



DEMOCRACY
COALITION
PROJECT

**For immediate release
July 28, 2009**

DCP Granted Consultative Status by the UN Economic and Social Council by a Vote of 30-9-9

On July 27, after a three-year process, the Democracy Coalition Project's request for consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) was granted by a large margin of 30-9-9 during a vote at the general segment of ECOSOC held in Geneva, Switzerland.

The vote by ECOSOC effectively overruled the recommendation of the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO Committee) in May to deny DCP's request; a decision that ran counter to Resolution 1996/31 establishing the guiding principles of NGO relations with the United Nations. (See DCP statement [here](#).) While the 19-member NGO Committee, ECOSOC's subsidiary body, is mandated to screen and make recommendations for NGO applications for consultative status, the authority to grant consultative status ultimately lies with the 54-member ECOSOC.

Prior to the vote, the United States, Sweden (on behalf of the European Union), Chile, Canada and Mexico all issued statements in support of DCP's application. "DCP has met all the requirements of Resolution 1996/31," stated the Chilean delegate. "It is an independent, legally-registered, democratically-governed organization. As such, we do not see any justification for the Committee's denial of DCP's application."

The United States motioned first to reject the Committee's recommendation, which succeeded by a vote of 12-29-7, and subsequently proposed to grant consultative status to DCP, which was supported by an overwhelming majority in a vote of 30-9-8.

"We are grateful for the support of the United States government as well as all the governments that spoke and voted in favor of our application and of upholding the principles of Resolution 1996/31" said Dokhi Fassihian, Executive Director of the Democracy Coalition Project. "Our victory is a collective victory for NGO participation at the UN."

During the session, other NGO applications were also under consideration, including a Brazilian NGO, AGBLT (Associação Brasileira de Gays, Lésbicas e Transgêneros), which also successfully overturned a negative recommendation by the NGO Committee by a vote of 25-12-13. Another US and South Korea-registered NGO, the Dynamic Christian World Mission Foundation, whose application had been "closed" by the NGO Committee earlier this year due to its refusal to provide the names and

addresses of its members in China, lost its bid to rescind this decision by one vote (22-23-3).

Several statements were made from member states criticizing the NGO Committee's decision-making process; accusing it of overstepping its mandate and going beyond the technical criteria and requirements outlined in Resolution 1996/31 in reaching its decisions. These statements, along with DCP's and AGBLT's victories, sent a strong signal to the Committee that such infringements will not go overlooked.

On July 20, 28 NGOs from around the world, including members of HRCNet – a global network of organizations working at the UN Human Rights Council – sent a letter to ECOSOC member states expressing concern about increasing politicization of the NGO accreditation process, in particular the targeting of human rights and democracy organizations seeking to gain or maintain their UN accreditation. In the letter, the NGOs urged ECOSOC to uphold the guiding principles of Resolution 1996/31 and ensure that eligible NGOs are not denied or stripped of their accreditation. The groups added: "We believe that any political supervision of the accreditation and reporting process for NGOs should follow technical procedures that uphold the rights of NGOs to form and express independent viewpoints freely and prevent retribution based on those freely expressed opinions."

For now, states have heeded this call. "ECOSOC sent a powerful message to the NGO Committee that it should not overstep its mandate," Fassihian said. "It is our hope that this may positively impact the accreditation process in the Committee and relieve pressure on NGOs that face undue scrutiny, rejection, and delays. While it was generally a good day for NGOs at the UN, more needs to be done to ensure that NGOs are assessed efficiently and objectively, and that their independence is respected."

With its newly obtained consultative status, DCP will be able to speak at UN meetings, circulate statements, and hold events. These benefits will greatly aid DCP's efforts in strengthening the work of the UN on the protection and promotion of human rights and respect for democratic principles.

Below are the results of the two ECOSOC votes on DCP:

Draft decision to reject consultative status to DCP (12-29-7)

In favor (12 States):

Algeria, Barbados, Belarus, Bolivia, China, Congo, Guinea-Bissau, Malaysia, Mozambique, Russia, Sudan, Venezuela

Against (29 States):

Brazil, Cameroon, Canada, Cote D'Ivoire, El Salvador, Estonia, France, Germany, Greece, Guatemala, India, Japan, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Malawi, Mauritius, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Peru, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Romania, St. Lucia, Sweden, United Kingdom, United States, Uruguay

Abstentions (7 States):

Indonesia, Kazakhstan, Namibia, Pakistan, Philippines, Republic of Moldova, St. Kitts and Nevis

Not present/did not vote (6 States):

Cape Verde, Iraq, Morocco, Niger, Saudi Arabia, Somalia

Draft resolution to grant DCP Special Consultative status (30-9-9)

In favor (30 States):

Brazil, Cameroon, Canada, Cote D'Ivoire, El Salvador, Estonia, France, Germany, Greece, Guatemala, India, Indonesia, Japan, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Malawi , Mauritius, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Peru, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Romania, St. Lucia, Sweden, United Kingdom, United States, Uruguay

Against (9 States):

Barbados, Belarus, Bolivia, China, Malaysia, Mozambique, Russia, Sudan, Venezuela

Abstentions (9 States):

Algeria, Congo, Kazakhstan, Namibia, Niger, Pakistan, Philippines, Republic of Moldova, St. Kitts and Nevis

Not present/did not vote (6 States):

Cape Verde, Guinea-Bissau, Iraq, Morocco, Saudi Arabia, Somalia