



Community
of Democracies

2018–2023

Community of Democracies Strategic Plan

A world where every nation respects and upholds the core democratic values, principles, and standards of the Warsaw Declaration.



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1. Message from the Secretary General

I am pleased to present to you the Community of Democracies' Strategic Plan, which will guide our work during the next five years.

Since its establishment in 2000, the Community of Democracies has brought together governments and civil society in the pursuit of a common goal: supporting democratic values and strengthening democratic norms and institutions around the world. The Community of Democracies is unique: it is a coalition that is not based on linguistic, geographical or economic criteria but on the commitment to shared values enshrined in the Warsaw Declaration. From the initial convening group of nations, it has gradually evolved into a global intergovernmental coalition of democratic states and a multi-stakeholder platform for dialogue and discussion on issues affecting democracy and its institutions.

The global context in which the Community of Democracies is operating has also transformed. With a number of complex challenges to democracy, both internal and external, the Community of Democracies' mission is even more relevant today than when the organization was founded at the dawn of the new millennium.

Democracy will always face the need for adjustment in this rapidly changing modern world. But while approaches and models of democracy may be different, core democratic values remain universal and must be protected and upheld. This Strategic Plan reflects the commitment of the Member States of the Community's Governing Council to strengthen their cooperation to more effectively respond to complex challenges to democracy and embrace new opportunities to support consolidation of democracies across the world.

With broad geographical participation by new and established democracies representing every region, with the involvement of civil society and cooperation with a range of international stakeholders, the Community of Democracies provides an important and much needed platform for multi-stakeholder and cross-sectoral cooperation that facilitates joint diplomatic action, mutual dialogue, sharing best practices and exchange of experiences. Building on the strengths and expertise of the Community of Democracies, this Strategic Plan provides a framework of how the coalition will respond to the remarkable challenges and opportunities it faces in advancing democracy and promoting democratic values worldwide.

The Permanent Secretariat and I look forward to working with the Community of Democracies' Governing Council Member States and civil society as we implement this plan as our roadmap.

Thomas E. Garrett

2. Executive Summary

As authoritarian regimes grow more aggressive and sophisticated in flouting democratic norms and undermining democratic societies beyond their borders, the mission of the Community of Democracies is more relevant today than at any time since its founding in the year 2000.

By the adoption of the Five-Year Strategic Plan for the period 2018-2023, the Community is determined to address several specific sets of challenges to democracy, including backsliding along several principles of the Warsaw Declaration such as free and fair elections, core civil and political rights, and democratic checks and balances. Severe violations of fundamental human rights in post-conflict countries where transitions have stalled or unraveled, and declining public confidence in political leaders and democratic institutions, coupled with the failure to reduce the influence of money and corruption on political processes are contributing to democratic backsliding.

As the Community of Democracies approaches its 20th anniversary, this Five-Year Strategic Plan reflects the commitment of the Members of the Governing Council to increase their engagement in the Community and to work together to ensure that within five years the Community is better equipped to marshal all of its resources and take proactive steps to address key democratic priorities and more effectively respond to the challenges.

The plan articulates how the Community will respond to the challenges and opportunities it faces in the current global environment, while considering the diplomatic tools and capabilities at the Community's disposal, resource constraints and demands, as well as the potential for strategic partnerships to further advance its mission.

Based on this five-year vision for the Community, Member States will take concrete, targeted actions to advance the following five strategic and operational objectives:

- Increasing the Community's role in safeguarding democratic institutions, and its response to democratic backsliding and restricting of civic space* both within and outside the Community;
- Enhancing the Community's engagement on and support for democratic processes in key post-conflict countries outside the Community that are committed to democratic reforms;
- Increasing opportunities for dialogue on democracy and development, increasing citizen trust, expanding participation in democratic processes, while reducing the detrimental impacts of corruption, manipulation of emerging technologies, and money in politics;
- Reforming Governing Council processes, including its biannual meetings and working groups, to ensure mechanisms are efficient, and action-oriented, enhancing the integrity and effectiveness of the Permanent Secretariat;
- Expanding partnerships with like-minded international and regional organizations and networks, particularly those with complementary mandates focused on analysis or technical assistance, to leverage resources and increase impact.

