



COMMUNITY
OF DEMOCRACIES

Statement by the Secretary General Thomas E. Garrett on Human Rights Day

Respect and protection of all human rights lies at the heart of the Community of Democracies' work and shared values enshrined in the Warsaw Declaration. The Community's founding document not only calls for all human rights to be protected and promoted but also emphasizes the strong interdependence between peace, development, democracy and human rights. Democracy and human rights are the most promising path to peace and security in this increasingly turbulent world – as shown in our recent report on Democracy & Security.

Commemorating Human Rights Day, it is important to emphasize the substantial role played by human rights defenders around the world supporting efforts to strengthen conflict prevention, peace and sustainable development. At the Community of Democracies, we welcome the recent adoption of the UN Anniversary Resolution on Protection of Human Rights Defenders and I would like to commend Norway for facilitating this process.

The Community of Democracies intends to share good practices of how members states of the Community's Governing Council support and engage with civil society in relation to human rights defenders. The publication of good practices will be presented next year at the Human Rights Council in Geneva. It will highlight how the states have sought to protect human rights defenders and safeguard their ability to exercise their fundamental rights to associate, assemble peacefully and freely express views and opinions.

Democracy remains the only system of governance where people can fully realize their human rights. But respect and protection of human rights are not rights reserved only for people living in democratic countries. Human rights and fundamental freedoms apply to all individuals in the world and must be respected, protected and fulfilled without any discrimination. Human rights are not for the privileged- human rights are for all.