



Community
of Democracies

2020 Annual Report of the Community of Democracies

February 2021



Community
of Democracies

2020 Annual Report of the Community of Democracies

February 2021

Table of contents

- Introduction..... 7
 - Message from the Secretary General Thomas E. Garrett 7
- Intergovernmental Cooperation.....10
 - Presidency of the Community of Democracies 10
 - Executive Committee of the Community of Democracies 14
 - Governing Council of the Community of Democracies..... 15
 - Working Groups of the Community of Democracies..... 18
- Community of Democracies and Civil Society22
- Events and Activities.....24
 - 20 years of the Community of Democracies.....24
 - Addressing the impact of COVID-19 on Democracy36
 - Gender Equality: Promoting Women’s Participation in Public Life.....45
 - Democracy and Development.....50
 - Other thematic events and activities.....54

INTRODUCTION

Introduction

Dear Friends of the Community of Democracies,

It is my pleasure to present the 2020 Annual Report of the Community of Democracies.

A significant milestone marked 2020: the 20th anniversary of the Warsaw Declaration, adopted in 2000 by 106 countries. The Community of Democracies emerged from the Warsaw Declaration as a unique coalition built not on geographical, linguistic, or economic criteria but by a commitment to shared values enshrined in the Warsaw Declaration.

One central idea behind the founding of the Community of Democracies was that democracy will always face changing circumstances and that democracies should support one another in addressing challenges. This year was like few in our lifetime in the challenge presented by COVID-19. The pandemic affected all spheres of daily life, testing and stretching democracy, requiring people in every corner of the world to live in a new reality.

Assessing the pandemic's impact, the Member States of the Governing Council of the Community of Democracies spoke to the importance of collaboration between democracies and agreed that "...democracies should respond to the global pandemic through renewed adherence to democratic principles of the Warsaw Declaration" (Bucharest Anniversary Statement). As the world locked down in 2020, the message of the Community of Democracies remained consistent: effective responses to the pandemic should uphold and protect human rights and democracy's universal values.

Another challenge for the Community of Democracies emerged with the abrupt removal of the Republic of Mali's elected government in August 2020. This extra-constitutional action of the military violated the democratic principles stated in the Warsaw Declaration. The Community of Democracies will seek to support Mali in 2021, supporting indigenous civil society in pressing the interim government on its pledge of democratic transition to restore constitutional order.

Diversity remains one of the critical strengths of the Community of Democracies. Inclusion is evident in CoD events and activities which took place despite the pandemic and brought together participants from all parts of the world to discuss democracy-related issues and highlight the value of a multilateral approach. Over the course of 2020, CoD

events gathered 141 experts, including 67 women and 74 men, representing government, civil society, youth organizations, and the private sector, to discuss a range of subjects, from the impact of COVID-19 on democracies through advancing women's participation in public life, the UN Sustainable Development Agenda, supporting youth empowerment, and embracing new technologies to support democratic governance.

This year of 2021 began with enhanced global cooperation between democracies in addressing issues such as the pandemic, climate change, and a return to the path of democracy in Mali, achieved with the greater inclusion of all citizens in democratic decision-making processes. I look forward to working with the Governing Council and the Community of Democracies' civil society partners to defend and promote democratic values and strengthen democratic institutions worldwide.

INTERGOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION

Intergovernmental Cooperation

Presidency of the Community of Democracies

In a brief ceremony at the Extraordinary Governing Council held on the margins of the UN General Assembly in September 2019, leadership of the Community of Democracies was transferred from Poland, concluding the 2017-2019 Quartet leadership shared with Norway, Chile and the United Kingdom, to the Presidency of Romania for a term of two years.

In February 2020, the Presidency hosted the 31st Governing Council meeting in Bucharest, with welcome remarks delivered by His Excellency Foreign Minister Bogdan Aurescu. Among the subjects of focus were the democratic transition of The Gambia and the role of democracy in the development of new technology. Discussions also centered on the X (Tenth) Ministerial Conference of the Community of Democracies, planned for June 2020, to include commemoration of the 20th Anniversary of the Warsaw Declaration.

The Ministerial Conference was postponed to 2021, due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Moving quickly to adapt to the new reality, the Presidency hosted an online Anniversary Conference to commemorate the adoption of the Warsaw Declaration in 2000. The event, described in detail in the next chapters, gathered high-level officials from Member States to discuss the past, present, and the future of the Warsaw Declaration. The discussions also focused on the impact on democracies of the pandemic. In the Bucharest Statement, adopted at the Anniversary Conference, Member States emphasized that upholding the democratic principles of the Warsaw Declaration should be a part of an effective response to the pandemic.

To further highlight the relevance of the Warsaw Declaration principles 20 years on, the Romanian Presidency, through its Embassy in Warsaw and in cooperation with Permanent Secretariat host state Poland, initiated a poster exhibition of the Warsaw Declaration principles. Designed by an award-winning Polish artist, the exhibition showed a “fresh” face of the Declaration.

Romania declared youth empowerment, a cross-cutting theme mainstreamed into CoD activities, as one of the priorities for its period of leadership. The importance of youth political engagement was underlined in the Outcome Statement adopted at the 31st Governing Council meeting chaired by Romania, and also in the Bucharest Statement,

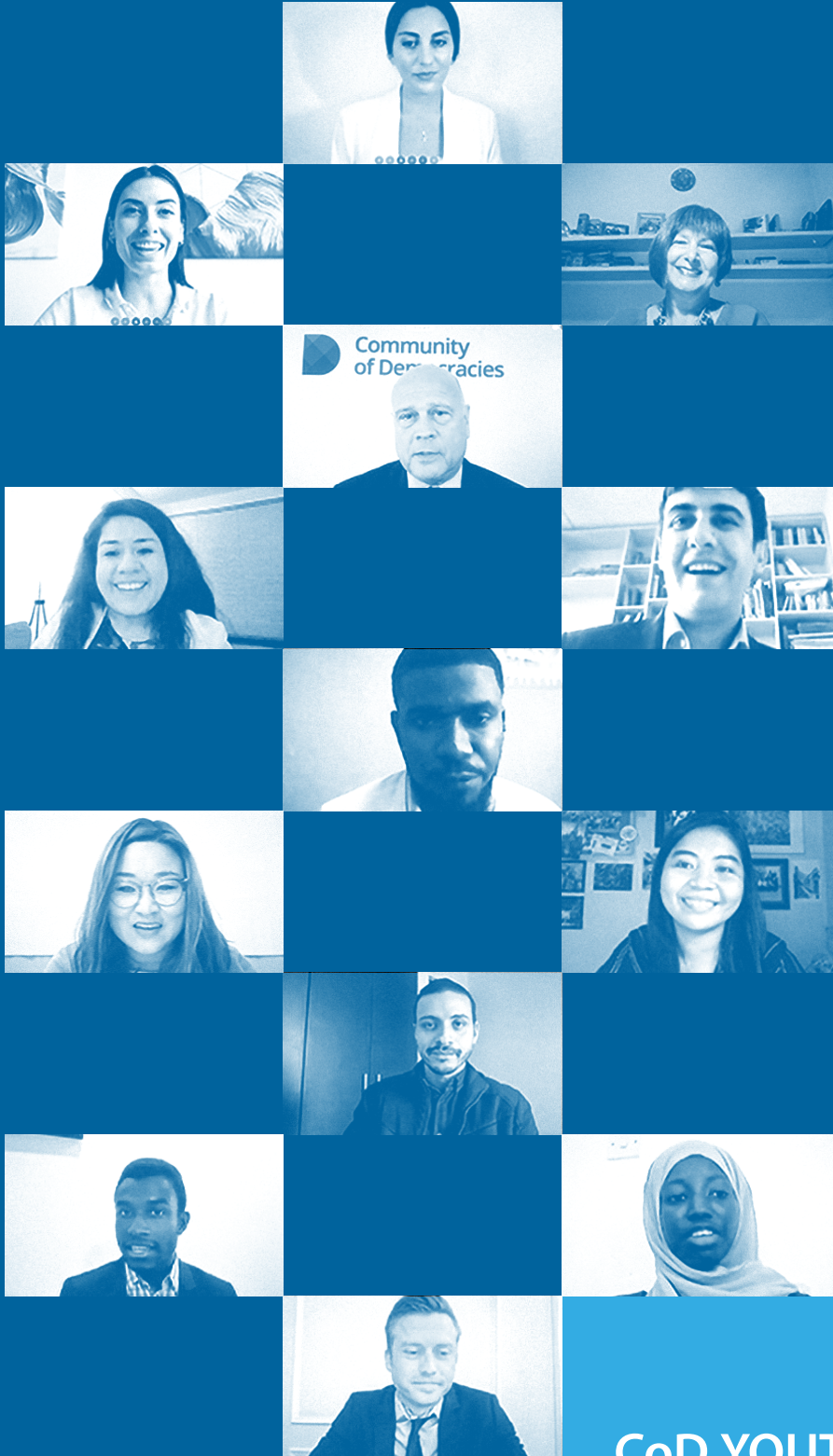
which highlighted that youth should be meaningfully involved in democratic decision-making processes.

