

“We have supported the Council for a Community of Democracies, so that ... a civil society network that operates in parallel [to governments] will be able to...make its contribution [to the Community of Democracies].”

*—Mark Malloch Brown,
Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations*

The Bamako Roundtable on Democracy in Africa

September 5–6, 2006



Council for a Community
of Democracies

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Hosted by the Nongovernmental Executive Secretariat
of the **Community of Democracies in Bamako**

1 The First in a Series of Regional
Nongovernmental Reports
to the Governments of the
Community of Democracies

The Bamako Roundtable on Democracy in Africa

From September 5-6, the Council for a Community of Democracies (CCD) organized the Bamako Roundtable on Democracy in Africa on behalf of the Nongovernmental International Steering Committee, with the help of a grant from the National Endowment for Democracy. The Roundtable benefited from having taken place immediately following the two-day meeting of the Management Committee of the African Democracy Forum (ADF) of the World Movement for Democracy and therefore had the participation of six members of the ADF leadership.

Joining them were: Amb. Istvan Gyarmati, Director of the International Centre for Democratic Transition from Budapest, Hungary, a Kenyan economist funded by the Center for International Private Enterprise, an authority on African elections made available by the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES), a Ghanaian Nigerian-based representative of the International Republican Institute, a U.K. representative of the Westminster Democracy Foundation, two Ghanaian

experts recommended by the Centre for Democracy and Development (CDD), and representatives from Freedom House and the Democracy Coalition Project from the U.S. Mali-based representatives of the National Democratic Institute and the Netherlands Institute for Multi-Party Democracy as well as a representative of the United Nations Development Program also participated.

Hosting the Roundtable was Dr. Oumar Makalou, President of the International Nongovernmental Secretariat of the Community of Democracies. The Secretariat, consisting of ten major Malian nongovernmental organizations was represented at the Roundtable by participants from several of its constituent NGO partners.

Present at the opening of the Roundtable were Malian Foreign Minister Moctar Ouane, Diplomatic Counselor to the President, Mamadou Traore, Amb. Oumar Daou, Director of Political Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, UNDP Resident Representative Joseph Byll-Cataria and U.S. Ambassador to Mali, Terrance McCulley. Addressing delegates to the Roundtable, Minister Ouane spoke of

Participants

Joseph Asunka, Ghana Centre for Democratic Development (CCD-Ghana)

Daniel Bartha, International Centre for Democratic Transition, Budapest, Hungary

Augustin Cisse, Mali, Netherlands Institute for Multi-Party Democracy (IMD)

Maiga Djingary, Mali, Executive Secretariat of the Nongovernmental Process of the CD

Dohki Fasshian, U.S., Democracy Coalition Project

Hannah Forster, the Gambia, African Centre for Democracy and Human Rights Studies

Audrey Gadzekpo, Ghana, School of Communications, University of Ghana

Paul Graham, South Africa, Institute for Democracy in South Africa (IDASA)

Amb. Istvan Gyarmati, Hungary, International Centre for Democratic Transition (ICDT)

Christina Hartman, Freedom House

Ryota Jonen, Japan, World Movement for Democracy

Josephat Juma, Kenya, Inter Regional Economic Network (IREN)

Mohamed Keita, Mali, Executive Secretariat of the Nongovernmental Process of the CD

Robert R. LaGamma, U.S., Council for a Community of Democracies

Charles Lasham, U.K., International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES)

Oumar Makalou, Mali, Executive Secretariat of the Nongovernmental Process of the CD

Matthias Naab, Ghana, International Republican Institute

Marina Narnor, Ghana, Westminster Democracy Foundation

Ayo Obe, Nigeria, World Movement for Democracy

Raphael Ouattara, Cote d'Ivoire, National Democratic Institute (NDI)

Marc Traore, Mali, Executive Secretariat of the Nongovernmental Process of the CD

Juliet Ibekaku UmeEzeoke, Nigeria, Africa Democracy Forum

Dieudonne Zognong, Cameroon, Humanus Foundation

Mali's pride in hosting next year's Fourth Ministerial Conference of the Community of Democracies. He voiced his country's strong commitment to the partnership forged by the Community between governments and civil society, the twin pillars of the democracy movement.

