

Fact Sheet

UN Establishes Democracy Fund U.S. To Be Among First Donors

“Because I believe the advance of liberty is the path to both a safer and better world, today I propose establishing a Democracy Fund within the United Nations. This is a great calling for this great organization... To show our commitment to the new Democracy Fund, the United States will make an initial contribution.”

-President George W. Bush, UN General Assembly, September 21, 2004

On July 4, 2005, UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan announced the establishment of a UN Democracy Fund. The idea for the Fund was first articulated by President Bush in a speech before the UN General Assembly last fall and has been embraced by the 141 nations that attended the third ministerial meeting of the Community of Democracies in Santiago, Chile in April 2005. The UN Democracy Fund builds on the UN General Assembly’s commitment to promote and consolidate new and restored democracies, as expressed in a resolution adopted in 2003. Annan’s announcement is an important step toward the September 2005 World Summit where world leaders will seek consensus on a UN Reform plan.

26 Countries Express Their Support

The United States has declared its intention of being among the first donors. In a June 2005 letter to Kofi Annan, 26 countries, including the United States, expressed their support for the creation of the Fund. It would, they said, play “a valuable role in highlighting the importance of democracy and U.N. involvement in democratic development.” President Bush requested \$10 million for the U.S. initial contribution in his FY06 Budget Request, and the U.S. Senate set aside that amount in its foreign operations appropriations bill passed in July 2005. The Democracy Fund will be operational in time for the September 2005 World Summit, making it possible for participating countries to contribute to it.

The UN Democracy Fund will be a voluntary fund housed in the UN Fund for International Partnerships (UNFIP)*, but with its own Executive Head who will report to an Advisory Board of Member States on substantive matters. In order to ensure transparency and accountability, a dedicated support office will arrange for monitoring, evaluation and auditing of the program.

A New Chapter in the UN’s Efforts to Promote Democratic Institutions and Practices

The UN Democracy Fund is the latest manifestation of the UN’s commitment to supporting emerging democracies with legal, technical and financial assistance and advice. On-going activities include:

✓ **Electoral Assistance:** UN officials lent logistical and strategic support to over twenty elections in the last year alone, including Afghanistan, Palestine and Burundi. In Iraq, the UN assisted the formation of the Independent Electoral Commission of Iraq (IECI) that supported the January 2005 elections.

✓ **Democratic Governance:** In Iraq, the UN is reaching out to groups such as the Sunni Arabs that did not take part in the elections, but are willing to engage in dialogue and peaceful negotiations to reach their goals. As the newly-elected National Assembly drafts its first constitution, UN advisors are also guiding this process.

✓ **Democracy Caucus:** In 2000, foreign ministers of a majority of Member States met in Warsaw to found the Community of Democracies, a precursor of the Democracy Caucus. The purpose of the Caucus, with a membership of over 100 countries, is to “forge common positions on democracy-related resolutions and activities.”

✓ **Rule of Law:** Upon completion of Peacekeeping missions, the UN remains engaged to ensure that the peace is buttressed by stable political institutions and the rule of law. Currently, a political mission in East Timor is developing and strengthening the countries judicial, human rights and police capacities.

✓ **Anti-Corruption:** In 2003, the General Assembly adopted the UN Convention against Corruption. The UN Office on Drugs and Crime also coordinates efforts to prevent and control corruption by offering guidance, technical assistance and evaluation services to countries. In Nigeria and Kenya, the UN is currently helping the governments recover assets looted by corrupt officials.

With the pledge to establish the Democracy Fund, the Secretary-General is committed to better coordinating the on-going democratic governance and election assistance work of diverse UN agencies. The UN Democracy Fund provides the UN with a new tool for the promotion of democracy and the strengthening of the rule of law.

* The Secretary-General established UNFIP in March 1998 to coordinate, channel and monitor contributions from the UN Foundation. Additionally, UNFIP works to build other partnerships between the UN and a variety of organizations, including the business community, foundations, and international and bilateral donors.