* As defined by CIVICUS, a member of the ISC, **civic space** "is the bedrock of any open and democratic society. When civic space is open, citizens and civil society organizations are able to organize, participate and communicate without hindrance. In doing so, they are able to claim their rights and influence the political and social structures around them."

3. Vision, mission and values

Vision

A world where every nation respects and upholds the core democratic values, principles, and standards of the Warsaw Declaration.

Mission

The Community of Democracies is a global intergovernmental coalition committed to taking concerted action to advance and protect democratic freedoms, strengthen democratic institutions, and expand political participation.

Governing Council Member States do this by abiding by core democratic principles in practice, supporting one another in meeting the objectives they set for themselves, responding to threats to democracy, and working closely with civil society.

Core Values and Principles

Through the Warsaw Declaration and subsequent Ministerial Declarations, Member States have consistently reaffirmed their commitment to core democratic values, including: partnership with civil society, dialogue and peer learning, advocacy on behalf of democratic standards, international collaboration, pluralism, civic education, support for emerging democracies, and economic prosperity as a foundation for democracy.



The
Warsaw Declaration
sets out
core
democratic
principles

4. Warsaw Declaration

The Warsaw Declaration is the founding document of the Community of Democracies, adopted on June 27, 2000, in Warsaw, Poland. It defines the essential practices and norms for the effective establishment and consolidation of democracy and emphasizes the interdependence between peace, development, human rights and democracy. Signatories of the Warsaw Declaration recognized the universality of democratic values and committed to respect and uphold the following 19 core democratic principles:

- 1 The will of the people shall be the basis of the authority of government, as expressed by exercise of the right and civic duties of citizens to choose their representatives through **regular, free and fair elections** with universal and equal suffrage, open to multiple parties, conducted by secret ballot, monitored by independent electoral authorities, and free of fraud and intimidation.
- 2 The right of every person to **equal access to public service and to take part in the conduct of public affairs**, directly or through freely chosen representatives.
- 3 The right of every person to equal **protection of the law**, without any discrimination as to race, color, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status.
- 4 The right of every person to **freedom of opinion and of expression**, including to exchange and receive ideas and information through any media, regardless of frontiers.
- 5 The right of every person to **freedom of thought, conscience and religion**.
- 6 The right of every person to **equal access to education**.
- 7 The right of the **press to collect, report and disseminate information, news and opinions**, subject only to restrictions necessary in a democratic society and prescribed by law, while bearing in mind evolving international practices in this field.
- 8 The right of every person to **respect for private family life, home, correspondence, including electronic communications**, free of arbitrary or unlawful interference.
- 9 The right of every person to **freedom of peaceful assembly and association**, including to establish or join their own political parties, civic groups, trade unions or other organizations with the necessary legal guarantees to allow them to operate freely on a basis of equal treatment before the law.

- 10 The right of persons belonging to **minorities or disadvantaged groups to equal protection of the law**, and the freedom to enjoy their own culture, to profess and practice their own religion, and use their own language.
- 11 The right of every person **to be free from arbitrary arrest or detention; to be free from torture and other cruel, inhumane or degrading treatment or punishment**; and to receive due process of law, including to be presumed innocent until proven guilty in a court of law.
- 12 That the aforementioned rights, which are essential to **full and effective participation in a democratic society, be enforced by a competent, independent and impartial judiciary open to the public**, established and protected by law.
- 13 That **elected leaders uphold the law and function strictly in accordance with the constitution** of the country concerned and procedures established by law.
- 14 The **right of those duly elected to form a government**, assume office and fulfill the term of office as legally established.
- 15 The **obligation of an elected government to refrain from extra-constitutional actions**, to allow the holding of periodic elections and to respect their results, and to relinquish power when its legal mandate ends.
- 16 That **government institutions be transparent, participatory and fully accountable to the citizenry** of the country and take steps to combat corruption, which corrodes democracy.
- 17 That the **legislature be duly elected and transparent and accountable to the people**.
- 18 That **civilian, democratic control over the military** be established and preserved.
- 19 That all **human rights – civil, cultural, economic, political and social – be promoted and protected** as set forth in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other relevant human rights instruments.

