

Statement by the Secretary General Thomas E. Garrett on World Press Freedom Day

The Community of Democracies recognizes press freedom and freedom of opinion and expression as core principles of democracy, as set out in the Warsaw Declaration – the Community’s founding document adopted by 106 countries. Protecting these core rights is the responsibility of all governments committed to democracy and human rights.

The Community of Democracies continues to work with governments and civil society to promote freedom of the media and to counter negative trends that suppress it. The 30th session of the Community’s Governing Council featured dialogue among Member States on media freedom, with participation of civil society and media organizations who emphasized the urgent need for concerted diplomatic actions to address the safety of journalists and protect the freedom of the press.

A Statement on *Media Freedom and Violence Against Journalists*, adopted by the Member States as an outcome of the Governing Council session, reaffirmed their commitment to the promotion and protection of media freedom online and offline, protection of journalists and other media workers; and called on all governments to safeguard pluralistic and independent media.

On today’s World Press Freedom Day, I urge leaders from across the world to redouble efforts to ensure that journalism is not a life-threatening occupation and public access to information disseminated by free and independent media is always protected as a fundamental human right and a crucial element of a healthy democratic landscape.