

## The Community of Democracies

### Introduction

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Over 100 governments came together in Warsaw, Poland in June 2000 to participate in meeting of to create the Community of Democracies (CD). The meeting's final declaration launched the CD, through which member states collaborate on strengthening democratic values and institutions at home and abroad. The Warsaw Declaration also commits states to cooperating on democracy-related issues in existing international and regional institutions. The CD has since met in Seoul, Korea in 2002, and plans to meet in Santiago, Chile in 2005.

### Basic Facts

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- **Informal Association of States:** The CD is not an international organization, but an informal association of states whose foreign ministers meet every two years.
- **Led by Convening Group:** The CD is led by a convening group of governments, who function like a steering committee. The group meets regularly, coordinates communications, organizes conferences, determines invitations, and issues policy statements and press releases.
- **Convening group members** include the Czech Republic, Chile, India, the Republic of Korea, Mali, Mexico, Poland, Portugal, South Africa and the United States.
- **Only democratic countries** can be members of the Community of Democracies. Convening group members compare the records of member and aspirant countries before each ministerial to ensure compliance with the standards laid out in the Warsaw Declaration.

### Talking Points

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- By upholding criteria for membership, the Community of Democracies not only sets the standard for the behavior of democratic states, but also encourages countries that want to be “part of the club” to pay more attention to the state of their democracy – even among older democracies.
- Experience has shown that quick condemnation by the international community of attempted coups and takeovers helps to restore democracy within countries by providing legitimacy to pro-democracy activists.
- Democracy isn't easy, even in places where it has been long-established. By sharing information between countries about efforts to strengthen democracy, countries get practical advice and moral support.

### United States Position

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The United States was a key player in the initiative to form the Convening Group of Warsaw meeting during the Clinton Administration. The Bush Administration also supports the Community of Democracies.

### What We Do

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Citizens for Global Solutions monitors the Community of Democracies process, educates Americans about the CD, and supports the creation of a Democracy Group at the United Nations, as called for in the Warsaw declaration. Citizens for Global Solutions staff attended the 2002 Seoul Ministerial.