5. The Community of Democracies in context

Dozens of democratic transitions have occurred since the founding of the Community of Democracies in 2000, offering models of reform that can be shared among emerging democracies. The majority of democracies have proven resilient to reversals, and in many countries where democratic rule is being tested, independent media, courts, opposition parties, and civil society are stepping up to counterbalance efforts to undermine democratic institutions.

Though the scope of the challenges to democracy has grown, many of the threats that confronted the Community's founders remain serious concerns today. Turbulent transitions unfolding in fractured societies, and deepening inequality and lack of public trust in representative government even in some of the most established democracies, are putting renewed pressure on national democratic institutions and giving added urgency to the Community's mission.

Yet at the same time, the current global context presents important new opportunities for Governing Council Members to recommit to the Warsaw Declaration and the values of democracy; strengthen their partnership within the Community of Democracies, and reinvigorate their joint actions and activities in support of consolidation of democracies globally.

An overview of how these trends are affecting specific dimensions of democracy, and the challenges and opportunities that warrant particular attention and support from the Community, should shape its priorities and resource allocations over the next five years.

It is possible to point to several specific sets of challenges to – and opportunities to advance – democracy that can help focus the Community's response and activities:

First, data on global democratic trends indicate that backsliding has occurred along several dimensions of democracy, including: a) free and fair elections, b) core civil and political rights, particularly freedom of association, freedom of opinion, and freedom of the press; and c) democratic checks and balances. These reversals affect country performance on a cross-section of principles described in the Warsaw Declaration, including Principles 4, 7, 9, 13, 15, and 17. These reversals are found in both new and more established democracies, as political leaders in some countries increasingly resort to using national legal frameworks to reduce freedoms and political competition to consolidate their hold on power. While the policy response should be driven by the particular circumstances in the respective countries, best practices suggest that rapidly mobilizing and raising awareness at the earliest signs of restricting civic space, and increased dialogue among democratic leaders about ways to safeguard constitutional democracy can help stem the tide of these reversals.

A second important set of challenges to democracy affects a narrower band of countries—those emerging from violent conflict. Reversals in early democratic gains and conflict relapse in these countries are relevant to the Community's mission because they have resulted in particularly severe violations of human rights (described in Principles 11 and 18 of the Warsaw Declaration). In the aftermath of conflict, transitioning countries have remained especially vulnerable to sudden reversals or even state collapse, particularly in the initial phases of their transitions. In countries where transitions out of conflict have stalled or unraveled, societies have devolved into recurrent cycles of impunity and violent conflict that are proving very difficult for the international community to break.

While post-conflict countries have a wide range of needs, from peacebuilding to humanitarian and economic development, participatory democracy-building efforts and the establishment of inclusive peace processes are increasingly recognized as the fundamental building blocks to achieving lasting peace and development. Lessons from successful transitions out of conflict over the past two decades suggest that increased dialogue about effective inclusion strategies in post-conflict transitions, particularly in constitution-drafting and electoral design processes, can help promote more effective approaches.

Third, declining public confidence in political leadership and democratic institutions, and the failure to reduce the manipulation of new technologies, money in politics, state capture, and corruption remain significant drivers of democratic backsliding.

An important goal for the Community of Democracies' Five-Year Strategic Plan is therefore to identify strategic objectives that can guide the Community to more effectively address the greatest challenges to democracy in the current global environment, and leverage the opportunities it presents.

6. Rationale and parameters for a five-year strategic plan

The Five-Year Strategic Plan was developed with the objective of strengthening the Community and articulating how the Governing Council will more effectively respond to the remarkable challenges and opportunities it faces in advancing democracy and promoting democratic values given the external trends and challenges outlined in the previous section. In addition to identifying specific goals, the Strategic Plan includes a brief assessment of the capabilities at the Community's disposal, through which it will pursue those objectives.

The following factors also justify the development of a Five-Year Strategic Plan at this juncture:

- **Limited Availability of Financial Resources:** Given the limited financial resources to support the activities of the Community, the Strategic Plan is designed to help the Governing Council ensure that its activities are strategic and efficient. It therefore focuses both on substantive policy priorities and priority reforms. Governing Council Members are committed to ensuring that the institution's capabilities and processes are used more efficiently to advance the Community's mission. The Strategic Plan will also increase efficiency by ensuring greater continuity in the Governing Council's work across the Executive Committee's rotating system of leadership, allowing Members to devote more sustained attention long-term democratic trends and national democratic reforms.
- **Growing Demand for Transparency and Accountability:** Governing Council Members recognize that the planning and conduct of the Community's work must be transparent and accountably executed. Release of the Strategic Plan is one mechanism for increasing the transparency of the Governing Council's decision-making processes.
- **Strategic Partnerships with International Actors Focused on Democratic Governance:** Governing Council Members are committed to consulting and partnering with civil society to avoid duplication across organizations, ensure a clear division of labor, and leverage greater burden-sharing between organizations with different comparative advantages.

