



Video Contest Launched at UN to Promote Dialogue on Democracy

CONTACT INFO: Laura Hesselton
Phone: 202/453-8363
E-Mail: Hesseltonle@state.gov

NEW YORK - September 15, 2008 – The Democracy Video Challenge, a global call to action celebrating democracy, launched today during International Democracy Day at the United Nations. The Challenge invites citizens from around the world to create short videos that complete the phrase: "*Democracy is...*" in an effort to enhance the global dialogue on democracy.

The Democracy Video Challenge is a new effort supported by a unique partnership comprised of democracy and youth organizations, the film and entertainment industry, academia, and the U.S. government. Richard Engel, NBC's chief foreign affairs correspondent, served as Master of Ceremonies for the contest's global launch. (Partners represented at the launch are listed below.)

"Film is a window into our common humanity - the challenges and joys that make up the universal human experience - no matter what language we speak or where we were born. The young filmmakers taking part in this challenge will harness the magic of this powerful art form to connect to people around the world in a global discussion on democracy," said Michael Apted, President of the Directors Guild of America, a partner in the Democracy Video Challenge.

The Challenge will honor seven winning videos: one each from Sub-Saharan Africa, East Asia and the Pacific, Europe, the Near East and North Africa, South and Central Asia, and the Western Hemisphere, and one anonymous video. The winning videos will be selected by global online voting. The video platform is being provided by YouTube (www.youtube.com/democrachallenge).

"The Challenge breaks fresh ground for the use of new media in public diplomacy. We in the State Department and our partners are not trying to define democracy for young people around the world. Rather, the Challenge asks participants to share their visions of what democracy means. If the Challenge can generate thought and debate about democracy, on the medium of choice for young people, we'll have achieved success," Under Secretary of State for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs James K. Glassman said.

The winners will participate in screenings of their videos in Hollywood, New York, and Washington, D.C., hosted by the Directors Guild of America and the Motion Picture Association of America. In New York and Hollywood, the winners will spend time on TV/film sets, and will meet with directors, film technicians, professional talent agents, and new media experts. They will also receive tickets to the Universal Studios theme park in Los Angeles. In Washington, D.C., the winners will meet with democracy advocates, the media, and U.S. government officials.

-more-



Democracy Video Challenge Partners include: the Center for International Private Enterprise (CIPE), the International Republican Institute (IRI), the National Democratic Institute (NDI), the International Youth Foundation (IYF), the Directors Guild of America (DGA), the Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA), NBC Universal, NYU's Tisch School of the Arts, TakingITGlobal, USC's School of Cinematic Arts, and the U.S. Department of State.

Partner representatives attending the launch event include:

Film/Media/Entertainment

NBC Universal – Paula Madison, Executive Vice President, Diversity & Chief Diversity Officer

DGA – Jean Frost, Assistant Eastern Executive Director

MPAA – Anissa Whitten, Vice President, International Affairs and Trade Policy

Democracy

CIPE – John Sullivan, Executive Director

IRI – Elizabeth Dugan, Vice President for Programs

NDI – Kathy Gest, Director of Public Affairs

Youth

IYF – Jim Peirce, Vice President, Planning and Outreach

TIG – Natalie Rodic, Project Coordinator, Youth Media Exchange

Academia

NYU – Mary Schmidt Campbell, Dean of the Tisch School of the Arts

U.S. Government

Department of State – James K. Glassman, Under Secretary of State for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs

Department of State – Jeremy Curtin, Coordinator, Bureau of International Information Programs

###

