

Introductory Note

The International Advisory Committee for the Community of Democracies Invitations Process (IAC) is an international, independent high-level body of experts established for the purpose of assessing the quality of democracy in countries belonging or aspiring to belong to the Community of Democracies (CD). It aims to strengthen and improve the Community of Democracies by bringing credibility, legitimacy and transparency to its invitation process. The IAC makes recommendations on which countries should be invited to the next Ministerial Meeting of the Community of Democracies for consideration by the Convening Group, a committee of 16 governments charged with issuing invitations to the Fourth Ministerial Meeting in Bamako, Mali in 2007.

In order to provide IAC members with in-depth, updated analyses on the state of democracy and human rights around the world, a Secretariat team coordinated by the Democracy Coalition Project, in partnership with the Bertelsmann Stiftung, the Ghana Center for Democratic Development and Freedom House, prepared a series of specific country reports: thirty-five in-depth reports on countries that deserved further analysis and twelve shorter watchlist reports on countries that initially qualified for invitation to the Ministerial Meeting, but where recent developments and ongoing trends recommended a close scrutiny of events. Further information on the methodology and criteria used by the Secretariat to determine which countries to study in detail can be found in the methodology note on this CD-ROM. Each country report analyzes a government's record of respect for democracy and human rights in accordance with the official Criteria for Participation in the Community of Democracies; it also provides suggestions on steps the government should take to meet the participation criteria.

These reports, prepared by the Secretariat and included in the present volume, provided the principal basis for the assessment carried out by IAC members. Their findings were shared with IAC members during the second half of 2006, and they were discussed during the meeting the IAC held in Berlin, on November 5-6, 2006. The reports were also shared with dozens of country experts, including members of the International Steering Committee for the Community of Democracies Non-governmental Process, a group of civil society leaders from around the world that monitor CD commitments. While the IAC acknowledges that the reports prepared by the Secretariat have constituted a vital source of information, the final responsibility for the country reports lies exclusively with the four organizations forming the IAC Secretariat.