



United Nations



# Democracy and Development:

The Role of the UN



**DiscussionPaper**

September 2013



*The effectiveness of institutions and the soundness of democracy politics are acknowledged as catalysts for development. Democracy creates the enabling environment in which policy choices are subject to the control of free and responsible citizens capable of holding government and state institutions accountable for their implementation.*



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ISBN: 978-91-86565-91-6

## INTERNATIONAL IDEA AT A GLANCE

*Democracy remains a universal human aspiration and a powerful force of political mobilization for change, as witnessed by citizen-led movements which are demanding democratic reform.*

International IDEA's Strategy 2012–2017

### What is International IDEA?

The International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International IDEA) is an intergovernmental organization with a mission to support sustainable democracy worldwide.

The objectives of the Institute are to support stronger democratic institutions and processes, and more sustainable, effective and legitimate democracy.

International IDEA is the only global intergovernmental organization with the sole mandate of supporting democracy; its vision is to become the primary global actor in sharing comparative knowledge and experience in support of democracy.

### What does International IDEA do?

International IDEA produces comparative knowledge in its key areas of expertise: electoral processes, constitution building, political participation and representation, and democracy and development, as well as on democracy as it relates to gender, diversity, and conflict and security.

IDEA brings this knowledge to national and local actors who are working for democratic reform, and facilitates dialogue in support of democratic change.

In its work, IDEA aims for:

- Increased capacity, legitimacy and credibility of democracy
- More inclusive participation and accountable representation
- More effective and legitimate democracy cooperation

### How does International IDEA work?

Because democracy grows from within societies, it is constantly evolving. There is no single and universally applicable model of democracy; the critical choices are best made, and the quality of democracy best gauged, by the citizens themselves. IDEA's work reflects this; the Institute's work is organized at global, regional and country level, focusing on the citizen as the driver of change.

IDEA's work is non-prescriptive and IDEA takes an impartial and collaborative approach to democracy cooperation; emphasizing diversity in democracy, equal political participation, representation of women and men in politics and decision making, and helping to enhance the political will required for change.

The Institute brings together a wide range of political entities and opinion leaders. By convening seminars, conferences and capacity building workshops, IDEA facilitates the exchange of knowledge at global, regional and national levels.

### Where does International IDEA work?

International IDEA works worldwide. Based in Stockholm, Sweden, the Institute has offices in the Africa, Asia and the Pacific, Latin America and the Caribbean, and West Asia and North Africa regions.

International IDEA is a Permanent Observer to the United Nations.

### Member States

International IDEA's Member States are all democracies and provide both political and financial support to the work of the Institute. The Member States include Australia, Barbados, Belgium, Botswana, Canada, Cape Verde, Chile, Costa Rica, Denmark, the Dominican Republic, Finland, Germany, Ghana, India, Mauritius, Mexico, Mongolia, Namibia, the Netherlands, Norway, Peru, the Philippines, Portugal, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and Uruguay. Japan has observer status.

### Governance

International IDEA is governed by a Council composed of its Member States and assisted by a Board of Advisers. Mr Vidar Helgesen, Norway's former Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, is the Secretary-General.

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# **Democracy and Development:**

## The Role of the UN

Editor: Massimo Tommasoli

Rapporteur: Timothy Sisk

Report from two international round tables on democracy and development co-organized by International IDEA, UN Development Programme, and UN Department of Political Affairs

# Key Recommendations

Twelve key recommendations about democracy and development, and the role of the UN, emerged from the Round Table:

- 1 Reflections on how democracy building is both an intrinsic goal, and serves instrumentally to advance development, should be essential to the United Nations consultations to derive a new development framework following the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in 2015.
- 2 While democracy's contribution to development, or development's contribution to democracy, are complex, context specific and at times contentious, the UN should continue to explore, support and promote the essential and mutually beneficial aspects of both processes.
- 3 The UN should contribute to building an empirical body of knowledge which demonstrates that democratic governance, with a rights based perspective that mainstreams gender equality, is central to achieving development gains in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.
- 4 The UN must be more systematic in its actions, and more explicit about its role, in democracy building worldwide. Grounded in its normative foundations, UN action should be committed to advancing democracy through principled, consistent engagement in pursuit of the Organization's three pillars of peace and security, human rights, and development.
- 5 The UN must further develop its own internal policies and capacity to more effectively assist countries in transition toward democracy and support nascent democratic transitions.
- 6 In view of democracy building being a long term, complex and highly context driven process, the UN's democracy assistance needs to be grounded in both a deep understanding of local realities and solid comparative knowledge.
- 7 The UN's long standing commitment to the principle of national ownership should be defined and exercised in a more inclusive manner, and informed by a context specific understanding of the mutually reinforcing relationship between democracy and development.
- 8 Short term efforts to achieve peaceful transitions to a new, stable political order must be linked to strategic long term approaches that aim to develop institutions that are more broadly participatory and that allow for all voices – including those of the poor, historically disadvantaged and vulnerable – to be heard.
- 9 Within the UN, it remains a common concern that at the global policy and at field levels, more needs to be done to create a sense of common vision across the democracy building, peace building and development assistance branches of the UN system.
- 10 The UN should bridge the gap between policy and practice in addressing the linkages between democracy and development.
- 11 Reforms are needed to address the way that traditional democracy building assistance is conceptualized and carried out.
- 12 It will be necessary to develop stronger partnerships between the UN – both at the global level, in regional contexts and at country level – with other key actors, in support of democracy.

# Executive Summary

**W**hile the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) are being evaluated in terms of aspirations versus actual results ahead of their landmark review in 2015, the time is ripe for revisiting the fundamental relationships between democratic governance, and particularly democracy in principle and in practice, and the achievement of development outcomes. After a period of questioning and reflection on both democracy assistance and development aid, and in light of recent transitions occurring in the Arab world and beyond, new perspectives and approaches are urgently needed.

## Conclusions

### ***Debating the Democracy-Development Nexus***

While the evidence in the scholarly literature is mixed and inconclusive, there is little disagreement that over time *democracy* and development are mutually reinforcing. Advances in one may produce advances in the other, in a process of mutual interaction and reinforcement. The term 'good governance' is often used as proxy to the broader concept of democracy's contribution to, and role in, development. However, participants contended that democracy, not just 'good governance' (or even more minimal expressions, such as 'good enough governance') is indeed essential to development, encompassing not only key institutions and processes but also the concepts of citizens' voice, participation, inclusion and nurturing a democratic culture. Some participants further pointed out that, at a minimum, there is no countervailing evidence to suggest that democracy must be sacrificed for development, or that somehow developmentally-oriented autocracies have

any better track record in the long run.

Through the various debates and comparative experiences examined during the 2008 and 2011 roundtables, participants evaluated that ultimately democracy does matter for achieving development outcomes. The core attributes of democracy such as participation, inclusivity, responsiveness to citizen demands, and accountability, do contribute directly as well as indirectly to development, when paired with state capacities such as safety and security, rule of law and access to justice, a professional public administration, and basic service delivery in areas such as education and health care.

On the other hand, participants also acknowledged that poverty, hunger and disease can limit people's ability to effectively exercise their political and civil rights. Thus, development also matters for democracy. The lack of development in the form of economic stagnation, persistent inequalities and/or deep poverty, can result in undermining people's faith in formal democratic systems of government, even in countries or regions where these systems were considered well consolidated. It is a reality that democracies do not always deliver development at the level and pace expected by citizens. Furthermore, formal and essential democratic processes such as the organizing and holding of regular, competitive elections – often strongly favoured by international donors in their democracy assistance – on their own, are not enough to improve the lives of the poor.

In all, however, there was an understanding that while individual democratic governments do not always get high marks for delivering on development in accordance with people's needs and expectations, the system's role in guaranteeing citizens' voice to express and demand those needs as well as citizens' rights to remove those who do not govern in accordance with those expectations – the

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essence of democracy – is indispensable for accountability and for the sustainability of development over time. Key to ensuring better development outcomes, which democracy can provide, is an enabling environment in which even the poorest and most marginalized can have a voice and help to shape the development agenda. The final conclusion was that – although it is not the only variable to consider – development, in the long term, is less likely to succeed unless it is based on an inclusive, democratic political settlement.

### ***Rethinking Approaches to Building Democracy and Development***

The challenge now, participants argued, is to use the opportunities created by transitional moments in rapidly changing societies to simultaneously further democracy and development objectives. This means ensuring that national development plans and economic reforms are broadly inclusive and participatory, that institutions of the state are made more accountable, and that electoral processes and constitution making processes are designed in such a way as to be broadly inclusive, especially of minorities, women and vulnerable groups.

Accountability and transparency, grounded in checks and balances especially on executive power, were identified as elements that would remain a critical challenge in the years ahead for emerging democracies, which would also be decisive for their development prospects.

## **Recommendations**

The UN should rethink how democracy building is traditionally carried out, as well as the conventional approaches to development aid. There is need for further ‘democratizing development’ to break down current silos or walls between democracy building and

development partnership implementation, especially in terms of the coherence of its delivery. For example, national and regional human development reports could prove to be even more useful tools by doing more to combine the analysis and monitoring of development outcomes and objectives with a more central appreciation of how citizen rights and participation affect the likelihood of sustainable progress.

### ***Addressing Democracy within the Post-2015 Development Agenda***

**1. Reflections on how democracy building is both an intrinsic goal, and serves instrumentally to advance development, should be essential to the United Nations consultations to derive a new development framework following the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in 2015.**

Recognizing that each country specific context is unique, there should be deliberation on how improvements in democracy representation, accountability and access to information, and inclusive governance are instrumental to development goals, especially for women. These issues should be central to the deliberations of UN entities and to the discussions of UN Member States, which will be the ultimate framers of the Post-2015 Development Agenda.

**2. While democracy’s contribution to development, or development’s contribution to democracy, are complex, context specific and at times contentious, the UN should continue to explore, support and promote the essential and mutually beneficial aspects of both processes.**

**3. The UN should contribute to building an empirical body of knowledge which demonstrates that democratic governance, with a rights based perspective that mainstreams gender equality, is central**



to achieving development gains in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. UN bodies and agencies should aim to demonstrate consistently *how* democratic principles and practices such as respect for human rights, rule of law, accountability, credible and transparent electoral processes, political pluralism and civil society engagement can directly and indirectly contribute to gains in development. Especially, evidence supporting the positive effects of women's representation on development outcomes should be presented to show how specific democracy building goals are related directly to progress toward development goals in areas such as education and health.

***Engaging in a Principled and Consistent Manner on Democracy and Development***

**4. The UN must be more systematic in its actions, and more explicit about its role, in democracy building worldwide. Grounded in its normative foundations, UN action should be committed to advancing democracy through principled, consistent engagement in pursuit of the Organization's three pillars of peace and security, human rights and development.** The UN's unambiguous role as a champion of human rights suggests that the UN needs to better articulate not *whether*, but *how*, democratic principles and practices directly or indirectly contribute to gains in development, such that democracy is both intrinsically desirable for fulfillment of human rights but also instrumentally related to achieving development outcomes. Democracy building should be mainstreamed throughout the work of the UN. The UN's roles and functions are both technical, for example, assisting in the organization of electoral processes, and principled, voicing support for comprehensive democratic transitions.

**5. The UN must further develop its own internal policies and capacity to more effectively assist countries in transition toward democracy and support nascent democratic transitions.** The UN is uniquely placed and has mandates for providing assistance to countries undertaking complex and often simultaneous political, social and economic transitions, as well as transitions from conflict to peace toward creating a new democracy. Ensuring that transitional processes following social upheavals lead to new accountability institutions is an essential entry point for UN engagement; autonomous, accessible, legitimate and effective rule of law institutions are an essential element of both democracy and development.

**6. In view of democracy building being a long term, complex and highly context driven process, the UN's democracy assistance needs to be grounded in both a deep understanding of local realities and solid comparative knowledge.** Democracy support can be highly relevant to any number of country contexts, since in all countries, the goal of 'perfecting' the democratic system is a constant work in progress. That being said, in transitional settings in particular, the UN needs to be able and prepared to provide support to democratic transitions, including institution building and the development of a culture of democracy, for the long term.

***Recognizing the Importance of Democratic Ownership and Inclusivity***

**7. The UN's long standing commitment to the principle of national ownership should be defined and exercised in a more inclusive manner, and informed by a context specific understanding of the mutually reinforcing relationship between democracy and development.** Development processes would become more effective if there were a democratic foundation to

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build from and in which a broad array of domestic actors and stakeholders play a substantial role in policy debate and oversight. Development would also be more sustainable by strengthening domestic accountability through the consolidation of democratic institutions and processes. For democracy to take root and for *national ownership* to carry real meaning, government, civil society and parliamentary representatives need to work together in shaping and agreeing on national development agendas. In turn, the political space opened up by such dialogue would provide building blocks for strengthening national, democratic decision making through multiple channels of interaction between the government, parliamentary bodies, elected leaders at sub-national levels and civil society.

