

**THE FIFTH INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE
OF NEW OR RESTORED DEMOCRACIES**

ULAANBAATAR, MONGOLIA

10-12 September, 2003

Ulaanbaatar Declaration

Democracy, Good Governance and Civil Society

i. We, the Governments and representatives of nations around the world gathered at the 5th International Conference of New or Restored Democracies,

ii. Declaring that democratic governance is legitimate and responsive, representative and participatory, transparent and accountable, and rights and law based. While it empowers, it offers checks and balances on authority to prevent abuse and enhances the promotion and protection of human rights, gender equality, and respect for the rule of law. We will endeavour to ratify, accept, or accede to the international human rights and international humanitarian law instruments;

iii. Democracy provides legitimacy to governments by rooting their actions in the will of the governed, builds greater success for national programs by engaging the energies of the governed, increases the potential for long-term sustainable economic development, and fosters human security by providing avenues for dissent to be expressed in legitimate, non-violent forms.

iv. Declaring further that the full, active and unobstructed participation of civil society, as they employ democratic and non-violent means, is essential for democratic governments to always remain responsive to the people's needs and wishes, including between elections;

v. Recognizing that new or restored democracies are today facing many challenges brought about by both national and international forces. Democracy has advanced rapidly in the last thirty years in many countries but we have also witnessed instances where democratic structures have come under direct threat by internal or external destabilisation forces of a military, political or economic nature;

vi. Recognising further that new or restored democracies also face the challenge of consolidating their sovereignty, their democratic achievements, of making democracy itself an irreversible process, and of ensuring that all members of society benefit from the democratisation process and are able to participate fully in the new systems of governance;

vii. Recalling that fifteen years have passed since the first International Conference of New or Restored Democracies (ICNRD) and that in these years democracy has developed and consolidated in many new and restored democracies, while some others have experienced failures due, *inter alia*, to armed conflicts or the undermining effect of organised crime, terrorist acts or repression;

viii. Recalling further that in the intervening period we have witnessed a rise in international terrorism. We fully support the increasing international efforts to address it. We reiterate our condemnation of all acts, methods and practices of terrorism, in all its forms and manifestations. In this regard, we underline the need to take the necessary steps to enhance international cooperation to prevent and combat terrorism, including measures that address factors that foster and sustain extremism and violence. Such efforts should comply with their obligations under international law, in particular international human rights, refugee and humanitarian law.

ix. Recognizing also the foregoing challenges, and in the spirit of solidarity and cooperation, desiring to open up a path for further strengthening the global democratic movement by the consolidation of new or restored democracies, as well as supporting other states in introducing democratic reforms for the benefit of all members of society. Democracy should be rooted in the Constitution of the State to provide permanency and a legal foundation;

x. Reaffirming the principles and commitments as endorsed in:

· The Manila Declaration adopted in June 1988 at the First International Conference of New or Restored Democracies;

· The Managua Declaration and plan of action adopted in July 1994 at the Second International Conference of New or Restored Democracies;

· The Final Document of Bucharest entitled “The review of the situation and recommendations” adopted in September 1997 at the Third International Conference of New or Restored Democracies; and

· The Cotonou Declaration adopted in December 2000 at the Fourth International Conference of New or Restored Democracies,

xi. Recognising further that:

- Democratic societies have certain qualities which we consider superior to others, particularly those concerned with their participatory, representative and equitable nature;

- Democracy, development and respect for human rights and of fundamental freedoms are interdependent and synergic; and

- Democracy is an ongoing process,

- xii. Dedicate our efforts to help new and restored democracies to both consolidate and deepen democracy.

- xiii. Endorse the following principles and agree to work towards implementing them in accordance to international, regional and national Plans of Action adopted in pursuance to this conference.

- xiv. Reaffirm our full adherence to the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and underline our commitment to strengthen the United Nations as the principal international multilateral forum.

I. A democratic society is a just and responsible society.

1. A just and responsible society cannot tolerate poverty and will work towards eliminating inequality and promoting equality of opportunities in our societies.

1a. We will endeavour to promote sustainable development and economic growth from which all members of our respective societies will benefit.

1b. We will strive to ensure access of all members of society to basic services, including health care, education, clean water supply, basic sanitation and affordable energy and communications.

1c. We will endeavour to ensure that globalisation does not have a negative but a positive effect on the poor, rural, or unskilled members of society.

2. A just and responsible society provides safety nets to the marginalised in society, with the assistance, if needed, of the international community.

