The Eighth Assembly
SEOUL, KOREA NOVEMBER 1–4, 2015

Empowering Civil Society for Democracy and Its Renewal
Steering Committee

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*Term expired at the close of the Eighth Assembly.
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The material in this report was edited by Ryota Jonen, Acting Director of the World Movement for Democracy, and produced by the World Movement for Democracy Secretariat staff. Special thanks to Marianne Tshihamba, Event Manager; Danielle Ayemang, Christian Edlagan and Schuyler Miller, Project Assistants; Yelena Viner, Project Officer; and Soo Yon Suh, Local Coordinator. The National Endowment for Democracy pays a special tribute to Art Kaufman for his 15 years of service leading the World Movement for Democracy.

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About the World Movement for Democracy

The World Movement for Democracy is a global network of democrats, including activists, practitioners, scholars, policy makers, and funders, who have come together to cooperate in the promotion of democracy.

In 1999, we held our first global Assembly in New Delhi, India, and have continued to organize assemblies in different global regions. We also conduct a variety of projects to defend civil society and facilitate networking among participants.

Goals
The World Movement aims to:
➤ Strengthen democracy where it is weak
➤ Defend democracy where it is longstanding
➤ Bolster pro-democracy groups in non-democratic countries

Leadership
We are led by a distinguished international Steering Committee chaired by the Rt. Hon. Kim Campbell, former Prime Minister of Canada. Our day-to-day operations are managed by a Secretariat located at the Washington, DC-based National Endowment for Democracy (NED).

Projects
➤ World Movement Assemblies. Global assemblies offer World Movement participants the opportunity to take stock of the accomplishments they have made and the challenges they confront, and to build networks of mutual solidarity and support across borders. Global assemblies also feature the presentation of the World Movement’s Democracy Courage Tributes, presentations by leading activities, a Democracy Fair, and technology training sessions that focus on the use of new information and Communication technologies in their democracy and human rights work.

➤ Civic Space Initiative. In 2012, we launched the Civic Space Initiative in collaboration with the International Center for Not-for-Profit Law (ICNL), Article 19, and CIVICUS: World Alliance for Citizen Participation. The initiative seeks to protect and expand civic space by supporting the work of the UN Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Association and Assembly, producing a series of videos profiling civil society activists to help educate broader publics about the work of democracy and human rights organizations, and other activities.

➤ Defending Civil Society. Now in its eighth year, this project responds to the recent disturbing trend of governments restricting the space in which democracy and human rights organizations carry out their work through new “NGO laws” and other measures. The World Movement, in partnership with the International Center for Not-for-Profit Law (ICNL), published the second edition of the Defending Civil Society report, which articulates a set of long-standing principles, rooted in international law, that ought to inform proper government-civil society relations and provides illustrative examples of the ways in which those principles are being violated. The World Movement and ICNL also released a new interactive Toolkit for Civil Society that provides tips, tools, strategies, and other information for organizations and activists working to reform legal frameworks in their respective countries.

Participation
We welcome as participants any individual or organization who can contribute to, and benefit from, contacts and communications with counterparts facing similar challenges to democracy and carrying out activities in a wide array of areas of democracy work.

We encompass a wide variety of regional and functional networks, such as the Asia Democracy Network (ADN), the Latin America and Caribbean Network for Democracy (REDLAD), the Network of Democracy Research Institutes (NDRI), and the World Youth Movement for Democracy, among others. These networks organize regional and global meetings to discuss critical issues, share best practices, and create opportunities for collaboration and action.

Get involved by signing up for our mailing list by visiting our website at www.MoveDemocracy.org. Stay informed and take action in support of individuals and organizations that are fighting for democracy and human rights around the world. You can also connect by liking our Facebook page and following us on Twitter @MoveDemocracy.

For further information about the World Movement and its projects, go to: www.MoveDemocracy.org
WORLD MOVEMENT FOR DEMOCRACY
EIGHTH ASSEMBLY
SEOUL KOREA
1-4 NOVEMBER 2015
Message from the Steering Committee

Last year the Steering Committee of the World Movement for Democracy adopted the statement “A Call for Democratic Renewal,” expressing our deep concern about the authoritarian resurgence and suggesting ways to address its challenges. We realized that the reinvigoration of democracy must begin with determination to defending civil society against that resurgence, protecting cyberspace as a medium for free expression, helping ensure the success of fragile new democracies, and countering the efforts by authoritarian and extremist elements to undermine basic freedoms.

As a result, we chose “Empowering Civil Society for Democracy and its Renewal” as the theme for the Eighth Assembly, a platform that brought together a diverse group of more than 400 activists, practitioners, scholars, donors and others who are forging the bonds of democratic solidarity around the world. South Korea was chosen as the Assembly site for its example of a successful democratic transition, having emerged in the late 1980s from military dictatorship to its position today as a consolidated democracy.

World Movement assemblies differ from the usual international gatherings inasmuch as they seek to create dynamic and interactive spaces for participants where they can teach and learn from each other’s experiences. During the course of the Assembly, participants identified repressive actions of authoritarian governments against civil society, free media, and everyday civic activities. The closing of civic space online, widespread use of pseudo-legal bullying by government officials, and uneven support from democratic nations were cited as obstacles to democratic development across regions.

Participants also focused on the positive progress they have made in their home countries, including open data initiatives, intra-regional cooperation, and robust digital security measures. The discussions at the Assembly contributed practical ideas for participants when they return to their respective countries.

We have been inspired by the courage shown by advocates for the Rohingya People, investigative journalists in Africa, and Hong Kong’s Umbrella Movement. The Assembly participants expressed their solidarity with them as we presented these heroes with the Democracy Courage Tributes at the John B. Hurford Memorial Dinner.

We would like to extend our gratitude to the Asia Democracy Network (ADN), whose secretariat is based in Seoul and managed by the Korea Democracy Network, for serving as our Assembly partner. In addition, we are thankful for the Center for Korean Women and Politics, the East Asia Institute, the Korea Democracy Foundation, and the Korea Human Rights Foundation for all their help in organizing the Assembly, which we believe offered the ideal opportunity to help deepen and expand the work of the ADN.

This message would be incomplete if we did not acknowledge the contributions of the many individuals around the world who work tirelessly for the cause of democracy and human rights, but who were not able to join us in Seoul. We hope that this report will serve as a useful resource for everyone who seeks to build democracy.

Steering Committee
World Movement for Democracy
A Call for Democratic Renewal

Democracy is being challenged today as never before since the end of the Cold War. The challenge is not the result of a particular crisis or democratic breakdown but has multiple sources. It is reflected in the conclusion of the most recent Freedom House global survey that human rights and civil liberties have declined for the ninth consecutive year. It can be seen in setbacks to democracy in countries as diverse as Thailand, Egypt, Venezuela, Hungary, Turkey, Kenya, Azerbaijan, and Pakistan. It is evident in the increasingly harsh conditions faced by civil-society organizations working to defend democratic freedoms and advance human rights and free media in scores of countries. It is also evident in the crisis of governance in the long-established democracies in Europe and the United States, the international impact of which is heightened by the rise of China, whose system of autocratic capitalism is seen by many people today as a more efficient path than democracy to modernity and development. And it is evident, not least, in the failure of the leading democracies to mount a meaningful response to the resurgence of aggressive anti-democratic forces, such as Putin’s Russia and the Islamic State, which pose a lethal threat to democracy and world peace. On issue after issue, the opponents of democracy are acting with brazen belligerence, while those who should be its main defenders seem beset by doubt, paralysis of will, and a lack of democratic conviction.

While the World Movement for Democracy is deeply concerned about the democratic prospect, we reject an attitude of pessimism and resignation. This is not the first time that democracy has faced grave threats and setbacks. In the 1970s, democracy also seemed to be in irreversible decline. Elections and civil liberties were suspended in India in 1975, which until then was the world’s largest democracy. Military dictators seized power in many Latin American countries; violent tyrants like Uganda’s Idi Amin ruled in a number of African countries; and the communist victory in Vietnam and the genocide in Cambodia were followed by the triumph of Islamic extremists in Iran and the Sandinistas in Nicaragua. Everywhere democracy seemed to be in retreat, leading prominent intellectuals to conclude, as one of them famously said, that democracy “is where the world was, not where it is going.”

Yet it was precisely at that very dark moment that “the third wave of democratization,” as it was later called, began with the democratic transitions in Portugal and Spain. Over the next fifteen years, the number of democracies in the world more than doubled, and with the collapse of communism in Central Europe and the Soviet Union, democracy came to be seen as the only legitimate form of government. Suddenly pessimism had turned into optimism, and the forward progress of democracy, which had spread to every region of the world but the Middle East, seemed to be unstoppable.

