

**Statement by the Secretary General Thomas E. Garrett on
the World Youth Day for Democracy #WYDD2018**

I am pleased to join the celebration of today's World Youth Day for Democracy to highlight the contribution of young people in the advancement of democracy.

The Community of Democracies understands that youth inclusion is key for the promotion and strengthening of democracies worldwide. Most recently, the Community's panel discussion held on the margins of the 73rd UN General Assembly session fostered a dialogue on the role of youth in democracy resilience and emphasized that young people's meaningful participation in the democratic decision-making processes is a vital element for ensuring resilient and sustainable democracies.

Young people are powerful agents driving changes in both established as well as transitioning democracies. The theme of this year's World Youth Day for Democracy: The New Face of Democracy, sends a very clear message that the youth should be fully engaged in democracy renewal process, creating new approaches, narratives and platforms for sharing experiences and promoting youth inclusion. It is important to underline that to help young people achieve their full potential as responsible informed citizens and future leaders, governments must prioritize civic education that creates strong foundations for young people's engagement.

There is no one-size-fits-all approach to create an enabling environment for young people's political empowerment; it is important to address the local context and country-specific challenges and opportunities and encourage sharing experiences and best practice. Democratic governments should make it a priority to carry out a continued dialogue at all levels with youth leaders and youth organizations to address young people's concerns and create avenues to advance youth's civic and political participation. Celebrating the World Youth Day for Democracy, let's make sure that the voices of youth are not only heard but that youth is fully engaged in creating a new face of our democracies.