This Strategic Plan is based on a review of the institution's cumulative work, input from the Governing Council, and the International Steering Committee of the Civil Society Assembly, and interviews and consultations with key stakeholders conducted between October 2017 and April 2018.

7. CoD & the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda

The UN 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda, adopted unanimously by 193 United Nations Member States in September 2015, constitutes a historic global effort, creating an action plan for the entire world to follow, aimed at ending poverty, protecting the planet and ensuring prosperity for all.

The Community of Democracies' mission to support democratic institutions and promote the democratic values enshrined in the Warsaw Declaration is firmly anchored in the 2030 Agenda. This connection is recognized in the Agenda when it reaffirms that there can be no sustainable development without peace, nor peace without sustainable development; acknowledging the importance of democracy as a precondition for economic and social development.

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) recognize that human rights, the rule of law, good governance, and peace and security are crucial for sustainable development, all of which are at the core of the Community's work.

The Community of Democracies in line with its mission developed a set of Global Voluntary Supplemental Indicators for Goal 16. These supplemental indicators aim to facilitate the better measurement of critical aspects of peaceful, just, and inclusive societies, supporting the comprehensive achievement of Goal 16, and, in doing so, enable the achievement of the Sustainable Development Agenda as a whole.

While Goal 16 creates a visible frame to contribute to the strengthening of democracy worldwide, and its elements of peace, just and inclusive societies are central to the mandate of the Community, other Sustainable Development Goals of particular importance to the work of the CoD also include: Goal 5 which sets out to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls; and Goal 17 on strengthening the means of implementation and revitalizing the global partnership for sustainable development, particularly through the sub-target on strengthening multi-stakeholder partnerships.

With broad geographical participation, from new and old democracies, both from global south and developed countries, and the involvement of different stakeholders, in particular civil society, the CoD has a structure that facilitates a multi-stakeholder and cross-sectoral approach necessary to help move forward the 2030 Agenda and preserve its integrity.

While democracy is core to the 2030 Agenda, the SDGs that have been identified as most relevant to the work of the Community are: SDG 16 (promoting peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, providing access to justice for all, and building effective, accountable institutions at all levels); SDG 5 (to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls); and SDG 17 (strengthening the means of implementation and revitalizing the global partnership for sustainable development).

Most relevant SDGs to the CoD's mandate

SDG 5.5

Ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life.

SDG 16.3

Promote the rule of law at the national and international levels and ensure equal access to justice for all.

SDG 16.5

Substantially reduce corruption and bribery in all their forms.

SDG 16.6

Develop effective, accountable and transparent institutions at all levels.

SDG 16.7

Ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels.

SDG 16.8

Broaden and strengthen the participation of developing countries in the institutions of global governance.

SDG 16.10

Ensure public access to information and protect fundamental freedoms, in accordance with national legislation and international agreements.

SDG 17.16

Enhance the global partnership for sustainable development, complemented by multi-stakeholder partnerships that mobilize and share knowledge, expertise, technology and financial resources, to support the achievement of the sustainable development goals in all countries, in particular developing countries.