In July 2020, the Presidency hosted a digital CoD Youth Forum. The event gathered young democracy leaders from different parts of the world and highlighted the importance of youth inclusion as a key element of strong democracies.

“I consider youth indispensable partners who must be involved in all debates and policy-making processes, in answering the challenges we face today and building a resilient world for future generations.”

H.E. Foreign Minister Bogdan Aurescu in his opening remarks at the Youth Forum





CoD YOUTH **FORUM**
— LEAD ENGAGE INSPIRE —

Executive Committee of the Community of Democracies

In 2020, the Executive Committee (EC) provided strategic recommendations to the Governing Council to inform decisions on the activities of the CoD. During the year, the Executive Committee held 12 meetings, each chaired by the Presidency of Romania.

A face-to-face EC meeting was held in Bucharest on February 12, 2020 in advance of the 31st Governing Council. Members discussed the Governing Council membership renewal process and preparations for the CoD 10th Ministerial Conference.

The remaining 11 EC meetings were held in a digital or conference call format. During the meetings, the EC discussed current and planned activities as well as internal issues including the draft CoD budget and draft Work Plan for 2021.

Governing Council of the Community of Democracies

31st Governing Council meeting, February 13, 2020, Bucharest

On February 13, 2020, Member States of the CoD Governing Council, representatives of Romanian and international civil society and invited Observer States gathered in Bucharest for the 31st Governing Council meeting, chaired by the Presidency Romania.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS

- In his welcome remarks, H.E. Foreign Minister of Romania Bogdan Aurescu reaffirmed Romania's commitment to support democratic transformation globally and preserve democratic standards.
- The event featured remarks by a guest speaker from The Gambia, H.E. Dr. Mamadou Tangara, the Honourable Minister of Foreign Affairs, International Cooperation and Gambians Abroad, who addressed the Governing Council on his country's transition from authoritarian rule to democracy. He was joined by a Gambian NGO representative who spoke of the role of civil society in reform.
- The Governing Council featured discussions on preparations for the 20th anniversary of the Warsaw Declaration and the 10th Ministerial Conference. Enhancing youth participation in public life and democratic governance through digital technology were also discussed.
- Guest speaker Dr. Tomicah Tillemann of DIGI New America delivered a presentation on digital governance platforms, outlining the role of governments, multilateral institutions and technology partners in building effective governance platforms.

GOVERNING COUNCIL STATEMENT ON YOUTH POLITICAL ENGAGEMENT

“The Warsaw Declaration affirms the right of every person to take part in the conduct of public affairs. This principle is particularly important in regard to youth participation”

– in the Outcome Statement adopted at the 31st Governing Council meeting, Member States underlined the importance of youth political engagement. They highlighted that meaningful participation of young people in political leadership and decision-making are key aspects of democratic societies. The Governing Council emphasized the importance of education as the foundation for creating inclusive, tolerant and resilient societies where the young both understand the value of democracy and are able to recognize and challenge democratic backsliding.

32nd Virtual Governing Council meeting, November 23–24, 2020

The 32nd meeting of the CoD Governing Council was held in digital format and chaired by the CoD Presidency Romania.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS

- The Governing Council discussed CoD activities and multilateral cooperation in response to current challenges and opportunities of democracy, including the COVID-19 pandemic and increased digitalization.
- Opening the meeting, H.E. Foreign Minister Bogdan Aurescu reaffirmed his country's commitment to promoting democratic principles and multilateralism and recalled the goal of the CoD Anniversary Bucharest Statement to consolidate trust in democracy.
- The meeting featured guest expert Dr. Richard Haass, President of the Council on Foreign Relations and author of the New York Times bestseller: “The World: A Brief Introduction.” He spoke to the need to renew civic education, in order to educate the young generation of the values and benefits of democracy. He also underlined that multilateralism is vital in these days of global challenges such as climate change, the COVID-19 pandemic, and nuclear proliferation.

GOVERNING COUNCIL OUTCOME STATEMENT

In the Outcome Statement adopted at the 32nd CoD Governing Council meeting, Member States committed to stepping up efforts to foster multi-stakeholder cooperation to promote the use of digital technologies to support democratic governance. Acknowledging this period of unprecedented connectivity, Member States underlined digital technology's potential to make governments more transparent, accountable, and inclusive. They welcomed the recent establishment of the CoD Working Group on Democracy and Technology and reaffirmed commitment to counter the misuse of new technologies to undermine democratic institutions and erode trust in democratic principles.

Working Groups

Establishment of CoD Working Group on Democracy and Technology

Launched in September 2020 and chaired by Governing Council Member Georgia, the Working Group on Democracy and Technology will act as an informal, voluntary structure for joint discussion and action to harness digital technology to support effective and accountable democratic governance. It will foster collaboration around developing and using digital public goods, such as governance platforms and open source tools, that support democracy and democratic institutions.

Areas of collaboration will include exchanging best practices and ideas on technological solutions supporting democracy and advancing the UN 2030 Sustainable Development Goals' implementation. The Working Group will also engage and participate in multilateral initiatives and architecture to build digital systems that respect human rights and democratic values, as established in the Warsaw Declaration and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

The Chair of the Working Group, Georgia, joined the CoD Governing Council in October 2019, bringing valuable experience and adding to its diversity. Throughout its digital journey, Georgia has followed good practices and shared its success stories with different stakeholders.