This new optimism, like the old pessimism, was also excessive. Following the fall of the Berlin Wall, many people hoped that Russia, China, and other authoritarian countries would modernize and liberalize as they became integrated into the world economy and experienced economic growth. Instead, many authoritarian governments have shown resilience and used their new national wealth to fuel more sophisticated authoritarian systems at home while projecting their illiberal values and preferences beyond their borders. These regimes have adopted a policy of democratic containment, using legal mechanisms such as the “foreign agents” law in Russia and the counter-terrorism laws in Saudi Arabia and Ethiopia to criminalize and otherwise obstruct political dissent, freedom of expression and assembly, and independent activity by civil society. They have also used their dominance over both traditional and new media to marginalize alternative voices and maintain effective control of over-arching political narratives.

The goal of the newly assertive authoritarian states is not just regime protection and the containment of democracy. Increasingly, they are also developing strategies to challenge and disrupt democracy beyond their borders. One target has been the human-rights and democracy components of international rules-based bodies, such as the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), that are critical for safeguarding democratic standards. These regimes are also building a web of authoritarian clubs such as the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), and the Eurasian Customs Union (ECU) that seek to institutionalize authoritarian norms of sovereignty and non-interference. Because they understand the importance of ideas, these regimes have also built formidable media
outlets such as Russia’s RT (formerly known as Russia Today) and China’s CCTV that enable them to project globally messages about their own achievements and the ostensible failures and decadence of Western societies.

The growing assertiveness of authoritarian states does not mean that the future of democracy is bleak or that the opponents of democracy have gained the upper hand. They haven’t. Public opinion surveys in all the major regions of the world show that popular sentiment still overwhelmingly favors democracy over authoritarianism, even in countries where people do not trust democratically-elected politicians and feel that democracy is not performing very well. The repeated warnings by rulers in China, Iran and other authoritarian countries about the dangers of “colored revolutions” betray their fear of popular movements demanding accountable government and political rights.

A program to reinvigorate democracy should have four core dimensions:

The first is a renewed commitment by democratic governments and international organizations to the defense of civil society against resurgent authoritarianism.

The perception of democratic retreat is not, therefore, the result of the inherent strength or appeal of democracy’s opponents. The problem is that the world’s democratic governments and their leaders have not shown the will to defend democratic values or to support the brave and beleaguered political activists fighting for democratic change. The enemies of democracy assault democratic norms with impunity, while democratic leaders are so preoccupied with their own troubles that they seem unable to uphold or defend the principles contained in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other international charters. Thus, when those fighting for democratic progress meet stiff resistance, the response of the democracies is not to show solidarity and increase support for such activists and dissidents, but to question whether staying the course in support of democracy is realistic and worth the effort.

It has been said many times before that the price of liberty is eternal vigilance. Democracy cannot be taken for granted, and its progress is not inevitable. Democratic progress requires hard and persistent work, coherent strategic thinking, strong democratic convictions, the courage to stand up against hostile forces and repressive regimes, and international solidarity with those on the front lines of democratic struggle. What is needed today is nothing less than a revival of democratic will that will bring about a new period of democratic progress.

A program to reinvigorate democracy should have four core dimensions:

The first is a renewed commitment by democratic governments and international organizations to the defense of civil society against resurgent authoritarianism. Over the past quarter of a century, governments and multi-lateral organizations have developed programs to provide financial and technical assistance to civil-society groups working to defend human rights and strengthen independent media, the rule of law, and the accountability of political authority. Yet a Survey on Democracy Assistance conducted by the World Movement for Democracy found that this assistance has not been accompanied by sufficient political support to civil society in response to the growing crackdown by governments resisting democratization. Such support is needed in the form of greater pressure on offending governments to respect the fundamental freedoms of assembly, association, and expression. In addition, democratic governments should recommit themselves to the established rules-based institutions that have set global democratic norms and served as the glue for the post-cold war liberal order. The goal should be to reverse the progress autocrats have made in hollowing out organizations such as the OSCE, the OAS, and the Council of Europe, which has created gaping holes in part of the global democratic infrastructure. A strengthened Community of Democracies should be used to energize and coordinate this new effort.

It is also necessary to strengthen the capacity of civil society organizations to respond to the new repression. Civil society groups have been put on the defensive and disoriented by the offensive waged against them by resurgent authoritarians. They need to adapt to a new and more hostile environment, build multiple associations on global, regional and sub-regional levels for the exchange of practical know-how and solidarity, and develop effective new ways of coping and turning the tide. The role of youth move-
Empowering Civil Society for Democracy and Its Renewal

ments and organizations is especially important in developing innovative ways of meeting the new challenges and tapping the enormous potential of social media as a tool for mobilizing and educating citizens and monitoring the performance of governments and other centers of power.

Another priority is strengthening international democratic unity within and across regions and to work in concert to uphold and defend democratic standards and values. It is especially important to reinvigorate transatlantic bonds in combating Russian efforts to divide European societies and to split Europe from the United States; to build support for democracy in Latin America from within the region; and to strengthen bonds between Western democracies and the rising democracies of South and East Asia.

Finally, it is necessary to mount a response to the information war that is being waged against democracy by resurgent authoritarians. Democratic activists and intellectuals, with the support of democratic governments, must work to revitalize the arguments for the central ideas of democracy and to make these arguments relevant for the 21st century context. It is also important to respond more effectively to the propaganda offensive that is being carried out by authoritarian governments. Such a response should include increasing support to democratic media and expanding the international broadcasting carried out by BBC, Deutsche Welle, RFE/RL and other public outlets; and also building up the capacity of local journalists and investigative reporters in autocratic countries and to help disseminate their reports through regional and global networks of traditional and social media.

The second is the need to protect cyberspace as a medium for free expression and the advancement of human rights and open societies. Popular sentiment long held that authoritarian regimes were technologically-challenged dinosaurs that could not keep up with online activity and would inevitably be weeded out by the information age. But these regimes are proving much more adaptable than expected. They have prioritized control of cyberspace, and they have also developed methods to exert that control and martialed the resources needed to back their initiatives in this space. National-level Internet controls are now deeply entrenched, and authoritarian states are becoming more assertive internationally and regionally, spreading norms and looking to shape cyberspace in ways that guard their power and legitimize their international goals. They have access to the most sophisticated tools to conduct digital attacks and espionage, ranging from commonplace and widely-circulated remote-access Trojan horses, to sophisticated intrusion software packages supplied and serviced by private companies, to “cyber militias” and pro-regime bloggers who seek to shape social media and discredit independent and critical voices.

The digital threats are exacerbated by the quandary in which society now finds itself: Nearly all parts of society are wired in some form, but only a privileged few have digital connections that are adequately secured. Rarely do the privileged include civil-society actors such as NGOs and citizen journalists, despite their heavy reliance on digital tools for mobilization and communication. Such imbalance gives authoritarian regimes a golden opportunity to exert digital control over their own populations and to combat dissent originating beyond their borders. Authoritarian regimes have complemented digital crackdowns by promoting cybersecurity policies that emphasize concepts of state security at the expense of human rights. They are actively seeking to reshape cyber norms both regionally and internationally.

To counter these threats, it is necessary to build a strong coalition among governments, civil society, and the private sectors in support of common principles concerning an open and secure Internet governance regime at global and regional levels that is consistent with internationally recognized human-rights norms. States that support Internet freedom must be proactive about their levels of international engagement, countering norms that discount human rights in cyberspace and taking a firm position that civil society should be off-limits to digital espionage and attack. States must also confront the extra-territorial nature of digital targeting, and the ability of illiberal states to buy on the open market sophisticated surveillance equipment that is used to undermine human rights.

In order for such a coalition to be effective, the democratic countries must “get their own houses in order.” This entails ensuring that proper oversight, review, and accountability mechanisms are in place to guard against the potential abuse of wholesale and indiscriminate data collection. Moreover, since most of the data that is collected by governments comes from private-sector companies that are frontline “sensors,” oversight by judicial or other authorities should extend to that sector’s stewardship over customer data. The sharing of data without proper oversight would create precedents for bad practices abroad and would weaken the capacity of democratic countries to defend liberal norms and an open Internet.
In addition to defending an open and secure Internet system, it is important to strengthen the capacity of civil society worldwide to use advanced communication tools to promote basic freedoms and accountable government. It is also especially important to provide civil-society activists with education and training on best practices of cyber security.