During the two-day Roundtable, participants considered ten issues critical to advancing democracy in Africa and identified specific recommendations for action by the governments of the Community of Democracies. They successfully sought to link the efforts of the African Democracy Forum, the International Nongovernmental Secretariat based in Bamako and the Nongovernmental International Steering Committee of the Community of Democracies in order to advance the cause of democracy on the continent.

Roundtables in Asia, the Americas, Europe and the Middle East will produce parallel recommendations that will be published in this series.

Robert R. LaGamma, Executive Director,
Council for a Community of Democracies.

Issues Considered by the Roundtable Panels:

1. **Gender Equality**
2. **Advancing Press Freedom**
3. **Poverty, Development and Democracy**
4. **Education for Democracy**
5. **Rule of Law**
6. **Improving Standards for the Conduct of Elections**
7. **The Assault on Democracy and the Right to Free Association**
8. **The Role of Political Parties**
9. **Free Enterprise and Democracy**
10. **UN Reform and the UN Democracy Caucus**
11. **The Role of the African Democracy Forum in the Community of Democracies**
12. **The Role of the International Centre for Democratic Transition in assisting Africa.**

Panelists considered the nature of the problem on each issue then recommended steps that governments could take to address those problems.

Here are the panels' findings and recommendations:

Panel #1 Gender Equality

Introduction:

In recent times, there has been significant paradigm shifts in favor of gender equality and advocacy coupled with significant interests in the discourse on gender/women issues. Significant political reforms have also invigorated civil society and energized women's organizations and movements across Africa, providing fresh opportunities for non-state actors to mobilize around issue of gender equality.

While acknowledging these critical and significant strides/changes (especially in the area of decision-making and representation, advocacy, etc.) it is generally acknowledged that a lot more still needs to be done in advancing the course of gender and especially women in Africa.

Problem Statement:

It is imperative to underscore the many problems faced by women generally on the continent. The following is a summary of some of the problems identified by panelists:

- Numerous human rights abuses against women
- Society preference and recognition of male children
- Increase in sexual abuses in schools, communities and work environments
- Educational discrimination
- Marriage: women generally have no say in the choice of their partner
- General neglect of women's rights
- Rape: used as a strategic weapon in conflict and in war-torn countries
- Lack of political will by national governments to legislate in favor of women's rights (i.e. ratification and/or domestication of international conventions and protocols.
- Other critical problems include: poverty, reproductive health and trafficking in women
- Women in decision-making.
- Violence against women.



Recommendations

- There is a need to strengthen opportunities for girl-child education (especially secondary education)
- Greater efforts must be taken to eliminate gender gaps.
- Access to sexual and reproductive health information and services must be increased.
- There must be greater investment to reduce the work load on women and girls.
- Sustained efforts must be made to ensure and guarantee women's economic and property rights.
- There must be a reduction in discrimination against women in the labor market.
- Women's participation and representation in the political and electoral processes must be increased.
- Governments must combat violence and abuse against women.
- The capacity of women's groups and associations (civil society) in the area of advocacy must be strengthened.
- There must be sustained advocacy for the ratification and domestication of international charters, conventions, declarations, particularly the Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality adopted by African Heads of State in 2004.
- Women's participation in decision-making (in the public service) must be strengthened.
- Elected representatives must be helped to understand gender issues on critical concerns to women.
- Links must be forged between women in public life and CSOs.
- The root causes of gender inequality and powerlessness, often socially based, must be addressed.
- Boys and men need to be involved and sensitized in order to break the generational transfer of attitudes and norms perpetuating gender discrimination.
- Women and women's groups must be involved in the peace process (in support of UN resolution 1325) and involve national governments in supporting this initiative.