SDG 17.17

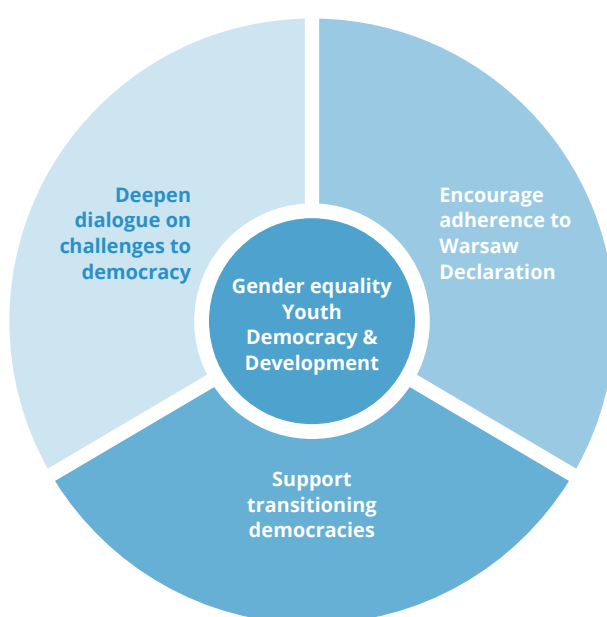
Encourage and promote effective public, public-private and civil society partnerships, building on the experience and resourcing strategies of partnerships.

8. Strategic objectives

Given the challenges and opportunities facing democracy in the current global environment, the diplomatic tools and capabilities at the Community's disposal, the resource constraints and demands on the institution, as well as the potential for strategic partnerships to advance its mission, Members of the Governing Council, with support from the Permanent Secretariat, will work with civil society over the next five years to:

- Cooperate to encourage adherence to the Warsaw Declaration;
- Coordinate their support for democratic consolidation in transitioning countries;
- Deepen and elevate dialogue on the challenges to and opportunities for democratization.

To achieve this five-year goal for the Community, Governing Council Member States will take concrete, targeted actions to strengthen the Community and reinvigorate and focus its activities, beginning with a new act by its Members to recommit to the values and principles of the Warsaw Declaration. Member States will prioritize the activities listed under each of the five strategic and operational objectives below and will ensure that the cross-cutting themes of gender equality, youth, and democracy and development are mainstreamed across these activities.*



* Several of the priority activities listed under each objective support more than one objective and are therefore listed under each of the objectives they support.

Strategic Objective 1

Governing Council Members encourage adherence to Warsaw Declaration principles in countries within and outside the Community.

Enhance the Community's coordinated diplomatic response to democratic backsliding – especially the restriction of civic space – through concerted diplomatic actions by Member States, including demarches and regular dialogue on key challenges facing democracies, with the support and coordination of civil society.

Areas of Focus:

- To utilize Governing Council meetings as a platform for discussion and dialogue among Member States, UN agencies and Special Rapporteurs, regional organizations, and civil society on substantive policy issues, such as any actions or trends that represent a threat to the principles and values outlined in the Warsaw Declaration, as well as proposed diplomatic actions for the Governing Council's consideration.
- To ensure sustained or rapid-reaction, the Working Group on Enabling and Protecting Civil Society will be empowered to take concerted actions in response to particularly concerning situations as they arise, including through the building of coalitions in multilateral fora.
- To support concerted action, the Permanent Secretariat will coordinate the inclusion of, and consult with, experts – distinguished leaders, civil society leaders, former diplomats, renowned academics – who are prepared to support the Governing Council and Working Groups on issues of particular concern.

- At the request of Governing Council Members or the Permanent Secretariat, partner organizations with expertise on the challenge at hand and complementary mandates (for example, focusing on technical assistance) will be systematically invited to Governing Council or Working Group meetings in order to increase coordination and burden-sharing.
- The Governing Council and Working Groups will coordinate diplomatic responses – including demarches, dialogue, and actions in other fora like the UN General Assembly and Human Rights Council – to discourage democratic backsliding and encourage the protection of the values and principles of the Warsaw Declaration.
- Governing Council meetings and Working Groups will periodically feature briefings by government or democracy stakeholders who have spearheaded particularly impactful democratic reforms related to the specific cases of the challenges of restricting civic space and democratic backsliding discussed above.
- Eminent global leaders, including current or former heads of state, will be invited to High Level Ministerial Conferences to deliver public remarks on the theme of key opportunities and challenges facing democracies, so as to elevate the public profile and visibility of these challenges and the Community's work.

Strategic Objective 2

Governing Council Members provide sustained support for key democratic consolidation in transitioning countries outside the Community.

Governing Council Members, in cooperation with civil society, coordinate their support for democratic processes and institutions in key countries that are committed to democratic reforms.

