

**DECLARATION OF SAN SALVADOR:
COMMUNITY OF DEMOCRACIES IN THE DEVELOPMENT**
July 24, 2015

We, the participants of the Eighth Ministerial Conference of the Community of Democracies, gathered in San Salvador, El Salvador on July 24, 2015.

Mindful of the strong commitment to the principles of the Warsaw Declaration of 2000 and the subsequent ministerial declarations of the Community of Democracies and aware that the advancement and consolidation of democracy constitutes the main objective of the Community of Democracies.

Celebrating the 15th anniversary since we the participants of the Community of Democracies met to adopt the Warsaw Declaration, resolving to work together to promote and strengthen democracy globally.

Recognizing the purposes and principles of the Warsaw Declaration and emphasizing the interdependence between peace, development, human rights and democracy.

Reiterating that compliance with the principles and purposes of the United Nations Charter, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other relevant and applicable international, human rights instruments, is fundamental to the participation of countries in the Community of Democracies.

Stressing the universal character of human rights and the primary responsibility of states to promote respect for, and observance of, human rights and fundamental freedoms for all, without any distinction.

Recognizing the importance of promoting a culture of peace and sustainable development in the international community, and convinced that both aspects are key for the strengthening of democratic processes and their institutions and vice versa.

Noting the importance of democratic governance, including transparency, accountability and combatting corruption as part of the efforts towards social development and the eradication of poverty.

Reaffirming the commitment to strengthen political cooperation with emphasis on human rights, freedoms and democracy in order to integrate efforts for inclusive development and poverty eradication in the context of Sustainable Development Goals.

Recalling that while development facilitates the enjoyment of all human rights, the lack of development may not be invoked to justify the abridgement of internationally recognized human rights.

Reaffirming the commitment of participating States in the Community of Democracies to work together to advance and strengthen democracy, consolidate social development and equitable growth, combat poverty and realize of human rights and fundamental freedoms for all.

Noting that the rapid pace of technological development opens new horizons to foster democratic societies and enables state and non-state actors all over the world to use new information and communication technologies to those ends, and also the importance of building confidence and trust in the Internet, not least with regard to

freedom of expression, privacy as set out in article 12 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and article 17 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and other human rights so that the potential of the Internet as, inter alia, an enabler for democracy, development and innovation can be realized (based on UNGA Res 68/167 and HRC/26/13).

Reaffirming further our determination to cooperate in the fields listed supra, and recognizing also that all countries are at different stages in their own democratic processes.

Expressing our desire to combine efforts in order to consolidate and strengthen democratic institutions, with due respect for sovereignty and the principle of non-interference in internal affairs of States, expressing also our objective to promote a growing adherence to democratic values and standards, as outlined above and considering also the Purposes and Principles of the Charter of the United Nations, including those related to promoting and encouraging respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms.

We resolve to:

1. Underline that democracy is a universal value based on the will of the people to determine their political, economic and cultural systems, expressed through free, fair and transparent elections which require full citizen participation, free operation of political parties, independent media, civil society and a judicial system capable of exercising independent and impartial authority.
2. Emphasize that the road to democracy is a continuous process, which is supported by dynamic interactions between different stakeholders in society in order to promote broad and inclusive participation in decision-making processes and trust between people and accountable institutions of government.
3. Recognize that all democratic processes face challenges, due to their evolving nature and therefore, democratic institutions should be strengthened to ensure institutionalization of democratic principles and practices.
4. Reiterate that within democratic processes, social inclusion and the realization of all human rights are interlinked and mutually reinforcing, particularly through developing and implementing public policies that promote sustainable development and equitable growth.
5. Increase international cooperation to promote transparency, combat government corruption and prevent international illicit financial flows that may seek to undermine democratic gains and constitutional governments.
6. Strengthen actions to effectively advance, at the national, regional, and global level, democracy and democratic institutions, the rule of law, human rights, dialogue and the Culture of Peace and promote equal access to justice for all.
7. Create and facilitate forums and spaces for reflection and dialogue aimed at fostering democratization, including in fragile and conflict-affected areas.
8. Stressing the need for women to be part of political representation and decision-making in all spheres, in democratic processes, and in their institutions.

