

FORUM: Special Conference on Securing and Advancing Democracy (SCSAD)

QUESTION OF: Promoting Trust in Democratic Institutions to Prevent Democratic Erosion

SUBMITTED BY: Belarus

CO-SUBMITTERS: Bangladesh, Papua New Guinea, Liberia, Germany, Bhutan, Portugal, El Salvador, Vietnam, Poland, Greece, Nicaragua, Togo, African Union, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan, Syria

THE SPECIAL CONFERENCE,

Defining "democratic institutions" as government organisations whose officials are selected by the people of the nation of which said organisation is part of,

Alarmed by the increase of claims of democratic erosion, especially in nations previously considered democratic,

Further alarmed by the increase of the number of potential threats to democratic institutions, including but not limited to gerrymandering and misinformation,

Fully alarmed that in certain democratic institutions it is possible to elect officials with a small minority of the electorate, such as elections held by first past the post,

Noting with regret that in certain regions the views of minorities are not represented in democratic institutions,

Recalling that Article 21 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), adopted by the United Nations (UN) General Assembly on 10 December 1948, states, "the will of the people shall be the basis of the authority of government",

Recognising the importance of democratic institutions in ensuring that the will of the people be carried out to the fullest extent,

Further recognising that failure to ensure the correct implementation of democracy can result in further political instability,

Deeply concerned by the recent decrease in democratic participation,

Desiring the member states who haven't ratified the United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC) to take the importance of the issue and review their policy on signing the treaty,

Further desiring Member States to reconsider the ratification and the promulgation of the Basic Principles on the Independence of the Judiciary as endorsed by the UN General Assembly Resolution 40/146 of 13 December 1985,

Seeking all Member States to reconsider the written promises and assurances they have made to their citizens in the presence of the global community, and the level of assurance Member States have bestowed upon their citizens regarding the Member States' ability in ensuring the livelihood of them, to remind nations that upholding their promises and assurances can lead to an environment where pragmatic solutions can be found to local and global issues,

Guided by Member States wishing to collaborate with UN bodies such as the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR), Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in order to equalize socially disadvantaged groups,

Further recalling that the UN Millennium Declaration, adopted by the United Nations General

Assembly on 8 September 2000 and reaffirmed in the 2005 World Summit, Member States committed to the promotion of democracy,

1. Calls for the establishment of the United Nations Citizens Advisory Board (UNCAB) that will coordinate international efforts on promoting and sustaining democratic institutions worldwide through researching and surveying the state of democracy within nations and issuing relevant recommendations including:
 - a) methods to increase voter turnout such as
 - i. access to polling places
 - ii. improving alternative voting registration systems and the use of technologies to ease the voting process
 - iii. adoption of electoral systems which more accurately reflect the will of the people and the outcome of elections such as instant-runoff voting
 - b) legislation ensuring universal suffrage and the prohibition of gender, religion, race and wealth as a basis for the exclusion of suffrage through means such as but not limited to reducing the cost of voter identification;
2. Further calls for the security of the UN's NGOs in ensuring that critical Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) are unable within their power to hinder NGO committees' efforts in promoting trust within democratic institutions;
3. Recommends Member States push to register unregistered voters by means such as decreasing the prices of voter ID's based upon the average income as well as taking into account the incomes of people below the poverty line;
4. Designates the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) to monitor all national elections within Member States and report to the UNCAB any and all national elections which it suspects to be held in a manner which is not free or unfair, and for Member States to cooperate with and provide unfettered access to said organisations;
5. Strongly urges that Member States ensure greater government transparency through means such as but not limited to:
 - a) legislation guaranteeing the right of citizens to make Freedom of Information requests and for Member States to respond to said requests, unless they hinder national security or the wellbeing of individuals
 - b) greater accessibility of any and all information being released through means such as addendums providing explanation of technical information and statistics;
6. Further urges that Member States ensure the right of citizens to participate in politics outside of voting through means such as but not limited to:
 - a) legislation guaranteeing the right of citizens to petition the government and for relevant institutions within Member States to respond to and act on said petitions
 - b) submission of questions by citizens to relevant officials and for said officials to respond to said questions;
7. Reaffirms the need for independence of electoral commissions within Member States and invites Member States to further this through means such as but not limited to:
 - a) appointing only politically neutral civil servants to said commissions
 - b) constitutional legislation guaranteeing the independence of electoral commissions;
8. Expresses its hope that Member States promulgate laws ensuring that boundaries of electoral districts be drawn by politically neutral civil servants and allowing independent national judiciaries to have the power of final adjudication over issues relating to said boundaries;

9. Further recommends Member States to establish, if they have yet to, ombudsman institutions independent of the executive and legislature and composed of politically neutral civil servants with unfettered access for said institutions to promote trust in democratic institutions and prevent democratic erosion through means such as but not limited to
 - a) investigation of any and all allegations of electoral fraud
 - b) investigation of any and all democratic institutions and their officials if there be evidence demanding such an investigation
 - c) publication of reports annually on the actions of democratic institutions;
10. Encourages Member States to adopt education curriculums involving mandatory civic education up to school leaving age and campaigns to raise awareness on issues such as but not limited to
 - a) the basics of government and politics of the Member State of which the educated is located in
 - b) the processes and importance of political participation
 - c) civil rights and liberties which are guaranteed;
11. Calls upon the creation of a non-partisan framework named the United Nations Fight Against Corruption (UNFAC), which will work towards enforcing the United Nations Convention against Corruption and combating corruption at a global level, comprising of a three-step process outlined below:
 - a) establishing institutional systems with incentives to prevent corruption from occurring at the start, the institutions will be tasked with
 - i. identifying potential risks to corruption
 - ii. addressing weaknesses in concerned institutions
 - b) establish an effective means of credible deterrence, relying heavily on accountability and enforcement mechanisms that are strong enough to send a message to wrongdoers of the potential cost of their misconduct, the enforcement mechanisms can take on many forms such as but not limited to:
 - i. the prosecution in the form of administrative and civil penalties
 - ii. a sanction and debarment mechanism similar to that of the World Bank
 - c) recognizing and influencing the social and political dynamic of nations in the long term in order to lead to a sustainable method of combating corruption and increasing transparency between citizens and the governments that represent them;
12. Further calls upon the creation of informative campaigns in isolated regions for citizens about their potential rights and duties as democratic citizens and provide them with a positive and inclusive vision for the future;
13. Further invites member states to consider the significance of and improve access to government services supported by NGOs such as but not limited to
 - a) law enforcement
 - b) infrastructure
 - c) healthcare
 - d) education.