

GLOBAL DEMOCRACY COALITION

VIEWS ON CONTINUATION OF THE SUMMIT FOR DEMOCRACY

SUMMARY REPORT WITH OBSERVATIONS AND
RECOMMENDATIONS



**GLOBAL
DEMOCRACY
COALITION**



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VOTING RIGHTS

**LIBERATION
MOVEMENT**

EQUALITY

**TEAR US DOWN
WE RISE**

*They Turned
Out to Vote in
Wisconsin
During a
Health
Crisis.
Here's
Why.*

ARE HUMAN RIGHTS

**FIGHT FOR THE SCHOOL'S
STUDENTS DESERVE**

**WE ARE ALL
RELATED**

**P
A
R
K**

SPEED
LIMIT
25
P
EARLY
BIRD
\$8

**RESPOND.
RESTORE.
RENEW.**

ABOUT THE GLOBAL DEMOCRACY COALITION

The [Global Democracy Coalition](#) (GDC) was formed in October 2021, ahead of the first Summit for Democracy, as a platform for engagement with the Summit by civil society organizations and other stakeholders. The GDC has evolved into a multi-stakeholder alliance, with more than 100 democracy organizations worldwide. It provides a space for collaboration, knowledge exchange, experience-sharing, and advocacy on democracy around the Summits for Democracy and the global democracy agenda.





Photo by Ronan Furuta via unsplash

ABOUT THE REPORT

In November 2022, the Global Democracy Coalition (GDC) facilitated a series of focus group discussions (FGDs) to gather GDC members' reflections and recommendations for the second Summit for Democracy, scheduled for 29–30 March 2023. That effort culminated in a **report** with recommendations. This new report builds upon the previous one by sharing reflections and options for a post-Summit process. It distils the views of GDC members, solicited through an online survey, five online FGDs, and two brainstorming sessions held during the month of February 2023.

In total, 48 members of the GDC took the online survey, giving their views on the Summit for Democracy and recommendations for its future. The GDC conducted the five online FGDs the week before the GDC Forum 2023 in late February 2023, and 12 representatives from 12 GDC members participated. Dozens of attendees took part in the two brainstorming sessions, which were conducted at the GDC Forum, hosted jointly in Brussels and Washington, D.C., on 28 February and 1 March 2023.

With the next Summit for Democracy taking place at the end of March 2023, the GDC hopes that the recommendations outlined below will provide Summit planners with a menu of actionable ideas and suggestions that encourage and generate meaningful participation by civil society and other stakeholders. If taken up by Summit planners, the recommendations below can help to capture what has been achieved by the process to date, as well as addressing existing gaps, incorporating valuable ideas for the way forward and generating the essential momentum necessary to achieve meaningful outcomes. The specific recommendations outlined below rose to prominence over the course of this initiative. They may not all represent the views of all partner organizations in the GDC and should therefore be read as a menu of proposed suggestions, rather than a strict checklist.

It should be noted that the views captured in this report were from February 2023, before the Summit for Democracy agenda had been finalized. The final second Summit programme addresses a number of the issues raised in the November 2022 report, such as civil society inclusion in the Summit agenda and bridging links between civil society and official Summit activities. The GDC thanks the Summit organizers for their receptivity to take on many of the recommendations made for the second Summit.



GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

Recurrent themes that endure from the November 2022 report include: greater transparency and inclusion in the Summit processes; equal partnership with civil society; the formalization and funding of cohorts; development of an official monitoring mechanism to strengthen the commitment process; greater inclusion—particularly for civil society organizations (CSOs) from non-participating countries; and closer linkages to and collaboration/coordination with existing resources and initiatives.

A clear difference exists between the tone of those responses derived from the survey and those provided by participants in the FGDs and the brainstorming sessions. A number of participants shared a sense of unmet expectations regarding communications, transparency, limited outcomes and the partially unfulfilled role that CSOs see themselves as having in the Summit for Democracy process.

However, some—in particular, dissident groups and exile non-governmental organizations (NGOs), which often feel excluded from such global processes—considered that the Summit for Democracy and the United States Administration had helped to elevate their organizations and given them a space at the table, particularly through the series of US Government thematic consultations with civil society. They considered these consultations the most important piece of the process in terms of communications, transparency and de-marginalization, and expressed the wish to resume them and make them regular events.



The survey responses did not share the sentiment of unmet expectations seen in the FGDs to the same degree. This divergence may be due in part to selection bias: people with strong (potentially negative) views may have been more interested in taking the additional time to participate in FGDs and brainstorming sessions, rather than complete a relatively short survey.

