



# *Democracy Bridge*

Multilateral Regional Efforts for the Promotion  
and Defense of Democracy in Africa and America

*African Union & Organization of American States  
OAS Headquarters, July 10, 11 and 12, 2007*





Democracy Bridge:

Multilateral Regional  
Efforts for the Promotion  
and Defense of Democracy  
in Africa and America

OAS Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Democracy bridge : multilateral regional efforts for the promotion and defense of democracy in Africa and America / [report of a conference held at the] OAS Headquarters, Washington, D.C., July 10, 11 and 12, 2007.  
p. ; cm.

ISBN 978-0-8270-5166-9

1. Democracy--Americas--Congresses. 2. Democracy--Africa--Congresses. I. Organization of American States. Secretariat for Political Affairs. II. African Union.

JC423 .D46 2007

Democracy Bridge:  
Multilateral Regional Efforts  
for the Promotion and Defense  
of Democracy in Africa and America

OAS Headquarters,  
17th and Constitution Avenue,  
Washington, D.C.

July 10, 11 and 12, 2007

Under Secretariat for Political Affairs.  
Organization of American States.



# General Index

Program	9
Introduction	15
Promoting Democracy in Latin America and Africa: From Rhetoric to Reality	19
The African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance, and the Inter-American Democratic Charter: Strengthening Political Will	23
Building a Citizen's Democracy	27
From Santiago to Bamako: Democracy Promotion within the Community of Democracies Process	31
Defending and Promoting Democracy: Regional Organizations and Universal Norms	33
Thematic Breakout Sessions	37
Closing Remarks	41
Remarks by Organization of American States Secretary General José Miguel Insulza	43
Remarks by Commission of the African Union Chairman Alpha Oumar Konare	49
Remarks by United States Secretary of State	57
Remarks by Convening Group of the Community of Democracies	61
Remarks by Organization of American States Assistant Secretary for Political Affairs	63
Remarks by African Union Commissioner for Peace and Security	67
Remarks by Organization of American States Assistant Secretary General	71
Acknowledgments	77





## Program

JULY 10, 2007

<p><b>Closed working session between designated senior Staff of the OAS General Secretariat and the African Union Commission.</b>          Chaired by Alpha Konare, Chairman of African Union Commission and Jose Miguel Insulza, OAS Secretary General</p>	<p>OAS Headquarters          Main Building          Miranda Hall</p>	<p>16:00 - 17:30</p>
---	--	----------------------

<p><b>Public Signing Ceremony</b>          Signing of a "Statement of Intent to Cooperate" between the African Union Commission and the General Secretariat of the Organization of American States.</p>	<p>Hall of the Heroes          OAS Headquarters          Main Building</p>	<p>17:30 - 18:00</p>
---	--	----------------------

<p><b>Reception</b>          Reception hosted by the OAS Secretary General in honor of President Alpha Oumar Konare and the delegation of the African Union</p>	<p>Aztec Patio          OAS Headquarters          Main Building</p>	<p>18:00 - 20:00</p>
---	---	----------------------

JULY 11, 2007

<p><b>Registration and distribution of materials</b></p>	<p>1st Floor          OAS Headquarters          Main Building</p>	<p>9:15 - 9:45</p>
--	---	--------------------

<p><b>WELCOME / INAUGURATION</b>          . Jose Miguel Insulza, Secretary General, Organization of American States          . Alpha Oumar Konare, Chairperson, African Union Commission          Condoleezza Rice, U.S. Secretary of State          . Deborah-Mae Lovell, Chairperson, OAS Permanent Council and OAS Permanent Representative of Antigua and Barbuda          . Abdoulaye Diop, Ambassador to the United States, Embassy of the Republic of Mali, Chairman, Convening Group of the Community of Democracies</p>	<p>Hall of the Americas</p>	<p>10:00-10:30</p>
--	-----------------------------	--------------------

<p><b>KEYNOTE ADDRESSES</b>          Promoting Democracy in Latin America and Africa:          From Rhetoric to Reality</p>	<p>Hall of the Americas</p>	<p>11:30 - 11:30</p>
---	-----------------------------	----------------------

- . Jose Miguel Insulza, Secretary General, Organization of American States
- . Alpha Oumar Konare, Chairperson, African Union Commission

---

**PLENARY PANEL DISCUSSION**

Hall of the Americas 11:30–12:45

The African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance and the Inter-American Democratic Charter: Origins, Application and Challenges Ahead

- . Julia Dolly Joiner, Commissioner for Political Affairs, African Union Commission
- . Humberto de la Calle, former Permanent Representative of Colombia to the Organization of American States
- . Moderator and Commentator: Jean-Louis Roy, President of Rights and Democracy, Canada.

---

**DISCUSSION**

Hall of the Americas 12:45–13:30

---

**LUNCH**

Aztec Patio 13:30– 14:30

---

**THEMATIC BREAKOUT SESSIONS**

14:30 – 15:45

(Open to public and CSOs)

---

**Breakout Session #1:**

**Strengthening Democratic Institutions and Promoting Democratic Values**

- . German Quintana, Director, OAS Department of Modernization of the State and Governance.
- . Jean Michel Arrighi, Director, OAS Department of International Legal Affairs.
- . Emile Ognimba, Director for Political Affairs, AU Commission

---

**Breakout Session #2:**

**Electoral Observation**

- . Elizabeth Spehar, Director, OAS Department for Electoral Cooperation and Observation.
- . Ambassador J. K. Shinkaiye, AU Commission

---

**Breakout Session #3:**

**Political Dialogue and Conflict Prevention**

- . Victor Rico, Director, OAS Department of Democratic Sustainability and Special Missions
- . El Ghassim Wane, Conflict Management Division, AU Commission

---

**Breakout Session #4:**

**Protection and Promotion of Human Rights**

- . Victor Madrigal, Senior Human Rights Specialist, Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (ICHR).



- . Nega Girmachew Lulessa,  
Legal Officer and Secretary to the African Commission Working Group on  
Indigenous Communities/Populations  
African Commission on Human & Peoples' Rights (ACHPR).
- . Claudio Grossman, Dean of the Washington College of Law, American University.

**Breakout Session #5:**

**Civil Society and Multilateral Organizations**

- . Mariclaire Acosta, OAS Office for Civil Society Affairs.
- . Andrea Sanhueza, Participa (Chile)
- . Akere Muna , Coalition of African Chapters of Transparency  
International and President Federation of Pan African Lawyers  
Barrister-at-Law (Cameroon)

**Coffee Break**

15:45-16:00

**THEMATIC BREAKOUT SESSIONS.** Same panels and structure.  
(AU Commission and OAS General Secretariat Officials only)

16:00-17:30

JULY 12, 2007

**KEYNOTE ADDRESSES**

Hall of the Americas 9:00 – 10:00

**Building a Democracy of Citizenship**

- . Antonio Mascarenhas Monteiro, former president of Cape Verde.
- . Eduardo Stein, Vice President of Guatemala.
- . Dante Caputo, Assistant Secretary for Political Affairs, OAS.
- . Said Djinnit, Commissioner for Peace and Security,  
African Union Commission

**DISCUSSION**

Hall of the Americas 10:00 - 10:30

**From Santiago to Bamako: Democracy Promotion within the  
Community of Democracies Process**

10:30 - 11:00

- . Introduction, Dante Caputo, OAS Under Secretary for Political Affairs.
- . Paula Dobriansky, Under Secretary, Democracy and Global  
Affairs, U.S. Department of State.

**PLENARY PANEL DISCUSSION**

11:00 - 12:00

**Defending and Promoting Democracy:  
Regional Organizations and Universal Norms**

- . Hannah Forster, Chair, Africa Democracy Forum
- . Colin Granderson, Assistant Secretary General,  
CARICOM Secretariat

- . Abdoulaye Diop, Ambassador to the United States, Embassy of the Republic of Mali, Chairman, Convening Group of the Community of Democracies
- . Moderator: Edward R. McMahon, Research Associate Professor, Department of Political Science, University of Vermont

---

**DISCUSSION**

Hall of the Americas 12:00 - 12:30

---

**CLOSING REMARKS**

12:30-13:00

Amb. Albert Ramdin, Assistant Secretary General, OAS







## Introduction

The international community has engaged in a process to underscore the importance and effectiveness of regional organizations, such as the Organization of American States (OAS), and the African Union (AU) in the promotion and maintenance of international peace and democracy in their regions. Indeed, the promotion, defense and strengthening of Democracy in Africa and the Americas has been the present and future goal of the region. In the 21st century, these two continents have become partners to reflect on the past and move towards a new future for both regions. Efforts have been undertaken to achieve progress and to find new opportunities so that all citizens can have the best quality of life under the universal value of democracy and its components.

*Democratic partnership which should be based on equality, mutual respect, consultation and that cannot be subject to a double standard must help to fight poverty and must help to establish social justice.*

*Alpha Oumar Konare*

Democracy is not seen as a system but more as a universally shared value that both national and international actors have a responsibility to preserve. Regional and international organizations have ensured that their mission is to protect the democratic values, including the full rights of citizens and freedom that democracy provides as well as safeguarding the social, economic and political spheres.

Throughout the years, many nations in both Hemispheres have adopted several legal instruments to ensure the continuance of democracy. This adoption of legal instruments greatly benefits the promotion of democracy in Africa and America. This document presents a summary of the discussions that took place during the two-day Conference “Democracy Bridge: Multilateral regional efforts for the promotion and defense of democracy in Africa and America,” as well as the work of these two regional organizations, the OAS and AU, in building a culture of peace and democracy in these two regions. It shows the efforts being made by the OAS and AU towards the creation of a more peaceful, secure and prosperous environment in these Hemispheres, and how these efforts can be done jointly. In fact, the Declaration of Intent that was signed during the Conference is the first agreement to commit both regions to jointly work in the promotion of democracy in Africa and America.

During the “Democracy Bridge” Conference both regional organizations discussed the main mandates and legal instruments related to democracy, especially the Inter-American Democratic Charter and the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance. These are the main instruments regarding democracy that seek to strengthen the promotion of the civil society and the assurance of the proper functioning of the democratic instruments and institutions. Prominent representatives of both regional organizations and regional political figures were present to discuss these pivotal themes. Among those present were OAS Secretary General Jose Miguel Insulza; Chairperson of the AU Alpha Oumar Konare; US Secretary of State Ms. Condoleezza Rice; Ambassador Deborah Mae-Lovell, current President of the OAS Permanent Council; Vice President of Guatemala, Mr. Eduardo Stein and Ambassador of the Republic of Mali, Mr. Abdoulaye Diop.







## Promoting Democracy in Latin America and Africa: From Rhetoric to Reality

*“...Recognize the people’s commitment, or else we will not move forward”*

*Alpha Oumar Korane*

Social democratic participation is the instrument that is needed in order to strengthen democracy. This is the main issue that was addressed by the Keynote speakers OAS Secretary General Jose Miguel Insulza and Chairperson of the African Union, Alpha Oumar Konare.

Their reflections indicate that the Americas and Africa share a number of strong values: the respect for democratic principles, good governance, the respect for the rule of law, and freedom of speech, among others. With the support of regional organizations, such as the OAS and AU, and the realization that democracy is not a luxury but a need to achieve progress, efforts for increased integration and greater socio-economic stability become vital for progress.

The establishment of democracy and its maintenance are equally important. The celebration of democratic elections is the starting point, but democratic stability, once those elected govern, is a greater challenge. In this sense, better economic conditions for the citizens make it easier to implement democracy, but this does not mean that democracy can not flourish in underdeveloped nations. It is in these nations where joint efforts are needed, and where democracy has flourished amidst harsh and authoritarian conditions.

*“The people of the Americas have a right to democracy. It is not a gift, not a concession, our people have fought long and hard for it, they continue to fight for it, and they want to achieve democracy”*

*Jose Miguel Insulza, OAS Secretary General*

The international community as a whole now desires a “republic of citizens”, leaving behind the old social contract and introducing a new contract – one in which individuals confer legitimacy to the government in exchange for the full exercise of their political and social citizenship .

