NINTH GLOBAL ASSEMBLY
6 - 9, MAY 2018 Dakar, Senegal
“Building Strategic Partnerships for Democratic Renewal”
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LETTER FROM THE STEERING COMMITTEE

The Ninth Assembly took place at a critical time for global civil society — a time when the future of democracy is uncertain and democrats find themselves on the defensive against escalating attacks by authoritarian regimes. More than 400 participants gathered in Dakar, Senegal, and brought stories of sophisticated disinformation campaigns, closing internet spaces, and increasingly dangerous working conditions. Ayo Obi, human rights lawyer from Nigeria, rallied the group by acknowledging the obstacles, but challenged the audience that “the time to take a stand was always the day before yesterday” – so the time to take a stand is today.

First and foremost, we must defend access to digital spaces and communication channels and protect them against disinformation and cyber-attacks. Participants cited the use of artificial intelligence by authoritarian governments to weaponize social media and corrupt trust in the information ecosystem. How do we break through the disinformation that is flooding our airways and digital spaces? Daniel Milo, senior research fellow at the GLOBSEC Policy Institute, spoke on educating audiences with unconventional methods saying, “With the level of global distrust towards media and NGOs hitting record numbers, you must look for unorthodox communicators. Youtubers, online celebrities, pop stars, actors. Whatever works for you in your context and target group.”

Beyond individual spokespersons, we must outreach to the business sector and religious leaders. With some major corporations’ profits exceeding many countries’ GDPs, they have tremendous resources to support our efforts and make an economic case for the importance of democratic institutions. Religious leaders are one of the most trusted community leaders and can help us counter the narrative that democratic and traditional values are incompatible. Ketehan Chachava, executive director of the Center for Development and Democracy, shared that the Georgian Orthodox Church enjoys 80% support among society while civil society comes in far behind. “We cannot afford to leave this majority out of [our] discussion . . . or not be sure how this majority understands these values where [the Church] word in one day, just like that, can change everything.”

At the Assembly, the World Movement explored ways to deepen working relationships between civil society and political society. Today, the public is increasingly losing its faith in democracy. To respond to this crisis, the World Movement argued that civil society leaders must engage with political society and sometimes consider becoming part of political society by running for public offices. Anita Vanderbelt argued in the Assembly discussion that “if you’re someone who is power feeling in positions of power, truly reflect the population - the diversity and the different life experi |

ences with nontraditional methods saying, “With the level of global distrust towards media and NGOs hitting record numbers, you must look for unorthodox communicators. Youtubers, online celebrities, pop stars, actors. Whatever works for you in your context and target group.”

Finally, we continue to honor those who have shown extraordinary bravery in their fight for human rights and democratic principles. The Democracy Courage Tributes present at the Assembly honored individuals from the Philippines, South Africa, and China, who have faced imprisonment and violence, but persevered in their work. In her acceptance speech in Dakar, she said: “I recognize that democracy is about protecting the rights of all citizens, regardless of their political beliefs. I recognize that democracy is about protecting the rights of all citizens, regardless of their political beliefs.”

The Ninth Assembly is over, but we will take our connections, ideas, and inspiration with us, and use the Assembly’s discussion as the foundation for future meetings and engagement. We hope this report will serve as a useful resource for everyone who works toward democratic renewal.
In welcoming participants to the Ninth Global Assembly, Zainab Bangura, Chairperson of the Steering Committee of the World Movement for Democracy, highlighted the inspiring history of Senegal in transforming its dark past into a promising future. “While many consider democracy to be in retreat today, Senegal is an emerging democracy that is providing democratic leadership on the African continent. During the Assembly, we hope you will have opportunities to interact with our Senegalese colleagues, and to learn from Senegal’s experience in motivating citizens to become engaged in the political arena, keeping those in power accountable, maintaining public space for debate, and engaging with religious leaders in fighting extremism,” Bangura stated.

Representing the government of Senegal, Penda Mbow, a special assistant to the President of Senegal, discussed further the role of civil society in engaging in democratic movements and processes within the continent to strengthen democratic institutions. In particular, she noted the inspiring story of keynote speaker Isatou Touray, now the Minister of Trade, Regional Integration, and Employment of The Gambia, who played a pivotal role in fighting for the rights of women in her country. Although Touray was targeted by the Gambia’s former leader Yahya Jammeh, she continued to fight for the rights of women and later became the first female presidential candidate in the country’s history.

Touray emphasized the importance of building cross-sector relation- ships to resist authoritarianism. She shared the case of her country in liberating themselves from the oppressive regime of the Yahya Jammeh after 22 years. Only by building a coalition between opposition politicians and members of civil society were democrats in The Gambia able to defeat Jammeh in the 2016 elections. She highlighted the importance of embracing “crossover”—the idea that members of civil society should pursue roles within political society to encourage a better working relationship between the two sectors and to help strengthen government institutions from within—an action she took by running for president and later by accepting the role of Minister.

Touray also highlighted the universality of democracy and its values, reinforcing the need to engage new voices in democratic dialogues and strengthening democratic unity. “If we look at democracy, every nation can identify elements that cut across boundaries and territories, gender, class, ethnicity or religion—it is a universal standard that involves everyone. The tenets of democracy call for independence of the judiciary, respect for the rule of law, and freedom of expression, with a common goal of promoting democratic rules and strengthening democratic norms and institutions around the world.”

“Experience has taught me that democracy is a journey, not a destination...[and] that you cannot take democratic progress for granted.” - Karen Bass

At a time in which many democrats feel a sense of cynicism towards parlia- mentarians and governments, Karen Bass, a member of the US House of Representatives, reminded participants that democratic institutions need their presence. Reforming government institutions from within is a necessary step that members of civil society can take to dismantle corruption and bring the voices of the people to the government: “As you heard, I am a US Member of Congress, but like you, I have struggled to make my own coun- try more equal, more democratic, and more representative. I have been an activist. I also started and worked in the NGO world, and now I try to achieve that goal as a Member of Congress.”

