

25 November 2004

TO: Ambassador Carlos Portales, Director General for Foreign Policy, Chile
and Senior Officials of the Community of Democracies Convening Group

FROM: Non-governmental Secretariat, Community of Democracies

RE: COUNTRY ASSESSMENTS FOR INVITATIONS TO SANTIAGO
MINISTERIAL

We would like to share with the Community of Democracies Convening Group an assessment of the democracy and human rights records of thirty countries. The purpose of the report is 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 compiles and evaluates reporting from a variety of national and international sources, including intergovernmental, civil society and media reports,¹ and reaches conclusions based on the criteria for participation of governments adopted by the Convening Group. An earlier draft of the document was circulated to all those participating in the Non-governmental Process.

At the second Ministerial Meeting of the Community of Democracies in Seoul, participating governments agreed to exclude “those countries where there is currently a disruption of constitutional rule or severe persistent erosion of or lack of essential elements of democracy.”² The Convening Group governments recently agreed that, in determining invitations to the third Ministerial Meeting, they would evaluate each government’s respect for democratic standards as set forth in the Warsaw Declaration.

According to the Convening Group’s criteria paper, “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, for a limited time and as long as deemed necessary. Alternatively, a state may be invited as an observer for as long as is determined appropriate.”³

The Community of Democracies has the potential to serve as an effective voice for peaceful democratic change around the world. The invitation process is a critically important way in which the Convening Group can demonstrate its determination to uphold the commitments made in the Warsaw Declaration and Seoul Plan of Action and ensure continued progress at the Santiago meeting.

¹ These include the World Bank Institute, Freedom House, Inter-Parliamentary Union, Bertelsmann Foundation, Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International, Reporters Without Borders, Open Society Institute, International Federation for Human Rights, local human rights organizations as well as regional organizations such as the OSCE, OAS, and Council of Europe. The assessment was prepared by the Democracy Coalition Project, in collaboration with Freedom House.

² Seoul Plan of Action, “Democracy: Investing for Peace and Prosperity,” 12 Nov. 2002

³ Community of Democracies, Criteria for Participation and Procedures, 27 Sept. 2002. Available at http://www.demcoalition.org/pdf/CD_participation_criteria.pdf