Mr. Chairman,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to thank you for the invitation to participate in this Roundtable. It is a pleasure for me to represent the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe at this Second Ministerial of the Community of Democracies, and I express also my thanks to the Republic of Korea for their efforts in organizing this important Conference. For those who do not know me, I am the Deputy Director of the OSCE's Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, which is located in Warsaw. I am here in my own behalf and on behalf of Secretary General Jan Kubis.

The OSCE includes 55 participating States in North America, Europe, the Southern Caucasus and Central Asia, but I note with regret that, quite rightly, not all OSCE participating States were invited to attend this meeting. The fact is that not all states in the OSCE region are qualified to participate in the Community of Democracies.

It was with great interest that I read the discussion papers prepared by the Chairmen of these four roundtables. In fact, I was torn as to which one I would attend, as all four of the topics are of relevance and interest to me and the OSCE. The OSCE is, by definition, a "regional organization for cooperation to promote democracy" (that's Roundtable II). From the very outset of the OSCE, democratization and human rights have been an important and integral part of the work to enhance security in Europe. The intention of the participating States was to create a comprehensive framework for peace and stability in Europe, based on a co-operative concept of security, which includes the politico-military dimension, the economic dimension and the human dimension. It is important to stress that there is no hierarchy among these OSCE principles. It is therefore not possible for any government in a participating State to claim that it must establish political or economic security before addressing human rights and strengthening democracy.

As will be evident from its name, my Office spends much of its time on "Consolidating Democratic Institutions" and working to promote and defend human rights, which is what this Roundtable is all about. We do this by observing and assessing elections throughout the OSCE region, which comprises 55 participating States in North America, Europe, the South Caucasus and Central Asia, making recommendations on improvements in electoral code and procedures, and offering assistance where needed in this field. We also monitor the human rights situation in participating States and take action where we see problems, discreetly or in more public manner depending on the circumstances, and we host a number of "human dimension" meetings each year, providing a forum for discussion of specific
issues and the venue for an annual review by the participating States (and the NGO community) of how their peers are implementing their commitments in this field.

We are also active through my Office in dozens of projects each year, most of them funded by generous voluntary contributions from governments in the region, helping other governments. These projects bring -- to States which want them -- knowledge and expertise in the rule of law, gender equality, strengthening civil society, freedom of assembly, religion, and movement, as well as the fights against trafficking in human beings and against terrorism. On the latter issue, I would briefly note that we remain convinced that terrorism is best uprooted by removing the soil in which it grows, including injustice, despair, lack of opportunity for expression of ideas or beliefs, etc., and our work aims to ensure that governments keep their human dimension commitments firmly in mind as they work to eliminate terrorism.

The OSCE also has a Representative on Freedom of the Media, established in December 1997 and tasked to observe relevant media developments in all OSCE participating States with a view of providing early warning on violations of freedom of expression. The Representative's second main task is to assist participating States by advocating and promoting full compliance with OSCE principles and commitments regarding freedom of expression and free media. His Office also carries out a number of projects designed to sensitize citizens and governments to the importance of freedom of the media in protecting human rights and fostering democracy in their countries.