



**Council for a Community
of Democracies**

**International Steering Committee
of the Community of Democracies**

The Ulaanbaatar Roundtable on Democracy in Asia

A Report on the September 28-30, 2010
Civil Society Roundtable

Organized with the Center for Citizen's Alliance,
the World Forum for Democratization in Asia,
and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade of Mongolia

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United Nations Democracy Fund (UNDEF)

2 The Second in a Series of Regional Nongovernmental
Reports to the Governments of the Community of
Democracies

International Steering Committee of the Community of Democracies

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The Council for a Community of Democracies (CCD) serves as the ISC Secretariat, www.isc-cd.org. More information on CCD may be found on its website: www.ccd21.org

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Acknowledgements

The Council for a Community of Democracies (CCD) is grateful to the United Nations Democracy Fund for making this roundtable on the state of democracy in Asia possible, the second in a series of regional roundtables to be held prior to the Community of Democracies Ministerial scheduled for 2011 in Vilnius, Lithuania.

This roundtable in Ulaanbaatar is especially important as we look forward to when Mongolia will become the Chair of the Community of Democracies in 2011, and for this reason, we are thankful for the early partnership between civil

society and the Mongolian Foreign Ministry that this meeting allowed. We were privileged to be welcomed by Foreign Minister Zandanshatar at the opening of the meeting and to hold our roundtable at the Foreign Ministry.

This meeting would not have been possible without the tireless assistance provided by our partners in Ulaanbaatar, who ensured that all of the necessary arrangements were made for our arrival and discussions. The Center for Citizen’s Alliance, MONFEMNET, and the Open Society Forum dedicated much time and many resources

to make these meetings successful and earned our endless appreciation.

CCD's long-standing partnership with the World Forum for Democratization in Asia (WFDA) has been invaluable in building a strong civil society network in support of the Community of Democracies in Asia, and this roundtable again benefitted from this relationship. We are extremely grateful for WFDA's ongoing support and leadership in support of democracy in Asia.

A number of individuals deserve special recognition for their contribution to the roundtable: Zanaa Jurmed from the Center for Citizen's Alliance in Mongolia provided daily support in the weeks leading up to the meeting to ensure that the necessary arrangements were made. Jonathan Lin from the World Forum for Democratization in Asia was a constant source of support. Daniel Hollingsworth from the Council for a Community of Democracies was responsible for coordinating the program details and

communication between the organizers and participants. The success of this roundtable would not have been possible without their many hours of hard work.

The report that follows is the result of three days of discussions among civil society leaders who traveled great distances to come together for this meeting. We are continually inspired by the work that is being done all over the world by those who often brave difficult circumstances to make their communities more free. Thank you to everyone who played a part in this roundtable.



Robert R. LaGamma, President
Council for a Community of Democracies

Overview of the Ulaanbaatar Roundtable:

Preparing Recommendations to the Working Groups of the Community of Democracies

The purpose of this three day roundtable was to develop a set of civil society recommendations on actions that could be taken by the Community of Democracies (CD) to strengthen democracy in Asia. The meeting was framed around the Working Groups of the CD that have been launched by Lithuania as CD Chair, focused on the specific thematic areas of **Gender Equality and Women's Rights; Enabling and Protecting Civil Society; Regional Cooperation; Poverty, Development and Democracy;** and **Promoting Democracy and Responding to National and Transnational Threats to Democracy.** The International Steering Committee of the CD also chose to feature **Democracy Education**, as this is a subject the ISC/CD hopes will be taken up by a Working Group in the near future.

This report and the recommendations herein will be presented to the members of the Convening Group of the Community of Democracies, the 17-member body that conducts the regular business of the CD. It is our hope that these recommendations can shape the Vilnius Ministerial planned for the summer of 2011, but also that they will have an impact on the future direction of the CD. The close interaction with the Mongolian Foreign Ministry, which served as our gracious host for this event, is a welcome indication of what we hope will be a fruitful partnership when Mongolia assumes the chairmanship of the CD in 2011.

The ideas contained in this report represent the views from the front line of the struggle for democracy around the world, and it is our firm belief that this process is an illustration of the partnership between governments and civil society that makes the Community of Democracies unique and necessary.