To those who may be inclined towards despondence in the face of what seem like impossible circumstances, Bass closed the opening session by re- minding participants, “experience has taught me that democracy is a jour- ney, not a destination...[and] that you cannot take democratic progress for granted.”
OPENING CONVERSATION: STATE OF DEMOCRACY

Following the opening remarks, civil society leaders and regional experts unpacked the successes of and challenges facing democracy movements in different regions. “We have a massive task ahead of us. We have to deal with bipolarization, weakened institutions...and not enough transparency and accountability in democratic countries,” said Larry Diamond, senior fellow with the Stanford University Center for Democracy, Development, and Rule of Law. Tanya Hamada, a former government official in the Philippines, echoed a similar sentiment regarding the election of autocratic President Rodrigo Duterte. “The voters didn’t go to the polls to elect a dictator...they expressed their feeling of exclusion in Filipino democracy.”

Other panelists focused on the lack of opportunity to participate in free elections and create political space for new leadership. Vladimir Kara-Murza, the coordinator of Open Russia, stated “since Putin came to power we have not had democratic elections, just a ritual that resembles an election...the so-called popularity of Putin inside Russia has never been tested.” In a similar vein, E. Gyimah-Boadi, executive director of the Ghana Center for Democratic Development, reinforced this statement noting that while defining and enforcing term limits remains a contentious issue throughout Africa, eight in ten citizens in 28 countries support the enforcement of limits on presidential tenure, although politicians in power refuse to acquiesce to this popular desire.

While each speaker discussed the challenges to democracy today, they also underscored the necessity of remaining positive and continuing to work to change political and civic landscapes to be inclusive of all citizens. In closing, Ayo Obe, a well-known human rights lawyer in Nigeria, remarked that “the time to take a stand was always the day before yesterday - but the time to take a stand remains today.” - Ayo Obe
Ezra Acayan and Raffy Lerma, two Manila-based photojournalists who have dedicated their careers to documenting extrajudicial killings in President Duterte’s war on drugs, accepted the award on behalf of Nightwatchers. “For us, it’s not about politics. We believe in human rights, in the humanity of every person regardless of class or background. We attempt balance and seek accountability. We are biased for facts, and we hope to honor the tradition of a free and fearless press,” said Lerma.

In the face of threats from the president, police, and government supporters, the Nightwatchers operate at great risk to themselves and their families. “Some of us quit our full-time jobs to take this on. We receive death threats daily. However, we are committed to exposing the effect of the war on drugs on the poorest and most vulnerable people of the Philippines,” remarked Acayan.

Thulisile “Thuli” Madonsela, the former Public Protector of South Africa (2009-2016), accepted the final Tribute on behalf of democrats committed to holding government leaders accountable in Africa. In her acceptance speech, she highlighted the importance of building strong institutions for defending the tenets of democracy.

“Democracy cannot work for all in the absence of the rule of law. President Mandela...said the following: ‘Even the most benevolent of governments have among them people with propensities for human failings. The rule of law as we understand it consists in the set of conventions and arrangements that ensure it’s not left to the whims of individuals to decide what’s good for the populous.’” — Jin Bianling

In memory of Li Baiguang, an inspiring human rights lawyer from China who dedicated his career to defending religious minorities, and many other Chinese human rights lawyers today, the second Courage Tribute was awarded to Human Rights Lawyers in China.

The award was accepted remotely by Jin Bianling, the wife of political prisoner Jiang Tianyong, who defended religious minorities, people with HIV/AIDS, and other vulnerable groups. Bianling was forced to seek political asylum in the United States due to state harassment her family has faced and has not seen her husband in three years. Since the massive crackdown on human rights groups in 2015, human rights lawyers have increasingly faced harassment, imprisonment, and physical harm by the government.

Bianling struck a defiant tone in her acceptance speech, saying: “The government wants us to feel isolated and alone. They want us to step back and give up our pursuit of the rule of law, human rights, and freedom. The Democracy Courage Tribute and others tell us we are not alone. The world is paying attention [to us] and honoring us. The government has failed to erase us from history and we will continue to appeal for our loved ones.” — Jin Bianling

In opening remarks, Foreign Minister Sidiki Kaba provided opening remarks for the presentation of the Democracy Courage Tributes, by highlighting the importance of civil society in creating democratic societies. “It should be noted that since independence, if democracy succeeded [in Senegal], it is because there has always been a thriving civil society,” he remarked. As a lawyer and human rights advocate who frequently represented activists in his work, Kaba emphasized the importance of organizations like the World Movement for Democracy in connecting democrats and providing a support network through which activists can share experiences and lessons learned. In closing, he provided participants with three pieces of advice to take with them after the Assembly: never trivialize the misfortune of others, always be ready to mobilize for a common cause, and always demand accountability and justice for those who are vulnerable.

This inspiring welcome set the tone for an evening to honor democrats working at their own personal risk to ensure societies are more inclusive and representative for all.

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Nightwatchers: Photojournalists in the Philippines

Human Rights Lawyers in China

Advocates for the Rule of Law in Africa

Opening Remarks by Foreign Minister Sidiki Kaba

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In recent years, many civil society activists and other citizens have started to view the relationship between society and its government representatives as an unbridgeable gap. In this session, speakers—many of whom began their careers as activists and became parliamentarians—discussed how parliamentarians should work to combat this sense of cynicism. The distrust stems from the stigma surrounding elected office, as only the elite or the corrupt are able to achieve those positions of power in many countries. Speakers noted in agreement the incredible importance of ensuring that citizens are truly reflected and represented within their institutions. Promoting institutions that provide opportunities for all would reduce the gap citizens see between themselves and their representatives and remedy the “us versus them” mentality that is prevalent in many countries, they noted. “In Canada,” remarked Anita Vandenbeld, Member of Parliament in Canada, “the Minister of Infrastructure, who’s responsible for deciding on billions of dollars for transportation infrastructure, began his life as a bus driver. Having people in positions of power that truly reflect the population—the diversity and the different life experiences of the populous—is one way to combat this cynicism.”

To renew this relationship between the people and their parliamentarians, Vandenbeld remarked that, “if more activists begin going back and forth between activism and politics, they’ll have an understanding that it’s wearing two different hats, but fighting for the same cause.”

Svitlana Zalishchuk, Member of Parliament in Ukraine, underscored the importance of entering Parliament to fight for those without a voice. “Parliamentarians have great power. Even one voice in the parliament with courage and stamina can make a difference... for the LGBTQ community’s voice... for women’s voices... it can make a difference.”