Working Group on CoD Governance and Effectiveness

The Working Group on CoD Governance and Effectiveness performed its activities under coordination by the Permanent Secretariat, with Governing Council Member States Argentina, Poland, the Republic of Korea, Romania, Sweden, the United Kingdom, the United States, and with representatives of the International Steering Committee of the Civil Society Pillar.

In February, on the margins of the Governing Council Meeting in Bucharest, the Working Group conducted face to face discussion on criteria of admission of new Governing Council Membership, as well as revision of the Governing Council Membership renewal process.

Between March and December the Working Group continued its agenda through virtual platforms due to the pandemic restrictions.

In April, the Working Group recommended to the Governing Council revision of the criteria on membership and guidelines for the Working Groups adopted in 2017, in order to facilitate engagement with the WG for all interested parties.

Between June and September, the Working Group considered possible ways to improve the invitation process for the CoD Ministerial Meetings.

In October, the Working Group considered the non-paper on modalities of chairmanship in international organizations prepared by the Permanent Secretariat.

In December, the Working Group held an online meeting to further consider issues outlined in previous meetings and provide recommendations for the Governing Council.

Working Group on Women and Democracy

In 2020, the Working Group on Women and Democracy held two meetings. On February 12, the Working Group discussed its upcoming activities, including marking anniversaries of the Beijing Declaration and United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security, and synergies regarding gender equality with relevant organizations. The Working Group's plans were reviewed in March to adapt to the safety and health conditions arising from the COVID-19 pandemic.

In 2020, the Working Group issued its first Statement on the occasion of the International Women's Day, in which they highlighted that "the equal, meaningful participation of women at all levels of government and in all areas of society is essential, it not only prioritizes the plight of women, but it is also a step in the right direction towards the achievement of the UN Sustainable Development Goals."

Led by the Working Group's new representative of longstanding Chair Lithuania, Ambassador Laima Jureviciene, the second meeting was held in a virtual format on December 2. The meeting was an opportunity to reflect on the activities of the Working Group realized in 2020 and consider activity for 2021, such as joining an UN Women Generation Equality Action Coalitions. Among the internal topics discussed was the expansion of membership to Governing Council Members active in areas of gender equality and women's empowerment, and potential co-chairmanship.

Additionally, to highlight the Community's work advancing gender equality and Women, Peace, and Security Agenda, in 2020 the WG together with the Permanent Secretariat launched the Twitter account @CoD_Women.

Working Group on Enabling and Protecting Civil Society

During the year, the Working Group on Enabling and Protecting Civil Society (WGEPCS) held five meetings by conference call.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS

May 2020 - WGEPCS issued a guidance document on how States can face the COVID-19 pandemic without hindering civil society. In response to the Covid-19 pandemic, governments around the world took steps that at times resulted in limitations on civil and political rights. The impact of such measures on civil society was the focus of the efforts of the Working Group on Enabling and Protecting Civil Society in 2020. The Working Group adopted an innovative approach under these extraordinary circumstances, in order to fulfil its mandate to foster collaboration among states, civil society and international organizations to counter repressive legislation restricting civil society space.

CALL FOR ACTIONS

The Working Group members discussed potentially repressive legislation and state measures targeting civil society that were under consideration or newly-adopted. The WGEPCS issued two calls for action to inform as well as stimulate a response by the international community on this worrying situation.

Through their work, WG members continued to share tools, events and intelligence developed on the thematic of enabling and protecting civil society and to explore creative ways to engage on this issue.

COMMUNITY OF DEMOCRACIES AND CIVIL SOCIETY

Community of Democracies and Civil Society

Civil society engagement is an important part of the Community of Democracies' work to defend and strengthen democracy worldwide. In 2020, civil society continued its important and active role in all activities undertaken by the CoD. Representatives of the CoD Civil Society Pillar actively contributed to all meetings of the Governing Council, bringing an important civil society perspective to discussed issues. Additionally, the 31st Governing Council meeting featured participation of a representative of Gambian civil society, Mrs. Hannah Forster, who spoke alongside her country's foreign minister in briefing the Governing Council on The Gambia's democratic transition.

In September 2020, Secretary General Thomas E. Garrett participated in the virtual Annual Meeting of the CoD Civil Society Assembly, highlighting the vital role of civil society in developing responses to the COVID-19 pandemic. This role was also affirmed by the CoD Member States in the Bucharest Statement, adopted at the Warsaw Declaration 20th Anniversary: "Civil society is a key partner of governments in responding to crises, as it plays a vital role in raising awareness, disseminating information, framing inclusive policies, advocating for the protection and promotion of human rights and fundamental freedoms, providing much needed support to vulnerable communities, and holding governments accountable. Civil society organizations are also critical for governments to understand the views, effects, and policy responses to the disease in marginalized and vulnerable communities."

Representatives of civil society organizations from across the world participated in the CoD events held throughout the year, highlighting their views on a number of democracy-related subjects, including gender equality, democracy and technology, press freedom, citizens participation in democratic processes, and many others.

The Outcome Statement of the CoD 32nd Governing Council meeting, which focused on democracy and technology, also highlighted the role of civil society as an important stakeholder of discussions on using new technologies to support democratic governance.

EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES

Events and Activities

Celebrating 20 years of the Community of Democracies and the Warsaw Declaration

Virtual Anniversary Conference June 26, 2020,
hosted by Presidency Romania

June 27, 2020 marked the 20th anniversary of the Warsaw Declaration and the founding of the Community of Democracies.

The CoD 10th Ministerial Conference, planned to take place in Romania in June 2020 to celebrate the 20th anniversary, was postponed until 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. To commemorate the two decades of the founding of the Community of Democracies, in June 2020 Romania hosted an online Anniversary Conference, which gathered high-level representatives of Governing Council Member States, civil society, and international organizations. The discussions focused on the theme “Democracy in the 21st Century: the Past and the Future of the Warsaw Declaration.”

KEY HIGHLIGHTS

- Opening remarks were delivered by H.E. Foreign Minister of Romania Bogdan Aurescu, former US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, Secretary General Thomas E. Garrett, and former CoD Secretary General Maria Leissner.
- Secretary Albright was present at the 2000 founding of the Community of Democracies. Her participation in the anniversary event was an important reminder of the mission and value of the Community of Democracies.
- “Democracies should respond to the global pandemic through renewed adherence to democratic principles of the Warsaw Declaration” – emphasized CoD Governing Council Member States in the Bucharest statement adopted at the CoD Anniversary Conference.

“The Community of Democracies was founded two decades ago with the idea that democracy faces changing threats and new opportunities. The global pandemic is one such challenge. I very much welcome the Member States’ statement, which sends a clear message to those who have said democracy is ill-equipped to address the pandemic, and highlights that the exact opposite is true: the values of the Warsaw Declaration represent the ultimate immune system of our democracies. Drafted in 2000, the Warsaw Declaration is fresh and current for 2020.”

Secretary General Thomas E. Garrett

“History teaches us that individuals and groups who crave, then abuse, authority will always be present among us. But to them, we now have answers. And one of those answers is the Community of Democracies. As we mark the twentieth anniversary of the Warsaw Declaration, I am proud that the Community continues to play an active role in the global democracy movement.”

former US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright

Bucharest Anniversary Statement adopted at the Anniversary Conference

“Democracies should respond to the global pandemic through renewed adherence to democratic principles of the Warsaw Declaration” – emphasized CoD Governing Council Member States in the Bucharest Anniversary Statement adopted at the Anniversary Conference. The document also underlined the importance of youth empowerment, saying that “democracies are best equipped to mobilize and ensure that all elements of society work together, adapt to new circumstances, and maximize inclusive joint efforts, including full and meaningful participation of youth in decision-making.”