Participants List



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Opening Remarks by H.E. Gombojav Zandanshatar

Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade of Mongolia

***As Prepared for Delivery
September 28, 2010***

Distinguished participants and guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great pleasure for me today to address the Roundtable on Democracy in Asia.

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the International Steering Committee of the Community of Democracies in collaboration with the Council for a Community of Democracies and the Center for Citizen's Alliance for organizing this Roundtable. Also I wish to express my deep appreciation to all distinguished participants and guests for active participation in this important meeting. Many of you have travelled great distances to be here. This three-day gathering will allow us to exchange views and experience, and learn from each other on how to promote democracy in this region, and to provide concrete and timely recommendations to the working groups of the Community of Democracies.

I warmly welcome all of you to Mongolia.

The Community of Democracies was established a decade ago. I am pleased to note that Mongolia has actively been participating in the activities of the Community of Democracies and firmly supported the movement. In 2011 Mongolia will be taking up the respected duty of the chairmanship of the

Community of Democracies. We attach great importance to the meeting today as it is the first event being organized within the framework of Mongolia's expected chairmanship of the Community of Democracies. The Mongolian proverb says that "A good beginning makes a good ending". We wish and believe that this meeting be fruitful with constructive and frank discussion of the challenges and difficulties and draw the roadmap to developing democracy in this region. I am content that we have the representatives of the academia and researchers and reckon that the recommendations to be drawn from the meeting would be substantive and scientific.

Mongolia is a young democracy, which, in a span of two decades, has undergone fundamental transformation in all spheres of societal life. Looking back we, Mongols, are proud of peaceful twin transition we have made to a pluralistic democracy and market economy. We have laid solid political and legal foundations for a functional democracy.

Respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, enshrined in the new democratic Constitution of 1992, freedom of the press, thriving civil society, free and fair elections are all guarantees of our democracy.

The government of Mongolia believes that encouraging civil society development and active



H.E. Gombojav Zandanshatar (second from left), Foreign Minister of Mongolia, welcomes civil society leaders at the opening of the Ulaanbaatar Roundtable on Democracy in Asia

citizens' participation should provide a vital guarantee for strengthening democracy. It is important that the public and their representative organizations work with government bodies and be the initiators and implementers in the process of solving many challenging issues such as the protection of human rights and reduction of poverty. My government will actively look for solutions to those problems in cooperation with the civil society organizations. I would like to emphasize that such co-operation would be a valuable

contribution to the implementation of the obligations assumed by Mongolia in front of the international community.

Finally, I am confident that the ideas, views, initiatives and recommendations from this roundtable will be reflected in the future policy of the Community of Democracies. I wish you fruitful deliberations during the three days.

Thank you for your attention.

Featured Recommendations from the Ulaanbaatar Roundtable

The six session reports that follow include several recommendations for the CD Working Groups, many of which are long-term projects that would require a commitment of time and resources. However, selected recommendations from this roundtable can be implemented by the Community of Democracies at little or no cost, and the ISC/CD urges the current Lithuanian Chair and Convening Group to consider the following:

- **Institutionalize the presentation of a “State of Civil Society” report**

The CD Ministerial Program, beginning as early as the 2011 Vilnius Ministerial, should feature a session to discuss the challenges facing civil society around the world. The nongovernmental International Steering Committee of the CD would prepare this report, highlighting the central role that civil society plays in the democratic process and specifically in the work of the CD. This presentation should be made a regular fixture of CD Ministerial Meetings, and its results should be disseminated widely by CD participants.

- **Include regional democracy and human rights bodies in CD activities**

The development of the ASEAN human rights mechanism in Asia provides an opportunity for the CD to engage with an emerging structure that could enhance the regional dimension of the CD. CD Chairs should consider issuing invitations to representatives of this and other similar institutions within regional bodies such as the Organization of American States, the African Union, and the Council of Europe to strengthen regional activities and broaden the constituency of the CD.

