



30 years INTERNATIONAL IDEA of Advancing Democracy in Latin America and the Caribbean for a More Inclusive and Prosperous Region

RAPORTEURSHIP
September 2025





Kevin Casas-Zamora, Secretary-General of International IDEA together with Michelle Bachelet, former President of Chile.

Rapporteurship

30 Years of Building Democracy: Commemoration of International IDEA

September 2025

Cover: International IDEA regional team with Beatriz Argimón, former Vice President of Uruguay and Michelle Bachelet, former President of Chile.



Equipo regional de IDEA Internacional.

Introduction

The celebration of International IDEA's 30th anniversary, held in Santiago, Chile, on 3 and 4 September 2025, brought together senior government officials, representatives of multilateral organizations, civil society leaders, academics, specialists and international organizations committed to strengthening democracy.

At a global moment marked by increasing uncertainty, institutional weakening, the rise of authoritarian rhetoric and growing citizen disaffection, the commemoration was seen as an opportunity for collective reflection on the fate and future conditions of democracy.

The agenda addressed the key dilemmas of our time. It began with a high-level discussion on political inclusion as a condition of legitimacy, followed by four panels; strengthening multilateralism in the face of a fragmented international order; gender equality as the core of substantive democracy; the impacts of the digital revolution on the public sphere; and the structural challenges of the democratic model in Latin America.

All discussions were aligned with the impact these issues have on the quality of life of citizens and on prosperity in the region.

Amid the diversity of these spaces, one common message was clear. Defending democracy requires building community, renewing the language of politics, going beyond national borders and affirming, once again, that democracy is not just a form of government, but a shared horizon that expands with every act of participation, every right won and every voice raised to demand dignity.

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**THE BEST WAY TO
PROTECT DEMOCRACY IS
TO REFORM IT**

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**KEVIN CASAS-ZAMORA
INTERNATIONAL IDEA**

Conversatorio de Alto Nivel
Democracia, Inclusión y Prosperidad en América Latina
Desafíos y Oportunidades para una Transformación Sostenible

30 AÑOS
IDEA
Internacional



Kevin Casas-Zamora
Secretario General
IDEA Internacional
Exvicepresidente de Costa Rica



Michelle Bachelet
Expresidenta de Chile



Beatriz Argimón
Exvicepresidenta de Uruguay



Paloma Ávila
MODERADORA
Periodista CNN Chile



High-Level Discussion: Democracy, Inclusion, and Prosperity in Latin America—Challenges and Opportunities for Sustainable Transformation, with the participation of Kevin Casas-Zamora, Secretary-General of International IDEA and former Vice President of Costa Rica; Michelle Bachelet, former President of Chile; Beatriz Argimón, former Vice President of Uruguay; and moderated by Paloma Ávila, journalist at CNN Chile.

Democracy as a shared will and a collective task

The day began with remarks by the Regional Director of International IDEA for Latin America and the Caribbean, Marcela Ríos Tobar, who highlighted the origins of International IDEA in 1995, a period of deepening democracy globally alongside strong multilateral promotion, and the lessons learned during its long history in the region. In the face of contemporary challenges, she warned that the proliferation of phenomena such as the rise of extremist, illiberal and authoritarian discourses attacks our rules and institutions, jeopardizing the very viability of democracy as a way of life.

International IDEA has been reporting on these trends since its inception. The annual publication of the Global State of Democracy (GSoD) allows us to track the decline, which has now reached nine consecutive years.

During 2024, 54 per cent of countries suffered at least one setback in their democratic factors, far exceeding the 32 per cent that registered progress. In Latin America, these trends have been ongoing since well before the pandemic, continuing to the present day.

Threats to democracy no longer come in the form of military coups; they are gradual and difficult to detect at first, hollowing out institutions from within by strategically manipulating elections, exploiting the justice system, persecuting the press or criminalizing protest. It is not just about data or a technical matter, “These threats are palpable in the daily life of our countries”, Director Ríos Tobar said, and can be seen in citizen unrest, frustration with institutions, or feelings of exclusion.

