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GLOBAL ISSUES GROUP  
COMMUNITY OF DEMOCRACIES NONGOVERNMENTAL  
PROCESS

DOCUMENT FOR DISCUSSION

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Non-Governmental  
Process for the  
Community of  
Democracies

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Dear Colleagues,

The objective of the Community of Democracies non-governmental process is to generate proposals to governments for their consideration at the Santiago ministerial meeting on April 28-29, 2005. As such, the Executive Secretariat has convened a Global Issues Group with the objective of making proposals to the Convening Group that directly addresses the Community of Democracies governmental process. The Global Issues Group was formed to consider issues that would more than likely not arise during the regional workshops, but which were of importance to the Community of Democracies as a whole.

The Global Issues Group is coordinated by the Executive Secretariat and is comprised of the Democracy Coalition Project; Council for a Community of Democracies; Westminster Foundation for Democracy; Institute for Multi-Party Democracy; and Executive Secretariat for the non-government CD process.

This paper is intended as a contribution to the non-governmental process and will cover the following seven themes:

1. Community of Democracies Invitation Process
2. Institutionalization of the Community of Democracies
3. Building Democracies: The United Nations Global Democracy Fund
4. Rewarding Good Democratic Performance
5. Cooperation for Democracy Assistance: Democracy Transition Center
6. United Nations Democracy Caucus; and
7. Regional Organizations

**Summary of main discussion points raised in the paper:**

- Limiting participation in the CD to states that meet the criteria for participation is a critical ingredient for its success. The weakness in the invitation process has been the inadequate and non-transparent application of the Criteria for Participation. An ongoing independent review mechanism should be adopted to assist the Convening Group evaluate which countries should participate. The independent mechanism should include former heads of state and government and experts reviewing the performance of countries.
- Greater institutionalization of the CD would provide a more permanent foundation on which the Community of Democracies should be organized as well as fostering the necessary continuity from one conference to another, while providing a mechanism that would ensure action is taken on conference recommendations. This could be achieved by: (a) Establishing a permanent secretariat; (b) Expanding and formalizing the rotation of the Convening Group; and (c) Establishing an International Executive Secretariat for the Non-Governmental Process, which is adequately funded by donors .
- The CD should support a UN Global Democracy Fund as a mechanism to support democratic reformers. In order to provide greater transparency and legitimacy, civil society representatives should be included in the governing board and civil society actors working

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on democracy promotion in closed societies as well as transitioning democracies should be eligible for funding

- Donor countries need to be more generous in providing development assistance, targeting debt relief and offering trade privileges to new democracies to help them meet the expectations of their citizens that there is a democratic dividend. Increased levels of development assistance should be provided to countries who are members of the CD.
- The CD should endorse Hungary's proposal for a Democracy Transition Center with a commitment by the CD governments to support, fund and lend expertise to the Center. The Center is an ideal international vehicle to satisfy the demand for assistance by new democracies, as well as helping the CD implement its mission of promoting the transition to democracy in authoritarian regimes.
- The UN Democracy Caucus should become the key forum for CD countries to coordinate common positions on democracy and human rights issues before UN bodies. In particular CD countries should mobilize under the auspices of the UN Democracy Caucus to support country specific resolutions, ensure greater participation of CD countries on the UNCHR and establish democratic criteria for UNCHR membership.
- Regional organizations are encouraged to turn to individuals of stature and integrity, including former heads of state and government, statesmen and non-governmental leaders who can offer good offices to provide preventive diplomacy mechanisms to address threats to democracy.

## 1. INVITATION PROCESS

- 1.1 In Seoul, all the member states of the Community of Democracies decided that, "In accordance with the principles articulated in the Warsaw Declaration, the Community of Democracies, through as wide consultations as possible with its participants, will not include those countries where there is currently a disruption of constitutional rule or severe persistent erosion of or lack of essential elements of democracy." The [Seoul Plan of Action](#)<sup>1</sup> further defines the *essential elements of representative democracy* as being:

respect for human rights – civil, political, economic, social and cultural – including freedom of expression, freedom of the press, and freedom of religion and conscience; access to and free exercise of power in accordance with the rule of law; the 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.

