent a letter to Ambassador Carlos Portales to express his appreciation of the prompt presence of the CoD delegation. FM Ramos-Horta also received, on behalf of

his government, the delegations report which summarized their personal views on the Timorese progress in democratization.

4. Meeting of the Convening Group (Santiago, June 17, 2003)

The first meeting of the CG held in Chile occurred on June 17, 2003. In addition to the Group's members, the meeting was attended by special guest representatives of the governments of Peru, Romania, and by civil society organizations.

The meeting reviewed the activities relating to the implementation of the "Seoul Plan of Action" and initiatives which, given their nature or contents, are consistent and/or compatible with the principles and goals of the CoD. The analysis of the regional meetings included the Seventh Summit of the Rio Group (Cusco, Peru), the seminar "Dialogue on Democracy" held at Coral Gables, Florida, between 5 and 6 June 2003, and the 33rd O.A.S. General Assembly (Santiago, Chile).

Invited to this meeting were Ms. Victoria Popescu of the Romanian Foreign Ministry, who spoke on the preparations of the Regional Bucharest CoD Conference; Ambassador Harry Belevan, Pro-Temp Secretary of the Rio Group; and Ms. Andrea Sanhueza and Mr. Genaro Arriagada, representatives of the Non-Governmental Forum of the Conference of the Community of Democracies.

Finally, the high-level officers and ambassadors of the CG approved a declaration expressing their concern for the political situation in Burma and for the unjustified arrest of Ms. Aung San Suu Kyi, a political leader of that nation and Nobel Peace Prize winner.

5. Meeting of the CD Convening Group (Washington, September 9, 2003)

This meeting, held in Washington, D.C., submitted a report on the activities developed in the scope of the "Seoul Plan of Action". The new initiatives included the decision to conduct a seminar on "Political Parties and Democratic Governance" in Chile, an initiative to be held on a date to be determined in conjunction with the Italian Government. The United States, in turn, reported on the beginning of contacts to carry out a technical assistance program on institutional matters in East Timor.

It also prepared the meeting of Foreign Ministers of the Convening Group, to be held on September 26, during the 58th session of the United Nations General Assembly.

6. Meeting of Foreign Ministers of the Community of Democracies' Convening Group (New York, September 26, 2003)

On September 26, the CG's Ministerial Meeting of the Community of Democracies was held at the United Nations headquarters. This meeting, chaired by Ms. Maria Soledad Alvear Valenzuela, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Chile, was attended by eight Ministers of Foreign Affairs from the USA, South Africa, Poland, Portugal, Mali, and Chile on the part of the Convening Group, and Italy and Peru, as special guests. Likewise, high-level representatives from the remaining Convening Countries (the Czech Republic, India, Mexico, and Korea) were present.

The main purpose of this meeting was to consider future activities to be developed by the Convening Group within the United Nations. The intervention of the various Heads of Delegations pledged the common undertaking of the Convening Countries to promote democracy in the world and also reflected the wide range of approaches that exist within the Group.

At that meeting, a joint press communiqué was approved which summarizes the issues under discussion:

- The Convening Group reaffirmed the commitments undertaken at the Ministerial Conferences of Warsaw (2000) and Seoul (2002).
- They ratified the observance of the CoD to the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter, the Human Rights Universal Declaration, and the fundamental principles of international law.
- They renewed the commitment of the CoD to develop and promote democracy in their respective countries, as well as at regional and global levels.
- As resolved in Warsaw, the CoD will cooperate with the promotion of democracy in international and regional organizations, forming coalitions and special groups to support resolutions and other international activities oriented to the promotion of democratic governance.
- They recognized the mandate of the "Seoul Plan of Action" to the Convening Group to meet on a regular basis and offer its support and assistance to all the participant countries.
- The Convening Group will encourage, in close consultation and cooperation with the CoD participants, the creation of coalitions and special groups within the United Nations and other multilateral forums in order to support democracy.

The ministerial meeting of September 26, 2003, was the first one of its type to be held within the United Nations' General Assembly. With the extensive participation of Ministers and the presence of special guests, the Chilean Chair of the Convening Group encouraged the other participants of the Community of Democracies to work for the promotion of democratic values and practices.

