



Pre-S4D Citizens **Summit**

2023 Report

Pre-S4D Citizens Summit

In Defense of Democracy – Citizens Summit On Democracy

March 27-28, Urban Hotel, Lusaka, Zambia.



About The Citizens Summit in Defense of Democracy & Freedom

Introduction

On March 29 and 30, the Government of the Republic of Zambia co-hosted the Second Summit for Democracy with the United States of America, Costa Rica, the Netherlands, and South Korean governments. This government-led convening was a global follow-up to the first Summit for Democracy hosted by the US Government in 2021 as part of the USA's renewed commitment to democracy at home and confronting autocracies abroad.

It followed a Year of Action (YoA) based on over 750 commitments from participating countries. The second Summit for Democracy was an opportunity for the states and other democracy partners to take stock and assess how to further the intentions of the Summit. The Zambia lag of the convening on Day 2 of the Summit focused on "free, fair, and transparent elections" as the central theme.

Ahead of the Summit on the 27th and 28th of March 2023, members of the Global Democracy Coalition and other African CSOs held the pre-S4D2 Citizens Summit in Defense of Democracy & Freedom (Citizens Summit) as part of the global Partners for Democracy Day. It was attended by about 120 people on day one and 87+ on day 2, drawn from 29 countries.

The Citizens Summit allowed civil society to shape and share their aspirations around the nature and form of democratization, how to make it deliver socio-economically, and how to push back on resurgent authoritarianism on the continent. It also allowed non-state actors to add their voices and influence state parties around S4D commitments through the Citizens' Summit Communique.

Importantly the Citizens' Summit was a unique catalytic moment for Civil Society in Africa and working on African elections and democracy to enhance their networks and strengthen their partnerships and learning coalitions beyond the Summit. It also brought the conversation and the fight for democracy to levels where citizens could access and participate by live-streaming the entire conference and having citizens' groups and local-level organizations participate in the Summit. It vastly increased citizen engagement with the Summit for Democracy and offered an opportunity for cross-sectoral reflections on electoral processes on the continent, bearing in mind that at least 24 African countries, including some S4D Countries, will hold elections in 2023.

<https://www.state.gov/written-commitments-the-summit-for-democracy/>



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Our task at this Citizens Summit in Defence of Democracy is to define the democracy agenda for ourselves, and bring back the people, the civilians, and the CITIZENS into the conversation.

McDonald Lewanika

Accountability Lab
Southern Africa Regional
Director

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The Summit for Democracy is not a check-the-box event but a catalyst for collective action, it's a historic opportunity for stakeholders to come together to deliver concrete pledges and mobilise action to restore and strengthen democracy world wide

Lisa J Peterson

Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary,
Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights
and Labour





Cover Page: Part of participants at the Summit for Democracy in Lusaka, Zambia.

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In Defence of Democracy

The Zambian Minister of Justice, Hon. Mulambo Haimbe; the European Union Ambassador Jacek Jankowski and the Accountability Lab Regional Director - McDonald Lewanika challenge delegates to renew their commitment to democracy.

Is Democracy Delivering for People

Prof Olukoshi Adebayo delivers keynote speech joined by Tiseke Kasambala; Arnold Tsunga; and Dr. Sarah Bireete to problematise the current state of democracy and offer potential solutions.

The State of African Youth Participation in Democratic processes

A conversation with Maxwell Dhlamini; Andrew Songa; Marwa Galaleldin; Merveille Gozo; Doudou Sankhare; and Samson Itodo on the youths' lived experiences, challenges and aspirations.

Money in Politics

Money is a necessary and growing component in modern competitive elections. Mulle Musau moderated a conversation with Henry Muguzi, Dr. Kojo Asante, Baidessou Soukplgue and Tanja Hollstein. The panel noted an absence of effective legal and institutional mechanisms to regulate 'money' leading to an 'arms race' of campaign spending resulting in an astronomical rise in the cost of running for elections

Media Freedom

Journalist harassment before, during and after elections, and associated impunity: Tips on how the media can push back, particularly during elections.