To reinforce this point, Ana Gomes, Member of European Parliament representing Portugal, discussed her own drive to serve in parliament after being a lifelong activist: “You can’t have democracy without political parties and you can’t have true democracy without (activists) joining those political parties and fighting for the things we think are right... I’m [in parliament] to talk about things people don’t want to talk about and to uncover things people don’t want uncovered... And I hope, indeed, that when I leave the parliament, I will once again rejoin civil society. I will put all I have known and my network at the service of civil society to continue with this fight.”

Throughout the conversation, speakers reinforced that by encouraging and participating in civil society and government crossover, members of civil society can help to remove the stigma around parliament and work to create real change from within the government for their countries.
To counter global decline of democracy, the Coalition for Democratic Renewal (CDR)—launched in Prague in October 2017—seeks to strengthen coordination amongst democrats and incubate new approaches to promoting democratic values. During the workshop, the working groups that make up the CDR reported on their initial efforts and identified key areas in need of innovation including, communications outreach, civic education, and strategic partnerships.

The Youth Working Group stressed the need to integrate and revitalize civic education with “rituals that will celebrate democracy and attract the attention of youth.” To the same end, the China Working Group discussed its efforts to create a new educational narrative on China’s economic and political models. By uncovering the flaws in China’s governing system they can decrease its influence in the world and discredit claims that it’s a better alternative to democracy. The Media Working Group highlighted the success of the information campaign that followed the signing of the “Prague Appeal,” the core mission statement of the coalition, and posited that using new media and simple audio-visual messaging will be key to expanding their reach to the critical youth audience.

A common thread throughout the discussion was the need to utilize existing outreach platforms by building partnerships with media, youth networks, and religious leaders. As was discussed frequently throughout the Assembly, today’s challenges to democracy require innovative responses. Workshop participants agreed that democrats should challenge themselves by reaching out to nontraditional communicators—such as celebrities, religious leaders, and other social influencers—that have a heightened impact on members of society who may be skeptical of democracy and its traditional proponents. Despite the obstacles facing democracy, the workshop ended on a hopeful note with panelists encouraging the participants to use the current challenges as inspiration to find innovative ways to engage other citizens and to build more inclusive democratic movements and institutions. To continue the discussion, members of the CDR will meet again at the 22nd Forum 2000 Conference in Prague on October 7-9, 2018.

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Peoples’ movements have often triggered democratic transitions, shepherding governance reform, and bolstering democratic consolidation. However, the varying degrees of success of different movements illustrate that long-term change is much harder to achieve. Throughout the workshop, participants highlighted examples of protests that failed to keep up the momentum they generated and discussed how civil society can learn from these mistakes.

These examples include South Korea’s 24-week-long “Candlelight Revolution” that ousted a corrupt president, to Senegal’s Y’en a Marre movement that encouraged voter registration to unseat the long-sitting president in 2012, to Brazil’s long-lasting protests in 2013. Unfortunately, actual change does not come without systematic institutional reforms. Participants emphasized that the removal of one authoritarian leader may bring temporary satisfaction, but it does not necessarily produce long-term results if democrats do not initiate attempts at institutional reform. Workshop participants recognized that these movements serve as critical entry points for CSOs to engage everyday citizens. To take advantage of this opportunity, CSOs must build out a strategy for reforming democratic institutions and maintaining civic engagement. With this in mind, workshop participants also emphasized the necessity for civil society to tackle corruption and reform government institutions from within by running for parliamentary and other political positions. With continued public engagement, and the ascension of civil society members to political roles, these movements could create long-lasting change. In September 2018, the Korea Foundation and the World Movement will convene participants once again to discuss further how movements in Asia can better reform institutions and engage the public.
Authoritarian governments frequently claim that traditional and democratic values are incompatible in order to sow distrust between civil society and citizens. To counteract this fabricated conflict of values, civil society actors must develop counter narratives that demonstrate how democratic norms support, rather than contradict, a community's traditional values and identities. Panelists observed that traditionalists are often left out of discussions among members of civil society—with their beliefs labeled as archaic and incongruent with democratic ideals. Members of civil society must bridge this gap by attempting to initiate this dialogue with, and break the stigma that has been created around, traditionalists.

In the case of Georgia, noted Ketevan Chachava, executive director of the Center for Development and Democracy, "only 4% of people in society said that they fully trust NGOs...but the Orthodox Church approval rating has been 80-85%.” With this clear discrepancy in mind, Chachava emphasized that working with religious leaders to build mutual understandings is instrumental if democrats want to spread their message to all of society. "When it comes to building strategic partnerships for democratic renewal, we need to become more open ourselves...Now we have seen religious leaders like bishops [and] the Vicar of Patriarch mak- ing these statements, promoting tolerance and promoting the freedom of choice, saying that [these values are] given to us by God and no one can take it away from us.”

In Jordan, Oraib Al-Rantawi, the director of Al Quds Center for Political Studies, had a similar experience. "We decided to launch a regional pro- gram under the title 'Coalition for Civic and Democratic Islamic Discourse.' We reached a conclusion that without the Islamic movement being adept in more democratic and civic values, democracy will not work…And now, in the Islamic movement, we have serious debates about civic and democrat- ic values. We have four Islamist parties…willing to join forces with demo- crats, and they have more open-minded approaches and discourse. It just so happens that most of their leaders used to be frequent participants in our program.” By taking initiative to create a dialogue between leaders in civil society and religious leaders, panelists agreed, democrats will be able to expand their audience and bring other community stakeholders to the table.

Integrating Democratic Values with Traditional Culture and National Identity

Increasingly, governments are imposing funding restrictions on non-profit organizations under the guise of countering terrorism and money laundering. Although many governments use these laws as excuses to suppress dissenting voices, these provisions stem to some extent from global requirements crafted by the Financial Action Task Force (FATF), an international policy-making body established by the G-7 in 1989 to combat money laundering. The organization issues financial regulations and enforces compliance with public warnings to countries failing to meet these requirements, affecting governments’ financial reputation and access to markets.