**8. Short term efforts to achieve peaceful transitions to a new, stable political order must be linked to strategic long term approaches that aim to develop institutions that are more broadly participatory and that allow for all voices – including those of the poor, historically disadvantaged and vulnerable – to be heard.** Social exclusion limits the extent to which a country develops the underlying state-society relationship necessary for democracy to work and for development efforts to be effective. Paired with such efforts to achieve inclusivity, there must also be new approaches to measuring progress through benchmarks that combine democracy building objectives and development goals in more holistic approaches to goal setting and monitoring.

**9. Within the UN, it remains a common concern that at the global policy and at field levels, more needs to be done to create a sense of common vision across the democracy building, peace building and development assistance branches of the UN system.** Critical in the years ahead will be to continue to build UN Country

Team capacities for working with national stakeholders to design and implement development planning processes that are more explicitly linked to democratic governance. A common vision should also be accompanied by more coherent and consistent messaging from the UN, regarding the mutually reinforcing nature of socio-economic development and democratic development, and their role in building sustainable peace, as well as the intrinsic importance of democracy as a universal value and primary goal. This means cultivating and taking advantage of entry points, giving appropriate support to democratic social forces and helping to create the conditions for civil society voices to be heard.

### ***Implementing Policies that Address the Democracy and Development Nexus***

**10. The UN should bridge the gap between policy and practice in addressing the linkages between democracy and development.** The UN has evolved considerably in the last 25 years to develop the knowledge base, to catalogue best practices and to improve the operational strategies on which democracy assistance is today delivered. Still, there are areas at the intersection of democracy and development in which greater coherence in doctrine, more coordinated delivery and more innovative approaches can bridge the gap between development assistance and democracy building perspectives.

**11. Reforms are needed to address the way that traditional democracy building assistance is conceptualized and carried out.** International organizations have tended to focus too much, and too episodically, on electoral processes. Less attention has been paid, however, to critical elements such as the role of the political party system and parliamentary performance. The UN has yet

# Introduction

to engage significantly on this ‘missing link’ element in democracy building. More efforts should be made to explore the possibilities of supporting countries in the development of transparent, inclusive and equitable multi-party systems, as well as exploring their potential impact on the development process.

## ***Sharing Experiences Globally and Developing Partnerships on Democracy and Development***

**12. It will be necessary to develop stronger partnerships between the UN – both at the global level, in regional contexts and at country level – with other key actors, in support of democracy.** UN partnerships with international organizations, regional and sub-regional organizations, and national government and civil society organizations should build on the wealth of experience in democracy and development, which these entities can bring to bear, and particularly those from the Global South. Various regional and sub-regional organizations, for example, have developed more context specific approaches to democracy building and promotion and have articulated locally grounded regional charters that link democracy, human rights and development. The UN must continually seek out new opportunities and approaches to ensure that democracy building support is based on an in depth knowledge of the context and is driven by the needs of local stakeholders. ■

This Discussion Paper presents the conclusions and recommendations from two round table discussion symposia convened jointly by the United Nations Department of Political Affairs (UN DPA), the UN Development Programme (UNDP), and the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International IDEA). The two round tables on democracy and development are part of a broader series of meetings intended to anchor more fully democracy building concepts and approaches in the UN’s core areas of work: peace and security,<sup>1</sup> human rights, gender and development. IDEA, UN DPA and UNDP are issuing a series of discussion papers on the relationship between democracy and these pillars of the UN’s work as a way to stimulate further discussion among UN policy makers, representatives of member states, scholars, students, experts and civil society on the relationship between democracy building and the work of the UN into the 21st century.

The relationship between democracy and development was debated in two Chatham House rule roundtable discussions in 2008 and in 2011. The objectives of these workshops on democracy and development were to consider these more detailed questions:

- In what ways and under what conditions does democracy in principle, and democratic governance in practice – institutions, processes, rights and participation – contribute to development?
- In what ways and under what conditions does development – both economic, in terms of expansion of wealth and income; and human, in terms of improvements in health, education or non-discrimination – positively contribute to democracy?
- How does democracy give meaning to bedrock principles of external engagement and assistance, particularly national and local ownership?
- What advances can be made at the strategic, policy and operational levels to improve how the UN engages to support mutually reinforcing processes of democracy and development?

The first symposium, convened on the occasion of the first celebration of the International Day of Democracy (12 September 2008), brought together UN policy makers and practitioners, representatives of UN member states and specialists from a wide range of countries. Participants exchanged views and shared research findings on the complex linkages between democracy and development and how gains in development can in turn contribute to democracy.<sup>2</sup> This meeting also identified areas of

1 For the Discussion Paper on Democracy, Peace and Security, see Tommasoli (2010).

2 The concept note and agenda for this symposium is presented in Annex 1.

policy development to improve multilateral action, particularly by the UN, in the critical areas of democracy building that can enhance sustainable development processes.

The second meeting was convened on 21 March 2011. This event looked more specifically at the role of the UN in simultaneously promoting democracy and development agendas and, in particular, how normative, strategic and operational aspects of UN engagement can be developed more effectively to pursue these mutually reinforcing aims. Participants deliberated on the broader strategic issues of how the UN reconciles the political aspects of UN engagement in transitions to democracy and the more ‘operational’ aspects of UN engagement – particularly the role of UN DPA in mediation, of UN country teams and the national development planning process and UNDP’s specific support to national governments to build state capacity and systems of social accountability.

This Discussion Paper reflects the deliberations on these questions in the two meetings, together with the findings of a background issues paper written by Professor Timothy Sisk of the University of Denver, titled *Rethinking Democracy and Development for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: Toward ‘Complimentarity’ [sic] in Democracy Building and Development Aid*. Prof Sisk also served as rapporteur for the events. ■

# Debating Democracy and Development at the UN

The Arab Spring raised anew the arguments that there is a strong, universal desire by people worldwide for accountable, corruption free governance; for voice and participation in determining national development priorities; and for basic human rights and human dignity. Indeed, it was recognized by participants in the 2011 symposium that a strong motive for protest in the region was the denial of dignity, and these grievances had both democracy related (lack of voice and representation) and development dimensions (lack of economic opportunity).

At the core of the contemporary debate on democracy building and development aid is an overarching question: When does democracy contribute to development, and when does development contribute to democracy? Following on this assessment, how can international organizations such as the UN more effectively engage through diplomatic or political support, democracy assistance and development aid to help engender mutually reinforcing, or ‘virtuous’, cycles of democracy and development?

A critical question for the immediate term is how to seize the opportunities created by transitional processes to support a mutually beneficial transition to democracy in a way that also fosters development aims. This concern is especially strong with respect to fragile and conflict affected countries, or those highly vulnerable to conflict and/or where the state fails to deliver basic services (including security).

As this Discussion Paper more fully details, democracy can contribute to development through the reduction of poverty in various ways. To start with, democratic electoral processes empower people by giving them a voice to decide on their political leadership: it can be an important motivator for people who have long been deprived of this right to organize and advocate for their interests. Political leaders may craft electoral appeals, and subsequently implement policy, to benefit the poor. When they fail to do so, people have the opportunity to reject ruling regimes and support

other political forces that demonstrate greater commitment. In addition to beneficiary government and donor dialogues on aid, there is equally the need to more fully expand the notion of local or national ownership by promoting a broadly inclusive development planning process that also incorporates local level participation and democratic accountability mechanisms.

In a recent study, Harvard Scholar Pippa Norris finds that ‘development goals are most often achieved under two conditions: first, where democratic institutions and procedures strengthen voice and accountability, providing opportunities for all citizens to express their demands and to hold elected officials to account for their actions, and, second, where the capacity of governance is strengthened so that the state can manage the supply of public goods and services’ (Norris 2012). With this in mind, how the UN can more effectively link democracy and development agendas is at the heart of this Discussion Paper.

## The Role of the UN in Democracy Building and Development

The international normative framework, as anchored in the UN Charter and developed through the Universal Declaration on Human Rights and related instruments, guides the UN’s role in democracy building and development. Regarding democracy in particular, some regional normative frameworks, such as the Inter-American Democratic Charter (IADC), are even more explicit: the IADC refers to a ‘right to democracy’ in its first article. Other frameworks, such as the African Union’s (AU) Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance, commit AU member states to advance democracy. A resolution

adopted by the United Nations Human Rights Council in April 2012, argues that human rights and development are ‘mutually reinforcing’ and invites ‘States members of intergovernmental regional organizations and agreements to include or reinforce provisions of the constitutive acts of their organizations and arrangements that aim at promoting democratic values and principles and at protecting and consolidating democracy in their respective societies.’<sup>3</sup> Article 21 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights features the right to vote, and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), especially Article 25, more clearly defines the right to participate in elections and in political life.

In 2000, the UN Millennium Declaration asserted that Member States ‘would spare no effort to promote democracy.’ In 2005, the World Summit outcome document described democracy, rule of law and human rights as belonging to ‘the universal and indivisible core values and principles of the United Nations’, and as such, were ‘interlinked and mutually reinforcing’. In turn, these broad normative statements have been manifested in direct guidance to the system from the UN Secretary-General on the principles and practices underlying the UN’s democracy work.

In 1986, the UN General Assembly adopted the landmark Declaration on the Right to Development (A/RES/41/128 4 December 1986). Twenty-five years later, the Declaration continues to be a touchstone to emphasize that deep and chronic poverty, food insecurity, unemployment and systematic exclusion and discrimination are violations of human rights and thus also present serious obstacles to the realization of democracy. The underpinnings of the UN normative frameworks on democracy and development share a common concern with

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<sup>3</sup> Human Rights Council Resolution 19/36, “Human Rights, Democracy, and the Rule of Law,” 19 April 2012, A/HRC/RES/19/36, article 20.



equality, participation, non-discrimination (particularly of women and vulnerable populations), accountability, transparency and justice. The interrelationship between these two goals is increasingly being recognized, with efforts, for example, to articulate the concept of development as a human right being taken up by entities such as the Intergovernmental Working Group on the Right to Development, which is administered by the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (UN OHCHR).

The UN's roles in democracy and development are multiple and varied. At the highest levels, the UN is today engaged – often together with regional organizations – in responding directly to the challenges of non-constitutional transfers of power within countries and in mandating direct support for reform during transitions to democracy.

At the operational level, UN country teams worldwide are directly involved in facilitating the development process, from supporting the formulation of national development planning to direct contributions for strengthening government capacities related to development in the critical areas of education, health, jobs and security. The UN through its country teams has direct poverty reduction programmes in nearly 80 countries, and often this work is conducted in direct coordination with UN specialized agencies such as the World Health Organization (WHO) or the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).

UN country teams are also engaged in coordinating, facilitating or managing multilateral aid flows to support governance institutions and processes. UNDP, particularly, has evolved as a central organization in supporting public administration reform, in working with other partner organizations (such as International

IDEA) to professionalize electoral processes, and in supporting key state institutions such as the judicial sector or providing new avenues for access to justice. The United Nations Democracy Fund (UNDEF) is an important instrument in promoting and supporting civil society organizations and participation as a key element of democracy strengthening.

## Linkages between Democracy, State Building and Peacebuilding

The roundtables focused on UN roles related to the democracy-development nexus as they manifest themselves in three primary areas of endeavour: the work on democratic governance within its development programmes, with a focus on building accountable and responsive democratic institutions and processes; the initiatives of mediation and electoral assistance, especially in situations of complex political transitions; and the engagement in peacekeeping and peacebuilding in conflict prone or post conflict contexts. The Round Tables underscored the growing awareness of the complexity of the inter-linkages between peacebuilding, state building and democracy building. Some recent policy analysis points to the importance of such linkages.

The World Bank's *World Development Report (WDR) 2011* on 'Conflict, Security and Development' acknowledged the effectiveness of initiatives based on quick and targeted action in some exceptional cases. However, it highlighted the importance of long term approaches to building democratic institutions through political reforms with systematic and gradual action over time, as shown by a number of successful political transitions. Hence, the *WDR 2011* underscored the importance of strengthening

legitimate institutions and governance to provide citizen security, justice and jobs as a crucial factor in order to break cycles of violence.

UNDP's emphasis on the linkages between democratic governance, conflict prevention and peacebuilding, as stressed in the report *Governance for Peace: Securing the Social Contract*, goes in the same direction (UNDP 2012). Based on a deeper understanding of the new challenges of fragility in contemporary crisis states, UNDP calls for greater focus on principles of responsiveness, inclusiveness and resilience, and strengthened partnerships. This should allow for the testing of innovative governance approaches that take into account strategic outcomes rather than sector specific outputs, like the construction of responsive institutions, the promotion of inclusive political processes and the fostering of a resilient society by mobilizing local capacities to adapt and cope with stress and crisis.