Overall, despite some unmet expectations regarding Summit outcomes to date, considerable support exists for efforts to refine and continue the Summit process. Participants regularly referenced the essential role of the US Government in launching the initiative, and the continued importance of its leadership and convening capacity in the future. However, many participants also emphasized the importance of broadening the ownership of the Summit process to more participants, including from the Global South.

Participants emphasized that what is needed following the Second Summit is a significantly modified approach. For example, there was near consensus that civil society should play a much more central role in planning and participating in future Summits, given their perceptions of marginalization from the government-centred Summit model. For future initiatives to be effective, members of the GDC consistently expressed the need for the Summit to evolve beyond what could be seen as a start-up phase to something with greater institutional capacity, strategic vision, inclusive partnership and shared capacities.

¹ Question #8 of the survey did ask respondents to rate 'the effectiveness of the Summit for Democracy process and the Year of Action'. One third indicated that it was either not effective or was only effective to raise awareness, but the rest provided a rating of 'conditionally effective' or higher. Question #26 allowed for more open-ended qualitative written observations and recommendations, but the vast majority of respondents either skipped this question or only provided very short responses, a possible missed opportunity to better gauge satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the Summit process.



STAND WITH UKRAINE

STAND WITH UKRAINE

US GOVERNMENT AT LEAST SHELTER WE WILL HANDLE

Photo by Gayatri Malhotra via Unsplash

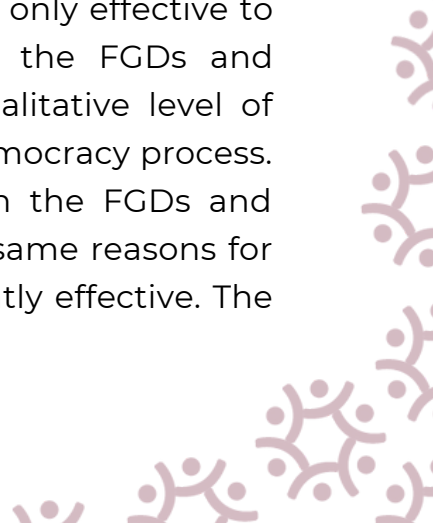
KEY REFLECTIONS AND ISSUES

Support for continuation of parts of the Summit process.

Survey respondents and focus group participants expressed a strong general aspiration that actions related to the Summit for Democracy process continue after the second Summit. However, as well as this widespread positive desire for a continuation of parts of the process, many respondents expressed concern that they had seen little detail about how such follow-on initiatives might be structurally and financially supported to achieve meaningful outcomes.

US leadership and broadening of ownership. US leadership was perceived by many survey respondents as both a strength (initial vision and direction, convening capacity) and a weakness (lack of consensus-based approach, perceptions of US domination) of the Summit; it is unclear what the impact of modifying a US-led approach would be. However, respondents also emphasized the importance of broadening the ownership to more countries, including from the Global South and welcomed the co-hosting model of the second Summit in that regard.

Feedback on current Summit process. Noteworthy levels of respondents to the survey and participants in the FGDs and brainstorming sessions expressed some dissatisfaction with the Summit for Democracy process to date. In addition to the third of survey respondents who rated the Summit for Democracy process as either not effective or only effective to raise awareness, nearly all participants in the FGDs and brainstorming sessions expressed some qualitative level of unmet expectations with the Summit for Democracy process. The survey respondents and participants in the FGDs and brainstorming sessions shared many of the same reasons for why they found the process to be insufficiently effective. The



reasons outlined in the survey and expressed with the most frequency and intensity in the FGDs and brainstorming sessions were:

- Limited engagement with civil society (54.17 per cent in survey)
- Lack of transparency (37.5 per cent in survey)
- Poor organization (35.42 per cent in survey)
- Too country-led (12.5 per cent in survey)

Commitment process. The second-voted reason in the survey for insufficient effectiveness—lack of a proper monitoring mechanism for the implementation of commitments (41.67 per cent)—was not expressed frequently in the focus groups or brainstorming sessions but still merits attention. The effectiveness of a country-level, commitment-based approach (both domestic and international) to organizing the Summit should be examined, given high variability in the depth, quality and civic participation facilitated in the creation of these commitments.