In its original guidelines, the FATF indicated that non-profits are susceptible to money laundering and terrorist funding. This language accounted for the increased scrutiny and financial regulation of CSOs, explained workshop panelists. Following coordinated action taken by the Non-Profit Organization Committee of the FATF, the FATF revised this language to recommend a more nuanced approach to assessing non-profit funding. The revised guidelines recommended that countries should conduct a non-profit risk assessment, should review its laws to mitigate these risks, and should consult with non-profit organizations to educate them about potential terrorist financing risks. However, compliance with these recommendations is in- consistent and sometimes results in onerous restrictions on civic space.

In order to improve regulations for non-profit organizations, participants identified opportunities in which non-profits can influence international regulations on Anti-Money Laundering and Combating Terrorism (AML/ CFT). First, participants agreed it is necessary to make a coordinated effort to edu- cate all non-profits about the regulations and how they can be changed. The more voices that express discontent with funding restrictions stemming from the FATF, the more successful these efforts will be. Under Recommendation #8 of the FATF guidelines, governments are required to reach out to non-profit organizations for risk-based assessments, which is a good opportunity for non-profits to initiate a dialogue. Additionally, when countries are up for evaluation, non-profits have the chance to make their case at the international level. However, noted speakers, these efforts take months of planning, so non-profit leaders must work together to create coordinated and effective messaging.

Shadowed by Anti-Money Laundering and Countering Terrorism: How Can Civil Society Push Back Restrictions?
The mandate of the United Nations Special Rapporteur for freedom of assembly and association (FOAA) serves as a critical connection point between civil society and the United Nations (UN). The newly appointed UNSR, Clément Voule of Togo, held a workshop to solicit strategic input from civil society voices on how best to serve the human rights community. The discussion identified three critical areas for improving civil society space—creating additional opportunities for country visits, streamlining the petitions to the UNSR, and strengthening communication channels between civil society and the UN.

One of the most effective tools the UNSR has access to is country visits where he can meet with government and civil society representatives. Participants agreed that lobbying for a UNSR visit was one of the best advocacy strategies for attracting global and national exposure. However, the UNSR's limited time and financial resources are often overwhelmed with hundreds of requests for visits. It would therefore be helpful if civil society could coordinate their requests among themselves to ensure that his visits serve broader regional and strategic goals. Although representatives of civil society have high expectations for the mandate, participants acknowledged that they need to also take initiative and be more proactive to help the UNSR improve the state of FOAA around the world.

Civil society can further help by providing the UNSR with broader updates on the state of civic space in their respective countries and by providing him with contact information for key people and organizations. Additionally, after the country visit, civil society has the ability to monitor reform processes—something that is difficult for the UNSR to do alone. Ultimately, participants agreed that while the mandate’s role is to bring the people closer to the UN, it is civil society’s advocacy and support for the mandate that will allow the new UNSR to make a difference. To aid in strengthening the mandate, the Civic Space Initiative—an initiative by Article 19, CIVICUS: World Alliance for Citizen Participation, the International Center for Not-for-Profit Law, and the World Movement for Democracy—will continue to facilitate consultations between the UNSR and civil society, as it has in the past.

SHAPING AN AGENDA FOR PROTECTING FREEDOM OF PEACEFUL ASSEMBLY AND ASSOCIATION

A panel of digital media and journalism experts discussed how activists can take back the Internet as a forum for democratic engagement, rather than allowing the space to be overtaken by censorship and disinformation. The speakers emphasized that in the context of online security, things will get worse before they get better. However, they also provided a sense of hope as they discussed global initiatives “to take back the Internet.”

The discussion also focused upon the challenge of countering disinformation and the seeming impossibility of halting the spread of fake news—especially for those who aren’t tech experts. “If you don’t know what to believe, then the person with the loudest megaphone wins,” remarked Maria Ressa, CEO of Rappler, a Filipino news site. Although panelists agreed that engagement of social media platforms by cyber activists and governments is necessary to stop the flow of false information, typical members of civil society still have a role to play. “You can’t discount people learning. Once they know that they’re being manipulated, you can take strides forward.” Providing media literacy training and information campaigns are steps that all members of civil society can take to help fight the war against disinformation.

RECLAIMING THE INTERNET FOR DEMOCRACY

Throughout the discussion, panelists underscored that access to an open Internet should be taken more seriously by the international community. Ron Deibert, director of CitizenLab, stressed that “human rights are not an afterthought when it comes to cybersecurity—they should be the foundation.” - Ron Deibert

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HEALTHY DEMOCRACIES REQUIRE AN INFORMED CITIZENRY. IN RECENT YEARS, HOWEVER, TARGETED DISINFORMATION CAMPAIGNS DIRECTED BY HOSTILE DOMESTIC AND FOREIGN ACTORS HAVE INCREASED SHARPLY AND ARE DAMAGING EVEN THE MOST ESTABLISHED DEMOCRACIES. THE BEACON PROJECT, CARRIED OUT BY THE INTERNATIONAL REPUBLICAN INSTITUTE (IRI), COUNTERS THESE CAMPAIGNS BY IDENTIFYING AND EXPOSING FALSE NARRATIVES; PINPOINTING GAPS IN DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE THAT ARE EXPLOITED THROUGH DISINFORMATION; AND HELPING SPUR A COORDINATED RESPONSE. IN THIS WORKSHOP, SPEAKERS OUTLINED HOW LESSONS FROM THE BEACON PROJECT CAN HELP POLITICAL ACTORS IN DEMOCRACIES RESPOND TO DISINFORMATION CAMPAIGNS AND HOW THOSE ACTORS CAN BEST COLLABORATE WITH CIVIL SOCIETY IN DOING SO.

ONE WORKSHOP PARTICIPANT EXPLAINED THAT, ALTHOUGH DISINFORMATION CAMPAIGNS ARE BECOMING INCREASINGLY COMPLEX, IT IS STILL POSSIBLE TO EXPOSE FALSE NARRATIVES BY USING TRADITIONAL LEGAL METHODS. THE PARTICIPANT DETAILED HOW THEY USED LEGAL PATHWAYS TO ACCESS EMAILS BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT OF SOUTH AFRICA AND A PUBLIC RELATIONS COMPANY IN ORDER TO EXPOSE A GOVERNMENT-FUNDED DISINFORMATION CAMPAIGN. THOSE EMAILS REVEALED THAT THE PUBLIC RELATIONS FIRM HAD CREATED 13 FAKE NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS AND OVER 80,000 FAKE FACEBOOK AND TWITTER PROFILES TO SPREAD GOVERNMENT PROPAGANDA.

