

LISBON DECLARATION OF THE COMMUNITY OF DEMOCRACIES

July 11-12, 2009

We the Participants in the Fifth Ministerial Conference of the Community of Democracies held in Lisbon on the 11th and 12th of July 2009:

Sharing the common vision of a future for the world as a space of freedom and justice for all,

Reiterating that our Community is based on the respect for the universal values of human dignity, for the principle of equality, for the rule of law and for human rights,

Reaffirming further that all human rights are universal, indivisible, interrelated, interdependent and mutually reinforcing, and that all human rights must be treated in a fair and equal manner, on the same footing and with the same emphasis,

Reaffirming the solemn commitment of our States to fulfil their obligations to promote universal respect for and the observance and protection of all human rights and fundamental freedoms for all in accordance with the United Nations Charter, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other instruments relating to human rights and international law, and further affirming our commitment to respect and uphold the specific principles and provisions agreed to in previous Community of Democracies Ministerial Conferences in Bamako 2007, Santiago 2005, Seoul 2002, and Warsaw 2000 and to implement the actions thereof,

Recognizing that democracy cannot be sustained without strict adherence to the principle of non-discrimination, as set forth in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights,

Determined to promote gender equality and full and equal participation of women in all spheres of life, including decision making processes at all levels,

Stressing that all acts of terrorism are a threat to democracy and democratic values,

Noting the contribution that initiatives like intercultural dialogue and the Alliance of Civilizations make in counteracting threats against democracy such as racism and xenophobia,

Emphasizing that international institutions, including the United Nations, and their reform, can support and help advance democratic governance across the Globe,

Acknowledging that profound changes occurred in the last ten years, since the creation of the Community of Democracies, and recognizing that democratization is a process that has to be nurtured and requires continuous improvement in governance practices to ensure democratic participation,

Recommitting our resolve to step up our efforts to ensure the timely and full realization of the Millennium Development Goals and objectives decided at the major United Nations conferences and summits and other fora,

Emphasizing that the current financial and economic crisis provides further reason for the strengthening of democratic institutions, democratic governance and transparency, while posing a challenge to open societies,

Stressing that the global economic and financial crisis does not diminish the primary responsibility of states in the protection and promotion of human rights and the rule of law and emphasizing the need for international cooperation in this regard,

Stating that democracy has better means to deal with the financial and economic crisis than other forms of government based on its accountability and legitimacy,

Reaffirming the outcome of the recent high-level United Nations Conference on the World Financial and Economic Crisis and its impact on Development, which establishes that peace, stability and prosperity are indivisible in today's globalised economy, due to the fact that all nations are far more closely tied together than ever before,

Recognizing also that social cohesion, meaning promotion of inclusion, equality, and the well-being of citizenry is an essential component of a sustainable democracy,

Reaffirming the symbolic relevance of the International Democracy Day as adopted by the United Nations General Assembly,

Hereby, we commit to:

Strive for democratic governance globally to promote and protect human rights and fundamental freedoms for all; to advance democratization and to involve citizens in a transparent political process; to support the rule of law, gender equality, human security, freedom of expression and access to information, access to basic public services, effective and accountable state institutions, sustainable economic growth and social cohesion,

Promote the universal recognition of the vital importance of free and fair elections as fundamental to the legitimacy of governments,

Actively promote the rights of every person to freedom of peaceful assembly and association,

Promote education for democracy and human rights education and learning as a fundamental tool for the participation in the democratic process and governance,

Strengthen international cooperation to counter terrorism, and to ensure States' efforts are in compliance with their obligations under international law, in particular international human rights, refugee and humanitarian law, including by enhancing the efficient implementation of existing counter terrorism instruments, and early conclusion of the negotiations of the Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism that reflects the Community of Democracies' views that acts of terrorism are criminal and unjustifiable regardless of their form, manifestation, or motivation,

Reinforce cooperation with regional and interregional organizations to promote democracy as well as develop regional cooperation mechanisms aiming at building and consolidating democracy in a substantial manner,

Recognize the importance of the reform of the United Nations, including the comprehensive reform of the Security Council,

We are also determined to:

Recognize the importance of reaching an ambitious and balanced agreement for the Doha Development Agenda, and honour our commitments to official development assistance and the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, in particular for Sub-Saharan Africa,

Endeavour to support actions and initiatives aiming at restoring confidence, growth and jobs, based upon transparent regulation and strong global institutions,

Recognize the need to work in cooperation and close association with relevant international organizations in particular the United Nations,

As we approach the 10th anniversary of the Community of Democracies, we commit ourselves to:

Give a new impetus to the Community of Democracies, strengthen the core principles that presided over its creation, intensify its effectiveness and through action-oriented goals, reaffirm its fundamental role in promoting democratic governance globally,

Strengthen the role of the Non-Governmental Process and the engagement of civil society,

Implement the new procedures adopted by the Convening Group under Portuguese Presidency,

Contribute to the careful preparation of this important process, including by supporting:

The high level meeting on the occasion of the 10th anniversary of the Community of Democracies in 2010 in Poland; and

The sixth Ministerial Conference of the Community of Democracies in 2011 in Vilnius,

Review the tasks and working methods of the Working Groups seeking to optimize and streamline their activities,

Support the Permanent Secretariat whose administrative, operational and technical input is encouraged,

Support the Lithuanian Presidency,

Welcome the subsequent Mongolian Presidency, We will meet again in Lithuania in 2011.