The State of Civic Space

Reflections on the current state of civic space on and offline in Africa and how to expand and protect this space in the context of electoral cycle processes.

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www.kairosgroupafrica.com

Hon. Mulambo Haimbe

Minister of Justice
The Republic of Zambia

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Democracy is in the everyday duties that we carry out and it is about what we do and not only what we say



Session 1: Welcome and Opening Session

This report details the proceedings of the Pre-Summit for Democracy Africa Citizens Summit in Defence of Democracy - Partners for Democracy Day, hosted by Accountability Lab and IDEA International. The Summit, part of the Biden administration’s newly announced U.S. Strategy Towards Sub-Saharan Africa, which seeks to reposition the U.S. as a valuable partner that reaffirms ‘African agency’ was held in Lusaka, Zambia. The pre-Summit brought together about 29 countries, 207 delegates and over 100 decision makers resulting in several resolutions and commitments: to coordinate civil society’s construction of a coordinated program of action around S4D2 commitments and to build sustainable learning coalitions and connections to improve the African continent’s prospects of democratisation; and to use the S4D2’s focus on elections as an opportunity to highlight some of the challenges around the region’s democratisation through an information campaign that spotlights issues and countries to watch.

An emphasis on redefining and reclaiming the role of the citizen in

promoting the enjoyment of and defending democracy that delivers for all was noted and echoed by the Minister of Justice Hon. Mulambo Haimbe; the EU Ambassador - Jacek Jankowski and Dr. Lewanika McDonald. The presenters also challenged the notion and practice of democracy - what it looks like and how it should work and yet in reality ordinary Africans are not experiencing nor are they enjoying the benefits of democracy. A call was therefore made for the summit to deepen citizen participation, and invest in building the capacity of citizens to make their governments accountable to commitments they make before, during and after elections.

In Africa, youth account for more than 60% of the population, yet they remain marginalised and excluded from participating in political and economic opportunities. Despite this, the Summit noted that the youth were energetic, innovative, able and willing to provide leadership and solve some of Africa’s most pressing challenges. It was further emphasised that tokenistic participation for young people or citizens, in general, makes the ideals of democracy elusive.



“We believe Youth should be a strong partner and actor in our societies. It is our role to bring the young generation to the table, to influence real change, and to help them get the experience they need for the responsibility they deserve to carry but equally important is our role to listen to them, their concerns and their ideas.”

Jacek Jankowski, European Ambassador to Zambia.



“We are here to restate our commitment to democracy and to explore how to spread it, make it better in meaningful ways that meet the bread and butter needs of the people. We are here not to make a case that democracy is perfect because it is not; we are here to build on what’s working with our democracies and strengthen our pillars of democracy that are struggling.”

McDonald Lewanika, Accountability Lab Southern Africa Regional Director



Session 2: Setting the tone for the pre-Summit.

As it emerged from the panel conversation on 'The Democracy renewal challenge in Africa', the social contract between the people and their respective governments is broken. This session set the tone for the summit by problematising the challenge that Africa faces in making democracy work for all, it also set the tone on potential pathways that the continent could take to strengthen democracy.

Five Key Emerging Issues

- The continent is experiencing democratic regression characterised by illiberal practices that are taking away the integrity of elections, citizen participation and consolidation of autocratic practices. The democratic project remains a permanent work in progress – thus there is an urgent need to reassert citizen activism.
- The social contract is broken. There is an increasing gap between the voice of the people and the actions of the leaders in fulfilling the aspirations and wishes of the people. Citizens are not experiencing the benefits of democracy or the contact of regular elections. The necessity of democratic renewal cannot be understated.
- The African continent is grappling with weak and corrupt institutions, hence the ability of these institutions to protect the will of the people and enforce the social contract remain highly compromised.
- A notable rise in the weaponization of democracy. Contestation of political power by any means necessary is creating a trust deficit amongst citizens. Power is seen as an end in itself, the notion and practice that everything starts and ends with power acquisition.