We also note that it is important to emphasize positive stories of significant change. There is a need to change the philosophy and approach to gender equality and there is a need for the development of a new approach to addressing women's rights and gender equality.

Women's rights issues need to be incorporated in the early stages of democratization initiatives and not mid-way or at the end of the transition.

Finally, gender equality is **not** about women taking power away from men, but women working with men in community development and as a result of women receiving their fair share of opportunities.

Panel #2 Advancing Press Freedom in Africa

The panel noted the tremendous growth of the African media resulting from re-democratization and the potential of the press to strengthen democracy. It assessed media performance as mixed, enumerating some of their strengths, weaknesses and external constraints as follows:

Strengths

- Exposing wrongdoing, corruption, bad governance
- Compelling more political and public accountability
- Providing a platform for public discussion and debate on local and national issues

Weaknesses

- Fragile and poorly capitalized thus their effectiveness is weak especially in the political arena
- Weak corporate governance
- Insufficient income to employ and train competent staff and properly gather and disseminate news
- Lack of professionalism
- Widespread unethical practices that undermine public interest.
- Over-politicization of issues and political polarization
- Prosecution of misleading and narrow agendas.

- Competition and commercialization at the expense of editorial content
- Hegemonic tendencies that do not provide adequate voice to the voiceless
- 8. Teaching media literacy as part of civic and public education.
- 9. Protection of journalists from harassment.
- 10. Support for journalists' groups

External Constraints

- Few journalism schools or sustained training opportunities for training and re-training professional journalists
- Legal and political environment not conducive to the profession
- No freedom of information acts
- Increase in number of lawsuits and award of huge damages
- Waning public support for media freedom
- Attacks and harassment of journalists

Recommendations

Deriving from this assessment and the fact that the media are indispensable to democracy the following recommendations were made:

1. Deepening journalists' democratic ethos and their sense of public responsibility through democracy training.
2. Helping journalists to improve their professional skills and ethics through training, including on specialized reporting.
3. Encouraging more editorial accountable and better corporate governance from media through training and technical assistance.
4. Addressing issues of media viability and sustainability through management training and technical support.
5. Increased advocacy on legal reforms and improved regulatory frameworks.
6. Stronger collaboration between democratically-minded civic groups and civil society organizations and the media.
7. Improving the information environment by advocating for enabling legislation such as Freedom of Information Acts

Panel #3 Poverty, Democracy and Development

The issues

- Democracy and development are complementary not antagonistic processes
- Democracy promotes political stability based on free electoral systems, respect for human rights, freedom of association and freedom generally
- Development requires political stability
- Poverty constitutes a major threat to democratic development
- And economic growth is a necessary, but not a sufficient condition for development

Recommendations

- Strengthen democracy, as a necessary condition for development
- Ensure sustainable growth through adoption of sound economic management (macro, micro, monetary, fair trade and investment-drive both local and foreign direct investment)
- Education of civil society organizations in the field of democracy education and economic management. For this purpose we suggest the setting up of a network of civil society organizations to appraise the state of democracy and the levels of economic development throughout the continent.
- Push the agenda to reduce inequality and poverty through the MDG campaigns, entrenchment of socio-economic rights in constitutions and the use of the peer review processes
- Civil Society should actively participate in the CD working group on "poverty, development and democratic governance"



Panel #4 Education for Democracy

In this and other panels, it was widely acknowledged that it is vital to address the issue of creating a democratic political culture through education in order to create a widespread understanding of democracy among the populace of any country. There was broad agreement that it is necessary to develop a strategy that centers on introducing education for democracy into the school curriculum at every level, and that the curriculum of each country would vary according to the history and culture of that country. Nonetheless, while history and culture would shape presentation of the subject, certain universal values, it was agreed, must be at the core of each curriculum. Such education serves to inform citizens, especially those at the grassroots about their rights, and affects all levels of society.