- **Launch a CD Working Group on democracy education**

Since the establishment of the Community of Democracies, Education for Democracy has been one of the leading issues discussed in CD forums. The Bamako Consensus of 2007 endorsed the Global Strategic Plan for Democracy Education developed by the International Steering Committee of the CD in partnership with education policy experts. A Working Group on Democracy Education has been proposed by both the ISC/CD and the Lithuanian Chair, but no country has assumed leadership. Such a Working Group should be launched at or before the Vilnius Ministerial and should identify strategies for strengthening national democracy education policies.

- **Form Regional Caucuses of the CD**

In Asia and in other regions, CD members from the region should explore the possibility of forming regional caucuses to include regional CD governments and civil society organizations. This will allow governments and civil society to interact more regularly and on more substantive matters that relate to issues within the region. It was also provide an opportunity for members of the Convening Group to strengthen awareness of the Community in their respective regions and enhance the legitimacy of the CD process as a whole.

Session Reports and Recommendations

Enabling and Protecting Civil Society

The CD Working Group on Enabling and Protecting Civil Society, chaired by the Government of Canada, identified the following objectives in the July 2010 Global Democracy Work Plan:

1. Develop a statement endorsing (existing) principles/guidelines on enabling and protecting civil society to be adopted by CD governments at the 2011 Ministerial in Vilnius. Such a statement would send a strong message of support to civil society and strengthen states' normative commitment to building environments that allow civil society to flourish.
2. Encourage CD governments to respond more effectively to regulatory threats against civil society by, for example: a) creating an international multi-stakeholder contact group of CD member state representatives and civil society organizations focused on the issue; b) strengthening an alert system to inform and activate the contact group to restrictive legal frameworks; c) producing and disseminating tools for the diplomatic and development community to identify and respond to regulatory threats; and d) establishing a joint-action protocol to encourage more effective collaboration between states on specific cases.
3. In collaboration with the United Nations Development Program, civil society actors and

relevant multilateral bodies, develop a CD mechanism that would coordinate the provision of technical assistance to member states in the process of drafting legislation that affects the space in which civil society operates.

Roundtable Recommendations

Participants in the Asian network for the Non-governmental Process of the Community of Democracies made the following recommendations for CD governments for consideration at the Vilnius Ministerial:

1. **Institutionalize the presentation of a “State of Civil Society” report in the CD process**
The central role of civil society in the CD should be recognized by making a report on the state of civil society a permanent fixture of CD Ministerial Meetings. This report would be prepared by the ISC, and a specific session should be held to examine and discuss the report. CD governments should then be urged to post the report and other civil society recommendations on their websites to make this information widely accessible to the general public.
2. **Establish a CD Democracy Fund for Enabling and Protecting Civil Society**
Democratic countries participating in the CD should make a commitment to financially supporting the necessary work of civil society in



Han Dongfang (right) and Erdenejargal Perelei (middle) lead the session on Enabling and Protecting Civil Society

developing democracy. The International Steering Committee should be an essential part of this mechanism. The fund should support civil society globally, but be distributed with a regional balance.

3. Encourage individual CD states in different regions to develop national funding mechanisms to support democracy and civil society

At the July 2010 High Level Democracy Meeting in Krakow, U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton announced an initiative to provide funding to support legal defense services for embattled civil society leaders around the world. CD members should consider providing similar support to address emerging threats to civil society and share best practices for making such support available and effective.

4. Award Democracy Tributes to acknowledge civil society activists working in challenging environments

The CD should develop a process to highlight the efforts and achievements of democracy activists working in the most challenging environments. Raising the profile of these activists will encourage others facing similar challenges and demonstrate solidarity between members of democratic countries and those striving to transform their own countries and communities.

5. Invite Taiwan to be a full CD member

Taiwanese civil society has been an active and essential component of the CD nongovernmental process, and the continued exclusion of Taiwan from official participation neglects what would be an important recognition of Taiwan's democratic system. A mechanism for including Taiwan formally in the CD would bolster the work of Taiwanese civil society in support of the CD.

Gender Equality and Women's Rights

The CD Working Group on Gender Equality and Women's Rights, co-chaired by the Governments of the United States and Lithuania, identified the following objectives in the July 2010 Global Democracy Work Plan:

1. Set up a password-protected website that will facilitate additional communication and idea exchanges between CD Working Group conference and program participants around women's political and economic empowerment.
2. Engage in a mapping exercise to identify websites that already catalogue national best practices and enabling laws, and post these findings to the CD Working Group website.
3. Support additional training opportunities for female political and economic leaders via exchange programs and on-the-ground training, in conjunction with civil society and private sector partners.