Strengthen the relationship between civil society actors and economic actors in the private sector. The illicit financial flows continue to undermine democracy and the democratisation project in Africa.

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How do we repair the breakdown of the social contract, in which the majority are young people, who are not seeing the benefits of democracy, who are not seeing the benefits of regular elections, where six of the continent's Heads of States have been in power for more than 30 years

Tiseke Kasambala,
Africa Director,
Freedom House



Tiseke Kasambala; Dr. Sarah Bireete, Chairperson, Eastern and Horn of Africa Election Observers Network 3. Mr. Arnold Tsunga, National Democratic Institute

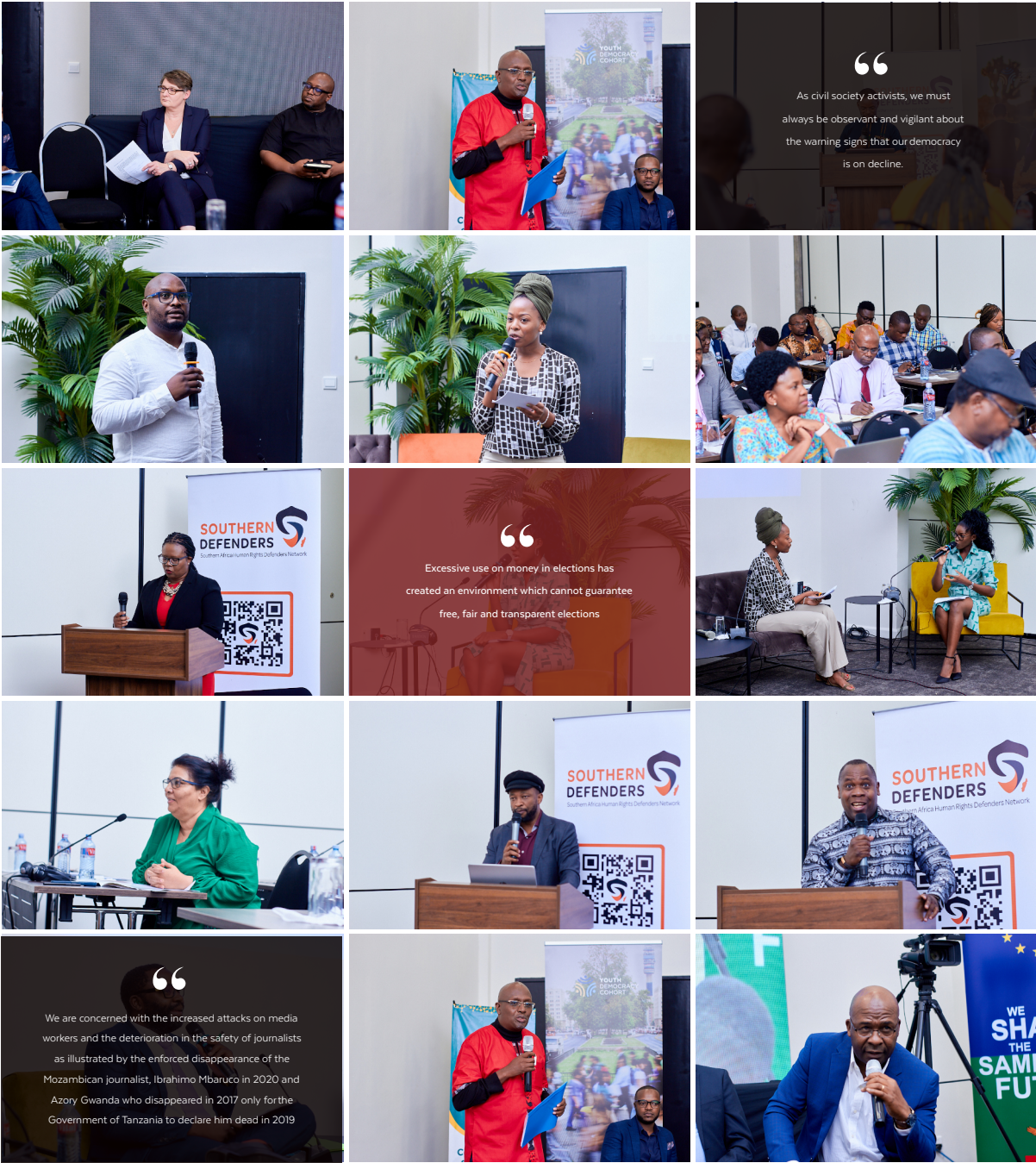
Youth Inclusion in Africa

Session Background: Africa's youth population is growing rapidly, and it is expected that by 2050, the majority of young people in the world will live on the continent. However, even today, there are not enough decent jobs to absorb the up to 20 million young Africans entering the labour market each year. Three-quarters of entrants to the labour market are self-employed or work in microenterprises, and less than 5% will find a formal wage-paying job. Equipping young Africans with the skills required to meet the growing and fast-evolving demands of the labour market is crucial.

What makes you disappointed with youth participation in the continent?	One word which summarises the state of youth participation in the continent?	What makes you happy about youth in the continent?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is limited involvement and inclusion of young people in democratic processes, electoral processes, and decision-making processes in Africa. • Youth mainstreaming is mistaken to be youth inclusion. • Youth lack the interest to participate in politics. • There are realities and idealism when it comes to youth participation in politics. Youth participate meaningfully and at the same time, others don't. • Tribalism, ethnicity, and lack of capacity to participate derail young people to participate meaningfully. • The political terrain is skewed against young people. • The gap between action and rhetoric with regard to government investment in youth participation. 	