7. Regional Conference of the Community of Democracies in Bucharest, Romania. (November 14-15, 2003)

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Romania, the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), and the NGO "Partners Foundation for Local Development" organized the meeting. "Freedom House" and the Local Government and Public Service Reform Initiative sponsored the non-government forum.

Mr. Mircea Geoana, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Romania, inaugurated the conference. Other honored guests included the representative of the UNDP in that country, Ms. Sornan Han Jung; the counselor of the Undersecretariat for Global Affairs of the State Department of the United States, Ms. Nicole Bibbins; the President of "Partners for Democratic Change", Mr. Raymond Shonholtz; the "Director of Partners for Local Development", Ms.

Ana Vasilache; and Chile's Ambassador to the European Union, Mr. Alberto Van Klaveren, who attended on behalf of the Chairman of the Convening Group, Ambassador Carlos Portales.

The Conference consisted of two round tables, a parallel non-government forum, and a closing meeting that integrated both the public sector and the NGOs. In total, there were approximately 100 people, almost half of them belonging to the public sector and the other half to NGOs. The participants represented Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Macedonia, Georgia, Hungary, Latvia, Poland, Moldova, the Russian Federation, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Serbia and Montenegro, and the Ukraine. Also present were representatives from the CG of the Community of Democracies: Chile, Korea, the United States, India, Mali, Mexico, and South Africa. In addition, representatives from Italy, the European Parliament, and several other international organizations like the UNDP, the Conference for Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE), the European Council, and the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe also attended.

In his opening speech, Minister Geoana stressed that the conference was in response to an initiative adopted in the framework of the CoD, in compliance with a commitment announced by Romania in an OAS's conference. He indicated that it was an initiative of great relevance to his country and to the rest of the South-Eastern Region of Europe, in consideration of the transition process they were going through after the 1989 revolution.

The first round table of the intergovernmental segment focused on monitoring public institutions. Several experts described specific transparency experiences and monitoring of public service. There was a consensus among the participants on the need to strengthen these mechanisms as an indispensable requirement for modern democracy.

The second round table focused on the development of regional cooperation mechanisms for promoting and developing the democratic principles, values, and institutions in Central and Eastern Europe. In general, there was a strong consensus on the need to consider democratic cooperation in countries of Central and Eastern Europe as a gradual, cumulative process. Further, a large majority of the participants supported the efforts deployed at the international level in support of democracy.

The third round table focused on the role of civil society and gathered the participation of government and non-governmental representatives. An analysis was made of the concept of civil society, stressing that it may only prosper in an environment of political pluralism and that a strong civil society represented an indispensable element for the consolidation of democracy. Representatives from the CSCE and from the European Council highlighted the importance of non-governmental forums in their respective organizations, as well as the possibility of establishing a closer relationship between them and the CoD. Several NGOs spoke about their cooperation experiences with the public sector and put forward their interest to reinforce these links.

8. Meeting of the Convening Group (Santiago, January 6, 2004)

The first meeting of the Convening Group of the year 2004 was held in Santiago at the Andrés Bello Diplomatic Academy and was chaired by the Deputy Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs, Ambassador Carlos Portales Cifuentes. The event was attended by high-level representatives and ambassadors from all the member countries of the CG: Korea,

India, Mali, Mexico, Poland, Portugal, the Czech Republic, South Africa, the United States, and Chile, in addition to a delegation of the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and, as a special guest, the Ambassador of Romania to Santiago. The Undersecretary of State for Global Affairs of the State Department of the United States, Ms. Paula Dobriansky; the Vice Minister for Planning of the Korean Foreign Ministry, Lee Sun-Jin; the Director of Political Studies and Planning of Poland, Mr. Piotr Switalski; and diplomats from Mali and South Africa also took part in the meeting.

The meeting reviewed the latest events related to the Community of Democracies, such as the International Conference of the New or Restored Democracies held in Ulan Bator, Mongolia (10-12 September, 2003); the Ministerial Meeting of the Convening Group Countries, held in New York (26 September, 2003); and the Regional Conference of the Community of Democracies, organized by the Romanian Government in Bucharest (14-16 November, 2003). On the development of this last-mentioned conference, the Romanian Ambassador to Chile, Ion Vilcu issued a comprehensive report.