Roundtable Recommendations

1. Launch a public website as a global resource for methods and strategies for advancing women's rights.

In addition to the proposed password-protected website, the Working Group should create a publicly-accessible website to share information on this subject. The WG should identify an organization that pays attention to innovative methods and strategies to host this website. This should include a mapping of women's collective strategies in different countries and information on activist organizations that serve to build political leadership and advocacy capacity of women leaders, especially at the local level.

Efforts should be made to support and link with existing resources, such as the website organized by Women's Center at Kennedy School to ensure that information is kept current.

2. **Identify and Promote Strategies for Increasing Women's Political Participation and Empowerment**

a. Promoting various means to increase women's participation in the political arena such as quotas for female candidates and creating more space for women leaders to interact and share experiences. The leadership training proposed by the WG is an important part of increasing women's participation in politics.

b. It is also noted that women's social and economic empowerment is key to women's political participation. It is necessary to focus on gender issues as a component in poverty reduction policies, and youth education for women, especially in poor areas.

c. Ensure women's equitable participation in policy making at all levels. At the budgetary level, accountable and transparent mechanisms should be implemented to ensure that budgets at all levels are sensitive to gender-based needs and that quality basic social services with respect to women's needs are provided.

3. **Urge that the issues of trafficking and migrant workers are addressed**

Two vitally important issues that disproportionately affect women and their role in society are trafficking and migrant labor. There is a need for additional training and networking for the protection of migrant workers' rights and the elimination of human trafficking. It is important to disseminate information on anti-trafficking campaigns and to link to existing networks and organizations on women migrants' rights. Regular consultations involving these organizations should be held to promote these issues as important in any discussions about women's rights.



Abdi Suryaningati (left) chairs a session to develop recommendations on Gender Equality and Women's Rights

4. **Support a greater role for women in peace processes**

UN Security Council Resolution 1325¹ calls on Member States to ensure the participation of women in peace and conflict resolution processes. The CD should educate women on this resolution and support consultations and regional networking in Asia on women, peace, and security. Civil society should play a leading role in these consultations.

Addressing Issues of Poverty, Development and Democracy

The CD Working Group on Poverty, Development and Democracy, chaired by the Governments of Chile and Italy, identified the following objectives in the July 2010 Global Democracy Work Plan:

1. CD Governments are invited to identify a range of policy options and actions tailored to different realities in order to counter the effects of the world economic crisis on the most vulnerable democracies.
2. CD Governments are invited to create partnerships with local social groups, the private sector, and civil society, on the basis of a strong commitment to rooting out corruption.
3. CD Governments are invited to take concrete actions in order to contribute to empowerment

¹ http://www.un.org/events/res_1325e.pdf

of women in democracies in transition as a precondition of development and democracy.

Roundtable Recommendations

1. **Emphasize capacity-building in development assistance programs**

Assistance programs should focus on providing citizens of the recipient countries the opportunity to speak about and determine their own need and interests. Funding should not contribute to the continuance of top-down approaches that focus solely on economic growth but neglect the interests of the people. Programs that target education and training, economic empowerment, and other capacity-building initiatives are best placed to enhance the democratic nature of the community and promote more equitable outcomes.

2. **Insist on transparency at all levels**

Transparency is a precondition for effective development. Countries must proactively release information in a way that allows citizens to use this information to ensure accountability. This includes information regarding government assistance programs, expenditures, revenues, and budgeting processes. Donor countries should also “publish what they give” for development assistance programs.

3. **Recognize democracy as intrinsically valuable for economic development**

Democracy in itself is a value for economic development, as it ensures that benefits of development are shared between rich and poor. Development assistance programs that treat democracy as secondary to economic growth risk outcomes that exacerbate existing inequalities and undermine the broader social goals of development.

4. **Build conditionality into development assistance programs**

Governments receiving aid should be required to demonstrate that they are utilizing this assistance transparently, responsibly, and equitably. The participation of citizens in public policy and implementation is the best method for ensuring this outcome, so CD countries should include democracy as a consideration and condition in determining the allocation of development assistance.