Cohorts. Regarding the effectiveness of cohorts, the gap between survey responses and the views of the participants in FGDs and brainstorming sessions widened considerably. Two-thirds of survey respondents rated the cohorts as either very effective or somewhat effective, whereas nearly every focus group participant expressed dissatisfaction with the cohorts. The overwhelming reason for cohort dissatisfaction, both in frequency and emphasis, expressed by the participants in the FGDs and brainstorming sessions was the lack of interest, support or connection to the Summit organizers and other governments, whereas only 18.75 per cent of survey respondents selected the closest corresponding option, 'Lack of linkage to Summit for Democracy'. According to the FGDs and brainstorming sessions, members participating in cohorts felt that their significant effort did not lead to clear outcomes or involve sufficient connection to the Summit itself. Lack of clarity on the long-term future of cohorts also diminished people's enthusiasm, leading some participants to avoid engaging with cohorts in the first place. Some participants also felt that the cohorts were not always sufficiently inclusive of

different types of CSOs and that some had barriers to entry and lacked open channels of information. Some reflected on cohort activities as ultimately being 'busy work'.

Transparency. Focus group and brainstorming session participants complained of a widespread lack of transparency in Summit for Democracy processes (agenda, invitation list etc.) and activities. Sometimes these concerns extended to cohorts, noting that some cohorts lacked internal transparency and ignored overtures from interested CSOs.

Communications. According to focus group and brainstorming session participants, part of the lack of transparency may be linked to insufficient communications from the Summit organizers. Participants indicated that they rarely received timely information on important Summit for Democracy events and initiatives. For example, the second Summit for Democracy is scheduled to take place at the end of March 2023, and a number of survey respondents reported having received little practical or substantive information that would facilitate their inclusion and participation. Many believed that challenges with US inter-agency coordination on the Summit led to long delays in decision-making and mixed messages being sent to external stakeholders.²

Communication strategy. Many focus group participants also noted that the Summit for Democracy lacks a sufficient communication strategy and that this shortcoming is a significant missed opportunity, both to convey the importance of democracy and to reach the general public at the grassroots level. The view was that the Summit for Democracy process needs much more publicity and that more media events should be organized around the Summit for Democracy initiatives. The GDC Forum was seen by some as providing a good venue for greater publicity. Multiple layers of communication were considered necessary: high-level diplomacy, CSO efforts, a media focus and communications to the general public and grassroots. There

² Based on responses up to 1 March 2023.

was a sense that the Summit for Democracy needs to better recognize and adapt to the fact that the political environment is competitive and that authoritarian regimes equally try to shape the narrative.

Political profile. Some observed that the lack of adequate communications also resulted in a diminished political profile. Few local politicians around the world had any notion that a Summit for Democracy even took place, much less mattered. This also has to do with participating governments' lack of communication on the Summit to their own constituencies.

Going forward. The survey solicited ideas for how the Summit for Democracy process could be continued, but the answer options were very general. More specific suggestions were expressed by focus group and brainstorming session participants. Specifically, some of the most notable ideas raised in the FGDs and brainstorming sessions included:

- **Country leadership.** While the importance of continued US government leadership is considered unique and, to many, indispensable, a general view suggests that the current management structure will not fit future needs. Some expressed the view that foreign ministries are not properly structured for such a role in the long term, nor should it be led by one country only. Removing parts of the organization of the Summit process to a (non-government linked) entity (or entities) that has the logistical capacity for an inclusive and transparent Summit process could help address some of the current gaps. However, the process would need country ownership to be sustainable.
- **Civil society partnership.** There seemed to be consensus that a widening of the Summit for Democracy leadership beyond governments to a partnership with civil society could help to create a more inclusive Summit process going forward.



- **Build on existing mechanisms.** Brainstorming session participants strongly expressed the opinion that future Summit for Democracy processes should not duplicate existing mechanisms and initiatives, but build on them, strengthen and improve them, rather than creating new structures. Direct linkage to existing organizations that already have complementary institutional capacity and/or mandates to pursue some (or many) of the Summit for Democracy objectives was therefore put forward as a strong recommendation. For example, with respect to commitments, numerous GDC members noted that the Open Government Partnership could potentially take over Summit for Democracy work on commitment formulation, monitoring and implementation. The Community of Democracies (CoD) was also noted by some as an institution that should have some kind of role in a post-Summit process—it has an appropriate mandate, and participation of a critical mass of democratic countries and CSOs (through its Civil Society Pillar³). The CoD has not played a significant role in the Summits to date, yet could do more if properly invested in and supported. However, some participants also pointed out some inherent weaknesses of the CoD, which may make it challenging for it to take on a leading role on its own. International IDEA was also mentioned as an existing multilateral organization in the democracy space with the mandate to advance democracy.
- **Secretariat.** The establishment of a secretariat was posited, perhaps initially as a pilot concept, with sufficient financial backing to institutionalize the efforts of the Summit for Democracy in a strategic and more effective way. It was suggested in the form of either an existing organization or a collaboration between existing organizations or mechanisms.