Mr. Alpha Oumar Konare, Chairperson of the African Union, noted that Africa is a region that has historically been considered a low economic growth region, but in the last few years has demonstrated the contrary. According to recent data by the World Bank, Africa has shown an increase in its economic growth and is now the region with the highest increase in growth. Indeed, Africa has the potential to be world's new market.

Economic growth is the reflection of a region that has achieved good governance with the respect and proper introduction of democratic values. With a change of management, a country's destiny can be changed to achieve better social standards that then go beyond national borders and promote principles and positive outcomes at the international level.

Low economic growth, crime rates and illiteracy are all obstacles for democracy. The Americas and Africa have suffered these conditions in the past, especially during the last few decades; however, slowly but steadily these problems are being targeted. One of the focuses of democracy is to improve the citizens living conditions through the protection of the rights of all citizens in a democratic system as well as "ending the colonial treaty logic" that created poverty and bad governance.

Overall, the progress of implementing democracy has been a great contribution to the stability of the World. What has been neglected is the progress in the practice of this. One mechanism to assure the fulfillment of democracy is strengthening the role of organizations such as the OAS and AU which seek to protect, strengthen and defend democracy at all times. Moreover, through a 'democratic partnership' among the OAS-AU, these challenges can be better overcome.

This 'democratic partnership' needs to be based on equality, mutual respect, collaboration, consultation, to address the needs of the regions' citizens, help fight poverty and promote social justice. In order to establish a workable partnership, the OAS and AU need to focus on two main points: (1) the duty to remember the past in order to improve the future, and (2) advance solidarity among the actors to achieve good governance.

*"We have the duty to remember, a duty to remember slavery, a duty to remember colonization, a duty to remember apartheid, a duty to remember genocide. This duty to remember should be the basis of our partnership".*

*Alpha Oumar Konare*

In the Inter-American region, the principles of democracy are introduced in the OAS Charter as well in various Protocols and Resolutions based on Democracy, including the OAS Charter, the Washington Protocol, the American Convention on Human Rights, the American Declaration of Rights and Duties of Man, and the Inter-American Democratic Charter, among others. This regional organization has 34 member states that endorse democratic values and principles.



The AU functions as the intergovernmental organization for cooperation and integration in the African region. It is composed of 53 countries of which all have agreed to make an executive structure with the vision of promoting democratic processes. The AU has adopted several juridical instruments such as the African Charter on Human and Peoples Rights, African Youth Charter and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child as well as the African Charter on Democracy, Election and Governance.

Conversely, democracy has generally been seen as a process that has been achieved with the influence of external factors, fall of the Berlin Wall, and by prominent leaders. Indeed, these elements have had a great impact on the implementation of democratic values; however, the principal impact has emerged from the commitment of the citizens and their struggle to put democracy into practice.



## The African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance, and the Inter-American Democratic Charter: Strengthening Political Will

The African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance and the Inter-American Democratic Charter are two legal documents created and signed by the Member States of the AU and OAS respectively, as an instrument to protect, strengthen and defend the democratic ideal. Through the adherence to the Charter, democracy is advanced with the political will of each Member State.

Ambassador Emile Ognimba, Director for Political Affairs of the AU Commission, indicated that the African Union is an organization born of the will of the people. It was created with a vision to unite all African states and promote democracy and prosperity for all its Member States. Most African nations are moving towards a process based on sustained democratization through politics on liberalization and decentralization. The democratization process that Africa is undergoing is not only based on the democratic ideal but on the principle of civil participation. The people of Africa have a high regard for the struggle of its people. As Chairperson Konare mentioned, democratic changes are done by the people and any change that takes place is due to the struggle, resistance and sacrifice that these people have made. In other words, participation by the people is fundamental in the AU charter.

One of the main focuses of the AU Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance as well as the Inter-American Democratic Charter is the response towards circumstances such as the undemocratic use of the constitution to retain power and unconstitutional political changes. This is also one of the main challenges that both charters face. Nevertheless, the AU Charter profoundly defines, as compared to the Inter-American Democratic Charter, what constitute violations to democratic rule and what the prerequisites to invoke the Charter are. The AU Charter has also implemented mechanisms to address threats against democracy at the national and regional levels.

In the eyes of the AU, Democracy is not just elections. It is based on good governance, and the fight against corruption. Democracy needs to be an ambition to

achieve national and regional progress through not only the creation of a Charter, but the implementation of such mechanism with a political will that transcends legal commitments.

In the case of the Americas, the process that led to the creation of the Inter-American Democratic Charter is based not directly on the struggle of its people, but more on the regional political process that it has been through. According to the Vice-President de la Calle there has been three phases in the Americas that have led to the creation of the Inter-American Democratic Charter - the milestone in the democratic development in the continent.

The process that led to the creation of the Inter-American Democratic Charter in 2001 was based on three primary phases starting with the successful implementation of the 1948 OAS Charter. The OAS Charter is the first mechanism that places importance on democracy in the American system. It declared its dedication to representative democracy and established the duty to promote democracy by the OAS. Democracy was enshrined in this first charter, but what was important in practice was the anticommunist struggle. The OAS response against communism in the region is what constitutes the first phase, in which all types of dictatorships flourished (1958-1975).

The second phase took place with the end of the Cold War and the democratic boom in Latin America. The OAS obtained great autonomy, greater capacity for discussion and negotiation, as well as protection measures against any challenges towards democracy. As a result of this, the Santiago Agreement and Resolution 1080 were approved.

In this phase, economic prosperity became associated with democracy and vice versa. Democracy was associated with achieving the highest human capital accumulation, lower political insatiability, and lower confrontational situations.

*“Democracy is the best instrument for achieving economic development and economic development is the response to poverty”*

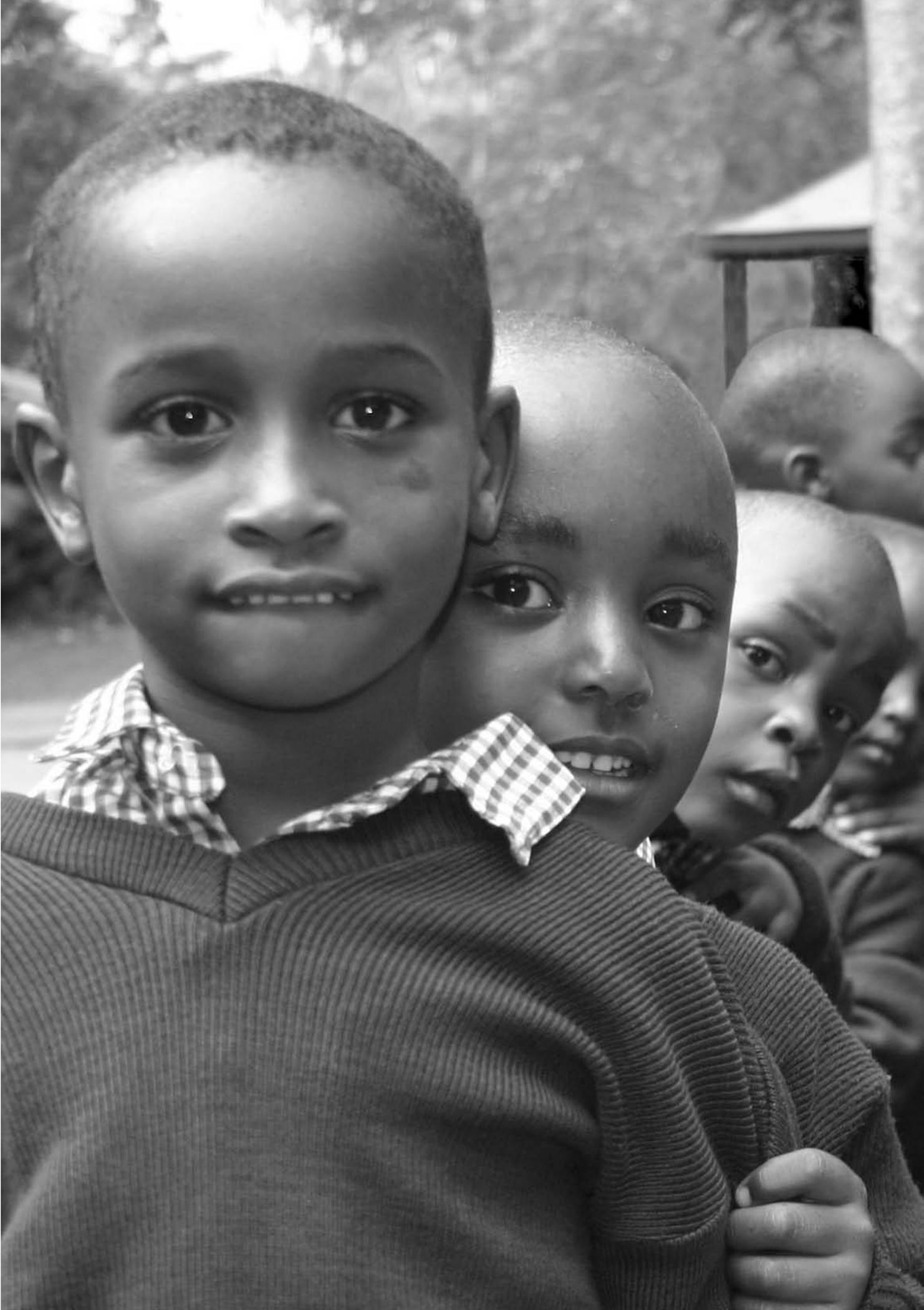
*Ambassador Humberto de la Calle*

In the third and final phase identified by Ambassador de la Calle, the Americas have been through an eruption of what is called Cesaerism, which is “a new authoritarianism that is basically undemocratic but retains the ritual of elections and wins elections as well.”

Although the Americas have been through dramatic political instability, democracy was introduced and is considered today a fundamental right, a human right to assure transparency and pluralism as well as to prevent internal armed conflict and to achieve other benefits, such as universal recognized collective rights (transparency, fighting corruption, guaranteeing the rights of indigenous peoples, etc).

In those situations that merit for the response to the inter-american system towards the interruption or changes in the constitutional order should be sufficiently gradual so that the idea of non intervention and national sovereignty can be balanced against the decisions made by the Inter-American system in cases of democratic breakdown.

The Inter-American Democratic Charter has been a superior mechanism to guide the Member States in how to proceed to promote, strengthen and defend democracy in the region. Even though the Inter-American Democratic Charter has great relevance, it does face challenges such as its legal nature, and the limitations that exist to apply it in situations of threats to the constitutional order, especially in terms of the debate about the principle of non-intervention.





## Building a Citizen's Democracy

*“Democracy means different things to different people. It is an ideal, a universal value and a system of government. It is a political system that combines free choice of leadership with respect for basic freedoms, fundamental human rights, the rule of law and good governance”*

*Said Djinnit*

Africa and America are two heterogeneous and different regions. Each region's challenges are different, but in essence, the point of convergence among both of them is democracy. Strengthening democracy is both a desire and a challenge as issues, such as poverty and inequality, continue to threaten democratic rule. Building democracy under extreme conditions of poverty and inequality is a sturdy challenge. Democracy, wealth, growth, freedoms and democratic practice has been seen as a normal historical sequence, but in reality it is the triangle of democracy-poverty-inequality that is present in the case of Africa and America.

Democracy is defined as a form of government in which people participate in the governmental system. Democracy empowers citizens as a whole to become decision makers of their own destiny evoking at the same time values, such as autonomy, and accountability.

Building citizenship is an objective of democracy, but this is only achieved by the desire of each individual to engage as responsible citizens. Pierre Mendes-France states that “every individual contains a citizen”. Each individual possesses the ability to become a citizen and to become directly involved in the political decision-making process. Their direct involvement contributes to guaranteeing the upholding of the rights that he or she possesses. In other words, if there is a strong citizenship, there is a strong democracy.

Overall, the involvement of the citizens in the decision-making process creates citizenship and provides trust in the political system as long as the people have

achieved the proper level of civic knowledge and commitment. An informed and responsible dialogue among the governmental actors and the people is also vital.