Areas of Focus:

- Building on work conducted as part of the Democracy and Security Dialogue, the Governing Council will consider requests to establish Working Groups to ensure sustained, coordinated support for post-conflict countries, based on best-practices such as the appropriate sequencing and timing of assistance for elections.
- Government officials and civil society representatives from transitioning countries will be invited to Governing Council meetings to give first-hand accounts of progress and challenges, and to articulate the specific type of support and engagement required.
- Governing Council meetings will periodically feature briefings by government or civil society leaders, or former leaders who have spearheaded particularly impactful democratic reforms in transitioning countries.
- To increase coordination and efficiency, UN agencies, regional organizations, civil society, or other subject-matter experts will be invited to be present, and brief the Governing Council during these meetings.

Strategic Objective 3

Governing Council Members increase and deepen their dialogue on the challenges that they face as democracies.

Increase opportunities for mutual dialogue, exchange of experiences, and lessons learned concerning increasing citizen trust and expanding inclusive participation in democratic processes, particularly with respect to expanding political participation for women, youth, and minority groups.

Areas of Focus:

- Biannual Governing Council meetings will systematically dedicate time on the agenda for dialogue about specific challenges to broadening political participation, which affect new and established democracies alike in the Community.
- To ensure that the Governing Council's agenda prioritizes discussion of challenges that confront a broad cross-section of Member States, including established democracies.
- To structure these dialogues, UN, international and regional organizations, civil society, and human rights defenders with expertise in the particular challenge at hand will be invited to brief the Governing Council on the specific issues under discussion and potential solutions.
- Governing Council meetings will periodically feature briefings by governments, civil society, and human rights defenders who have spearheaded particularly impactful reforms.
- To ensure inclusivity*, human rights leaders, whose participation in democratic processes globally should be expanded, will also be invited to participate in Governing Council meetings.

* As outlined in the Washington Declaration (2017)

9. Operational objectives

To complement the implementation of the strategic objectives of the Community of Democracies, the Permanent Secretariat will prioritize two parallel objectives focusing on operational efficiency and effectiveness of the Secretariat. These objectives will cover improving internal administrative processes and developing strategic partnerships.

Operational Objective 1

Improve Community of Democracies coordination and its internal processes.

Increase the efficiency and integrity of Community processes and structures, including Governing Council meetings, Ministerial Conferences, and Working Group management and organization, to ensure these mechanisms are as efficient, effective, nimble, and action-oriented as possible, and to enhance the integrity of these mechanisms and the operations of the Permanent Secretariat.

Areas of Focus:

- To utilize Governing Council meetings as a venue for dialogue and discussion around the strategic objectives and priority areas of the Community of Democracies.
- To increase the effectiveness and transparency of Governing Council meetings by ensuring early distribution of supporting documentation, coordination with Working Groups, affiliated bodies, and partner organizations on specific agenda items, and the public release of summaries or readouts of meetings.
- To increase the transparency and accountability of the operations of the Permanent Secretariat, including the public release of financial statements and annual financial audit reports.
- To encourage the Civil Society Assembly to institute similar reforms to maximize transparency and inclusive participation.

- To conduct a review of all Working Groups to ensure the ability to utilize Governing Council meetings and Ministerial Conferences for dialogue and discussion on Community thematic priorities and strategic objectives, presenting country and situational reports, and proposing diplomatic actions.
- To prepare strategic communications plans to facilitate coordination and consistency in public messaging and increase the visibility and impact of Community activities among Governing Council Member States, the Civil Society Assembly, and other partner organizations.

Operational Objective 2

Establish strategic partnerships with like-minded organizations outside the Community to advance the strategic objectives.

Develop an outreach plan to increase partnerships with like-minded international organizations and networks in order to facilitate the achievement of the three strategic goals listed above in order to maximize cross-fertilization of ideas and establish goal-oriented alliances that increase burden-sharing while decreasing duplication of work.

Areas of Focus:

- To expand partnerships between the Community and like-minded global, regional, and civil society organizations, including UN bodies, with strong analytical capacity to help structure the agenda and discussion at Governing Council meetings and focus them on action-oriented outcomes, as well as to increase the legitimacy of the Governing Council's actions.
- To expand partnerships with like-minded organizations focused on technical assistance in areas of concern to the Community.