³ Civil society is represented at the CoD Governing Council by the International Steering Committee, an independent, representative body elected by the CoD's Civil Society Assembly to provide advice to the CoD.

- **Summit process rather than Summit event.** Many focus group and brainstorming session participants observed that the ‘Summit’ approach—an official, government-level initiative meant to enable formal agreements among participating countries—could benefit greatly from an established architecture (like a Secretariat) but ideally should be paired with additional resources, initiatives and structures. For example, working with governments, civil society, foundations, academics, the private sector, unions, and other key stakeholders to invest in a consistent series of coordinated conferences (including existing ones)—where agendas can be more flexible and focus more on learning and consensus building—could be more engaging, and less controversial and bureaucratic/protocol heavy than one Summit. A process rather than event. However, there was no consensus on this point. Some participants felt very strongly that a global Summit provides a key galvanizing moment that a series of smaller thematic conferences do not, and urged to keep the global Summit event at least every two years.

CSOs and democracy activists from non-participating countries. Many focus group and brainstorming session participants recommended a widening of participation in future Summit-related activities. Most prominently, many repeated consistent calls for the invitation of CSOs and activists from non-participating countries. A view expressed by many was that the Summit for Democracy needs to find tangible ways to support those fighting for democracy under the most challenging of circumstances. Participants cited among their recommendations diplomatic cover, sharing of resources and financing. Specific to Summit participation, many CSOs would benefit greatly from assistance to cover costs for basic transport, accommodation and translation.

Greater financial support is required for cohort activities. Many noted that all cohort activities were conducted on a voluntary basis, which serves as a barrier to entry and also

saps cohort morale, particularly if they perceive that their efforts have not been noted or incorporated into the official Summit(s).

Clearer strategic vision and goals. Many participants believed that future Summit for Democracy processes and institutions require clearer strategic vision and goals and a guiding theory of change. Some observed that Summit for Democracy does not seem like a coherent process but rather a series of ad hoc events, where the ultimate goal is overtaken by process considerations. Others felt that the multiple issues covered by the Summit and the cohorts felt at times like a laundry list, making it difficult to focus on a core set of priorities that stakeholders could agree on and work towards over the coming years. For example, some suggested that reaching broader consensus on how international development assistance could better strengthen democracy—including by encouraging more governments and private donors to invest in democracy support—could have been transformational. However, some participants also emphasized that the Summit was unique in its vision, bringing together issues that are often treated in isolation from each other, under the umbrella of democracy, which is a taboo word in many global fora. They viewed the Summit as a valuable space for government–society dialogue on the three themes of anti-corruption, authoritarianism and human rights, tied together under the broad umbrella of democracy.

Commitments as a prerequisite. Some survey respondents and focus group participants recommended that the Summit for Democracy require governments to commit to concrete deliverables up front as a prerequisite for participation.





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RECOMMENDATIONS AND OPTIONS FOR A POST-SUMMIT PROCESS

The consultation process generated a number of different ideas and options for a potential post-Summit process. There was no consensus among participants on one definitive option. Some of these ideas are outlined as options for consideration below.

1

THE SUMMIT FOR DEMOCRACY PROCESS SHOULD CONTINUE THROUGH EVOLUTION

The Summit for Democracy process focused attention on democracy and coalesced key resources at a pivotal moment for the state of democracy. It has been a galvanizing moment, one which has put democracy at the centre of the global agenda. US leadership has been crucial in launching this initiative and should continue. To capture these gains, it is time for the effort to evolve and expand. Summits for Democracy may continue, perhaps every other year, but they should become showcases for enduring efforts undertaken in a more formalized way by institutions with the capacity and financial resources to achieve real outcomes. A global secretariat (or similar entity) could be considered, building on existing efforts and an institution or several institutions already in place.



2

OWNERSHIP AND LEADERSHIP OF THIS EFFORT SHOULD BE BROADENED

The expansion to five co-hosts for the Second Summit for Democracy is an important step in this direction. Any institutions that emerge from this process should build on the inclusion of co-hosts and incorporate a rotating leadership from all regions of the world, with civil society and governments as equal partners. Demonstrated political will for Summit objectives should serve as a key prerequisite for any country or institution seeking to engage in such an expansion.