The third dimension is the need for civil society to be better prepared to help protect fragile new democracies against the danger of backsliding, to contribute to successful democratic transitions from authoritarianism, and to guard against extremist movements and intolerant majorities. Democracy is challenged today by more than resurgent authoritarianism. In scores of countries where democracy has only sunk very shallow roots, democratic development and the rule of law are being threatened by a witches brew of rampant corruption, bad governance, electoral fraud, illiberal populism, ethnic and religious intolerance, political violence and intimidation, and the abuse of power by executives intent on hollowing out institutions of accountability and accumulating power and wealth for themselves and their cronies. There is no simple solution to problems of such magnitude and breadth. Democratic governments, donor agencies, and multilateral institutions should condition their assistance and cooperation on a much higher standard of governance and democratic performance than what is now considered acceptable. But the core of a meaningful response has to come from an empowered, educated, and organized civil society.

Popular movements such as the EuroMaidan in Ukraine, Y’en y Marre in Senegal, and the New Citizens Movement in China have elevated the idea of democratic citizenship, showing a readiness to take moral responsibility for the future of their societies and to act as agents of democratic change. Popular movements in other countries and regions should build upon these examples of active citizenship and insist on political accountability and an end to impunity for leaders who steal from and persecute their own people. They should also try to build bridges of tolerance and cooperation across gender lines and ethnic cleavages and among people of different economic strata, social backgrounds, and generations.

In building a new citizens movement, the organizations of civil society need to prioritize civic education, using all the tools at their disposal, including Internet platforms, to inform, motivate and organize people at the grassroots. They need to develop a fresh defense of democracy, making the case that democratic processes are the only way fight corruption and achieve accountable government; and explaining how democracy can “deliver” and address the economic needs of average citizens. In addition, civic organizations must connect with political society, work more closely with political parties, and be ready not just to hold government accountable in the aftermath of a democratic breakthrough, but take responsibility for governance during the process of transition and political consolidation.

Making the shift from civil society activism to politics is not easy in countries where parties have been associated with corruption, self-seeking, and the abuse of power. There is also an inherent reluctance of activists who have worked courageously for many years against repressive systems to make the transition from protest to politics. Too often activists who are ready to make great sacrifices in the struggle against dictatorship are less willing to cross over into government once a breakthrough has been achieved. Young activists would benefit from more political-science training as part of civic education programs to help them better understand the requirements of democratic politics in addition to the dynamics of popular movements. Connecting them to the many

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civic activists and journalists in Ukraine and other countries who have made the transition to politics and governing would be one way to help prepare young activists for the challenges of the future.

An even more difficult challenge will be responding to violent ideological movements that use religion to mobilize followers, such as the 969 movement in Burma and the much more widespread movements of Islamist radicalism such as the Islamic State and Al-Qaeda. Until now, religious and political establishments have failed to credibly challenge and discredit these dogmas of violence and nihilism. The solution must emerge from religious thinkers, research centers, and private educational institutions and NGOs within these communities that are able to offer an alternative vision of modernity, universal values, and the role of religion in public life. At present there are hundreds - even thousands - of independent and innovative educational and cultural initiatives of this kind scattered all over the globe. There is a clear need to create stronger networks among these groups and help them challenge extremism by laying out an alternative democratic vision of tolerance, pluralism, civility, and modernity. Such networks will enhance the impact of ongoing educational and cultural projects and enable educational reformers to engage collectively in shaping and offering alternative narratives, amplifying the impact of existing efforts, and creating a critical mass of literature and educational products.

The fourth priority is the need for the advanced democracies of the West to improve their economic and political performance, regain their confidence and sense of democratic purpose, and recommit themselves to strengthening the liberal world order and to countering the efforts by authoritarians and extremists to undermine it. While the United States and Europe remain stable and affluent democracies, they have entered a period of malaise that could harm the prospects for democracy worldwide. One reason for the malaise has been an extended period of economic stagnation that was magnified by the global financial crisis of 2008 but is rooted in systemic problems, among them increasing indebtedness and large budget deficits, uncontrolled entitlement spending, growing inequality, and the failure to invest in the development of human capital and social infrastructure. There is also a crisis of political dysfunction, exemplified in the United States by political polarization and declining trust in government, and in Europe by the rise of populist fringe parties. The preoccupation with these problems has contributed to the declining geopolitical influence of the West, a trend that has emboldened the opponents of liberal democracy, who are rushing to fill the vacuums created by the Western paralysis and retreat.

The scope and depth of these problems do not mean that the democratic West cannot find a way to overcome its current travails. Democracy’s greatest strength is its capacity for self-correction, and the dangers it faces today should concentrate the minds of political, economic, and civic leaders and move them to face up to the hard realities. They will need to think beyond the short-term and propose new and creative ways to address many challenges – how to achieve higher levels of economic growth and productivity that will benefit average citizens and not just the very wealthy; how to build greater political unity on core issues of national interest; how to adopt policies that will contain and deter democracy’s enemies; and how to restore confidence in the future and universal appeal of democracy. What is needed is nothing less than a new democratic resolve by the leaders and citizens of the world’s advanced democracies.

This can be done. With all the troubles today, there are many reasons to remain hopeful. In key countries of the global south, democracy has made important and often surprising gains. In Indonesia, the world’s largest Muslim country, a broad democratic civic movement has enabled a reform leadership to beat back a concerted effort by the militaristic old guard to roll back democratic political change. In Tunisia, deeply divided political forces and social movements have been able to unite around a new democratic constitution, choose a new leadership in peaceful elections, and establish the Arab world’s first democracy. In Nigeria, the mobilization of civil society of civil society and citizens journalists using social media transformed what could have been a violent and fraudulent election into a step forward for democracy in Africa’s largest country. Even in Sri Lanka, a divided country that is still recovering from decades of civil war, a new leadership promising to restore good governance and the rule of law and to address difficult issues of accountability for past war crimes came to power in a remarkably smooth transition following a relatively peaceful election. The stability for almost 70 years of democracy in India, which is soon to become the world’s largest country and is certainly its most diverse in language and religion, is nothing short of phenomenal.

Democracy may indeed be in the throes of what some have called a democratic recession, but there
has been nothing close to the kind of “reverse-wave” rollback of democracy that followed earlier waves of democratic expansion. According to Freedom House, the number of electoral democracies now stands at 125, two more than the previous high-water mark of 123 that was reached in 2005 and seven more than in 2012. To be sure, in some of the countries newly ranked as electoral democracies – Nepal, for example, or Kenya or Pakistan – democracy is deeply troubled. Yet it is significant that authoritarianism has not been restored in any of them, and it has been reversed in Honduras and Mali, which experienced coups in 2009 and 2012, respectively. What is noteworthy about democracy over the last troubled decade is not its fragility, but its often unappreciated resilience.

Authoritarianism has also shown resilience. But key autocracies today are facing unprecedented crises. Russia is now reaping the harvest of its aggression in the form of a weakening currency, rising inflation, massive capital flight, and shrinking foreign reserves, in addition to significant casualties from the war in Ukraine that the government – fearing a public backlash – has tried to conceal. These problems have now been compounded by the sharp drop in the price of oil and could threaten the survival of Putin’s regime. Other oil-based autocracies also are in trouble, notably the increasingly repressive populist regime in Venezuela, where the economy began to implode even before the catastrophic fall in oil prices; and the Islamic dictatorship in Iran. Economic troubles in dictatorships are not necessarily a good thing, since the regimes could react by escalating international tensions and increasing repression. But they expose the vulnerability of such regimes, and they can sometimes lead to unexpected political openings.

The final reason for hope is the sustained struggle of democratic movements in countries throughout the world for political and economic accountability, civic renewal, and democratic rights. The victory last February of the Euromaidan movement in Ukraine produced a harsh Russian reaction. But instead of retreating, the movement continued to push forward. If it succeeds in fighting corruption, reforming the economy, and building a new country based on the rule of law, it will help the prospects for democracy not just in Ukraine but also in Russia and other countries in the region.

Even in some of the bleakest situations, such movements have shown relentless determination and persistence. The police cleared the streets after the Umbrella Revolution in Hong Kong, but movement leaders unfurled banners reading “We will be back,” and their persistence is certainly an inspiration to activists on the mainland, where repression has also failed to defeat a resilient civil society. New civic forces are also beginning to assert themselves in Cuba, where activists in the Civil Society Open Forum are pressing for a real political opening and offering the Cuban people “a new narrative, tactics and strategy, and a new language” after more than five decades of totalitarianism.

