Challenges to Democracy Building

Recommendations for a new Swedish policy on democracy building

With the support of the

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Report from the seminar co-organized by
the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs
and International IDEA*

* The seminar held on 28-29 May 2007 that served as the basis for this publication was organized by the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs in cooperation with International IDEA. This report has been published by International IDEA with support from the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs. The Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs does not necessarily share the views expressed in this material.

Foreword

Maria Leissner, Swedish Ambassador for Democracy

In early 2007 I was appointed to be the Swedish Ambassador for Democracy. Swedish Minister for Development Cooperation Gunilla Carlsson had the vision of Sweden being on the front line when it comes to democracy support – and the creation of a democracy ambassador was one step towards realizing this idea.

This is an innovative step and I am convinced that it is not by coincidence that Sweden, with a long history of commitment to democracy building, is the state that has created the post of the world's first democracy ambassador in the context of development assistance.

Sweden already has an ambassador for human rights, another core value in Swedish foreign policy. I believe that the new post of democracy ambassador will be an important addition to this human rights focus. For human rights to be guaranteed and put into effect there must be a supportive political system in place. The best system to ensure the protection of human rights is democracy; and democracy is definitely part and parcel of human rights in the texts of the international conventions themselves.

I see a world of possibilities in this most inspiring task. However, it is not just fun and games – there are also several real challenges to deal with. I ask myself questions such as what, indeed, *is* democracy for different people in different contexts today? The concept is so multifaceted and contested; the definitions and descriptions vary infinitely.

There are also plenty of questions relating to the methods by which and the way in which we can support and participate in democracy building. Where are we today? What has happened in the world with regard to democracy building? What mistakes have been made and what would it be wise to do in the future? We have learned that democracy can only grow from within countries. Given that, how can we best support such processes? How can formal and traditional systems best be combined?

I would also like to highlight the role of political leadership, which I see as one of the front-line challenges to be dealt with. We need more debate on what it is to be a politician and what is expected of those who are elected to represent others. Issues such as accountability, representativeness and legitimacy are extremely important. As you see, with so many questions, there is little risk of my task becoming boring.

In democracy building some vital stepping stones are *capacity building* and *peer reviews*. With these tools much can be achieved. Another crucial and absolutely necessary tool – sophisticated in its simplicity – is *dialogue* and *communication*. Democracy building is and must be a mutual, circular relationship based on listening and learning from all sides. It is a multilateral communication between several actors in an open dialogue.

There must be internal dialogue for the local actors to agree on the best solutions and the most

important values in the specific context, and there should be communication across borders in order to share experiences and lessons learned on the values, institutions and practices we have in common. The more one participates in election observation and the more one visits other systems, the more one realizes that there is room for improvement in the system back home as well.

By sharing our different perspectives with each other, both differences and similarities become apparent. Such exercises help to take us beyond the concept of *good governance*. Governance is about the technical details, about the bits and pieces that make up a democratic system. But democracy is much more than governance – governance is only one aspect of true democracy.

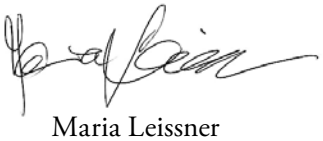
Another key feature is that democracy can never be sustainable if it is not home-grown and adapted to the cultural context – if the democratic culture has not evolved from within and with local support. I want to emphasize that my task is about *democracy building* rather than just *democracy promotion*. Democracy building is more than just exporting a system from above and from outside; it is a dialogue and a process focused on local needs and experience.

The purpose of the seminar on Challenges to Democracy Building was to invite international experts from all different parts of the world for a brainstorming session to share information and experience on these questions and issues. The result of this brainstorming will be a building block for the development of the new Swedish policy on democracy building.

I am particularly glad to have had the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International IDEA) as co-organizer of the seminar. International IDEA provides a resource base with knowledge on best practices and with the database of inspiration and good examples of how things could be done. Sweden is pleased to host this organization and to support its work.