5. **Involve civil society organizations in monitoring programs**

CD donor countries should dedicate resources to develop mechanisms for involving CSOs in planning and monitoring of development assistance programs. CD countries should identify strategies for strengthening the capacity of local CSOs to evaluate the value and the social impact of these grants. Empowering civil society to play a direct role in determining worthy recipients of assistance can be an effective approach for maximizing the benefits of these programs (*See sidebar on next page for the example of the Civil Society Education Fund*).

6. **Support the growth of credible civil society organizations**

Governments should be encouraged to provide resources to CSOs, but there should also be a mechanism to ensure that these CSOs manage resources independently, accountably, and transparently.

7. **Consider the social and environmental impact of major development projects**

Impact assessments should be conducted before launching major projects that risk enacting significant social costs on the host community. Citizens should be made aware of these assessments and provided opportunities to provide input and monitor the conduct of these projects to ensure that the benefits of these projects are shared.

Promoting Democracy and Responding to National and Transnational Threats to Democracy

The CD Working Group on Promoting Democracy and Responding to National and Transnational Threats to Democracy, chaired by the Government of Hungary, identified the following objectives in the July 2010 Global Democracy Work Plan:

1. Launch a pilot project of connecting democracy activists from all over the world with each other and some relevant national and international institutions in order to create a clearing house for exchange programs of countries aimed at supporting and training democracy activists.

Civil Society's Role in Managing and Monitoring Assistance Programs: The Example of the Civil Society Education Fund

Source: Education for All Fast-track Initiative

www.educationfasttrack.org/financing/epdf/csef/

The Education for All Fast-track Initiative (EFA FTI) was created as the first ever global compact on education, to help low-income countries achieve a free, universal basic education. It was launched in 2002 as a global partnership between donor and developing country partners to ensure accelerated progress towards the Millennium Development Goal of universal primary education by 2015. All low-income countries which demonstrate serious commitment to achieve universal primary completion can join FTI.

EFA FTI promotes inclusive partnerships between all stakeholders involved in education sector plans at the country level. Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) are important stakeholders in the education sector not only as implementers but also in policy discussions and independent monitoring. Recognizing CSOs as full-fledged partners will be one important step towards achieving aid effectiveness in the sector, particularly regarding country ownership and mutual accountability. Therefore, EFA FTI supports CSOs to:

- increase their participation in local education groups,
- promote their recognition as important partners by the governments and donor partners, and
- enable them to assume their role as effective and knowledgeable advocates for EFA.

In 2008, EFA FTI agreed to support the **Global Campaign for Education** (GCE) to scale up support to national civil society education coalitions in FTI-eligible countries through the **Civil Society Education Fund** (CSEF). Over a period of two years (2009-2011) EFA FTI, through its Education Program Development Fund, will provide US\$17.6 million to the CSEF which is coordinated by the GCE at the global level. Three regional CSEFs were set up in Latin America, Africa, and Asia Pacific to provide grants to national education coalitions with action plans aligned to the objectives and goals of the CSEF. Currently national education coalitions in 40 countries receive grants from the regional CSEFs: 25 in Africa, 4 in Latin America, and 11 in Asia Pacific. Additionally, the GCE provides a capacity support program through the CSEF aimed at building the capacities of national education coalitions to perform as effective partners at the national level.



Roundtable participants consider recommendations on promoting democracy and responding to threats to democracy

2. Set up a mechanism (initially of NGOs) to monitor the emergence of national and transnational threats to democracy and make the Community of Democracies aware of such threats, including recommending action, like sending CD missions to the country or countries concerned, reporting to the Convening Group, etc.
3. Set up a group of experts to monitor restrictions and even threats to internet security by governments, private companies, etc. – including even self-imposed ones – and make recommendations how to avoid and eventually combat them.

Roundtable Comment: The International Steering Committee of the CD and the World Movement for Democracy should be engaged as partners on Items 1 and 2.

