

Diplomatic Missions in Islamabad Support the Democratic Process in Pakistan

8 May 2013 - The embassies and high commissions of Australia, Canada, Japan, Norway, Switzerland, the United States of America, as well as the European Union Delegation, in agreement with EU heads of missions in Islamabad, recognize the commitment to democracy of the over 4,600 candidates standing for office federally, the 11,000 standing provincially and the 86 million Pakistani citizens registered to vote and express our unequivocal support for free, credible and transparent elections in Pakistan.

We express our sympathy for the victims of recent violence and their families and welcome the efforts of Pakistan's authorities to provide security for the elections. The deliberate targeting of candidates and supporters by terrorist groups in Pakistan is an attack on the democratic rights of all candidates, democratic institutions and governance, and the internationally recognized right of the people of Pakistan to take part in the government of their country through freely chosen representatives. We welcome the call by Pakistan's religious leaders, supported by the major political parties, urging voters to go to the polls and exercise their right to choose their political representatives.

It is essential for Pakistan's continued democratic development that women and men in all parts of Pakistan feel safe to commit their energies to the democratic process by standing for election and voting without fear.

The 2013 general elections are a historic moment for Pakistan, where political authority is being passed from one elected government to another, and it is only through free, credible and transparent elections that the rights of the people of Pakistan can adequately be respected.