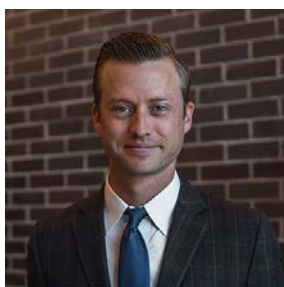




#CoDYouthLeads campaign

At its 20th anniversary, the CoD engaged young democracy leaders from across the world to share their stories on democracy and highlight the relevance of the Warsaw Declaration to the next generation. As part of the #CoDYouthLeads social media campaign, young activists and democracy leaders from countries ranging from Canada to Estonia through Nepal to Haiti shared engaging and inspiring stories speaking on their personal experience and contributions towards defending, promoting, or strengthening democracy. Some of them grew up in established democracies, others experienced democratic transitions or lived under non-democratic rule, but they each believe that democratic values and desire for freedom are universal and apply to all, across the world, across the generations, across social or economic backgrounds. The #CoDYouthLeads campaign showed that, twenty years on, the values of the Warsaw Declaration are very much relevant to a younger generation.

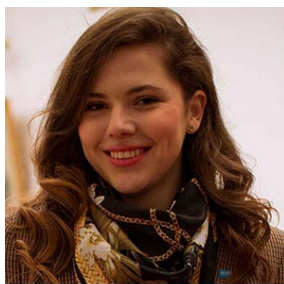
In addition to the campaign, the Youth Leads played an active part in numerous CoD activities throughout the year, including the Youth Forum (adopting a Youth Forum Statement), and other events on subjects ranging from gender equality to democracy and technology. To support the ongoing engagement and ability of the Youth Leads, the CoD organized a series of trainings on personal branding and public service leadership, led by international expert Ms. Nancy Bocskor.



BRYAN GRIFFIN

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

*"I care about people,
so I care about democracy."*



IOANA DOSPINESCU

ROMANIA

*"Trust your power to create change
and act on it."*



JAGDISH KUMAR AYER

NEPAL

"All human rights must be promoted and protected."



LAURA DANILAS

ESTONIA

"I believe that everyone regardless of age should be able to represent the society in the decision-making processes at local, national and international level."



LU ARGUETA

EL SALVADOR

"All citizens must work to build peace and democracy for the future."



LYNROSE JANE D. GENON

PHILIPPINES

"YOUth are never too young to hold political views, express informed opinions and participate."



MONIKA ILIOSKA KANTARDZIOSKA

NORTH MACEDONIA

"Be the change you want to see! Believe in yourself, express your ideas, and fight for your rights and freedoms!"



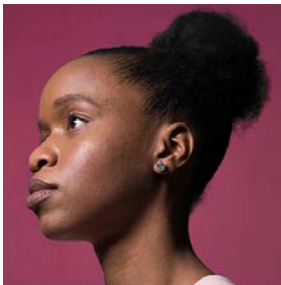
PHILIPPA MCCUE
UNITED KINGDOM

"Only with inclusive and accountable societies can we expect democracy, and all the benefits it brings, to be maintained."



RAFIU ADENIRAN LAWAL
NIGERIA

"The Warsaw Declaration is an essential framework required for all youth to hold their government accountable and strengthen democratic principles and ideals."



REBECCA JOACHIM
CANADA

"When we hear multiple voices we get closer to democracy - why diverse young voices are needed."



REYAAZ SCHARNECK
SOUTH AFRICA

"The Warsaw Declaration principles are the call to action for young leaders to ensure these ideals are attained, not just aspired to."



RITA SAIAS
PORTUGAL

"Democracy is about sharing power between citizens, and young people will only truly commit if given an active role."



SALIMATOU FATTY

THE GAMBIA

"There is a strong need for youth inclusion and empowerment for effective and efficient democratic nations."



SAMUEL AMOFA ASANTE

GHANA

"Global leaders must see us as partners in building a sustainably robust world."



TINATIN OBOLADZE

GEORGIA

"Step up, take responsibility, and act now!"



WALTER CORZO

GUATEMALA

"Now is the time to do our part to make this country a safer place to live and a more equal place for everyone."



WILBERT ST FORT

HAITI

"Everyone, including young people, should be able to participate in public life."






CoD Youth Forum July 23–24, 2020

Continuing the celebration of the Warsaw Declaration 20th Anniversary, in July 2020 the Romanian Presidency hosted a digital CoD Youth Forum. The Forum gathered representatives of global and regional youth networks from around the world, including young Members of Parliament, diplomats and civil society activists. The event provided a global platform for young people to share opinions and exchange ideas and best practices on diverse issues concerning their world, from political participation in elected office through achieving the Sustainable Development Goals to a democratic response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

THE FORUM FEATURED TWO THEMATIC SESSIONS:

■ From Activism to Democratic Governance

The session included keynote remarks by H.E. Foreign Minister of Romania Bogdan Aurescu, presentation of the Youth Forum Statement, CoD Youth Lead interventions and the panel discussion: “From Activism to Democratic Governance” featuring the following speakers:

-  Melvin Bouva, President, Forum of Young Parliamentarians, Inter-Parliamentary Union, Suriname;
-  Sos Avetisyan, Member of the National Assembly of Armenia, Standing Committee on Foreign Relations;
-  Maria Mezentseva, Member of Parliament of Ukraine;
-  John Tennant Wright Sol, President of “Nuestro Tiempo” Political Party and former member of the Legislative Assembly, El Salvador; and
-  Elisa Novoa, Youth Engagement Officer, CIVICUS.

■ Youth for Sustainable Development Goals

The session featured keynote remarks by Ambassador Simona Mirela Miculescu, Representative of the UN Secretary General, Head of the UN Office in Belgrade, CoD Youth Lead interventions, closing remarks by Secretary General Thomas E. Garrett, and the panel discussion “Youth for Sustainable Development Goals” featuring the following speakers:

- 👤 Lynrose Jane D. Genon, Executive Council, Young Women+ for Peace and Leadership, Philippines, CoD YouthLead;
- 👤 Rafiu Adeniran Lawal, National Coordinator, Nigeria Youth 4 Peace Initiative, CoD YouthLead;
- 👤 Esma Gumberidze, Georgia's Youth Representative to the UN;
- 👤 Salimatou Fatty, Founder of Salimatou Foundation for Education, The Gambia, CoD Youth Lead; and
- 👤 Rosario Diaz Garavito, Founder of The Millennials Movement, Peru.

CoD Youth Forum Statement

Championed by the YouthLeads and presented at the CoD Youth Forum, the Youth Forum Statement called on governments to adhere to democratic values and fundamental rights. The document also highlighted the importance of cooperation with youth in all spheres of public life and their inclusion in democratic decision-making processes. In line with the 19 Warsaw Declaration principles, including equality, inclusion, and diversity, the Statement gave life to the importance of the Warsaw Declaration to a new generation.

