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Support of global citizens' assemblies

Democracy Without Borders (DWB), according to its mission statement, supports democracy promotion that embraces the dimensions of representation, participation and deliberation. Exploring new and innovative mechanisms, tools, and bodies in these realms is a necessary contribution to strengthening and deepening democracy. We support efforts that are complementary to each other and mutually reinforcing.

At the global level, DWB prioritizes the establishment of a citizen-elected UN Parliamentary Assembly (UNPA) that enhances democratic representation. In the field of participation, we promote the creation of a UN World Citizens' Initiative as an essential tool. In terms of deliberation, we endorse the use of global citizens' assemblies (GCAs) to complement the deliberative function of a UNPA. DWB in principle supports such citizens' assemblies that

- are bodies set up by a given entity or who are self-organized with a spirit of complementing, not replacing, other possible and existing institutions and mechanisms in the fields of representation, participation and deliberation;
- are composed of randomly chosen citizens who as a collective are as demographically representative as possible of a given constituency, for instance in terms of age, gender, ethnicity, income and political orientation;
- are mandated to deliberate on one or more specific issues and adopt recommendations addressed to appropriate entities for decision-making;
- enable and encourage its members to study the matters at hand in-depth, involve experts that offer different views and allow members to consult with experts they independently select;

and in doing so, in principle, individually and collectively should be free from government and corporate interference, enabling them to form free and independent opinions and recommendations which should be facilitated to be in line with fundamental international human rights norms.

DWB believes that convening GCAs along those lines should be a regular activity of the UN and other intergovernmental organizations in order to seek citizens' input in their agenda-setting and policy-making, to strengthen global citizenship and to educate the wider public. For this purpose, formal procedures should be put in place. Among other things, these procedures need to ensure that the entity in question seriously considers and responds to recommendations put forward by a GCA.

DWB supports the idea of a GCA that is asked to make recommendations on global governance reform and democratization. Polls suggest that a majority of ordinary citizens tends to support the creation of a world parliament. It is thus fair to assume that a randomly selected GCA will be likely to do so as well if it is mandated to examine the issue. Such a GCA can be a stepping stone that advances the creation of a UNPA and, eventually, a world parliament.

Further, DWB supports the idea of a transnational citizens' assembly of democratic countries that examines common root causes of democratic backsliding at the level of individual states, identifies ways of strengthening democracy at home, and makes recommendations on joint policy and action with regard to promoting and defending democracy internationally.

DWB is open to work with and endorse like-minded groups that study and pursue the creation of GCAs.