

Statement
on democracy and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development
of the 30th Meeting of the Governing Council
of the Community of Democracies
Warsaw, Poland, June 14, 2019

The Warsaw Declaration, the founding document of the Community of Democracies in 2000, recognizes the universality of democratic values and commits its 106 signatories to respect and uphold core democratic principles, and to promote and protect human rights and fundamental freedoms. The freedoms and rights reflected in the Warsaw Declaration are interdependent and mutually reinforcing. Respect for and the promotion and protection of these principles and rights in addition to preserving and promoting democracy and the rule of law at national, regional and international levels, create a special environment conducive to democracy's ability to foster sustainable social and economic development for people around the world.

We, the Member States of the Community of Democracies Governing Council, acknowledge a strong interdependence between democratic order and economic and social development. We recognize that a transparent, responsible, accountable and participatory government, respectful of human rights and fundamental freedoms, including for members of minorities and marginalized groups, strong democratic institutions, free media and the rule of law are the foundations on which good governance rests. Such foundations need to be built over time and are critical for the full realization of human rights and democratic principles.

Each country holds the responsibility for its future. However, by acting collectively we can strengthen democracy.

Community of Democracies Member States recognize the 2030 Agenda as a global framework for sustainable development that can help countries work toward global peace and prosperity adopted by world leaders in September 2015 at an historic UN Summit. The Agenda's Sustainable Development Goal 16 calls upon the international community to "Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development [that] provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels" which is consistent with the democratic principles and practices of the Warsaw Declaration, which itself, inter alia, recognizes that the rights 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. The Warsaw Declaration further emphasizes the interdependence between peace, development, human rights, and democracy. The Declaration acknowledges the mutually-reinforcing benefits the democratic process offers to achieving sustained economic growth.

We, the Member States of the Community of Democracies Governing Council, also affirm that the strength and vibrancy of democratic nations depend on a robust civic space, active civil society, media and meaningful consultation between governments and civil society as well as other relevant key actors to promote peace, prosperity, national development, and the well-being of all people.

We, the Member States of the Community of Democracies Governing Council, underscore the importance of engaging with the private sector and civil society, including the Community of Democracies' Civil Society Pillar, to understand and respond to challenges in furthering Sustainable Development Goals 16 and 17.

Civil Society Organizations are independent development actors, and We, the Member States of the Community of Democracies Governing Council, call on states to provide an enabling environment, consistent with international law, that maximizes the contributions of civil society to development.

We, the Member States of the Community of Democracies Governing Council, in the spirit of openness and inclusiveness, encourage countries, within and outside the Community of Democracies, to uphold the principles of the Warsaw Declaration, promote democracy in all regions of the world, support inclusive democratic processes in societies on the democratic path and collaborate on democracy-related issues in existing international and regional institutions, aimed at promotion of democratic governance.

We, the Member States of the Community of Democracies Governing Council, call on governments to partner with the private sector, civil society and human rights defenders, including women human rights defenders, all of which play a crucial role in democracy. We encourage states to meet their international human rights obligations and commitments when pursuing development policies, to promote gender equality and the participation of youth in their pursuit of “peaceful, just and inclusive societies” and to renew focus on the achievement of equal opportunity of men and women in the political and economic spheres, to invest in improved participation of women and youth in development and to ensure the inclusion of all persons regardless of race, color, gender, language, religion or belief, national or ethnic origin, sexual orientation, gender identity, political or other opinion, social and property status or disability.

Democracy is an essential component to leaving no one behind.