“Young people must be acknowledged as the upcoming generation of policymakers and recognized as effective agents of change in democratic systems. Youth empowerment and meaningful participation in leadership and decision-making processes at global, regional, national and local levels, are critical elements to ensuring inclusive, representative, and sustainable democratic societies.”

CoD Youth Forum Statement

Warsaw Declaration Principles: Poster Exhibition

On the occasion of its 20th anniversary, the Community of Democracies presented a poster exhibition of the core democratic values enshrined in its founding document, the Warsaw Declaration. A joint initiative of the CoD Presidency Romania and Permanent Secretariat host country Poland, the exhibition was officially launched at the Romanian Embassy in Warsaw. Designed by an award-winning Polish artist, Nikodem Pręgowski, the series of posters innovatively illustrate the universal principles of human rights and democracy contained in the Warsaw Declaration.





Addressing the impact of COVID-19 on democracy

The Community of Democracies was founded in 2000 with the idea that democracy doesn't move only from triumph to triumph but faces fresh challenges. The COVID-19 pandemic has had significant impact on all aspects of public life, including social, economic and political spheres; stretching the capacity of democracies across the world. Throughout the year, the CoD hosted or engaged in a number of events that discussed the impact of COVID-19 in different democracy-related areas, including democratic resilience, gender equality, access to information and countering disinformation.

An outline of activities in different thematic areas is presented below.

DEMOCRATIC VALUES AND COVID-19

Speaking in numerous events throughout 2020, Secretary General Thomas E. Garrett highlighted that democracies must respond to current pandemic through renewed adherence to the 19 principles of the Warsaw Declaration. "I believe this global crisis will allow democracy, with its openness and accountability, to show it is the political system best suited to protect citizens' health, while ensuring protection of the rule of law, human rights and fundamental freedoms" – he said at the CoD Anniversary Conference in June 2020. Below is a brief outline of activities that emphasized the importance of upholding democratic values in times of pandemic.

Statement by the Secretary General Thomas E. Garrett on the Impact of COVID-19 Pandemic

In his statement issued in April 2020, SG Thomas E. Garrett acknowledged that states concerned with public health were required to act quickly to address the rapidly changing situation. He underlined that this may require imposing extraordinary measures, yet in a democracy emergency legislation should be temporary, proportionate to the aim of public good and remain consistent with democratic principles enshrined in the Warsaw Declaration and state obligations under international law and human rights standards.

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

Celebrated on September 15, 2020, the International Day of Democracy provided the opportunity for deeper reflection on the impact of COVID-19 on democracies around the world. In his statement, the Community of Democracies' Secretary General emphasized that democracy, with its openness and accountability, is the political system best suited to protect not only citizens' rights and freedoms but also their health.

Webinar on Democratic Resiliency in Times of World Crisis

Working with its partners International IDEA and the Organization of American States, the Community of Democracies held an event on April 24, 2020, aimed to provide a platform for open conversation among the leadership of global and regional multi-stakeholder organizations on the challenges and opportunities around democratic resilience in times of the global pandemic. Secretary General Thomas E. Garrett joined Secretary General Kevin Casas-Zamora of International IDEA and Secretary General Luis Almagro of the Organization of American States in discussing democratic resiliency in times of world crisis. SG Garrett stated that "...while we work and sacrifice to stay healthy and keep our communities safe, we can't lose sight of the risk to human rights and freedoms." He shared best practice examples of how CoD Member States were addressing challenges during the pandemic, for example in election administration or in advancing e-governance and underlined that the democratic principles of the Warsaw Declaration should be an important part of effective response to this crisis.

"Underpinning democracy is trust, or the common assumption that elected officials and institutions are working together for the best interest of people. And while that trust has been weakened, this global crisis I think will allow democracy, with its openness and accountability, to show it is best suited to protect citizens' health, while ensuring protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms at the same time."

SG Thomas E. Garrett

Supporting Democratic Resilience in the Americas: SG's participation in a special session of the Permanent Council of the Organization of American States

Speaking at a special session of the Permanent Council of the Organization of American States on "Supporting Democracy Resiliency in the Americas: Challenges and Best Practices" (May 14, 2020), SG Thomas E. Garrett underlined that one of the key means to effectively address and respond to the pandemic-related challenges will be upholding the democratic norms and principles of the Warsaw Declaration and the Inter-American Democratic Charter, which both provide a road map to democratic values and fundamental freedoms. He explained the relevance of the Warsaw Declaration principles to the pandemic and stressed that civil society is a key partner of governments in responding to crisis, as they play a vital role in raising awareness, disseminating information, framing inclusive policies, and advocating for the protection of fundamental rights.




Public Access to Information in Times of Global Pandemic – SG Statement on World Press Freedom Day

The right of the press to collect and disseminate information is one of the core principles of the Community's Warsaw Declaration. In his statement on World Press Freedom Day (May 3, 2020), SG Thomas E. Garrett underlined that through democracy countries will be best-suited to address and tackle this pandemic, in providing government transparency and access to information, media freedoms, and enabling citizens to have a voice, providing a space for exchange of views and ideas to contribute to decision making processes.

Digital Conference on Safeguarding Democracy and Countering Malign Foreign Influence




The two-day digital event on "Safeguarding Democracy and Countering Malign Foreign Influence" (October 14 to 15) included two panel discussions: Countering Malign Foreign Influence Aimed at Undermining Democratic Institutions and Norms; and Media Freedom and Fact-based Reporting as Key to Safeguarding against Disinformation, both of which also discussed the subject of disinformation during COVID-19 pandemic.

Session 1 on Countering Malign Foreign Influence Aimed at Undermining Democratic Institutions and Norms featured a keynote opening speech by the Foreign Minister of Romania, H.E. Bogdan Aurescu and welcome remarks by Secretary General Thomas E. Garrett. The panel discussion was moderated by Christopher Walker, Vice President of Studies and Analysis, National Endowment for Democracy and featured the following speakers:

-  Siim Kumpas, Strategic Communications Advisor of the Government Office of Estonia;
-  Nina Jankowicz, Global Fellow at the Kennan Institute of the Wilson Center;
-  Corina Rebegea, Director, Democratic Resilience, The Center for European Policy Analysis.

The panel served as an opportunity for a dynamic discussion on how democracies can prepare to deter and defend against external threats from authoritarian influences aiming to weaken trust in democratic governments and societies and undermine the rules-based international order. The panel also examined the similarities and differences in the motives and tactics of authoritarian perpetrators.

Session II on Media Freedom and Fact-based Reporting as Key to Safeguarding against Disinformation focused on the critical role of media freedom and fact-based reporting in countering disinformation and propaganda that can rapidly spread in the times of pandemic, undermining governments' health strategies, democratic institutions and public trust. With welcome remarks by Secretary General Thomas E. Garrett and Leah Bray, Deputy Coordinator of the Global Engagement Center in the U.S. Department of State, and keynote speech by Jamie Fly, German Marshall Fund, the panel featured the following speakers:

-  Veronika Krátka Špalková, Analyst of the Kremlin Watch Program of the European Values Center for Security Policy in Prague;
-  Sarah Cook, Senior Research Analyst for China, Hong Kong and Taiwan, Freedom House;
-  David Shullman, Senior Advisor for Countering Foreign Authoritarian Influence, International Republican Institute.