UN peacekeeping mandates and missions have evolved over the years from 'traditional peacekeeping' to 'multidimensional peacekeeping' through integrated missions, comprising military, police and civilian components. Moreover, there are now as many UN political missions deployed to assist transitioning countries than peacekeeping operations. This has implied a broadened focus from the standard security functions (like monitoring ceasefire agreements or setting buffer zones between belligerents) to a wide range of tasks that conventionally fall within the scope of democracy assistance, such as support for the rule of law, governance institutions and support to constitutional processes, elections, human rights and political reconciliation, thereby helping to build the political institutions and structures that safeguard citizens' rights and facilitate their participation in the political process.

Many of these roles require deployable capacities to support processes as and when they develop as well as specialized niche capacities.

Looking across all the critical UN tools to support peaceful transitions, the independent review of civilian capacity in the aftermath of conflict of the Senior Advisory Group of February 2011 (Guehénno 2011), and the subsequent Secretary-General's report on the same issue of 19 August 2011 (UN Secretary-General 2011), stress the need for collectively strengthening the quality and efficiency of civilian support after conflict. Inclusive political processes are one of the core areas highlighted for strengthening civilian capacities in post conflict situations, in order to meet needs ranging from support to constitution making to the facilitation of political dialogue and political parties development.

In 2010, the celebration of the tenth anniversary of the adoption of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) was an opportunity for the UN system, Member States, and regional organizations to assess progress and develop new approaches for addressing gender issues in peacemaking and peacebuilding. The Secretary-General's report produced on that occasion (UN Secretary-General, 2010) singled out a 7-point action plan – with related indicators – to expand women's participation in peacebuilding, thus providing a major contribution to consistency and coherence in international efforts in this area. This also entailed including indicators on increased representation of women at all levels as decision makers in post conflict countries. The role of women in both peacebuilding and democracy building falls clearly within the mandates and priorities set for UN Women and the Peacebuilding Commission.

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### ***Evolution of Democracy and Development Norms***

Today, international democracy norms have also proliferated at the regional level. Many regional organizations – especially the African Union (AU), the Organization of American States (OAS), and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) – have developed extensive non-binding norms, instruments, guidelines and best practices for member states' regimes in relation to the preservation and strengthening of democracy. The AU's African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance is an example of these new norms at the regional level, which in some cases are augmented by sub-regional charters (for example the Southern African Development Community's [SADC] Principles and Guidelines Governing Democratic Elections). In 2011, the OAS celebrated the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Inter-American Democratic Charter, which declares, *inter alia*, 'The peoples of the Americas have the right to democracy, and their governments have an obligation to promote and defend it.'

The advent of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in 2000 underscored the global commitment to the reduction of poverty and to generating the enabling conditions for development. The 2005 World Summit outcome document declares that democracy is a 'universal value' and that it is 'ultimately a means to achieve international peace and security, economic and social progress and development, and respect for human rights.' Other processes, such as the Paris and Accra consultations on international development assistance and the respective agendas for action, and the Busan consensus on development effectiveness, have further underscored the importance of democracy and inclusive governance as the necessary underpinnings of the principle of national ownership of the development process.

In these and other forums, there is an emerging principle of 'democratic ownership of development' and an exploration of new ways of giving such ownership expression, grounded in a growing awareness of the complex and sometimes contradictory relationships between aid and democratic processes for national development decision-making (International IDEA 2011). The post Busan agenda has led to recognition that donor led approaches to development may actually undermine the possibility of achieving the stated goals, particularly in fragile states. Another key reflection in this regard is provided by the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) in its 2008 document on state building in fragile situations (OECD/DAC 2008), which includes principles concerning assistance to democratic accountability actors and institutions, in the fields of elections, political parties, the media and parliament (OECD/DAC 2012). The principles echo the view that aid can at times undermine accountability and that development cooperation must be more focused on using aid to improve domestic accountability processes and strengthen state-society relations.

There is recognition that the democracy building and development assistance agendas do not always coincide, and there are debates about sequencing and the desirability of democracy building efforts in countries experiencing conflict, economic stress or social conflict. That is, some still argue that development gains must precede democracy, and that democracy is less likely to be sustained in low-income countries. Indeed, there are analysts who posit that some 'benign autocracies' or well meaning development states that are not democratic may well be more suited to realizing significant development gains. In political transitions such as those unfolding in the Middle East



and North Africa (MENA) region, there are acute dilemmas of sequencing and prioritization of aid, challenges of delivery capacity and the need to have a cautious and strategic approach to ensuring the legitimacy of international aid to fledgling democratic transition processes.

The arguments for harmonizing democracy building and development aid are based on instrumentalist arguments: democratic states are more likely, over time, to realize long term development goals and to create the conditions – such as the full expression of women’s rights and participation – on which sustainable peace and development ultimately depend. This view has been closely associated with Nobel Prize winning economist Amartya Sen in his landmark work *Development as Freedom* (Sen 1999), but is also an important concept for the UN’s own debate among its development, peace building and democracy building practitioners. ■

‘There is an ongoing debate in the academic world about this relationship. The main assumption of those who deem democratic regimes to be above all others is that democracy creates economic growth and therefore that is the best regime for development. Unfortunately the empirical evidence is still not clear on this matter.

However one could argue that in order to achieve economic growth it is required among other conditions to have a consolidated institutional framework and respect for the rule of law which are key components for long term economic planning as well as transparent political institutions that support the mechanism in which the current global markets evolve.

In all these issues democracy prevails as the regime that serves better the cause of development because it establishes a political bond between citizens and decision makers that compel the latter to act in accordance with the general interest or at least the interest of the majority’.

H.E. Ambassador Claude Heller, Permanent Representative of Mexico to the United Nations, 2007-2011

(full statement in Annex 2)

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# Why Democracy Matters for Development

There is widespread agreement that today the legitimacy of ruling regimes rests to a large extent on their credentials as democracies; and even among those states with dubious human rights records or a penchant for seriously restricting political opposition, there is a careful attempt by the governments to appear globally, and to their own citizens, as democratic in nature. In 2011, at least 60% of the countries in the world are widely agreed by scholarly analysts to have basic democratic institutions, processes and procedures; thus, nearly half of the world's population lives in acknowledged democratic states. Furthermore, even many of the countries that do not make that list could be described as 'quasi-democratic', that is, having some attributes of democracy – such as credible local level elections, for example – but may lack other key attributes, such as the right to form independent political parties.

While there has been a rapid growth in democratic countries in the last thirty years, democratic gains in countries emerging from conflict and/or autocracy can often be very fragile, and backsliding from democratic norms and practices are a real risk. A third of all the countries in the world are experiencing or have recently experienced transition from autocratic systems or civil war to democracies, and most of these countries in transition can at best be labelled 'partial', emerging or 'aspirational' democracies.

## The Debate about Democracy and Development

Revisiting the specific relationships between democracy and development, in light of scholarly research and practitioner experience, was deemed by round table participants to be essential. The findings of research often

'By far the biggest threat that democratization processes have is not to be able to democratize societies and markets so that all can benefit from progress. The threat is not being democratic enough as much as is demanded by these new critical citizens. Will democracy fail to generate fair process in societies?

That is the question of governability. Unfortunately in some parts of the world, growth and development have widened the gap between those who feel part of society and those who do not. Markets are being questioned as a tool to distribute economic goods. The state is being looked at again, as an instrument to solve problems. Leaders are learning the hard way that electorates expect inflation to be controlled, foreign investment to be favored, macro-economic policies to be balanced with acceptable degrees of social protection and distribution of benefits, progress and development. It is not acceptable for larger parts of the population to be left behind'.

Marta Lagos, Director, Latinobarometer, Santiago, Chile

present 'inconvenient facts' for policymakers, as one participant noted. The first session of the 2008 roundtable explored these issues in depth, and in application to particular regional settings such as Latin America and West Africa where the democracy-development debate has resonated in recent years. As well, there was a 'debate about the debate' in which the key terms were subjected to intense scrutiny: for example, how precisely does 'democracy' differ from related concepts such as 'democratic governance' or 'good governance'?

As for development, should more narrow definitions of development be used (for example, measures of gross national product), or more extensive measures such as the level of inequality within society or the equal rights and role of women in the development process?

Much of the scholarly debate – which is in turn reflected in practitioner ambiguities – centers on the question of ‘causality’. That is, does democracy *cause* development, or vice versa? How important are competitive national elections in defining competing agendas or even ideologies around the national development process? Conversely, to what extent is a certain level of development a prerequisite for the meaningful exercise of democracy in a society? These questions of causality are extensively debated in the scholarly literature, with mixed responses.

Some researchers conclude that there is no evidence of a strong democracy-development nexus, and they cite both quantitative research and historical experience to back their views. Adam Przeworski and colleagues have found no direct relationship between ‘regime type’ and growth of total income in countries using statistical analysis to find such correlations (Przeworski et alia 2000). At best, this literature finds that countries with a strong tradition of rule of law may facilitate rapid advances in development outcomes through, for example, providing for the sanctity of contracts or the protection of intellectual property.

This academic literature is backstopped by the view that systems characterized by ‘guided development’ and restricted political rights are preferable for achieving development outcomes in contrast to the often more inchoate, chaotic and sometimes inconclusive governing coalitions found in some democratic systems.

‘When we look at the attitudinal data we find that people from all social classes, particularly people from the lower social classes, see development as an attribute of democracy and therefore democracy is not a separate concept from development.

While in the academic literature there is an attempt to separate these two concepts. There is an attempt to suggest that when we talk about democracy, “don’t overload democracy”. Don’t add social justice to democracy; don’t add rights to democracy; don’t add development to democracy.

Yet in the people’s common sense these are all attributes of democracy. Why is democracy important? Because it gives you development and welfare’.

Peter Ronald deSouza, Director, Indian Institute of Advanced Study, Shimla, India

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Participants argued that perhaps the strongest challenge to democracy’s contribution to development is reflected in the cases of poor economic performance and continued socio-economic ills in nascent or restored democratic regimes, looking at a number of countries that underwent transitions from autocratic or one-party rule in the late 1980s and early 1990s. In Latin America, for example, many newer or restored democracies seem consolidated in their institutional form; however, given continuing high levels of inequality and economic hardship of large segments of the population (even in those places where some important gains in reducing poverty have been achieved), restive politics, populism, discontent and dissatisfaction with political elites have tended to prevail and sometimes have led populations to question the validity of democracy itself, as experienced in their countries. Factors such as enduring poverty, inequality, corruption and political exclusion by gender, ethnicity or age

limit democracy's reach in terms of its ability to foster development, and as a result, can even threaten its very legitimacy in the eyes of the population.

Participants also debated the linkages and relationships between elections, democracy and development. It was pointed out that, unfortunately, many still equate the holding of elections with the existence of a well-functioning democracy, even though, while elections (credible, transparent and competitive ones) are a hallmark of a democratic society, the mere holding of 'an election' does not a democracy make. They furthermore pointed to specific difficulties created in countries with deep or historical identity divisions, when the conduct of electoral processes reflected or even aggravated stark social differences. Particularly in the case of divided and/or post conflict societies, the use of ethnic, religious or other 'identity politics' appeals in electoral processes was identified as challenging democracy, undermining the role of the electoral process in arbitrating visions of national development and turning the competitive features of democracy into an unhelpful confrontation among internally divided social segments for the spoils of power.

## **Virtuous Cycles: Democracy, Governance and Development Outcomes**

As much as quantitative research raises doubts about whether democracy facilitates development in broad statistical comparisons, other studies using comparative case study methodology (such as the World Governance Survey) do find a strong relationship. The Survey, reported in 2008 (Hyden et al), found that development progress was best explained by the quality of governance in

a country across six domains: civil society, 'political society', government effectiveness, bureaucratic quality, economic society and the judiciary. The Survey stressed the view that good governance is in fact a linchpin for development – especially controls on corruption.

Participants contended that *democracy*, not just 'good governance' (or even more minimal expressions, such as 'good enough governance') is indeed essential to development. Some participants suggested that at a minimum there is no countervailing evidence to suggest that democracy must be sacrificed for development, or that somehow 'developmental dictatorship' has any better track record. Because 'development' is often defined by skeptics of the relationship in terms of growth in total income (gross domestic product, GDP), or increase of GDP per capita adjusted by purchasing power parity (PPP), and that many non-democratic countries may have strong reliance on exploitable natural resources (such as oil and gas exports), the quantitative research findings that attest to no democracy-development relationship must be taken with a significant grain of salt.