3

EXISTING MECHANISMS SHOULD BE LEVERAGED FOR MAXIMUM IMPACT

While an ongoing Summit process could bring great benefits, there are many opportunities to engage existing multilateral institutions and processes to advance democracy. Some ideas offered by GDC members included:

- further exploring the idea of a 'D-10' group to support and defend democracy, and an accompanying initiative ('C-10') with global civil society participation
- additional investment in parts of the United Nations system working on democracy issues (UN Development Programme, UN Women, UN Democracy Fund)
- starting early negotiations on the Post-2030 Agenda, with Summit countries leading advocacy for a stronger successor to Sustainable Development Goal 16, with clearer democracy commitments
- work with multilateral development banks and other international finance institutions to incorporate greater requirements for democracy, human rights and participatory governance for lending and financial support, similar to the mandate given for the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development's work⁴

⁴ Article 1 of the Agreement Establishing the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development includes a provision that the Bank may only carry out its purpose in those of its recipient member countries (countries of operations) that are 'committed to and applying the principles of multiparty democracy, pluralism and market economics'.

4

TRANSPARENCY AND TIMELY ACCESS TO INFORMATION

The Summit for Democracy process requires greater transparency and timely access to information. Practically, better sharing of information among all participants, but particularly from governments to CSOs, is essential to assure that efforts align and opportunities are fully captured rather than missed. Transparency and access to information are also fundamental components of democracy, so on principle they need to be at the centre of Summit for Democracy efforts.



5

DEVELOP AND EXECUTE A COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

Ultimately democracy is for the people. But the public knows little about the Summit for Democracy or the messages it would like to share. This lack of awareness extends to most politicians, who represent the public and who define domestic political agendas. Linked to this need for greater transparency and access to information within Summit activities, organizers also need an effective strategy to get their message out through a diversity of media platforms. The media should be included as participants in Summits for Democracy as well, both to allow the media to share its perspectives on free press in democracy and to improve awareness among the media of Summit initiatives.



6

CIVIL SOCIETY AS AN EQUAL PARTNER

Previous recommendations for the Second Summit for Democracy called for greater incorporation of civil society into leadership and planning. The same holds for post-Summit initiatives. The equal role between civil society and governments should be incorporated into follow-on institutions and efforts in a structured way. Most importantly, this co-ownership upholds fundamental elements of democracy itself, but it also achieves practical outcomes both through greater burden-sharing and through work that is better informed on the perspectives and experience of civil society.



7

INSTITUTIONALIZATION AND FUNDING TO ASSURE POST-SUMMIT OUTCOMES

To fully capture the potential of the Summit for Democracy processes, institutionalization and funding is required. Regarding institutionalization, organizers could explore the establishment of a secretariat or similar mechanism with the capacity to plan and conduct future Summits, manage commitments, coordinate cohorts and communicate timely, substantive information about democracy to the general public and practical information to Summit participants. Serious consideration should also be given to establishing formal relationships with existing institutions, such as CoD or OGP, which have the established capacity to carry out some of this work. Existing institutions engaged in any future process can also benefit from lessons learned through the Summit for Democracy as all stakeholders work to address gaps in this shared endeavour together.

Regarding funding, targeted outlays of relatively small financial resources could yield outsized results for Summit objectives. In addition to the financing necessary for a secretariat or similar mechanism, funding for cohorts and for some participation by and translation costs for civil society, particularly from the Global South, would bring benefits far beyond the modest associated costs.



8

COHORTS NEED MORE THAN FINANCIAL SUPPORT

GDC members strongly believe that cohorts are an essential mechanism for civil society to contribute to the Summit for Democracy process. The role of cohorts should be enhanced not just through greater financial support but also through structural changes that give their participation more institutional weight. The work under cohorts should be systematized across the whole portfolio, including, for example, work on model commitments, knowledge products, flagship initiatives and democracy/issue promotion strategies. A potential secretariat could help coordinate the work of the cohorts and facilitate synergies among them. However, cohorts should be more inclusive of different types of civil society actors and should reduce barriers for entry and enhance their own transparency.