The speakers discussed best practices that governments can utilize to counter false narratives promulgated by governments, and both traditional and social media, while adhering to the Warsaw Declaration principle of the right of the press to collect, report and disseminate information, news and opinions. Closing remarks were delivered by SG Thomas E. Garrett.

United in Dialogue during Covid-19 Pandemic– SG’s participation at the 2020 Ministerial to Advance Freedom of Religion or Belief

On November 17, 2020, Secretary General Thomas E. Garrett moderated a discussion panel “United in Dialogue during Covid-19 pandemic” at the 2020 Ministerial to Advance Freedom of Religion or Belief hosted by Poland. In his remarks he underlined the negative consequences of the pandemic on human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the freedom of religion or belief. He stressed that: “(...) in the challenging time of this pandemic we must stay united as humanity and put more emphasis on dialogue. Ultimately, we all share the same deepest spiritual convictions, fears and hopes as humans.”

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on Human Rights– SG Statement on Human Rights Day

The theme of the 2020 Human Rights Day, celebrated on December 10, emphasized that human rights must be central to recovery efforts following the pandemic. In his statement on this occasion, SG Thomas E. Garrett stressed that Principle 19 of the Warsaw Declaration provided the core message of the Community of Democracies: “That all human rights – civil, cultural, economic, political and social be promoted and protected as outlined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.”

GENDER EQUALITY AND COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic has affected women disproportionately. CoD activities highlight the importance of women's inclusion in the decision-making during the pandemic as well as its recovery efforts.

Women’s Leadership in Times of Crisis

With participation of high-level female speakers, including ambassadors of CoD Member States, the digital event on “Women's Leadership in Times of Crisis”, held on September 17, 2020, discussed the importance of women's political participation and involvement in decision-making during the COVID-19 pandemic and its recovery efforts.

Community of Democracies

@CommunityofDem
@CoD_Women



Women’s Leadership in Times of Crisis

September 17, 2020 | 4 p.m. CET | 10 a.m. EDT

PROGRAM

Opening Remarks
CoD Secretary General Thomas E. Garrett
Working Group on Women and Democracy representative (TBC)

Brief overview on the global impact of COVID-19 on democracy and gender equality

Conversation on the importance of women’s political participation and involvement in decision-making during the COVID-19 pandemic and its recovery efforts

Speakers:



Katri Viinikka
Ambassador for Gender Equality
Finland



Kelley Eckels Currie
US Ambassador-at-Large for Global Women's Issues



Leslie Scanlon
Ambassador of Canada to Poland



Mira Sun
Ambassador of the Republic of Korea to Poland



Rumbidzal Kandawasvika Nhundu
International IDEA

Laima Jurevičienė, Ambassador-at-Large, UN, International Organizations and Human Rights Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Lithuania, highlighted Lithuania's commitment to the topics of inclusion, women's participation in public life and gender equality and provided examples of Lithuania's initiatives supporting democracy movements in places such as Belarus. "Lithuania has been serving as the Chair of the Working Group on Women and Democracy since its inception in 2010 and remains committed to the topics of inclusion, women's participation in public life, and gender equality."

Rumbidzai Kandawasvika-Nhundu, Head of Political Participation and Representation Programme Global Programme, International IDEA, provided an overview on the impact of COVID-19 impact on democracy and gender equality: "The COVID-19 pandemic is exposing and deepening pre-existing and persistent gender inequalities." Following welcome remarks and the presentation, the panel served as an opportunity for women leaders to discuss their strategies, concerns and experiences of leading in the pandemic, highlighting the critical roles of women at the front lines of the crisis:

Katri Viinikka, Ambassador for Gender Equality, Finland, spoke about the efforts of Finland's women-led government in responding to the pandemic: "In Finland, the government's communication style played an important role during the COVID-19 crisis. Women leaders were found to have clear and empathetic communication skills." Ambassador Viinikka recognized that women are working tirelessly at the frontlines of the COVID-19 pandemic, leading its response and recovery efforts, especially in the health care system and as primary caretakers.

Kelley Eckels Currie, Ambassador-at-Large of the United States for Global Women's Issues stressed that women's expertise and knowledge has to be included in the decision-making processes at all levels, also to drive the recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. Ambassador Currie introduced U.S. initiatives empowering women across the globe, such as the Women's Global Development and Prosperity Initiative, and also emphasized the need to mainstream gender equality and women, peace, and security agenda across the work of government agencies

Leslie Scanlon, Ambassador of Canada to Poland, underlined Canada's commitment to ensure gender equality in all areas of public life, including peace and security efforts. Ambassador Scanlon also noted that women's full participation in peace and security contributes to the sustainability of peace. To illustrate women's role in achieving and promoting peace, the Ambassador brought attention to the presence and efforts of women of Belarus as being central to the country's peaceful protests.

Mira Sun, Ambassador of the Republic of Korea to Poland, highlighted that the pandemic deepened social, economic and political inequalities with women being disproportionately affected by this crisis. Ambassador Sun outlined the three important elements of the Republic of Korea's response to the COVID-19 pandemic: openness, transparency and public engagement and noted: "Women must be equal participants in the management of the COVID-19 crisis; they shouldn't be left on the side-lines."

CoD YouthLeads Tinatin Oboladze of Georgia, Rita Saias of Portugal, and Lu Argueta of El Salvador participated in the event's Q&A session and engaged the panel on the importance and effectiveness of gender quotas at national and local levels, leadership style of women and stereotypes behind the low numbers of women's participation.

Conversation with Michelle Bekkering, Assistant Administrator of the Bureau for Economic Growth, Education and Environment, United States Agency for International Development

Hosted by Secretary General Thomas E. Garrett on October 6, 2020, the event focused on women's economic empowerment and how women are key drivers of the economic recovery from COVID-19. The event featured introductory remarks by Assistant Administrator Bekkering about USAID's approach to advancing women's economic empowerment. The comments session brought CoD YouthLeads Tinatin Oboladze of Georgia and Reyaaz Scharneck of South Africa into the conversation.

DEMOCRACY AND NEW TECHNOLOGIES IN TIMES OF COVID-19

The pandemic accelerated digitalization processes across the world, new technologies presented fresh challenges as well as opportunities to democracy. In response, the CoD established a new Working Group on Democracy and Technology, described in detail in previous chapters, and engaged in discussions on democratic governance through technology in times of pandemic and beyond.

Enabling Democratic Governance through Technology

Technology and digitalization have a major role to play in strengthening democracy and the COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated some key technology trends. With participation of representatives of governments, private sector, and civil society, the CoD event on “Enabling Democratic Governance through Technology”, held on September 29, 2020, examined multilateral mechanisms to exchange best practices and ideas with respect to technology's use which supports democratic governance. The discussion also looked at technological tools that enable participation in democratic governance and how they can be maximized through accountability and transparency measures.

In his welcome remarks, H.E. Foreign Minister of Romania Bogdan Aurescu welcomed the creation of the CoD Working Group on Democracy and Technology and spoke to the opportunities and challenges of digital transformation and new technologies.

Secretary General's participation at the #DigitalDecade event

On September 18, 2020, SG Thomas E. Garrett joined the New America's #DigitalDecade event, which discussed how governments can better respond to the unprecedented demand for digital services during the pandemic. During the event, Secretary General announced the establishment of the CoD Working Group on Democracy and Technology, outlining its mandate to foster collaboration around developing and using digital public goods, such as governance platforms and open source tools, that support democracy and democratic institutions.