Interestingly, social survey results from the Center for the Study of Developing Societies (CSDS) State of Democracy report found that in the eyes of people in India, for example, the two concepts of democracy and development are intrinsically linked. There is widespread agreement among people about what constitutes democracy – 'people's rule' and 'rights and freedoms' but also 'development and welfare'. As well, in the 2011 Round Table, several participants also made the point that protestors in Egypt and Tunisia in early 2011 did not inherently differentiate their grievances about political repression from other grievances such as poor job prospects and chronic poverty.

'We are having this Round Table (2011) on Human Rights Day in South Africa, which commemorates the anniversary of the 1960 Sharpeville Massacre, which was a key turning point in the anti-apartheid struggle for democracy. Today, the reality of many people's lives is a struggle for freedom, for inclusion. It's about voice, and about participation. It is not just about benefitting from development, but equally about shaping the agenda so that women, marginalized people, those who are discriminated against, are part of the process and to put their concerns on the table'.

Geraldine Fraser-Moleketi, Director, Democratic Governance Group, Bureau for Development Policy, UNDP

'Gender equality, feminist politics, women's rights, women's empowerment ... have been sustained only in democracy, only where they have been based in the struggle for social transformation and for a change in the social compact. So, there is no way around the importance of investing in women's civil society strength. Unfortunately, though, what we have seen in many democracies is that women's organization work and their leadership is much more present and active in civil society than in political society. So there is no escaping the connection between political freedoms for women and economic and social rights'.

Anne-Marie Goetz, Chief Advisor, Governance, Peace and Security, UN Women

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Like in India, other surveys such as the Afrobarometer and Latinobarometer support the view that public attitudes in countries in these regions rank the core attributes of both democracy and development highly when it comes to articulating expectations of how governance should relate to their daily lives. Generally, according to several participants, these surveys do support Sen's notion that democratic governments should be accountable to their citizens in economic and social justice terms and that the public in Global South countries view addressing poverty, social exclusion and poor economic performance to be as important as political rights. These perspectives underscore a longstanding set of views that are reflected in UN research, such as the UNDP human development reports, which have continually emphasized aspects of democracy such as human rights (2000), democracy and participation (2002), or cultural liberty (2004) as bedrock foundations of human development.

Finally, local democracy may be especially critical for fostering development: it is at these levels where governance is nearest to the people and affects their daily lives in tangible ways. Direct participation and citizen action are often more feasible at these levels, and it is in the sphere of the local where the concept of 'voice' is most likely manifested in practical terms. Participation, or 'having a voice', allows citizens not only to demand rights and services, but also to potentially check abuses and ensure accountability. Accountability flows from the linkages between state and society, especially when oversight and priority-setting by citizens are linked to resource mobilization and taxation by governments. For this reason, many participants argued that empowering local governments to raise resources through taxation may strengthen democracy at the local level. ■

### Box 1: Essential Points: Democracy's Contribution to Development

- The evolution and practice of democracy must be seen alongside processes of national identity construction and of state formation. Building a nation and building a state in the wake of colonialism, internal repression or conflict is a long term, challenging process. When nation- or state-building imperatives collide with democratic institutions or practices, often these take precedence over democracy as such.
- Core attributes of democracy are essential to the notion of good governance and to best practices in development planning and implementation: participation in policy formulation and implementation, electoral competition over visions of development strategies, and accountability for ruling elites through parliamentary, civil society and media oversight. The same attributes of democratic governance are also critical to the management of contemporary economic crises, environmental scarcity and degradation, energy, food security and migration related stresses.
- Democratic governments may be more legitimate in terms of providing public goods such as education, health care, job training, environmental protection and the rule of law that allows for sanctity of contracts and predictability in regulatory environments and overall economic management.
- Democratic space allows people at the local level to self-organize and to create their own local public goods – such as regulation of local markets or cooperatives for credit – that in turn create the conditions for local level democracy and democratic values and structures from the 'bottom up'.
- Democracy and direct participation support the principle of democratic national ownership of development planning. In this way, democracy can contribute to compromise-oriented and consensus seeking forms of policy making and implementation and the sustainability of economic reforms over time that involve at the outset all the principal stakeholders on a given issue and that, in turn, reconcile competing interests and priorities through dialogue, compromise and joint implementation.
- In many countries, especially less developed and "fragile" states, the UN's role in democracy building and state capacity development is significant. In these settings, the UN serves a norm-setting function, monitors democratic and human rights practices, provides direct assistance for capacity development and in some instances reacts to democratization crises such as electoral fraud or unconstitutional changes in government.



# Why Development Matters for Democracy

It is a longstanding maxim in scholarly research that the vitality of democracy depends on an educated, involved, interested middle class for whom democracy provides not just opportunity to express their preferences and priorities, but as a check against the arbitrary seizure of property. While the thesis that ‘modernization’ and a middle class are necessary prerequisites for democracy has been challenged – the cases of Botswana, Costa Rica or India historically refute this argument – there remains an appreciation that development as a whole is supportive of the values, interests and expectations that lead to the onset and sustainability of democracy. Conversely, deep development challenges undermine the social tolerance and trust needed for democracy to prosper. Participants pointed especially to three areas in which development deficits can undermine democratic practice.

## Overcoming Inequality and Marginalization

Persistent socio-economic inequality in which a large proportion of the population is marginalized, fragmented and lacking in the capacity to organize and produce effective social groups undermines the social basis for successful democracy. When there is persistent hunger and food insecurity, illiteracy, homelessness or disease, there are constraints on the ability of the poor to organize and express their ‘voice’.

Conversely, democracy is generally understood as being aided by a well developed middle class. This alone, however, is not enough to ensure democracy’s sustainability; a vibrant middle class can only be effective in contexts where civil society is autonomous and independent of political elites such that

it can represent interests of various groups in society.

Various participants suggested that the neo-liberal economic policies associated with unfettered globalization and erstwhile remedies of ‘structural adjustment’ have exacerbated social inequalities in many countries of the Global South. Inequality was effectively identified as an impediment to the successful functioning of democracy, particularly in newly-emerged democracies, because there is a persistent, implicit ‘ranking’ of different groups in society and differing distribution of state resources and public goods to the advantaged groups. Equally, there is a distinct disadvantage of social mobility to marginalized groups, including women. And, finally, some participants argued that inequality can become ‘institutionalized’ in political systems.

‘Very few people disagree with ownership of the development policy processes. But it is impossible for ownership to become meaningful if the domestic, national level policy framework is itself hijacked from the forces that are supposed to be central to the making of policy. Many new democracies are choice-less democracies in the extent to which they keep policy directions that are not the project of internal policy processes but are in fact imposed from outside as policy preferences. In a very direct way, where decisions taken in international financial institutions increase the prices of essential commodities, or in removing subsidies on things like petrol fertilizers and where farmers groups and cooperatives don’t matter, you have a serious problem’.

Adebayo Olukoshi, Director, UN African Institute for Economic Development and Planning (IDEP), Dakar, Senegal

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## Fostering Social Accountability

Development deficits and persistent poverty also give rise to a tendency for politically aspirant elites to see the state as a means for personal enrichment or for enrichment of their own group. This tendency creates a very high set of stakes for democracy, starting with electoral processes.

In societies where the state and state machinery are seen as the principal sources of wealth and prosperity, the stakes of winning and losing in electoral processes are often directly related to individual or group economic opportunity and the potential for using state power to capture ‘lootable’ goods such as rents from natural resource exports. It is these dynamics which participants also associated with an increase in election related violence in various countries around the world. Participants further voiced concern about the effects of election related violence on democracy, and indeed on development where perceptions of political risk undermine the confidence needed for long term investment. Another related concern is the criminalization of politics through which political elites operate criminally or in which criminals (including transnational organized crime) gain access to political power and protection via the state.

The question of state predation is essentially a developmental problem as well as a democracy deficit of accountability. As such, predatory behaviour by politicians is often seen as being among the underlying causes of chronic poverty, social violence and threats to human security, which in turn gives rise to social frustration, protest and, potentially, violence. Some participants argued that predation intensifies in weak democracies because time horizons of politicians are short and they thus have an incentive to accumulate as much as possible

‘...what you need is to develop an independent middle class that is able, let us say, to develop and also to strengthen civil society and non-government organizations (NGOs).

That is I think one of the most important keys to develop democracy. In Indonesia we have been fortunate that we do have many, many civil society organizations that have a lot of political leverage vis-à-vis political parties as well as vis-à-vis government. This is what we need to develop in the Muslim world. A strong middle class ... but at the same time a middle class that is able to develop independent NGOs, vis-à-vis government’.

Ayumardi Azra, Director, Graduate School, Syarif Hidayatullah State Islamic University, Jakarta, Indonesia

quickly and to use state resources (including the police) to influence subsequent electoral processes in order to retain power.

Overall, participants concluded that democracy and development are mutually reinforcing. That is, advances in one may produce advances in the other in a process of mutual interaction and reinforcement: in short, countries may experience ‘virtuous cycles’ of democracy in development in which gains in one arena are reinforced by gains in the other. More than one participant in the Round Tables pointed to the case of Ghana in the 2000s, which has seen remarkable progress in the consolidation of both democratic institutions and economic development: the country is poised for even faster development given the recent discovery of extensive fossil fuel deposits in some of its most impoverished regions. The Ghana experience will be a test case of whether democratic institutions can help manage the proverbial ‘resource curse’ as has been identified in some broader research. ■



**Box 2: Essential Points: Development's Contribution to Democracy**

- Development challenges such as widespread poverty, high unemployment, disease and food insecurity place enormous strains on the effective operation of democracy. Participants argued that such social and development challenges provide the underpinnings for social violence, xenophobia, radical political agendas and distrust in the political system and its ability to deliver meaningful change. Rapid rises in basic commodity prices, particularly for energy and food, are widening inequality gaps in many countries and undermining the basis for social tolerance and trust on which democracy is ultimately based.
- Development gaps such as the systematic exclusion of women from economic opportunity, starting with unequal education and opportunities in job markets, creates an excluded underclass of citizens who are economically (and often physically) vulnerable. In the case of women, these underlying conditions often inhibit their participation in democratic politics and this means that their concerns, in turn, are not frequently addressed by the political system.
- In countries with high dependence on primary commodity exports – particularly oil, precious minerals or essential primary agricultural commodities – the international political economy may undermine democracy through the incentives for political elites to be more responsive to external economic relations (from where government revenue arises through export earnings) than to their own people. Absent national and international regulatory frameworks that ensure accountability and transparency, global economic dependency can prevent the successful functioning of state-society relations that are a core feature of democratic systems.
- An important consideration is the need to create opportunities through which the poor can participate – which often involve community level processes or support to local level democracy – for example, in natural resource management. The most sustainable approach to encouraging the state to deliver resources is to create the conditions under which mobilization by the poor yields constructive policy and implementation results that address basic human needs (e.g., health, education and housing).
- Gains in health, education and income – especially for women and girls – provide a basis in the family, neighbourhood and locality, and for society as a whole, to channel energies towards people's own formulation of preferences and goals and to collectively organize.
- An essential element for development and indeed for a functioning democracy is a system of human and community security. In situations where security is absent, the underlying basis for development is absent. In turn, democracy itself requires a secure environment and the freedom to organize and to mobilize without fear.

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# Looking Ahead: Implications for Policy and Practice

**A**s the initial Millennium Development Goals initiative winds toward the conclusion of its first phase in 2015, many observers who see democracy as facilitating development have raised anew whether any follow on set of goals should more explicitly reference democracy and governance improvement as a pivotal, instrumental factor in achieving the MDGs as a whole.

## **Addressing Democracy within the Post 2015 Development Agenda**

The Secretary-General's Report on 'Accelerating Progress towards the MDGs' underscores in paragraph 55 that 'although the MDGs agenda draws from the Millennium Declaration, they clearly are not identical.' He further noted that, 'when considering the elements of a post 2015 development agenda, the world community may revisit the values and principles of the Millennium Declaration as a starting point for renewing its vision of global development in the light of contemporary challenges' (UN Secretary-General 2011a). Individual freedoms for democratic and participatory governance was one of the six fundamental values, and human rights, democracy and good governance were one of the six broad objectives defined in the Millennium Declaration. They should be properly addressed in the ongoing conversation on a post 2015 development agenda.

The round table discussions reinforced this

argument: if people worldwide, as reflected in attitudinal studies, differentiate little between democracy and development in terms of their aspirations, then international norm setting, monitoring and supportive implementation should also respond in an integrative way. Thus, some participants argued that it is time for a 'new paradigm' that links more explicitly democracy and citizen participation to development. Others elaborated further, arguing for an essential shift in approach that restores more directly global advocacy of democracy as an intrinsic right and as an instrumental avenue to realizing development gains.