Such movements will be heard from in the years ahead since they consist of activists who represent a new force in international politics: realistic in their goals and strategies, tech-savvy and informed, and committed to staying the course in the fight for human rights, freedom of expression, and the rule of law. Such activists know that they face a long and dangerous struggle and that, even if they succeed in removing a dictatorship, an even more difficult challenge will follow: building new institutions, subjecting powerful and corrupt interests to the rule of law, and getting democracy to work and produce real progress for all the people, not just for the elites. The fact that such activists persist in their work, without the benefit of any illusions, is the main reason we can be hopeful about the future. Their example also has the potential to ignite a new flame of democratic conviction in the established democracies.

There is therefore reason to believe that, while democracy faces formidable obstacles, the prospect for its renewal should not be underestimated. For the brave activists fighting for dignity and freedom, democracy remains a source of inspiration and of hope.
Sunday – 1 November

Welcoming Remarks
Presentations by World Movement Participants
Cultural Performance: Yeowoolim, North-South Korean Women’s Choir

Monday – 2 November

9:00 – 10:00 AM
Plenary Session: Conversation on “Understanding the Global Assault on Democracy”

10:15 AM – 1:15 PM
Panel Discussion A: Preparing Civil Society for its Role in Successful Transitions, Protecting New Democracies, and Guarding Against Extremist Movements

Workshop Session A:
1. Active Citizen Engagement in Public Policy Making: Elections as an Entry Point
2. How to Conduct Innovative Issue-Based Mobilization among Youth
3. Engaging Effectively with Global Initiatives to Defend Civic Space
5. How Can Economic Reforms Contribute to Democratic Renewal and What do Leaders Need to Know?
6. Research Workshop: The Global Campaign Against Democratic Norms
8. Google Ideas Democracy Fair Booth
9. Technology Training Session: Communicating in Hostile Environments

1:15 – 2:30 PM
Democracy Fair

2:45 – 6:15 PM
Regional Workshops
1. Asia Democracy Forum of the ADN: The State of Democracy in Asia—Challenges and Opportunities for Civil Society
2. African Democracy at Risk: Averting Recession, Promoting Progress
3. Shrinking Space for Civil Society in Eurasia: Clash of Values, Authoritarian Trends, and Regional Context
4. Central and Eastern Europe: How Can Civil Society Respond to Russia’s Efforts to Hinder Democratic Transitions and European Integration?
5. Latin America and the Caribbean: Ideas for Innovative Activism
6. Middle East and North Africa

7:15 – 10:15 PM
Cultural Evening and Dinner Hosted by the Seoul-based Secretariat of the Asia Democracy Network with support from the Seoul Metropolitan Government and Mayor Park Won Soon and the Korea Democracy Foundation

For summaries of the Eighth Assembly workshops, please visit our website at www.movedemocracy.org.
Tuesday – 3 November

9:00 – 10:00 AM
Plenary Session: Conversation on The UN Commission of Inquiry (COI) Process on Closed Societies: What Can We Learn from the COI on North Korea?

10:15 AM – 1:15 PM
Panel Discussion B: Digital Threats against Civil Society and Potential Solutions

Workshop Session B:
1. Implementing Commission of Inquiry (COI) Reports on Closed Societies: The Case of the COI Report on North Korea
2. How Can We Best Support Democratization from Outside the Country?
4. How to Move Beyond “Negative” Peace
5. Moving from Protest to Politics: How to Ensure Democratic Transitions in Fragile Contexts
6. How Can We Use International Human Rights Mechanisms Effectively in Authoritarian Countries?
7. LGBTI Rights: Confronting Prejudice in Claiming Civic Space
8. Beyond the Usual Suspects: Engaging Artists in Civic Space Advocacy

Local Site Visits within Seoul:
1. People’s Solidarity for Participatory Democracy (PSPD)
2. Metropolitan City of Seoul City Hall

1:15 – 2:30 PM
Democracy Fair

2:45 – 6:00 PM
Google Ideas/Citizen Lab Workshop: Digital Security Bootcamp: Arming against Online Threats

Activists on the Big Screen: Civic Space Initiative (CSI) Videos

Local Site Visits within Seoul:
1. War and Women’s Human Rights Museum
2. Seoul Youth Factory for Alternative Culture (Haja Center)

For summaries of the Eighth Assembly workshops, please visit our website at www.movedemocracy.org.
Wednesday – 4 November

9:00 AM – 12:00 Noon
Panel Discussion C: How Can Civil Society Respond to the Current Resurgence of Authoritarianism?

Workshop Session C:
1. How Can we Best Address Threats against Minority Rights through Dialogue and Political Processes?
2. Inter-Generational Dialogue: Creating Shared Values for a Sustainable Democracy Movement
3. Kleptocracy: Its Corrosive Impact on Democracy at Home and Abroad
5. What are the Best Strategies for Expanding and Deepening Women’s Political Participation?
6. Supporting Human Rights Defenders in Danger: Current and New Approaches to Regional and Global Assistance
8. Building Political Support for Independent Media: The Role of Civil Society
9. Technology Training Session: Digital Activism in Repressive Environments

9:00 AM – 12:00 Noon
Local Site Visits within Seoul:
1. Korea Democracy Foundation (KDF)
2. Seoul NPO Center

12:15 – 1:30 PM
Democracy Fair

1:45 – 4:45 PM
Panel Discussion D: Developing an International Action Plan to Renew Democracy: What do the Leaders and Citizens of Advanced Democracies Need to Do?

Workshop Session D:
2. How Can Institutionalizing Post-Conflict Reconciliation Provide a New Path for Democracy?
3. Consultation for UN Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Association and of Peaceful Assembly: Best Practices for Managing Peaceful Protests
4. How Can Education Help Cultivate Responsible Democratic Citizenship?
5. How Citizen Movements Impact Political Parties and How Parties Can Respond
6. Enhancing Democracy through Access to Open Data: What are the Roles of Civil Society and Media?
7. Corporate Citizenship and Collaborative Governance
8. How NGOs that Integrate Multi-Partisan Actors Can Improve the Quality of Democracy
9. Technology Training Session: Armchairs to Action—Activating Your Network Online

6:30 – 9:00 PM
John B. Hurford Memorial Dinner and Presentation of Democracy Courage Tributes

For summaries of the Eighth Assembly workshops, please visit our website at www.movedemocracy.org.
Opening Session

Welcoming Remarks

The Rt. Hon. Kim Campbell
Member (Canada) and Chair, World Movement Steering Committee
Former Prime Minister of Canada

Excerpts: Since the World Movement’s founding in 1999, we have repeatedly emphasized the importance of mutual cooperation, support, and solidarity. Regardless of our background, we have come together to reaffirm our commitment to democratic principles at a time when democracy is facing a host of threats around the world.

The theme of this Assembly is “Empowering Civil Society for Democracy and Its Renewal.” You and your fellow civil society activists around the world are at the forefront of challenging resurgent authoritarians, protecting fragile new democracies, contributing to successful democratic transitions, and guarding against extremist movements.

We chose Seoul as our venue to recognize and celebrate the remarkable transformation of South Korea from a military dictatorship in the late 1980s to its position today as a regional leader on democracy. We believe there is much to learn from that important experience.

Hwang Kyo-ahn
Prime Minister of the Republic of Korea

Excerpts (translated and edited from the Korean original): The Right Honorable Kim Campbell, Chair of the World Movement Steering Committee, participants of the World Movement for Democracy, and distinguished guests, congratulations on the opening of the World Movement for Democracy’s Eighth Global Assembly.

It is meaningful that the Republic of Korea is hosting the Assembly for the World Democracy Movement for the first time in East Asia. I also wish to welcome you who are leading the development of democracy around the world to Korea.

Democracy is the optimum political system for guaranteeing freedom and happiness. However, there are many regions in which the roots of democracy have yet to take hold. Civil society and human rights are being threatened and democracy is facing challenges from the terror of extremist groups such as ISIL. The theme of this Assembly, “Empowering Civil Society for Democracy and Its Renewal,” is significant. Your passion for and devotion to democracy is critical in expanding cooperation on democracy issues within the international community and strengthening the activities of civil society.

“We chose Seoul as our venue to recognize and celebrate the remarkable transformation of South Korea from a military dictatorship in the late 1980s to its position today as a regional leader on democracy.” —Kim Campbell

“Your passion for and devotion to democracy is critical in expanding cooperation on democracy issues within the international community and strengthening activities of civil society.” —Hwang Kyo-ahn
The Republic of Korea achieved democratization and industrialization in a short time, an unparalleled miracle. Our experience taught us the symbiotic relationship between democratization and economic development. We built a foundation for rapid economic development and democracy, and are securing continued national development using this base. We will continue to contribute to freedom and human rights, peace and prosperity in the global village by sharing our experience with democratization and industrialization.