2a. We will endeavour to reskill workers who are made redundant as a result of economic reform or technological changes.

3. A just and responsible society prioritises sustainable development.

3a. We undertake to address the urban/rural divide in the delivery of development services, and prioritise rural development.

3b. We undertake to address, with urgency, environmental problems.

3c. We exert our efforts to help achieve the Millennium Development Goals.

4. A just and responsible society is committed to human security and human development.

4a. We undertake to promote human security and human development to achieve cultural, economic, social, and political progress.

4b. We uphold political freedom and participation as important for human security and human development and reaffirm that fundamental aspects of human security and human development, including investing in education and health, increasing people's safety from the threat of violence, promoting equitable economic growth, and ensuring participation through democratic governance are mutually reinforcing principles leading to a better future for our societies.

4c. We undertake to incorporate in our respective national development strategies the above fundamental principles of human security and human development.

II. A democratic society is an inclusive and participatory society.

5. An inclusive and participatory society must provide access and ensure participation of its citizens in the national decision-making process.

5a. We will endeavour to adjust our institutions to better serve the goals of democracy.

5b. We will endeavour to strengthen representative democracy - parliamentary and electoral systems.

5c. We undertake to take all possible measures to encourage the full participation of women in the electoral process and increased representation of women at all levels, including legislatures.

5d. We will pursue, where necessary, electoral reforms with the participation of political parties and other relevant segments of civil society to uphold the principle of holding free, fair and periodic elections.

5e. We undertake to strengthen our electoral systems by ensuring independence of electoral bodies, monitoring electoral campaigns and processes by independent experts, and transparency of campaign contributions.

5f. We will endeavour to pursue further the consolidation of democratic multiparty systems in our societies to increase participation and representation of the people.

5g. We are committed to creating favourable conditions including a strong legal framework for the development of political parties and their engagement in political developments, elections, and responding to the interests of society.

5h. We will build mechanisms to give people better access to their members of parliament.

5i. We will take all possible measures to legislate only after proper consultations.

5j. We will endeavour to strengthen democracy at the local level.

5k. We will take measures to broaden electoral participation to encompass all sectors of our respective societies, particularly our citizens living abroad or overseas.

6. An inclusive and participatory society addresses the interests and concerns of people belonging to ethnic and other minorities.

6a. We undertake to keep an open dialogue with people belonging to minority groups to improve their situation.

6b. We undertake to ensure people belonging to minorities are well and truly represented in all the national institutions, and where this is not possible, to be regularly consulted.

7. An inclusive and participatory society values and implements compromise and accommodation as they facilitate the resolution of societal conflicts and promote stability of democracies.

7a. We commend achievements of democracy through compromise and accommodation as a universal means to mitigate conflicts, promote stability, and harness the creative energies of the people for common causes.

8. An inclusive and participatory society needs to foster national belongingness for all members and groups in society.

8a. We will endeavour to promote national unity and identity within all groups of society.

9. An inclusive and participatory society encourages education on democratic values and informs its members on their democratic rights and freedoms, as part of their efforts in consolidating their democracy.

9a. We will endeavour to initiate or facilitate the development of national education programmes, or to encourage the appropriate authorities to do so, to improve knowledge of basic democratic values and human rights.

III. A democratic society promotes and protects the rights and freedoms of all its members.

10. A democratic society promotes and protects the rights and freedoms of all its members providing instruments of redress for cases of breach of rights and abuse of power.

10a. We undertake to set up and strengthen national institutions and mechanisms to ensure that basic democratic principles and human rights are fully respected and guaranteed.

10b. We undertake to bring to justice, within existing national legal frameworks, any person, irrespective of status or position, who commits a breach of human rights or abuse of power.

11. A democratic society that promotes and protects the rights and freedoms of all its members protects those who work towards ensuring that such rights and freedoms are fully respected.

11a. We undertake to secure an environment conducive to the activities of Human Rights defenders in line with existing Human Rights instruments.

12. A democratic society protects vulnerable people.

12a. We undertake to address issues related to protection of children, women, the aged, and people with disabilities from abuse, especially during armed conflict.

12b. We undertake to address issues related to the empowerment of women and youth.

12c. We undertake to address issues related to the empowerment of children, the aged and people with disabilities.

IV. A democratic society is an open and transparent society.

13. An open and transparent society encourages the free creation, pursuit and flow of information.

13a. We undertake to make any legal reforms necessary to ensure the freedom of all types of media – print, broadcast and Internet.