<p><i>Ambitious, Doers; Active; Peripheral; Passive, Mitigate, and Courage</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Despite youths operating in a hostile and restrictive environment a number of youths have taken a lead as vanguards of democracy and have been pushing the agenda for the restoration of citizen-led governments. • Youth have challenged military and authoritarian regimes in countries such as Sudan in 2019. • Youth are at the heart of innovative approaches to driving citizen engagement around democratic governance issues. • Use of technology to expand civic spaces in Africa through setting up an online platform to petition those in power and expand learning that can impact the day-to-day advocacy work around citizen engagement.

AU Agenda 2063 'The AU has developed several youth development policies and programmes at the continental level aimed at ensuring the continent benefits from its demographic dividend. The policies include the African Youth Charter, Youth Decade Plan of Action, and the Malabo Decision on Youth Empowerment, all of which are implemented through various AU Agenda 2063 programmes.'





Break Away Sessions

MEDIA FREEDOM MONEY IN POLITICS THE STATE OF CIVIC SPACE



Media freedom | Emerging Key Issues

This breakaway session sought to understand the role and impact of technology on civic space and digital repression in promoting civic participation and engagement during elections. There was an inquiry on how the media fraternity was responding to shrinking civic space, and harassment of journalists before, during and after elections.

- Media-related threats to democracy are on the rise. There is an urgent need to increase media freedom, safety, and security for journalists as a critical feature of our

democracies.

- Shrinking of safe digital spaces and governance characterised by internet shutdowns, cyber censorship, attacks.
- Illiberal influences that promote and sponsor draconian media regulations and cybersecurity laws are becoming the new frontiers for restricting free expression on and offline.
- No strong mechanisms that promote accountability amongst member states that are abusing their power and end up attacking media freedoms.
- The rise in and promotion of misinformation, and disinformation by states is increasing the trust deficit amongst citizens as the value of knowledge, information exchange is diminished.



Money in Politics

In a context where there is a growing interest in who rules or leads, the session on money in politics sought to spotlight the implications of unregulated political financing in electoral processes in Africa. The absence of effective legal and institutional mechanisms to regulate political financing has created an ‘arms race’ of campaign spending resulting making the processes of contesting for political power a preserve of the super-rich and open to illiberal influences.