Citizen participation began with the institutionalization of the universal suffrage in 1848. Citizens' rights to participate in politics were gained after the French Revolution and other liberal and democratic revolutions. Power, if it is not constrained, leads to autocracy and dictatorship. Only a system based on effective and functioning institutions aligned to provide check and balances can prevent this tendency.

One of the most important challenges in the developing nations is the gap between proposition and practice. Said Djinnit expressed that this gap reinforces the position of autocrats and weakens the building of democracy on a culture of effective citizenship. Based on this, there needs to be a linkage between governments and civil society. The constitutive act of the African Union stresses this, namely the need to build a partnership between governments and all segments of civil society.

The need to involve citizens in the political process was emphasized throughout the conference. Democracy built on citizenship needs to stress as well the obligation by the community at the state and regional levels to enhance not only participation at the political but also at the socioeconomic level. In other words, the socioeconomic needs of the citizens need to be prioritized and met.

*“The mission of democracy, of citizenship is to ensure parliamentary control over government action, separation of power, freedom of the press, freedom of speech and thought, freedom of association, and free and just elections. It should guarantee the adequate functioning of the real rule of law”.*

*Antonio Mascarenhas Monteiro*

*“There is a need to organize conditions so that democracy creates and motivates citizenship in order to attain power, public power to enhance the possibility of building a solid democratic citizenship in the Americas and Africa”.*

*Dante Caputo*

The desire and need of the citizens to be governed with a wider public agenda to address issues that affect their normal living standards is increasing. There is disenchantment and exhaustion by the citizens in regards to traditional political parties, traditional politicians and traditional structures of representative democracy. This disenchantment has led to a greater acceptance of the possibility of an authoritarian regime on the perception that this type of regime can provide for the needs of the people. This is a signal for governments to provide benefits to their people, and to shift their political agendas towards the public sector.

Two countries that have centered their agenda more towards the public are Brazil and Panama with programs that directly target the problems of the people creating a closer relation between governments and their citizens, and increasing the trust of



the citizens towards the political system. The “Zero Hunger” Program, targeted to overcome concrete issues of poverty and Bolsa-Escola Program allowed a higher access to education through the direct allocation of resources to communities by the government. These were two programs by the Brazilian government to achieve a higher citizen participation in the political agenda. The second example is the project designed for the expansion of the Panama Canal. In order to get the citizens’ approval for this project, the level of trust by the citizens towards the government needed to be solid.

In Africa, the region has demonstrated that there has been an increase in participation, cooperation and optimism by members of the African population especially through the growth of the region by 5.5% in 2006 and an expected growth of 6.2% in 2007. Through this increase, the continent has faced positive change towards certain political stability as well as an increase of citizen participation. Indeed, democracy is a factor of development and peace. It is the corollary of a learning process held by general interest, tolerance and acceptance of differences.





## From Santiago to Bamako: Democracy Promotion within the Community of Democracies Process

In 2002, the Community of Democracies (CD) was founded with the objective of uniting democracies from every region of the globe with the purpose of strengthening democratic institutions and democratic values as well as to encourage the growth of democracy where it is denied.

*“We know that democracy is crucial to peace and sustainable development, and we all cherish our democratic principles and rights. We share fundamental values and interests, so it is natural, it is vital, that we should come together to support democracy both in our own countries and elsewhere”*

*Dr. Paula Dobriansky*

The commitment shared by the CD is to support democratic nations in the process of sustainability through cooperation at regional levels among different regions. Democratic nations have met to pledge their support to this process of assistance for democratization process starting from 2002 in Warsaw with the latest meeting held in Santiago de Chile in 2005 and the upcoming meeting to be hold in Bamako, Mali in 2007.

The CD focuses on four priority areas within the democratic community:

- a)Regional and interregional cooperation in support of democracy.
- b)Promotion of democratic governance and civil society.
- c)Mutually reinforcing benefits between democracy and development.
- d)Response required when democracy is faced with national and transnational threats.

The OAS and AU have made key contributions to the development of the four pri-

ority areas of the CD. The Democracy Bridge Conference and the interregional cooperation between OAS and AU create the exchange of experiences and information to support the democratic process in each region. Assistance among regions is essential.

Similarly, for the interregional cooperation among the OAS and AU, cooperation at the domestic and international level is essential to ensure the participation of the civil society. Civil society is vital to assure the transparency, accountability of the government and the trust among the people as well as ensuring the focus of the public in the political agenda.

In response to the third focus on mutual reinforcing the benefits between democracy and development, both elements complement each other. Through sustainable development, democracy has a better chance to persevere and through democracy the development process provides concrete benefits to people's lives.

The fourth and final priority area, namely that of adequate response by democratic community when threats arise towards the democratic structure, is possible through the exchange of experiences among states. African and American regional organizations have made a great contribution in this area through concrete commissions, resolutions and protocols that are found in each institution and the creation of institutions such as the Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission and the Inter-American Committee against Terrorism.







## Defending and Promoting Democracy: Regional Organizations and Universal Norms

*“International promotion of democracy is not the preservation of one power nor is it externally imposed; it comes from within. Regional organizations are very important and well placed to serve as a plaque tournante; serving as a mediating and integrating function between local and traditional historical realities and practices, as well as universal norms of democracy.”*

*Edward McMahon*

Democracy is a 20th century product that has been agreed upon as a universal commitment by the majority of the international community. Democracy is not yet universally accepted or uniformly practiced, but it has become the preferred choice of government in countries throughout the world. The 20th century has changed the geopolitical landscape of the world, doubling the number of democratic states in the last quarter compared to the proportion of states that are not considered free. Democracy is not an exported good from the West to the rest. It is a good that is built by the people for the people through the power of citizens. In the founding charter of the Organization of American States, the leaders of the Americas identified representative democracy as an essential element for social and economic development. Moreover, democratic government is a sine quo non for membership and other regional organizations have followed suit, including the European Union, which explicitly requires democratic government in its Constitution.

*“Democracy is the global aspiration, a global principle that all aspire and share”*

*Jean Louis Roy*

According to Ambassador Diop, the emphasis that is needed to promote democracy should be placed on the necessity to work with regional organizations and the role they can play in deepening the democratic process in the countries, and in the region. The main purpose of a regional organization is to create solidarity at the regional level in order to have a coordinated development program and joint projects to promote economic developments in countries.

In promoting democracy, regional organizations need to commit the Member States and organizations to development and peace as well as the institutionalization of democratic, social, economic and political policies. In 2002, democracy has been priority on the AU agenda and has stated the commitment by its members to democratic principles in the Constitutive Act of the AU. In the case of the OAS, its Charter explicitly states that the organization as well as its members upholds the principle of representative democracy.

One of the priorities for political stability is peace and security. In order to aspire and promote peace and security, it is vital to recognize democracy as an important tool. Democratic governments rarely, if ever, go to war against one and other. Different from authoritarian regimes, they seek to settle differences through dialogue and peaceful resolution of conflicts.

In Africa, fifty-three (53) African countries have become independent states establishing the nearly completion of the struggle against colonialism. Overall, Hannah Foster states that most African leaders pride themselves on being proponents of democracy even though the AU still faces challenges with respect to issues of liberty, prosperity and dignity in the region.

In connection to Ms. Foster comment, it is becoming increasingly evident that even in dictatorial states, rulers no longer champion an alternative form of government to democracy. Rather they claim that their regimes are already democratic, even if they are not, or that their political leaders are moving slowly towards democracy.

In the AU, democracy has been a priority on the agenda since 2000 and the commitment by its members to democratic principles is stated in the Constitutive Act of AU. Furthermore, instruments were developed to strengthen the democratic framework in the African region to commit the AU member states to democracy, development and peace as well as the institutionalization of democratic, social, economic and political governments.

To be effective, regional efforts to promote democracy must include an array of partners. For instance, the Organization of American States often coordinates with the United Nations while at the same time supporting sub-regional organizations such as the Caricom Secretariat or the Central American and Andean parliaments. In addition to creating partnerships with international and regional organizations, democracy promotion also includes national partners, including government authorities, political leaders and civil society representatives. Citizen participation and public credibility depend on the inclusion of all actors of a democratic society.

The OAS and the AU can contribute in the promotion of access to information to enhance understanding of the institutions; cross-fertilization of ideas and processes in the form of various exchange programs, including promotional visits, exchange of information on jurisprudence; the need to create and support a network for shar-



ing information and experiences and good practices in areas of mutual interests. In order for success to exist in the partnership among regional organizations, citizens participation and the democratization process, there needs to be sufficient political will exercised both by the Member States of the regional organizations and by the regional organizations themselves.





## Thematic Breakout Sessions

### **1.Strengthening Democratic Institutions and Promoting Democratic Values**

The presentations gave rise to a lively debate from which the following points emerged:

a.The integration of indigenous peoples into democratic society faces two challenges. First, these ethnic groups must have a meaningful place in the decision making process and be afforded the same opportunities as other citizens. Secondly, their unique traditions and customs should be recognized and respected within a concept of nation that includes all citizens. This issue is among vital challenges on the agenda of many countries in both the Americas and the African continent. The view was expressed that resolution of the different issues involved is likely to be ongoing, with different solutions identified in each country. To achieve this end, OAS member states are working on a draft Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, and a draft Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination, among other things.

b.The issue of how the democratic progress of the past decades could be preserved was raised. Given the fact that citizens in the region favored the democratic system and that the real challenge is to strengthen policies to encourage participation was seen as key and the session took into account the importance of a gender focus and the promotion of inclusiveness.

c.A discussion of mechanisms for political representation was brought up. In this context, it was underlined that multilateral institutions such as the Pan African Parliament could be strengthened, for example by mechanisms such as direct election of representatives and adequate financing for these institutions.

d.With regards to the application of the Inter-American Democratic Charter, observations were supported, in the sense that norms and regulations of the Charter's provisions could be deepened to make its application more effective. The issue of regional solidarity as a principle of support to democratic processes was high lightened.

Technical advice and follow-up mechanisms can provide key support to the strengthening of political commitments and legal instruments.

## **2. Electoral Observation**

Some of the activities of Cooperation and Exchange on Electoral Observation between AU Commission and OAS Secretariat that were agreed upon included:

a. To undertake two week-long sessions of training and information exchange on electoral observation between electoral experts of the African Union Commission (AUC) and the General Secretariat of the Organization of American States (GS/OAS).

b. The AUC will invite a GS/OAS electoral expert to participate in one of its next electoral observation missions, at a mutually convenient time. Likewise the GS/OAS will invite AUC electoral experts to the next electoral observation missions, at a mutually convenient time.

c. The GS/OAS will invite AUC electoral experts to the next meeting on the Principles of International Election Observation, which it will host in Washington, DC on November 14 and 15, 2007.

d. The GS/OAS will invite an AUC electoral expert and one electoral official from an African member state to the V Inter-American Meeting of Electoral Officials, scheduled for the second quarter of 2008.

e. The AUC and the GS/OAS will jointly facilitate a week of exchange of experiences and best practices between the authorities of a noted African electoral body and those of a noted electoral body in the Americas. The AUC and the GS/OAS will share experiences and methodologies regarding electoral observation and evaluation criteria.

## **3. Political Dialogue and Conflict Prevention**

The activities of Cooperation and Exchange on Political Dialogue and Conflict Prevention between AU Commission and OAS Secretariat that were agreed included:

a. The exchange of information and experiences in both early warning and political analysis system.

b. Analysis of cross border issues relating to demarcation and cross-border cooperation and confidence building measures.

c. To further explore the organization of bilateral meetings in both Africa and Latin America to discuss these emerging issues in the areas of Political dialogue and Conflict Prevention.

