

COMMUNITY OF DEMOCRACIES STATEMENT ON TERRORISM

SEOUL, 12 NOVEMBER 2002

1. The Participants of the Second Ministerial Conference of the Community of Democracies held in Seoul from 10-12 November 2002 strongly denounce terrorism as a grave threat to democratic societies and the values they embrace. They reaffirmed that terrorism constitutes a threat to international peace and security as well as to humanity in general and indeed the very foundation on which democracies are built. The most recent terrorist attacks confirm that international cooperation against terrorism will remain a long-term effort and requires a sustained universal commitment.

2. The Participants emphasize that the democratic principles and institutions promoted by international and regional organizations and reiterated by the Community of Democracies are crucial elements in endeavors to combat terrorism. Democracy provides a solid foundation for peaceful thriving societies by empowering people, holding governments more accountable and responsive to the people's needs, facilitating sustainable economic development, and, above all, enhancing respect for and protection of all human rights and fundamental freedoms. To protect societies from the scourge of terrorism and to create equitable, stable and secure societies, the participants reiterate their determination to strengthen sound democratic institutions and good governance as well as to promote their underlying principles. The participants stress that any laws or measures against terrorism should comply with states' existing obligations under international human rights law, as well as international humanitarian and refugee law applicable in specific situations.

3. The Participants underscore that terrorism cannot be justified by any cause or under any circumstances and note that the fight against terrorism requires a comprehensive set of actions, including addressing conditions that may offer a breeding ground for terrorism. The promotion of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, mutual understanding, respect for cultural diversity, public civil education as well as collaborative efforts to alleviate poverty and empower socially marginalized people could help contain terrorism and promote a more peaceful and prosperous international community.

4. The Participants underline that the fight against terrorism requires cooperation between and among states. They reiterate their resolve, expressed in the Warsaw Declaration, to strengthen cooperation to face transnational challenges to democracy such as state-sponsored, cross-border and other forms of terrorism. They therefore welcome increased cooperation at the regional as well as global levels. They renew their commitment to these concerted efforts to combat terrorism. In particular, they reiterate the need for universal ratification and full implementation of the UN Conventions and Protocols related to acts of terrorism, as well as the need to enforce the provisions of all the relevant United Nations Security Council resolutions including UNSCR 1373. They also commit themselves to ensuring the full implementation of the measures set out in the Seoul Plan of Action which will contribute greatly to the consolidation of democracy at the national, regional and global levels, thereby enabling their respective societies to better counter terrorism.