OTHER SPEAKERS EMPHASIZED THAT DEMOCRATS, ESPECIALLY DEMOCRATS IN THE “WEST,” MUST SET AN EXAMPLE SO THAT THE IDEALS OF DEMOCRACY CANNOT BE AS EASILY EXPLOITED IN DISINFORMATION CAMPAIGNS. “DEMOCRACY CREATES GREAT EXPECTATIONS AND MUST DELIVER GREAT RESULTS.”

ONE WORKSHOP PARTICIPANT EXPLAINED THAT, ALTHOUGH DISINFORMATION CAMPAIGNS ARE BECOMING INCREASINGLY COMPLEX, IT IS STILL POSSIBLE TO EXPOSE FALSE NARRATIVES BY USING TRADITIONAL LEGAL METHODS. THE PARTICIPANT DETAILED HOW THEY USED LEGAL PATHWAYS TO ACCESS EMAILS BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT OF SOUTH AFRICA AND A PUBLIC RELATIONS COMPANY IN ORDER TO EXPOSE A GOVERNMENT-FUNDED DISINFORMATION CAMPAIGN. THOSE EMAILS REVEALED THAT THE PUBLIC RELATIONS FIRM HAD CREATED 13 FAKE NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS AND OVER 80,000 FAKE FACEBOOK AND TWITTER PROFILES TO SPREAD GOVERNMENT PROPAGANDA.

OTHER SPEAKERS EMPHASIZED THAT DEMOCRATS, ESPECIALLY DEMOCRATS IN THE “WEST,” MUST SET AN EXAMPLE SO THAT THE IDEALS OF DEMOCRACY CANNOT BE AS EASILY EXPLOITED IN DISINFORMATION CAMPAIGNS. “DEMOCRACY CREATES GREAT EXPECTATIONS AND MUST DELIVER GREAT RESULTS.”

NEW VOICES AND NEW ENERGY FOR DEMOCRATIC RENEWAL

WHEN THE RISE OF AUTHORITARIANISM AROUND THE WORLD, MANY DEMOCRATS HAVE EXPRESSED FEAR THAT YOUTH ARE NOT COMMITTED TO FIGHTING FOR THE PRINCIPLES OF DEMOCRACY. THIS PANEL OF YOUNG LEADERS ATTEMPTED TO ANSWER ONE QUESTION: ARE YOUTH TRULY APATHETIC, AND IF SO, WHAT CAN BE DONE TO CHANGE THESE ATTITUDES? OF COURSE, BEGIN PANELISTS, THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF YOUTH PARTICIPATION WILL DIFFER GREATLY BY REGION, AND EVEN BY COUNTRY. HOWEVER, “YOUTH—AND I THINK THIS IS SOMETHING THAT GOES BEYOND BORDERS—FEEL THAT POLITICS, DEMOCRACY, AND DECISION MAKING IS COMPLETELY ALIEN TO THEM, AND THAT IT IS SOMETHING RESERVED FOR OLDER, MORE POWERFUL, AND MORE WEALTHY PEOPLE,” REMARKED JATZEL ROMAN, GENERAL COORDINATOR FOR THE LATIN AMERICAN YOUTH NETWORK FOR DEMOCRACY.

IN LATIN AMERICA, YOUTH HAVE DISPLAYED NOT JUST A LACK OF INTEREST IN DEMOCRACY, BUT ALMOST A SENSE OF CONTEMPT FOR IT. GIVN THE FAILURE OF MANY “DEMOCRATIC” GOVERNMENTS IN THE REGION TO DELIVER THE RESULTS YOUTH EXPECTED, IT IS UNDERSTANDABLE WHY PEOPLE HAVE BEGUN TO LOSE FAITH IN DEMOCRACY. COMBATING THIS SENSE OF APATHY, HE STATED, IS OF THE UtMOST IMPORTANCE. “AS RONALD REAGAN ONCE SAID, ‘FREEDOM IS NEVER MORE THAN ONE GENERATION AWAY FROM EXTINCTION.’” IF DEMOCRATS WANT TO CREATE SUSTAINABLE DEMOCRATIC CHANGE WITHIN THEIR COUNTRIES, THEY MUST PLACE A FOCUS ON BOLDING YOUTH ENGAGEMENT IN CIVIC AND POLITICAL SPACES.

TO COMBAT YOUTH APATHY TOWARDS DEMOCRACY, ELECTORAL AND CAMPAGN REFORMS WOULD HELP TO MAKE AN IMPORTANT DIFFERENCE, PANELISTS AGREED. PARTISANS, AND GOVERNMENT INSTITUTIONS PLAY A SIGNIFICANT ROLE IN FOSTERING DEMOCRACIES—HOWEVER, SUBSTANTIAL BARRIERS TO PARTICIPATION FOR YOUTH DISCOURAGE THEM FROM ENGAGING WITH POLITICAL BODIES. IN BOTH IRAQ AND NIGERIA, NOTED KADHIM MOHSIN OF THE NISSAN CENTER FOR DEMOCRATIC AWARENESS AND RINSO ABOILA OF THE NIGERIAN ALL PROGRESSIVE CONGRESS, EVEN IF YOUTH HAVE AN INTEREST IN POLITICS, THE FINANCIAL COSTS OF RUNNING FOR OFFICE MAKE POLITICAL ENGAGEMENT DIFFICULT FOR ALL BUT THE WEALTHIEST. ADDITIONALLY, AGE LIMITS IN PARLIAMENTARY INSTITUTIONS ENSURE THAT YOUTH ARE EXCLUDED FROM THE DECISION-MAKING PROCESS.