## **Engaging in Principled and Consistent Engagement on Democracy and Development**

There was a common call for rethinking how democracy building is traditionally carried out, as well as the conventional approaches to development aid. Some participants called for 'democratizing development' throughout UN action, and to increase its consistency in order to break down current silos or walls between democracy building and development aid.

At the conceptual level, this approach means that democracy, as a set of institutions and processes, needs to be seen less in procedural terms and more in terms of the substance of providing a living, everyday experience for people in which development is pursued as a collective, public good. Linking democracy and development provides political leaders with more tangible incentives to

promote broad based development goals. At the same time, development strategy should target areas such as health, education and livelihoods for vulnerable sectors in ways that so consciously empower them to participate in democratic institutions and decision making processes.

Participants suggested that new emphasis should be placed on *the quality of democracy* and, in particular, the extent of inclusivity of the poor, women and other vulnerable groups in society. Analysis by international organizations must be recalibrated to take into account both the processes of democracy and the actors in a democracy, in ways that are more directly attuned to expanding inclusivity. Prior analysis, for example the Arab Human Development Reports of 2002 (UNDP 2002) and onward, did in fact presage the crises of democracy, development and accountability that provided the underlying basis of the Arab Spring demands for change. The gap between education and opportunity, and the tight control of society by autocratic regimes – often buttressed by external aid or global economic ties and natural resource rents – was untenable.

The UN must constantly look for new entry points for providing assistance in rapidly evolving transitions. A challenge for UN practitioners working in this area is that of risk taking. Participants agreed that UN practitioners needed to be further encouraged and supported to look for ways to assist and nurture inclusivity and strengthen the capacities and the ‘voice’ of the traditionally vulnerable, in pursuit of norm based, action oriented agendas on both democracy and development, even in more complex environments such as the Middle East. In that regard, the roles and support of entities such as UNDP and its work in Tunisia in support of the Association of Tunisian University Women and Tunisia Women

Democrats over the years, and UNDEF’s role in supporting various civil society groups in the region, were highlighted.

Some participants suggested that the time is ripe to consider a new UN charter or declaration on democracy that would provide a 21<sup>st</sup> century set of norms that directly ties democracy building and development goals; others, however, suggested that the current normative frameworks are sufficient and that what is needed are ways to better achieve a complementary approach through new partnerships and methodologies.

The UN should reassess its operating procedures to be less automatic and reflexive – typically based on past experiences – and especially to work with its country teams and field missions on the ground to develop more context specific, integrated approaches to democracy building, peace building and development. Much of the responsibility for smart innovation and improved outcomes rests on the actors in the field, including Special Representatives, Envoys, Resident Representatives/Coordinators of the UN in the country and the teams themselves, through careful analysis of acceptable risks and promising entry points. However, close cooperation with Headquarters is essential, including relevant departments of the Secretariat, agencies and programmes.

In view of democracy’s nature as a long-term, complex and highly context-driven process, the UN’s democracy assistance needs to be grounded in both a deep understanding of local realities and solid comparative knowledge. Finally, in transitional settings the UN needs to be able and prepared to provide support to democratic transitions, institution building and the development of a culture of democracy for the long term.

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## Recognizing the Importance of Democratic Ownership and Inclusivity

The third area of recommendation is around improving support to a broad array of domestic actors to play a role in the development process. This is linked to the need identified in the round table discussions to more fully expand the notion of ‘local’ or ‘national ownership’ of development. ‘National ownership’ needs to be understood as encompassing a wide range of actors in a country who should be participating in shaping the development agenda. This is important for both development and democracy. In that sense, the concept could well be characterized more effectively as ‘democratic ownership’. More specifically, democratic ownership speaks to the need for parliamentary, civil society and local level elements of society to have meaningful participation – and influence – in the development planning process. The UN could become more involved in supporting such processes, and in particular, facilitating the participation of civil society and social networks in the debate and decision making process on development, beyond the traditional beneficiary government and donor dialogues on aid. In that sense, development assistance itself must be ‘democratized’: new partnerships should be developed and strengthened to help ensure that aid prioritization and sequencing is responsive to the real needs on the ground and in particular, to the poor and most vulnerable in society.

Increasingly, there is emphasis on participation and dialogue among beneficiary governments and donors, such as the g7+ representation of countries experiencing fragility that has been part of the implementation of the Paris, Accra and Busan agendas for aid and development effectiveness

(International Dialogue on Peacebuilding and Statebuilding 2011). A 2011 International IDEA discussion paper prepared for the Busan high-level dialogue included a plea for an agreement in which ‘ownership is defined as “ownership by the people”’. An agreement that ownership begins and ends with the people would mean that a new aid system could be developed. From this bottom-up perspective, key processes and actors which aggregate and represent the voice of citizens in national policymaking and development processes can be identified and become part of the aid system’ (International IDEA 2011: 11).

In the years ahead, the UN will also need to continue to build its capacities for working with national stakeholders to design and implement development planning processes that are more explicitly related to democratic governance. Among the critical areas for action are macro-economic aspects such as natural resource wealth sharing agreements, education, health and livelihood opportunities for women and girls, more effective decentralization and local governance, and the capacity of key institutions such as parliaments (including at the regional level in federal states) to participate in the design of compacts for development and the distribution of development aid. Some participants suggested that the concept of ‘inclusive growth’ should be further developed as a way to ensure that development processes are more widely owned by societies.

The UN must also become more adept at harnessing technological advances in communication and information sharing that can support traditional development objectives as well as democratic development, allowing for broader citizens’ participation, monitoring and demands for service delivery by the state. As digitalization has lowered the cost of both production and distribution of

information, many citizens now have access to several different platforms through which to make their views known in the public sphere.

Participants at the Round Tables felt that the UN must do more to harmonize its political facilitation work in transitional settings with longer term support for democracy building as well as development processes that can in turn also contribute to the viability of democracy over time. Traditional democracy building activities focusing on electoral assistance or institution building can also clearly benefit from support to inclusive development planning and from initiatives encouraging participatory approaches to education, health and economic stimulus measures. Short term efforts to achieve peaceful transitions to a new, stable political order must be linked to strategic long term approaches that aim to develop institutions that are more broadly participatory, accountable and transparent and that allow for the voices of the poor and vulnerable to be heard. Paired with such efforts must also be new approaches to measuring progress through benchmarks that combine democracy building and development indicators in more holistic approaches to goal setting and monitoring.

## Implementing Policies that Address the Democracy and Development Nexus

The UN should bridge the gap between policy and practice in addressing the linkages between democracy and development. The UN has evolved considerably in the last 25 years to develop the knowledge base, to catalogue best practices and to improve on the operational strategies upon which democracy assistance is today delivered. Still, there are areas at the intersection of democracy and

development in which greater coherence in doctrine, more coordinated delivery and more innovative approaches can bridge the gap between development aid and democracy-building perspectives. The UN Secretary-General's Guidance Note to the UN system of 2009 goes a long way toward addressing some of the doctrinal issues, and a present concern is how to translate this into greater operational effectiveness.

A useful starting point could be the process through which national and regional human development reports are developed. Those reports could do more to combine the analysis and monitoring of development outcomes and objectives with a more central appreciation of how citizens' rights and participation affect the likelihood of sustainable progress.

Reforms are also needed in the way that traditional democracy building assistance is carried out. International organizations, participants argued, have tended to focus too much, and too episodically, on electoral processes. Less attention has been paid, for example, to critical elements such as the role of political parties (except by a number of international NGOs and party institutes which provide capacity development to political parties). Regarding the UN specifically, participants felt that, despite the potential sensitivity of some of this work, the Organization should build on its considerable experience and lessons learned in areas such as electoral assistance and strengthening democratic governance more generally, to more systematically support other critical aspects of democracy building such as successful constitution-making processes, democratic dialogue, parliamentary effectiveness and greater political representation and empowerment of women. Although there is some UN capacity in these areas in UN DPA, UNDP and UN

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Women, as well as external expertise available through rosters, the very delicate but also technical nature of such assistance suggests that improving the UN's internal capacities to provide expert assistance to such systems and processes is long overdue. The field of constitution making was singled out in this regard.

Participants argued that the UN should also find ways to support the development of democratic multi-party systems without it becoming or being seen as partisan or 'political'. To achieve this, the UN should work with national institutions and stakeholders for the development of transparent, inclusive and equitable multi-party systems of representation, or in sum, systems that create a level political playing field. For example, an appropriate role for the UN could be to help develop an equitable campaign/party finance system, or to promote the establishment of parties that are broadly inclusive, particularly of women, are internally democratic and transparent, and represent broad national agendas rather than focusing on narrow identity based interests or engaging in personality based politics. The link between political inclusivity and development outcomes is based on research that indicates that the inclusivity of political settlements, and the stability/duration of a political settlement, is key to creating the enabling environment under which development best occurs.

Democracy building programmes should concentrate on compromise and consensus seeking forms of policy making and implementation and the sustainability of economic reforms over time that involve at the outset all the principal stakeholders on a given issue and that in turn reconcile competing interests and priorities. A continued focus on the linkages between public administrative reform and capacities

for dialogue based policy making is critical for democracy building strategies.

Democracy and development assistance also intersect at the point of developing state capacity. This means supporting institutional reform in transitional contexts to improve integrity and autonomy (for example of judicial institutions), facilitating the restoration or building anew of critical ministries and service delivery functions of the state, contributing to security sector reform and especially policing, and systematically expanding access to justice. Without a functioning, professionalized, responsive state, neither meaningful democracy nor sustainable development is likely, several participants asserted. At the same time, the UN and particularly UNDP must constantly balance its direct support to state institutions with a concomitant support to civil society to improve its ability to provide social accountability.

A practical and immediate way in which democracy is linked to development is at the *local level*, where direct participation, inclusion and voice are central to social accountability in development. Given that there is concern that traditional approaches to decentralization are not working, according to some participants, the UN may benefit from comparative lessons learned on the ways to foster more synergistic relationships between the devolution of authority and resources at the local level to gains in development outcomes.



## Sharing Experience Globally and Developing Partnerships on Democracy and Development

Finally, many participants suggested there should be stronger partnerships between the UN, regional organizations and regional NGOs in relation to the democracy-development nexus. Many suggested that regional organizations have developed more context specific approaches to enabling democracy and to articulating democracy, human rights and development in the field. At the same time, regional norms, monitoring and crisis response capacities are highly uneven, it was noted. Regions such as the Middle East and North Africa, Central Asia, South and Southeast Asia, and East Africa were cited as ‘under-institutionalized’ in comparison with, for example, Latin America and the Caribbean, Eastern Europe, and Southern and West Africa. Much attention was paid in the 2011 Round Table on specific measures to improve regional capacities for contributing to electoral and constitution making processes that were likely to be undertaken in wake of the changes occurring in various parts of the Arab world.

A strategic goal for partnering is thus to strengthen the cooperation between the UN and regional organizations, and to strengthen the ability of UN missions and country offices to work collaboratively with regional organizations in the field. Because regional organizations vary in their composition, mandates and effectiveness, an additional strategic goal in this area should be to strengthen the capacity of regional organizations themselves, helping them to make more effective use of the norms and tools that have been developed and adopted by them. Capacity development for

regional organizations along South-South lines has been shown to be a particularly effective strategy of developing capacities for democracy building and development that are perhaps better grounded in local cultures and experiences. ■

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# Conclusions and Recommendations

## Conclusions

### ***Debating the Democracy-Development Nexus***

While the evidence in the scholarly literature is mixed and inconclusive, there is little disagreement that over time *democracy* and development are mutually reinforcing. Advances in one may produce advances in the other, in a process of mutual interaction and reinforcement. The term 'good governance' is often used as proxy to the broader concept of democracy's contribution to, and role in, development. However, participants contended that democracy, not just 'good governance' (or even more minimal expressions, such as 'good enough governance') is indeed essential to development, encompassing not only key institutions and processes but also the concepts of citizens' voice, participation, inclusion and nurturing a democratic culture. Some participants further pointed out that, at a minimum, there is no countervailing evidence to suggest that democracy must be sacrificed for development, or that somehow developmentally-oriented autocracies have any better track record in the long run.

Through the various debates and comparative experiences examined during the 2008 and 2011 roundtables, participants evaluated that ultimately democracy does matter for achieving development outcomes. The core attributes of democracy such as participation, inclusivity, responsiveness to citizen demands, and accountability, do contribute directly as well as indirectly to development, when paired with state capacities such as safety and security, rule of law and access to justice, a professional public administration, and basic service delivery in areas such as education and health care.

On the other hand, participants also acknowledged that poverty, hunger and disease can limit people's ability to effectively exercise their political and civil rights. Thus, development also matters for democracy. The lack of development in the form of economic stagnation, persistent inequalities and/or deep poverty, can result in undermining people's faith in formal democratic systems of government, even in countries or regions where these systems were considered well consolidated. It is a reality that democracies do not always deliver development at the level and pace expected by citizens. Furthermore, formal and essential democratic processes such as the organizing and holding of regular, competitive elections – often strongly favoured by international donors in their democracy assistance – on their own, are not enough to improve the lives of the poor.