9. Urge all states to respect all human rights and to uphold the capacity of civil society to operate free from hindrance and insecurity.
10. Emphasize further the crucial role that a free and vibrant civil society, human rights defenders, free media and the political opposition play in democratic processes and in supporting the enjoyment of the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly, association and expression online and offline.
11. Reiterate that democracy includes the realization of all human rights and fundamental freedoms, including inter-alia freedom of association and of peaceful assembly, freedom of expression and opinion, freedom of thought, conscience, religion or belief, the right to be recognized everywhere as a person before the law and the right to take part in the conduct of public affairs, directly or through freely chosen representatives, and to vote, to be elected through genuine, periodic, free and fair elections by universal and equal suffrage and by secret ballot guaranteeing the free expression of the will of the people (REF OP1 RES / HRC 19/36) as well as respect for the rule of law, the separation of powers, the independence of the judiciary, transparency and accountability in public administration and decision-making and free, independent and pluralistic media.
12. Emphasize the fundamental importance of education and training for human rights and democracy to promote, protect and realize all human rights, effectively.
13. Engage in government-to-government and people-to-people linkages to promote civil education and literacy, including education for democracy.
14. Encourage further efforts aimed at incorporating advances in information and communication technologies for the advancement of human rights and democracy, including freedom of expression, education for democracy, social inclusion and tolerance, political participation and gender equality.
15. Reaffirms that the same rights that people have offline must also be protected online, and the need for States to protect the exercise of human rights and fundamental freedoms on the Internet and through connection technologies, as well as to support individuals, organizations and institutions who use new technologies to promote and protect human rights, democracy and development.
16. Emphasize that solidarity, cooperation and political will among States are fundamental to the implementation of the Post-2015 Development Agenda, through a global cooperation and financial system sensitive to the needs and interests of all, and to reaffirm the key role of the United Nations in these efforts.
17. Reaffirm our commitment to implement the post 2015 Development Agenda with emphasis on the realization of all human rights and the promotion of peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels, taking into account the pillars of the Community of Democracies as expressed in the Warsaw Declaration.
18. Commit to push for the integration of a gender perspective as a crosscutting issue in the Post- 2015 Development Agenda, including in its Declaration, the SDGs, targets, means of implementation, follow up and review, in order to foster the political and economic empowerment of women and girls in achieving gender equality as key

elements to ensure inclusive public policies aimed at overcoming poverty and achieving social and economic development for women and girls.

19. Strengthen the Community of Democracies' Youth pillar through cooperation and exchange of experiences among our countries, with emphasis on education for democracy and capacity building, aimed at strengthening the culture of peace and the promotion of a democratic culture in which understanding, pluralism, tolerance, dialogue and cooperation prevail.

20. Strengthen the Working Group on Women and Democracy of the Community of Democracies and take steps to ensure promotion and protection of the human rights of women and girls, including their civil and political rights and the promotion of the economic and political empowerment of women, with emphasis on comprehensive efforts in combating all forms of discrimination and violence against women and girls, including femicide, and child, early and forced marriage.

21. Reaffirm the commitment to the United Nations Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace in accordance with the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

22. Emphasize in all the activities of the Community of Democracies the unequivocal adherence to the principles of freedom, justice, democracy, tolerance, solidarity, cooperation, pluralism, cultural diversity, dialogue and understanding at all levels of society, including minority groups and indigenous peoples, and among nations.

23. Emphasize that dialogue and negotiation are effective tools to resolve conflicts and to enable transition processes towards more just and democratic societies, and in this regard, seek a review of the international governance architecture, so as to better address threats to international peace and security.

24. Take steps to combat all forms of discrimination and intolerance, including those based on race, color, gender, language, religion or belief, national or ethnic origin, sexual orientation, gender identity, political or other opinion, social and property status and disability, in pursuing inclusive societies and sustainable development.

25. Emphasize that peace is the fruit of social development, equality and justice, considering the existing cross-link between all efforts towards social development, which contributes to more democratic, tolerant and inclusive societies.

26. The Governing Council of the Community of Democracies thanks the people and the Government of the Republic of El Salvador for its leadership and for hosting the 8th Ministerial Conference of the Community of Democracies.