IN NIGERIA, EMPHASIZED ABOILA, SHE HAS SEEN THE INCREDIBLE POWER YOUTH HOLD IF GIVEN THE CHANCE TO ENGAGE MEANINGFULLY WITH THEIR REPRESENTATIVE INSTITUTIONS. IN 2015, A YOUTH-LED CAMPAIGN HELPED TO DEFEAT AN INCUMBENT IN PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS FOR THE FIRST TIME IN NIGERIA’S HISTORY. SHOWING YOUTH THAT THEY CAN HAVE AN IMPACT WITHIN政治 INSTITUTIONS REVITALIZED THEIR INTEREST IN DEMOCRATIC PROCESSES. SINCE THAT ELECTION, YOUTH HAVE BECOME MORE FAR AS POLITICAL SPOKESPERSONS, EVIDENCED IN THE POPULARITY OF THE WNOTOS/YOUNGTOFAR CAMPAIGN—A SUCCESSFUL INITIATIVE TO REDUCE THE AGE LIMIT FOR RUNNING FOR ELECTED OFFICE IN NIGERIA. IF THERE ARE EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUTH TO RUN FOR OFFICE, IT WILL HELP TO RENEW THEIR INTEREST IN DEMOCRATIC PROCESSES, PANELISTS AGREED.
In a rapidly-evolving world, young people have developed and adopted mechanisms for engaging in political processes that challenge the frequent recourse to old-fashioned, top-down frameworks, which benefit only a few. It's perceived that youth are not fully committed to fighting for democracy and its ideals. Workshop participants discussed the ways young people are engaging in politics and reinforced the need for youth-based initiatives and movements.

One participant noted that in Sri Lanka, a country plagued by conflict for over 30 years, youth struggled to identify their role in a society fractured by ethnic and political division. In order to combat this polarization, members of civil society created “friendship clubs” where young people had the opportunity to discuss social and political issues in a constructive environment. To engage youth further in democratic processes it is instrumental to encourage the growth of youth networks and provide civic education, participants agreed. However, these programs require funding, and members of civil society should begin presenting the issue of youth engagement as a long-term investment in encouraging stable societies to donors, others noted.

Throughout the conversation, participants also argued that perhaps youth are not “doing democracy wrong,” and that they are just doing democracy differently. In an age where globalization and new technologies have revolutionized how people interact with each other and with democratic institutions, youth are finding new avenues to engage. “Democracy is a set of values and principles. The structures may change, but the principles are the same. There are different ways of influencing the spaces, and it’s okay for youth to try and fail with alternatives,” noted one participant.

Expanding Space for the Next Generation: Strengthening Political Participation Mechanisms

The growing threat to democracy around the world requires a concerted response from different sectors of society to identify areas of collaboration and address issues surrounding governance and security. Although often unacknowledged in democratic discussions, the private sector plays an important role in shaping sustainable economic and democratic development. The workshop discussion focused on one central question: how can collaboration between the private sector and civil society be encouraged to address cross-cutting challenges facing countries?

By far, the largest barrier to cooperation between business and civil society has been mistrust between the two sectors, speakers began. However, several recent civil society initiatives and the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights have made significant steps towards helping these sectors understand the value in one another. In Africa, remarked one participant, rapidly-changing mindsets have evidenced themselves in agreements like the Ouagadougou Declaration, the outcome of an event organized by the World Movement for Democracy, Center for International Private Enterprise (CIPE), and US Chamber of Commerce where 400 members representing 10 different countries came together to identify areas of collaboration between sectors for strengthening democratic governance.

Another participant highlighted the importance of enforcing international and regional norms, noting: “Communities are more empowered because they know their rights; the business sector is more aware of the international framework related to rights that govern their actions; and the public sector knows more about these issues and is deciding in favor of protecting rights.” Now that businesses are aware of legal limitations, they are less likely to be at odds with the work of civil society. In fact, civil society can play an important role in encouraging discussions between vulnerable communities and businesses. With heightened mutual understanding, business; civil society, and government will have the opportunity to work together to build a stable environment for steady and long-term business growth, as well as a prosperous and free society.

To strengthen these cross-sector partnerships, the World Movement’s Promoting Inclusive Governance program will continue to engage the three sectors by convening national dialogues in Kenya and Nigeria in late 2018.

Exploring the Voice of Business in Strengthening Democratic Governance
From Ghana, to Pakistan, to Argentina, social media movements in the last year have mobilized women to combat sexual harassment, speak out about violence against women, and run for political office in historic numbers. Despite the incredible momentum, systematic barriers, often reinforced by religious, educational, and cultural institutions, still limit the participation and potential of many young women in political processes. In this workshop, participants leveraged intergenerational experiences to help frame a global response to boost participation of women in political and civic spaces.

In order to change regressive stereotypes about women in many societies, one speaker suggested engaging media to increase the representation of academic women on TV and in the news. Unlike the inner-workings of the government, TV reaches almost every household in Haiti, she remarked. However, women represented on TV are not consulted on serious matters or considered to be experts. Proponents of gender equality need to work with media outlets to convey the reality that women are equals and to set an example for the rest of the populous, participants agreed.

Another participant stated that one way to ensure women have a seat at the table is to promote quota requirements in legislative bodies. While many agreed that quota systems are generally beneficial, they also emphasized that quotas do not have a direct impact on the cultural practices that inhibit women’s participation in the first place. On one matter, almost all participants agreed: the most important way of providing young women access to political spaces is by fostering intergenerational mentorship. Women who have achieved success or positions of authority should initiate mentorship with aspiring young leaders to prepare them for the challenges that lie ahead. To encourage the involvement of young women in mentorship and community engagement in Africa, the YoungStars Foundation of Nigeria hosted a “Female and More” symposium on August 31-September 1, 2018 in Lagos, Nigeria.

Breaking Barriers: Empowering Young Women’s Political Leadership

Innovative Partnerships

In an era where the public is increasingly losing trust in democracy, artistic expression and innovative communication are important tools for reaching audiences with little interest in democratic processes. Throughout the Assembly, participants highlighted strategies to engage new actors in understanding the values of democracy.
**Activism + Art = Artivism for Deepening Democratic Culture**

Artistic expression is an important tool for reaching audiences with little interest in democratic processes. Through “artivism,” artists can highlight sentiments of democracy and address the repression of individuality and free-thinking that authoritarians impose. Through art, activists are better able to convey sentiments and emotions that words often cannot.

Recognizing the transformative potential of art as a form of protest, speakers showcased the importance of civil society providing these opportunities for local communities.