In all, however, there was an understanding that while individual democratic governments do not always get high marks for delivering on development in accordance with people's needs and expectations, the system's role in guaranteeing citizens' voice to express and demand those needs as well as citizens' rights to remove those who do not govern in accordance with those expectations – the essence of democracy – is indispensable for accountability and for the sustainability of development over time. Key to ensuring better development outcomes, which democracy can provide, is an enabling environment in which even the poorest and most marginalized can have a voice and help to shape the development agenda. The final conclusion was that – although it is not the only variable to consider – development, in the long term, is less likely to succeed unless it is based on an inclusive, democratic political settlement.



### **Rethinking Approaches to Building Democracy and Development**

The challenge now, participants argued, is to use the opportunities created by transitional moments in rapidly changing societies to simultaneously further democracy and development objectives. This means ensuring that national development plans and economic reforms are broadly inclusive and participatory, that institutions of the state are made more accountable, and that electoral processes and constitution making processes are designed in such a way as to be broadly inclusive, especially of minorities, women and vulnerable groups.

Accountability and transparency, grounded in checks and balances especially on executive power, were identified as elements that would remain a critical challenge in the years ahead for emerging democracies, which would also be decisive for their development prospects.

## **Recommendations**

The UN should rethink how democracy building is traditionally carried out, as well as the conventional approaches to development aid. There is need for further ‘democratizing development’ to break down current silos or walls between democracy building and development partnership implementation, especially in terms of the coherence of its delivery. For example, national and regional human development reports could prove to be even more useful tools by doing more to combine the analysis and monitoring of development outcomes and objectives with a more central appreciation of how citizen rights and participation affect the likelihood of sustainable progress.

### **Addressing Democracy within the Post-2015 Development Agenda**

**1. Reflections on how democracy building is both an intrinsic goal, and serves instrumentally to advance development, should be essential to the United Nations consultations to derive a new development framework following the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in 2015.**

Recognizing that each country specific context is unique, there should be deliberation on how improvements in democracy representation, accountability and access to information, and inclusive governance are instrumental to development goals, especially for women. These issues should be central to the deliberations of UN entities and to the discussions of UN Member States, which will be the ultimate framers of the Post-2015 Development Agenda.

**2. While democracy’s contribution to development, or development’s contribution to democracy, are complex, context specific and at times contentious, the UN should continue to explore, support and promote the essential and mutually beneficial aspects of both processes.**

**3. The UN should contribute to building an empirical body of knowledge which demonstrates that democratic governance, with a rights based perspective that mainstreams gender equality, is central to achieving development gains in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.** UN bodies and agencies should aim to demonstrate consistently *how* democratic principles and practices such as respect for human rights, rule of law, accountability, credible and transparent electoral processes, political pluralism and civil society engagement can directly and indirectly contribute to gains in development. Especially, evidence supporting the positive effects of women’s representation on

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development outcomes should be presented to show how specific democracy building goals are related directly to progress toward development goals in areas such as education and health.

***Engaging in a Principled and Consistent Manner on Democracy and Development***

**4. The UN must be more systematic in its actions, and more explicit about its role, in democracy building worldwide. Grounded in its normative foundations, UN action should be committed to advancing democracy through principled, consistent engagement in pursuit of the Organization's three pillars of peace and security, human rights and development.** The UN's unambiguous role as a champion of human rights suggests that the UN needs to better articulate not *whether*, but *how*, democratic principles and practices directly or indirectly contribute to gains in development, such that democracy is both intrinsically desirable for fulfillment of human rights but also instrumentally related to achieving development outcomes. Democracy building should be mainstreamed throughout the work of the UN. The UN's roles and functions are both technical, for example, assisting in the organization of electoral processes, and principled, voicing support for comprehensive democratic transitions.

**5. The UN must further develop its own internal policies and capacity to more effectively assist countries in transition toward democracy and support nascent democratic transitions.** The UN is uniquely placed and has mandates for providing assistance to countries undertaking complex and often simultaneous political, social and economic transitions, as well as transitions from conflict to peace toward creating a new democracy. Ensuring that transitional processes following social upheavals lead to

new accountability institutions is an essential entry point for UN engagement; autonomous, accessible, legitimate and effective rule of law institutions are an essential element of both democracy and development.

**6. In view of democracy building being a long term, complex and highly context driven process, the UN's democracy assistance needs to be grounded in both a deep understanding of local realities and solid comparative knowledge.** Democracy support can be highly relevant to any number of country contexts, since in all countries, the goal of 'perfecting' the democratic system is a constant work in progress. That being said, in transitional settings in particular, the UN needs to be able and prepared to provide support to democratic transitions, including institution building and the development of a culture of democracy, for the long term.

***Recognizing the Importance of Democratic Ownership and Inclusivity***

**7. The UN's long standing commitment to the principle of national ownership should be defined and exercised in a more inclusive manner, and informed by a context specific understanding of the mutually reinforcing relationship between democracy and development.** Development processes would become more effective if there were a democratic foundation to build from and in which a broad array of domestic actors and stakeholders play a substantial role in policy debate and oversight. Development would also be more sustainable by strengthening domestic accountability through the consolidation of democratic institutions and processes. For democracy to take root and for *national ownership* to carry real meaning, government, civil society and parliamentary representatives need to work together in shaping and agreeing on national development agendas. In turn, the political

space opened up by such dialogue would provide building blocks for strengthening national, democratic decision making through multiple channels of interaction between the government, parliamentary bodies, elected leaders at sub-national levels and civil society.

**8. Short term efforts to achieve peaceful transitions to a new, stable political order must be linked to strategic long term approaches that aim to develop institutions that are more broadly participatory and that allow for all voices – including those of the poor, historically disadvantaged and vulnerable – to be heard.** Social exclusion limits the extent to which a country develops the underlying state-society relationship necessary for democracy to work and for development efforts to be effective. Paired with such efforts to achieve inclusivity, there must also be new approaches to measuring progress through benchmarks that combine democracy building objectives and development goals in more holistic approaches to goal setting and monitoring.

**9. Within the UN, it remains a common concern that at the global policy and at field levels, more needs to be done to create a sense of common vision across the democracy building, peace building and development assistance branches of the UN system.** Critical in the years ahead will be to continue to build UN Country Team capacities for working with national stakeholders to design and implement development planning processes that are more explicitly linked to democratic governance. A common vision should also be accompanied by more coherent and consistent messaging from the UN, regarding the mutually reinforcing nature of socio-economic development and democratic development, and their role in building sustainable peace, as well as the intrinsic importance of democracy as a universal value and primary goal. This

means cultivating and taking advantage of entry points, giving appropriate support to democratic social forces and helping to create the conditions for civil society voices to be heard.

### ***Implementing Policies that Address the Democracy and Development Nexus***

**10. The UN should bridge the gap between policy and practice in addressing the linkages between democracy and development.** The UN has evolved considerably in the last 25 years to develop the knowledge base, to catalogue best practices and to improve the operational strategies on which democracy assistance is today delivered. Still, there are areas at the intersection of democracy and development in which greater coherence in doctrine, more coordinated delivery and more innovative approaches can bridge the gap between development assistance and democracy building perspectives.

**11. Reforms are needed to address the way that traditional democracy building assistance is conceptualized and carried out. International organizations have tended to focus too much, and too episodically, on electoral processes.** Less attention has been paid, however, to critical elements such as the role of the political party system and parliamentary performance. The UN has yet to engage significantly on this ‘missing link’ element in democracy building. More efforts should be made to explore the possibilities of supporting countries in the development of transparent, inclusive and equitable multi-party systems, as well as exploring their potential impact on the development process.

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***Sharing Experiences Globally  
and Developing Partnerships on  
Democracy and Development***

12. It will be necessary to develop stronger partnerships between the UN – both at the global level, in regional contexts and at country level – with other key actors, in support of democracy. UN partnerships with international organizations, regional and sub-regional organizations, and national government and civil society organizations should build on the wealth of experience in democracy and development, which these entities can bring to bear, and particularly those from the Global South. Various regional and sub-regional organizations, for example, have developed more context specific approaches to democracy building and promotion and have articulated locally grounded regional charters that link democracy, human rights and development. The UN must continually seek out new opportunities and approaches to ensure that democracy building support is based on an in depth knowledge of the context and is driven by the needs of local stakeholders. ■

# ANNEXES

## **ANNEX 1 Concept Note and Annotated Agenda for the International Round Table on “Democracy for Development/Development for Democracy”**

New York, 12 September 2008

### ***The Event***

On the occasion of the first-ever International Day of Democracy, established in 2007 by the UN General Assembly, the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International IDEA), the Department of Political Affairs (DPA) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) of the United Nations will co-organize in New York a one day Round Table on the inter-play between democracy and development.

### ***Objective***

The meeting will seek to identify areas of policy for multilateral action in the current global context – especially by the UN – in the field of democracy promotion and support that would enhance sustainable development processes.

Key recommendations from the meeting will be conveyed to the special informal plenary of the 62nd Session of the General Assembly that will be held on 15 September on the occasion of the First International Democracy Day.

The meeting may provide forward-looking ideas for the debate on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) at the forthcoming UN High Level Mid-Term Review, scheduled to take place in September in New York in connection with the 63<sup>rd</sup> Session of the General Assembly. The discussions may also provide inputs for the follow up to the recent ECOSOC Development Cooperation Forum, especially as regards the role of parliaments, local governments, political parties and civil society, as well as other non-state actors at the national level. The debate should be informed by the results of the Accra High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness, to be held from 2<sup>nd</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> September, and it may also be relevant for the forthcoming UN Conference on Financing for Development in Doha, 29<sup>th</sup> November to 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2008.

### **Participants**

The meeting will bring together some fifteen panelists drawn from experts, scholars and policy makers jointly identified by IDEA, UN DPA, and UNDP and representatives of Permanent Missions to the UN, UN Secretariat, UN specialized agencies, funds and programmes, regional organizations, think tanks and NGOs will also be invited to participate in the event. Every effort will be made to present views from diverse geographic locations, and panelists will also be selected to provide specific policy ideas and recommendations pertinent to the role of the UN system.

### **Rationale**

Sustainable development is pursued by agencies, funds and programmes throughout the United Nations system as one of the key pillars of the UN work, with key priorities for the international community enshrined in the Millennium Declaration and the associated Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). In particular, UNDP's specific mandate on human development is associated, in the field of democracy building, with its democratic governance agenda. Development cooperation programmes focus increasingly on improving and strengthening specific aspects of democratic governance, whether they address rule of law issues, human rights, gender equality, inclusive participation, transparency, voice and accountability, effective public service delivery, or more broadly, developing the capacity of institutions to be responsive to people's needs. These actions, in one way or another, deal with promoting the core aspects of democracy, a system in which government is controlled by citizens, all citizens are given the opportunity to participate meaningfully, and are considered as equals in the exercise of that control.

Activities in support of democracy and those in support of development are often perceived as belonging to separate, if not competing or even opposed agendas. They also tend to be seen as essentially technical fields of expertise, removed from the broader realm of making political choices and decisions. However, if development is increasingly understood as “human development”, that is expanding choices and opportunities, the sustainability of democracy appears to be highly sensitive to improving the everyday lives of the people. The two areas increasingly converge, not only in citizens' objectives and aspirations, but also in the very practical matter of using resources more effectively. Furthermore, the experience of numerous actors clearly shows that both processes involve much more than technical expertise, policy advice, and higher levels of investment. In order for development results to be genuinely owned by their beneficiaries and for that development to be sustainable, they need to be generated and shaped by an open and inclusive participatory decision-making process that is genuinely democratic.

The twin goals of democracy and development are also being acutely affected in various countries, in the context of current global economic trends. The global rapid rise in commodity prices, including basic food staples and energy sources like petroleum, has reached every corner of the world, affecting millions of people and particularly those already living in poverty. As the capacity of governments to deliver services is directly affected by these shocks, their immediate impact has the potential to destabilize democracies at a time when it is essential that governments that are accountable and politically motivated to respond to inequalities are sustained. At the same time, the strain of higher commodity prices for poorer, importing nations threatens to undermine efforts at further social and

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economic development and in reaching key MDG goals.