10. Core strengths and capabilities

The Community of Democracies is a **global intergovernmental coalition of democratic states committed to supporting each other and working together, and with civil society, to advance democracy and uphold and defend core democratic principles globally through concrete diplomatic actions.** Governing Council Members are committed to the premise that democracy has intrinsic value as a form of government and universal set of principles, and also has instrumental value as a fundamental building block for peace, sustainable development, and human progress; a premise that was enshrined in UN Sustainable Development Goal 16 on peaceful, just and inclusive societies. The Community of Democracies provides Member States with a forum in which to work together to learn from each other and identify global priorities for diplomatic action to advance and defend democracy, including through collective diplomatic action at the UN and in other multilateral fora. In addition to facilitating joint diplomatic action, the Community provides an international forum that **facilitates mutual dialogue, learning, and the exchange of experiences among Members.**

The Community's distinctive characteristics and role in advancing democracy worldwide include:

A Unique Global Voice on Democratic Values

The Governing Council provides a unique venue for countries that share democratic values to help each other and advocate globally on issues of mutual concern. The Governing Council's Member States represent every world region and, as a result, it can facilitate joint advocacy by its members to respond to democratic backsliding and to proactively promote democratic values. The Community is increasingly recognized in various multilateral fora for bringing a focused diplomatic voice on democracy and human rights priorities.

Forum for Pooling Diplomatic and Other Resources

At a time of increasing budget austerity the Community offers the prospect of more strategic, focused, and better-coordinated engagement with and support for democratic reforms, and therefore holds the promise of greater impact and returns on investments and diplomatic resources.

Diversity

The diversity of the Governing Council's Membership, which includes countries from most world regions as well as states at different stages in their democratic journey, means that it has the potential to draw on a wide pool of experiences and information sources to spur action and facilitate peer learning.

Role of Civil Society

The participation of civil society is a resource that helps to inform Governing Council discussions and adds legitimacy to its decisions. Civil society, represented by the ISC at the Governing Council, is a unique asset to the Community and one of its key strengths.

11. Risks, challenges, and mitigating actions

The main risks and challenges to achieving these five-year strategic and operational objectives include:

Limited financial resources available to support the Governing Council's activities.

Mitigating actions:

- The Permanent Secretariat to prepare structures and processes to the Governing Council for approval, that would allow for the diversification of funding, to include non-government funding.

Significant backsliding among Governing Council Member States, including in established democracies, which would significantly undermine the legitimacy and credibility of the Community.

Mitigating actions:

- Facilitate peer dialogue among Governing Council Member States.
- Refine and continue to develop the procedures stated in the by-laws pertaining to renewal of membership in the Governing Council and adherence to the principles of the Warsaw Declaration

12. Ministerial Conferences

Ministerial Conferences are bi-annual high-level meetings of states, civil society, and other democracy stakeholders, with the aim of exchanging views and best practices on supporting the common democratic values and standards outlined in the Warsaw Declaration. Ministerial Conferences conclude with the adoption of the Ministerial Declaration by the participating states.

CoD' Ministerial Declarations:



13. CoD Timeline



27 June 2000

Adoption of the **Warsaw Declaration** and founding of the Community of Democracies

2000

Formation of the Convening Group, with **Chile, India, Mali, Mexico, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, South Africa**, and the **United States of America**

2001-2003

Republic of Korea Presidency

2003-2005

Chile Presidency

2006

Entry of **Cabo Verde, El Salvador, Italy, Mongolia, Morocco**, and **the Philippines** to the Convening Group

2005-2007

Mali Presidency

2007-2009

Portugal Presidency

2008

Establishment of the **Permanent Secretariat of the Community of Democracies** by decision of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Poland

2009

Entry of **Lithuania** to the Convening Group

2009-2011

Lithuania Presidency

2010

10th Anniversary of the **Warsaw Declaration**

2011

Transformation of the Convening Group into **the Governing Council**



2011

Adoption of the **CoD Mission Statement**

2011

Entry of **Canada, Costa Rica, Finland, Hungary, Japan, Nigeria, Romania, Sweden, and Uruguay** to the Governing Council

2011-2013

Mongolia Presidency

2012

Host State Agreement between the Presidency of the Community of Democracies and the Republic of Poland concerning the Permanent Secretariat of the Community of Democracies

