

# VILNIUS DECLARATION

SETTING UP THE YOUNG LEADERS FORUM OF THE COMMUNITY OF DEMOCRACIES

Democracy Days in Vilnius 21<sup>st</sup>-24<sup>th</sup> June, 2010

We, the participants of the Democracy Days in Vilnius,

- *expressing* our gratitude to the Community of Democracies for providing the opportunity to take part in a process that aims to strengthen the promotion of democracy around the world;
- *considering* the protection and support of human rights, fundamental freedoms, mutual respect, free and fair elections and tolerance as core values for establishing a democratic society;
- *believing* that there is no such thing as a perfect democracy, because democracy is not an all-or-nothing affair, but rather a continuous process of transformation, which presupposes a set of universally accepted principles;
- *appreciating* the commitment and contribution of young leaders to building democracy, which is possible only when strong will, motivation, open-mindedness and optimism are maintained;
- *expecting* to achieve a sustainable and effective international youth network that will encourage and motivate young people from around the world to be in the forefront of defending democratic values and principles;

Hereby agree to:

- *establish* the Young Leaders Forum of the Community of Democracies in order to involve youth in the process of building democracy;
- *share* the values and principles of fundamental human values set forth in the Warsaw Declaration which established the Community of Democracies and its subsequent declarations and documents;
- *encourage* participation in Community of Democracies activities by all young civil society activists and organizations which promote democratic principles;
- *educate* youth about democratic principles and practices and promote youth involvement in decision-making and policy-making processes;
- *reach* out and encourage young people to get involved with democracy promotion, active citizenship and political activities.

We hereby address the Community of Democracies and the Parliamentary Forum of the Community of Democracies with the request to:

- *support* the development of the Young Leaders Forum of the Community of Democracies;
- *foster* this and other networks which support young activists around the world and promote the values and principles of the Community of Democracies among budding politicians and civil society activists, thus enabling them to develop as valuable future leaders of a more democratic world;
- *provide* channels for the exchange of ideas, reform initiatives and participation in political and civil society activities and movements.

## Signatures of the participants of the Democracy Days (Vilnius):

1. VIKTORIJA BRAŽIŪNAITĖ (LITHUANIA)
2. Eugene Korsak (belarus)
3. Larina Pasynych (Ukraine)
4. Andriy Kobut
5. Irina Hubskaya (Belarus)
6. Ali S. Novruzov (Azerbaijan)
7. Zaur Arbuzov (Azerbaijan)
8. Yaroslav Rudkivskyy (Ukraine)
9. MASA Milutinović
10. Konstantin Ter-Nakalyan (Armenia)
11. LITRA LEONID (MOLDOVA)
12. Kristine Saroyan (Armenia)
13. Liliana Calancea (Moldova)
14. Torosyan Yeva (Armenia)
15. Stephen Gichohi (Kenya)
16. Mikhail Pashkevich (belarus)
17. ~~3. [Signature]~~ (SAKARTVELO)
18. [Signature] (Burma)
17. [Signature] (Burma)
18. [Signature] (Burma)
19. Maka Mosulishvili (Georgia)
20. Natia Tsvariani (Georgia)

21 Armine Hakhinyan ~~AKH~~

22. Larisa Skryhan ~~SKR~~

23 - Rosca Ruxanda Republic of Moldova  
Rosca

24. Alberto Kabbabe (Venezuela).

Alberto Kabbabe

25. Tonik Tonikyan (Armenia)

~~Tonikyan~~

26 Monika Sargsyan (Armenia)

Monika Sargsyan

THE YOUNG LEADERS FORUM OF  
THE COMMUNITY OF DEMOCRACIES (YLF OF CoD)

YOUNG LEADERS FORUM STRUCTURE

I

Participants of Democracy Days gathered in Vilnius in June 2010 and created the Young Leaders Forum (YLF) of the Community of Democracies (CoD), guided by the democratic principles of the Warsaw Declaration of 2000. YLF is committed to strengthening the effectiveness of the Community of Democracies in promoting and supporting democracy around the world. YLF will establish a Bureau located in Vilnius with the mission of providing multidimensional support to the Chairman, Vice-Chairmen, and members of the YLF congress.

II

YLF of CoD will be led by a Bureau. The Bureau will consist of:

1. Chairman
2. Five Vice-Chairmen from different world regions
  - Africa
  - Asia
  - Europe
  - North America
  - South America and Caribbean

III

YLF will be based alongside the Vilnius-based Parliamentary Forum, thus sharing its Bureau which will ensure technical support from the Parliamentary Forum for the implementation of the activities of young leaders.