## **4. Protection and Promotion of Human Rights**



In relation to cooperation among the ACHPR, the IACHR and other organs of the African and Inter-American system, it was discussed that:

a. The exchange of experience between the organs is fundamental at two levels: the cross fertilization of jurisprudence and doctrine, and the sharing of lessons learned in relation to institutional definition.

b. Mutual visits from its members and officers to academic sessions, discussions, working meetings, public hearings and sessions to strengthen the relations between them.

c. Mechanisms to add value to the cooperation were considered to ensure the availability of resolutions and reports; to provide more formality to the existing exchanges and cooperation activities and the possibility of creating a joint committee to steer the exchanges between the organs of the African and Inter-American systems.

#### **5. Civil Society and Multilateral Organizations**

Some substantive issues that should convey further dialogue and cooperation in this realm were mentioned:

a. Recognizing the changing nature of civil society organizations and continuing efforts to empower them. Particular priority should be given to the issue of gender.

b. Creating mechanisms to foster civil society participation in international and regional organizations as well as national governmental structures.

c. Identifying support activities to be carried out by multilateral organizations to strengthen the role of civil society in democratic promotion.





## Closing Remarks

Through the tragedy of slavery, Africa and the Americas are bounded by history and face many of the same economic, political and societal changes facing its peoples. Realizing the struggle that the people have endured through history is vital to appreciate the sacrifices made for an ideal: democracy. For the recognition of these efforts it is important for the nations to continue these steps towards the promotion and defense of democracy in the regions.

The Inter-American Democratic Charter and the African Charter on Democracy represent important mechanisms through which the Americas and Africa can support, defend and promote democracy. Collaboration between the two organizations can provide an opportunity for honest and frank reflection on the effectiveness as well as the shortcomings of these instruments. Moreover, this cooperation can assist in identifying concrete activities to put into practice the democratic ideals articulated by the leaders of the member countries of these regional organizations.

Unfortunately, democracy in the Americas and Africa was founded in a context of poverty, social exclusion and discrimination, which have impeded its development. It is vital that regional organizations recognize these realities and promote justice and participation of all the peoples of these regions. Social-economic development needs to be side to side with the democratic process in order to achieve sustainability in each nation and equal opportunity for all.

Assistant Secretary General of the OAS, Albert R. Ramdin expressed that the building of strategic alliances and partnership between all regions of the world is significantly important and provides possibly one of the most effective response mechanisms to the changing global world and to the impact of new initiatives undertaken in the areas of trade, development and finance.

“We should be mindful that for democracy to be truly meaningful, the fruits of democracy must also nurture and feed the social and economic well being of our citizens”

*Assistant Secretary General. A. Ramdin*





## Remarks by Organization of American States

*Secretary General José Miguel Insulza*

*Secretary General  
José Miguel Insulza  
Organization of  
American States*



This morning we listened to important ideas expressed by President Konaré, who described the situation on his continent, an enormous continent that may be and has the potential to be the world's new market, one of the earth's largest markets with its advantages and disadvantages. Yesterday we heard a report from the World Bank on governance; indices have improved in many regions of the world but have done so in Africa more than any other continent. I feel it is important to emphasize this as an optimistic hint of what we are beginning to see.

We are interested in and enthusiastic about jointly promoting most of the values that President Konaré has pointed to and believe we can exchange experiences on important issues our democracies face, first in being democratic and then continuing to be democratic when dealing with so many difficulties relating to economic growth, hunger, disease, war, and conflict. Democracy is not the heritage of the developed countries alone although it is true that it is easier to have democracy when there is not so much poverty, so much misery, and so much backwardness.

Our experience in recent years has been positive. We cannot deny that America is today much more democratic than it was twenty-five years ago; this is something undeniable that we sometimes forget when we magnify some of our problems. And I am not just speaking about elections. We have representatives here from civil society. Our General Assembly welcomes more than one hundred and fifty delegations from civil society. There are many such groups in Latin America in countries with more problems and in countries with fewer problems. But how this world has grown, how it has developed in the last twenty years of democratic development, how the quality of our electoral systems has increased.

We have problems financing elections, which are increasingly more complex in our countries. There is much inequality in terms of people's ability to gain access to power but we have made progress in this area as well.

Latin America and the Caribbean are young democracies. When we speak of the Inter-American Democratic Charter we must start by explaining it on the basis of our own experience because it was not written by a few people in a few days. It was developed over a long period of time in the midst of conditions that were much more difficult than the conditions we face today. The Declaration of Santiago that began the process leading to the Inter-American Democratic Charter was produced following a period of dictatorships in most South American countries and following civil wars in the countries of Central America. Those two democratizing currents merge with those now coming to us from the Caribbean where there have also been periods of dictatorship, uniting us with a set of principles in which we all believe intensely.

As I said this morning, our Democratic Charter asks much of us and its first requirement is reflected in what President Konaré said. Article 1 of our Inter-American Democratic Charter states that the peoples of the Americas have a right to democracy. It is not a gift, not a concession; our peoples have fought long and hard for it, they continue to fight for it, they want to achieve democracy, they have a right to it. That right is not only expressed every so often when there are elections. It is also expressed in the fact that the individuals who are elected are representatives of the people, they are not bosses. The democratic form of government does not produce authorities as much as it produces representatives, people who must represent the people. This is enshrined in our charter.

Representing democracy in accordance with laws, with rules, the rule of law that you have pointed out, constitutional regimes, participation – all this is added by our Inter-American Democratic Charter as the basis for the institution of elections so as to speak later of another aspect – the citizen. The old social contract in which the individual who conferred authority subordinated himself to authority in exchange for security is not essential today. What is essential today is the new social contract, in which the individual confers legitimacy on the government in exchange for the full exercise of his citizenship.

Republics of citizens is what we want. We want republics of laws and republics of citizens, not self-created enlightened authorities. This is the purpose of our charter. But, of course, like everything in this world, there are problems. We do not have perfect democracies and I would like to note some of the major difficulties in our region's efforts to effectively respond to the democratic ideals embodied in the Charter, ideals that we will not achieve from one day to the next but on which we are making progress.

First, I think we should remember that most countries in our region have experienced relatively low growth rates in recent years. Unlike other regions of the world, unlike what we see in some areas of Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean was the region that experienced the least growth over the last twenty-five years. This causes problems. But we are overcoming this. The last four years have been good ones in terms of Latin American economic growth. Why shouldn't these



democracies be enthusiastic about their growth? However, many of our peoples ask themselves whether economic growth will last this time and, an even more delicate question, whether they will receive any of the benefits of that growth. This is because our second most serious problem, our strongest, most difficult, and most painful problem, is the problem of poverty and inequality.

This is not a poor continent in the same sense as President Konaré mentioned. It is a continent with great wealth and without extreme conditions of under-development. Per capita income in Latin America and the Caribbean is slightly less than the world average. We are not so much a poor continent as an unjust continent. We have the highest levels of inequality on earth, with countries in which the poorest sectors of the population, 20% of the population, bring home about 2% of national income and wealth continues to be amassed by the few and the problems of poverty and discrimination against minorities are very serious problems. We are also addressing these problems.

We face problems of violence but not the violence of war – although we do in fact have some conflicts. Our major problems are not the problems of war, not internal wars, much less wars between countries because decades have passed since we had wars between countries. What we have in the Americas are problems of crime beyond those in any other region of the world. Thus, we cannot be proud of our record on the subject of criminal violence even though the aggregate statistics indicate, since we don't have wars, that fewer people in this region suffer violent deaths than in other regions of the world. However, we have the highest homicide rates in the world and three-fourths of the people kidnapped in the world were kidnapped in Latin America and the Caribbean.

So we do have some problems and our democracies must be capable of resolving them. Here I want to consider what in my view is the crux of the matter, which involves much of what you have heard about Latin America and the Caribbean in recent years – that there are tense situations, there are difficulties, there are conflicts, there are ideological problems.

What we still have is a significant weakness in our state institutions. Like most countries in the developing world, we have weak states and weak institutions that are often subject to demands for great efforts to improve their citizens' living conditions but that often lack the institutional capacities to do so. When they ask me about instability in Latin America and the risk of retrogressing in the area of democracy, I say that the principal risk lies in the fact that the people elect those who govern them, who are endowed with legitimacy. These are strong and legitimate governors and they are faced with immense problems of poverty, inequality, disease, and injustice. The combination of weak institutions and strong governors is never a stable combination and will always be problematic.

The great challenge in democracy is not only to elect governments but to give them the instruments they need so that they can govern, to give them institutions

or create institutions through which the exercise of the government's power can be permanent and on this basis shape these democracies. We want democracies that are not just democratic at the start but continue to be so in practice and mean something to people. Those of us who believe in democracy must work so that it has meaning in the lives of our citizens. Politics is not a pure exercise of ideas. What matters is that it have beneficial results for the people being governed. This is not achieved through elections alone. Rather, elections unleash a certain degree of hope.

It we look at the surveys on democracy in Latin America in the last two years, there is an upswing in the hope for democracy in Latin America and the Caribbean. People believe in democracy because we have many elections. There's some hope in that but people want to improve their condition. They make demands on their governments as never before; they want these democracies in which they live to improve their living conditions. And improving living conditions necessarily means addressing the other aspects of the Inter-American Democratic Charter: the republic of laws, the quality of government, efficiency in civil service, problems of corruption, as well as problems noted in the area of integrating internal relations between countries.

Latin American began to talk of integration at the same time as Europe. Then the Caribbean countries were included, with a significant effort toward integration, although we recognize that we have not progressed as far as we would like. We still have little trade among ourselves and are still highly dependent on ties to the developed countries although our presence on world markets is limited. We still have not resolved essential economic and trade-related problems among ourselves and, naturally, there aren't are many of us as there are in Africa. However, there are six hundred million inhabitants in Latin America and the Caribbean; if we were integrated we could make a much greater effort. There is another area in which Africans and American are alike: we are more like each other than peoples who have integrated. Clearly there is much less difference between an inhabitant of North America and an inhabitant of South America than there is between the inhabitants of northern Europe and the inhabitants of southern Europe. Nonetheless, we have not made sufficient progress toward integration.

When we look at the reality of our democracies, I think we must recognize the progress we have made in recent years but must also recognize that we have made much more progress in creating democracy than in its practice. Strengthening our democratic republics is something to which we must devote much greater effort. We do have an Inter-American Democratic Charter and I say in all sincerity that I appreciate its great value. While many say that the Charter does not allow us to act as often as we would like, that it is not a treaty and is not absolutely binding on anyone, it is our principal legal instrument because it embodies the consensus in the Americas on what democracy means. It is fascinating how we have discussions among ourselves and each of us interprets the Inter-American Democratic Charter. No one says "The Charter doesn't bind me; it doesn't affect me." We all



say “I demand this on the basis of the Inter-American Democratic Charter.” This is great progress.

There are three things we must do with the Inter-American Democratic Charter. First, we need to use it as an instrument for promoting democracy. We are developing an interesting program called “Democracy Practitioners.” The idea is to provide technical assistance to countries to help them strengthen their state institutions. Second, we need to defend our democracy when it is threatened, but must do so as prudently as possible because the Inter-American Democratic Charter is based on a specific set of historical circumstances and precisely for this reason contains a significant number of safeguards with respect to when a country can insert itself in the affairs of other countries, since we have had a lot of that. I had the opportunity to explain to President Konaré yesterday that we have some enormous countries in terms of wealth and size and some very small countries. Since there are great inequalities, sovereignty and autonomy are important to our members although this does not absolve us of the need to act forcefully and in unison when democracy is effectively and massively threatened in some countries.

We must be concerned about our problems and for this reason so many of our countries are participating in efforts to resolve the problems of our beloved sister country, the Republic of Haiti. We have made progress in this area too but we also have to give it a place in this new period in which we are living. Finally, we must promote and defend democracy. Most of all, however, we must expand democracy. Expanding democracy means including more citizens and addressing the problems of social citizenship. Social citizenship means not only that each citizen has the right to vote, to speak, and to organize. It is encompassed by the value that you repeated several times in your remarks, which I take up with the leitmotif of our association – “solidarity.”