**Anselmo Lee**
**Executive Director of the Korea Human Rights Foundation**

**Excerpts:** The Assembly is here not because Korea is the best example of democracy, but because there are many lessons to learn and challenges to share. As the Prime Minister stated, South Korea has achieved economic development and democracy simultaneously.... When I was young, democracy seemed a distant dream, and many, especially students and youth, political dissidents and workers, died for the cause of human rights and democracy in Korea. When I was older, I witnessed the dream of democracy come true.

Today in Korea, many people have become disillusioned about democracy. People are protesting and demonstrating in the streets, an indication of vibrant civil society and dynamic Korean democracy. Korea is the perfect venue for this gathering as there is much to learn from Korea’s successes and failures.

**Dr. Matyas Eörsi**
**Senior Advisor to the Secretary General and Head of Administration, Finance and Human Resources at the Community of Democracies**

**Excerpts:** As we see the world is changing, the foes of democracy are changing. Globalization has meant that the world is becoming one big financial market. Recently, globalization has acquired a new element. Anti-democrats learn from each other and their endeavors to shrink civic space have also become global. The number of countries where journalists are in jail has remained painfully high.... New voices face barriers and small media outlets are driven to the brink of insolvency.... Vicious lawsuits are being systematically filed.... This all shrinks the discourse and matters of discussion that are important to the people.

Civil societies are not necessarily prosecuted like in the past, before the fall of the Berlin Wall. Today, the revenue offices can achieve the same goals by effortlessly controlling civil society organizations, suspending their tax numbers to prevent them from doing any activities.... It is clear that if we do nothing about this, autocracy might continue spreading.

“If anti-democrats have formed a global coalition and learned from each other, conclusion number one is that democracy cooperation must also become global.”
—Matyas Eörsi
If anti-democrats have formed a global coalition and learned from each other, conclusion number one is that democracy cooperation must also become global. Democracies should also learn from each other. And they should also create firm coalitions and act jointly in the international arena…

**Presentations**

**Ladan Boroumand**  
Co-founder and Research Director of the Abdorrahman Boroumand Foundation for the Promotion of Human Rights and Democracy in Iran

**Excerpts:** Today, we are facing a reinvigorated wind of authoritarianism that defies democracy. China’s detention of Nobel Prize laureate Liu Xiaobo and assault on pro-democracy demonstrators in Hong Kong, the extra judicial killings of Russian opposition figures, the arrest of Venezuelan dissidents, Iran’s execution of political and religious dissidents, and Syria’s bombing of its own people are the business of the world.

Inaction is as much founded in principles and values as is action. It’s time for democratic politis to ask if principles of inaction and disunity are consistent with their democratic values. What is at stake is the expansion of democratic values in the world, and more urgently, the preservation of these values within established democracies. There is a relationship between the fight for democracy within non-democratic countries and the strengthening of democracy within societies that already enjoy democracy’s blessings…

The work will require faith, experience, lucidity, and imagination. During the last wave of democratization, civil society emerged as a recognized and legitimate global actor. If we are being silenced, it is with the help of democratic governments and the global human rights community that we can re-emerge as strong relevant actors. Such an alliance should aim at creating real and virtual spaces where dissidents from authoritarian states can survive and launch challenges to spread democratic culture. It is this alliance, I am confident, from which the next wave of democratization will spring.

**Svitlana Zalishchuk**  
Member of Parliament, Ukraine

**Excerpts:** I feel humbled by the bravery of courageous activists like Rafael Marques, a journalist from Angola who faced persecution for his investigative reports on blood diamonds; Ladan Boroumand, an Iranian activist who is collecting testimonies on the tortures and assassinations of thousands of people in Iran; and Wai Wai Nu from Burma remains passionate after 17 years of imprisonment for simply being a daughter of an opposition politician.

“There is a relationship between the fight for democracy within non-democratic countries and the strengthening of democracy within societies that already enjoy democracy’s blessings.” —Ladan Boroumand

“…Revolution that happens on a personal level has the ability to positively influence the course of history” —Svitlana Zalishchuk
Two years ago in Ukraine, we lived through dramatic developments when we kicked the authoritarian regime out of the country. In the middle of this fight, even after democratic elections, we realized the fragility of democracy. In the face of corruption, restrictive laws, censorship, and brutal infringement of human rights, we saw how weak democracy really was.

During our Maidan revolution, I used to coordinate one of the largest Facebook pages that became the main source of information for hundreds of thousands of people. After a police officer shot and wounded a peaceful protester, I remember posting a message that this [wounded protester] badly needed a certain type of blood. Two hours later...there was a line of two hundred people standing in front of the hospital ready to give their blood. They did not know, nor did they ask, who this man was. They did not think this was a doctor's issue or a problem of the Ministry of Health. They felt it was their issue.

This example of the revolution that happens on a personal level has the ability to positively influence the course of history. Although democracy is weak, humble efforts of everyday people make democracy irreversible.

Jose Luis (Chito) Gascon
Chair of the Human Rights Commission of the Philippines

Excerpts: Democratic forces should be able to overcome pushback of autocrats if we pursue a systematic and coordinated counter strategy as is outlined in the document “A Call for Democratic Renewal.”

I wish to highlight some points drawn from experiences in my own country. First, the need to hold security forces accountable for their abuses and to ensure civilian control and oversight. Second, the need to make democracy deliver by ensuring good governance, voice, civil participation, and inclusive development as the best safeguard against the alternatives offered by populism and the emergence of illiberal democracies. Third, the need to increase investment in human, financial, and knowledge resources and democracy promotion programs directed at political activists. Fourth, [the need to] confront all activities that bolster authoritarian forces. We also need to address the double standards exhibited by some leaders of established democracies that undermine the values of human rights in pursuit of either state security or economic interests...

This is self-evident: an empowered citizen, when confronted by tyranny, will choose freedom and will be prepared to sacrifice in unison with others for a noble calling.... No matter the obstacles we face, in our efforts to achieve democracy, we must stay the course, so long as we pursue our convictions about our cause’s justice and validity, for freedom and the democratic ideal.

“An empowered citizen, when confronted by tyranny, will choose freedom and will be prepared to sacrifice in unison with others for a noble calling.” —Chito Gascon
A highlight of each Assembly is the presentation, at the John B. Hurford Memorial Dinner, of the World Movement for Democracy’s Democracy Courage Tributes, which give special recognition to groups and movements working in particularly difficult circumstances. At the Eighth Assembly, Tributes were presented to the Advocates for the Rohingya People, Investigative Journalists in Africa, and the Umbrella Movement in Hong Kong.

**Advocates for the Rohingya People**

Accepted by Wai Wai Nu, Founder of the Women’s Peace Network

While the Rohingya have received international recognition as an ethnic group deserving citizenship and equal rights in Burma, many label them as illegal Muslim migrants and subject them to dehumanizing treatment. International visitors to Burma’s Rakhine State have described their living conditions as deplorable and UN Special Rapporteurs on Burma’s human rights situation have highlighted their brutal state-sponsored persecution. Groups such as the Women Peace Network—Arakan have worked courageously with and on behalf of the Rohingya people, building their political awareness and calling international attention to the systemic discrimination and human rights abuses they face.

**Investigative Journalists in Africa**

Accepted by Rafael Marques de Morais, investigative journalist

In much of Africa, journalists live in fear of arbitrary arrest, receive death threats from politicians and armed groups, and are regularly harased along with their families. This has been particularly true of those who investigate corruption, corporate misdeeds, and state sponsored terrorism. In this difficult environment, a number of brave individuals have managed to break through the bonds of censorship and corrupt media practices to score victories for freedom of the press. In the words of Angolan investigative journalist Rafael Marques, “When we do good investigation, it gets international attention and can be a game-changer.”
Empowering Civil Society for Democracy and Its Renewal

The John B. Hurford Memorial Dinner was sponsored by the Hurford Foundation whose president, Robert Miller welcomed all the Assembly participants and recognized their extraordinary efforts.

The dinner was named for the late John Boyce Hurford (1938-2000), an internationalist and philanthropist who played an important role in helping to conceptualize and bring into being the World Movement for Democracy.

Robert Miller, president of the Hurford Foundation providing welcoming remarks at the concluding John B. Hurford Memorial Dinner.

