



Renewed Internationalism for Resilient Democracies

Statement International Day of Democracy

The Progressive Alliance joins the world in celebrating this International Day of Democracy. We extend our solidarity to all peoples who continue with their struggles for democracy.

It is no secret that democratic institutions across the globe are under assault, both from within and without. What was once a unique phenomenon in a few countries has now spread across most, if not all, democratic countries. Huge amounts of resources are being utilized in campaigns of disinformation, political manipulation, and in weakening democratic institutions. The specter of military adventurism has once again pushed itself to the mainstream of political discourse. These developments are worrying given the past years of democratic decline and a growing possibility of worsening social, political and economic conditions.

As socialists, social democrats, and progressives, it is urgent that we work towards clear and coherent solutions before democratic decline fully transforms into authoritarian ascendancy. It is indeed worrying that as we approach a century since the wave of authoritarianism and reactionary populism that birthed the Second World War, we are now faced with a similar widespread resurgence of despotism.

It is important to note that social democrats and progressives have won crucial victories in national elections in Asia, the Americas, and in Europe. However, we cannot rest assured that such elections will spell a halt on the return of authoritarianism. A more serious and concerted effort must be made to thwart the spread of authoritarian tendencies and to address the root causes of the democratic decline.

Clearly, liberal democracy as it exists now has had shortcomings in addressing many of the world's social, economic, and environmental problems. The present economic order of neoliberal capitalism has indeed unleashed tremendous economic growth but such progress has largely benefitted a few and created huge disparities in wealth and power and in gender inequalities. It is disconcerting that we are seeing a rise in attacks on the basic rights of economically marginalized,

migrants, women, and LGBT+ people. The multiple crises we face has bred deep insecurity and precariousness.

Moreover, the huge challenges we face in achieving sustainability in our economy and society are tremendous hurdles that breed insecurity and general societal anxiety. Continued inaction provides fertile ground for reactionary politics to take advantage of these.

When democratic governance fails to address these problems and deliver on its promises this only pushes societies into the arms of autocrats. Their simplistic analysis of global problems and their undemocratic approach to politics are catastrophic for our societies. The solutions do not capture the nuances and complexity of our communities and are therefore bound to fail. But it is an indictment on the present political and economic order when citizens willingly vote for such movements over democratic political parties and candidates.

The global movement of progressives must learn from these mistakes of the present order and create new strategies and solutions to end this ascendancy of authoritarianism and bring about a renaissance of democratic governance and build resilient democracies. This includes a strong commitment to achieve full gender equality in our societies as well within the democratic institutions and fighting all forms of discrimination especially now that we see an alarming rise in misogyny and anti-LGBT rhetoric that is welded into rightwing and autocratic ideology. It is also important to note that a multi-polar world order is taking shape and it is alarming that autocrats and populists are becoming its drivers and proponents. Our narrative of social democracy where justice is delivered must actively compete with these authoritarian forces within our societies. **We cannot allow despotism to become the dominant paradigm once again. We cannot allow unilateralism and wanton disregard of international laws to become the new normal. Socialists, social democrats, and progressives must stress on a new spirit of democracy that stresses collective prosperity and guaranteed liberties for all.**

In this regard, we believe that strategic actions must be made in order to ensure that human rights, rule of law, and collective peace and security – all cherished hallmarks of democratic governance are protected.

1. A renewed spirit of internationalism and cooperation

The climate crisis, covid pandemic, and the multiple threats to peace and security has shown the need for greater cooperation among countries and the folly of isolationism. Moreover, if a new era of democratization is to be achieved it can only be done when democracies provide support to fellow

embattled democracies. Authoritarianism has shown that it is an international movement. Therefore, the resistance to it must equally be on a global front.

Our recent experience has shown that isolationism only serves to strengthen anti-democratic tendencies and encourage abuses by authoritarians. Past solidarity work between parties and movements between the Global North and Global South have shown tremendous efficacy in preventing or reducing abuse. Likewise, internationalism has presented itself as a potent deterrent to the abuse of international rule of law.

As such, **we call on the broad spectrum of democratic movements and political parties to work together and build alliances to serve as the backbone of this global democratic movement.**

2. Building resilient democracies and democratic institutions

We must also ensure democracies are able to weather through the numerous assaults posed by authoritarians. Strong democratic institutions exist are a guarantee against assault on people's freedoms and serves as a check on the abuses of the powerful against the powerless. Resilient democracies protect the peoples' interests while at the same time guard against corruption and nepotism that erode public trust to institutions.

Promotion of resilient democracies is not only a safeguard against creeping authoritarianism but also guarantees the effective delivery of social welfare and protections. Populists and autocrats have shown time and again their ineffectiveness in delivering on these programs when crises break out. Careful understanding of the underlying causes of these crises and effective solutions to these have never been a hallmark of authoritarian regimes. Only democratic governance can provide both the political will and effective solutions to the present economic, social, political, cultural, environmental, health, and security crises we currently face today.

As socialists, social democrats, and progressives **we commit ourselves to building such a bulwark of democracy within our institutions, our movements, and citizenry.**

3. Strengthening citizens' involvement in governance and promotion of popular democratic movements

As social democrats we believe that strong institutions must exist alongside strong people's movements. It is no coincidence that the growth of strong movements of workers, women, youth, minorities, and other oppressed peoples developed alongside greater democratization. This tradition of popular and democratic mobilization of citizens has long been a cherished legacy of the socialist, social democratic, and progressive political tradition. We need a return to such traditions.

An active citizenry that is committed to the values of democracy is a potent force towards ensuring effective governance. Meaningful citizens' involvement in all levels of government guarantees that democratic governance can deliver on its promises. Moreover, vigilance from an empowered citizenry is an effective tool against abuse and corruption

Creating the political, social and cultural environment for people's movements and organizations must be of paramount task. As socialist, social democratic, and progressive political parties **we call on governments to ensure such people's participation is guaranteed alongside ensuring that safeguards exist to ensure the free association of people to exercise their democratic rights.**

This year's International Day of Democracy must serve not only as warning for all democratic movements, political parties, and citizenry on the grave danger that an ascendant authoritarianism poses. It must also serve as a clarion call for all democrats, most especially those who are torchbearers of the socialist, social democratic, and progressive tradition, to heighten efforts and to close ranks in thwarting authoritarianism.

The struggle we face is no longer simply about political work towards electoral victories. It is now an existential crisis of democracy itself that we face. History has bitter lessons on what a defeated democracy can mean. We cannot afford to lose this struggle.