For us, the word “social democracy” means the full exercise of solidarity within nations and between nations. We note with bitterness how many times when we speak, for example, of trade topics, of development assistance in the world, this great value we call solidarity seems to get lost. Even the richest among us ask what benefit they will obtain before finding or seeking areas for negotiation with the poorest among us. Development assistance goals are set on a year by year basis. A few days ago, I read an interminable list of times when the nations of the world have met to decide what will be achieved in the next ten, twenty, or thirty years. Invariably we meet years later without having achieved our goals.

If we are not capable of promoting social democracy and social citizenship, we can compare notes and exchange reports on how we do things here or there in the world but we will not have gotten to the heart of our problem, which is the fact that in this world of marvels, of inventions, of huge advances, in this world of more than six billion inhabitants there are still more than two billion poor people and similar numbers of people without access to potable water, sewers, and minimum sanitation services.

Now is the time for us to confront this issue together and the issue – as President Konaré has said – has only one name: it is the concept of solidarity, solidarity between our peoples to insist that the conditions to which humanity has access in the world must be better distributed. We must know our history well, know well why we have had our problems, know well what has caused our problems, and must join together so that this century will effectively be the century of those who have been neglected over so many centuries in our historical past.

Thank you very much.







## Remarks by Chairman of the African Union Commission

*Alpha Oumar Konare*

*Alpha Oumar Konare*  
*Chairman*  
African Union  
Commission



If you will permit me, Mr. Secretary General, I would like to welcome the presence in this hall of a great African, someone who was a great Head of State of an exemplary democracy. I would like to welcome the presence of Mr. Mascarenhas, former President of Cape Verde, whom you invited to join this gathering, I am certain, because of the symbol that he and his country represent.

Mr. Secretary General, Ms. Rice's presence this morning is also, in our view, an expression of the United States Government's desire to stand with us in the battle for democracy in Africa. I am well aware of all the strong actions taken by the U.S. Government to support our continental organization. These include the opening in Addis Ababa of a special embassy to the African Union in recognition of our political organization, the acceptance here in Washington of an African Union ambassador to the U.S. Government, and, of course, all the commitments given to us for various programs, particularly the peace and security and governance promotion programs in Africa.

Mr. Secretary General, I could not fail to respond to your invitation, for several reasons: the historical ties, the geographical ties, that bind Africa to the Americas; the blood ties, the human ties, that unite us. But Mr. Secretary General, this common desire that we have today to share a number of strong values, democratic values – all of that compelled me, compelled us, the African Union delegation, to be here with you to conduct the meetings that will be held over these two days.

It must be said, Mr. Secretary General, that the two of us have been trying to find each other for some time. Each of us needed to define our identity more clearly: you, the Organization of American States, amidst this multitude of American regional organizations; and we, the African Union, to reflect a different image of Africa, an Africa that intends above all to count on its strength, on its own strength – an Africa that knows that its current situation is not its destiny. An Africa with poor

people, to be sure, but an Africa aware that it is not a poor continent, an Africa convinced that with a different form of governance, with respect for human rights, law, and democracy, Africa's situation can be different.

The African Union is the expression of a responsible Africa, which is resolved, determined, therefore, to work with you, but which is also determined to develop a multifaceted partnership, because we need a harmonious partnership, a balanced partnership.

You and we, Mr. Secretary General, need to promote, each in our own sphere, the values to which we have just referred: values of democracy, good governance, respect for the rule of law, and respect for freedoms. For our part, we do not consider democracy to be a luxury. This is not the place for me to indulge in an abstract discussion – however interesting – that we should continue to foster over the next several years, of what kind of democracy our countries need. This is a legitimate question. It does not challenge the validity of certain universal values, but it forces us to think about the cultural basis, the historical basis, for the establishment of universal principles in our countries so that we can be sure there is genuine ownership. I am certain that in your sphere of action, you will do the same. But beyond our spheres of jurisdiction, you and we need to ensure that these principles in which we believe also govern international relations in the world.

In her statement this morning, Ms. Rice spoke, and rightly so, of the need for a democratic partnership. We must foster this democratic partnership – you, an American organization, and we, an African organization. Democratic partnership will be based on equality. Democratic partnership will be based on mutual respect. Democratic partnership will be based on consultation. Democratic partnership cannot be subject to a double standard. Democratic partnership – and I also share Ms. Rice's objective – must seek to settle the population problem that confronts us daily; must help to fight poverty; must help to establish social justice. If this were not the case, we would be left with abstract and false approaches to democracy. If this were not the case, we would allow the social arena to be undermined by all forms of extremism, and when the extremists undermine the social arena, if we reduce democracy to holding elections, then these forces will transform their social investments into votes. They will win, and will bar the road to change once and for all.

Mr. Secretary General, our experience in Africa warrants the sharing of certain information. In recent years we have often spoken, in connection with Africa, of external factors that have quickened the democratic process, that have even brought democracy to Africa. We have spoken of the fall of the Berlin Wall; we have spoken of the La Baule speech. For our part, and in my opinion, this is one of the lessons that we should draw over and over in our analyses. These external factors have certainly helped, along with the commitment of some countries to advancing democracy, countries such as the United States, Canada, Japan, and others in Africa. These have been encouraging factors, but rarely, rarely do we



speak of African peoples' struggle to advance democracy in Africa, rarely do we speak of African peoples' resistance. It is external factors that prevail.

Either that, or our people's victories are sometimes regarded as gifts from presidents, from individuals. This person, that president, brought democracy; this or that president did such and such for democracy. I am well aware of the role that leaders have played in this, but for heaven's sake, let us recognize the peoples' struggles, let us recognize their sacrifices. Let us recognize the peoples' commitment, or else we will not move forward.

The organization on whose behalf I speak this morning is also the outcome of an idea. You know that before the African Union, there was the Organization of African Unity (OAU). The OAU was an intergovernmental organization for cooperation and solidarity that helped fight apartheid, that helped fight colonialism, that helped liberate the continent, but that did not answer a number of concerns that our people had regarding governance, regarding peace, regarding economic development. This is why the African Union was established.

And the African Union is not merely an intergovernmental organization for cooperation. The African Union is an organization for regional integration. This means that 53 African countries have affirmed their desire to move one day toward what we call the United States of Africa. I can say here today, after our recent Accra Summit, that if something has been achieved, it is that 53 African countries have agreed that the goal of the African Union is one day to have the United States of Africa.

Now, where the debate lies is in the process, the legal personality of this organization. The debate lies also in determining the spheres of jurisdiction that States are ready to put together in common. These are questions that could not be settled in Accra.

But one thing that was not debated in Accra is that all the countries have agreed that the African Union should have an executive body, an executive authority. This will be worked out in the months ahead, but it is undeniable that this is not the only difference between the African Union and the OAU. The African Union has institutions. It has the Commission that I chair, which is an executive body; it has a Pan-African Parliament; it has a Court of Justice; it has an African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights. It has financial institutions; one day it will have a central bank, an African development bank, an African monetary fund. The African Union also has an Economic, Social, and Cultural Council.

I mention all these institutions to make you understand that increasingly, the Summit of Heads of State, which is the highest organ, which wielded all the authority – executive authority, legislative authority, judicial authority – this Summit of Heads of State has embarked on a democratic process. It is in the process of ceding authority to the new organs I mentioned earlier, simply because the African Union

stands for the strong values that we have affirmed. It stands for democracy, for good governance, for respect for freedoms, for respect for the rule of law, for a larger role for women, for recognition of the role of civil society and the private sector in Africa. This means that our organization can no longer be simply an organization of States: our organization also seeks to be an organization of peoples.

Integration will not work if it is not founded on democracy. For the last several years, we have tried to reflect this by adopting a number of charters. The first of these was the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights. The defense of individual freedoms represents historical progress. For heaven's sake, let us not have it foisted upon us, along with the defense of public and general interests. The African Charter seeks to combine the two.

We adopted a charter with an addendum on women's rights in Africa. I chair a Commission of 10 persons – five men, five women – and there are African countries that are making much more room now for women in all their institutions, and I think this is a sign of democratic progress in our countries.

We adopted an African Youth Charter and an African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child. In the framework of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), we established the African peer review mechanism, which allows African countries to evaluate themselves. All of this seems like progress to me. Last January, we tried to put all of this in the framework of a charter that will be presented to you today and tomorrow: the African Charter on Democracy, Elections, and Governance. In drafting this charter, we sought in fact to evaluate our democratic practice.

First, as Ms. Rice said this morning, we adopted decisions in Algiers and Lomé against unconstitutional change, which we confirmed means against coups. Not simply against military coups, but against those who are unwilling to leave power. We clarified it further. In this regard I think, my point of view is, that we in Africa should no longer accept a transition being carried out by the military. If unfortunately there was a military coup because of a breach between legality and legitimacy, and if the military intervened, there could be no question of the military remaining in power to hold elections. Indeed, we have agreed that if the military intervenes to ensure that elections are held, it should not run in these elections; furthermore, in our opinion, it should not even manage a transition, because in a democratic system, the military must obey civilian authority. This does not mean that a democratic system does not need an army, but it needs a democratic army in order to be established.

We also evaluated the issue of changes in terms of office. I think that a discussion should be initiated between you and us so that we can share experiences. Why four years, why five years, why six years, why seven years? But what seems important to me is that the rules must not be changed in the middle of the game.



In evaluating our practice, we also evaluated the holding of elections. I think everyone agrees that the holding of multiparty elections in Africa constitutes progress. But we all agree now that it would be a lethal error to believe that democracy consists solely of elections. You have the example today of countries where there are elections and, as I said, when democracies fail in their solidarity obligations, extremists occupy the field. You hold elections, they win elections. Democracy cannot consist solely of holding elections: it means civil society, it means freedom of the press, it means a dynamic private sector doing business.

We evaluated the holding of elections in Africa and, it must be admitted – and this is an area where we can cooperate – exchanging observers. But watch out! These observers who come for 48 hours, 72 hours – that is not observation. Observation should continue up to the point where the electoral rolls are drawn up, otherwise the observers are hamstrung nowadays, and here we have an important problem that should challenge us, and that can be the subject of collaboration between us, particularly in Africa: the problem of civil status in Africa, the documents that are handed out haphazardly, to anyone; all the forgeries nowadays in birth certificates, death certificates. The problem of civil status in Africa is a basic problem nowadays for the democratic development of our countries.

When elections are held, there is the problem of money. Vast corruption is now organized around elections. Incidentally, there is a senior African official who said that you don't lose elections when you are in power, but this must be taken seriously. Nowadays, money corrupts, money destroys; nowadays, oppositions disappear. A majority alone is not democracy. We must therefore establish the status of an opposition, an opposition that is also responsible.

Those are the challenges we are facing, and then of course, with the democratic practice we have had, it is becoming clear that we should think about the separation of powers, because there is a feeling that the State nowadays is becoming a crony State, based on inheritance. These are things that we should think about, because they are not peculiar to Africa alone.

What is the role of the judiciary? What is the role of the legislature? What is the role of the executive? And what is the role of the media today? The media must be allowed to play its full role with all due guarantees, but it must also attain a certain level of professionalism so as not to be manipulated by politicians.

These are some of the issues that are challenging democracy in Africa today. There are, of course, other issues. There is illiteracy. What does it mean nowadays to teach people to read and write, especially in their national language? Because language is power, but it is not among the first foundations that must be laid to build democracy. What are the limits of democracy with populations that cannot read and write? What is the use of posting electoral rolls when people cannot read them? If most people cannot identify a ballot, what is the use?

One of the cornerstones of the battle for democracy today is combating illiteracy. One of the cornerstones of the battle for democracy today is another way of administering the country. This means emphasizing decentralization, delegating authority to local communities, but also emphasizing regional integration. Nowadays we are challenged to reflect on the question, What is a political party? When we speak of democracy and regional integration, does that mean that we cannot think about transnational parties, pan-African political parties? Does it mean that we cannot raise the question that defending the law should have no borders? That organizations fighting to defend human rights might be cross-border organizations? Pan-African organizations?

These are questions that we are now asking ourselves repeatedly and that deserve an answer; as I say, the status of the opposition, the status of former Heads of State. Those are some of the questions that are worth thinking about and to which we should seek to provide some answers.

