

## ■ EDITORIAL

### Democracy in the 21<sup>st</sup> century: advance or decline?

Recent times have witnessed an upsurge in voices warning of a looming global crisis of democracy. The warning cries point to a variety of factors as providing substantive cause for alarm. Some, for example, highlight the negative political impact of rapidly rising energy prices. Others point to the continuing fallout from the military intervention in Iraq, ostensibly undertaken by the U.S. government in the name of democracy.



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*Vidar Helgesen*

By Vidar Helgesen, Secretary-General

## ■ FOCUS: Democracy and Development

### Democracy for development; development for democracy!

Highlights from the Democracy Round Table 2008

Posted: June 25, 2008

Popular support for democracy is as strong around the globe as it has ever been. But those who invest their hopes and political commitment in democracy do not aim just at free and fair elections: they aspire to a more dignified and more rewarding life. The major challenge for democracy today is to deliver on its many promises.

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□ Photo: © Javier Galeano/Scanpix

### Politics and poverty: looking to the future

Posted: June 13, 2008

Although democracy has taken root throughout Latin America in the "third wave of democratization" that began in the 1980s, many of the region's fledgling democracies still face serious challenges. As a result, they are unable to respond effectively to the increasing demands of citizens who clamor for more inclusion, better services and greater opportunities.

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## ■ OTHER NEWS

### International IDEA supports women in constitution building in Nepal

Posted: June 13, 2008

On 2 June 2008, International IDEA Nepal launched its *Women and Constitution Building* initiative, aimed at supporting constitution building in Nepal from a gender perspective. A significant component of this is "The Gender Folder – Toolkit for Members of the Constituent Assembly".

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### Colombia: women from 21 political organizations in Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru and Venezuela discuss strategies

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### Democracy Round Table 2008 "Democracy and Development"

New Delhi, India, 17-18 June 2008  
Interviews, speeches, background papers and more.

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Posted: June 9, 2008

Although the region recently greeted with enthusiasm the election of two women presidents, Michele Bachelet in Chile and Cristina Fernández in Argentina, and progress has been made in women's parliamentary representation in various countries, in general women are still absent from the spheres of public decision making. This situation, particularly as it relates to women's participation in political parties, was analysed at a seminar on "Best Practices for Women's Participation in Latin American Politics," held 19 and 20 May 2008 in Cartagena de Indias, Colombia.

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#### **Bolivia: seminars on women in politics and hydrocarbon wealth**

Posted: June 6, 2008

International IDEA is supporting democracy in Bolivia at a time of profound political change. The country is divided into two different political visions.

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#### **Young leaders in democratic governance**

Posted: June 5, 2008

A workshop titled "Young Leaders in Democratic Governance in the MENA region" was held in Venice, Italy from 25 to 30 May 2008. This event was jointly organized by International IDEA and the European Inter-University Centre for Human Rights and Democratization (EIUC) with the support of the Al Kawakibi Centre for Democratic Reform, Jordan, and the Arab Democracy Foundation, Qatar.

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#### **Training of political parties in Sudan**

Posted: May 2, 2008

As Sudan slowly moves forward in its preparations for the elections scheduled for 2009, as part of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, International IDEA continues to work with building the capacity of political parties. In April 2008, the Sudanese census began amidst a sea of controversy. The census is a prerequisite for the country's first democratic elections in 2009, as it will be used to determine the electoral boundaries as well as to map the cultural identity of the country.

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#### **■ NEW RELEASES**

##### **Assessing the Quality of Democracy: An Overview of the International IDEA Framework**

Introduces International IDEA's State of Democracy (SoD) assessment framework, developed for use by local actors in assessing the quality of their democracies and mounting reform agendas. The Overview, together with *Assessing the Quality of Democracy: the Practical Guide* (forthcoming in July 2008), forms a comprehensive package of knowledge resources for the implementation of the SoD framework.

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##### **Annual Report 2007 - A record of actions**

Highlights International IDEA's objectives and main activities in 2007.

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##### **From Rhetoric to Practice: Best Practices for Women's Participation in Political Parties in Latin America (Spanish)**

Provides political party members and leaders with the means to implement concrete strategies for achieving equality for women within party organizations and in access to positions of power and representation.

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