



STATEMENT ON THE FIRST ANNUAL INTERNATIONAL DAY OF DEMOCRACY

15 September 2008

We are pleased to commemorate the first annual International Day of Democracy, established by U.N. General Assembly resolution as a unique opportunity for inter-governmental and non-governmental organizations “to focus attention on the promotion and consolidation of democracy at all levels and to reinforce international cooperation in this regard.”

It is widely recognized that the consolidation of democracy and human rights are critical to support peace and security and that genuine democratic elections are the means through which the will of the people is expressed and the legitimate authority of the government established. The presence of professional international election observation groups enhances the integrity of elections by providing an impartial assessment of the electoral process and expressing the commitment of the international community to supporting democracy.

In 2005, we came together at the United Nations to endorse The Declaration of Principles for International Election Observation and Code of Conduct for International Election Observation. The Declaration, a set of guidelines for professional observation that has now been endorsed by 32 international election observation organizations from across the globe, marks a critical milestone in the development of election observation and is symbolic of increased international cooperation in the field of democracy and human rights promotion. The Declaration also underscores that genuine democratic elections are a prerequisite for democratic governance. As endorsers, we hope that our cooperation and support for democracy and democratic elections will continue to flourish through the annual observance of the International Day of Democracy.

The Carter Center

Democracy Reporting International (DRI)

Electoral Institute of Southern Africa (EISA)

International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International IDEA)

International Republican Institute (IRI)

National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI)

Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, Office of Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (OSCE-ODIHR)

Southern African Development Community, Parliamentary Forum (SADC-PF)