Gender Equality: Promoting Women's Participation in Public Life and Peace and Security

In 2020, the CoD continued activities supporting the advancement of women's participation in public life, including the inclusion of women in politics and in building and sustaining peace, as well as addressing the COVID-19 pandemic and recovery efforts (CoD activities on gender equality and COVID-19 are outlined in the previous chapter).

Women's Empowerment and Participation in Public Life

On March 5, 2020, ahead of International Women's Day, the Permanent Secretariat of the Community of Democracies, together with the 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.



“Gender equality is not only a moral issue, but a fundamental human right. Every aspect of our lives depends on it, be it by allowing more women to become economically active on equal conditions to men, creating better environment for family members to share the load, or simply by reducing the psychological burden from the primary earners in the households. And let us not forget the economic factor of gender equality: the world loses an estimated 140 trillion Euro in wealth because of the fact that women don't participate fully in the labour market and are not equally paid to men. The gender pay gap persists in all countries and across all sectors.”

Her Majesty Margareta, Custodian of the Romanian Crown

Women in Peacebuilding: Stories

Continuing the conversation on the importance of women's involvement in peace efforts, the Permanent Secretariat of the Community of Democracies conducted interviews with women leaders in peacebuilding and peacekeeping from Sri Lanka, Liberia, Nagorno-Karabakh, the Philippines, Romania, and Nepal to present their stories to the public and highlight the many achievements of women in sustaining peace as well as challenges to their participation in these settings. The initiative aims to raise awareness about the contribution that women make across the world to preventing and resolving conflicts, and peacebuilding; inspiring future generations to actively engage women in sustaining peace. The initiative was developed with the generous support from Governing Council Member State Republic of Korea within the framework of the project "Engaging Women in Sustaining Peace".

Commenting on the initiative, Mira Sun, Ambassador of the Republic of Korea to Poland said:

"Albert Camus once wrote it is extremely rare for one to encounter a moment of grand revelation – once or twice at best in one's entire life – but life is forever transformed when it happens. For those of us who yearn for gender-responsive peacebuilding and reconciliation, "Women in Peacebuilding: Stories" published by CoD today offers such rare moment of grand revelation with inspiring stories of women leaders on the forefront of peace and security. It is only befitting that CoD turns to their "stories" to continue the dialogue on women's role as peace builders initiated by "Engaging Women in Sustaining Peace: A Guide to Best Practices". Women are born storytellers as we grow up listening to stories of our mothers and grandmothers and learn how to draw strength from and provide strength to our loved ones through storytelling. Stories of women in this publication show that women peace builders do and can make a difference and the world needs to engage women more in conflict resolution, peacebuilding and peacekeeping to sustain peace."



Strengthening Civic and Political Participation of Women in The Gambia

Launched in July 2020, the Community's project on "Strengthening Civic and Political Participation of Women in The Gambia" supports participation of women in public life in The Gambia. The initiative is currently being implemented by project partner Westminster Foundation for Democracy and supported by Member State the Republic of Korea. The project was developed as an outcome of the CoD High-Level Delegation to The Gambia, conducted in 2019.

The project seeks to contribute to the implementation of The Gambia's National Development Plan 2018-2021 and National Gender Policy 2010-2020 by supporting Gambian female leaders to strengthen their toolkit to overcome some of the barriers holding them back to fully participate in politics. The program consists of two workshops: on women's

political leadership and effective communications, and coaching sessions.



At the first workshop held in November 2020, Banjul-based project trainer Musu Bakoto Saho noted, "Women serve as mobilisers, organise rallies and are responsible for the smooth running of the events. Women constitute 58% of all registered Gambian voters, yet majority of the decision-making platforms are occupied by men and the political arena is also largely dominated by men."

Commemorating the 20th Anniversary of UNSCR 1325

October 2020 marked the 20th anniversary of the adoption of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security that for the first time recognized the importance of women's equal and full participation as active agents in establishing and maintaining peace and security worldwide. Commemorating this anniversary, the Community of Democracies invited women leaders in peacebuilding and peacekeeping to discuss achievements and progress in women's inclusion in peacebuilding 20 years after the adoption of UNSCR 1325. The "Engaging Women in Sustaining Peace: 20years after UNSCR 1325" event explored interlinkages between strengthening of democracy

and advancing women's participation in peace and security. The discussion featured:

- 👤 Marita Sørheim-Rensvik, Special Envoy for Women, Peace and Security, the Royal Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs;
- 👤 Sharon Rolls, Chair of the Board of the Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict, Fiji;
- 👤 Chief Superintendent Raluca Domuta Marga of Romania, Former U.N. Peacekeeper in Haiti;
- 👤 Lynrose Genon, Member of the Executive Council of Young Women for Peace and Leadership, the Philippines.

In the “20 years after UNSCR 1325: Perceptions of Women Leaders in Peacebuilding and Peacekeeping” article developed based on the conversation, Norwegian Ambassador Sørheim-Rensvik noted: “Working for women’s political participation is vital in reconstruction efforts after a conflict. [It is] crucial for successful implementation of peace agreements and for building sustainable peace. All this women, peace and security work is crucial for the functioning of inclusive democracies where women play their rightful role in political processes.”



In his statement issued on this occasion, Secretary General Thomas Garrett underlined that “through working together, democracies can tackle current challenges more effectively, including barriers to women’s participation in peace and security.”

Commemorating the 25th anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women and the Adoption of the Beijing Declaration

October 2020 also marked the 25th anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women and the Adoption of the Beijing Declaration. In his statement, Secretary General Thomas E. Garrett underlined that: “The Community of Democracies is determined to continue taking concrete actions to advance gender equality in public life and empower all women and girls through working with Governing Council Member States and civil society.”

Democracy and Development

In 2020, the Community of Democracies continued its activities in the area of democracy and development, with a focus on the progress in the implementation of SDG16+.

The Role of SDG 16+ in Accelerating 2030 Agenda Monitoring and Implementation and Launch of Forus -ADA Goal 16 Report (UN High-level Political Forum online side event)

The Permanent Secretariat of the Community of Democracies joined Asia Development Alliance, Forus, the National Planning Commission of the government of Nepal, NGO Federation of Nepal, UNESCAP, the Global Alliance on reporting progress on SDG 16 +, TAP Network, and the Danish Institute of Human Rights, in speaking at an online side-event on “The Role of SDG 16+ in Accelerating 2030 Agenda Monitoring and Implementation” in the margins of the UN High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development on July 15, 2020.

Patricia Galdamez, Senior Advisor at the Permanent Secretariat, spoke about the importance of partnerships and collaboration in promoting the monitoring & implementation of Goal 16 +, noting that “making progress in democracy is not often easy, it requires a system of alliances amongst like-minded organizations. In the same way, ensuring progress and achieving the SDGs requires concerted action”.

Reinventing the Role of International and Regional Organizations in Promoting Inclusive Institutions in Times of Crisis: What Has Been Done and What is Next?

In the framework of the UN75 Global Governance Forum and the Inter-Regional Dialogue for Democracy (IRDD), an online event was held by the Stimson Center in Washington D.C. focused on the challenges that the COVID-19 pandemic presented and best practices on addressing those challenges at the regional and global levels within a perspective of the SDGs.