During the second half of the workshop, participants collaborated on a piece of art that represented global solidarity for democracy. The artwork comprising of three panels, which reads from left to right, begins with images of cocoons and individual hands raised in resistance. As the painting continues, the hands join together, representing global solidarity. As this happens, the cocoons bloom into butterflies. The painting, a fitting product of a gathering such as the Ninth Global Assembly where participants are able to build solidarity and enact change together, are now displayed at Dakar City’s Communal Building allowing participants to have left a positive mark on the city for years to come.

**Lightning Talk: Defending Digital Information Space**

I n a lightning talk on “Defending Digital Information Space,” Daniel Milo, Senior Research Fellow at the GLOBSEC Policy Institute, discussed how GLOBSEC managed to reach youth in Slovakia with messages about disinformation by utilizing the capabilities of two popular YouTube stars rather than traditional methods.

The two young Internet celebrities were asked to begin spreading false information about each other in an online “war.” Their respective supporters quickly joined in without thinking to fact-check any of the information or consider alternative narratives. In the end, the two YouTubers released a video together announcing that their feud was fake and urging their viewers to always fact-check their information and be wary of disinformation on social media.

“With the level of global distrust towards media and NGOs hitting record numbers, you must look for unorthodox communicators—YouTubers, online celebrities, pop stars, actors—whatever works for you in your context, and target group.”

- Daniel Milo
Dear Participants in the World Movement for Democracy Ninth Congress,

I am writing to express my congratulations to your historic congress. As you all know, we had our first democratic local and municipal elections on Sunday, and the official preliminary results will be announced tomorrow. It is predicted that our party, Ennahdha, will come in first and that our ally Nidaa Tounes will come in second. We can only fathom the victory, however, only for the Tunisian people and our nascent Tunisian democracy. The task of building coalitions at the local level begins now in earnest, and this is vital for the success of the democratic transition in Tunisia, and it is the first time in the Arab world that elections are not enough to sustain democracy. Ennahdha cannot govern alone, and neither can Nidaa Tounes. Our economy is not worse than before, but it is not faring any better either; unemployment remains high at about 15 or 16 percent overall, and more than 35 percent among young people, most of whom are university graduates.

Rachid Ghanouchi is co-founder and president of the Ennahdha party in Tunisia. A leading political theorist on Islam, pluralism, and democracy, he spent twenty-two years in exile before returning to Tunisia in 2011 to take part in the country’s historic democratic elections. His speech was published by the Journal of Democracy, which may be found online. Ghanouchi spent twenty-two years in exile before returning to Tunisia in 2011 to take part in the country’s historic democratic elections. His speech was published by the Journal of Democracy, which may be found online.

Our country is not worse than before, but it is not faring any better either; unemployment remains high at about 15 or 16 percent overall, and more than 35 percent among young people, most of whom are university graduates. For us, these municipal elections are a landmark moment in Tunisia's history and the realization of the promises of the Arab Spring. The strengthening of local authorities will allow the local and central government to respond to the vital needs and huge differences that exist between all parties, NGOs and religious leaders and institutions. Challenges and threats must be met through constant dialogue between all parties, NGOs, religious leaders and institutions. The threat of terrorism, which has touched Tunisia, its citizens, its armed forces, and also its visitors and guests, is a threat we are facing together. We must strengthen our resilience and fight terrorism with all its aspects. Groups such as ISIS and al-Qaeda have exploited the Arab world's economic challenges and political problems to present themselves as an alternative. To succeed in facing these problems, we need to address all of its aspects. Groups such as ISIS and al-Qaeda have exploited the Arab world's economic challenges and political problems to present themselves as an alternative. We must strengthen our resilience and fight terrorism with all its aspects. Groups such as ISIS and al-Qaeda have exploited the Arab world's economic challenges and political problems to present themselves as an alternative. To succeed in facing these problems, we need to address all of its aspects. We must strengthen our resilience and fight terrorism with all its aspects.
The solution to extremism is more freedom (not less), more democracy (not less), more debate and dialogue, and more moderate religious teachings that confront this extremist ideology.

While the world’s leaders focus on combating the tide of violent extremism through heightened security and military acts, little more than lip service has been paid to the deradicalization or reintegration of the young people who comprise the greatest pool for terrorist recruitment.

If we look at all the verses of the Koran holistically to underline key themes, it becomes clear that the holy text emphasizes the idea that God created mankind with at least one distinguishing feature—the freedom of choice. The Koran makes clear that, if God so wished, He could have created all of mankind in the same mold, with similar likenesses and speaking a common language. Instead, the Koran stresses that God chose to introduce diversity to the human race, underscoring racial, ethnic, and religious groups, and to endow all of us with choice in crafting our lives and the values and belief systems on which to base them. Thus, pluralism and differences within Islam and between religions were intended to be universal and natural laws of the human species that cannot be subverted or obliterated by any individual or group; any attempt to do so goes against the very nature of creation.

Why did the Prophet Muhammed include Jews, Christians, and non-Muslims as members of the first Muslim society of Medina and guarantee their protection, if pluralism is not accepted in Islam? Why is it that the oldest churches and synagogues in the world are found, to this day, in Muslim countries? If Islam did not protect pluralism and ensure the continued survival of these minorities and their places of worship, groups such as ISIS would not have found minorities to persecute nor churches and temples to destroy in the first place.

Imams, through their weekly sermons at Friday prayer services and other religious services throughout the week, are the first and most prominent spokesmen for religious thought and understanding in local communities. In Tunisia, for example, each of the 5,300 mosques in the country serves an average of 500 persons for Friday prayer services (the largest weekly congregation), making this an optimal platform for promoting to a broad and religiously observant audience a compelling and tolerant religious vision, and for combating extremist ideologies, as well as strengthening democratic values and respect for human rights.

Therefore, religion and democracy must work together to solve the problems of the world and of our society. I appeal to you, leaders of democracy, to include religious and religious actors and institutions in all your efforts and programs.

Finally, we cannot forget the importance of economic development and growth—these are key to having a stable and strong democratic state. Guaranteeing free elections and freedom is not sufficient. A strong state must ensure economic and social inclusion, enabling people to enjoy opportunities, prosperity, and security. People must feel that the state protects their rights, serves their interests, protects their resources, and works for the good of all or group: any attempt to do so goes against the very nature of creation.

Our second goal and priority is strengthening democratic culture and institutions: we are working on civic-education, voter-registration, and citizenship initiatives across the country. I hope we can count on your support in this critical area.