In this vein, the commemoration served as a space for pluralistic dialogue to renew the democratic pact, underscoring that Latin America has time and again demonstrated its capacity to withstand pressure from organizing 25 elections during the pandemic to the role of civil society in countries such as Guatemala in defending the popular mandate against attempts at institutional capture, as well as the institutional resilience shown by Brazil’s institutions in the face of the attempted assault on public authorities in 2023, “Just as democracy can regress, it can also be reborn”, Director Ríos Tobar said, vindicating resilience as a quality that can be strengthened.

The President of the Republic of Chile, a country that has been a founding Member State of International IDEA since its inception, HE Gabriel Boric, also emphasized this dimension of democracy in his opening remarks. He called for it to be seen as a process in constant transformation that must be defended with

actions, not just words, “Politics is done every day” and “Democracy is about improving the quality of life of our people”, he said, inviting democrats to reconnect with the territories, their social unrest and material needs. A democracy that fails to deliver results in social justice, pensions, health or security is vulnerable to authoritarian narratives that promise easy solutions at the expense of rights and pluralism.

People need to know and feel deep down that a democratic system is worth defending, but to achieve this, democracies must demonstrate their ability to deliver on their promises.

Strengthening democracy means revitalizing it from within, building from the ground up, broadening its margins of inclusion and providing concrete solutions to common problems. A democracy that listens and takes responsibility is a living practice, capable of taking root in conscious citizens, institutions open to change, and empathetic leadership.

The best defense for democracy, the strongest safeguard, is to generate a sense of justice and belonging through its deepening.

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CRISES ARE OPPORTUNITIES FOR CHANGE

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BEATRIZ ARGIMÓN
FORMER VICE PRESIDENT OF URUGUAY



HE Gabriel Boric, President of Chile, participated in the inauguration of the commemoration event for the 30 years of International IDEA, held at the Gabriela Mistral Cultural Center - GAM.

Renewing the democratic pact towards more inclusive societies

During the opening day, a high-level dialogue was held on the revitalization of democratic pacts in complex times. The Secretary-General of International IDEA, Kevin Casas-Zamora, pointed out that Latin America has made significant progress in consolidating reliable electoral processes, even under extreme conditions such as the pandemic, and in advancing the subordination of the military to civilian power. However, this progress coexists with the expansion of organized crime, the fragmentation of party systems and their disconnect from the social fabric, which hinders governance, leaving countries trapped between legislative paralysis and the temptation of authoritarianism.

But crises can also be moments of openness if they are approached from committed democratic leaderships. For this reason, the former Vice President of Uruguay, HE Beatriz Argimón, focused on the transformative possibilities available to us. The new generations demand agile and accessible responses; it is not enough to evoke the authoritarian past to sustain democratic commitment. The challenge lies in using a language that combines institutional strength with social sensitivity; in this sense, renewal entails seeking new ways of doing politics.

The recovery of the social fabric is a key component in today's context. The former president of Chile and former United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, H.E. Michelle Bachelet, recalled that democracy is sustained by the living networks that connect people to public life: trade unions, neighborhood organizations, mothers' centers, religious communities, sports clubs, and citizen groups. When civil society becomes fragmented, its ability to rebuild trust is also weakened. This is especially true in the face of challenges such as structural corruption, narco-politics, and criminal economies, whose expansion is fueled by the loss of social cohesion.

Although much of the strengthening of democracy occurs within countries, many issues that affect the national sphere extend beyond the borders of any single country, such as migration, climate change and crime. That is why the importance of multilateralism in producing shared solutions was emphasized.

However, the challenges that these bodies currently face require a rethinking of how they operate.

The defense of democracy cannot be seen as an imposition of western powers. On the contrary, it must be a space for pluralistic dialogue where countries from all continents can share their experiences and lessons learned on equal terms.

Substantive equality, social ties and transformative leadership. Governing in a democracy may be more difficult, but it is also more legitimate and fair. These were the keys to rebuilding a democratic social pact for the future. Achieving real equality is a matter of human rights and democratic quality. But public confidence is not restored with rhetoric, but by fulfilling what has been proposed.

