

CIVIL SOCIETY PILLAR, COMMUNITY OF DEMOCRACIES**OUTCOME STATEMENT****25TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE WARSAW DECLARATION AND BEYOND****WASHINGTON DC, OCTOBER 29TH, 2024*****Democracy in recession:***

We are facing a global democratic recession. Democracy is under threat around the world, including in countries that have long been champions of fundamental rights and freedoms.

The Community of Democracies - CoD has been and must continue to be a powerful voice to deepen Democracy around the world. The Civil Society Pillar - CSP is independent but an integral dimension of the CoD and is committed to continuing and expanding its work, including in countries which are not a part of the CoD. In many of the CoD countries the CSP's focal points do not have strong links to the governments, making their work more difficult; many of the focal points have no connection, and in some CoD member states there are no focal points.

CoD transition period:

We are experiencing a transition period in the CoD, one which we must embrace as a golden opportunity to take the CoD to another level, hence becoming much more relevant and effective to strengthen Democracy around the world as a way of life and to protect and preserve human rights of all. This transition period presents an opportune juncture, and covers the following:

- A recently elected Secretary General, in Mr. Mantas Adomėnas;
- A recently elected Executive Committee (formed by Canada, Lithuania, Morocco, Panama, Poland, Republic of Korea and the United States of America), for 2024 - 2026;
- A new and well discussed and approved sound CoD Strategic Plan for 2024 - 2028;
- A new CoD presidency starting next year, under the leadership of Poland, where it all begun,
- A new Youth Democracy Network initiative is being developed, and
- The 25th Anniversary of the Warsaw Declaration next year, specifically on June 27th, 2025, a unique opportunity to look forward with vision and hope, for the next 25 years.

Twofold CoD Action Plan:

In said embracing of this transition period, the CoD's action plan should be twofold, internally and externally.

Internally:

-Work on a sound strategy, the CoD's Governing Council - GC with the Permanent Secretariat of the CoD - PSCD, in coordination with the CSP, for strengthening the CoD's finances. If the CoD leadership does not come up with a serious and realistic plan for strengthening our finances (i.e. getting significant funding from CoD member countries and potentially other outside organizations/institutions etc.), it will be very difficult for the CoD to survive, which we all feel strongly would be a terrible loss. We are facing the reality that not a single member state of the CoD, and that includes the U.S. and Poland, the essential creators, currently views the CoD as anywhere near the most important Democracy-focused platform. We must come up with ideas to move the CoD countries to make funding a higher priority, while also looking more widely for other prospective donors. At a time when Democracy is under threat in much of the world, one might expect more funding to be available.

-Establish a committee or mechanism to monitor and follow up, with the PSCD, the orderly progress and effective execution of the approved Strategic Plan (2024 - 2028).

-The CoD's Executive Committee - EC should meet regularly and, from now until mid-next year, always having in its agenda the item the "*25th Anniversary of the Warsaw Declaration celebration*". Almost a year ago, when the GC met in London, the International Steering Committee - ISC of the CSP formally proposed a working group precisely to work on this important matter; it has not yet been installed, reason why at this stage we propose for the EC to take up this matter directly.

-The GC and the Polish government, in coordination with the PSCD and the CSP, should organize an in person ministerial meeting of the CoD, in June of next year, in Warsaw, where this all began (June 27th, 2000).

-The Warsaw Declaration was not signed but adopted, by 106 countries. While Madelaine Albright and Bronislaw Geremek are considered the founders of the Community of Democracies, we recognize Dr. Morton H. Halperin as the initiator and one of the founding fathers of the Community of Democracies; he was also one of the main writers of the Warsaw Declaration and its 19 principles; we fully support his idea in that for such a ministerial gathering, member states should sign and reaffirm their adherence to the Warsaw Declaration, and other countries should be invited, perhaps as observers, to adhere to the same. A leading group

formed by high-ranking representatives of some 5 or 6 member states (perhaps some of which are now a part of the EC), with the ISC, should be established to politically give the necessary thrust to a concept of “*friends of the Warsaw Declaration*”.