It was suggested that efforts be made in order to hold a new ministerial meeting in 2004, taking advantage of the attendance of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs at the United Nations General Assembly in New York.

The UNDP informed the participants of the activities being carried out to strengthen democracy and of the support given to the Regional Conference in Mongolia and other initiatives in Africa, Latin America, and Middle East. Likewise, the chair of the Convening Countries suggested the possibility that the UNDP contributes its experience and networking to the preparation of the Third Ministerial Conference of the Community of Democracies to be held in Santiago, in May 2005.

9. First Coordination Meeting of the Non-Governmental Process of the Community of Democracies (Lisbon, Portugal, January 19-21, 2004)

The first coordination meeting of the Non-Governmental Process of the Community of Democracies was organized by the Executive Secretariat, in preparation for the Third Ministerial Conference of the Community of Democracies to be held in Santiago, May 4-6, 2005.

The event took place at the campus of the Institute for Political Studies of the Portugal Catholic University in Lisbon, and gathered 37 people, including representatives of civil society organizations from different regions of the world. Ambassador José Manuel Matta attended on behalf of the Chilean Government.

The general objectives of the meeting were: to discuss the non-governmental strategy towards the Ministerial Meeting of the Community of Democracies of Santiago 2005 with a group of social actors and politicians from different regions of the world, and to promote the creation of counterparts for the development of regional activities in support of working out proposals and recommendations for the governments that will participate in Santiago 2005.

In order to attain this objective, the Executive Secretariat put forward specific objectives: (i) to introduce the process of the Community of Democracies both at the governmental and non-governmental level; (ii) to apprehend the objectives, approaches of action, and activities of the participating institutions; (iii) to submit the non-governmental strategy

towards the Ministerial Conference in Santiago, May 2005, including implementation, opportunities, and difficulties; (iv) to discuss and decide on the regional activities to be conducted during 2004; and (v) to establish the next steps to be taken on the basis of the outcome of the discussion.

10. Meeting of the Convening Group (Geneva, February 19, 2004)

A meeting of the Permanent Representatives of the Community of Democracies Convening Group was held at the Chilean Mission in Geneva on February 19, 2004. Ambassadors of the Convening Group and, as special guests, the Ambassadors of Italy, Peru, and Romania attended the meeting.

The purpose of the meeting was to discuss specific CoD initiatives to be implemented in the scope of the 60th session of the Commission on Human Rights, in compliance with the mandate of the Ministerial Meeting of 26th September 2003. This was taking into account the necessity of promoting the principles of the Community of Democracies, to enhance its public presence and put forward initiatives of common interest.

The proceedings and resolutions thereat included:

- Drafting a joint press communiqué, to be issued in consultation with the Convening Group's members and special guests. As a general rule, it was agreed to be a brief, concise paper that gathers central elements of the ministerial press communiqué of the Ministerial Meeting of September 26 and summarizes the activities undertaken by the Convening Group during the 60th session of the Commission on Human Rights.

- Supporting previous resolutions of the Commission on Human Rights whose contents are consistent with the CD objectives. At the meeting, copies of three CHR resolutions were circulated among participants, in connection with the objectives of the Community of Democracies. These resolutions are (i) Interdependence between democracy and human rights; ii) Incompatibility between democracy and racism; and iii) The role of Good Governance in the promotion of human rights. There was support to the contents of these three resolutions.

- Convening a seminar. The group was informed that paragraph 16 of resolution 2003/36 "Interdependence between democracy and human rights" refers to the need for the High Commissioner on Human Rights to convene a second seminar of experts during 2004, in order to examine the interdependence between democracy and human rights, under the name of Democracy and the Rule of Law. This seminar will take place in Seoul, September 16-18, 2004.

Representatives also agreed to keep a permanent contact through their officers in charge of the issue, in order to consult, discuss, and bring together their points of view on the agreed decisions. At the same time, it was agreed to hold meetings with a given frequency (every two months) in order to discuss and coordinate stances, where appropriate.

11. Second Meeting of the Convening Group in Geneva (March 9, 2004)

The second meeting of Permanent Representatives of the Convening Group of the Community of Democracies (CoD) was held in Geneva on March 9, 2004. Present thereat were representatives from most of the Missions of the Convening Group. Representatives from Romania, Italy and Peru also took part as special guests.