IV

The meetings of the YLF Congress will take place at least once a year.

YOUNG LEADERS FORUM VOTING PROCEDURE

VOTED:

1. Election of Chairman
2. Election of the Vice-chairman (Africa)
3. Election of the Vice-chairman (Asia)
4. Election of the Vice-chairman (Europe)
5. Election of the Vice-chairman (North America)
6. Election of the Vice-chairman (South America and Caribbean)
7. Delegation of the Chairman of YLF of CoD to proceed with all necessary actions to register the organization according to Lithuanian Law

ELECTED:

1. Chairman – Viktorija Braziunaite (Lithuania).
2. Vice-chairman Stephen Mwenda Gichohi (Africa).
3. Vice-chairman Than Kyaw (Asia).
4. Vice-chairman – will be elected in Krakow (Europe).
5. Vice-chairman - will be elected in Krakow (North America).
6. Vice-chairman - Alberto Kabbabe (South America and Caribbean).
7. Delegate Chairman Viktorija Braziunaite to do all necessary actions in order to register the YLF of CoD according Lithuanian Law.

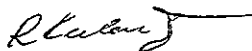
OBSERVERS:

1. Rodger Potocki

2. Cynthia Romero



3. Rasa Kublickaite



## ACTION PLAN FOR THE YOUNG LEADERS FORUM

### Main challenges

#### 1. Security, human rights and the environment

Security, human rights and environmental problems should be high on the democratic agenda. These challenges include:

- i) Excessive executive powers, a weak judiciary, arbitrary activities of security services, censorship, and pressure on human rights activists;
- ii) Conflicts that remain frozen and unresolved and other security threats that are in need of continued attention;
- iii) Environmental problems posing threats to living conditions and democratic development.

#### 2. Democratic deficit

As a result of decades of rule by non-democratic regimes, people living in transitional and semi-authoritarian states lack knowledge of how democracy works and what impact it can have on their daily lives. They have misperceptions about the role of government in their lives and their own role in the political system. This leads to a weak civil society which in turn can impede the reforms necessary for democratic development. Three key points include:

- i) A feeling of an inability to have an impact on policies;
- ii) The fear to express opinions; and
- iii) A paternalistic perception of the government;

#### 3. Corruption and closed political systems

Corruption remains widespread and accepted, resulting in a lack of trust towards state institutions. Double standards among democracies also weaken public trust in these institutions. Political participation by youth is in decline, and youth often feel disempowered in the political decision-making process.

#### 4. Societal gaps and the failures of democratic governance

In many countries democracy has failed to meet basic social needs of the population. Meanwhile, social fragmentation (including ethnic divides and rising inequality) is increasing around the world, aggravated by the global economic downturn. This polarization has given rise to radical and extremist political movements, which undermine democratic principles. Failures of governance have weakened the appeal of democracy in some parts of the world.

## Goals

The Youth Leaders Forum should:

1. *Elaborate* cooperative mechanisms between civil society and governments within the member states of the Community of Democracies;
2. *Increase* societal awareness about democratic values and its implications as well as further knowledge about the role of government in the lives of ordinary citizens, and *promote* civic participation in political life, that is, *support* the building of strong civil societies;
3. *Ensure* transparency of international fora, including those focusing on foreign assistance programs;
4. *Promote* social integration as an aspect of democratic development, including wider access to education and health-care for all citizens in all countries.

## Actions

The Youth Leaders Forum should do the following:

1. *Create* web-based resources for the exchange of information between democracy activists;
2. *Organize* seminars and trainings aimed at raising public awareness about democratic goals;
3. *Create* materials on successful cases of the contributions civil society has made to democratic development;
4. *Launch* initiatives to promote political and civic participation of youth.



**PROPOSALS BY YOUNG LEADERS FORUM  
OF THE COMMUNITY OF DEMOCRACIES  
FOR THE GLOBAL DEMOCRACY WORK PLAN**

1. *Establish* the Young Leaders Forum as an official pillar within the Community of Democracies and ensure youth representation at every level of the Community of Democracies, including ministerial and working group meetings;
2. *Ensure* that the Community of Democracies initiatives, including resolutions, trainings, programs, international expertise for legislation, etc. are implemented in partnership with the Young Leaders Forum members in target countries;
3. *Promote* transparency, information exchange and an awareness of all Community of Democracies initiatives at the governmental and parliamentary levels among all civil society actors and youth representatives of the Community of Democracies through web networking, communications, and regular meetings. The Community of Democracies should request feedback and contributions from civil society, including the Young Leaders Forum, for all initiatives.