In the African case, of course, we have a number of values that we should think about, such as consensus and solidarity. These are values to which we should give careful consideration, in order to nurture our democratic practice and make the necessary changes.

Mr. Secretary General, we are with you, but you know as well as I do that for our partnership to be sound – Ms. Rice referred to this – we have a duty to remember, a duty to remember slavery, a duty to remember colonization, a duty to remember apartheid, a duty to remember genocide. This duty to remember should be the basis of our partnership.

But, Mr. Secretary General, our partnership should also be based on a need for truth, truth about Africa, so that it can be responsible for managing its conflicts. Believe me, we want to end this tragedy in Darfur; we want more than ever to ensure that our continent does not know the tragedy of Darfur.

We thank all the countries that are helping us, especially the U.S. Government and the United Nations, on the basis of the compromise that we have to find. We will show no laxity in this regard. Our young organization, which is barely four years old, has tried to do its best, but has encountered political limits, physical limits. I am convinced that we will draw lessons from all of this, so that our organization utilizes some of its strong values, such as not being indifferent, because all African problems can be seen coming. We must allow ourselves to interfere in the problems of African countries, not to teach them lessons, but in a courteous and cooperative fashion.

You know, in African culture, there is a famous saying: the way something is said can ruin everything. However, if we find a way to say things, we should intervene in time, we should not accept silence in the face of tragedies that we see dawning. There is no African problem that was not seen to develop. Africa



must also acquire the means to intervene. I am not referring to an African army. But the African Union must have an African Union army, so that when there is a problem, we can immediately mobilize and send in troops, knowing that we do so not to make war, but to promote political dialogue. In Darfur, in Somalia as well, now and on other occasions. This is our responsibility, and we intend to shoulder it alongside the United Nations, with the support of all friendly countries, particularly the united African States.

This duty to the truth should also allow us to say that Africa cannot develop solely through a philosophy of aid. This duty to the truth should allow us to say that so many promises were made to Africa that have not been kept and will not be kept. We should now tell ourselves the truth: if things continue as they are, the Millennium Goals will not be achieved. We should talk about these issues. This duty to the truth compels us to say that Africa is the continent with the greatest number of poor people, yet Africa is not poor; why this paradox? It is because all of Africa's raw materials go out of Africa, are not sold at their real prices, and are not processed in Africa ... not yet for Africans. It is this colonial treaty logic that rules Africa which is at the root of much of Africa's poverty, together, of course, with the bad governance and unacceptable conflicts that our continent has experienced.

The second thing on which our partnership should be based is a need for solidarity. When we speak of solidarity nowadays, people think it means begging. Oh, no, I am not a beggar, I am not asking for a handout, I do not believe that Africa can pull through by asking for a handout. What will pull Africa through is work, good work and good management. This is what will help Africa, but solidarity means recognizing that the African continent is in a difficult phase these days, and that it is necessary to invest in Africa, only in Africa, in an exceptional fashion, so that Africa has roads, so that Africa has railroads, so that Africa has energy sources.

A sprinkle of aid will not help fight poverty in Africa, so Africa must be helped. Africa must be brought up to date with new technologies. This is not begging! But to change things, we need a strong effort.

Lastly, Mr. Chairman, you know, I often say that our continent has all it needs to succeed. We have many natural resources, Mr. Chairman. At this moment I am happy. You have stretched out your hand to us because you believe in Africa, you have confidence in Africa, and Africa has the resources to pull through. Many here have heard me say that Africa is not a small country, Africa is a big country, a country of 30 million square kilometers. And I often say that Africa has the area of the United States, Mexico, Argentina, Brazil, India, China, and the European Union combined. It takes all of that to make up Africa.

Africa is a big country. In 30 years, Africa will have one billion, nine hundred million (1,900,000,000) inhabitants. Demographically speaking, we will be the third largest power after India and China. And in 30 years, when we have 1,900,000,000 inhabitants, Mr. Secretary General, that will equal the population of all of the

Americas that you represent – North America, Central America, South America – plus Oceania, plus the European Union. This is what Africa's population will be. But the advantage we will have is that we will be the world's youngest population. The advantage we will have is that where we live, everything will need to be done. Africa will be the world's new construction site, and Africa will be the world's new market.

There is no future without Africa. If Africa remains poor, it will mean insecurity for the whole world. But Africa can be a great opportunity. That is the Africa on whose behalf I speak, Mr. Secretary General. That is the Africa which crossed the corridor of your heroes, who are also our heroes.

Mr. Secretary General, I often say that whenever America looks in a mirror, it sees Africa. Whenever a country in the Americas, the United States of America, looks in a mirror, it sees Africa.

Mr. Secretary General, when you and I looked at each other yesterday, we had a Statement of Intent before us, which we signed. But I am convinced that we will turn this Statement of Intent into a lasting and permanent alliance for the peoples of Africa, the peoples of America, and all others as well, because we are convinced that we belong to the same great family of men and women who inhabit this earth that belongs to us all.

I wish our association every success, and thank you very much.







## Remarks by United States Secretary of State

*Condoleezza Rice*

*Condoleezza Rice*  
United States  
Secretary of State



Thank you very much and good morning. Distinguished guests, distinguished fellow members of the platform, I welcome you to the Organization of American States/African Union Democracy Bridge Forum. I want to recognize especially Secretary General Insulza for his excellent leadership of the men and women of the Organization of American States. Thank you very much for your outstanding leadership. I want to thank African Union Commission Chairman Konare and the members of the AU Commission for participating in this important dialogue.

To the entire diplomatic corps from the OAS and the AU, thank you all for coming. I thank all the countries and institutions that are represented here and for the commitment to democracy in Africa, in the Americas, and in the world. As I entered this room, I noticed the busts of the founding fathers of the Americas that are lining the hallway. They tell me it's called the "Hall of Heroes." And it reminded me of all our forebearers, both in Africa and the Americas, impatient patriots who would not accept that their countries could not be made better; not perfect, just better.

It was these men and women who laid the foundations for independence and democracy in our regions. In recent years, in Africa, we have seen a democratic transformation sweep the continent and we have observed many heads of state leaving office voluntarily. In the Americas, we have witnessed the end of military dictatorships and the rise of a new democratic consensus. And in both regions, we have now enshrined our commitment to democracy in visionary documents: the Inter-American Democratic Charter and the newly adopted African Charter on Democracy, Elections, and Governance.

We have made these commitments to democracy within our regions and now, we gather to make them between our regions. We make them to each other. That is the great vision that brings us together today, a vision of partnership between the premiere multilateral organizations of Africa and the Americas that grew out of

the Community of Democracies. And I want to thank Mali for its chairmanship of that Community of Democracies.

Our challenge now is to use our democratic partnership, Americans and Africans together, to deliver the benefits of democracy to our people. For amidst great progress and the great opportunity in our countries today, there is still great and tragic suffering: citizens who are excluded from opportunities for economic advancement and social justice, citizens who are beginning to wonder whether democracies really can deliver on their rightfully high hopes for a better life.

We must use our democratic partnership to build up, expand, and broaden democratic institutions, institutions that are transparent and accountable to the needs of all of their people. We must fight corruption and protect civil liberties and the rule of law. We must encourage vibrant, civil societies and defend freedom of speech. Through free and fair elections, governments earn legitimacy in the eyes of their people and it is through good governance that they earn people's trust and confidence that life will get better.

Our new initiative to help democracies build good and enduring institutions is the Partnership for Democratic Governance, currently under consideration at the OECD. We support this new global initiative and we appreciate your support of it as well, because we must use our democratic partnerships to reduce poverty and advance social justice in all of our countries. Today's forum is much more than a dialogue on best practices. We're here to work together to meet the greatest development challenges that we face, to join together as democracies, to help meet our people's needs, from housing and health, to good jobs and education.

The democratic governments of Africa and the Americas must liberate the creativity and industry of their people. They must help them seize the opportunities of regional and global trade. It should not be easier to start a rebellion than to start a business. Governments must help, not hinder, the social and economic progress of their people. The right to vote is not enough when men, women, and children lack opportunity, personal security, healthcare and education.

Finally, we must use our democratic partnerships, as well, to support those in Africa and in the Americas and in the wider world, who still struggle for freedom and opportunity. We must support the great people of Cuba who still long for a future of freedom that their government denies to them. We must support the men and women of Zimbabwe who suffer from misrule and long for a better life.

And of course, as fellow democracies, we must remain resolved to end the suffering and end the violence in Darfur. Too many have died, too many women have been raped, and too many children have been torn away from their families. The planned AU/UN peacekeeping force is essential to increasing security for the people of Darfur so that they can begin returning to their homes. We must not let the Government of Sudan continue this game of cat and mouse diplomacy; making promises, then going back on them. It is our responsibility, as principled nations,



as principled democracies, to hold Sudan accountable.

We must also rise to our global obligations, lifting our sights beyond our regions and championing the democratic aspirations of all people, in places like Burma and Iraq and Afghanistan. The promise of democracy is not confined to any particular region. It is universal and it is global and our partnership must be as well.

Your countries have learned great and important lessons in your own democratic transitions, and people around the world look to you not only for inspiration, but for cooperation and assistance. Great patriots can determine their countries' future, and we have a responsibility to help those who seek liberty chart a free and better course.

Ladies and gentlemen, those of us gathered here know that democracy is a process. It's a very hard one. Everyday, you get up and you work to put yet another brick in place in the foundation of democracy.

Here in the United States, we firsthand know that our own progress towards a more perfect union has been long and imperfect, and it goes on to this day. As a young girl growing up in segregated Birmingham, I too, and my parents and my neighbors, were frustrated with the pace of democratic and social justice in this country. And we learned what an important difference committed partners can make in the pursuit of democratic ideals.

Now, we are beginning to fulfill a democratic vision together. In centuries past, the peoples of Africa and the Americas met in another way, a more tragic way. We met across a bridge of slavery spanning the Atlantic. The ties that bound our people were literally the shackles and the bindings of slavery. One of our largest shared endeavors was the theft and transport and sale in the Americas of the sons and daughters of Africa, my ancestors among them.

Now, we have a different and hopeful binding -- hope binding us together. And we meet here to build these new bridges between us, bridges of liberty and justice and dignity and human rights which transcend all differences of culture and race and religion. Today, we stand here together, united as the force for human advancement through liberty. One day, we will look back at tyranny as we now look back at slavery; as a crime of man, not a fact of nature. And history will remember the new bridge of democracy and freedom that we built together.

Thank you very much.





## Remarks by Convening Group of the Community of Democracies

*Chairman Abdoulaye Diop*

*Abdoulaye Diop*  
*Chairman*  
Convening Group  
of the Community  
of Democracies



Let me first express my appreciation to His Excellency President Konare for his leadership and commitment to accelerate regional integration in Africa and promote democracy and human rights on the continent. As Chair of the Convening Group of the Community of Democracies (CD), I would like to salute the role you played at the inception of the Community of Democracies at the Warsaw Conference in 2000 as President of the Republic of Mali.

Let me also congratulate the leadership of the Secretary General of the Organization of American States and of the African Union Commission for organizing this very important event and for inviting Mali, in its capacity as Chair of the Community of Democracies, to take part in it.

At the onset, I would like to underscore the importance that the Community of Democracies and its chairmanship give to the timely initiative of organizing a dialogue on the role of regional organizations in promoting and strengthening democratic governance in the world in general and in the Americas and Africa in particular.

Indeed, the Community of Democracies, in its basic documents—the Warsaw Declaration, the Seoul Plan of Action, and the Santiago Commitment—recognized the crucial role that regional organizations play in the consolidation of democratic institutions, good governance, and the promotion of the democratic principles that sustain them. It also encouraged regional organizations to cooperate between themselves by exchanging their experience in the field of democratization through events such as the one that gathers us today.

