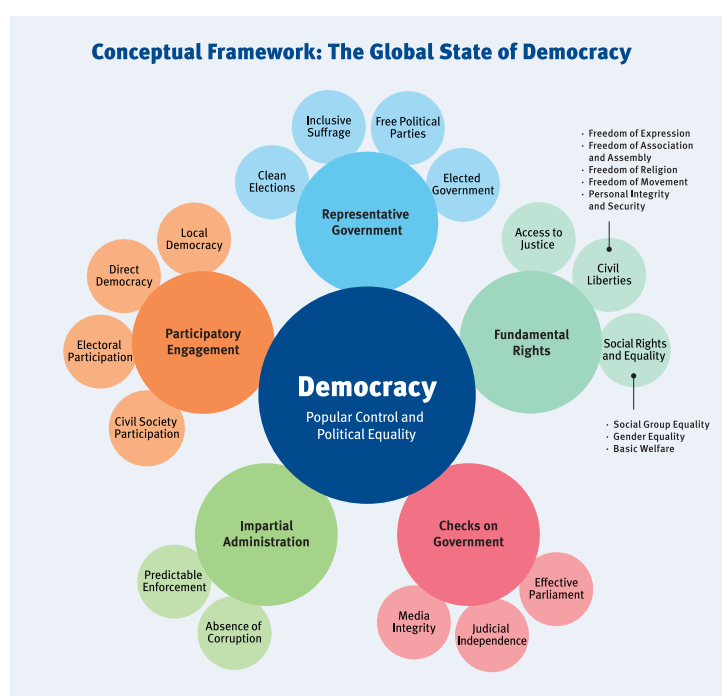# The Global State of Democracy Initiative

Is democracy really in decline? What are the global trends in democracy? How do democratic trends compare across regions and countries? What are current opportunities and challenges to democracy?

To answer these questions, International IDEA launched the Global State of Democracy (GSoD) Initiative in 2016. This Initiative provides evidence-based and balanced analysis and data on the state and quality of democracy globally and for 158 countries across all regions of the world. It aims to contribute to the public debate on democracy and inform policy interventions to strengthen democracy.

Democracy is conceptualized as popular control over public decision-making and decision-makers, and equality between citizens in the exercise of that control. These principles have been translated into 5 main democracy attributes that cover 16 subattributes and 97 indicators in total.

Conceptual Framework: The Global State of Democracy

The GSoD report should be compulsory reading for all politicians

Ine Eriksen Søreide, Norwegian Minister of Foreign Affairs

A thorough perspective study of where democracy stands today. Its global scope and thematic analysis are truly impressive.
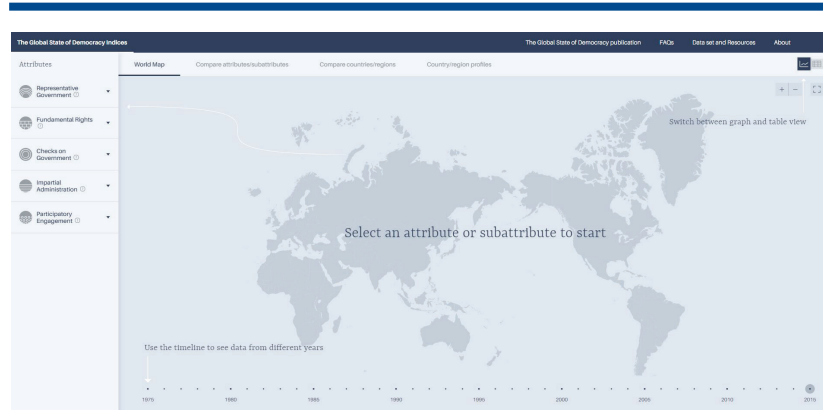
Kofi Annan, former UN Secretary-General

The value-added of the GSoD Indices in relation to other existing democracy measurements on the market include:

• A robust and transparent methodology developed together with academic democracy measurement specialists and validated by experts in the field

• Packaged into a theoretically-backed, while policy-friendly conceptual framework of democracy, broken down into a total of 28 aspects of democracy

• Broad multidimensional conception of democracy that allows for nuanced analysis of democratic performance

• The reliance on various data sources to minimize bias (12 data sets), including a combination of expert surveys, standards-based 'in-house coding', observational data, and composite measures

• A 158 country coverage and a wide time span (from 1975), updated annually

• Allows for analysis of global, regional and country-level trends and comparative performance of democratic quality across regions, sub-regions and countries

• Linked to analysis that is based on policy-relevant on-the ground country and technical assistance and programming
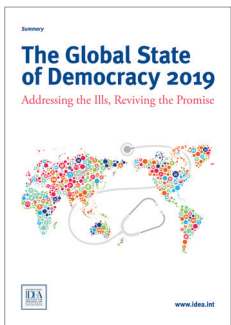
The GSoD intiative provides:

- **The Global State of Democracy indices**: depict democratic trends at the country, regional and global levels across 28 aspects of democracy from 1975 until today. Composed of indicators from V-Dem and other sources, the indices cover 158 countries and are updated annually. The database is publicly available and generates trends graphs and downloadable country profiles. For more, visit: <https://www.idea.int/gsod-indices/>

Landing page of the GSoD indices website

Graphs generated from the GSoD indices website

- **The Global State of Democracy report**: drawing on the GSoD indices, rigorous comparative research, fact-based and peer-reviewed analysis, the report explores the challenges and opportunities facing democracy globally and regionally. It also provides recommendations to inform policy interventions. The report analyses six key global challenges to democracy: the rise of populism; democratic backsliding; the shrinking civic space; electoral processes; corruption and money in politics and the impact of information communications technologies on democracy. It also provides in-depth analysis of the state of democracy in Africa and the Middle East, the Americas, Asia and the Pacific and Europe.

- **Global State of Democracy In Focus**: short briefs with succinct analysis on specific issues in the democracy debate illustrated through trends in the GSoD Indices. They are published in relation to United Nations Days and cover topics such progress in achieving Sustainable Development Goal 16; political gender equality; press freedom; the linkages between corruption and democracy.

Where to find the data

The data is available on the International IDEA website.

Users can generate their own data visualizations and extract data at the country, regional and global levels across the 28 aspects of democracy for specific years or for selected time periods starting from 1975. The indices are updated annually.

Visit: ‹http://www.idea.int/gsod-indices›

About International IDEA

The International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International IDEA) is an intergovernmental organization with the mandate to promote and advance democracy worldwide. International IDEA contributes to the public debate on democracy and assists in strengthening process, reforms, institutions and actors that build, advance and safeguard democracy, with a focus on electoral processes; constitution-building processes; and political participation and representation.

The Global State of Democracy Initiative is headed by the Democracy Assessment and Political Analysis Unit (DAPA). For contact or queries on the Initiative or the Indices, please contact the DAPA team and GSoD Helpdesk at GSoD.indices@idea.int.