Five Key Emerging Issues

- Women, Youth and other marginalized groups are excluded from contesting in electoral processes because they cannot access campaign finances.
- There is a danger in allowing highly monetized elections as electoral results cease to reflect the will of the people.
- Lack of transparency and accountability in and around election campaign financing and political party financing. States must commit to strengthening and enhancing the integrity of elections as the most visible expression of popular democracy that can allow for genuinely representative governance of the people by the people.
- African countries continue to struggle with the notion and practice of ‘state capture’. As a result, the quality, integrity, freeness, and fairness to ensure genuine electoral contestation remains low.
- Most countries lack robust legal and regulatory frameworks to address abuse of ‘money’ in electoral processes. Hence the proposal to introduce state funding for political parties would increase the competitiveness of smaller political parties, reduce reliance on wealthy candidates and would incentivize inclusion.



The state of Civic space

This session focused on how to improve the role of Human Rights Defenders in safeguarding the civic space, both on and offline and holding authorities to account throughout the entire electoral cycle processes in Africa. The panel also reflected on new ways and practices of raising the cost of civic space and human rights violations during electoral cycle processes.



Emerging Key Issues

- Governments are increasingly threatening civic space and sponsoring repressive non-governmental organisations (NGO) laws under the guise of advancing noble causes but which have the effect of constricting organised civil society.
- Civil society broadly and Human Rights Defenders must continue to offer oversight on governments and institutions (public and private).
- Solidarity between civil society organizations across borders is essential as it is often only with the support of fellow activists and campaigners outside their countries that defenders of democracy are able to continue their work.
- Civil Society should continue to be independent, in defence of and be the promoters of human rights and the rule of law.
- Lessons for the future must be drawn from the weaponization of COVID-19 by African governments to restrict civic participation.

Spotlighting Nigeria: The Good, The Bad and the Ugly – implications for Democratic Renewal in Africa.

Nigeria is one of Africa’s largest democracies. Over the years Nigeria has conducted credible elections, allowing the peaceful transition of power. CSOs and media have played essential roles in building knowledge and complementing the capacity of the Electoral Management Body to deliver credible elections.

Five big issues that defined the 2023 general election

- 01**

Nigeria's new electoral legal framework, 2022 Electoral Act
- 02**

Identity Politics
- 03**

Introduction of new electoral technologies (BVAS and IReV)
- 04**

Nigeria's Demonetization policy
- 05**

Voter suppression and violence

What went wrong?

- 01**

Operational lapses resulted in late opening of polls
- 02**

Technical glitches and delayed electronic transmission of results
- 03**

Tactical use of violence to influence electoral outcome
- 04**

Non-compliance with electoral guidelines
- 05**

Manipulation of election results
- 06**

Lack of transparency and institutional incompetence

Big lessons

- 01** Electoral reforms can deliver credible elections if stakeholders especially political parties comply with rules and standards.
- 02** The polarizing effect of identity politics is unprecedented.
- 03** A captured electoral commission is a big threat to democracy.
- 04** Electoral technology is no silver bullet. It takes more than electoral technology to protect electoral integrity.
- 05** Discretionary powers is a potential tool for election manipulation.
- 06** New actors and alliances produce dramatic shifts in political culture and voter behavior.
- 07** Broken public trust undermines the attainment of national goals.





Communique

of the Second Summit For Democracy held on 29 and 30 March 2023, Lusaka Zambia from the Citizens Summit in Defence of Democracy and Freedom, held in Lusaka, Zambia

Pre-S4D
Citizens Summit
2023

WE, THE CITIZENS of Africa, gathered in Lusaka, Zambia, for the Citizens Summit in Defence of Democracy and Freedom, on the 27th and 28th of March 2023, choices and joint efforts of the citizens of this continent and that people are at the center of the building and sustaining democracy.

UNITED in our commitment to building, strengthening, and sustaining democracy on our continent.

APPRECIATING AND RECOGNISING that African citizens remain deeply committed to democracy and accountable government and have an unyielding belief that honest and accountable government is the only way our people can rise to meet the pressing challenges that confront our states.

RECOGNISING that while the demand for democracy is high, supply remains low and, in some cases, is in decline.

MINDFUL that democracy must yield socio-political and economic dividends for ordinary citizens in practical and tangible ways through peace, greater freedom, prosperity, and better quality of life; that bridges the gap between the rich and poor.