The Umbrella Movement in Hong Kong

Accepted by Nathan Law Kwun-chun, Secretary General of the Hong Kong Federation of Students

The Umbrella Movement’s bold call in the fall of 2014 for a free and fair election process to select the city’s leaders brought thousands into the streets to demonstrate peacefully. The images from these protests have motivated Chinese democracy activists on the mainland and resulted in solidarity between longtime champions of democracy in Hong Kong and a new generation of Hong Kong youth seeking to improve their city. The Hong Kong democracy movement will face further obstacles in the years to come, and their idealism and bravery will need to be supported as they work for democratic representation in Hong Kong.
Special Remarks

The Honorable Chung Ui-Hwa
Speaker of the National Assembly of the Republic of Korea

Excerpts (translated and edited from the Korean original): The Courage Tribute recipients, through their courage and devotion, are like precious jewels who have led the evolution of human history by enriching the world we are living in now. …

While we are faced with challenges against democracy, we have a firm belief in the power of democracy. Democracy is not a static thing; it is perpetual journey...

The people of the Republic of Korea have broken the chains of a painful history from the colonial era, liberation, war, and the division of the nation. Korea’s success is not unique. I believe it is an attainable goal that can be applied anywhere in the world; a model for freedom, human rights, peace and prosperity around the globe. I assure you that the National Assembly of Korea will take a more active role to share our experiences with the international community...

This year marks the 70th anniversary of the end of World War II, but also it has been 70 years since South and North Korea were divided in two. Only a few dozen kilometers north of Seoul, residents living on the opposite side of the demilitarized zone are living a tough and miserable life, mainly concerned about their livelihood, let alone their political freedom. I’d like to call on the ladies and gentleman gathered here today to pay more attention to them so that North Korea can open its closed doors to the world so that North Korean people can live with the basic values of democracy: freedom, equality and human rights.

“The people of the Republic of Korea have broken the chains of a painful history from the colonial era, liberation, war, and the division of the nation. Korea’s success is not unique. I believe it is an attainable goal that can be applied anywhere in the world; a model for freedom, human rights, peace and prosperity around the globe.” —Chung Ui-Hwa
Every day, governments introduce restrictive laws and policies that shrink civic space and people’s ability to live free and meaningful lives. Some activists who attended past World Movement Assemblies ARE NOW IN PRISON.

#SetThemFree is a GLOBAL campaign to build solidarity with those activists and many others behind bars.

Together, we can raise awareness, mobilize others, and engage with stakeholders to achieve their RELEASE.

Khadija Ismailova  Ilgar Mammadov  Gilbert Sojo

To learn more about their stories and find out how you can help, visit our website at:

http://www.helpsetthemfree.org/
From the perspective of plenary session participants, combatting the current authoritarian resurgence may require a radical shift in the ways democracy is advanced and democracy assistance is organized.

The development of authoritarianism is occurring at the level of institutions and ideas, said Christopher Walker of the National Endowment for Democracy’s International Forum for Democratic Studies. Illiberal regimes are compromising, subverting and, in some cases, seeking to replace international institutions associated with the liberal world order. Even more, authoritarians are making dedicated efforts to dilute and adulterate democratic norms and question democracy, not least through mass media.

Combating the attack on civil society, typified by Ethiopia’s restrictive laws and Russia’s designation of foreign-funded NGOs as foreign agents, is a strategic priority, said Maina Kiai, the UN Special Rapporteur on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association. The resilient resistance evident in recent protests by Chile’s students, Hong Kong’s Umbrella Movement, and Burkina Faso’s citizens confirms that there is a new global contestation. However, democratic norms are consistently challenged within the United Nations by a well-disciplined and like-minded group of illiberal states – sadly, including democratic India and South Africa – while liberal democracies fail to match their organization and commitment.

Too many resources have been devoted to institution-building at the expense of civil society. It is inappropriate to maintain the same approach if it isn’t working. Rather than do more or do better, we need to change the template of democracy and governance work; this includes rejecting a development-style, technocratic approach to advancing democracy based on inappropriate indicators and outcomes.

The experience of Central Asia confirms that authoritarians are also promoting their own counter-norms, said Alexander Cooley of Columbia University’s Harriman Institute. In response to the Color Revolutions, the Arab Spring, and Euromaidan, autocrats are stressing security, sovereignty, and stability, and playing on fears of foreign interference. Civilizational diversity is promulgated through the likes of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, which present universal norms as ‘Western’ values. Finally, traditional values are being promoted by Russia – most recently in Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan – and defended on the grounds that they are threatened by foreign funding of NGOs and by the LGBTI agenda.

The language of “universal values” and norms should be employed instead of “Western” values, which plays into the autocrats’ agenda. For the same reason, democracy promoters must steer clear of associations with geopolitical agendas and interests. Eurasia’s family-based regimes have proven to be quite adept at taking advantage of globalization – for example, enjoying Western investments – and at playing off the Great Powers.

For summaries of the Eighth Assembly workshop sessions, please visit our website at www.movedemocracy.org
The poor performance of new democracies in failing to deliver basic goods and services has opened the door to authoritarian regimes and enhanced the appeal of the China model, which has challenged the association between democratization and sustained economic growth, said the East Asia Institute’s Sook Jong Lee. Democracy has been further tainted by weak state capacity and the prevalence of ethnic and religious divisions within civil society. Asian democracies like South Korea and Indonesia should form a coalition of middle powers that is more energetic in promoting democracy, but adopts approaches different from the EU or US. This middle coalition should capitalize on close commercial and cultural ties with China to help “socialize” its elites to liberal norms. There is a critical need to empower Asian civil society – especially those groups which support democratic change in North Korea and Myanmar, to promote reconciliation and counter ethnic cleavage, and to avoid “nationalizing” civil society – requiring that CSOs follow their state’s insistence on sovereignty and Realpolitik in foreign relations.

In Latin America, the process of authoritarian learning appears evident – Venezuela and Nicaragua have copied aspects of Cuba’s autocratic governance, while Ecuador and Bolivia have learned from Chavismo and Sandinista practice, said Carlos Ponce, Latin America program director for Freedom House. Latin America’s more established democracies have also failed to come to the aid of beleaguered democrats in Venezuela and similar regimes, while the OAS has failed to invoke its Democratic Charter in defense of its own standards and norms.

Ultimately, it is essential for democrats around the world to recognize the global assault on democracy and coordinate unified responses at the national, regional, and international levels. Authoritarian regimes will continue to undermine democratic values and institutions if proponents of democracy do not learn from these developments and act.
The influence of deeply rooted state actors is another challenge to transition. High-level officials from the military and security sectors, oligarchs, and other big business groups often influence and manipulate the political environment. This derails the constructive development of democratic institutions. A shift in the ownership of media outlets from independent private owners to those oligarchs with political ambitions or high-level government officials remains a threat to democratic transition. The legitimacy of democracy is questioned in light of corruption, lack of accountability, and absent independent judicial systems.

In many of these transitions, state institutions and processes have been captured by the military or security services tied with economic interests. This phenomenon decreases the ability for democratic institutions to function and leads to public perception of injustice, illegitimacy, and lack of confidence in the state. For example, Igor Blazevic argued that Burma has transitioned from a dysfunctional military regime to a regime in which the military sits as an autonomous and powerful body supervising the political space in which the ruling party rules forever. In addition, many states in transition are challenged by an increase in majoritarianism. In recent years, single party governments in Central Europe, for example, have been gaining power and reducing negotiation in policy making. Such a system ignores the diverse voices of citizens, including religious, ethnic, and other minorities, in the policy-making processes.

There is also a noticeable crisis within civil society. Even though civil society is vibrant in many of these states, there is little cohesion and coordination. In the context of donor-driven projects, civil society organizations are often divided and competing with each other, rather than being united. Lack of internal democratic practice, transparency, or accountability within civil society groups are also challenges to building a stronger democratic movement.

In the wake of horrific acts of terror committed around the world today, authoritarian governments are using the label of terrorism to crack down on critical civil society groups and activists that they deem to threaten national peace. Maintaining such stability has become a priority for the governments as well as the international donors; although most groups are not a terror threat, this logic is used to suppress democracy and human rights groups.

Having identified the challenges, the panelists urged efforts to renew the civil society sector. In the face of changing political environments and actors, civil society groups need to adjust their strategies. Often, organizations that were established before the transitional period face challenges in coping with the changing environment.

ELECTING different people to political office is not enough. In Ukraine, for example, civil society needs to keep a critical eye on elected MPs and government officials while also taking responsibility into their own hands and actively participating in the reform process. Svitlana Zalishchuk of Ukraine pointed out that many civil society leaders have become members of Parliament to push reforms within the system. One result of the Arab Spring was bringing to office a new group of MPs and government officials who were active in civil society leading up to the political opening. Still, there are challenges to this involvement and the translation of civil society’s voice to the political arena. For instance, while women in the Middle East have been extremely active in protests on the street, those women are rarely represented in the new government.

