

## ■ EDITORIAL

### Participation and Inclusiveness

The election of Barack Obama was hailed by world political leaders who hope it will usher-in a revival of multilateralism and a return to primacy of international law. Their hopes are important; they are certainly hopes that I share. Yet, they are largely generated by mistakes of the past.



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*Vidar Helgesen*

By Vidar Helgesen, Secretary-General

## ■ FOCUS: Participation & Inclusiveness

*Referendum on the European Constitution*  
©: Bigot/Andia.fr/Still Pictures

### Direct Democracy: unpacking political participation

Posted: December 8, 2008

The air in Pretoria is alive with thunder, lightening and talk of the upcoming 2009 general elections. This electric environment proved to be the perfect backdrop for the 4 December 2008 launch of International IDEA's newest publication, *Direct Democracy: The International IDEA Handbook*.

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### Citizens' tool for checking the health of their democracies

Posted: December 1, 2008

A week after Americans demonstrated the empowering potential of democracy by electing their first African American President a new guide was published to help people around the world conduct a health check on their own governments and institutions. It has been developed by International IDEA and was launched at a seminar in New York on 13 November 2008.

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### Participation in constitution building in Africa

Posted: November 28, 2008

Africa took an important step forward on 25–27 November 2008 in its ambition to establish good governance across the continent. Hosted by the Government of Benin, the African Union (AU) Commission and International IDEA organized an international conference on constitution building in Africa.

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### Women in politics: What has been the impact of gender quotas?

Posted: November 1, 2008

Politicians and researchers from around Latin America gathered for three days in mid-October 2008 to assess the progress that has been made in women's political participation and representation since the region's first quota laws were passed more than 15 years ago.

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### Women and constitution building in Nepal

Posted: October 20, 2008

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### Democracy support – where now?

Participate in International IDEA and **openDemocracy's** major debate on the current state of democracy support in the international arena.

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» [Season's greetings from International IDEA!](#)

International IDEA hosted a conference in late September 2008 on *Women and Constitution Building* aimed at supporting constitution building in Nepal by providing comparative knowledge from Latin America, Africa and Asia. "Drafting a constitution is not enough: we must change the authoritarian behavior patterns that are stored on our personal hard drives", said Ana Maria Ruiz Antelo, member of the Bolivian Constituent Assembly.

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### **Colombian politics is still an uphill fight for women**

Posted: November 1, 2008

The *More Women, More Politics* campaign, which is sponsored by 10 organizations including International IDEA, launched a study to develop a deeper understanding of the situation of women in politics in Colombia. The result is the article, "Ranking of Equality of Men and Women in Colombian Political Parties and Movements," which was released 21 October 2008 in Bogotá.

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#### ■ OTHER NEWS

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### **Managing diversity**

Posted: December 1, 2008

How can the North benefit from the experiences of the South in managing diverse societies democratically – and vice versa? What can we learn from each other? These were the key questions on managing diversity considered at a workshop of experts held in Pretoria, South Africa on 26–27 November 2008.

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### **Combating violence against women in politics in South Asia**

Posted: November 25, 2008

Regional and national mechanisms to address political violence against women in South Asia were discussed at a three-day "Regional Conference on Violence Against Women in Politics" in late November in Kathmandu.

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### **Building democracy in parties and Congress**

Posted: October 25, 2008

Political and electoral reform activities aimed at enhancing political representation and building more democratic parties were the focus of International IDEA's efforts in Peru in October 2008.

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### **How does the Constituent Assembly in Nepal work?**

Posted: October 15, 2008

The Nepalese Constituent Assembly, the Nepal Law Society and International IDEA held a three-day orientation programme in October 2008 in Kathmandu for Constituent Assembly (CA) officials from different parties on "How the Constituent Assembly Works."

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### **European Development Days**

Posted: November 25, 2008

The International IDEA - EU Presidency/global consultations project team organized a round table with civil society representatives on their views on the EU's role in democracy building. It was held at the "European Development Days", hosted by the European Commission and the French EU presidency, in Strasbourg 15–17 November 2008.

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#### ■ NEW PUBLICATIONS

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### Creating the New Constitution: A Guide for Nepali Citizens

Launched on 29 November 2008 in Kathmandu, Nepal, Minister for Law, Justice and Constituent Assembly Affairs, Dev Guring, said that this book would contribute to the process of constitutional development in Nepal by providing sought after information and different options to Constituent Assembly members.

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### Building a New, Pluralistic Political Landscape: Shaping Politics in Bolivia's Departments (Spanish)

Maps the political and social arrangements in eight departments in Bolivia to contribute to the ongoing debate on geographically based political divides in the country.

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### Direct Democracy: The International IDEA Handbook

First of its kind to detail the definitions, usage, best practices and challenges of different direct democracy provisions, such as referendums, citizens' initiatives, agenda initiatives, and recall procedures.

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### Political Party Development: Latin America Experiences (Spanish)

Shares experiences in political party-building from several Latin American countries and aims to further strengthening the representative system in Bolivia.

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