9

ENSURE INCLUSIVITY

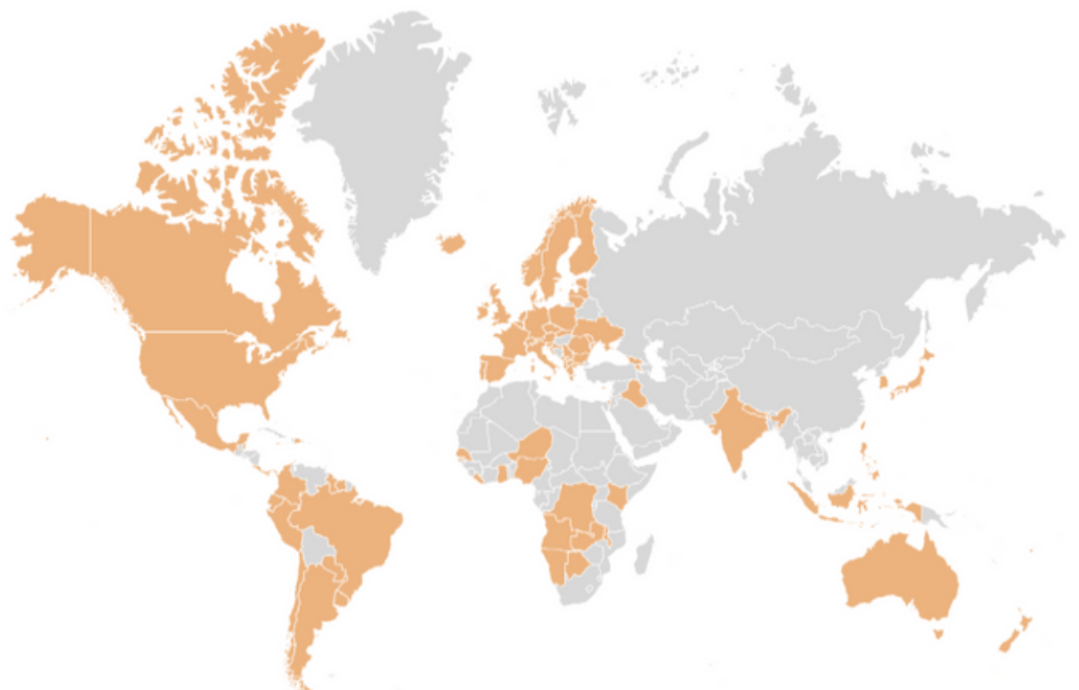
Repeating calls from the November 2022 report, there is a need to include civil society representatives from Summit for Democracy non-participating states. And following on the November recommendation to mainstream youth participation in Summit proceedings, a similar mainstreaming should occur with post-Summit actions.



10

CREATE A LONG-TERM ROLE FOR THE GLOBAL DEMOCRACY COALITION.

The GDC was established in large part due to the organizing of the Summit for Democracy and has played a critical role in elevating a diverse set of civil society and other non-governmental voices in the process. The GDC is expected to remain active, as its members have stated a clear desire to continue working together to advance democracy worldwide. This could include playing a role in a potential secretariat, becoming a 'host' for existing (and future) cohorts, facilitating multi-stakeholder dialogue on key democracy issues post-Summit and serving as a learning resource and commitment 'bulletin board' for cohorts.



