

**Statement of Vygaudas Ušackas, Foreign Minister of Lithuania, the
Informal Community of Democracies Ministerial at the United Nations,
September 24, 2009**

Ladies and Gentlemen,

- On behalf of my President [Dalia Grybauskaitė] it is with great pleasure that I welcome you to this ministerial gathering under the Lithuanian Presidency of the Community of Democracies. Lithuania is truly honored to steer this forum.
- As a diplomat I have worked hard over the past two decades in my country trying to consolidate our sovereignty, managing the complex transition from Soviet occupation to democracy. To us and to other captive nations that regained freedom after the fall of the Berlin wall, democracy meant independence, security, stability and sovereignty. We paid a dear price for democracy. And we know that democracy can never be taken for granted and that the support of democratic countries and their people can be crucial to the success of those fighting for democracy in their own country.

Dear colleagues, I hope you agree that today we discuss the following items:

- First of all, **revitalizing** the Community of Democracies as well as **creating synergies** between the Community and other stakeholders of democracy building so it becomes a positive sum game for everybody;
- Secondly, **current cases** where democracy is at risk, such as Honduras.
- And finally, we expect Minister Grażyna Bernatowicz to brief us on preparations for the Community's 10th anniversary **Krakow summit**.
- Concerning the first issue, we will try to **revitalize the Community** by sharing our experience, reaching out to other international or regional organizations (stakeholders of democracy), largest democracies as well as by recreating working groups of the Community. Four years ago in Santiago we agreed to establish several working groups. We are grateful to **India, Mexico, Romania, and Italy** for their leadership while chairing those groups. Today we need your energy again. We have drafted a **food-for-thought paper** regarding possible working groups and specific Community flagship projects. This document is available in the room. Please come back to us with your comments through diplomatic channels. We hope to discuss this proposal at the next Convening Group meeting in Washington. To ensure **proper communication with your capitals** after this meeting we will officially ask to nominate one person as a **Contact Point** for the Community of Democracy. Žygimantas Pavilionis, Ambassador-at-Large, will be our Contact Point from Lithuanian side. We will also promote **thematic agenda** during our Presidency. We are actually developing a new approach to the issue of **women and democracy agenda**, built on the recent conference that Community held in

Warsaw. In addition, we will strengthen the **youth segment** of our Community. We are also ready to establish a **parliamentary dimension** of the Community. This can only be accomplished if we streamline our procedures and support the work of the Community's through the good offices of the **Permanent Secretariat** in Warsaw as we expect the Secretariat to provide us not only with logistic support, but also actively participate in the initiative of Lithuania's Presidency.

- And in addition, some words on **synergy**. I see the Community of Democracies as a hub of activities aimed at supporting democracy, with multiple levels of engagement. We have a lot of institutions, initiatives and stakeholders for democracy development, but at the same time we lack synergy, focus and common action. We need to involve all relevant democracy stakeholders - global, regional or national. We hope to develop an agenda to guide the work of the **Democracy Caucus in New York and Geneva**, and make our voice heard at the **Human Rights Council**. As an example, we intend to submit a **UNGA resolution on Education for Democracy** a draft of which is being distributed in the room for your consideration. In addition, we will engage with the **OSCE, the Organization of American States, the African Union, ASEAN, and the European Union**, and various other regional organizations open and willing to collaborate with the Community. I hope that the Community's and the European Union representatives will be able to meet for a **brainstorming session in Brussels** on how we can work together. Maybe on this occasion we could also think about a Community **Troika** meeting with our colleagues in Brussels. We will follow with similar CD sessions in other **European capitals** as well as other **largest democracies** on other continents. I would very much welcome your engagement and ideas in this regard.
- Concerning the second point of our agenda - current issues at stake - let me say some words on **Honduras**. It's one of the most pertinent issues of democracy today. In Lisbon we had a good discussion and a statement on **Honduras**. Since then, the situation on the ground has not improved, it took quite dramatic turn with the return of President Zelaya to Tegucigalpa. In this sense of moral responsibility today we are issuing **statement** to this regard calling all relevant actors and institutions to refrain from violence (the statement is being distributed in the room). We also welcome the **initiative of GRULAC** to make a statement on human rights in the Republic of Honduras at the Human Rights Council in Geneva. We wholeheartedly support all regional and subregional efforts, in particular the San Jose Accords, directed towards swift, negotiated and peaceful solution to the current situation. I would appreciate if colleagues **from the region as well as Vice Minister Angel Lossada from Spain could brief us** about the situation, as well as on the intended **mission of International Commission on Mediation** that is heading to crisis-hit Honduras as well as on possible **added value** of the Community. Yesterday I was speaking with Miguel Moratinos on the possibility **to include the representative of the Presidency of the Community of**

Democracies to this mission or requesting Spain as other countries to speak on behalf of CD when mediation effort will be conducted.

- Finally, a few words about the **Krakow Summit Meeting** next year. Lithuanian Presidency is ready to contribute to the success of this meeting. Time is running short and we have to come out quickly with concrete ideas on deliverables of this important meeting. I agree with Radek Sikorski that this summit should be a major re-launch of the Community. I hope Minister Bernatovic will elaborate at his point.

Thank you for attention.

