

**PLATFORM FOR DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE IN THE ISLAMIC WORLD**  
**ISTANBUL, TURKEY**  
**14 APRIL 2004**

We, being political practitioners from predominantly Muslim countries in Africa, Asia, Europe and the Middle East, met in Istanbul, Turkey, from April 12 to 14, 2004, at the Congress of Democrats from the Islamic World. We are former and current heads of state and government, cabinet ministers, members of parliament, and civic and political party leaders with experience in democratic governance and participation. Reflecting the hopes and aspirations of our peoples, we are determined to offer the following Platform for Democratic Governance in the Islamic World:

**PREAMBLE**

Principles of Islamic culture and values include tolerance, justice and participation, together with peace. These principles provide the basis for democratic governance and a more peaceful and prosperous world. Through their application, such principles and values demonstrate that cultural expressions and democratic processes reinforce each other, thereby confirming the compatibility of Islam and the principles of democracy.

These principles of Islamic culture and values call for a democratic political process that maintains our common cultural identity while guaranteeing all individuals their rights and freedoms, as enumerated in the United Nations (UN) Charter, European Union (EU) Charter, Warsaw Declaration, Universal Declaration of Human Rights, European Convention of Human Rights, European Charter of Fundamental Rights, UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, African Charter of Human Rights, and the Sana'a Declarations of 1999 and 2004.

Each of these principles carries with them commitments to which democrats from the Islamic world are bound.

In relation to the above principles and values, convinced that the existence of different viewpoints strengthens rather than diminishes our societies, we believe in the following:

**TOLERANCE**

- Freedom of thought, conscience and belief;
- Freedom of expression and opinion;
- Freedom and pluralism of the media; and
- Freedom of association and assembly.

**JUSTICE**

- Equal rights for all peoples, without distinction of any kind, such as race, color, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other social and economic status;

- The principle of equality shall not prevent the adoption or maintenance of temporary measures providing for specific advantages in favor of women and groups that have been under-represented in our political process;
- The rule of law and an independent judiciary;
- Abolition of torture, persecution, and cruel or unusual punishment; and
- The reduction of poverty and the promotion of development.

## **PARTICIPATION**

- Free, fair and regular multiparty elections that enable a peaceful transfer of power and that hold public confidence through the establishment of independent election commissions that are nonpartisan or politically balanced, and that guarantee the right to vote for all citizens of full age regardless of gender;
- Democratic decision-making processes that encourage the equal participation of men and women;
- Societies that are informed and open via independent media outlets, civic education programs and a civil society that actively participates in political life;
- Accountable political parties that represent citizens' interests, and legislatures that are legitimized through democratic and transparent elections and genuine political competition;
- A system of democratic governance that seeks to prevent corruption and strengthen the rule of law through mechanisms of transparency and accountability, freedom of information, and parliamentary and independent civil society oversight;
- Consistent with the rights of children, effective measures that make education available and accessible to all girls and boys; and
- Transparent financial policies and corporate governance that contribute to economic prosperity.

This Platform demonstrates that the principles of Islam and the principles of democratic governance are mutually reinforcing.

We believe that all nations and all individuals who follow the principles of this Platform will contribute to human dignity, social cohesion, economic prosperity, and security while promoting understanding and peace between all peoples.

We commit ourselves to give concrete expression to these principles through follow-up initiatives and a network of democrats from the Islamic world.