

## ■ EDITORIAL

### The century of the citizen

On this International Day of Democracy 2011 it is time to realize that we are now firmly in the century of the citizen. Recent events reaffirm that the citizen is at the heart of democracy and that democracy has proven itself central to citizens' aspirations. Citizens are the driving force for democratic change and international actors should respect their leadership in building their democracies.



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By Vidar Helgesen, Secretary-General

## ■ FOCUS: CONSTITUTION BUILDING PROCESSES



Photo ©: Chris/Flickr

### International Day of Democracy – a reminder about the importance of constitution building

Posted: September 15, 2011

In an interview, IDEA's Winluck Wahiu explains about the challenges and why constitution building is so important for democracy.

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### Constitutional reform in the Arab world: the struggle for new social contracts

Posted: September 14, 2011

One of the main sources of anger triggering the uprisings in the Arab world stems from existing constitutional constructs that do not provide for the minimal level of genuine democratic rule and principles. The construction of new nations, reflecting the views and aspirations of their own people, means that new "social contracts" are needed.

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### External intervention in constitution building; challenging sovereignty?

Posted: September 14, 2011

Constitution building practitioner and adjunct professor at Victoria University of Wellington, Andrew Ladley, answers questions related to the issues addressed by IDEA's new policy paper *Constitution building after conflict: External support to a sovereign process*, and to recent global events affecting constitutional governance.

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### Nepali indigenous peoples' voice in the new constitution

Posted: September 10, 2011

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The Indigenous Peoples' Caucus has published its position paper on a new constitution in August 2011. This marks a major initiative in Nepal's constitution making, representing their voices and translating their demands into legal language.

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### **Citizenship provisions remain contested when Nepal writes its new constitution**

Posted: September 5, 2011

In Nepal, citizenship has always been a highly sensitive and debated issue. The 2007 Interim Constitution made a number of important changes; it allowed women to pass citizenship to their children in their name only. However, the decision was overturned and has caused a wave of protests amongst Nepalis, especially women. » [Read more](#)

#### **Read further**

- **A voice of statelessness in Nepal** (interview with Nepali citizen Ganga Nagarkoti)  
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- **The principle of attaining citizenship is closely tied with equality** (article by Constituent Assembly Member Usha Kala Rai)  
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#### ■ **OTHER NEWS**

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### **Indigenous people on their way toward dialogue in Peru**

Posted: September 5, 2011

On 6 September 2011, Peru's newly elected president, Ollanta Humala, signed the long-awaited Prior Consultation Law, which represents the Amazonian indigenous people and makes way for dialogue with the government and formal opportunities for their political participation.

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### **Zambia's State of Democracy assessment; lessons for others**

Posted: August 30, 2011

Citizen-led and owned democracy assessments – like the ongoing Zambia SoD assessment process – are one way for citizens to periodically monitor the health of their democracy with a view to celebrating successes, while contributing to reform and strengthening weak areas.

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### **Early warning and early action to prevent election-related violence in Africa**

Posted: July 30, 2011

The UN Security Council Ad Hoc Working Group on Conflict Prevention and Resolution in Africa held a seminar, co-organized by IDEA's office of the Permanent Observer to the United Nations, on early warning tools and indicators to assess the risk of election-related violence in Africa.

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### **Democracy, human rights and the UN**

Posted: July 25, 2011

IDEA's office of the Permanent Observer to the United Nations co-organized a roundtable event, as part of a series on the UN approach to supporting democracy, looking at the linkages between democracy and the three pillars of UN work: peace and security, development and human rights.

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### **Democracy and development in Latin America: opportunities and challenges**

Posted: July 15, 2011

International IDEA's Daniel Zovatto takes a closer look at Latin America's democracies, as these are showing varying degrees of fragility and face important challenges ahead.

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### **Political party experts discuss effective party assistance**

Posted: July 22, 2011

How does political change come about? How can outsiders influence such changes? For years these questions have been at the centre of debate among those trying to strengthen political parties in emerging democracies. On 22 June 2011 International IDEA organized an expert meeting in The Hague to discuss a study with the latest insights on these issues.

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#### ■ **NEW PUBLICATIONS**

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#### **Unseeing Eyes: Media Coverage and Gender in Latin American Elections (Spanish)**

Identifies differences that women candidates in five Latin



#### **Gender mainstreaming in Latin American Parliaments: A work in progress (Spanish)**

Describes and analyzes the progress of gender equality in



American countries face in media coverage before elections.

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Latin America.

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### Assessing the Quality of Democracy: A Practical Guide

Presents International IDEA's State of Democracy (SoD) assessment Framework. **Now available in French and Arabic!**

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### Funding of Political Parties in Latin America (Spanish)

Presents the different financing systems of political parties and electoral campaigns in Latin America.

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