

■ EDITORIAL

Constitution Building in Asia: the tipping point for democratization?

Two important constitution-building processes currently underway in Asia are reaching a tipping point. Last week, the Nepali people elected members of a Constituent Assembly; while in May the Burmese people will vote on a draft Constitution.



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By Vidar Helgesen, Secretary-General

■ FOCUS: Elections in Nepal

A New Dawn – Election Day in Nepal

Posted: April 14, 2008

As the sun rose over Kathmandu on April 10 on the cusp of the Hindu new year 2065, voters started appearing to get in line to elect a Constituent Assembly. The streets were deserted with no cars which gave a serene calm to the normally noisy, bustling horn-beeping streets.

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□ *Election day, 10 April 2008, in Kathmandu, Nepal*
Photo: © Paul Guerin

Nepal's constitutional elections

Posted: April 9, 2008

"The development of a Constitution by the Constituent Assembly selected by popular election is a landmark, and a vital stage, but it is not the culmination of Nepal's peace process." Commentary by S.D. Muni, Senior Visiting Research Fellow at the Institute of South Asian Studies, Singapore.

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Interviews:

Two prominent Nepalese leaders discuss the Constituent Assembly elections and the role of the international community in the peacebuilding process in Nepal with International IDEA:

- Nepal's Chief Election Commissioner **Mr Bhoj Raj Pokharel**
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- Civil society activist **Devendra Raj Panday**, leader of the citizens' movement that sparked off Jana Andolan 2
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■ OTHER NEWS

International IDEA supports birth of new Ecuadorian Constitution

Posted: April 9, 2008

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■ COMING UP

[Democracy Round table on "Democracy and Development" Delhi, India, 17-18 June 2008](#)

Are democracy and development linked? What is the impact of globalization?

As Ecuadorians debate the form that their new Constitution will take, International IDEA continues to support the process, providing information to the Constituent Assembly delegates, encouraging inter-party dialogue and facilitating public involvement with a broadcast on community radio stations.

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Ghana joins International IDEA

International IDEA welcomes Ghana as a new Member State. Bringing the total number to 25 democracies drawn from all continents, Ghana is International IDEA's sixth African Member State and the second Western African Member State.

Political reform in Colombia: a unique opportunity for Congress

Posted: April 3, 2008

The recent imprisonment of another five members of Congress involved in the parapolitica scandal, which has already seen 27 members of Parliament jailed and some 20 others placed under investigation, has in recent days revived the flames of debate in Colombia surrounding the legitimacy of the current Congress, and even the possibility of revoking its mandate.

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A BRIDGE 2 Far? Not far enough...

Posted: March 29, 2008

Together with its partners, International IDEA launched Version 2 of the Building Resources in Democracy and Governance (BRIDGE) Project on 26 March 2008. Aimed at supporting the professional development of Electoral Management Bodies (EMBs), BRIDGE is to date the most comprehensive curriculum on electoral processes.

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More BRIDGE impact in Southern Africa

Posted: March 20, 2008

International IDEA in partnership with the South Africa Electoral Commission (IEC) held a 10 day BRIDGE Train the Facilitator Course in Pretoria, South Africa, between 3-14 March 2008. The course concludes a two-year programme that began in 2006 to support the professional development of election administrators in East and Southern Africa.

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Parliamentarians define strategies for greater gender equity

Posted: March 20, 2008

In recent years, a great deal of research and debate has focused on helping women gain access to political power. These efforts have begun to bear fruit, with increasing numbers of women elected in many Latin American legislatures. Very little work has been done, however, on strategies to help women use that power effectively once they are in office.

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■ NEW RELEASES

Nepal in Transition: A Study on the State of Democracy

Presents major findings of a survey conducted in April 2007 by the Nepal Chapter of the State of Democracy in South Asia and International IDEA.

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Political and Electoral Reform in Latin America 1978-2007 (Spanish)

Provides an overview, as well as a country-by-country analysis of progress, setbacks and differences in the development of democratic institutions and mechanisms in Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemalan, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay and Venezuela.

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Politics and Poverty in the Andean Region Policy Summary: Key Findings and Recommendations

Identifies policy areas that political parties can agree upon in the fight against poverty, as well as analyzes the political obstacles to poverty reduction.

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