As the Chair of the Community of Democracies, I would like to highlight that regional organizations, such as the OAS, the African Union, the European Union, have adopted political instruments that bolster democratic governance and the rule

of law. In fact, the Inter American Charter, adopted in September 2001, and the African Charter on Democracy, Elections, and Governance, adopted in January 2007, stress the fact that the peoples of the Americas and Africa have the right to democracy and their respective governments have an obligation to promote and defend it. It is then easy to understand why these organizations have created special mechanisms to prevent threats and attacks on democracy and have opposed unconstitutional changes of government, as well as nonrespect for the rule of law and democratic principles.

In the same trend, international and regional organizations are emphasizing the importance of maintaining and supporting free and democratic elections and the creation of necessary conditions for the broad participation of the population in political and economical life. In this regard, they have agreed upon the role of civil society and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) in promoting democracy and reinforcing the respect and protection of human rights and fundamental liberties, and they are working hard to make civil society play a considerable role in the whole democratization process.

Ladies and gentlemen, poverty reduction is an important dimension of the consolidating process of democratization in the world, and the Community of Democracies believes that regional organizations can play a crucial role in this endeavor.

As the first African country to chair the Community of Democracies, Mali has decided to focus the Fourth Ministerial Conference, to be held in Bamako from November 14 to 17, 2007, on the topic of democracy and development. These concepts are closely dependent. Democracy can bring concrete advantages to citizens by encouraging stability and good governance, which are essential, with economic prosperity. Institutions such as the Millennium Challenge Account (MCA), from which Mali has benefited last year, undoubtedly strengthen this dynamic.

By focusing attention on the link between democracy and development, the Malian chairmanship wishes to cause a stronger mobilization of the international community and its engagement to firmly and resolutely support countries that have achieved considerable progress in practicing democratic governance while still facing important economic and social challenges.

We hope to take advantage of the outcomes of today's discussions to enrich the final document that will be issued by the Community of Democracy at the Ministerial Conference in Bamako.

To conclude, I would like once again to encourage the Organization of American States and the African Union to continue these important joint processes and initiatives, which aim to promote and defend democracy.

I thank you for your time.







## Remarks by Organization of American States Assistant

*Secretary for Political Affairs Dante Caputo*

*Dante Caputo*  
*Secretary for*  
*Political Affairs*  
Organization of  
American States



Discussing the similarities between two such heterogeneous and different continents as Africa and Latin America, whose territories in turn contain an immense diversity, is not an easy matter. Our countries have different sets of problems and our continents face very different challenges.

Nonetheless, there is a subject that unites us and the context in which this subject appears unites us as well. The subject is democracy. This gives us an immense common platform despite the heterogeneity between the two continents and within each continent.

I want to discuss two issues that make the democratic challenge unique in both Africa and Latin America. I refer first to the context in which this challenge develops and then to the nature of that challenge.

The challenge of democracy in Africa and Latin America has a unique context that represents an unprecedented reality. Never before has it been necessary to build democracy under extreme conditions of poverty and inequality. This triangle of democracy-poverty-inequality is a new one in the history of the world. Development, wealth, growth, freedoms, and democratic practice has been the normal historical sequence. The nature of the practical challenges, of the conquest of democratic legitimacy, and of the institutional challenges is entirely different in the case of Africa and Latin America. It is one thing to be rich and democratic and quite another to be poor, unequal, and democratic. We inhabitants of Africa and Latin America, of Africa and the Caribbean, we Africans and Americans thus face a common challenge: a historical novelty that has not occurred before now in the process of building democracies.

Besides having to deal with this unique situation, I believe that on both continents we understand a truism that is beginning to be repeated more and more: a neces-

sary precondition for democracy is elections, elections that are free and transparent and without which there is no democracy in practice. However, democracy goes beyond the existence of free and transparent elections. And it is here that the title of this panel, of this meeting is born: the democracy of citizens.

Allow me to use these few minutes to further delineate the content of this idea of democracy, of citizenship, or the democracy of citizens, and then quickly describe some challenges that emerge from the idea of the democracy of citizens.

So as to leave no doubt regarding my assertions, I repeat that there is no democracy without free elections, without transparent elections. However, free and transparent elections do not by themselves guarantee democratic legitimacy. Even more, they do not guarantee democratic sustainability, the continuation of democracy over time and its ability to regenerate itself.

Democracy's principal objective is to transfer nominal rights as they are written in our laws into positive rights. The goal is to transform rights into daily life: to make my right to personal security, to physical integrity, the reality of my security. What use is it to me that the law says that I have the right to think freely and not be imprisoned for it, if in practice I am later persecuted for my ideas? This transition from a nominal right to a right as it is lived is the construction of citizenship. Citizenship is rights as they are experienced in the lives of the men and women in our communities.

A great French politician and economist, Pierre Mendès-France, has a pithy and marvelous phrase that crystallizes this challenge that I am trying to describe. Pierre Mendès-France says that "Every individual contains a citizen." He does not say that "every individual is a citizen." Every individual, he tells us, has the ability to become, to transform him or herself into a citizen. This will be true whenever a series of events occurs that effectively allows his or her daily life to be the expression of the rights he or she holds.

Thus, democracy is not just a system for electing who governs but also a system for organizing society in such a way that rights become realities. My right to decent work, as the ILO states, becomes a decent job in reality; my right to physical integrity is reflected in respect for my physical integrity; and my right to life is honored in reality.

Citizenship-building is the objective of democracy. There is no better system than democracy itself for organizing society with the purpose of building citizenship. Nothing better has been invented so far. This is not an axiomatic assertion; it is a reality.

Why is democracy the best system? Because the basic objective of democracy, history's second chapter, is to organize power in society. I wonder, if there were no one to organize power in society – why would the weakest members enjoy their



rights; why would minorities be treated with the same rights as the majority; why would those with great resources have the same opportunities as those with few resources? Why wouldn't the law of the jungle prevail in our societies?

There must be a system to regulate power in societies. That system is democracy. However, we need a system that regulates power in such a way that, while it permits rights to become realities, it prevents the concentration of power from becoming a new threat to the creation of citizenship. This strange and complex interaction between creating a system to govern power and at the same time preventing power from overwhelming individuals can only be achieved in the context of this sophisticated, extremely delicate, and difficult to complete construction that we call democracy.

Before proceeding to conclusions, I should like to review two basic ideas. The democratic challenge in Africa and Latin America is a new challenge in history. We have to build citizenship under conditions of poverty, extreme poverty, and high levels of inequality. As Africans and Latin Americans, we both live in the regions that suffer from the greatest inequality and poverty in the world. Latin America is the most unequal region. Latin America's Gini quotient is 0.5.

The poverty levels in our region – all of you are aware of them. In most cases, forty percent of the population lives below the poverty line. And more than 20 percent of the population lives below the indigence or extreme poverty line. This means that more than twenty percent of the inhabitants of our regions do not have the calories needed to feed themselves. In this context, we must lay the foundations for a political and institutional system that will allow us to build the citizenship to which I referred.

If democracy is a system designed to build and organize power so that in the context of the democracy-inequality-poverty triangle we will be able to build citizenship, there is a central challenge we must resolve and that must, in my judgment, be the main focus of the agenda in our discussions.

The State is necessary for the new Latin American democracies and for the new African democracies. However, there is not enough discussion of this subject, at least in Latin America.

In the past, we had a State that absorbed individual capacities and blocked them, an omnipresent State in which a man behind a desk determined the price of onions from 3,000 kilometers away. Ridiculous! A man who decided where to invest. Even more, it was a State that eliminated the creativity that economic freedom brings. That State exhausted itself and overwhelmed us. And then came the great reforms of the 1970s, the 1980s, and above all, the 1990s. But we threw the baby out with the bathwater. And we're left without a State, that is, we're left without power to democratize, to build citizenship.

What can be done to organize power if the majorities are elected within a power that has no power, the State. What happens when the government that occupies a State that has no power is unable to organize the power of a society? This discussion is not sufficiently developed. And it is not a theoretical debate. Do you think that drug-trafficking is proliferating in Latin America because there is too much State or too little State? Or can we perhaps assert that sadly, as noted by the Secretary General of our Organization yesterday, Latin America has the highest murder rate in the world because there is too much State or too little State? Migration problems exist ... because there's too much State or too little State? Are there day-to-day insecurities... because there's too much State or too little State? I know that this is quite a challenging and provocative suggestion: our market imperfections, extremely serious market imperfections, the lack of market economies that actually function and that have not been developed in our countries... does this happen because there's too much or too little State?

Recall that George Soros has stated that if there were no State, competition would destroy competition. The goal of each competitor in the market is to destroy anyone who produces the same thing, displace them, and do away with them. Therefore, competition without a State to regulate it eliminates the free market, eliminates the market economy. In Latin America we are not discussing an enormous question – I don't know if it's being discussed in Africa, but I fear not. The question is: what type of State do we need for our new democracies?

Finally, all this is synthesized in an idea that is provocative but not sinful since it comes from a Dominican priest. Jean-Baptiste Henri Lacordaire, a nineteenth century Dominican who restored the Dominican Order in France expressed a striking idea: "it is freedom which oppresses and the law which sets free." What use is freedom if there is no law? It's a good thing that a priest said it because, if not, you would think that I was exaggerating. No, no. Without the law, our freedom does not find expression in reality. In Latin America and I think in Africa as well, we are not just economically poor, we are legally poor as well. We have truncated legality because we have truncated States.

I believe we face an immense common challenge despite the heterogeneity between Africa and Latin America and within our continents: we must organize conditions so that democracy will create citizenship. This is our major challenge.

The vote is an instrument that must be as perfect as possible to attain power and from power to transform our societies and in turn convert rights into reality. However, in order to attain power, there must be public power, there must be a State. I don't mean the State of the past that overwhelmed us, but the State that we need for this democracy of citizens. This is the democracy that in my judgment constitutes the major challenge that should be the subject of increasing and more elaborate discussion. I hope that these meetings will be the start of joint efforts between Africa and Latin America.

Thank you very much.







## Remarks by African Union Commissioner for Peace and Security

*Said Djinnit*

*Said Djinnit*  
African Union  
Commissioner for  
Peace and Security



Democracy means different things to different people. It is an ideal, a universal value, and a system of government. Whatever the difference about the nature, character and essence of democracy, there is some agreement about its basic elements. It's a political system that combines free choice of leadership with respect for basic freedoms, fundamental human rights, the Rule of Law, and good governance. If a democratic system is to be effective and provide dividends for the people it is expected to serve, it must be built on citizenship.

Democracy, as both a value and a system of government, rests on three basic factors; namely, functioning and effective institutions; appropriate attitudes, norms and patterns of behavior; and a culture of citizenship. The three are linked together. The effective test of a government of the people is that it is a hindrance to autocracy and dictatorship. Experience demonstrates that power, if not constrained, could easily give way to autocracy and dictatorship. Only a system based on effective and functioning institutions aligned to provide the checks and balances can prevent this tendency. Checks and balances in themselves, however, could be inadequate. Those in power control the resources of state that could be used to coopt opposition, suppress dissidents, and compel compliance.

A political culture of constitutionalism that enjoins a model of behavior to support democratic ethos would be required to sustain the effective performance of institutions. That political culture must rest on the rights and obligations of citizenship, a society that recognizes its interests, establishes appropriate norms, and organizes itself to support and defend them within the framework of constitutionalism.

The difficulty in terms of the African experience is that the democratic ethos is fragile. It is important to recall that following the independence of most of the African member states, democracy was conceived as democracy for the people as an entity. Focus on nation building and the ideological divide that prevailed during

the Cold War period, with its impact on Africa, did not encourage the promotion of the liberal interpretation of democracy. The consolidation of institutions has often been interrupted by reforms that have not been sustained, political turmoil and instability, military rule, occasional coups, external influences and interference, and retrogressive lapses into autocracy.

The role of checks and balances in nascent African political systems was eroded by the shocks that were received in this context. More significantly, the situation has supported the emergence of personalist rules and personality cults. Power of those who control the state in such circumstances have grown rapidly and promoted dormant cultures of citizenship in which a vast majority are submissive and recalcitrant. Few are easily labeled as simple dissidents.

The conditions of poverty among a large spread of African populations have tended also to undermine the power of the majority, creating conditions that promote compliance in the face of oppression.