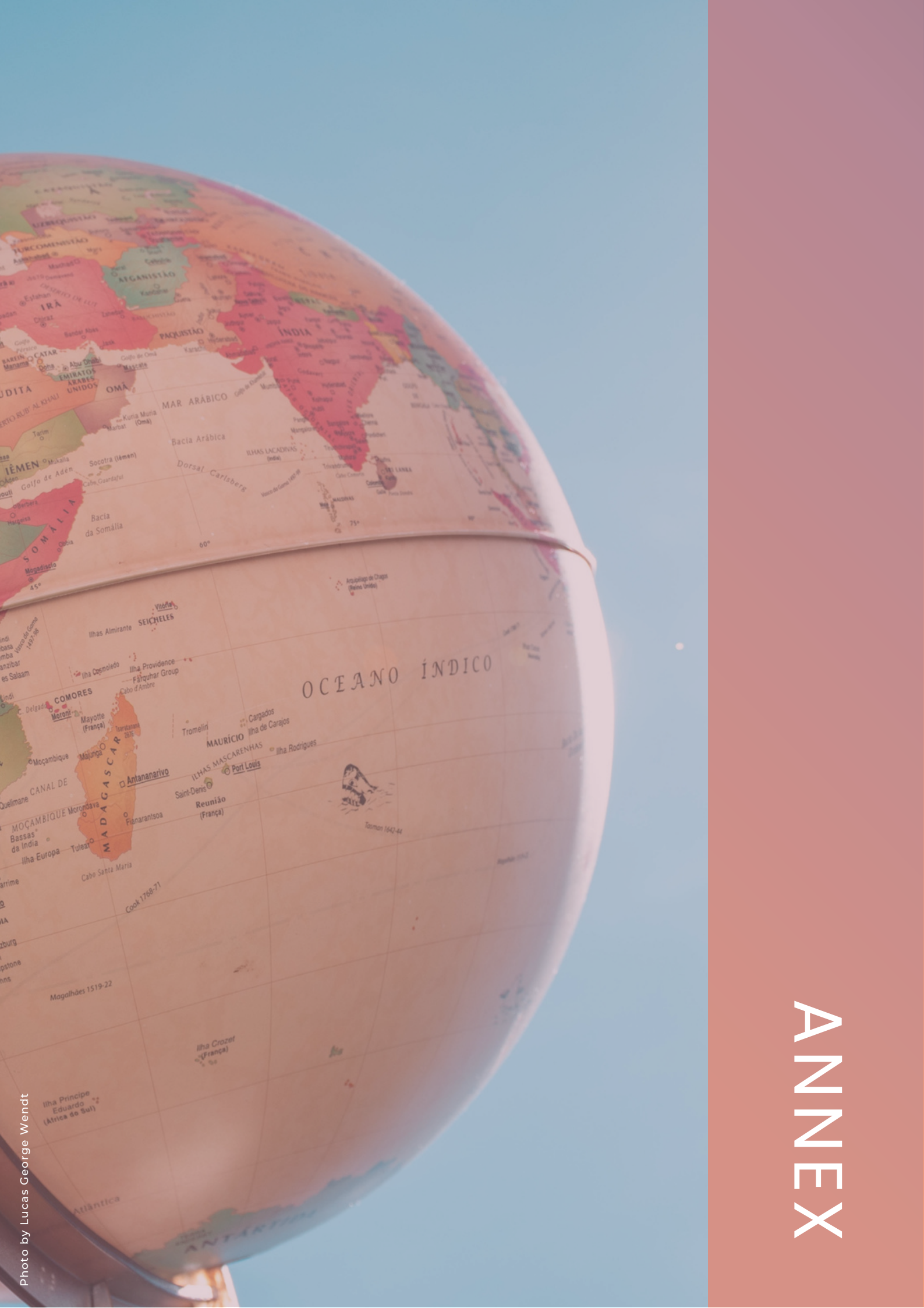


Photo by Lucas George Wendt

ANNEX



ANNEX: ABOUT THE GLOBAL DEMOCRACY COALITION

The **Global Democracy Coalition** (GDC) was formed in October 2021, convened by International IDEA and other democracy assistance organizations from around the world. The intention was to create an informal group of organizations committed to the advancement of democracy, working together to engage constructively with the Summit for Democracy, hosted by the US government, in December 2021. Together, partner organizations decided to hold a forum ahead of the first Summit to broaden and enrich its discussions.

What started as an informal group working together to organize one forum has evolved into a strategic multi-stakeholder alliance of more than **100 democracy organizations** from around the world, committed to advance and protect democracy worldwide and to influence the Summits for Democracy and the Year of Action.

The GDC now provides a platform for dialogue, collaboration, knowledge exchange and experience-sharing, and advocacy on democracy around the Summits for Democracy and beyond. Working collectively on strategic issues relevant to the global democracy agenda can contribute to making the individual organizational voices stronger and more likely to be heard.

Global Democracy Coalition Forum 2021

The purpose of the 2021 GDC Forum was to facilitate a global conversation on democracy to broaden the Summit discussions, providing a multi-stakeholder platform for voices, actors and issues that were not part of the official Summit for Democracy. On 7 December 2021, the first Forum brought together 52 democracy organizations across the world, with around 250 speakers from over 50 countries and various sectors in [41 webinars](#) held over 24 hours and across all time zones, to discuss a variety of issues relevant to the democracy debate. The issues discussed ranged from the integrity of elections, women's political participation, how to counter disinformation, hate speech, transnational repression, the state of democracy globally and regionally, local self-government and local democracy, multilevel governance, youth and democracy, corruption and malign finance, the role of a free media, and digital rights, among many others. GDC partners included democracy assistance organizations from the Global North, and democracy organizations in the Global South, including from authoritarian contexts. A [report](#) summarizing the recommendations to the Summit for Democracy was put together in the 24 hours following the Forum, and handed over to Summit organizers to inform the discussions in the Summit and the Year of Action.

In January 2022, the GDC convened to discuss the lessons learned from the GDC Forum and the Summit for Democracy. GDC partners discussed the impact of the GDC Forum, the value of such an endeavor and the importance of continuing the effort during the Year of Action. It was also decided that the GDC would take the Year of Action as an opportunity to continue collaborative efforts in support of democracy and the Summit process.