ACKNOWLEDGING that the structures and foundations of democracy are based on the

CONCERNED by the continued shrinking of democratic and civic space across the continent and the apparent capture and manipulation of state institutions in some countries to serve causes other than democracy and to advance partisan and sectarian interests.

DETERMINED to work hand in hand with our governments to protect democratic gains on the African continent and push back on democratic backsliding and decline.

REAFFIRMING our commitment to freedom of expression and free media as key cornerstones of democracy

RESOLUTE in our belief that freedom matters and that it is integral for our democracies to work in ways that prioritise fairness and justice, security and safety, and prosperity for all people, and;

CONFIDENT in the knowledge that democracies should embrace accountability, oversight, peer-review, and new ideas.

Therefore, resolve and recommend the following to the Summit for Democracy:

On youth engagement in democratic processes and spaces

1. That states and all stakeholders must find ways to ensure that young people participate, speak and be heard, engage, and use their creative energies for the good of the continent and to ensure their presence at the decision-making table. Governments must facilitate their effective participation in democratic processes. Africa will benefit immensely by capitalising on the democratic dividend of a growing youthful population.

2. That state actors and non-state actors alike, including civil society and the private sector, prioritise the effective participation of young people in governance and economic spaces and that young people themselves must continue to actively pursue effective non-tokenistic participation that allows their voices to be heard and integrated into policymaking.

3. That partners for democracy across civil society and state institutions, through a range of interventions and the provision of resources, facilitate the capacitating and building of knowledge for young people on democracy and electoral issues, including through supporting, encouraging, facilitating, and accommodating young people with a full agency to engage on issues of democracy.

4. Civil society groups in Africa, through a Call to Action prepared by the Youth Democracy Cohort, calls for all Summit for Democracy stakeholders to strengthen youth participation beyond the second summit in three domains: to engage young people in Summit for Democracy cohorts, to include young people in stakeholders post-Summit planning; and for governments to make at least one commitment on youth political participation within six months of the 2nd Summit for Democracy – concerning a menu of possible commitments prepared by the Youth Democracy Cohort to help enhance youth participation around 33 actionable and specific recommendations.

On media freedom and free expression

5. That states, African leaders, and partners for democracy address media-related threats to democracy and increase media freedom and safety and security for journalists as a critical feature of our democracies.



6. That states African leaders and partners for democracy continue to promote open and safe digital spaces and governance devoid of internet shutdowns, cyber censorship, attacks, misinformation, and disinformation.
7. That states and partners for democracy desist from sponsoring draconian media regulations and cybersecurity laws, which are becoming the new frontiers for restricting free expression on and offline.
8. That democracies and partners for democracy review and sanction each other and intransigent authorities without fear or favour, when there are media freedom and digital platform violations.
9. That states and partners for democracy recognise the value of knowledge, information exchange, and free expression and the need to protect journalists and journalism. At the same time, laws and regulations must facilitate and enable the free exchange of information on and offline.

On civic and democratic space

10. That our governments recognise that democracy cannot be consolidated without an open and vibrant civic space that allows citizens to be at the centre of democratic processes and building.

11. That our governments desist and discourage their peers from threatening civic space and sponsoring repressive non-governmental organisations (NGO) laws under the guise of advancing noble causes but which have the effect of constricting organised civil society.

12. We demand that all governments that have put in place restrictive CSO laws roll them back immediately as there is no place in democratic societies for laws that undermine fundamental freedoms.

13 That across Africa, many pro-democracy groups, and individuals that, include activists, civil society actors, the media, artists, and human rights defenders, operate in precarious conditions of fear, reprisals, attacks, and threats. This undermines the contribution of citizens to democratic practice and participation in democratic processes outside of spaces organised by the State.

14. Governments must embrace their international obligations and constitutional responsibilities to protect and implement effective and resourced mechanisms to promote and protect human rights defenders.

