

**Discurso del Ministro de Relaciones Exteriores de la República  
de Corea,  
Don Ban Ki Moon**

His Excellency President Ricardo Lagos, Excellencies, Honorable Ministers, distinguished Delegates, representatives from Community of Democracies countries, Ladies and Gentlemen.

It is a great privilege for me to speak to you as foreign minister of the hosting country of the last ministerial conference held in Seoul in 2002. I wish to begin by sincerely thanking the Chilean Government for its warm hospitality, and the excellent arrangement made for this important occasion. It is particularly meaningful that this conference is held here in Chile, a country that stands out as a strong vindication for the cause of the Community of Democracies. Chile's journey towards democracy is a vivid manifestation of the time-tested proposition that the will and power of the people ultimately prevails, and glad of this opportunity to pay tribute to the Chilean people for the courage and wisdom they have shown in the process towards democracy.

Excellencies, distinguished delegates, the Warsaw Declaration and the Seoul Plan of Action, democracies of the world, we have formed the principles of democracy as universal norms, as well as the commitment to the protection, consolidation and promotion of democracy at all levels. This indeed marked a milestone, yet declaration and plans must be followed by concrete actions. Therefore, this conference, where we are to discuss a specific commitment as a strategy for future action, is truly important for the process of the Community of Democracies. Democracy is now an unstoppable trend in any place in the world. It is rooted as a universal norm, permeating every aspect of our life. It provides order by managing differences in opinions, and thus to ensure harmony and stability in human society. In the post cold war era in particular, democracy is pursued by all peoples as the ideal political and social system yet there is no

shortcut, no royal road, to stable and working democracy. Efforts to build democracy worldwide face a number of challenges: conflict, terrorism, poverty and sudden disruption of constitutional order pose obstacles to many countries on the path to a mature democracy. Sometimes, even the meaning of democracy varies in different countries, regions and cultures. Working democracy depends not only on democratic institutions, but also on individual mindset and cultural valuing, dialogue and compromise. Nurturing these takes time, experience and education, therefore the need for more systemic and coordinated cooperation within the international community to guide these efforts is evermore compelling. I believe that in such common efforts, our process of the Community of Democracies has a unique role to play, and our gathering here will be another landmark as we rise to this challenge with a specific strategy.

The Community of Democracies, since its inception in 2000, has engaged in various activities to promote democratic principles in the world. In the United Nations General Assembly, and the Human Rights Commission, the CD Caucus has taken several initiatives. These initiatives, among other things, aim at strengthening principles of democracy in the work of those organizations, including cooperation with regard to the resolutions articulating and supporting democratic values. The experts group from the CD convening group visited Timor Lester and Georgia in persisting efforts to establish democratic institutions. Such steps have already testified to the unequivocal niche of the Community of Democracies in the international community.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, as we are going to start contemplating commitments to serve as guiding strategies for the future, I wish to point out several elements that should be duly reflected in our commitment.

First, human dignity and human rights must be the pervasive guiding principles. At the very heart of democracy, after all, lies the aspiration to uphold the dignity and freedom of all. The task of guarding the fundamental pillars of democracy,

such as the division of power, free and fair elections, the rule of law and freedom of the press should transcend any national differences. In particular, we should take special care to safeguard the rights of groups such as minorities and the economically and socially marginalized. Fostering a thriving civil society is increasingly vital. As a voice for the will of the people and the resource for policy options, civil society is preying on the increasingly essential role in building and maintaining a working democracy. Creating a constructive partnership with the civil society and encouraging the participation of citizens have therefore emerged as the key tasks for all democratic governments. I believe that the cooperative relations between governments and civil society, including NGO communities need to be further strengthened. Good governance is a sine qua non for the realization of human rights. In this regard, I'd like to draw your attention to the results of the seminar on good governance practices for the promotion of human rights held in Seoul in September, 2004. We welcome its conclusions emphasizing the mutually reinforcing relationship between good governance and protection of human rights. Needless to say, elements of good governance such as the rule of law, accountability, transparency and participation, are best secured in a democratic environment. The community of democracies should lead the international society by showing best practices of good governance and protection of freedom and human rights.

The Community of Democracies certainly represents a new and unique approach, yet there are still many countries outside the CD that are struggling in the efforts to pursue the cause of democracy. Developing cooperative relations with them will be important. In this regard, we welcome the proposal by the US Secretary General in his report on the reform of the United Nations on strengthening the organizations capacity to help emerging democracies. We particularly support the creation of UN Democracy Fund, which aims to provide help to countries seeking to establish or strengthen their democracy.

Lastly, in our discussions on measures for cooperation, the regional and country specific context needs to be truly considered. Future actions should be conceived based on the clear understanding and analysis of country and region specific needs and challenges.

The structure of this meeting, divided into two segments for passing on thematic and regional issues respectively, does indeed offer a practical and balanced approach to the issue of cooperation.

Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen, in many corners of the world we continue to hear the unstoppable calls of our fellow humans for freedom and dignity. At the voting stations in Iraq and Afghanistan, on streets of Ukraine and Kyrgyzstan, we have witnessed the power of freedom and resilience of human spirit. As we all know, turning such aspiration for stable democracy into reality is a daunting challenge, yet it is one that will be worth the effort. Because, done, remitting motivation behind this community, I believe, lies in nothing less than the pure belief in human freedom and dignity that we constantly aspire to.

For the Republic of Korea, it is also a way to payback what we received from the international community during our long and arduous struggle for democracy. Now in the Middle East, Korean troops are helping the Iraqi people to rehabilitate the country. This effort stems from our formed commitment to the values of democracy and freedom now enjoyed by the Iraqi people. It is our firm belief that Iraq will be built as a proud and prosperous democracy revindicating our cause. I assure you that Korea, as an active member of this community, will continue to work with all of you to this end. Indeed, the commitment we are to adapt here will be another landmark. Yet we are all aware that the greater challenge will come after this meeting, which is turning are vision into reality. Through continued commitment and action, let us make sure we make of this forum, a true community. Thank you.