Senior Advisor Patricia Galdamez joined representatives from global and regional organizations, and civil society working on the advancement of SDG 16+, including International IDEA, the 16+ Forum, Pathfinders for Peaceful, Just and Inclusive Societies, in this important discussion.

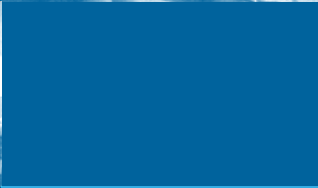
Panelists explored ideas on how to better align global and regional efforts to support key actions towards the achievement of the SDGs, despite the current pandemic, helping to further collaborate with the United Nations to ensure implementation of the SDGs, especially Goal 16 in the coming years.

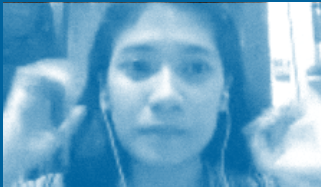
Kathmandu Democracy Forum 2020

Organized by the Community of Democracies and Asia Democracy Network, hosted by the government of Nepal, and supported by Governing Council Member State Republic of Korea, the online Kathmandu Democracy Forum was held from November 4-6, 2020. As in previous years, this Asia Regional Forum gathered civil society organizations from across the region, government representatives, and other multi-stakeholder organizations working in the SDGs to discuss the UN Sustainable Development Agenda and progress made in Asia. The Secretary General Thomas E. Garrett delivered opening and closing remarks at the Forum.

The Forum provided a platform for knowledge sharing among multi-stakeholders and for civil society organizations from across Asia to present main findings from their SDG 16 monitoring reports focused on the impact of COVID-19.

Civil society organizations presented 13 national level reports and six thematic reports.





Other thematic events and activities in 2020

CoD High-Level Delegation to Armenia

Under the CoD Strategic Objective 1, which encourages Governing Council Members to promote adherence to the Warsaw Declaration within and outside the CoD, the Secretary General Thomas E. Garrett led the CoD High-Level Mission to Armenia (February 27-29, 2020). The Delegation, composed of three Member States (Lithuania, Poland, Romania) and Norwegian and U.S. representatives of the Civil Society Pillar, met with high-level government officials, parliamentarians and civil society representatives.

Members of the Delegation met with the Foreign Minister of the Republic of Armenia, Deputy Minister of Justice, the Human Rights Defender of Armenia, and the Chair of the Corruption Prevention Commission, among others. In the National Assembly of the Republic of Armenia, the Delegation met with representatives of two political parties seated in January 2019 in the 132-member legislative body. Finally, the Delegation held meetings with Armenia's civil society, including a roundtable organized by the Human Rights House Foundation. The High-Level Delegation was funded by the United Kingdom.

Defending Democratic Institutions against Malign Foreign Influence

"Traditional challenges to democracy such as voter alienation and corruption have been joined by new issues such as malign state interference in other nations' democracies" – said SG Thomas E. Garrett in his welcome remarks at a panel discussion on "Defending Democratic Institutions against Malign Foreign Influence", held on January 29, 2020, at the Permanent Secretariat of the Community of Democracies.

A keynote speech was delivered by USAID Deputy Administrator Bonnie Glick who emphasized that "...democracy is humanity's most fertile soil for nurturing tolerance because it rests on respect for the individual's right to contribute to her society's political future regardless of political, religious or other persuasion. These sorts of open political societies are also the systems most likely to host enabling environments necessary for open markets, and, in turn, strong and sustainable economic growth."



Panel discussions featured Ambassador Martin Roger of Estonia, who shared the experience of Estonia in countering foreign interference, and Ms. Katarzyna Chimiak of the Institute of Public Affairs, who highlighted the importance of maintaining a dialogue with civil society and providing a counter-narrative to challenge malign interference.

Launch of the Center for Freedom and Democracy

On November 10, 2020, the Secretary General participated in-person in a hybrid event at the launch of the Center for Freedom and Democracy by the Ronald Reagan Institute in Washington D.C. The U.S. Secretary of State, Michael R. Pompeo, delivered keynote remarks, followed by a panel conversation featuring the co-chairs of the Reagan Institute's Westminster 2.0 Working Group, Ambassador Mark Green and Mr. Kenneth Wollack.

SG Presentation to the Casper Committee on Foreign Relations and St. Louis Committee on Foreign Relations

SG PRESENTATION TO THE CASPER COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS, DECEMBER 3, 2020

The Secretary General spoke to a largely college student-age American audience in Wyoming as guest of the Committee on Foreign Relations. He described the work of the Community of Democracies and the relevance of the Warsaw Declaration in addressing challenges such as the COVID-19 pandemic.

SG PRESENTATION TO THE ST. LOUIS COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS DECEMBER 8, 2020

The state of democracy around the world was the subject of a two hour discussion between the Secretary General and a virtual audience in Missouri, USA. As in the Casper presentation, the program also served to introduce the Community of Democracies to new audiences.

New project: “Inclusive Democratic Participation to Prevent and Counter Violent Extremism”

On December 10, 2020, the Permanent Secretariat of the Community of Democracies held a virtual meeting with representatives of the government of Governing Council Member Morocco and civil society organizations from the region. The meeting discussed thematic areas and organizational matters of the CoD new project on “Inclusive Democratic Participation to Prevent and Counter Violent Extremism”, to be held in Morocco in 2021. The initiative is funded by Romania’s International Development Cooperation Agency (RoAid), Member State Morocco and coordinated by the Permanent Secretariat of the Community of Democracies.

CoD joined #ThisIsDemocracy Campaign

On Human Rights Day, the Community of Democracies was proud to join the #ThisIsDemocracy social media campaign, which seeks to highlight and defend shared human rights values that underpin democratic societies. Partners of the campaign include governments of Canada, Estonia, Finland, Lithuania, the United Kingdom, the United States, Ukraine, and partner organizations European External Action Service, Westminster Foundation for Democracy, and CoD. More information on the campaign can be found here:

→ thisisdemocracy.campaign.gov.uk



Webinar on Innovative Democracy Participation: Citizens' Assembly

As the last event held in 2020, on December 10, the Permanent Secretariat of the Community of Democracies, in cooperation with the Conference of the INGOs of the Council of Europe, hosted a webinar on "Innovative Democracy Participation: Citizens' Assembly". The event discussed innovative approaches to civic participation using example of Citizens' Assembly.

With a keynote speech by Jez Hall of Shared Future, UK, the webinar featured the following speakers:

- 👤 Anna Rurka, President of the Conference of INGOs of the Council of Europe;
- 👤 Richard Youngs, Senior Fellow in the Democracy, Conflict, and Governance Program, Carnegie Europe; and
- 👤 Roman Szelemej, President of Wałbrzych, Poland.

Contact Us

Community of Democracies Permanent Secretariat
Al. Ujazdowskie 41, 00-540 Warsaw, Poland

Tel. +48 22 375 90 00

Fax. +48 22 319 56 28

E-mail: info@community-democracies.org

Website: community-democracies.org

Social networks



facebook.com/CommunityofDemocracies



twitter.com/CommunityofDem



youtube.com/user/CommunityDemocracies



flickr.com/people/communityofdemocracies