-The GC, in coordination with the PSCD and the CSP, should work on a sound strategy to involve more member states in the Community; again, countries which could be invited to first join as observers; including countries with weak democracies and a commitment to advance democratic principles, and be assisted by more robust democracies, and establish a constructive and friendly mechanism by virtue of which member states and observers abide to the Warsaw Declaration and its 19 principles.

Externally:

-Member states should send an annual report on the state of Democracy in their respective countries, taking as a guide the 19 principles of the Warsaw Declaration, indicating progress, obstacles.

-As proposed by the ISC of the CSP in November last year, and was included into the new Strategic Plan, The GC, in coordination with the PSCD and the CSP should work on a strategy to strengthen the role of the CoD as convenor - catalyst, among the different pro-democracy efforts working for the same cause, such as: International IDEA - Global Democracy Coalition; Open Government; Summit for Democracy, Summit of the Americas; OECD, etc., international organizations, and different Democracy forums in cities such as Warsaw, Vilnius, Athens, among others.

-The CoD must intensify its media presence, not limited to social media. The CoD overall is one of the best kept secrets anywhere. It is much more difficult to obtain more support and possible funding if the CoD remains as a best-kept-secret.

-To differentiate from other pro-democracy efforts, in addition to serving as a convenor - catalyst, the CoD should embrace and work hard on the initiative the ISC Chair and the CSP has been leading, to establish a multi-sector approach platform, by virtue of which governments and political sector, civil society, academia and workers will work together on a level playing field and shared vision, via a constructive dialogue, in order to advance democratic principles towards a strengthened democratic culture.

In line with the above, we also must recognize the pivotal role civil society, academia, the private sector, and others play in building information integrity and enabling civic education and learning that enhances critical thinking, including around elections. Through advocacy, programming, and research, civil society organizations are essential to sounding the alarm on

threats to information integrity online and catalyzing real change on the ground, both in communities and in the halls of government.

-We also urge the CoD member states to commit to protecting and promoting Democracy and Civic Space at home and abroad. CoD member states can lead by example by adopting feminist foreign policy principles and human rights approaches in all engagements.

Focus on the Youth:

We also want to acknowledge the impressive efforts of the CoD Youth Leads, whom we saw in action on a global stage firsthand in March in Seoul, during the past Summit for Democracies. They truly represent the next generation of Democracy champions, and we are thrilled to know the Youth Democracy Network, a dynamic community of young leaders passionate about promoting Democracy, human rights, and fundamental freedoms, will be officially launched the first week of December this year, from Panama, Republic of Panama.

As CSP we will work on promoting new value based and principle-oriented leadership focusing on the youth and engaging with younger students to explain about fundamental civics and their rights and responsibilities as citizens; the absence of basic civics across a high percentage of schools in many countries has led to a sharp decline in support for Democracy and democratic values.

25th Anniversary of the Warsaw Declaration:

As the CoD enters its 25th year, the work of promoting and protecting democratic principles is more important now than ever. The 19 principles of the Warsaw Declaration remain a guiding light for all of us, as we look to bolster our democracies internally and, beyond our borders, to support democratic governance and promote respect for human rights.

There is a role to play for every sector in this endeavor, from each corner and all sectors working together. The CoD's integration of civil society via the CSP is an asset, and as CSP we shall continue to reach out to other sectors, also strengthening the CSP's focal points following the multi-sector approach, setting up focal points in CoD member states where there are none, and also in non CoD member states. Parallel to the latter, finalizing the execution of Memorandums of Understanding with other civil society networks in different regions of the world.

Although the CSP is an integral part of the CoD process and structure, but works independently, it can also explore working beyond the CoD, and partner with similar initiatives and nudge and accompany the CoD to do the same, to imbue the CoD with a fresh perspective and energy that would hopefully result into evolving new strategies. The 25th anniversary of the Warsaw Declaration next year is an opportunity to rediscover its roots and reboot.

The 25th anniversary of the Community of Democracies coming up next year offers an important marker on the calendar to reinvigorate commitment to Democracy around the world, and to spur high-level action. Considering the above-mentioned reflections and recommendations, the CSP is committed to this cause.



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