Finally, we return to the many different definitions of democracy. The Irish playwright George Bernard Shaw said that 'democracy is a device that ensures we shall be governed no better than we deserve', while the US author Laurence J. Peter called it 'a process by which the people are free to choose the man who will get the blame'.

To me, democracy is more like the air we breathe. It is difficult to grasp and to describe – but it is necessary. I will strive during my time as Ambassador for Democracy to contribute to a world where as many as possible can breathe as freely as possible.



Maria Leissner

Preface
Democracy and development

Vidar Helgesen, Secretary-General of International IDEA

So, what does lie in store for democracy and development?

The presentations and discussions at this seminar demonstrate that the 'democracy and development' nexus has been and continues to be debated both in academic circles and in the international community. There is, however, a broad understanding that the linkages are multiple and very relevant for both those who work in the field of democracy support and those who are involved in development policies.

The complexity of both subjects and their sensitivity to specific historical, social and political contexts make it very difficult to measure in quantitative terms the concrete 'impact' of democracy on development and vice versa. That is probably why attempts to 'measure' the impact in both directions have not been very conclusive.

However, the thesis that authoritarian rule may be better for development is definitely losing ground as development itself is no longer seen as reflected in growth in gross domestic product (GDP) alone. The case of China is frequently cited as a disturbing exception to the thesis, but the way in which China's case is being presented is also debatable. Is the remarkable growth of the Chinese economy attributable to authoritarian rule or, rather, to other features such as the growing pool of skilled human resources and the huge domestic market? Furthermore, is China more or less authoritarian today than it was in Mao's time? Its political stage is still closed to multiparty elections, but the margins of free economic initiative have certainly expanded and China is certainly a more open country today than it was 30 years ago. This is not to say that China is on the verge of becoming democratic – we are still far from that; the point is just that one should be very careful in identifying causal relations in such complex developments.

More important than the quantitative impact of democracy on development and vice versa is perhaps the evolution that both concepts – democracy and development – have undergone during the last decade or two.

- Development is increasingly understood as a general improvement of the 'quality of life' for the majority of the population and as such it includes GDP growth, but also the effective fulfilment of human rights, including civic and political rights.

- Democracy, although a value to be pursued for its own sake, is also seen as a system of governance that is expected to deliver a better quality of life. There is ample evidence, particularly in Latin America, that large disparities in income distribution and the failure of governments to deliver on economic issues and basic services seriously affect the credibility of democratic institutions, including that of parliaments and political parties.

The importance of these linkages has been grasped by most actors in the international community – bilateral development cooperation agencies, multilateral organizations like the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and the World Bank among others. This is reflected in the fact that good governance has been included in the Millennium Development Goals and in the fact that actors in the international community include democratic governance as an important criterion for aid allocation. The ongoing debate on the importance of national ownership in the design and implementation of development programmes and governance reforms is also a reflection of this new awareness.

The international community has come a long way since the 1990s when general structural adjustment prescriptions were offered and developing countries were expected to apply them regardless of their social context and priorities. Since then, the international financial institutions have developed the concept of poverty reduction strategy papers (PRSPs) as a common platform around which assistance is provided to post-conflict and developing countries. Although PRSPs reflect an important conceptual advance compared to earlier approaches, this approach still falls short of making development a fully nationally owned process.

Although PRSPs are negotiated in the countries concerned through what should be a participatory and nationally owned process, they are ultimately assessed by bilateral and multilateral actors in international policy forums, and aid flows are influenced by their approval. International partners place a strong focus on executives and civil society organizations. While the role of such actors is certainly important, an excessive emphasis on them undermines the functions of other actors in political systems, such as parliaments and political parties.

There is a growing concern among political party actors in many developing countries that national development objectives, important as they are, are not issues that can differentiate their political platforms from those of their fellow contenders, since their main contents are constrained by international donor pressures – and even conditionalities. Thus there is a perception that the recipients of development cooperation assistance are more accountable to the donors than to the citizens represented by their parliaments and political parties. This situation may have several adverse consequences.

- First, because development issues are absent (or not sufficiently present) in the local political debate, there is a risk that policy will lose touch with key expectations of a broad range of national stakeholders; the negative effects of accelerated globalization on national politics, particularly in terms of the participation of young voters, reinforce the need for politicians to link development to the local political debates.