The meeting discussed a draft Joint Press Communiqué of the CG, to be issued on the occasion of the 60th meeting of the Commission on Human Rights, the text of which is as follows:

1. Meeting on the occasion of the 60th Commission on Human Rights in Geneva, the Convening Group of the Community of Democracies deemed appropriate to emphasize the observance to the purposes and principles of the UN Charter, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and the fundamental principles of international law.
2. Since the adoption of the Warsaw Declaration of June 2000, the Community of Democracies have been seeking to strengthen institutions and processes of democracy by -among others- encouraging discussions and creating forums on subjects relevant to democratic governance and the promotion and respect of human rights.
3. The Convening Group reaffirms the essential elements of representative democracy as stated in the Plan of Action adopted at the Ministerial Meeting of Seoul of November 2002: respect for human rights; freedom of the press and freedom of religion and conscience; access to and free exercise of power in accordance with the rule of law; holding of periodic free and fair elections based on secret balloting and universal suffrage monitored by independent election authorities; freedom of association, including the right to form independent political parties; separation of powers, especially an independent judiciary; and constitutional subordination of all state institutions, including the military, to the legally constituted civilian authority.
4. The Convening Group stresses the idea of promoting the values of tolerance, compromise and respect for pluralism that bolster democratic systems. Therefore, it encourages other participants of the Community of Democracies to work in favor of that goal at the sixtieth session of the Commission on Human Rights and invites all countries to work more closely to jointly support initiatives and to strengthen the Commission on Human Rights' work to promote the ideals of the UN's founding Charter."

The representatives from Romania and Poland made a brief summary of the resolutions to be submitted by their respective delegations at the Commission on Human Rights, which deal with issues relating to the CoD objectives. As for Romania, and along the lines of the resolution "Interdependence between democracy and human rights" (CHR Res. 2003/36), this country will put forward this year the draft resolution "Highlighting the role of the regional, subregional and other organizations and steps towards promotion and consolidation of democracy."

Poland coordinated an updated version of the resolution "The role of good governance in the promotion of human rights" (CHR Res. 2003/65).

Several ambassadors stated the necessity of working out, during the 60th Commission on Human Rights, a number of formulas providing for a degree of coordination among the missions to preparing common views and positions.

In other matters, the US Ambassador announced that his Mission was organizing a breakfast on March 17, 2004, in honor of Poland, Korea and Chile, in their capacities as

hosting countries of the Ministerial Conferences of the Community of Democracies, held in Warsaw (2000) and Seoul (2002) and the one to be held in Santiago in May 2005.

12. Meeting of the Chairman of the Convening Group with UNDP representatives and CG's Ambassadors in New York (March 11, 2004).

The Chairman of the Convening Group held working meetings regarding the Community of Democracies with representatives of the UNDP and Ambassadors of Convening Group in New York and special guests.

The meeting with Ms. Gita Honwana Welch, Main Counselor and Leader of the Institutional Development Group of the United Nations Development Program, and Mr. Magdy Martínez-Solimán, Director of the UNDP Institutional Development Group, was basically intended to discuss the support the UNDP could provide in relation to Ministerial Conference, as well as on the report the UNDP is preparing on these activities.

She also said that according to a recommendation from the recent meeting in Mongolia of the group "New and Restored Democracies", the Secretary General had resolved to appoint Mr. Danilo Turk, as Political Counselor in charge of this issue. Mr. Turk has expressed his interest in playing a role in the CoD activities, prior to the Ministerial Conference of the CoD to be held in Chile next year, through seminars or other activities.

Then, a meeting was held at the headquarters of the Chilean Mission in New York, with Permanent Representatives of the Group of CoD Convening Group (the Czech Republic, India, Mali, Mexico, Poland, Portugal, Korea, the United States, and South Africa) and special guests (Italy, Peru, and Romania). At this meeting, Ambassador Carlos Portales described the various steps that have been taken in the implementation of the "Seoul Plan of Action," mentioning the Washington meeting scheduled for the next day, as well as the activities developed in New York and Geneva, the preparations for the Santiago Conference, and the interaction and collaboration that is taking place with the UNDP.