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IT IS ESSENTIAL TO REINVENT, REINVIGORATE AND RENEW POLITICS. AND THAT IS DONE BY KEEPING PROMISES

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**MICHELLE BACHELET
FORMER PRESIDENT OF CHILE AND
FORMER UN HIGH COMMISSIONER
FOR HUMAN RIGHTS**



Benjamin Müller, Chargé d'Affaires a.i., Embassy of Switzerland to the Republic of Chile.



HE Andrew Martin, Ambassador of Australia to the Republic of Chile.



Kevin Casas-Zamora, Secretary-General of International IDEA and former Vice President of Costa Rica.



Alberto van Klaveren, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Chile.



Marcela Ríos Tobar, Regional Director of International IDEA for Latin America and the Caribbean.



Sebastián Kraljevich, Secretary for the Strengthening of Democracy, Organization of American States (OAS).

The future of multilateralism under pressure

The conversation on multilateralism revolved around a paradoxical situation. We live in an interconnected world where cooperation is essential to address transnational challenges that no single state can solve on its own, but the international system is too weak to do so, as it is marked by structural divisions, a loss of basic consensus and a process of geopolitical fragmentation that prevents collective responses to shared threats. This contributes to a growing anomie within the system, which manifests itself both in the institutional fragility of international organizations and in their lack of effectiveness in addressing persistent challenges.

The democratic model has been questioned by various actors, and the criticism that it is incapable of fulfilling its promises beyond the West has gained ground. In addition, we are witnessing the withdrawal of those who historically promoted democracy as a core value and the rise of authoritarian models that, from the perspective of many countries, seem to offer faster solutions in sensitive areas such as health, employment and security, all of which are essential elements for achieving a lasting prosperity that guarantees the well-being of citizens.

In this scenario, democracy runs the risk of being perceived as a luxury detached from the urgent needs of development, while its support and promotion may be interpreted as external interference. For this reason, it was emphasized that genuinely pluralistic and credible spaces for dialogue across all regions are crucial in order to build bridges where gaps currently prevail.



Panel: Multilateralism and Cooperation for Democracy: Defining the New Global Order, with the participation of Kevin Casas-Zamora, Secretary-General, International IDEA; Alberto van Klaveren, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Chile; Sebastián Kraljevich, Secretary for the Strengthening of Democracy, Organization of American States (OAS); María José Henríquez, Director of the School of International Relations and Global Public Relations, University of Chile; and Sandra Borda, Academic and Senior Advisor for International Relations to the Mayor of Bogotá. The moderation was led by Paula Molina, a journalist at Radio Cooperativa.

To this end, democracy and the multilateral system must show tangible results in order to be perceived as effective systems capable of solving problems.

One way to strengthen global trust in citizenship is to link development, rights and inclusion. The need to reconcile national interests with global objectives within sustainable multilateral frameworks was highlighted, with real capacity for action and from a comprehensive perspective of growth.

This also requires a different way of approaching states and people by multilateral institutions. In light of the current disconnect, the urgency of speaking more clearly, closer to people and grounded in their real concerns was emphasized. By opening the institutions to their participation, their legitimacy can be rebuilt, so that democracy becomes a common cause again.



Aluna Serrano, Programme Officer, International IDEA.



Panel: Gender Equality as a Pillar of Democracy. Marcela Ríos Tobar, Regional Director of International IDEA for Latin America and the Caribbean, accompanies Gloria de la Fuente, Undersecretary of Foreign Affairs of Chile; Mónica Xavier, Director of InMujeres, Uruguay; Julissa Mantilla, former President of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights; and Pamela Figueroa, President of the Board of Directors of the Electoral Service of Chile (SERVEL). The moderation was led by Lucía López, a journalist at ADN Chile.

Gender-responsive democracy: from rules to results

Democracy, understood as a political system where sovereignty resides in free and equal citizens, has inclusion in the depths of its heart. A regime that excludes part of its citizenship or establishes social hierarchies among people cannot be considered fully democratic, even if it holds elections. One of the great legacies of democratic history has been the progressive expansion of civil and political rights to the entire population, but there is still work to be done to ensure substantive equality.