- Second, national political actors (parliaments and political parties first and foremost), by shying away from debating development issues and priorities, lose a key opportunity to strengthen their role and their credibility as mediators between citizens and government.

- By the same token, political parties may lose motivation and fail to acquire the necessary knowledge and capacity to aggregate important demands of their constituencies and to express themselves through coherent economic and social programmes.

Experience shows that countries that have succeeded over time have invested in developing long-term visions, and have also created the institutions to translate long-term visions into reality, supporting them and following up. One factor that contributes to this outcome is the capacity to build consensus on development goals among the various sectors and components of a society.

Despite these challenges, all is not gloom and doom. Several development cooperation agencies have shifted or are shifting towards the inclusion of democratic politics in their development policies, moving beyond just a focus on the executive and the judiciary, to include a stronger focus on

parliaments and political parties as key institutions that should be involved and supported in the reconstruction and development of their country. European Union (EU) member states such as Germany, the Netherlands, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom are adopting this focus in terms of their policy making; it is up to us all to ensure that these policies are translated into action and can also influence the wider development agendas of the World Bank and the harmonization agendas of the OECD.

In fact, a recent conference on the topic of the European Approach to Democracy Building, at Wilton Park, brought together actors from governments, think tanks, development cooperation agencies and EU institutions, and concluded that Europe's approach to democracy building is 'developmental' but that a lot more work needs to be done at both the policy and the technical levels in order to translate this into a much more coherent policy that goes beyond the EU's 'near abroad' and can ensure that democracy and development are mutually reinforcing in EU policy. The EU could also use its 'soft' power to influence other major players to shift from a position of security-based democracy promotion to development-focused democracy building.

International IDEA has included democracy and development in its strategy. In particular, it is currently exploring ways in which it could provide knowledge tools and support the development of policies that would broaden the role of and the room for national political debate on the design and implementation of development policies.

We believe this is extremely relevant both for the development of effective democracy support policies and for the fostering of national ownership in development cooperation.

Vidar Helgesen

Introduction

On 28–29 May 2007, Swedish Ambassador for Democracy Maria Leissner in cooperation with International IDEA organized a seminar on the topic of Challenges to Democracy Building. This two-day event brought together experts on democracy and human rights for discussions and the sharing of knowledge and experience.

The overarching purpose of the seminar was to provide inspiration and input for the democracy ambassador's process of creating a new Swedish policy on democracy building and human rights. The participants at the seminar were invited to point out the main challenges, to highlight areas where improvements could be made and to give advice to the democracy ambassador with regard to the new policy under way.

The seminar was opened by Swedish Minister for Development Cooperation Gunilla Carlsson. Her introductory speech is included in this report. During the following two days, eight main speakers gave presentations on various aspects of democracy building. The conference report includes accounts of all these presentations, summarizing the main conclusions and lines of thought.

The final Chapter of the report draws conclusions and summarizes the main pieces of advice and the key issues that were raised during the discussions. There are several concrete recommendations which may inspire not only Sweden's policy on democracy but also other practitioners and members of the democracy-building community.

Acknowledgements

The seminar of 28–29 May 2007 was jointly organized by the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs and International IDEA. It was not least made possible by the assistance of Therese Arnewing and Johan Hallin. This publication owes much to the efforts of Ingrid Wetterqvist, Susanne Lindahl and Florencia Enghel.

Special thanks to all the panellists and speakers who contributed to the two-day seminar and to all those who participated, listened and discussed this important topic. The input and perspectives from all the corners of the world are of great importance for developing more effective policies for promoting democracy and human rights.