13. Meeting of the Convening Group in Washington (March 12, 2004)

The meeting was held in Washington on 12th. March 2004 and was chaired by Chile's Director General of Foreign Policy, Ambassador Carlos Portales. It was attended by representatives from all members of the Convening Group, as well as by the Ambassador of Lithuania to the United States, who participated as an observer. In addition, Mr. David W. Yang, representative of the UNDP, and Mr. Genaro Arriagada, Chairman of the Non-Governmental Forum of the CoD, participated as special guests.

The issues discussed during the meeting include the following decisions and commitments:

i) Regarding the Ministerial Meeting to be held in New York next September: the chair must prepare a final proposal for consideration at the forthcoming meeting of the GC in Santiago next June. This meeting to be open to all participating countries at the Seoul Conference of the Community of Democracies, and the subject matter should be of general nature on the CoD activities and the situation of democracy in the world. In addition, it will be a proper occasion for reporting on the preparations of the Third Conference.

ii) Regarding the preparation of the Third Ministerial Conference, Santiago 2005: the Chair must prepare a paper on the four working areas (participants, format, relations with the civil society, and documentation), to be circulated as documentation for the next CG's meeting.

iii) Regarding the delegation of the CoD to East Timor: the Chair should send a new letter to Minister Ramos Horta confirming the visit by a CD delegation next May 10-14, 2004, whose members and work areas will be defined as soon as possible by the GC coordinators for East Timor: the United States, Portugal, and the UNDP.

14. Breakfast Meeting of the Convening Group of the CD in Geneva, in the scope of the CHR (March 17, 2004.)

The United States Mission in Geneva organized the breakfast in honor of the hosting countries of the previous Ministerial Conferences of the Community of Democracies (Poland and South Korea) and Chile, as the next organizer of such Conference. The breakfast was attended by all the permanent representatives of the member countries of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights, who are in turn participants at the Community of Democracies. Approximately 100 people were present.

The guests were welcomed by Ambassador Richard Williamson, head of the United States delegation to the Commission on Human Rights; then, the Undersecretary of State for Global Affairs of the State Department, Ms. Paula Dobriansky said that the Community of Democracies is grounded on common interests and values and that on the basis of those shared interests, an important work has been developed that seeks to incorporate more participants to the common job of promoting democracy and its institutions.

Regarding the 60th session of the Commission on Human Rights, Ms. Dobriansky spoke about the fate of millions of human beings who have lived their whole lives in countries without democracy. She referred to the case of those people who, coming from non-democratic countries, have had the chance to get to know democracy and its institutions, and how that experience made a great difference and caused a change in their lives. Those same people, when returned to their own countries can and do make a great contribution to the expansion of democratic values in the world.

Ms. Dobriansky said that the idea of the CoD is not to take the place of or compete with other types of groups. In her view, the CoD at multilateral forums like the Commission on Human Rights, can operate in different ways, such as by supporting the resolutions regarding democratic values; by supporting countries in the composition of the Commission itself; and by writing declarations as a group, that reflect their shared values and interests.

Another aspect of the work of the Community of Democracies is the assistance to countries with democratic handicaps. From the operative point of view, this implies, for example, organizing multinational teams with experts from democratic countries to visit countries without a previous experience in representative democracy and provide them with support regarding technical expertise or cooperation in areas like construction of democratic institutions.

Ambassador Juan Martabit, Chile's permanent representative in Geneva, summarized the main elements of the "Seoul Plan of Action" and stated that Chile, as Chair of the

Convening Group, has primarily worked in the implementation of the "Seoul Plan of Action", which has implied a number of initiatives and activities of different nature: regional meetings, seminars, initiatives in support of civil society as well as public diplomacy. He also referred to the meeting of foreign ministers of the Convening Group held last September and to the agreement in terms that the members of the Convening Group will consult and coordinate their actions, among other instances, with the Commission on Human Rights.

At the breakfast meeting, the Joint Press Communiqué was made known and circulated to the other Missions of participating countries of the Community of Democracies present in Geneva, as well as to the press. Mention was also made of the draft resolutions that the Convening Group will be supporting as a group, as well as the seminars and other initiatives to be developed in this framework.

15. Seminar on Political Parties and Democratic Governance (Santiago de Chile, March 19, 2004)

The seminar "Political Parties and Democratic Governance" was organized by the governments of Chile and Italy, along with the Italian-Latin-American Institute. The purpose of this event was to promote democratic values and the strengthening of institutions, as well as the role of political parties in democratic governance.