Democracy requires that all people enjoy the same conditions to express themselves, decide and govern. However, opening spaces for representation does not always translate into greater effective power for excluded groups. The inclusion of sectors that have historically been excluded from decision-making spaces, such as women, sexual minorities, rural populations and low-income urban sectors, calls us to reflect on the very structure of these bodies.

For this reason, parity is more than an electoral correction mechanism: it is a political approach with practical and symbolic effects, which reorders public priorities, incorporates new visions and transforms the way in which the state is linked to citizens in different spheres, ranging from the design of policies to the structure of parties, through justice systems, state budgets and forms of deliberation.

One of the most powerful contributions of the debate was to link the gender agenda with international decision-making spaces. Over the last decade, gender-sensitive diplomacy has emerged and permeated bilateral relations as well as trade and multilateral agreements.

This is reflected in advances such as the inclusion of gender clauses in economic treaties, the development of roadmaps within regional blocs and the integration of issues such as political violence into international forums.

This global dimension is key, as it prevents gender equality from being confined to the domestic sphere or to the ups and downs of the electoral agenda, but there are also challenges with its implementation. Negotiating spaces must be pluralistic, incorporating the intersectional identities of indigenous, Afro-descendant, migrant, and rural women, both as a form of justice and institutional resilience.

In this context, feminism is proposed as a democratic and ethical reorganization of power from a care-centered perspective. This ideal is the source of its strength, but also the reason why it becomes a target of attacks by authoritarian narratives. The contexts of polarization and conflict that prevail today make the presence of diverse, committed, and accessible leaders even more urgent. Consequently, the exclusion of women weakens the quality of policy responses.

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**THIS IS NOT A
CIRCUMSTANTIAL QUOTA.
WE NEED TO REDESIGN
PARTICIPATION IN POWER.
WE MUST MAKE THAT
POWER SERVE OTHER
PURPOSES THAN THOSE IT
HAS SERVED UP UNTIL NOW**

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MÓNICA XAVIER
DIRECTOR INMUJERES, URUGUAY

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Beatriz Argimón, former Vice President of Uruguay.

Keys to democratic regulation of the digital ecosystem

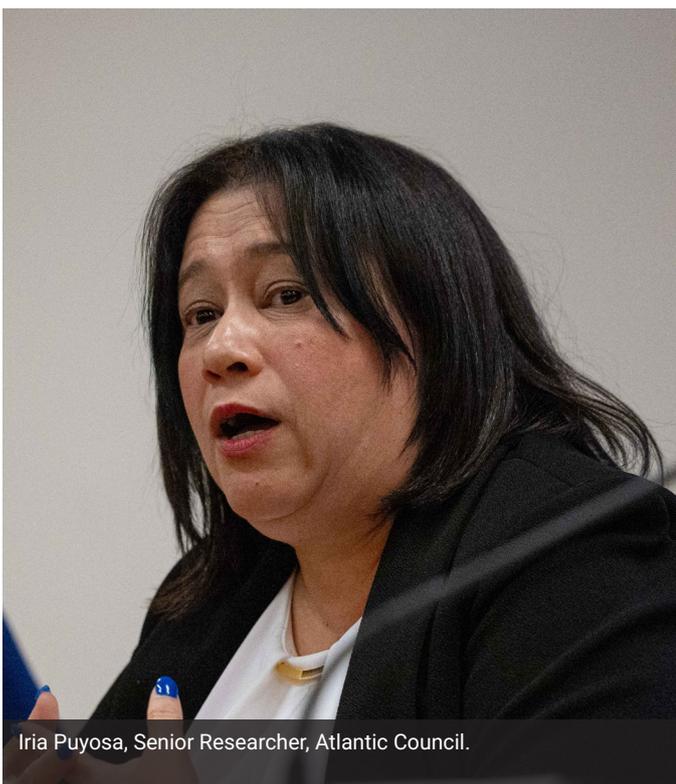
Digital transformation has brought many advances and opportunities for democracy, but innovation also requires adaptation, and this brings challenges that must be addressed before they have a negative impact. The integrity of the information ecosystem reflects this situation well, since it has never been so easy to access so much information in such a short time and from such a wide variety of quality sources. However, for the same reason, we are not prepared to assimilate it in its entirety.

