

# GLOBAL SUMMIT FOR ELECTORAL DEMOCRACY

## Main Concurrences and Proposals for the future of our Democracies

With the double purpose of analysing in the broadest and deepest possible manner the new risks and challenges that representative democracies face nowadays and identifying proposals and initiatives that would allow to face them in the most effective way, a wide range of international and regional organisations, associations of electoral management bodies, civil society organisations, and think tanks from around the world joined efforts in May 2022 to call for a Global Summit for Electoral Democracy.

For the Summit to achieve its objectives, it was deemed indispensable that it would encourage a global process of reflection, exchange, and proposal focused on discussing the relevance of the actions to preserve the democratic rules, institutions and values, and, especially, the actions to uphold the independence, autonomy and credibility of electoral management bodies.

There were forums in Africa, the Americas, Asia, Europe, and the Middle East (Arab World) between June and August to precede the Global Summit for Electoral Democracy that took place from 20 to 22 September this year, hosted by the National Electoral Institute of Mexico.

In the course of the Summit, in addition to presenting the main findings and proposals of the previous forums, the process of reflection was completed with the views and proposals of distinguished representatives of institutions of the international community and academicians that stand out for promoting and defending democracy.

Among the principal contributions from this unprecedented effort, and subject to the release of further details shortly, the following can be highlighted:

1. Democracy is valued in all regions of the world as the form of government and social coexistence that protects individual and collective liberties and rights, by subjecting the State apparatus to human dignity through the abidance to the rule of law as the fundamental tool.
2. The voices heard during the Global Summit agree that the problems of democracy can only be solved through more and better democracy. While questions are raised against democratic regimes because they have not clearly and effectively articulated the ideological currents and addressed the prevailing social needs and the serious structural problems currently faced, democracy continues to be the best bet contemporary societies can make.
3. The persistence and worsening of many structural problems have resulted in the loss of confidence on democratic institutions, which has paved the way for political forces and leaderships with strong authoritarian and populist inclinations.
4. The tendencies towards the concentration of power, at the expense of its separation and equilibrium, have the perverse effect of shrinking or suppressing spaces required for the public, critical, and informed debate, and for the full exercise of fundamental rights and freedoms, like those of association and expression. Additionally, they foster the attempts to control or seize autonomous institutions that are indispensable for the effective accountability of government performance. Both risks are present in representative democracies around the world to a greater

or lesser degree.

5. There is wide consensus on the need to face these challenges collectively and coordinately by joining the efforts of the widest range of institutions, organisations and sectors who share democratic ideals and values, and who also encourage at their own fields of action. That requires greater democracy, better institutions, and empowered citizens.
6. The impartiality and independence of electoral management bodies, and the broadest guarantees for the exercise of political rights and the integrity of electoral processes, are key elements for the preservation and strengthening of the democratic order.
7. Since some undertakings to breach their independence and impartiality of electoral management bodies are noticeable, there is an agreement in the need to build support networks to uphold electoral integrity, curb and denounce the harassment against electoral authorities and counter the doubting of the legitimacy of elections built using narratives of fraud. Creating safe and effective spaces for dialogue to revert the use of polarisation as political strategy is also essential.
8. There is consensus in the need to further civic and democratic education. Free and fair elections are not being partnered with a systematic and vigorous effort of democratic education. Hence, they are especially important for rescuing democratic values, institutions and practices that can relate with the 21st century attitudes, values, and skills.
9. Violence, in its many forms and expressions, looms as a threat to democracy and, in some regions, the presence of organized crime is a disruptive factor that threatens civil liberties and the free exercise of political rights. It is urgent to make a common front against this challenge.
10. While efforts to promote gender equality are acknowledged, there is still a need to further the political participation and representation of women, as well as preventing, curbing, and eradicating gender-based political violence. Even though there have been formal advancements in the matter, real asymmetries between men and women continue to exist in the public and private spheres due to cultural inertias.
11. Fake news and disinformation campaign have a great disruptive capacity that erodes democratic coexistence and complicates the performance of electoral authorities and guarantors of electoral integrity. Hence the importance of adopting pre-emptive and proactive strategies, as well as re-building a civic space with measures that both inform and hold accountable the actors.
12. Contemporary society continues to be more plural and diverse. Democratic systems ought to be as inclusive as possible and guarantee the political rights of all social groups (women, youth, indigenous peoples, persons with disabilities, persons with diverse gender identity, and others).
13. All institutions organising the Global Summit for Electoral Democracy agree in the importance of continuing this reflection, analysis, and proposal effort for the strengthening of electoral democracy, and commit to conduct the necessary consultations and arrangements to accomplish it.

Mexico City, 20–22 September 2022