Civil society can work to provide solutions to terrorism, violent extremism, and religious conflict. To respond to the crack-down by authoritarian governments, civil society should engage in more activities to address root-causes of terrorism and extremism. Civil society should also challenge governments and work with the international community to ensure that governments recognize civil society as partners in addressing the issues.

Finally, broader, united democratic fronts are needed to address the challenges to democratic transitions. Civil society groups should be more united to leverage their power against the power of authoritarian governments or military regimes. Partnering with the media community is essential in sharing stories that expose the corruption. Small and medium-size enterprises (SMEs) should be included as possible allies.
Empowering Civil Society for Democracy and Its Renewal

Ambassador Jung-Hoon Lee, the Korean Ambassador for Human Rights, opened the plenary session by giving an overview of how, since the 1948 adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human rights, the international community has come together to develop frameworks to deal with human rights abuses globally.

While these frameworks have been employed in places as diverse as Rwanda, Cambodia, and South Africa, the North Korean abuses, until recent years, have managed to elude global attention. However, this trend changed when the UN Human Rights Council started paying closer attention to the North Korean human rights situation after 2003. This change culminated in the UN Commission of Inquiry (COI), which produced its report in February 2014 after a year of research, testimony, and consultations.

Participants noted that a few years ago, the idea of a COI on North Korea was unthinkable in large part due to the seemingly insurmountable problem of access to the country. However, while the COI is a major accomplishment, it does not necessarily translate to change. The best way to continue the momentum of the COI is to raise the standards of data collection and to continue to research and compile evidence that can be used in future years when the country or its leaders are more open to accountability mechanisms.

Persistent activism was key to gaining the attention necessary to bring the movement to where it is today; the COI was accomplished by using multiple UN mechanisms to help issues in North Korea gain traction and attention internationally.

It is critical to build trust through regional mechanisms. For example, the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) was initially convened to address issues of regional security, but through years of trust-building, the ten very politically diverse nations managed to find common ground. It is from this common ground that participants see the opportunity for the group to continue to expand its reach to new areas and issues like human rights. In this vein, ASEAN could be a venue to advance the momentum of the COI process.

Participants also spoke about the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, which recently published a report on abuses in Sri Lanka following the recent end of conflict. Sri Lanka transitioned from a detrimental situation, in which the UN was congratulating the Sri Lankan government for bringing the war to a close, to one in which war crimes were under UN investigation. This has been a major achievement for civil society considering the short timeframe; it can be attributed to the consistent advocacy of civil society.

The workshop considered what would happen if the Security Council does not refer North Korea to the ICC. Though North Korea is not a member of the ICC, international jurisdiction could be used to hold some leaders accountable. Further, there has also been discussion of a hybrid court with South Korea. While there is no precedent for such an arrangement, Ambassador Lee pointed to other examples globally where hybrid courts have had success. Going forward, a tribunal targeting the 100 most culpable individuals might be another option outside of the ICC. Participants stressed that it is important at this stage to continue to gather evidence.
and keep applying pressure. While accountability is the ultimate goal, the human rights agenda can also be advanced through trade, development, and economic agreements. It is important for civil society to continually work toward their goals, even after some success has been attained.

Ambassador Lee closed by quoting the COI’s language that the abuses taking place in North Korea have “no parallel in the contemporary world.” While it is still difficult to directly observe North Korea, there are promising signs that the COI has had an impact and that civil society can capitalize on the momentum.

The discussion opened with a presentation describing the experience of the Tibetan community in dealing with targeted digital attacks. The Tibetan community has faced malware attacks for over a decade. In response, groups in the community have developed “hyper localized” approaches to raise awareness and engage in public education.

Research conducted by the Citizen Lab has found that the capacity of civil society to connect to information communication technologies is outpacing their capacity to be secure. Digital security breaches are a silent and pervasive epidemic in civil society that needs to be addressed. Civil society groups face the same threats as the private sector and government, while equipped with far fewer resources to secure themselves.

Despite these issues, success stories exist. In Malawi, for example, human rights groups used Martus, a secure information collection and management tool developed by Benetech, to gather stories of police brutality against the LGBT community. They presented this documentation to law enforcement authorities, who investigated and addressed the issue. Media have reported that an employee of the spyware firm Hacking Team quit his position after a Citizen Lab report showed Hacking Team spyware products were being used against activists from the Ethiopian community. This story demonstrates that research on these issues can shift the moral orientation of people working in this field.

The participants also noted a number of challenges for improving digital security for civil society and potential ways forward. First, the digital security community must encourage people to take security seriously without introducing excessive paranoia about digital threats. Activists can become so paranoid that it paralyzes their ability to work effectively. Second, the usability of tools can be an issue. Software that is developed for human rights activists is often not as usable and accessible as popular consumer apps. Open Source
Empowering Civil Society for Democracy and Its Renewal

The current authoritarian resurgence is in large part motivated by the sweeping gains of the Third Wave of democracy and, more recently, the “Color Revolutions” in post-Communist states. In light of those events, the ruling elites of China, Russia, and Iran clearly undertook strategic reviews, identifying regime vulnerabilities, and opposition strengths, before initiating pre-emptive measures to counter and nullify challenges to their authority. As of today, the world’s democratic forces have yet to undertake a corresponding re-orientation or innovation in response to authoritarian learning.

It may be unrealistic to expect ethical foreign policy from democratic governments, which inevitably need to balance economic, military, trade, and other strategic factors against considerations of democracy and human rights. The European Union and the United States are often not on the same page when it comes to promoting democratic reform in places like Georgia or Ukraine. When values-based foreign policy meets interest-based geo-economics, democratic principles are too easily bargained away.

The West is currently disabled by political polarization, fiscal problems, and, most of all, a value dilemma brought on by moral relativism and post-colonial guilt. These factors breed an incapacity for self-affirmation and inaction, as in Syria and Ukraine. It is therefore necessary to spark a revival of democratic conviction in Western societies. With few exceptions (e.g. Merkel) the current generation of Western leaders has no experience of living under or combating authoritarian and totalitarian rule, either militarily or politically.

Technology can often be a good bulwark for questions like, “what else is my data being used for?” Finally, the approach to security cannot just include activists but must involve solutions that can include larger communities and networks. It can be tempting for civil society to try and consider all of the digital security threats and problems at once and try to develop solutions. However, a more practical approach requires focusing on one thing at a time.

The discussion highlighted the need for funders to address their digital security within their own organizations so they can better protect their grantees. Panelists and the audience also stressed the need to develop more creative, interactive, and engaging methods for raising awareness and providing education on digital security. Participants concluded that civil society should approach solutions to these attacks through both advocacy and research.

Developing an International Action Plan to Renew Democracy

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<td>PRESENTERS:</td>
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<td>Robert Hårdh, Civil Rights Defenders – Sweden</td>
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<td>Carl Gershman, National Endowment for Democracy (NED) – U.S.</td>
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<td>Leyla Aliyeva, St. Antony’s College, Oxford University – Azerbaijan</td>
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| MODERATOR: | Larry Diamond, Stanford University – U.S. |
| RAPPORTEUR:| Michael Allen, Democracy Digest, NED – UK |

The current authoritarian resurgence is in large part motivated by the sweeping gains of the Third Wave of democracy and, more recently, the “Color Revolutions” in post-Communist states. In light of those events, the ruling elites of China, Russia, and Iran clearly undertook strategic reviews, identifying regime vulnerabilities, and opposition strengths, before initiating pre-emptive measures to counter and nullify challenges to their authority. As of today, the world’s democratic forces have yet to undertake a corresponding re-orientation or innovation in response to authoritarian learning.

It may be unrealistic to expect ethical foreign policy from democratic governments, which inevitably need to balance economic, military, trade, and other strategic factors against considerations of democracy and human rights. The European Union and the United States are often not on the same page when it comes to promoting democratic reform in places like Georgia or Ukraine. When values-based foreign policy meets interest-based geo-economics, democratic principles are too easily bargained away.

The West is currently disabled by political polarization, fiscal problems, and, most of all, a value dilemma brought on by moral relativism and post-colonial guilt. These factors breed an incapacity for self-affirmation and inaction, as in Syria and Ukraine. It is therefore necessary to spark a revival of democratic conviction in Western societies. With few exceptions (e.g. Merkel) the current generation of Western leaders has no experience of living under or combating authoritarian and totalitarian rule, either militarily or politically.
In light of these challenges, an international action plan to renew democracy should include the following:

- Activists should take advantage of existing democratic institutions by educating and training dissidents on how to access and lobby the institutions like the European Commission and how to bring cases to the European Court of Human Rights.