Large volumes of data can overwhelm even native users of the digital world, compounded by the emergence of artificial intelligence and the generation of increasingly difficult-to-detect hyper-realistic content. When these technologies are misused or designed without considering their risks, democracy and the way we interact socially can be affected, as seen in the growth of digital violence and the proliferation of false narratives and disinformation campaigns.

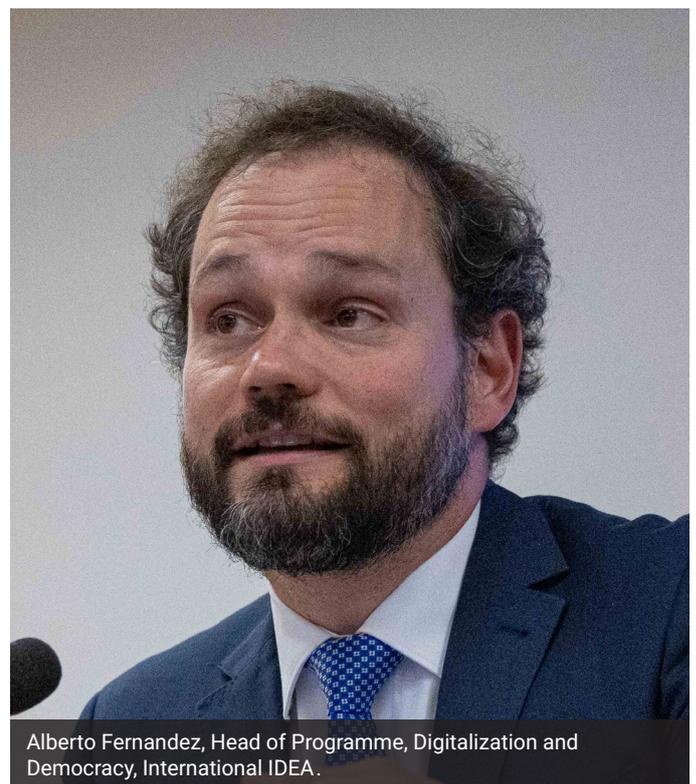
Digital platforms play a leading role in this interconnected world. It is true that the current challenges facing democracies have long-standing roots; however, it was emphasized that the very architecture of digital platforms whose algorithms, designed to maximize dwell time and emotional engagement, prioritize extreme, sensationalist or disruptive content can act as amplifiers of these flaws. In response, it was proposed to move towards regulation based on transparency, accountability and risk assessment, but with significant differences on how to do so.

Some approaches placed the responsibility on digital actors to demonstrate that their platforms will not cause harm, especially in electoral processes or human rights contexts. Others sought to delve deeper into the differentiation between actors according to their role in the digital ecosystem.

In the same way, the importance of content moderation was a topic of consensus, although with nuances in terms of responses. It was noted that it is not possible to legislate directly against disinformation as a phenomenon, given the impossibility to cover all the content and challenges of an exhaustive classification opens the door to arbitrariness and, with it, to state censorship. Instead, it was proposed to legislate on amplification vectors, such as algorithms, business models and digital architectures.



Iria Puyosa, Senior Researcher, Atlantic Council.



Alberto Fernandez, Head of Programme, Digitalization and Democracy, International IDEA.

The need to strengthen state capacities was also highlighted, such as the autonomy and technical competence of electoral bodies to monitor illicit campaigns, cooperation between electoral justice, cybersecurity and human rights bodies. Although there was no agreement on the creation of agencies with specific mandates for algorithmic regulation or the adaptation of institutions already in force in the countries.