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<sup>1</sup> Seoul Plan of Action (Democracy: Investing for Peace and Prosperity) 12 November 2002. URL: [http://www.demcoalition.org/pdf/SEOUL\\_PLAN\\_OF\\_ACTION.pdf](http://www.demcoalition.org/pdf/SEOUL_PLAN_OF_ACTION.pdf)

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- 1.2 The adoption of the Seoul Plan of Action, and the decision to limit participation to qualifying states and to create an “observer” category, were positive moves to ensure that the Community of Democracies fulfilled its potential as an association of states that “respect democratic standards.”<sup>2</sup>
  - 1.3 In mid-2004 the Convening Group confirmed that they were using the 27 September 2002 [Criteria for Participation and Procedures](#)<sup>3</sup> when issuing invitations to the Santiago Ministerial Meeting.
  - 1.4 The Criteria for Participation states that the “Community of Democracies should be a privileged forum for the defense and promotion of this comprehensive concept of democracy.” Furthermore, responsibility to apply the criteria rests with the convening group to determine which countries should be invited to *participate*. If “any state fails to comply, for a reasonable period of time, with one or several of these main requisites, it will not be invited to participate in any events of the Community of Democracies.”
  - 1.5 Furthermore, the Criteria for Participation stipulates that invitations to attend as an *observer* will be “issued to countries that fail to meet international standards of democracy and human rights, but are in a transition process and have given concrete steps along the lines of the [participation] Criteria.”
  - 1.6 The Democracy Coalition Project (“DCP”), as part of its work as a member of the Global Issues Group, in collaboration with Freedom House (“FH”), presented the [Country Assessments Report](#) to the Convening Group in December 2004.<sup>4</sup> DCP and FH used the criteria established at the Seoul Ministerial, as well as the Convening Group’s criteria paper, as a basis for recommending the invitation status for countries. A draft was circulated by the Nongovernmental Secretariat to all participants in the nongovernmental process.
  - 1.7 The purpose of the report was to help the Convening Group make decisions on which governments should be invited to the third Ministerial Meeting of the Community of Democracies and in what category (full participant, observer or non-invitee). The study compiled and evaluated reporting from a variety of national and international sources, including intergovernmental, civil society and media reports, and reached conclusions based specifically on the criteria for participation of governments adopted by the Convening Group. It incorporated comments received by participants in the CD Nongovernmental process.
  - 1.8 DCP and FH presented the report to the Convening Group in December. In advance of the 12 January 2005 Convening Group meeting, DCP and FH issued a

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<sup>2</sup> Community of Democracies: Criteria for Participation and Procedures, 27 September 2000. URL: [http://www.demcoalition.org/pdf/CD\\_participation\\_criteria.pdf](http://www.demcoalition.org/pdf/CD_participation_criteria.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> Community of Democracies: Criteria for Participation and Procedures, 27 September 2000. URL: [http://www.demcoalition.org/pdf/CD\\_participation\\_criteria.pdf](http://www.demcoalition.org/pdf/CD_participation_criteria.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> Country Assessments: Invitation Process for the Community of Democracies, December 2004. URL: [http://www.demcoalition.org/pdf/Country\\_Assessments\\_CoD\\_Invitation\\_Process.pdf](http://www.demcoalition.org/pdf/Country_Assessments_CoD_Invitation_Process.pdf)