It was agreed that a society that invests in democracy education reaps reward in areas of gender equality, increased participation in the political process at all levels, freedom for each citizen, participation in decision-making processes, and promotion of a strong and active civil society. Gender equality and advancement of African culture are essential elements of democracy education and should be incorporated in teaching about democracy in Africa.

Recommended Actions

1. African Ministries of Education should ensure that education for democracy has an important place in their school curricula.
2. Donor countries should help by making education for democracy a priority in their assistance programs.
3. UNESCO and other multilateral institutions including the World Bank should make education for democracy a higher priority and devote greater resources to it.
4. The Community of Democracies since its inception in Warsaw in 2000 has highlighted the importance of democracy education as a means of strengthening and consolidating democracy around the world. Special attention must be given to implementing reforms consistent with its pronouncements, especially in Africa. We recommend

that the Community of Democracies establish a special working group at the Bamako Ministerial to recommend concrete actions designed to advance this agenda.

Panel #5 Strengthening Rule of Law in Africa

Statement of the Problem:

Premise: Rule of law is critical to the stability of democracies.

1. Weak governance institutions and electoral processes impact negatively on rule of law.
2. Lack of respect for constitutional provisions of checks and balances creates tension and often exacerbates conflict.
3. Lack of enforcement and sanctions for impunity and corruption weakens respect for rule of law.
4. Ignorance of constitutional provisions by citizens impedes respect for rule of law.

Key Recommendations:

1. Electoral processes need improvement.
2. Access to information needs to be fostered.
3. Judicial independence needs strengthening. The Judiciary as pillar of rule of law should instill confidence in citizens. As such the selection and appointment of judicial officials must be credible and transparent.
4. Term limitations should be included in the Constitution for all elective positions.
5. Prosecutors must be independent enough to discharge their tasks without fear. They must not be used by government to intimidate the opposition.
6. The security of tenure of all critical government positions must be guaranteed.
7. The police must be adequately funded to carry out their mandate of protecting society.
8. Government must develop strong mechanism to address corruption.

9. CCD should use the AU/NEPAD/APRM platform to strengthen rule of law across the continent.
10. Training programs should be developed that deepen understanding of democratic values.
11. Democratic institutions and personnel require training and must be equipped to carry out their functions.
12. Civic education must be made a part of school curricula at all levels.
13. Constitutions should be translated into local languages and widely disseminated.
14. Governments must respect their constitutions.

Panel #6 Improving Standards for the Conduct of Elections

Major Recommendation:

1. Where they do not currently exist, each country should create permanent, independent Electoral Commissions. Elections are not discrete events but are a process.

Specific Recommendations:

2. Elections must be organized according to the principle of direct, secret and universal suffrage.
3. Elections must be organized regularly, honestly and on a calendar that is well known to all in advance.
4. Electoral standards should be included in the texts of constitutions.
5. Electoral codes should regulate the conduct of elections.
6. Training and electoral education should be assured on a regular basis.
7. Electoral observers should be accepted during all phases of elections.
8. Election campaigns should assure equitable access to the media for all candidates.
9. Challenges to electoral results should be permitted

in the post electoral period.

10. Excuses of cultural relativism should be avoided in the conduct of elections.
11. All countries should adopt internationally accepted standards for their elections in order to achieve free and fair assessment of their electoral process.
12. In addition to allowing domestic and international observers, we recommend that each country preparing to organize elections adopt the Declaration of Principles for Election.
13. Observation and the Code of Conduct for International Observers (UN October 2005).
14. Begin to implement change 6-12 months after an election based upon observer reports to improve future elections.
15. Make electoral law and the Constitution available to civil society and citizens for a better understanding of the electoral process and citizens' rights and responsibilities

Panel #7 The Assault on Democracy and the Right to Free Association

Participants deliberated on the following resolution as passed by the Nongovernmental International Steering Committee and the Executive Board of the World Movement for Democracy. While affirming strong for the principle of free association and the essence of the resolution the Africa Democracy Forum Management Committee formed a group to study the resolution and draft a separate resolution in order to present its own perspective on the issue. Herewith the text of that declaration:

Africa Democracy Forum

Building Democracy for Peace, Development, and Human Rights in Africa

Statement of the African Democracy Forum Management Committee

in support of

Proposed Resolution of the Community of Democracy on Restrictive NGO Laws

The Management Committee of the African Democracy Forum (ADF), a regional network of democrats in Africa, supports the draft resolution submitted by the International Steering Committee for the Community of Democracies (CD) Nongovernmental Process, and hereby urges the CD to re-commit themselves to the principles of the Warsaw Declaration, affirming the respect for rights of people to associate and assemble and ensuring an environment conducive to democratic development.

Over the last several months, we have received messages and reports from our friends and colleagues from within and outside Africa, describing the increasingly limited environments, in which they conduct activities to promote democratic values and protect human rights. As members of the ADF Management Committee, we express our concern over the emerging phenomenon of restrictive NGO laws in various countries on civil society's activities that promote greater civil rights and strengthening democratic institutions.

We would like to draw attention of the CD member states to the following democratic principles in the Warsaw Declaration:

- "The right of every person to freedom of opinion and of expression, including to exchange and receive ideas and information through any media, regardless of frontiers."
- "The right of every person to freedom of thought, conscience and religion."
- "The right of every person to freedom of peaceful assembly and association, including to establish or join their own political parties, civic groups, trade unions or other organizations with the necessary legal guarantees to allow them to operate freely on a basis of equal treatment before law."

The important role of civil society in a democracy is recognized and promised by the CD member states. Furthermore, The Declaration states that the CD member states will "promote civil society, including women's organizations, non-governmental organizations, labor and business associations, and independent media in their exercise of their democratic rights.

Informed participation by all elements of society, men and women, in a country's economic and political life, including by persons belonging to minority groups, is fundamental to a vibrant and durable democracy." While recognizing the importance of the "respect for sovereignty and the principle of non-interference in internal affairs," the Declaration also indicates that the CD member states intend "to create an external environment conducive to democratic development."

We, members of the ADF Management Committee, urge the CD member states to re-affirm their commitment to those democratic principles and values and encourage non-CD member states to respect those principles. We sincerely hope that at the CD Ministerial meeting in Bamako in 2007 all the member states will adopt the draft resolution by the ISC of the CD Nongovernmental Process, which seeks to promote that the "efforts to repress democracy promotion activities should cease and that any existing legal restrictions toward that end be repealed". In conclusion, we hope that they will affirm "the rights of nongovernmental organizations to promote democracy in support of the rights defined in the Warsaw Declaration."

September 19, 2006

Hannah Forster

*Chair, Management Committee of the
African Democracy Forum*

Panel #8 Integrating Political Parties in the CD Nongovernmental Process

Since the Warsaw Declaration the role of political party participation within the Community of Democracies has been addressed as an issue to consider. Consideration was given to this issue during the Seoul and Santiago meetings, but no decision had been taken. The first meeting of the International Steering Committee in Bamako took the decision to find a way to include political parties in the NGP, possibly through the inclusion of the four party Internationals, but no resolution to this inclusion resulted. A working group formed of NDI, WFD, NIMD and Participa initiated a draft TOR. After the Bamako meeting NIMD and NDI went onto elaborate the draft TOR. A formula for inclusion of political parties is in its final stages and will be considered by the International Steering Committee later this year.

Political parties are key actors in the democratic process. They have a specific status and role because they are neither government nor NGO, and therefore can play a critical role in the CD NGP.

Prior to agreement on the inclusion of political parties in the broader nongovernmental process NIMD and NDI initiated some activities in collaboration with the Malian Executive Secretariat in Bamako: Augustine Cisse from NIMD introduced these activities.

On May 20th 2006, an information session organized by the ES to introduce the CD and the road map of Mali's presidency to the Malian political parties. During this workshop, the ES shared the topics addressed by the NGOs as priorities for discussion. The Malian political parties saw it as important for themselves and can discuss these issues with political sensitivities.

