

**Statement by the Participants of the Non-Governmental Process
of the Community of Democracies**

On the Invitation Process to the Community of Democracies

Lisbon, July 10, 2009

We, participants of the nongovernmental International Steering Committee of the Community of Democracies (ISC/CD), meeting in Lisbon in conjunction with the Fifth Ministerial Meeting of the Community of Democracies (CD), express our concern about the invitation process for this meeting, having been notified of the actual list of invited countries at the last minute. In the future, we encourage the Convening Group (CG) to make the invitation decisions in a more timely and transparent way.

The CD process depends for its legitimacy on maintaining the standards that the governments adopted in Warsaw, and applying them in a fair and transparent manner. In this light, we strongly welcome the attention given by the Convening Group to the recommendations of the International Advisory Committee (IAC) composed of prominent democracy experts and leaders; these recommendations were earlier endorsed by the ISC/CD. We believe the IAC process is extremely valuable and needs to be continued.

However, the large number of deviations from the IAC recommendations has caused our surprise and disappointment. A total of 28 CG decisions are contrary to the IAC recommendations, which is substantially more than for the Fourth Ministerial Meeting. The fact that all of these deviations are in the direction of giving a more favorable status to the governments in question -- notably Angola, Egypt, Iraq, Nicaragua, and Russia -- indicates a trend of declining standards.

The observer category raises particular questions. Of 25 countries invited as observers to Lisbon, 17 had received non-invitation recommendations by the IAC. Moreover, many of these are countries in various stages of backsliding. This fact confuses the original purpose of the observer category to encourage countries demonstrating progress. We are further disturbed that observers are apparently to participate on an equal footing at this Ministerial Meeting. We call on the Convening Group to clarify the meaning of observer status and the criteria for granting it.

Finally, we regret that the Convening Group has not found a suitable mechanism to enable participation of the government of Taiwan in any meetings of the Community. Taiwan is a thriving democracy which fully meets all criteria laid down by the Community. Moreover, through the Taiwan Foundation for Democracy, it has played a very constructive role in supporting and developing the Non-Governmental Process.

Appendix: Countries whose Invitation Status at the Lisbon Ministerial Meeting Differs from the Recommendation of the International Advisory Committee

Governments invited as participants which had been recommended by the IAC as “Do Not Invite”:

1. Angola
2. Bahrain
3. Iraq
4. Jordan

Governments invited as participants which had been recommended by the IAC as observers:

1. Bangladesh
2. Bhutan
3. Haiti
4. Kenya
5. Liberia
6. Malaysia
7. Thailand

Governments invited as observers which had been recommended by the IAC as “Do Not Invite”:

1. Afghanistan
2. Algeria
3. Armenia
4. Azerbaijan
5. Burkina Faso
6. Cambodia
7. DR Congo
8. Djibouti
9. Egypt
10. Guinea-Bissau
11. Nicaragua
12. Nigeria
13. Oman
14. Qatar
15. Russia
16. Rwanda
17. Uganda