- Proponents of democracy should use the leverage of democracies to deter and penalize autocrats by denying access to Western markets, educational institutions, and culture. A “Global Magnitsky Act” would further enhance democrats’ ability to raise democratic and human rights violations in multilateral institutions and to penalize or at least embarrass perpetrators. Targeted sanctions are valuable because they raise public awareness of the issue and raise the cost to autocrats.

- Democrats should also educate and mobilize the public in western democracies to defend the democratic idea and institutions. The wars in Iraq and Afghanistan have unfairly tarnished democracy assistance, especially in so far as it is associated with western military interventions and nation-building. Framing democratic values as “Western” is damaging and counter-productive, playing into the hands of fundamentalist or traditionalist forces. Rather, proponents of democracy should publicize the views and statements of activists from non-democratic states and emerging democracies who are able to articulate their passion and appetite for democracy in a manner comparable to Soviet dissidents of an earlier era. New networks of NGOs and democratic governments could help counter the criminalization of democracy assistance and cross-border solidarity against democracy. “Non-Western” democracies like Brazil and India have so far failed to step up and advance democracy internationally. Civil society and other democratic actors in those states should be mobilized to apply pressure to legitimize and institutionalize democracy assistance.

- The democracy assistance community must engage and mobilize the younger generation, which has demonstrated a commitment to democratic values and international action on human rights, environmental, and other issues. Democrats should take advantage of activists like Malala Yousatza of Pakistan, who has demonstrated an ability to inspire and capture the imagination of younger people.

- Proponents of democracy should make an effort to broaden the agenda of the European Endowment for Democracy and channel more resources through non-governmental organizations rather than states bodies.

- Strategic priorities should be established, including the development of democracy in Tunisia, the Arab Spring’s only success story and a beachhead for democracy in the region; Ukraine; and Cuba, which has significance in Latin America.

- Civil society should refresh, re-state, and renew the case for principles of democracy, and re-animate activism, highlighting the work of committed activists and the pronouncements of the likes of German President Angela Merkel and Nobel laureate Svetlana Alexievich.

Democratic activists and organizations should position themselves to take advantage of emerging opportunities:

- Activists should take note of the coming crisis of authoritarianism, possibly in China and probably in Cuba, which may be expedited by engagement.

- In response to adaptive authoritarianism, democrats need to strategically innovate and adapt democracy movements by developing new approaches and deploying new technologies.

- Civil society organizations should press for more financial resources and consider strategic priorities to enhance the traction and leverage of existing funds.
The Democracy Fair provided participants with the space to interact, network and learn from each other. It also served as a venue for participants to build solidarity on specific causes. For example, a letter writing station and photo booth was installed to support the Set Them Free campaign to bring attention to political prisoners around the world.

We also screened a film series, “Activists on the Big Screen”, featuring Civil Space Initiative videos. The videos included: Girl Child: One Woman’s Quest to Redefine Her Society; I Was Not Alone: A Pakistani Activist’s Journey for Change; and, Fatima: Voices of Civil Society in Iraq.
The Technology Trainings focused on the use of new technologies in the work of democracy activists. The training included:

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<th>Technology Trainings</th>
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<td>Digital Activism in Repressive Environments</td>
<td>China Digital Times</td>
<td>Xiao Qiang, China Digital Times – U.S.</td>
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<td>Armchairs to Action—Activating Your Network Online</td>
<td>Perennial</td>
<td>Aaron Rodericks, Perennial – Canada</td>
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<tr>
<td>Communicating in Hostile Environments</td>
<td>Wickr Foundation – U.S.</td>
<td>Rita Zolotova, Wickr Foundation – U.S.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Google Ideas Booth</td>
<td>Google Ideas – U.S.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Participants visited diverse Seoul-based organizations to learn about their efforts for sustaining and enhancing their democracy in South Korea.

**People’s Solidarity for Participatory Democracy (PSPD)**
Democracy can only be realized when the people choose to regularly participate in socio-economic and political spheres of decision-making and closely monitor abuses of power by the state and corporations. PSPD works to promote and facilitate citizen engagement in these governmental processes and reforms.

**Metropolitan City of Seoul City Hall**
The Metropolitan City of Seoul City Hall provides a forum for Seoul’s citizens to voice their ideas and put them into action. City Hall undertakes various projects to promote democracy.

**War and Women’s Human Rights Museum**
The War and Women’s Human Rights Museum exhibits and records the criminal institutionalization of sexual slavery by the Japanese military during World War II. The museum shares the stories of the victims of the “comfort women” system to provide history, peace, and human rights education to future generations.

**Seoul Youth Factory for Alternative Culture (Haja Center)**
The Haja Center seeks to promote inter-generational relationships in creative ways. The Center runs a number of initiatives focused on mutual development, including the Haja Production School, social enterprise programs in musical performance and multicultural education, and career training for teenagers.

**Korea Democracy Foundation (KDF)**
The Korea Democracy Foundation (KDF) was established to contribute to democratic development by memorializing Korea’s democratization movement. The KDF supports democracy-oriented projects, arranges events to promote democracy, operates the Korea Democracy Memorial Hall, and manages documents and artifacts related to Korea’s democratization movement.

**Seoul NPO Center**
The Seoul NPO Center is a hub for incubating and cultivating non-profit organizations working for the public interest. Seoul NPO Center provides a space for civil society organizations to build productive partnerships with each other and the Seoul Metropolitan Government.
Cultural Evening

The Cultural Evening and Dinner was co-hosted by the Seoul-based Secretariat of the Asia Democracy Network with support from the Seoul Metropolitan Government and Mayor Park Won Soon and the Korea Democracy Foundation.
Democracy activists, practitioners, and scholars from every region of the world gathered in Seoul, Korea to discuss practical solutions to a wide range of challenges to democracy.

In the following pages, participants are listed according to region, country, and then alphabetically by last name. Those who attended are but a small fraction of the thousands of activists around the world, so many of whom could not be included in this Assembly. However, they are as much participants in the World Movement as those who attended. Many of the participants took great personal risks to attend the Assembly and some cannot be listed here for that reason. We wish to thank both those who attended and those who were not able to attend for their support, dedication, and commitment.

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Maka Angola

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Ligue Iteka

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Haki Africa

**Kenya**
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Collectif des Femmes du Mali

**Mauritania**
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Pacte Républicain

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National Assembly of Bhutan

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Press and Social Media

Aaron Rodericks
@DQ2E9K5
That was a very touching end to the World Movement for Democracy. Arguably more emotional than most weddings I've attended. #SeoulAssembly
2:16 PM - 4 Nov 2015

Anita Milic
@anita_milic
“Human spirit is undefeatable. If people want to stand up, they will stand up.” @ManuelAce_UNDR #SeoulAssembly
2:58 PM - 1 Nov 2015

WLP (@WLP)
WLP was thrilled to share our new Gender & Human Rights manuals at the Democracy & Human Rights Fair @SeoulAssembly
1:16 PM - 1 Nov 2015

skwealer chinedu
@skwealer_chinedu
Move Democracy. Otherwise democracy will move you. This is the spirit from #SeoulAssembly.
5:36 AM - 4 Nov 2015

Louisa Greve
@UN Ladies
Some amazing youth activists for human rights for Rohingyas and Tibetans. @WaWaAsu @MgmtsOsun @SeoulAssembly
5:47 AM - 4 Nov 2015 - Venezuelanglo, Seoul, 서울

Maria Leissner
@centemissions
#SeoulAssembly reminding us that democracy guarantees security. Human rights & takes into account voice of citizens.
8:58 AM - 2 Nov 2015

Nicholas Opio
@Opiopower
#SeoulAssembly AllAfrica_UNSR peaceful assembly is a form of expression in a democracy. It's better than violence
6:41 AM - 4 Nov 2015

UN Watch en français
@UNWatch_fr
Chers dictateurs, pensez gardez 100 activités pro-démocratiques consenti contre vous #SeoulAssembly
8:05 AM - 2 Nov 2015

Aaron Rodericks
@arodericks
I'm realizing that Kim Campbell is rather witty at #SeoulAssembly
8:53 AM - 2 Nov 2015
The World Movement for Democracy thanks the following for their generous support

Our Local Partners
The World Movement thanks its partner on the Assembly, the Seoul-based Secretariat of the Asia Democracy Network managed by the Korea Democracy Network, which is comprised of the Center for Korean Women and Politics, the East Asia Institute, the Korea Democracy Foundation, and the Korea Human Rights Foundation.