The event was carried out at the Sheraton Hotel in Santiago, on 19 March 2004, and counted on the outstanding participation of academics, politicians, congressmen, and Latin-American and European authorities. The First Vice-Chairman of the Chilean House of Representatives, Mr. Antonio Leal, inaugurated the event. For its part, the Minister of the Interior, Mr. José Miguel Insulza, closed the seminar.

The seminar was developed in three panels:

Panel I: Contribution of political parties to democratic governance. Institutional dimension.

Panel II: The relation between political parties and civil society. Mechanisms for an effective interaction.

Panel III: Role of political parties in the elaboration, design and evaluation of public policies.

At the end of the event, the conclusions of the Seminar were drawn up into a Declaration:

In the course of the intense and deep debates developed on this day, the following preliminary conclusions have been drawn up:

It was recognized, by unanimous decision, that strengthening the political parties as mediators of the claims of citizens in a representative democracy is essential for the operation of the democratic political system, a fundamental principle of the Santiago "Declaration on Democracy and Citizen's Confidence" and coherent with the spirit of the Plan of Action adopted in Seoul, in the scope of the Community of Democracies.

In this regard, emphasis was placed on the fact that democracy is born and developed with political parties. Today, political parties are not an ideologically rigid formulae, but they adapt to the new realities. They are not an end but an instrument, a link between the people and its institutions. If they do not work, there is crisis. That is where their constitutional importance stems from.

Stress was placed on the changes that have to be made by political parties when facing new realities in society. Among these, the following were pointed out: the strengthening of internal democracy; the establishment of financial transparency; correspondence between public ethics and political ethics; the reconsideration of the role of the mass media; and the creation of fora that promote a correlation between political parties and the civil society.

The comparison between the European and the Latin-American experiences turned out to be very useful, particularly in relation to the distinct role of political parties in the institutional mechanisms, and the relations of the political parties with the new actors of civil society.

Reference was made to the political parties' crisis and the risk that it generates for the functionality of democracy. The above has translated into radical changes in their structure, in the reformulation of their tasks, in the necessity of their internal renewal as a consequence of the intrusion of social actors as channels of citizen's expression.

There was recognition of new international collaboration instruments, like the EU/Chile Association Agreement, which appear to be functional to the social-economic development of countries of the region and in support to their respective democratic good governance. Inter-parliamentary Cooperation may, in turn, give continuity to this process.

The result of these agreements may undoubtedly be useful in deepening the matters which appear to be interlinked, social cohesion and fight against poverty, which are necessary to increase citizen's confidence and credibility on democratic, representative institutions. The target of that process may be the next Summit of Heads of State of the EU – LAC in Guadalajara”.

16. Breakfast Meeting of the CD Convening Group at the United States Mission to the UN in Geneva, in the scope of the CHR (March 24, 2004)

Upon an invitation of the United States Ambassador to the UN, Sichan Siv, on 24 March, an informal working meeting was held with the attendance of members of the Convening Group, plus some other CoD members that are part of the ECOSOC.

Ambassador Siv underlined the fact that CoD countries constitute an ample majority in the UN, and in the international community at large, and that this same majority exists in relevant bodies such the Commission on Human Rights in Geneva, where 33 CoD participants were counted. Other participants at the meeting expressed similar ideas.

Special mention was also made of how to deal with a possible coordination with the group of “New and Renewed Democracies.” In this respect, Chile stated that, as the Chair, it is concerned with finding mechanisms that make it possible to serve the needs of coordinating therewith, stating also that the UNDP and the UN Secretariat are also interested in cooperating with such goal.

17. Approval of three Resolutions at the 60th Session of the Commission on Human Rights, relating to objectives of the Community of Democracies (Geneva, April 21, 2004).