The impact of the global system has also not always been beneficial. On the one hand, the strong influence of Western powers and their dominant ethos of liberal democracy have unleashed pressures for promoting a wider democratic culture within Africa. However, ideological positioning does not always conform to behavior, as powers that preach democracy do not often practice it or honor it in the process of their international conduct.

Where such gaps exist between proposition and practice, it reinforces the position of autocrats and weakens the building of democracy on a culture of effective citizenship. Also, there have been attempts to impose conditionality that hinders processes of economic development and creates hardships that undermine an active political culture that would support civil rights.

This notwithstanding, there is considerable room for optimism about the African environment and its ability to build a democracy of citizenship. The end of the Cold War in the 1990s witnessed the advent of liberalization and democratization, which broadened the frontiers of citizens' political freedoms and rights in a number of African countries.

Similarly, the African Union, since its inception, has prioritized the realization of human and people's social, economic, civil, cultural, and political rights, even though these processes have not attained full maturity. In the same vein, there is a greater recognition of the requirement of building democracy and development on the platform of effective public participation in the determination of goals, means, and ends of public policy.

Thus, the constitutive act of the African Union stresses the need to build a union based on partnership between governments and all segments of civil society, particularly women and youth. This has been translated into action with the effective incorporation of civil society in all aspects of the policy process.



Similarly, there is a growing compact between policymakers and all segments of the population in the development of policy processes that will provide the foundation for a democracy that is based on a culture of effective and supportive citizenship.

We at the African Union are convinced that the democratic and socioeconomic transformation will be considerably accelerated with the full involvement of women, who constitute a huge reservoir of energy and resources yet not fully exploited on the continent. The process is growing and will face serious challenges rising from old attitudes and other difficulties that are normally associated with the growth of a vibrant but yet fragile political culture.

Even now, however, there are critical lessons to be learned. The effective participation of civil society in the development of the culture is a *sine qua non* for its existence, and there is considerable evidence of this. However, one paramount danger that has become evident is that some activists in civil society attempt to stress rights of citizens without underscoring the need to align them with duties. Indeed, a democracy built on citizenship cannot just focus on rights, but must also stress obligations at the community, state, and regional level.

Ladies and gentlemen, in conclusion, allow me to share with you my conviction that the democratization process in our continent is an irreversible one. However, building democracy of citizenship should not be considered in isolation from the socioeconomic and cultural transformation of Africa. Filling the democratization gap in Africa goes hand in hand with filling the socioeconomic gap. Democratic transformation would be more effectively addressed if it is considered as part of a comprehensive approach towards accelerated political and socioeconomic transformation of the continent.

Similarly, for the democratization process to be sustained, it should be supported by effective institutions and the most, the biggest challenge in Africa today is precisely building institutions that can support the African agenda for peace, security, and democracy. This is precisely the approach and the agenda of the African Union, to which we are full committed.

Thank you for your attention.





## Remarks by Organization of American States Assistant Secretary General

*Albert R. Ramdin*

*Albert R. Ramdin*  
*Assistant Secretary*  
*General*  
Organization of  
American States



Let me start by thanking all of you for attending this closing session of this important conference under the telling title “Democracy Bridge: Multilateral regional efforts for the promotion and defense of democracy in Africa and America”.

In my view and from what I have heard from delegates to this conference, it has indeed been a very fruitful and productive two days. Like several speakers before me, it gives me great satisfaction to be able to already conclude that this forum has been a step in the right direction in support of a new democratic partnership, as Dr. Condoleezza Rice so eloquently stated in her opening remarks yesterday morning.

These last two days of working sessions, sharing of experiences and thematic discussions on the many challenges our continents face have reaped numerous ideas on how to move forward and build on the progress made so far, and strengthen the collaboration between the two regions.

Not only do we share similar challenges, but also many of our member states are bound by history, in particular by the transatlantic slave trade. It is therefore symbolic and of historic significance that this meeting is being held in the year that we all commemorate the 200th anniversary of the abolition of the transatlantic slave trade.

Let me reiterate our support, recognition and appreciation to Secretary General Jose Miguel Insulza and the African Union, in particular, to President Alpha Oumar Konare, as Chair of the African Union Commission for envisioning this historic event, which has brought representatives of distinct and yet similar continents together for the first time in a multilateral setting to engage in a focused dialogue on the promotion and defense of democracy -- a principle that we at the OAS hold dear.

Let me at the outset reaffirm that the leadership of this Organization stands ready to continue our engagement with our African counterparts in pursuit of our collective efforts to strengthen and operationalize regional instruments, such as the Inter-American Democratic Charter, and the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance. Undoubtedly, many of our future joint efforts will work toward strengthening, promoting and consolidating democratic governance in our regions to the benefit of the citizens of Africa and the Americas.

Many of you may not know, but this joint initiative started almost five years ago, in this same building, with a special meeting between the Ambassadors of the African continent to the United States and the Permanent Representatives of the Organization of American States. Today, I am pleased to recognize the historic work of the convener of that initial meeting, the distinguished Ambassador of Grenada, Ambassador Denis Antoine, who was then Chairman of the Permanent Council of the OAS. Subsequently, he successfully canvassed support to have some African countries become Permanent Observers to the OAS. Ambassador Antoine, you have put us on a path which is not only historic, but also, as President Konare reminded us in his visionary statement yesterday, a most critical one in overcoming current and future challenges in order to more effectively and efficiently provide the peoples of both continents healthy, safe and prosperous lives.

Ladies and Gentlemen, when we listened to the main presentations yesterday morning during the opening session all the speakers recognized the progress made in terms of democracy, elections, rule of law and human rights. Implicit in those statements was the recognition that the strengthening and consolidation of democracy must continue to be nurtured and must remain a priority as states work toward achieving the ideals of democracy that have been enshrined in many of our constitutions.

During the course of these discussions, it became clear that there is consensus that while progress has been made, nation states, be they developed or developing, still face challenges such as poverty, inequality, and social exclusion, among other areas, which can undermine the positive efforts in building democracies and peaceful societies in both continents.

We all know the problems many in our continents encounter every day and sometimes every hour.

I do not need to remind you that while you traveled safely to this conference, millions in Africa and in the Americas do not have that privilege and often are exposed to direct threats to their families and themselves.

I do not need to remind you that while you had a decent breakfast this morning, after having slept in a comfortable bed under a roof, many millions of people in our continents did not sleep in a bed or under a roof, did not wake up and enjoy a refreshing bath followed by a meal. Instead, they woke up to the knowledge that they would face another day in which they will struggle to survive to the next day.



Under these circumstances of misery, social exclusion and discrimination, democracy cannot flourish. The priority or concern of these hundreds of millions who struggle merely to survive will not be the lofty ideals of democracy.

We therefore cannot afford to close our eyes to these realities. While I believe that efforts to strengthen democratic institutions, to promote the rule of law and to defend human rights are of critical importance, in my view it is also clear that these efforts cannot be an end in themselves. They are, in my view, the necessary and critical foundations on which states can build their ability and capacity to respond to the needs of their citizens in a transparent and equitable manner, and in so doing build peaceful communities and viable economies, which can provide a safe living and working environment, and equal access to opportunity.

In this context, we note that regional governance is becoming more and more important, not only in light of the cross-border nature and the impact of many of the challenges our countries are facing, but also because we have progressed in our collective efforts in the Americas and in Africa, we have created what I call “a set of instruments and legislation”, which requires regional governance mechanisms in order to apply these new forms of supra-national collaboration.

The “Community of Democracies” initiative has proven to be an excellent example of the growing international architecture of collective institutions and nation states working together to enshrine both the principles of democracy and human rights and has underscored the legitimacy of international action to promote them.

Ladies and Gentlemen, the ever evolving dynamics in international diplomacy and the relations between states demand from all of us at all levels a more comprehensive understanding of the changing nature of global politics. In my view, the building of strategic alliances and partnerships between all regions of the world is therefore of significant importance and provides possibly one of the most effective mechanisms for response to the changing global world and to the impact of new initiatives undertaken in the areas of trade, development and finance.

We must recognize that the time has come to strengthen collaboration among regional organizations as well. I am convinced that this is more relevant today than ever before, given the context of a more structured approach in the United Nations System and the consultations organized by the Secretary General of the UN with heads of regional organizations in the last several years.

This historic meeting between the OAS and the AU and should constitute the first of several, not only between the Organization of American States and the African Union and, but also between CARICOM, as well as other regional organizations, like the Central American Integration System, the Andean Community and the AU.

I strongly believe that for democratic values and principles to take root in our societies, we need to empower the youth while we protect the children. Education

should therefore become a critical element of any policy geared to enabling our peoples to live up to their full potential. If we prepare the next generation, a solid foundation for peace, security and well-being will be laid, our institutions will be strengthened and our communities will flourish.

One of the most significant outcomes of the 2001 meeting at the OAS with high-level representatives from 16 regional and multilateral organizations from around the world, government officials, academic and civil society experts on the promotion and defense of democracy was a proposal for a action agenda to advance cooperation among regional and multinational organizations.

Over the last two days, we have begun to fulfill that action agenda but in order to pursue and fully implement more enhanced inter-institutional cooperation, closer coordination and improved communication will be critical in the coming years.

It is clear from the recent discussions that most, if not all of us, agree that a combination of good governance, accountability, rule of law, sound economic policies, a strong, transparent and professional public service and an engaged citizenry constitute the foundation for democratic strengthening and consolidation of economic growth.

It is also important to continue to ensure full respect for fundamental rights and freedoms; incorporate greater emphasis on peace and stability into the democratic paradigm; cultivate real partnerships between the public and private sectors, and between government and civil society; as well as with communities of distinct ethnic, social and economic backgrounds.

I believe that establishing democratic partnerships on the basis of equality, mutual respect, tolerance and solidarity is as important as establishing economic partnerships based on the same principles.

Member states of both organizations should consider whether the time has not come to consider the convening of a meeting of both regions at the highest political level -- that is an Americas-Africa Summit, to be able to translate these noble objectives and intentions into real action to the benefit of both regions in the areas of trade, economy, security, health, and other areas.

An Africa-Americas Summit could provide a valuable platform from which to build this democratic partnership between our regions; with a targeted, realistic and executable action agenda.

To be able to achieve our discussed objectives and initiatives, we need the full commitment of all actors in society, especially from the political leadership to create the most optimal environment in society to build consensus, mitigate conflict and facilitate wealth creation. It is in this climate that democracy can flourish and be strengthened and deepened, beyond the formalistic legal and institutional frameworks.

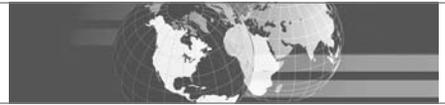


In this regard, I applaud the Ambassador of Mali on his announcement of the decision to focus the Fourth Ministerial Conference of the Communities of Democracy on the topic of democracy and development. The time has come to call upon ourselves as representatives of the international community to simultaneously address political and developmental priorities, as mutually reinforcing priorities in our societies.

Finally, we should be mindful that for democracy to be truly meaningful, the fruits of democracy must also nurture and feed the social and economic well being of our citizens. Expectations in both Africa and the Americas are high. Let us therefore not fail those in dire need, those hundreds of millions who are in search of a better future for themselves and their children. We have here a challenge and an opportunity. We have the responsibility to rise to both.

Thank you.





## Acknowledgments

We would like to thank the Permanent Mission of the United States of America to the OAS as well as the Permanent Observer Mission of Portugal to the OAS for their generous financial contribution to the organization of the event.

We also would like to thank the Embassy of Mali for its key role and collaboration during the preparation of the Democracy Bridge summit.

The Democracy Bridge initiative would not have been possible without the commitment and responsibility showed by all OAS staff, consultants and interns who contributed to the successful organization of this precursor initiative.







*African Union  
Organization of American States*

*OAS Headquarters, July 10, 11 and 12, 2007  
17th and Constitution Avenue,  
Washington, D.C.*

*Under Secretariat for Political Affairs.  
Organization of American States.*