In another line of conversation, it was pointed out that the misuse of technologies by authoritarian governments is a reality that already surpasses fiction. Disinformation has become a common tactic for undermining democracy, with examples in different regions of the world where platforms have been exploited to manipulate electoral information.

At the same time, it was noted that the proposals for regulation must be observed carefully, since laws against disinformation have also been used for censorship and surveillance.

The conversation ended with a shared reflection on the urgent need to rethink digital governance from a democratic perspective. Beyond technical diagnoses and differing views on how to regulate, there was agreement that the responses require a cooperative approach.

The key is to ensure that the structural conditions that produce and disseminate content respect people's freedoms and rights. Regulation of the digital environment must safeguard dissent, protect diversity, and strengthen the real democratic capacities of the state, independent media, and citizens.

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**IT IS IMPORTANT
TO RECOGNIZE THAT
WE CANNOT LEGISLATE
MISINFORMATION; RATHER,
WE MUST LEGISLATE THE
RISKS AND SOCIAL IMPACT
OF CERTAIN TYPES OF
INFORMATION.**

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**ALBERTO FERNÁNDEZ
INTERNATIONAL IDEA**



Catalina Botero, Director, UNESCO Chair, Universidad de los Andes; former Special Rapporteur for Freedom of Expression, IACHR



Alex Pessó, Director of Legal and Corporate Affairs, Microsoft

Reimagining democracies

In our times, authoritarian regimes tend to come to power through votes, not military coups. They use legal tools to dismantle the Rule of Law from within, often with broad popular support. This basis of social legitimacy is problematic because, ultimately, authoritarian leaders challenge the very concept of democracy using a wide range of rhetorical and even legal-institutional resources. In this way, some leaders have crossed the authoritarian threshold, persecuting opponents, restricting freedoms and concentrating power, even without losing their popularity.

The rise of authoritarian leaders with public legitimacy has been explained by their ability to respond efficiently to problems, such as security in the face of organized crime. Accordingly, many analyses conclude that it is necessary to enhance the responsiveness of democratic regimes. But capacity building requires addressing the structural limitations of Latin American States. Since its inception, the region has been shaped by social hierarchies and persistent inequalities, which has had an impact on politics since sectors with greater economic power have had greater influence on decision making, reproducing a direct link of inequality between wealth and representation, which has tended to hinder a profound redistribution of resources.

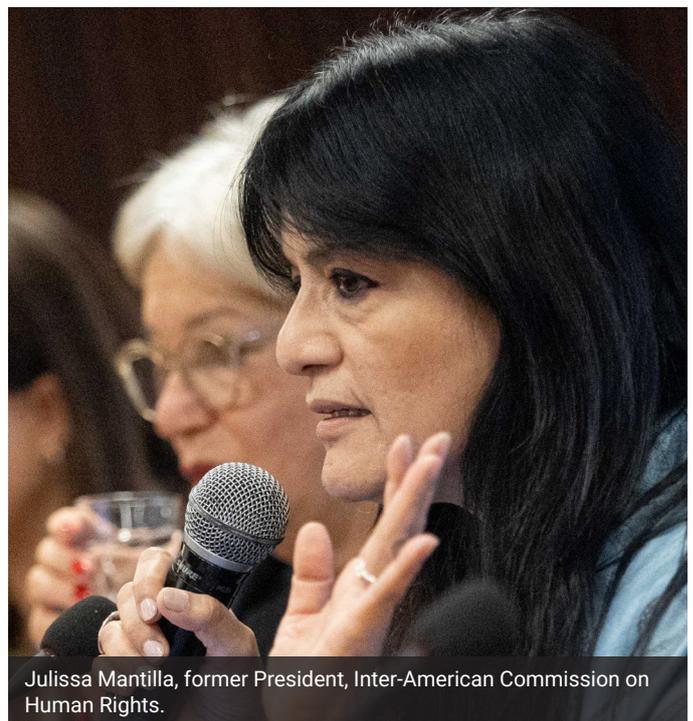
Institutions can be resilient and operate by fulfilling their legal functions. However, a common point emphasized by the panel members was that the promise of democracy will remain hollow unless power is distributed more equitably. This can also be seen in the loss of credibility of meritocratic discourse, as citizens disenchanted with democracy feel abandoned and stuck due to the lack of opportunities for social mobility in areas such as education and work.