Roundtable Recommendations

1. Revitalize the UN Democracy Caucus to make it more effective

CD members should focus on making the Democracy Caucus in the United Nations a more active caucus, both in New York and Geneva. Concerted action on issues relevant to democracy and human rights, in which democratic governments often have shared values and interests, should be sought.

2. Identify major challenges to democracy and strategies for addressing them

Research and expertise should be utilized to better understand the most serious threats to democratic development. The CD should engage in a substantive dialogue with academic experts and practitioners to keep current on the latest challenges and cutting edge strategies for responding to them.

3. Consolidate best practices into a handbook for democracy promotion

The CD should develop guidance for institutions of democratic governments seeking to strengthen democracy promotion policies. The CD and ISC/CD have networks of leading experts from the government sector and civil society that could catalogue successful programs and illustrate possible methods for improving policy decisions.

4. Establish regional, independent institutions for democracy

CD countries should support the establishment of regional intergovernmental bodies to focus on monitoring democratic development. The ASEAN region could host the first such institution, helping to support newly developed democratic countries in the process of consolidation and strengthening the voice of ASEAN on the global stage.

5. Incorporate democracy and human rights education into training for law enforcement and the military

Programs to improve the understanding that police and the military have of principles of democracy and human rights should be made a mandatory component of training. Law enforcement and military activity should not contradict the overarching values of democratic society.

6. Improve capacity for interaction with media and the private sector on issues of democracy

Democracy promoters need better strategies for conveying their message to the media and private sector actors. The CD should encourage and support training on how to deal with the media and how to develop better communications strategies for democracy assistance programs.

7. Engage segments of society that are not traditionally involved in democracy issues

Since effective democracy relies on active participation of all citizens, groups such as neutral voters and religious leaders should be included in outreach efforts on democracy promotion. These groups are often removed from the standard political discourse but offer important insights into the needs and challenges of promoting democracy in a community or country.

Regional Cooperation

The CD Working Group on Regional Cooperation, chaired by the Governments of Romania and South Korea, identified the following objectives in the July 2010 Global Democracy Work Plan:

1. Examine the possibilities for setting up interregional platforms for exchange of good practices and experience in the area of democracy support.
2. Encourage and facilitate the setting up of regional registers of expertise on electoral reform, constitutional law, democratic governance, and human rights law.
3. Encourage regional organizations to consider establishing training and awareness raising programs on the essential mechanisms of democracy building and their potential, to facilitate access and understanding for the population and the voters, including at the local community level.

Roundtable Recommendations

1. Form regional CD caucuses

In Asia and in other regions, CD members from the region should explore the possibility of forming regional caucuses to include regional CD governments and civil society organizations. This will allow governments and civil society to interact more regularly and on more substantive matters that relate to issues within the region.

2. Collect best regional practices on the conduct of elections

On a regional basis, CD governments should gather best practices on organizing free and fair elections and promote the development of

regional guidelines for quality elections. The Asian Network for Free and Fair Elections (ANFREL) could be an appropriate partner for this activity.

3. Create opportunities for regional and interregional dialogue on democracy support

The CD should create space where topical themes such as human rights, women's rights, and protection of civil society can be discussed among regional mechanisms such as ASEAN, the Organization of American States, or the African Union. The CD should consider inviting representatives of these regional organizations to participate in CD activities, including major Ministerial meetings and other forums.

4. Support the inclusion of civil society in regional and interregional mechanisms

The CD emphasizes the importance of civil society in the democratic process, so CD countries should encourage a greater role for civil society in the regional bodies in which they participate.

5. Support the development of an Asian network of Muslim democracy activists

Asia is home to major Muslim-majority countries that are thriving democracies as well as countries where significant Muslim minorities are important participants in democratic societies. Efforts have been made to form a civil society network of Muslim democrats across the region that would document best practices of democracy in an Islamic context and provide an important counterweight to perceptions of an inherent incompatibility between Islam and democracy. CD governments from all regions have an interest in supporting this movement and should find ways to contribute to its success.

6. Organize CD solidarity missions to regions where democracy faces stresses

The CD can make a unique contribution by sending missions to support measures to strengthen democracy. A coalition of experts could be assembled to address specific concerns, and this could be most effective in countries that have participated in CD activities but have developing or fragile democratic institutions.