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- [press release](#)<sup>5</sup> urging the Convening Group to limit membership to the Community of Democracies to those states that are genuinely committed to strengthening democracy.
- 1.9 Unfortunately, the present invitation system has not realized its potential as a mechanism to ensure the Community of Democracies remains an association of democracies. The final list of invitees is not yet available; however, all indications suggest that a number of countries are to be invited to attend the Santiago ministerial as either participants or observers, which plainly do not satisfy the Criteria for Participation. Their inclusion undermines the clearly stated aim of the invitation process to create a “privileged forum for the defense and promotion of this comprehensive concept of democracy.”
- 1.10 Furthermore, countries whose commitment to the essential elements of democracy have been backsliding since the Seoul ministerial meeting have not had their invitation to the Community of Democracies withdrawn.
- 1.11 The Community of Democracies will only be as effective as its ability to ensure that it remains an association of democracies committed to working through common issues and strengthening democracy around the world. The failure to implement the criteria for the issuing of invitations to the Santiago Ministerial Meeting makes a mockery of the invitation process.
- 1.12 The Criteria for Participation is an excellent instrument that accurately reflects the commitment made by over 100 governments in the [Warsaw Declaration](#)<sup>6</sup> and Seoul Plan of Action. The weakness in the system has been the application of the criteria by the Convening Group during the invitation process.
- 1.13 In order to overcome the deficiencies of the invitation process, a transparent mechanism to monitor and assess which governments continue to meet the democratic standards set forth in the Warsaw Declaration needs to be established to complement the forward thinking Criteria for Participation agreed to at the Seoul Ministerial Meeting.
- 1.14 In order to ensure impartiality and promote greater transparency in the process, an ongoing independent review mechanism should be adopted to assist the Convening Group evaluate which countries should continue to participate in the Community of Democracies . Such a mechanism should be headed by independent experts and individuals of stature and integrity including former heads of state and government and other leaders of good standing and experts responsible for reviewing the performance of countries according to the Criteria for Participation in order to determine eligibility for continued CD participation.

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<sup>5</sup> “Democracy Club must limit its Membership to be Credible,” Press Release 12 January 2005. URL: [http://www.demcoalition.org/pdf/democracyclub\\_Jan05.pdf](http://www.demcoalition.org/pdf/democracyclub_Jan05.pdf)

<sup>6</sup> Warsaw Declaration, 27 June 2000. URL: [http://www.demcoalition.org/pdf/warsaw\\_english.pdf](http://www.demcoalition.org/pdf/warsaw_english.pdf)

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1.15 The review of each member's adherence to the Criteria for Participation should be ongoing and new rules need to be agreed to stipulate in what circumstances and how a member can be expelled from or admitted to the Community of Democracies in the intervening periods between ministerial meetings.

## 2. INSTITUTIONALIZATION OF THE COMMUNITY OF DEMOCRACIES

2.1 The Community of Democracies has come to a point in its evolutionary process when there needs to be greater institutionalization rather than the ad hoc procedures presently in place.

2.2 Greater institutionalization of the Community of Democracies, through formal structures and established systems, would provide a more permanent foundation on which the Community of Democracies could be organized. At the same time the creation of a cumbersome bureaucracy should be avoided.

2.3 The Community of Democracies should strive to become an organization of member states committed to upholding democratic principles, with periodic meetings to transact their business, rather than a sequence of ministerial meetings at two or three yearly intervals with no clear organizational framework.

2.4 The Community of Democracies should be institutionalized by:

- Establishing a permanent Community of Democracies secretariat
- Expanding and formalizing the rotation of the members of the Convening Group taking fair regional representation into account
- Establishing an International Executive Secretariat for the Non-Governmental Process with adequate funding to allow civil society to exchange views with the Convening Group

2.5 Permanent Secretariat: There is a need for a permanent secretariat to carry out the Community of Democracies' work and implement the action plans or recommendations emerging from each of the ministerial meetings. The work of a permanent secretariat could extend to administering the independent review mechanism for the invitation process, coordinating ministerial meetings, exchanging information, monitoring country developments, tracking best practices and developing and implementing a process to coordinate collective responses to threats to democracy.

2.6 Expanding and Rotating the Convening Group: The membership of the Convening Group has been relatively static since the inception of the Community of Democracies. Since 2000 there has been a growing interest by a number of countries in becoming more involved in the strategic guidance of the Community of Democracies. It is proposed that the Convening Group rotate the present membership as well as expand the group to include other interested democratic countries committed to the principal aims of the Community of

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Democracies. The discussion as to which countries are included in the Convening Group should be open to civil society organizations working on the Community of Democracies as a means of endowing the Convening Group with greater transparency and legitimacy. A democratic and transparent process for selecting new members of the Convening Group should be developed in consultation with civil society groups.

- 2.7 Establishing an International Executive Secretariat of the Non-Governmental Process: In order to make the Community of Democracies more transparent and legitimate, the participation of civil society organizations should be institutionalized by establishing a civil society run International Executive Secretariat of the Non-Governmental Process, which is adequately funded by member states and democracy foundations. 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, particularly in Africa and the Arab world, with the hope that these organizations can become involved in future. The nongovernmental secretariat should be responsible, inter alia, for interacting with the Convening Group on the implementation of the plan of action emerging from the Santiago 2005 ministerial meeting, design and implementation of an independent review mechanism for evaluating participation in the CD process, and on planning for the next ministerial meeting in cooperation with the host country.