The International Day of Democracy 2008 is an opportunity to further identify the key areas of policy that need to be addressed when considering the interactions between the development and democracy agendas in the current global context, with a view to making them more mutually reinforcing, and to consider the challenges and potential for multilateral action, and in particular by the United Nations, in that perspective. ■

## **Annotated Agenda International Round Table on Democracy for Development/ Development for Democracy 12 September 2008**

The New York Helmsley Hotel,  
New York

### **WELCOMING ADDRESS**

H.E. Ambassador Claude Heller, Permanent Representative for Mexico to the UN

### **INTRODUCTORY REMARKS**

Dr Massimo Tommasoli, Permanent Observer for International IDEA to the UN

Mr Olav Kjørven, Assistant Secretary-General and Director, Bureau for Development Policy, UNDP

Ms Elisabeth Spehar, Director, Europe Division, UN DPA

### **I. DEMOCRACY AND ITS IMPACT ON DEVELOPMENT**

Chair: Mr. Goran Fejic, Senior Advisor, International IDEA

Speakers: Ms Marta Lagos, Director, Latino-barómetro, Chile

Professor Peter Ronald deSouza, Director, Indian Institute of Advanced Study, India

Discussants: Dr Jibrin Ibrahim, Director, Centre for Democracy and Development, Nigeria

Ms Lourdes Flores Nano, Leader, Unidad Nacional Alliance and Partido Popular Cristiano, Peru

Ms Alexandra Trzeciak-Duval, Head, Policy Coordination Division, Development Cooperation Directorate, OECD

### **Themes and Questions:**

There is evidence that, on balance, institutions that promote political contestability, checks and balances, freedom of expression, voice, and democratic accountability can make a greater difference for development results in the longer term. However, poverty may be an impediment to democracy as the struggle against hunger, disease and violence makes it extremely difficult for citizens to actively take part in political and social life.

The results of opinion polls carried out by the global barometers and policy-oriented analysis on public perceptions of the 'delivery' side of democracy show a worrying picture. For example, studies carried out in Latin America point to the existence of a negative correlation between trust of citizens in democratic institutions and disparities in national income distribution. A similar correlation is likely to exist in other regions as well. The recent sharp increases in food and oil prices triggered public unrest in many countries and put the 'delivery capacity' of many democratic governments under severe strain.



What does current experience with democratic governance reveal about achieving sustainable development?

Why are the potential advantages of democracy not always translated into apparent or real development for poor countries or for the poor within other countries?

Are there any differences in trends and impacts at the regional level?

What scope is there for multilateral action (at global, regional and country levels) to support democratic reforms and dialogue that foster sustainable development?

## II. DEVELOPMENT AND ITS IMPACT ON DEMOCRACY

Chair: Mr Bjørn Førde, Director, Oslo Governance Centre, UNDP

Speakers: Professor Adebayo Olukoshi, Executive Secretary, CODESRIA, Senegal

Professor Azyumardi Azra, Universitas Islam Negeri, Syarif Hidayatullah, Indonesia

Discussants: Mr Jerzy Pomianowski, Director, Partnership for Democratic Governance Advisory Unit, OECD

Professor Georges Nzongola-Ntalaja, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, USA

Ms Marie-Angelique Savané, Chair, APRM Panel of Eminent Persons, Senegal

### Themes and Questions:

It has been argued that an effective development strategy leading to durable development gains requires many, if not all, of the essential hallmarks of democratic governance: rule of law, transparency, accountability, checks and balances, among others. It has also been argued that any development strategy needs to be ratified

and reinforced by democratic participation in order to be implemented and to achieve results on a sustainable basis.

In terms of international development cooperation, an element traditionally considered to be key to success is the principle of national ownership of the process. Current debate is increasingly focusing on enhancing the democratic dimension of the implementation of this principle, by focusing on mutual accountability and by acknowledging and enhancing the role of other actors in addition to national governments, such as civil society organizations, the private sector, and – more recently – actors more intrinsically political in nature, such as parliaments, local assemblies, and political parties, in donor and recipient countries alike.

Thus, ‘democratic ownership of development’ can be considered a concept that goes beyond classic development cooperation parameters and is highly relevant for both developing and developed countries, as reflected in the work on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), on implementing the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness and in follow-up to the ECOSOC Development Cooperation Forum, in the context of the Financing for Development review.

To what extent and under what conditions is sustainable development essential for the building of democracy? What is the impact of different patterns of development on the building of democracy, based on experiences from various regions?

What are the main elements or ‘triggers’ for democracy building and consolidation in these cases?

What are some useful experiences of national ownership of - and participatory processes in - development, in different parts

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of the world? How can these experiences be effectively shared, particularly in a South-South cooperation framework?

What scope is there for multilateral action (at global, regional and country levels) to support reforms to sustainable development processes that foster democracy building?

### III. CONCLUDING REMARKS

Chair: Dr Massimo Tommasoli, Permanent Observer for International IDEA to the UN

Speakers: Mr B. Lynn Pascoe, Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, United Nations

Mr Ad Melkert, Deputy Administrator, UNDP ■

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## ANNEX 2

### Welcoming Address by H.E. Ambassador Claude Heller Permanent Representative for Mexico to the United Nations

I must mention only the example of my region, of Latin America and the Caribbean, the least that can be said is that for Argentina to Venezuela going to Cuba or Mexico, there is a plural conception of democracy in the region. However, for the sake of our discussion today let us concentrate on the concept of democracy as a point of departure, as a regime where elections are held periodically with governmental accountability, where voters have the liberty to choose from different political options. I have also to say very clearly that democracy is not an export product that can be imposed on society.

It is necessary to develop according to the particularities of each nation. Nobel Prize winner Amartya Sen asserted a few years ago that no democracy has ever had a famine, establishing eloquently that democratic regimes are accountable to their citizens not only on political terms but also on economical terms. This can be considered as a starting point in the discussion of the relationship

within, between democracy and development.

There is an ongoing debate in the academic world about this relationship. The main assumption of those who deem democratic regimes to be above all others is that democracy creates economic growth and that, therefore, it is the best regime for development. Unfortunately, the empirical evidence is still not clear on this matter. However, one could argue that in order to achieve economic growth it is required among other conditions to have a consolidated institutional framework and respect for the rule of law which are key components for long term economic planning as well as transparent political institutions that support the mechanisms through which current global markets evolve. In all these issues democracy prevails as the regime that serves best the cause of development because it establishes a political bond between citizens and decision makers that compel the latter to act in accordance with the general interest or at least the interest of the majority.

The effects of democracy on economic growth can also be perceived in an indirect way through issues such as health, education, human rights protection and other public goods. Policy makers in democratic regimes have incentives to provide more public goods to the citizens, fearful of losing electoral



support if they do not act accordingly. Citizens in democratic regimes have the capacity to translate their desires into political action through the power of the vote. In contrast, in so-called autocratic regimes, elections are not so relevant and political actors are not subject to wide accountability measures. But as the title of this meeting accurately suggests, the relationship between these two concepts can be studied not only from the viewpoint of the benefits that democracy provides to development but also from the perspective of how economic development favors democracy. It is certainly complex to establish the empirical evidence to sustain the argument that economic growth leads to democracy, and I expect our distinguished speakers today to be of significant help in this regard.

History has shown us that this relation is much more complex than what defenders of modernization theories have sustained. Still we could argue that economic development is fundamental in maintaining social stability, which in turn contributes to the preservation of democracy. To quote the finest of them, Przeworski, democracy is more likely to survive in a growing economy, especially in wealthy nations. Furthermore, in even the poorest economies democracy can be preserved if the regime manages to generate development. Thus there seems to be a clear interaction between development and democracy.

Academic research has proven that poverty and economic decline are the most dangerous threats to democracy, especially in young democracies, such as those that have flourished in only the last two decades. In this regard, there is a global perception nowadays that societies within countries that have experimented recently with the democratization process are growing impatient in relation to their governments

on issues such as crime, violence, lack of economic opportunities and social disintegration. Sound economic policies oriented towards creating not only growth but real human development, sustainable development, become determinate in these nations in order to protect democratic values against the scourge of social unrest.

In addition to such policies, the global nature of the 21<sup>st</sup> century economy calls for an international understanding of these challenges compelling the actors of the multi-lateral arena to act in promoting sustainable development and human security for the survival of democracy.

This issue has a significant resonance in the United Nations particularly through the work of its agencies and programs. I am certain that the distinguished representative of the UNDP present today will not contradict me on this matter. The objectives contained in the Millennium Declaration and the subsequent Millennium Development Goals must be placed at the center of our debate today as well as in the following recommendations that will eventually be submitted to the General Assembly. We have to bear in mind that the construction of modern and effective states where democracy, human rights and economic growth are guaranteed is absolutely necessary and should be the priority of development programs in multilateral institutions.

Many of the tragedies that we witness today are due to the poor capacity that some governments have to provide basic needs to the citizens, which, if increased and accomplished, have the power to protect the democratic values that these nations espouse. Sustainable development and economic growth are of course the desires of those who lead democratic nations and also the constant demand of those who elect them in order to preserve and to promote democracy around

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the world. Actions that can be undertaken by nations and multilateral forums include continuing the pursuit of sustainable development through the commitments that we have acquired in recent years in the framework of the Millennium Development Goals. I am certain the contributions with which our distinguished speakers will enlighten us today will nurture the current debate on the transcendental bond that ties democracy and development together.

As a final word I would like to quote Sir Winston Churchill when he reminds us that democracy is the worst form of government except for all the others that have been tried from time to time. Let us hope that this gathering and the celebration that will follow on Monday will contribute to the protection and reinforcement of this imperfect but cherished form of government.

Thank you very much. ■

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### **ANNEX 3**

#### **Statement by Mr Olav Kjørven**

Assistant Secretary-General  
and Director, Bureau for  
Development Policy, UN  
Development Programme

On this first International Day of Democracy, we are provided here with an excellent opportunity to celebrate the progress the world has experienced in promoting and consolidating democratic systems over the last three decades throughout the world. At the same time we also need to recognize that we are facing challenges and we need to take stock of those challenges and to explore the meaning of the more worrisome trends when it comes to what we see in democratic governance around the world today.

At UNDP democratic governance is one of the channels through which we support efforts to uphold human rights and through good governance expand human development as espoused in the Millennium Declaration adopted by 189 world leaders in 2000. In this regard, we are strongly committed to

these objectives within the context of our human development agenda and its focus on enabling individuals to expand their choices and opportunities, develop their full potential, and lead productive lives in dignity and in accordance with their needs, choices and interests. Drawing on the contribution of Amartya Sen, he brilliantly defines development as freedom and this very conceptualization of freedom is a very valuable sentiment to bring with us in our bread-and-butter development world, around the world.

The overarching contribution of UNDP is capacity development, and by that we mean enhancing the local and national capacity to deliver on development commitments and to take advantage of opportunities. In this spirit, our on-the-ground efforts focus on strengthening capacity of national institutions to deliver services to citizens, promote citizen engagement, and to learn from experience. In the same fashion, we promote inclusive participation in decision-making processes so that policy and development initiatives can be shaped by the real needs of citizens with particular attention to marginalized populations. This is, in a nutshell, our agenda as UNDP to give operational meaning to the development-as-freedom concept.

There is still a long way to go. At UNDP, we have hosted over the last couple of years a Commission on the Legal Empowerment of the Poor. Chaired by Ambassador Madeleine Albright, former United States Secretary of State, and Peruvian economist Hernando de Soto, the Commission concluded that in our world today 4 billion people remained excluded from the rule of law in the sense that they do not have effective access to the protections and opportunities that only the law and functioning state institutions can provide. It is amazing to contemplate that almost ¾ths of the world's population cannot access justice, whether it is access to effective property rights or other such tools, their cultural identity, for example. These are the most serious gaps in development today, if we are to make rapid and sustained progress toward achieving the MDGs and inclusive human development for all.

Working with national stakeholders, we help countries to strengthen national and local institutions so they are more accountable and transparent as well as more efficient. The long-term goal is to strengthen national ownership by giving all actors – citizens,

civil society, and the private sector – a stake and a voice. Do we always succeed in this regard, or do we always have a transformative impact? No; we do fail and sometimes fall short. Assistance can be ineffective, and there are opportunities for its improvement. We see enough evidence of good practice to show what success is and how we can make a difference to ensure that we are building on the lessons we learn throughout the world in some 140 countries in which we are engaged in governance, based on good practice and learning from things that are not working.

That we have gathered today representatives from the public sector, civil society, and the private sector gives us an opportunity to move forward together, consolidating existing partnerships, in an effort to bring assistance and support to the places that need it most. Let us seize the opportunity today not only to learn from one another but also to identify ways in which we can strengthen the nexus between development and democracy in countries around the world.