15. That, even in moments of disaster and emergency, aptly illustrated by the COVID-19 pandemic, governments must commit to disaster and emergency responses that protect and promote human rights, good governance, democratic practice, and open and safe civic space.

16. That, governments, and partners for democracy commit to strengthening and enhancing the integrity of elections as the most visible expression of popular democracy that can allow for genuinely representative governance of the people by the people.

17. While the quantity of elections has increased, their quality, integrity, freeness, and fairness to ensure genuine electoral contestation remains low. Poor-quality elections in Africa are threat multipliers to the tenets of democracy. Undemocratic elections in Africa threaten freedoms of speech, expression, association, and assembly. Elections are in many ways performative, without procedural certainty but rife with the certainty of outcomes.

18. We enjoin our governments and other partners for democracy to promote, encourage and support genuine democratic ballots where there is process certainty and outcome uncertainty and where the people's will is respected.

19. We encourage our governments, The African Union, and Regional Economic Communities (RECs) to insist on sound electoral practices per the African Charter on Democracy, Governance, and Elections and regional protocols for conducting democratic elections.

20. We urge our governments to commit to standardising legal frameworks on political financing to promote accountability, and transparency in the financing of political parties, election campaigns, and referenda. This includes strengthening institutions that offer political finance oversight in line with article 7.3 of the United Nations Convention against Corruption, which calls on states to take appropriate legislative and administrative measures to enhance transparency in the funding of candidatures for elected public office and political parties.

21. We encourage the African Union (AU) to coordinate with African States to pass a resolution on a joint standard for political finance and set up a peer review mechanism on political finance at continental and national levels. There must be international support for operationalization of best practices in political party and campaign finance. Political finance must be approached holistically through effective interagency collaboration, coordination and oversight, extensive citizen engagement, and the integration of indigenous approaches that foster transparency and accountability, bearing in mind the local context.

22. We urge our governments to actively promote, strengthen, and encourage citizen engagement and participation throughout the electoral cycle, including by providing an enabling environment for such participation.

23. We urge our governments and partners for democracy to facilitate the active involvement of all stakeholders in the private sector, civil society, and academia in political and government processes. Inclusivity, consultation, engagement, representation, and participation are hallmarks of democratic practice.

WE commit to working together as citizens with other democracy stakeholders and our governments to realise the consolidation of democracy on our continent.

28 March 2023

LUSAKA, REPUBLIC OF ZAMBIA

Acknowledgements

The Pre-S4D Citizens Summit in Defense of Democracy & Freedom was a collaborative platform by a diverse cast of CSOs for deep reflection on the challenges of democracy on the continent and collective exploration of possible solutions.

The effort benefitted from central coordination by International IDEA and Accountability Lab who deployed numerous human and financial resources to ensure the staging of the event. This coordinating core was well supported by a Steering team for the event which consistently met every Tuesday since the beginning of February 2023 to shape the event, commit to participation and mobilization. These include:

- 1. Accountability Lab*
- 2. Afeonet*
- 3. Alliance for Finance Monitoring (ACFIM)*
- 4. Carter Centre, Zambia*
- 5. Christian Churches Monitoring Group*
- 6. European Partnership for Democracy*
- 7. International IDEA*
- 8. Kofi Annan Foundation*
- 9. Southern Defenders*
- 10. Westminster Foundation for Democracy*

The Summit benefited from generous and timely financial and conceptual support from:

- 1. European Union*
- 2. Ford Foundation*
- 3. Freedom House*

And many other INGOs who supported their partners and individual delegates' travel.

About the Global Democracy Coalition

The Global Democracy Coalition was formed in October of 2021, convened by International IDEA and other democracy and democracy assistance organizations from around the world. The goal was to create an informal group of organizations committed to the advancement of democracy, working together to engage constructively with the Summit for Democracy

It has now evolved into a strategic multi-stakeholder alliance of more than 90 democracy organizations from around the world committed to advance and protect democracy worldwide and to influence the Summits for Democracy and attendant commitments. It provides a platform for dialogue, knowledge exchange and experience-sharing, and advocacy around the Summits for Democracy and beyond.