I sincerely apologize for not being with you, but I am sure you will understand when I tell you that the work of democracy requires me to be here in Tunis, rather than with you in Dakar.
The Democracy Lounge was an informal space for participants to connect and form strategic partnerships at the Assembly. In addition to facilitating informal networking, the Democracy Lounge featured four “democracy clinics” to help activists and civil society members troubleshoot potential problems in their line of work and learn more about innovative strategies being employed around the world.

**Enhancing Digital Security for Online Activists**

The digital revolution has transformed the world’s ability to interact with others and access information. Today, democracy activists conduct large parts of their work online, using digital media and other outlets that enable new forms of mass advocacy. However, this also makes activists vulnerable to digital surveillance and attacks. The Digital Security Clinic, hosted by DefendDefenders, offered participants the chance to identify their digital security vulnerabilities and provided guidance on how to proactively protect themselves and their devices.

**Discovering the State of Civil Society Through “Democracy Dialogues”**

The CIVICUS 2018 State of Civil Society Report discusses 10 key trends affecting civil society, including political polarization and divided societies. During the CIVICUS Democracy Dialogues, participants had the opportunity to discuss the current challenges facing democracy and civic space in different regions and to collaborate with other activists to identify solutions. CIVICUS is a global alliance of civil society organizations and activists dedicated to strengthening citizen action and civil society throughout the world.

**Developing Deeper Understandings of Democracy with Democracy Cake**

What are “ingredients” that are essential to building and sustaining a democracy? With the Rafto Foundation for Human Rights’ “Democracy Cake” board game, participants had the opportunity to learn hands-on what ingredients are necessary for building and nourishing a democracy. The Rafto Foundation for Human Rights is an organization dedicated to the global promotion of human rights. It funds and facilitates projects, and offers human rights education to local and international audiences.

**Sustaining Resources for NGOs**

In today’s challenging economic and political environments, the Center for Private and International Enterprise (CIPE) posits that nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) may become ineffective if they are forced to tailor initiatives around donor priorities. In CIPE’s Building Sustainable NGOs Clinic, participants had the opportunity to build a “portfolio” to identify different funding sources that would ease donor-dependence and encourage local stakeholder engagement.
Keur Gui Crew is a widely popular, socially-conscious rap group that helped found the Y’en a Marre movement in 2011, a grassroots campaign against injustice and inequality. Originally a response to local power outages, the nascent protest movement went on to mobilize against the controversial bid by Senegalese president Abdoulaye Wade to remain in office for a third term. The Y’en a Marre movement continues to help mobilize Senegalese citizens, civil society organizations, and youth to engage in political processes and dialogues.

Soirée à Dakar
The Soirée à Dakar was hosted by the City of Dakar, and it featured a concert of West African rappers who use music as a medium to inspire their audiences to get involved in political processes and civil society.

Performers
Keur Gui Crew (Senegal)
Keur Gui Crew is a widely popular, socially-conscious rap group that helped found the Y’en a Marre movement in 2011, a grassroots campaign against injustice and inequality. Originally a response to local power outages, the nascent protest movement went on to mobilize against the controversial bid by Senegalese president Abdoulaye Wade to remain in office for a third term. The Y’en a Marre movement continues to help mobilize Senegalese citizens, civil society organizations, and youth to engage in political processes and dialogues.

EloM 20ce (Togo)
EloM 20ce is an activist and Pan African rapper from Togo. He created the practice of ‘Arcticism,’ an activity that promotes political participation through artistic mediums. Through his Arcticism, EloM 20ce facilitates debates and dialogue among citizens to challenge restrictions on freedom of expression and promotes youth development.

Killa Ace (The Gambia)
Ali Cham, also known as Killa Ace, is a rapper from The Gambia and founder of the movement, Team Gom sa bopa (Believe in Yourself). It is a social-media driven movement dedicated to raising social and political awareness among young people. Killa Ace was also the host of ‘The Cypher,’ a weekly broadcast that encouraged youth to express their socio-cultural and political views through rap and showcased their talent on air.
Join the Movement

Through the World Movement for Democracy, our participants have the ability to engage with others facing similar challenges, build solidarity within regional and global networks, and collaborate on innovative approaches. We welcome any organization or individual who can contribute to and benefit from this network. Make sure to keep up with our network’s activities by following us on Twitter and Facebook.

Connect with other participants by checking out our interactive participant directory, which includes profiles of individuals, networks, and organizations associated with the World Movement for Democracy. Users can identify and connect with fellow activists through the directory when searching by topics, countries, and regions.

To stay up to date with the latest democracy developments, sign up for our bi-monthly newsletter, DemocracyNews. We also welcome newsletter contribution submissions—submit statements, research, reports, information on your projects, and advocacy efforts.

Express solidarity with political prisoners through the Set Them Free Campaign and commit to sharing DemocracyAlerts, which spotlight at-risk activists in our network who face violence and arrests as they advocate for democracy in their countries. Sign up here!

Participants

Democracy activists, practitioners, and scholars from every region of the world gathered in Dakar, Senegal 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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Partners West Africa - Senegal works with a network of global partners and change leaders to strengthen democratic institutions, promote sustainable development, and resolve conflict throughout the region. The team leads several projects that prevent terrorism, support capacity-building, promote access to justice, foster social entrepreneurship, and engage civil society in peace and governance.

La Rencontre Africaine pour la Défense des Droits de l’Homme (RADDHO)

Since 1990, RADDHO has promoted, protected, and defended human rights in Senegal and in Africa. The organization facilitates meetings on human rights issues, conducts field investigations of human rights abuses, and participates in electoral monitoring.

ARTICLE 19 - Senegal

ARTICLE 19 works regionally and internationally to close the implementation gap between law and practice. They promote media freedom, increase access to information, protect journalists and human rights defenders, fight the shrinking of civic space, and place human rights at the heart of developing digital spaces.

Gorée Institute

The Gorée Institute Center for Democracy, Development, and Culture in Africa was founded in 1992. It is a Pan-African civil society organization, whose mission is to support peacebuilding initiatives, electoral reform, and governance.

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THE WORLD MOVEMENT FOR DEMOCRACY THANKS THE FOLLOWING FOR THEIR GENEROUS SUPPORT

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