2012

Appointment of **Ambassador Maria Leissner** as the first Secretary General of the Community of Democracies

2013-2015

El Salvador Presidency

2014

Entry of **Estonia** and **Guatemala** to the Governing Council

2015-2017

United States of America Presidency

2015

Entry of the **Norway** to the Governing Council

2016

Entry of **Argentina** and the **United Kingdom** to the Governing Council

2017

Appointment of **Thomas E. Garrett** as the second Secretary General of the Community of Democracies

2017

Appointment of the Executive Committee members for 2017-2019 with **Chile, Norway, Romania, Republic of Korea, Sweden, United Kingdom** and **Poland**

14. Definitions

Community of Democracies (CoD)

is a global intergovernmental coalition comprised of the Governing Council Member States that support adherence to common democratic values and standards outlined in the Warsaw Declaration and represented in international fora by the elected Secretary General.

Executive Committee (EC)

is composed of elected Governing Council Member States and provides strategic recommendations and opinions to the Governing Council to inform decisions on the activities of the Community of Democracies.

Governing Council (GC)

is comprised of Member States that commit to abide by the common democratic values and standards outlined in the Warsaw Declaration and make tangible contributions to strengthening the CoD. The Governing Council cooperates with civil society and other affiliated bodies of the CoD.

International Steering Committee (ISC)

is an independent, representative body elected by the Civil Society Assembly to provide advice to the Community of Democracies. It develops its own strategies and activities to promote civic space, proposes areas for consideration, and expresses the view of civil society during Governing Council deliberations, including those deliberations associated with invitations to join the Governing Council or participate in Ministerial Conferences.

Ministerial Conferences

are biannual high-level meetings of states, civil society, and other democracy stakeholders, with the aim of exchanging views and best practices on supporting the common democratic values and standards outlined in the Warsaw Declaration. The Governing Council invites states as participants or observers, in accordance with the invitation procedure. Ministerial Conferences conclude with the adoption of the Ministerial Declaration by the participating states.

Permanent Secretariat of the Community of Democracies (PSCD)

undertakes functions of administrative, operational, and technical nature in support of the CoD structures and activities under the direction and guidance of the SG. The PSCD, seated in Poland, has legal personality and capacity to perform its functions within the framework of the laws of Poland, in accordance with the agreement between the Republic of Poland and the Presidency of the Community of Democracies concluded on 09 July 2012.

Secretary General (SG)

acts as a spokesperson for the CoD, representing it at international fora and meetings of regional and multilateral international organizations whose agendas include democracy issues. The SG serves as a liaison to the GC members and receives direction from the GC. The SG is responsible for the day-to-day management of the Community of Democracies' Permanent Secretariat by structuring the Secretariat and properly allocating budget resources in order to successfully deliver on the GC's priorities.

Working Groups

are action-oriented structures that drive the implementation of the strategic objectives of the Community of Democracies. Working Groups are composed of states, civil society representatives, and other democracy stakeholders. Working Group mandates are approved by the Governing Council, and they are supported and coordinated by the Permanent Secretariat of the Community of Democracies.

Working Groups provide leadership for the implementation of the strategic objectives by shaping Governing Council meeting agendas, conducting research and analysis on specific subjects, and hosting high-level discussions at Ministerial Conferences. Each Working Groups is responsible for the development of work plans, guiding the implementation of activities, monitoring, and reporting results back to the Governing Council on a biannual basis.

15. Acknowledgements

The Permanent Secretariat expresses its gratitude to the Member States who have contributed to the development of the Community of Democracies first-ever strategic plan, which will guide its mission through the years 2018 to 2023. The Secretariat is grateful for the core financial contributions from Chile, Estonia, Norway, Poland, the Republic of Korea, Sweden, and the United States that made this endeavor possible, and for the support of the Executive Committee Members throughout the process. The Civil Society Assembly and Academic Advisory Board of the Community of Democracies provided input and feedback, as did many civil society stakeholders who took part in consultations and dedicated time to review drafts of the strategic plan.

Further appreciation goes to Secretary Madeleine Albright for her valuable insights on the founding of the Community of Democracies in 2000 and for her thoughts on its mission for the future. Lastly, thank you to consultant Corinne Graff and the Permanent Secretariat's Jason Worlledge for their months-long dedication to the strategic planning process.



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