

Concept Note
Second Meeting “In Defense of Democracy: Fighting Against Extremism”

24 September 2025

***Convened by** H.E. President Gabriel Boric, President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva,
President of the Government of Spain Pedro Sánchez*

1. Second Meeting “In Defense of Democracy” (New York, September 2025)

In a context of global uncertainty and rising threats to democratic values, amid distrust and social discontent, the second meeting of the “In Defense of Democracy: Fighting Against Extremism” initiative represents a critical opportunity to reaffirm shared commitments, promote innovative solutions, and strengthen multilateral cooperation.

The objective of this initiative is to advance an active democratic diplomacy that fosters cooperation among like-minded democratic states in the face of institutional erosion, disinformation, hate speech, and growing social inequality. This platform seeks to articulate a collective response to the challenges facing contemporary democracies, starting from a diagnosis of the root causes of public discontent and distrust fueling extremism, and promoting concrete actions to revitalize democratic institutions, to counter extremist narratives, and to advance toward more just, inclusive, and cohesive societies.

In this regard, the meeting, held during the United Nations General Assembly, aims to amplify this shared effort by articulating an alternative narrative to the global democratic backsliding, while building on the commitments made in 2024 and the progress achieved during the July 2025 meeting in Chile, through three priority areas:

- **Defense of democracy, its institutions, and multilateralism:** Assessment of threats and strategies to reinforce democratic governance.
- **Extremism and inequality:** The impact of extremist ideologies and inequality on political and social stability.
- **Disinformation and digital technologies:** Address the rapid spread of disinformation with the aim of countering manipulative narratives and ensuring access to reliable information.

2. Background

- **First Meeting “In Defense of Democracy: Fighting Against Extremism” (24 September 2024)**

On 24 September 2024, within the framework of the 79th session of the United Nations General Assembly, a high-level meeting convened by Brazil and Spain brought together a diverse group of countries. The objective was to deliberate on the threats posed by extremist movements to democracy across different parts of the world.

Participants included leaders and representatives from Barbados, Cabo Verde, Canada, Colombia, France, Kenya, Mexico, Norway, Senegal, Timor-Leste, and the United States, as well as the President of the European Council and the United Nations Deputy Secretary-General.

The event took place as a roundtable, during which participants reiterated their commitment to the defense of democracy and acknowledged that polarization, extremism, and the spread of disinformation are transnational phenomena that erode social cohesion and fuel violence and instability. The meeting also strongly reaffirmed the need for ongoing coordination in addressing challenges to democracy.

- **Preparatory Meeting “Democracy Always” (21 July 2025)**

In July 2025, the Presidents of Chile, Brazil, Spain, Colombia, and Uruguay met in Santiago, hosted by President Gabriel Boric, to continue the “In Defense of Democracy” initiative launched at the 2024 UN General Assembly. Held under the banner “**Democracy Always,**” the meeting aimed to deepen a common agenda in response to democratic backsliding, the rise of extremism, disinformation, and the structural inequalities affecting our societies.

Throughout the meeting, the Heads of State discussed proposals around three thematic areas: strengthening democracy and multilateralism; regulating the digital sphere and combating disinformation; and addressing inequality as a foundation for resilient democracies. The meeting also served to formalize the agreement to convene a second high-level meeting on the sidelines of the 2025 UN General Assembly.

The primary courses of action proposed were:

- **Multilateral reform:** Promote a reform of the international governance system—particularly the United Nations—to make it more effective, participatory, and representative.
- **Active democratic diplomacy:** Strengthen cooperation among States based on democratic values, human rights, and social justice.
- **International collaboration on digital governance:** Promote algorithmic transparency, information integrity, and technical cooperation on data management.

- **Establishment of a Multilateral Youth Observatory on Extremism:** Led by the Ibero-American Youth Organization, it aims to generate data, share best practices, and develop public policies from an intersectional and youth-inclusive perspective.
- **Network of think tanks:** Support the creation of an international network of think tanks committed to democracy, providing evidence, rigorous analysis, and public policy proposals.
- **Fiscal and climate commitments:** Support initiatives that strengthen international fiscal cooperation and enhance the integrity of climate change information.

The Santiago Declaration underscored the urgency of continuing to strengthen a broad-based initiative that brings together governments, civil society, academia, and parliaments to respond in a coordinated manner to the threats facing democracy. The convening of a second high-level meeting of the “In Defense of Democracy: Fighting Against Extremism” initiative was agreed upon during the 80th session of the UN General Assembly in September.