Within this complex constellation of factors, a symbolic vacuum emerges in which punitive forms of leadership find fertile ground, feeding on widespread discontent. However, alongside the challenges, experiences of democratic resilience and significant advances in women's rights, inclusion of dissidents, recognition of indigenous peoples and expansion of education, among others, were also highlighted. Latin American democracies have been able to deal with adversity in the past, strengthening themselves after episodes of decline.

Therefore, the diagnosis is necessary to focus on the action, but it cannot lead to pessimism. It was emphasized that, while setbacks often take the form of authoritarian legalism that turns democratic tools against themselves, the central task is to strengthen the core pillars of democracy such as checks and balances bodies and electoral institutions, and to protect civil society, with a view to expanding civic space. The panellists thus agreed on the idea of reconstructing the meaning of politics



Sandra Borda, Academic, Senior Advisor for International Relations, Mayor of Bogotá.



Julissa Mantilla, former President, Inter-American Commission on Human Rights.

from its ability to transform daily life, which implies investing in education, guaranteeing basic social rights such as health, housing and employment, and promoting fairer tax systems. The role of independent journalism, even in contexts of exile, as a pillar of accountability and public debate was also highlighted.

For these measures to be effective, we must overcome a vision of democracy focused exclusively on voting and move towards more horizontal models of representation, capable of exercising effective social mediation. Political parties can play an important role in this work, but reforms are necessary to transform them into active spaces for political intermediation. Thus, any future agenda for strengthening democracy, both globally and regionally, must be committed to regenerating its institutional, economic, and social foundations.

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THE PROBLEM WITH JOURNALISM IN EXILE IS THAT YOU BECOME A SUBJECT OF THE PAST. YOU CAN TELL WHAT HAPPENED, BUT WE NEED TO TELL WHAT IS HAPPENING... WE HAVE TO TALK TECHNICALLY ABOUT HOW TO DO JOURNALISM FROM EXILE

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ÓSCAR MARTÍNEZ
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF EL FARO



Mónica Xavier, Director, InMujeres, Uruguay



Pamela Figueroa, President of the Board of Directors, Electoral Service of Chile – SERVEL

Towards a future agenda for democracy

The various panels gave rise to diverse views on democracy, but among the different contributions made by participants, a common perspective on the state of democracy in the region emerged. Democracy is undergoing a prolonged cycle of gradual setbacks and growing unrest based on unfulfilled expectations. However, even in these times of radical uncertainty, democracy has not been defeated. The setback is far from being an inexorable fate, as demonstrated by the resilience that Latin America has shown at critical moments. The task now is to turn that resilience into a transformative agenda.

That agenda must begin by rebuilding the link between democracy and everyday life. The legitimacy of institutions is based on their ability to positively transform people's living conditions. Criticism of the performance of democratic regimes is not always a rejection of their foundations, but rather disappointment at the lack of concrete results in areas such as employment, security, health, pensions, housing and care. Therefore, the urgency of showing that democracy is not just a normative ideal, but a system capable of bringing greater well-being.

It was also stressed that no project of democratic renewal is possible without a strengthened state. In much of the region, state coverage remains uneven and fragmented, eroding the principle of political equality and opening space for parallel orders controlled by illegal actors. Ensuring that public action covers the entire territory and that rights are exercised everywhere is a prerequisite for restoring citizen belonging and preventing the absence of the state from being filled by the violence of organized crime.

Electoral integrity emerged as another key pillar. Elections remain the foundation of democracy, but trust in them has become more vulnerable in the face of disinformation campaigns, institutional capture, digital

interference and illicit flows of money. That is why it is important to provide electoral management bodies with autonomy, sufficient resources and technical skills, in addition to establishing safeguards against corruption in their institutional design. In the digital age, this must be complemented by regulations for online propaganda with clear standards to ensure voting in transnational and crisis contexts. In turn, the quality of political representation requires more vibrant mediation institutions that are connected to society. Political parties remain indispensable, but they need to transform themselves into open and deliberative structures, with greater transparency and real links to social movements, trade unions and communities. At the same time, democracy must be open to participatory mechanisms with effective advocacy capacity, such as participatory budgets or deliberative councils, which reinforce the social fabric and bring politics closer to common life.