Partner organizations in the GDC decided to hold another GDC Forum one month ahead of the second Summit for Democracy, scheduled for 29–30 March 2023, building on the lessons learned from the 2021 Forum. The partners in the GDC

all saw the value of broadening out the Summit and its conversations, to cover more actors, voices and issues, enabling civil society and other stakeholders not invited to the official Summit to join in parallel conversations and get visibility for their efforts. However, many also felt that the first Forum's proximity to the initial Summit (two days before) made it challenging to influence the Summit agenda and discussions. To address this, a more multi-faceted engagement strategy was devised to: (a) provide inputs to the Summit agenda and discussions months in advance; (b) broaden the conversations of the Summit to more voices and issues; and (c) create visibility for civil society and other stakeholder efforts in support of democracy.

Global Democracy Coalition and the second Summit for Democracy 2023

In September 2022, the GDC formed a Steering Group composed of eight volunteering organizations⁵ from the GDC, to craft a GDC plan for the second Summit for Democracy. The second Summit will be co-hosted by Costa Rica, the Netherlands, South Korea, the United States and Zambia. The GDC has organized four main activities ahead of the second Summit:

- 1 Focus groups designed to craft concrete recommendations for the second Summit for Democracy, based on lessons learned from the first Summit. FGDs were held during the month of November 2022 and a report of recommendations was handed over to Summit organizers in December 2022.

⁵Accountability Lab, Alliance for Vietnam's Democracy, Alliance of Democracies, Counterpart International (current GDC coordinator), DT Institute, Humanity United, International IDEA (current GDC coordinator) and PartnersGlobal.

- 2 **The Global Democracy Coalition Forum 2023.** The GDC Forum took place one month before the Summit (on 28 February and 1 March 2023) in hybrid format in Brussels and Washington, DC, to prepare inputs to influence the Summit content and discussion. The GDC Forum focused on proposing recommendations to give continuity to the Summit process beyond the second Summit, taking collective stock of commitment implementation and the state of democracy globally since the first Summit, but also providing an opportunity for dialogue on the lessons learned and achievements of the cohort process. The GDC also encouraged commitments/pledges from GDC partners, to be presented at the GDC Forum, and to be announced at the second Summit. The GDC Forum produced the following outputs:

 - this report, which provides recommendations for a post-Summit process (building on a survey, FGDs and two brainstorming sessions);
 - a document of joint reflections on the state of democracy since the first Summit;
 - reflections on commitment implementation;
 - GDC pledges for the second Summit; and
 - reflections on Summit for Democracy cohorts.
- 3 **A Partners for Democracy Day.** Two days before the Summit, on 27 March 2023, a series of virtual and hybrid events organized by partners in the GDC (and other CSOs, think tanks, academic institutions and philanthropic organizations), under the umbrella of the GDC (similar to the 2021 GDC Forum), took place around the world. The Partners for Democracy Day provided visibility for civil society and other voices and their efforts in support and protection of democracy worldwide, while broadening Summit discussions.
- 4 **A video project/campaign with stories of democracy defenders around the world will highlight the successes, serious challenges, strategies, and efforts of democracy defenders, supported by partners in the GDC, around the**

world. The aim is to provide an additional platform for these voices to be heard and be given visibility around Summit discussions. The videos will be posted on the [GDC website](#) ahead of and during the second Summit.

On the Summits for Democracy

The Summits for Democracy hosted by the US Government in 2021 and 2023 provide a historic opportunity to reaffirm commitment to a global democracy agenda at a time when democracy is severely threatened around the world. Russia's war against Ukraine, the Myanmar military's removal and jailing of the country's democratically elected leaders, and numerous examples of democratic backsliding and autocratic repression in every region are clear reminders that democracy must be vigorously defended and revitalized.

The first Summit for Democracy was convened in December 2021 and invited 110 countries to join in the reaffirmation of democratic principles. In early 2022, countries were asked to submit voluntarily some written monitorable commitments to strengthen democracy at home and abroad, for which they would be held to account over the course of a Year of Action. In total, 62 countries made such commitments. Of these, 55 countries made commitments to strengthen democracy at home, 44 countries made commitments to strengthen democracy abroad and 39 countries made both types of commitments. More than 800 commitments were made in total by countries, of which nearly 350 referred to international commitments. The second Summit is scheduled for March 29-30 2023, at which countries are expected to report back on their progress in implementing their commitments.



March 2023

www.globaldemocracycoalition.org

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This publication is independent of specific national or political interests. Views expressed in this publication do not necessarily represent the views of the partners and donors of the Global Democracy Coalition.

The content of this report was written by Joseph Brinker, Executive Director, Cincinnatus Development Consulting. It was based on a Global Democracy Coalition (GDC) member survey, focus group discussions and brainstorming exercises with GDC partner organizations, facilitated by the organizations in the GDC steering group in February 2023.

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