

Statement by the Secretary General Thomas E. Garrett on International Day of Democracy

The 19 principles of the Warsaw Declaration, the governing document of the Community of Democracies since its adoption by 106 countries in 2000, tells us that democracy is much more than free and fair elections. Democratic development is not simply a checklist of norms and principles but an ongoing process that requires cooperation, understanding and partnerships.

The theme of this year's International Day for Democracy – participation – serves as a reminder that democracy is about people. Ensuring meaningful participation of citizens, including women, youth, and minority groups, is required to advance and strengthen democracy, whether building democratic structures in a transitioning country or addressing backsliding in established democracies.

Activities undertaken by the Member States and Civil Society Pillar of the Community of Democracies in 2019, including the High-Level Delegation to Mali, multi-stakeholder panel discussions on the implementation of SDG16+, youth civic engagement, women's participation in sustaining peace, or the role of the private sector in advancing the Sustainable Development Goals, emphasized that multilateralism and inclusion should be the fundamental pillars to develop effective responses to the challenges and opportunities faced by modern democracies.

'A world where every nation respects and upholds the core democratic values, principles, and standards of the Warsaw Declaration' – guided by its vision and core values, the Community of Democracies will continue to work together with its Member States and Civil Society to encourage adherence to the Warsaw Declaration, support transitioning democracies, and deepen the dialogue on the challenges and opportunities for democracy.

On the occasion of the 2019 International Day of Democracy, I call on political leaders to expand inclusive participation in decision-making processes at all levels of governance to ensure that democracies are transparent, participatory and fully accountable to citizens.