The Missions of the Convening Group supported, at the 60th Session of the Commission on Human Rights, three draft resolutions which identify themselves with the principles and values promoted by the CD. Such draft Resolutions were:

- **“Strengthening the role of the organizations and regional, sub-regional, and other arrangements in the promotion and consolidation of democracy”** (Item 11, Political and Civil Rights, L.42). Approved by 45 votes for, zero against and 8 abstentions.
- **“Incompatibility between democracy and racism”** (Item 11, L.57). Approved without a poll.
- **“The Role of good governance in the promotion of human rights”** (Item 17, L.85). It was approved without a vote, but the incorporation of a paragraph on the Community of Democracies had previously been put to vote, as requested by one country. This paragraph was approved by 41 votes for, one against and 11 abstentions.

18. Luncheon-meeting of Convening Group and special guests of the CoD (Geneva, April 26, 2004)

The Ambassador of Chile, Juan Martabit, hosted a luncheon meeting to evaluate the results of the 60th Session of the Commission on Human Rights and to receive suggestions on activities to be carried out during the next session of the Commission.

Likewise, it was agreed to create a group of experts of the CG’s Missions in Geneva, to analyze potential proposals of future activities, coordinate positions and establish certain criteria of action both at the Conferences and in the tasks of the sub-commissions in Geneva.

19. CG’s activities in United Nations – New York

In New York, the Mission of Chile has developed several efforts, in coordination with the other countries of the CG, in order to identify different action for the CoD, such as: sponsorship and support resolution projects linked with the CoD’s goals and joint statements with regard to the promotion of democratic values and respect for human rights.

The idea of those activities is to do a concerted action, according to the agreements of the Seoul Action Plan, and the Ministerial Declaration of the CG (September 26, 2003) on the occasion of the 58th session of the UN General Assembly.

On November 17, 2003, the Permanent Representative of Chile, Ambassador Heraldo Muñoz, in the name of the CG, made a statement supporting the Resolution Project on New and Restored Democracies, on the occasion of the 58th session of the UN General Assembly of the United Nations.

In the same way, on December 10, 2003, the Permanent Representative of Chile, in the name of the CG, made a statement on the occasion of the 55 anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the 10th anniversary of the Vienna Declaration and the Action Program on Human Rights, in the frame of the 58th UN General Assembly.

20. Visit to East Timor by a delegation of the CoD Representatives

A delegation of representatives of the Convening Group (Chile, Korea, Portugal, and the United States), in addition to Australia, Cape Verde, Italy, New Zealand, and Israel, visited East Timor from May 10-14, 2004, and interviewed with the top-level political, judicial, parliamentary, and civil society authorities in the country. They also visited different cities with a view to evaluating the most urgent needs of that country regarding the institutional reconstruction; the condition of the judicial, electoral, and social systems; and identify areas in which the CD might provide cooperation and support. Furthermore, the delegates delivered to the Timorese authorities a document with suggestions about the highest priority issues identified during the visit. The United States and Portugal will conduct a follow up process on the visit.

21. Meeting of Convening Group (Santiago, July 22, 2004)

The Director General of Foreign Policy and Chairman of Convening Group of the Community of Democracies, Ambassador Carlos Portales, headed the third meeting of this year on Thursday, July 22, 2004. The main purpose of which was to go forward in the preparations towards the next Ministerial Conference, to be held in Santiago, Chile, in May 2005.

During the meeting, held at the Diplomatic Academy, the progress achieved was also analyzed on the cooperation that is taking place in the world, as well as inside the United Nations, on governance and democracy.

At the meeting, the Non-Governmental Forum of the Ministerial Conference of the Community of Democracies, headed by Mr. Genaro Arriagada, supplied information on the preparation of the civil society process.

Representatives and Ambassadors from all member countries of the Convening Group as well as by the US Undersecretary of State for Global Affairs, Ms. Paula Dobriansky, attended the meeting.

22. Meeting of the Convening Group (Washington, September 10, 2004)

Representatives of the Group's members and special guests representing Hungary, Italy, Rumania, the UNDP, and the NGO Secretariat attended this meeting, which was held in Washington, D.C., under the chairmanship of Ambassador Carlos Portales. The focus of the meeting was the preparation of the ministerial meeting of the CoD, to be held in New York, on September 22, 2004, and the preparations for the Third Ministerial Conference, to be held in Santiago, May 4-6, 2005. A special item on the agenda was the consideration of proposals and initiatives from members of the CG and other participants of the CoD. There was a presentation by representatives from the NGO's Executive Secretariat of the Community of Democracies and a presentation by the UNDP.