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DEMOCRACY WAS SUPPOSED TO COME WITH A PACKAGE OF CIVIL, POLITICAL, AND SOCIAL CITIZENSHIP. INSTEAD, WE NOW HAVE DEMOCRACY WITHOUT CITIZENSHIP—AND CITIZENSHIP DENIED TO LARGE SEGMENTS OF THE POPULATION

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**JUAN PABLO LUNA
PROFESSOR AND
DIAMOND-BROWN CHAIR,
MCGILL UNIVERSITY**

The challenge of security, particularly in the face of organized crime, was highlighted as one of the most pressing issues. Where states fail to respond, authoritarian temptations emerge, promising quick solutions but at the expense of rights and freedoms. The democratic response must combine investigative strategies, transnational judicial cooperation, and financial intelligence with preventive policies in vulnerable territories, always within a framework of respect for human rights and civilian control of security forces.

Another essential condition is substantive equality. Democracy and inclusion cannot be separated, as the former's normative ideal entails dismantling hierarchies and structural inequalities based on gender, class, ethnicity or territory. Parity must be assumed as a cross-cutting principle in all institutions, and care must become an organizing principle of society through national systems that redistribute responsibilities and recognize the work that sustains life.

Strengthening the Rule of Law also requires an independent, effective and accessible justice system. Guaranteeing impartial judicial selection processes based on track records and capabilities, reinforcing the autonomy of the courts and ensuring equitable access.

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**PEOPLE TEND TO VALUE
DEMOCRACY, BUT THE
DISCONTENT LIES IN
THE PERFORMANCE OF
DEMOCRACY ITSELF**

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**PAMELA FIGUEROA
SERVEL CHILE**



Daniela Campello, Associate Professor of Politics and Global Affairs, Fundación Getulio Vargas



Juan Pablo Luna, Professor and Diamond-Brown Chair, McGill University



Óscar Martínez, Editor-in-Chief, El Faro (El Salvador)



Marcela Ríos Tobar, Regional Director of International IDEA for Latin America and the Caribbean

Justice are basic conditions for protecting citizens from political or corporate interference. Similarly, press freedom and the right to information are democratic pillars whose defense requires robust legal frameworks and financing mechanisms that allow the sustainability of independent, local and investigative media, ensuring the plurality of voices in the public sphere.

The digital environment, which has now become a structuring space for political life, demands democratic regulation capable of addressing the risks of disinformation, polarization and algorithmic manipulation. This implies transparency, accountability and differentiated responsibility of actors according to their role, as well as civic and digital education programs that strengthen the critical capacity of citizens.

In the face of information saturation and online violence, the best defense is not guardianship from above, but empowerment from below, by a deliberate and informed citizenry that acts as the first line of protection.

Democracy cannot be preserved in isolation. In an interdependent world, multilateralism is indispensable, but it must be reconfigured on a legitimate, practical and participatory basis. Regional and global cooperation needs to be guided by principles of equality and dialogue, serve not only to punish ruptures, but also to activate early supports and be open to civil society, academia, the media and local networks. Only in this way can an architecture of cooperation be built that supports states without reproducing asymmetries and that supports the most urgent tasks of contemporary democracy.

Conclusion

The commemoration of International IDEA's 30th anniversary in Santiago made it clear that democracy faces profound challenges, but also that it retains a vital capacity for renewal. Overcoming them requires shared work and sustained effort. It is possible to rebuild the democratic pact through resilience, inclusion and strategy, by strengthening state capacities, protecting civic space, expanding substantive equality and building institutions that are open to citizens. Only in this way can democracy regain its appeal, not only as a normative ideal, but as a concrete reality that transforms lives and improves the well-being of citizens.



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