12 September 2008 ■

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## **ANNEX 4**

### **Statement by Ms Elizabeth Spehar**

Director, Europe, United Nations  
Department of Political Affairs

The international community has long been engaged in supporting and promoting development and democracy at the global, regional, and country levels. Development and democracy are also at the core of the United Nations mandate and the UN has

become a key advocate of both around the world.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights enunciated the essentials of democracy and ever since its adoption, it has made a significant contribution to the global acceptance of democracy as a universal value. The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights sets out to translate many of the principles of the Declaration into international treaties that would protect specific rights. Ratified by 160 member states, the ICCPR contains

binding obligations on member states with respect to elections, freedom of expression, association and assembly, and other democratic entitlements. Since 1988, the General Assembly of the UN and the former Commission on Human Rights have adopted at least one resolution annually dealing with some major aspect of democracy. Democracy, therefore, has emerged as a cross-cutting issue in the outcomes of the major UN conferences and summits since the 1990s, including the Millennium Summit. In 2000, in the UN Millennium Declaration, member states reaffirmed that they would “spare no effort to promote democracy.” The 2005 World Summit Outcome Document likewise described democracy as a “universal value” that is “interlinked and mutually reinforcing” with respect for all human rights, the rule of law, and development.

These normative and consultative processes have been matched by an increasing amount of operational activity undertaken in the context of the three core pillars of the UN’s work: development, peace and security, and human rights. Led by the Secretary-General, there have also been efforts to enhance the work of the UN in the field of democracy through increasing coherence and reducing fragmentation of efforts across the UN departments, agencies and programs. Despite this, there remains a perception and perhaps a reality, that democracy has failed to improve people’s lives in some parts of the world. As a result, in some countries or regions where democracy was believed to have been “consolidated” we have witnessed popular discontent with the lack of economic and social development that has actually challenged in some circumstances political stability in those countries. People have expectations that democracy will also deliver development; this is a reasonable expectation, and we must strive to help this be achieved. We should at the same time be mindful

of arguments that inclusive, *sustainable* development can be achieved – and perhaps more easily so – without basic democratic underpinnings in a society.

Ongoing transitions in the Middle East and North Africa and recent democratic reversals in parts of Sub-Saharan Africa have put the spotlight once again on the democracy-development nexus and its impact on a country’s political life. Each situation is unique and complex in its own way; at the same time, such cases would seem to point to the importance of building strong democratic institutions and an inclusive democratic political culture alongside processes of inclusive and sustainable development. The various upheavals currently being witnessed could be seen as illustrating what can happen when either one of these two variables, or both, are absent.

Despite the need for democracy strengthening and consolidation in many countries around the globe (even in more “established” democracies, for that matter), suspicion about and resistance to democracy-support activities have increased over the past decade in some quarters. Indeed, international assistance for democracy building is sometimes seen as nothing more – and nothing less – than foreign-sponsored political interference in a sovereign country’s internal affairs. Some will further argue that the focus should be on “pure development” activities, de-linking traditional development initiatives from issues of governance and participation.

It is for these reasons, among others, that this meeting has been organized, focusing on one of the three key areas of the UN’s work, development, as it relates to democracy. We seek to advance our understanding of how democracy and development complement each other. Are the political choices offered by democracy linked to the social and economic choices offered by development? If so, how

can the UN, through its multi-faceted work on advancing human development and human security, enhance or increase these choices?

The twin and closely interlinked goals of democracy and development are also being acutely affected in various countries by current global economic trends. The rapid rise in commodity prices, including basic food staples and energy sources like petroleum, has touched every corner of the world, affecting millions of people, and particularly affecting

those already living in poverty. We would therefore also like to understand better the impact of such crises on the perceptions of lack of delivery by democratic governments. We look forward to a lively discussion focusing on the key areas of policy to be addressed when considering the interactions between development and democracy. We are also hoping to address the specific challenges as well as potential for multilateral action as directly related to the daily work of the United Nations. ■

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## **ANNEX 5**

### **Statement by Dr Massimo Tommasoli**

#### Permanent Representative for International IDEA to the United Nations

Both comparative politics and development studies have explored the relationship between democracy and development and the results of the much-heated debate generated are inconclusive, not least because of the limits posed by the different definitions of democracy and development themselves. While recognizing the existence of a positive correlation between democracy and development, evidence of a causal relationship in one direction or the other is mixed and contradictory.

As a result, democratization and democracy building are contested areas. IDEA's work in support of democracy in Latin America, Africa and Asia especially, is based on a non-prescriptive approach to building democratic institutions and processes grounded on comparative knowledge, including from the

Global South. Our experience has provided us with ample evidence that institutions can rapidly lose popular trust and support particularly when they are monopolized by self-complacent elites and isolated from social realities. In some parts of the world there is evidence of declining support for democracy due to the perception that democracy has failed to improve people's lives

Democratic institutions such as legislatures, executive branches and political parties are seen as ineffective in representing the citizenry's demand for economic and social progress. Even in countries or regions where democracy was believed to have deep roots, popular discontent with the lack of economic and social development lead to the emergence of populist and extreme politics.

A core aspect of the linkages between democracy and development is the gender dimension which is critical to the effectiveness, legitimacy and sustainability of both democracy and development. A continuing challenge is the participation of women. Despite the adoption in Beijing of the target of 30% of women representation, equal participation in political activities and as elected representatives is still far from a

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reality. Notwithstanding undeniable progress through quota mechanisms and other strategies for inclusion of women, the present challenge is also to ensure that women's issues and concerns are on the political agenda while at the same time striving to achieve higher levels of representation in terms of numbers and developing new approaches to promote proportionality in representation.

There is also the need to address the delivery side of democracy. The effectiveness of institutions and the soundness of democracy politics are acknowledged as catalysts for development. Democracy creates the enabling environment in which policy choices are subject to the control of free and responsible citizens capable of holding government and state institutions accountable for their implementation.

Democracy is therefore a tool to empower people to address issues of poverty and exclusion, and the international community acknowledged this relationship. Yet the opposite perception that authoritarian regimes have an advantage in promoting development still survives. Likewise in many countries influential actors of political life that embrace formal democratic procedures still fail to grasp the vulnerability of democracy to extreme poverty, inequality and social exclusion. There is therefore a need for political actors – primarily in political parties – to better understand the likely development effects of their political choices and the likely politics effects of their development choices. Top-down governance capacity building must be married to bottom-up accountability measures in a mutually reinforcing fashion.

In the field of development, too, the landscape is changing. New emerging economies are entering the states, thus broadening for those in need of experience and support the range of options to choose from and to combine in accordance with

their own needs and priorities. Perhaps “development” itself is one of those ideas that require deeper insight. Who is shaping it and for whom? Do ordinary people have a say? Can they rely on their elected representatives to set the right priorities? What is the real meaning of “national ownership” in these circumstances? Highly valued as one of the guiding principles of international development cooperation, national ownership often gets reduced for all practical purposes to ownership by the executive branch of the government, and this is the case for both developed and developing countries.

Ownership of development needs to be democratized. For this to happen, key actors in the democratization processes like political parties, legislatures, as well as civil society and the media could and should play a role. In this respect, it is encouraging that the Accra Agenda for Action, agreed to on September 4, 2008, at the Accra High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness, identified democracy together with economic growth, social progress and care for the environment as the prime engine of development in all countries.

The United Nations has emerged as an important player in many areas of democratization, especially in the fields of electoral and parliamentary support, human rights and the linkages between peacebuilding and democracy building. The role of the UN in state building is also increasingly associated to the parallel and often intertwined dimensions of building democratic institutions and processes and in conflict-prone and highly divided contexts. We hope this Round Table will provide an opportunity for an open and frank exchange on the various dimensions of the democracy-development nexus, and we look forward to conclusions that inform the policy debate on the role of multilateral action in this area. ■



## **ANNEX 6**

### **Annotated Agenda, Round Table Discussion on “Rethinking Democracy and Development for the 21st Century”**

Uganda House, New York, 21 March 2011

#### **I. INTRODUCTION**

Opening remarks: Dr Massimo Tommasoli, Permanent Observer for International IDEA to the UN

Overview of Issue Paper: Professor Timothy D. Sisk, Josef Korbel School of International Studies, University of Denver

#### **II. STRATEGIC AND POLICY LEVEL**

Facilitator: Ms Elizabeth Spehar, Director, Europe Division, UN Department of Political Affairs (DPA)

##### **Themes and Questions:**

In light of the global financial and economic crisis as well as the wave of change in the Middle East and North Africa:

In what ways can the United Nations and the international community more coherently and collectively contribute to democratic and development processes that are mutually reinforcing?

To what extent do we need to rethink the architecture and functioning of global institutions and processes that promote democratic development in order to overcome ‘silo’ approaches to democracy building and development aid?

How can we use democratic openings (such as the one in the Middle East) and the related prospect for greater gender equality, in a timely and coherent manner to support sustainable development? In turn, how can development assistance contribute to democratic governance in such contexts?

#### **III. SECOND SESSION: OPERATIONAL LEVEL**

Facilitator: Ms Geraldine Fraser-Moleketi, Director, Democratic Governance Group, Bureau for Development Policy (BDP), UNDP

##### **Themes and Questions:**

How can smarter, more sophisticated, gender-sensitive and context-specific support in the areas of electoral processes, parliaments, political parties, and sector-specific democratic dialogue contribute to governance processes that are central to development objectives (e.g., democratic dialogue on health, education, or community security)?

How should accountability mechanisms be designed that enhance the impact of development assistance and build trust by providing transparency and thus disincentives for abuse?

How can assistance be improved to the nascent processes of democratization and development in fragile and conflict-affected countries?

In what ways can democracy building and development assistance providers work with and through ‘hybrid’ or informal institutions in local contexts? How can informal institutions contribute to, and not distract from, democracy and human rights?

How should the ‘inequality gap’ in middle-income countries be addressed? How does the concentration of high levels of poverty

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in middle-income countries affect the prioritization of aid flows? In what ways can aid for democracy and governance contribute to narrowing the inequality gap?

#### **IV. RESEARCH AND ANALYSIS**

Facilitator: Dr Massimo Tommasoli,  
Permanent Observer for International IDEA  
to the UN

In what ways can the UN, other intergovernmental, regional, and local organizations promote research on the relationship between the quality of democracy over time and country-level performance on the MDGs?

In what practical ways can new partnerships and mechanisms be developed for donor-beneficiary dialogues on democracy and development that would enhance coherence?

#### **V. CONCLUSIONS**

Speakers: Ms Elizabeth Spehar, Director,  
Europe Division, UN DPA

Ms Geraldine Fraser-Moleketi, Director,  
Democratic Governance Group, BDP, UNDP

Dr Massimo Tommasoli, Permanent Observer  
for International IDEA to the UN ■

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# Abbreviations

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APRM	African Peer Review Mechanism
AU	African Union
BCPR	Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery (UNDP)
BDP	Bureau for Development Policy (UNDP)
CSDS	Center for the Study of Developing Societies
ECOSOC	(United Nations) Economic and Social Council
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
ICCPR	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
IDEA	(International) Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance
IDEP	(United Nations) African Institute for Economic Development and Planning
IPDD	International Panel on Democracy and Development
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MENA	Middle East and North Africa
NGOs	Non-governmental organizations
OAS	Organization of American States
OECD-DAC	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development- Development Assistance Committee
OSCE	Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe
POGAR	Programme on Governance (UNDP Arab Regional Bureau)
PPP	Purchasing Power Parity
SADC	Southern African Development Community
UN	United Nations
UNDEF	United Nations Democracy Fund
UN DPA	United Nations Department of Political Affairs
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UN DESA	United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UN OHCHR	United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
UN Women	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
WDR	World Development Report
WHO	World Health Organization



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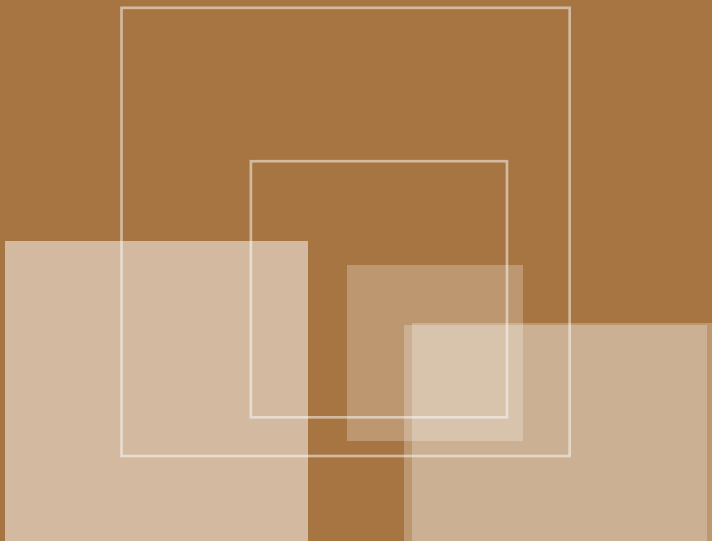








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ISBN: 978-91-86565-91-6