7. Work with civil society to promote cross-regional interaction among CSOs

Much of the civil society networking in the CD process has been on a regional basis. CD countries and processes should support opportunities for idea-sharing across regions at the civil society level as it is done at the country level.

Democracy Education

Democracy Education is not currently the topic of an active Working Group. Such a Working Group has been proposed, so the first recommendation of the Ulaanbaatar Roundtable is **to identify a Chair to take leadership of a CD Working Group on Democracy Education.** The following recommendations suggest action items that could be undertaken by this group upon its launch.

Roundtable Recommendations

1. Review and implement the Global Strategic Plan for Democracy Education

The Global Strategic Plan for Democracy Education developed by the International Steering Committee was endorsed by CD governments in the 2007 Bamako Consensus. Governments should encourage its review and implementation to strengthen national civic education policies with respect to democracy.

2. Integrate inclusive, experiential democracy education into teacher training curricula

Teachers should be trained on creative ways to incorporate democracy education into curricula, with an emphasis on combining academic or classroom learning with experiential learning to make a more lasting impact on students. Opportunities for practicing democracy in the school setting can often be the most impactful in instilling an understanding of civil responsibility in a democracy. Democracy education programs should also ensure inclusiveness, with equal participation of women, ethnic, cultural, sexual, and other minorities.

3. Explore learning opportunities for elected leadership from new democracies

Partnerships between established democracies and new democracies to expose newly elected leaders to democracy in practice would be an

ideal project for the Community of Democracies. Sharing experiences and learning from each other could be seen as a welcome and acceptable approach to developing training programs to support the consolidation of democracy.

4. Open channels of dialogue between civil society and elected officials

Effective interactions between government and civil society at all levels, especially at the local level, would be an important avenue for creating better understanding of citizens' rights and government's responsibilities in a democratic society.

5. Promote youth participation in democratic processes

Strategies for increasing youth engagement in the democratic process are among the best tools for ensuring a strong democracy in the future. Democratic countries should be encouraged to develop formal and informal education opportunities for children (under 18) and youth (under 30). The CD should introduce and strengthen opportunities for youth engagement, including a Young Democrats Workshop and parallel activities for youth during CD activities.

6. Open public spaces for free expression

Democratic governments should assist in opening democratic public spaces, especially at local levels, to build citizens' participatory skills and deliberation capacity. These do not have to be explicitly political in nature; free speech forums, community events, or street plays can function creative forms of democracy education.

7. Make democracy education a mainstream priority in assistance programs

CD governments and other aid agencies should include considerations for democracy education

in their support programs. Mainstreaming democracy education into foreign aid and development programs, through agencies like the UN Democracy Fund and the UN Development Program, and increasing direct support for civil society in the field of democracy education will signal a greater commitment to democracy education as an essential tool of democracy support.

8. Include education on workplace democracy as a component of democracy education programs

The principles and practice of workplace democracy should be promoted by enacting a legal framework that effectively ensures the freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining, in order to respect, protect, and promote the right of workers to participate in the public life of the enterprise.

9. Explore opportunities for partnerships to promote democracy education

CD governments should develop extensive public-private partnerships with organizations devoted to democracy education, support civil society networking activities, and seek cooperation with grassroots networks that have expertise on this issue. Greater openness in the development of curricula would set an example of democratic principles and indicate the high priority placed on them by society.

10. Engage media to publicize CD activities and promote greater awareness of democratic principles

Greater attention should be given to drawing media into CD events and activities to make the public more aware of the principles the CD promotes. The CD itself should serve as an instrument of democracy education, but it needs to find opportunities to present these ideas to a broader audience.



**Council for a Community
of Democracies**

**International Steering Committee
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UNDEF



The United Nations
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The United Nations Democracy Fund (UNDEF) finances projects carried out by a wide range of governance actors, including NGOs, civil society organizations, executive, legislative and judicial branches of government, constitutionally independent national bodies, and the United Nations, its relevant departments, specialised agencies, funds and programmes. UNDEF aims to support those partners who undertake action-oriented projects to bring about measurable and tangible improvements in democracy and human rights on the ground, thereby translating the concept of “democracy” into practical solutions for people to have their voices and choices heard.

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