13b. We undertake to ensure that our laws, while guaranteeing media freedom, do protect individuals, organisations and institutions from abuse.

13c. We will endeavour to give all people access to new information technologies.

14. An open and transparent society elicits the effective participation of civil society in local, national and international institutions and processes.

14a. We undertake to engage in regular and active dialogue and consultation with civil society organisations as our partners in our democratic development.

14b. We undertake to provide legislative and regulatory framework and foster an enabling environment for civil society organisations to develop. We shall promote partnerships between civil society and government. To that end

we undertake to involve broadly civil society in decision making processes at local and national levels.

14c. We undertake to serve our citizens by providing more information on government policies and programmes, and by considering the benefit of access to information legislation and systems, if not already in place.

V. A democratic society functions under agreed rules of law and accountability regardless of the challenges it may face.

15. A society that functions under agreed rules of law and accountability condemns all types of terrorism as a crime and a threat to peace and security at both national and international level, and democratic governance.

15a. We undertake to ensure that, while fighting terrorism, we will work to promote and protect human rights and fundamental freedoms as they are guaranteed by international and national legal instruments. We undertake to ensure due process to those who are charged with terrorism. We support the efforts being made by the international community under the auspices of the United Nations to address the issues of terrorism, and express the hope that the process will be accelerated.

15b. In the framework of our struggle against terrorism we undertake to promote democracy, human rights, good governance, development, and the rule of law as important in creating just, equitable, stable and secure societies.

15c. In the framework of our struggle against terrorism we undertake to work together to strengthen international law in order to enhance the fight against all types of terrorism and ensure a peaceful resolution of conflicts.

15e. We undertake to create and integrate, where necessary, mechanisms of conflict prevention and consensus-building in our societies.

16. A society that functions under agreed rules of law and accountability cannot tolerate violent and/or military insurgencies against a democratically elected government.

16a. We undertake to provide civilian control over military, paramilitary and police forces to ensure they protect democracy and constitutionality and through their actions do not undermine democratically elected regimes.

16b. We undertake to deal with insurgents against democratically elected governments in a lawful and constitutional manner.

17. A society that functions under agreed rules of law and accountability cannot tolerate abuse of power and corruption. These elements undermine democracy as they erode the people's trust in democratic governance.

17a. We undertake to promptly address any challenges to the separation of powers.

17b. We undertake to strengthen the safeguards for ensuring independence, impartiality and professionalism of the judiciary.

17c. We undertake to adjust, reform or reinvigorate systems and procedures to eliminate corruption and introduce accountability measures when trust is breached.

17d. We undertake to encourage the investigation of allegations of abuse of power and corruption. We will strive to help bring to justice parties, individuals or groups, within and outside our societies, responsible for the corruption of elected and appointed national officials, within existing national frameworks.

VI. Democratic societies show solidarity toward others

18. Encourage and assist other states in making the often difficult transition to democracy.

18a. Share experiences, lessons and best practices on the adoption of democracy and democratic institution building.

18b. Support multilateral organisations in their efforts to promote and strengthen democracy.

19. We take note of the outcome of the Seoul Conference of the Community of Democracies, held in November 2002 and encourage the two fora to work closely together in the pursuit of the common goal of developing and deepening democracy throughout the world.

20. We believe that democratic societies are better able to achieve the Millennium Development Goals as they are inherently and fundamentally participatory and representative. The more affluent democratic states need to assist new and restored democracies in meeting their development goals for the benefit of all people living in democratised developing countries as this ensures stability and thus the success of the democratisation process.

20 a. Assist new and restored democracies achieve their Millennium Development Goals.

20 b. Assist new and restored democracies in realising commitments undertaken in regional and international fora.

21. We express our appreciation and gratitude to the governments of the Philippines, Nicaragua, Romania, Benin and Mongolia, as well as to the United Nations and individual donor countries, for having made the five International Conferences of New or Restored Democracies possible. We call upon the United

Nations General Assembly and upon its member states to examine the possibility of providing further support to the ICNRD conferences, organised in cooperation with the United Nations.

22. The participants have expressed their deep gratitude and high appreciation to the people and the Government of Mongolia for successfully holding the Fifth International Conference of New or Restored Democracies. They have recognized that after thirteen years of the peaceful transition to a democracy and market economy Mongolia has made significant progress in promoting and consolidating democratic values.