

DEMOCRACY DELIVERS

Joint Commitment on Supporting Democratic Openings

Announced on September 25, 2024 at USAID's 2024 flagship Democracy Delivers event on the sidelines of the United Nations General Assembly in New York.

Democratic systems and principles foster global stability, political accountability, and peace; protect human dignity and rights; and advance sustainable development. While democracies around the world are facing significant threats, there are also “bright spots”: countries where democratic reformers are gaining ground against oppression and authoritarianism. When a country experiences a promising democratic opening—when there is an opportunity to enact democratic reforms; strengthen transparency; uphold the rule of law; enforce checks and balances; advance human rights, including those of women, persons with disabilities, and other marginalized populations; strengthen participation in social, political, and economic decision making; administer free and fair elections; support civil-society movements; deliver inclusive prosperity; and more—fellow democracies should quickly come together to help reformers seize the moment. Windows of democratic opportunity are often fragile, requiring agile, tailor-made, context-specific, and responsive action. The success of a democratic opening is determined both by democratic reform and socioeconomic progress, among other factors; therefore, democracies must advance both to equitably improve lives and sustain lasting democratic resilience.

As democracies, we are coming together to pursue the following actions to support democratic progress and principles and sustainable democratic development around the globe. These actions build on previous commitments to advance democratic strengthening, including those outlined in the Millennium Declaration (2000), World Summit (2005), 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (2015), and Declaration of the Summit for Democracy (2023).

I. Elevate attention to democratic openings: Amid concerning global threats to democracy, bolstering and expanding new democratic gains requires attention, knowledge, and resources. While maintaining the critical support for efforts to prevent backsliding, we should dedicate attention to countries where nascent democratic governments and movements are on

a promising trajectory, helping turn early momentum on reform efforts into sustained democratic progress. To elevate this attention, we aim to consider a variety of approaches to engagement and support available—such as diplomacy, policy, development programs, partnerships, and convening power—toward the goal of turning moments of democratic opportunity into enduring democratic institutions, values, and norms. We acknowledge progress can be uneven and also requires long-term commitment by citizens, governments, and partners alike.

2. Increase support across development sectors: Democracies should deliver democratic as well as socioeconomic gains for their people, including women and marginalized populations. Delivering meaningful improvements in people’s lives during democratic openings requires comprehensive, responsive, and cross-sectoral support. All development, diplomatic, and partnership efforts can contribute to advancing democratic development. We therefore seek to harness our collective capabilities and resources to help improve public services—for example, by promoting health, education, and safety; reducing bureaucratic hurdles; and expanding economic opportunities and jobs—thereby sustaining support for reform and democratic resilience. As democracies, we seek to incorporate principles of participation, inclusion, transparency, rule of law, effectiveness, efficiency, responsiveness, and accountability across our efforts. We encourage other development sectors to pursue democratic, human rights, and inclusive governance outcomes when possible. We also encourage ethical, rights-respecting, locally led, multi-stakeholder collaborations with business, philanthropy, civil society, academia, and others to advance cross-sectoral reform efforts driven by local demands and needs.

3. Strengthen information resilience and advance narratives that affirm democracy: Democracies must demonstrate their value and earn the trust of all their people. Democratic systems of governance not only can deliver greater prosperity and security, but also allow for greater freedom, dignity, and inclusive opportunity. Democracies enable open and public debate, independent and pluralistic media, and the free flow of information, which fosters legitimacy, trust, transparency, responsibility, and accountability for citizens and representatives of public institutions. As partners committed to democratic progress, we intend to work together to help uphold information integrity and resilience, bolster independent media and media literacy, and defend against information manipulation. We also seek to foster transparent and accessible government-citizen dialogue, build social cohesion and democratic political culture, and commit to an inclusive digital information space in support of democracy around the world.

The following partners have endorsed this statement: Australia, Canada, Denmark, Estonia, German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development, Ireland, Finland, New Zealand, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, Spanish Agency for International Development

Cooperation (AECID), the United Kingdom's Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, and the United States Agency for International Development.

Background about USAID's Democracy Delivers Initiative:

As part of the U.S. Government's renewed efforts to invigorate democracy worldwide, USAID Administrator Samantha Power and Secretary of State Antony Blinken launched the [Democracy Delivers Initiative](#) in 2022 to surge support, resources, and attention across development sectors to countries experiencing promising democratic openings, or "bright spots." We're bringing together the development and diplomatic tools of the U.S. government, together with contributions by other bilateral and multilateral donors, the private sector, and the philanthropic community, to support countries experiencing a moment of democratic opportunity to implement and expand their reform agendas. That means helping them demonstrate wins and sustain popular support for democratic reform. Support to democratic openings is part of USAID's broader approach to renewing democracy globally, as articulated in USAID's new Democracy, Human Rights, and Governance policy, available [here](#).

To learn more about Democracy Delivers, visit www.usaid.gov/democracymatters or contact democracymatters@usaid.gov.