### **3. BUILDING DEMOCRACIES: THE UN GLOBAL DEMOCRACY FUND**

- 3.1 The Warsaw Declaration recognizes the Universal Declaration of Human Rights as the source for the universality of democratic values, which it then proceeds to define more fully. In recognition of the universality of democratic values and in order to encourage democratic reforms, a United Nations (“UN”) Global Democracy Fund has been proposed. The Community of Democracies should support this endeavor as a funding mechanism within the UN system to support democratic reformers.
- 3.2 The proposal suggests creation of a UN trust fund for democracy to be administered by a governing board that includes representatives from donor countries, young democracies, the UN Secretary-General’s office and non-governmental representatives. It is anticipated that the Community of Democracies will serve as the focal point for governing the fund and that the representatives will be drawn from the members of the CD. In order to provide greater transparency and legitimacy to the governing board administering the fund, it is essential that civil society representatives be included in the group that determines how the funds will be allocated. Furthermore, designers of the

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- management structure need to ensure the Global Democracy Fund does not become mired in bureaucracy.
- 3.3 The Community of Democracies governments should endorse this initiative and contribute funds as it provides a more flexible funding mechanism that can be tapped by democratizing states and civil society actors working on democracy anywhere in the world.
- 3.4 If the Global Democracy Fund is to reach its potential as a fund designed to advance the universality of democratic values and support democratic reforms then civil society actors working on democracy promotion in closed and autocratic societies, as well as transitioning countries should be eligible for funding. Among other things, the UN Global Democracy Fund could also support a Democracy Transition Center and efforts to deliver global democracy education.

#### 4. REWARD GOOD DEMOCRATIC PERFORMANCE

- 4.1 The United Nations [Millennium Declaration](#) considers certain fundamental values to be essential to international relations in the twenty-first century, including freedom. The Millennium Declaration goes on to state that democratic and participatory governance based on the will of the people best assures men and women have the right to live their lives and raise their children in dignity, free from hunger and the fear of violence, oppression or injustice.<sup>7</sup>
- 4.2 Empirical evidence shows that low-income democracies consistently outperform low-income autocracies in terms of economic growth, life expectancy, literacy rates and access to public health.<sup>8</sup>
- 4.3 Conversely, one of the greatest threats to democracy is the prevalence of poverty and inequality in new and emerging democracies as well as their vulnerability to globalization.
- 4.4 Although empirical studies show that over the long term democracies perform better,<sup>9</sup> in the short term new democracies have trouble delivering on their citizens' high expectations of the benefits that are meant to flow from transitioning to democracy.
- 4.5 Donors should assist new and fragile democracies provide dividends for their population. Strengthening the ability of new and fragile democracies to improve living standards for their citizens can be accomplished by increasing bilateral

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<sup>7</sup> United Nations, *Millennium Declaration*, September 2000. URL: <http://www.un.org/millennium/declaration/ares552e.pdf>

<sup>8</sup> Morton H. Halperin, Joseph T. Siegle and Michael M. Weinstein, 2004. *The Democracy Advantage: How Democracies Promote Prosperity and Peace*, Council on Foreign Relations, Routledge Press.

<sup>9</sup> Morton H. Halperin, Joseph T. Siegle and Michael M. Weinstein, 2004. *The Democracy Advantage: How Democracies Promote Prosperity and Peace*, Council on Foreign Relations, Routledge Press.

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- and multilateral development assistance, targeting debt relief and extending trade privileges.
- 4.6 Furthermore, donor countries need to coordinate their assistance to new democracies so as to ensure assistance is provided not only for building democracy and strengthening governance, but also for economic development and poverty reduction.
- 4.7 Donor countries should determine which countries to allocate and increase development assistance to based on the potential recipient country's qualification for membership in the Community of Democracies process.
- 4.8 Furthermore, democratic governments should use their voting power at international financial and trade institutions to ensure that members of the Community of Democracies are given preference for multilateral development bank loans, debt relief and trade privileges.
- 4.9 On the flipside, autocratic regimes have little incentive to open the door to political reforms. Cutting off development assistance and discretionary aid to autocratic regimes acts as a disincentive, whilst the promise that assistance would flow once it is clear that a country is transitioning to democracy would act as an incentive to move away from authoritarianism.

