

### **Statement by the Secretary General Thomas E. Garrett on International Women's Day**

Since 2000, the Community of Democracies (CoD) has supported the advancement of women's meaningful participation in public life, including political engagement, in countering and preventing violent extremism, and in building and sustaining peace.

June 2020 marks twenty years since the adoption by 106 states of the Warsaw Declaration, which emphasizes that "informed participation of all elements of society, men and women, in a country's economic and political life is fundamental to a vibrant and durable democracy". Among its 19 democratic principles, the Warsaw Declaration affirms the right of every person to equal protection of the law, equal access to public service and to take part in the conduct of public affairs, and the right to equal access to education- all of which are particularly important with regards to women's rights and their inclusion in public life.

2020 also marks the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of UN Security Council Resolution 1325, making this year's International Women's Day a unique opportunity for reflection on the achievements as well as barriers on the path towards gender equality.

Ahead of this year's International Women's Day, on March 5, 2020, the Permanent Secretariat of the Community of Democracies together with the CoD Presidency of Romania was honored to host an event on "Women's Empowerment and Participation in Public Life" with a keynote address by Her Majesty Margareta, Custodian of the Romanian Crown. Addressing the audience of diplomats, civil society and media representatives, HM Margareta emphasized the importance of both political and economic empowerment of women and noted that the trend of technological change presents an opportunity to increase women's engagement in the public sphere.

The CoD will soon launch a project on strengthening civic and political participation of women in public life in The Gambia. Through capacity-building workshops for women leaders in Banjul, the project will aim to provide participants with leadership skills and civic knowledge, necessary to enhance their participation in the decision-making processes.

In September 2020, to mark the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the 1325 UNSC Resolution, the CoD is planning to launch "Women for Peace: Stories", which will present stories in the area of peacebuilding and peacekeeping, to highlight women's contribution to preventing and resolving conflicts and to inspire future generations.

On the occasion of #IWD2020, I am pleased to invite you to follow the CoD new Twitter profile **@CoD\_Women**, with highlights of gender equality-related activities of the CoD and its Working Group on Women and Democracy. Celebrating 20 years of working together with governments and civil society to protect and strengthen democracy worldwide, the Community of Democracies will continue to engage in multilateral efforts to contribute to building more inclusive and gender-equal world.