NIMD took the opportunity of the meeting of political parties from 8 countries on capacity building in Accra in July 2006 to inform them about the CD.

Another participant gave an example of partnership between political parties and civil society showing that collective action on a specific issue had more impact and increased trust between the two partners.

The debate following the presentations highlighted some key questions:

What types of partnership?

What types of partnership to make an impact?

How are civil society and political party interests to be reconciled?

Recommendations

The nongovernmental process should include some form of political party representation in the International Steering Committee.

The development of advocacy training is necessary for civil society and political parties.

There is a need to organize joint civil society/political party meetings with a common agenda.

Political foundations and donors should be encouraged to support the inclusion process.

The ISC should present its plan for including political parties in the nongovernmental process to the Bamako Ministerial Conference.

Panel #9 Free Enterprise and Democracy

A lively debate on the role of the private sector failed to achieve consensus on the boundaries between what the private sector should do vis-à-vis government. It was agreed that the issue would be raised within the framework of the African Democracy Forum in the coming year to produce a greater consensus on the issues related to free enterprise.

Recommendations

- To advance democracy with free enterprise governments must provide for freedom of movement and open borders as well as to strengthen physical infrastructure (road and air) to allow greater movement between countries.
- Governments must harmonize legislation to ease transactions.
- Increase grassroots sensitization to facilitate informed choices.
- Strengthen legal infrastructure to:
 1. respect property
 2. enforce contracts
 3. be predictable
 4. hasten justice
- Must allow competition to increase
- Strengthen corporate governance and public and private partnerships
- Must undertake market analysis;
- Must form groups for the production of goods, export and sales;
- Train personnel extremely important. Asia is an example of good practice. Africans should lean from this.



- Should not only look at bottom line — profit margin.
- Democracy mentioned for the first time. In relation to mining, must preserve the environment.
- Must avoid monopolies — whether they are state or free enterprise monopolies.
- Main issue is monopoly and management. Must be well managed.

Panel #10 United Nations Reform and the U.N. Democracy Caucus, and the International Advisory Committee of the CD Invitation Process

Participants supported the role of the U.N. Democracy Caucus in promoting reforms based on democratic values. They strongly supported the U.N. Democracy Fund (UNDEF), and agreed to urge member states, particularly members of the Democracy Caucus, to heed the call of the Secretary General to renew their contributions to it. They indicated that they will closely follow events at the U.N. concerning such issues as the evolution of the Human Rights Council. Participants agreed to consider issues such as the development of the Universal Periodic Review, continuation of country-specific situations, yearly elections to the Council, and freedom of association, as areas in which the UN Democracy Caucus should become involved. Participants felt the inclusion of the ISC in the UN Democracy Caucus proceedings to be an important opportunity to project the views of civil society in international fora.

Participants welcomed the International Advisory Committee's work on strengthening the CD Invitation Process. They agreed to support the Committee's work and said they welcomed consultations with the Secretariat of the IAC on country reports and recommendations for African democracies.

Panel #11 the Role of the African Democracy Forum (ADF) in the Community of Democracies (CD)

The ADF currently is focused on four issues:

1. Gender equality, including women's participation (started planning and will happen in 2007)
2. HIV/AIDS (started planning)
3. Corruption
4. Externalities affecting policies

Potential collaboration for the CD

1. ADF participants can contribute to CD process.
2. African NGOs need to be better informed about the CD process and its significance.
3. There is a need for African NGOs to be represented in all aspects of the process and adequately represented in these bodies.
4. There is a need to use the regional institution-building processes, especially the APRM.

Challenges to further cooperation

1. Finances
2. Language

Panel #12 the Possible Role in Africa of the International Centre for Democratic Transition (ICDT)

Ambassador Istvan Gyarmati, President of the ICDT introduced the Centre to participants in the Bamako Roundtable. The ICDT was created in Hungary six months ago this year. It is now fully operational and ready to play a role in Africa.