**5. COOPERATION FOR DEMOCRACY ASSISTANCE: DEMOCRACY TRANSITION CENTER**

- 5.1 In line with the "Responding to Threats to Democracy" component of the Seoul Plan of Action, the Community of Democracies has taken tentative positive steps toward providing multilateral responses to requests for technical assistance by sending democracy practitioners to emerging and consolidating democracies, such as Timor-Leste and Georgia.
- 5.2 There is a growing demand by transitional democracies for assistance, provided by practitioners who have a detailed understanding of the application of governance and democracy practices in comparative settings.
- 5.3 Accordingly, there should be a capacity within the Community of Democracies to provide rapid reaction political and technical assistance when democracies are under threat or when an opportunity arises to assist democratic reformers in the transition to democracy.
- 5.4 Following on from the successful experience in Timor-Leste and Georgia, the Community of Democracies should endorse a permanent structure for the continuation of this kind of democracy assistance.
- 5.5 The proposed Democracy Transition Center that Hungary has offered to host is a vehicle that would provide the Community of Democracies with a long-term, on-

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- going institutional capability to provide political support and technical assistance to democratic reformers on request.
- 5.6 The objective of the Democracy Transition Center is to provide first-hand information on the experience of democratic transition with two “products” – negotiating transitions, and post-transition consolidation. The scope of the Center will be global.
- 5.7 While the Democracy Transition Center has the support of the Hungarian Government it would be independent of government. The Democracy Transition Center is a logical source of continuity for the Community of Democracies and should have a professional staff capable of helping implement the Community of Democracies basic mission of promoting the transition to democracy.
- 5.8 Community of Democracies ministers should endorse this initiative and encourage the Community of Democracies governments to support, fund and lend expertise to the Democracy Transition Center.
- 6. UN DEMOCRACY CAUCUS**
- 6.1 The Community of Democracies agreed in Warsaw, and later mandated the Convening Group in the Seoul Plan of Action, to form caucuses and other coalitions in existing international organizations to support democracy and human rights.
- 6.2 Since then, modest steps have been taken to bring together a Democracy Caucus at the UN for the purpose of coordinating common positions on democracy and human rights issues before UN bodies. Currently, membership in the Democracy Caucus is limited to those governments invited to the Community of Democracies Seoul ministerial.
- 6.3 In particular the Community of Democracies should mobilize under the auspices of the UN Democracy Caucus to support country specific resolutions, ensure greater participation of Community of Democracies members on the United Nations Commission on Human Rights (“UNCHR”) and establish criteria for UNCHR membership.
- 6.4 The UN Democracy Caucus needs to develop a focused and clear agenda, in particular with respect to the UNCHR. On this issue it should take the lead in identifying key issues and areas of concern by ensuring that some of the world’s worst rights violations are brought to light and censured.
- 6.5 Furthermore, the UN Nations Democracy Caucus is in a prime position to take the lead in rejecting the proposal to make membership of the UNCHR universal. In order to prevent this initiative the UN Democracy Caucus should work

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- together in the regional blocs and at the ECOSOC in order to advance the introduction of membership criteria to sit on the UNCHR.
- 6.6 Membership of the UN Democracy Caucus should remain limited to those states invited as participants to the Community of Democracies ministerial.
- 7. REGIONAL ORGANIZATIONS**
- 7.1 In line with the Seoul Plan of Action, many regional organizations have developed mechanisms to promote regional democratic progress and to respond to threats to democratic rule or unconstitutional transfers of power. To be effective at preventing the violence and instability associated with reversals of the democratic process, regional organizations should establish mechanisms to assist governments under threat from non-democratic forces.
- 7.2 Regional 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 provide creative preventative diplomacy for volatile situations. An example of an organization that could facilitate such an initiative is the Club de Madrid.
- 7.3 The CD should encourage and work with an organization in each region to energetically oppose and counteract threats to democracy in that region.