In the past few years many transitional democracies have experienced failures. The problem is that many do not know the path to follow. The ICDT collects the experi-

ences of transitional democracies not just in Central and East Europe, but also in such countries as South Korea, Chile and Spain among others. Rather than aiming to promote democracy in general, ICDD sets more concrete and pragmatic goals: we concentrate on democratic transition as a process.

ICDD does not aim at regime change. We seek to be helpful to people. We work with local partners in order to ensure the effectiveness of our advice. Our projects are carefully planned to take local conditions into account.

Ambassador Gyarmati summarized three current ICDD projects:

1. The Oral History project aims to preserve the valuable pool of knowledge of the leaders of transitions by using the methodology of “oral history” by conducting in-depth interviews with individuals key to the transitions. Tapping the memories of such individuals will enable us to create a credible and detailed picture of the transition process and eventually yield insights that will help with an understanding of the transition process.
2. The Ombudsman Project in Kosovo aims at enhancing the effectiveness of the Ombudsperson Institution. This project consists of two parts. First, local and Hungarian experts are studying the workings of the Ombudsperson Institution and analyzing local needs through broad-based consultation among civil organizations and governmental officials in Kosovo. Second, a Task Force will be formed which, by relying on the findings of the consultations, will draft a feasibility study on a new concept and framework for the Ombudsperson Institution, together with legal recommendations.
3. Management of oil resources: ICDD will look at ways in which it can help oil producing countries to spend oil revenues effectively, taking into account the needs of citizens.

Ambassador Gyarmati reported that he met with Louis Michel, European Commissioner for Development and Humanitarian Aid on August 28th and discussed possible projects for Africa.

ICDD announced its intention to seek project proposals from Africa and to cooperate with projects intended to strengthen democracy in Africa.

International Steering Committee of the Nongovernmental Process of the Community of Democracies

AMERICAS

Andrea Sanhueza, *Chile, PARTICIPA*

Genaro Arriagada, *Chile, Diario 7*

Dick Rowson, *USA,*

Council for a Community of Democracies

Morton Halperin, *USA, Open Society Institute*

ASIA

Gus Midlat, *Philippines,*

Initiatives for International Dialogue

Michael Kau, *Taiwan,*

Taiwan Foundation for Democracy

Vo Van Ai, *Vietnam/France,*

Vietnam Committee on Human Rights

Soon Juan Chee, *Singapore,*

Alliance for Reform and Democracy in Asia

MENA

Mohsen Marzouk, *Tunisia, Freedom House*

Sama Leftawi Awidha, *Palestine,*

Arab Network of Women

Amina Bouayach, *Morocco,*

Moroccan Commission on Human Rights

Yousry Moustapha, *Egypt,*

Coordinator of the Arab Human Rights Fund

SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

Ayesha Imam, *Nigeria, African Democracy Forum*

Dieudonne Zognong, *Cameroon,*

African Democracy Forum

Oumar Makalou, *Mali, Executive Secretariat of the*

Non- Governmental Process of the CD

Paul Graham, *South Africa, IDASA*

EUROPE+RUSSIA+NIS

Yuri Dzhibladze, *Russia, Centre for the Development of Democracy and Human Rights*

Marina Narnor, *UK,*

Westminster Foundation for Democracy

Roel von Meijefeldt, *The Netherlands,*

Netherlands Institute for Multiparty Democracy

Ilona Mihaies, *Romania,*

Euroregional Centre for Democracy

Matteo Mecacci, *Italy, Transnational Radical Party*





Council for a Community of Democracies

CCD is a 501 (c) (3) tax-exempt organization incorporated in the District of Columbia where its office is in:

The DACOR Bacon House, suite 308
1801 F St. NW, Washington, DC 20006

Tel: 202-789-9771 Fax: 202 789-9764

Email: info@ccd21.org

Website: www.ccd21.org

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