Maria Leissner
Ambassador for Democracy
Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Vidar Helgesen
Secretary-General
International IDEA

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Part II
Regional trends, experiences and challenges

Acronyms and abbreviations

APRM	African Peer Review Mechanism
AU	African Union
DAC	Development Assistance Committee (OECD)
DRL	Bureau for Democracy, Human Rights and Labor (US State Department)
EU	European Union
FRIDE	Fundación para las Relaciones Internacionales y el Diálogo Exterior (Foundation for International Relations and External Dialogue), Spain
GDP	gross domestic product
International IDEA	International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance
IIHR	Inter-American Institute of Human Rights
ILO	International Labour Organization
IRI	International Republican Institute
NDI	National Democratic Institute for International Affairs
NED	National Endowment for Democracy
NEPAD	New Partnership for Africa's Development
NGO	non-governmental organization
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
PRSP	poverty reduction strategy paper
Sida	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNDEF	United Nations Democracy Fund
USD	US dollar

Supporting democracy: Highlighting the political dimension of international development cooperation

Opening address by
the Swedish Minister for Development Cooperation, Gunilla Carlsson

Dear friends,

Not so long ago we lived here just a short flight away from oppression. We would gather in meetings like this and express our support for those men and women whose longing for freedom led them to dedicate themselves to the struggle for democracy. They did not hesitate to stand up for democratic values even when it seemed unlikely that the freedom struggle would succeed. The fall of the Berlin Wall and the break-up of the Soviet Union proved that change can happen even when we least expect it, that freedom is a force that cannot be stopped.

But freedom needs the assistance of political will and individual conviction in order to take root. And once it takes root, it must be cared for.

The world has changed and it has progressed.

We sometimes forget that we still live in a world where some of our neighbours are oppressed. I think of neighbours of the European Union (EU) and further beyond, where media freedom is restricted, human rights are being violated and the absence of rule of law makes life insecure for ordinary people. I think of the 53 per cent of the world's population who live in countries that Freedom House has labelled not free or partly free. There are still millions of men and women who have never cast a vote. We should think of all of them as neighbours, who deserve democracy as much as we do.

The historically recent European experience of peaceful transitions from dictatorship to democracy provides inspiration for democratic movements and individuals in authoritarian states all over the world today. For this reason, Europe carries a particular responsibility to contribute to building democracy elsewhere, in the light of its own experience. In fact, we are morally obliged to do so by our own history.

The political dimension of international development cooperation should be guided by this moral obligation. Our approach to democracy building is in this sense more principled than ideological.

Combating poverty is the overarching goal of both Swedish and international development assistance. Poverty is not only about lack of material resources, but about lack of power and choice – in short, an absence of human dignity. The struggle against poverty is a struggle aimed at restoring this dignity through different means. And dignity is found in freedom. To rise from poverty is to be given the freedom to shape your own life and to enjoy access to power.

No human being willingly accepts living deprived of freedom and in destitution. These are absolute and unquestionable rights – to have your vote count; to be able to vote out a government you don't like; to be able to speak your mind without taking personal risks; to be able to form political and other organizations freely.

Freedom is not only a right: it also works. We must therefore conduct the fight against poverty with both money and values. Democracy and respect for human rights are my government's core values and as such provide the foundation of Swedish foreign policy.

Often the fight against poverty and the fight for democracy are presented as if they were mutually exclusive: 'you can't eat ballot paper', 'people must be able to read before they can be allowed to vote'. Sometimes, this sounds like an echo from the people who argued against full democracy, in Sweden back in the 19th century. Today we know that democracy is a central component of sustainable human development.

The Swedish approach is not only to politically pursue the democracy and human rights agenda worldwide, but also to make sure that we apply a developmental approach to these issues. To give priority to democracy in development cooperation means to recognize the political dimension of development cooperation.

There are many reasons to see democracy as a development goal and a global norm.

- Democracy is a universal aspiration, a manifestation and a natural outflow of the idea that all human beings are created equal.
- Democracy is an integral part of the 1966 Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which in turn is part of the international frameworks of non-disputable legal norms.
- Democracy institutionalizes a non-violent form of conflict resolution and fosters the willingness to negotiate, compromise and debate rather than fight.
- Democracies do not experience large-scale famines, as Amartya Sen, winner of the Nobel Prize for Economics, concluded, since there is a simple correctional element in democracies that other systems lack: people exert control over their governments.
- Democracy is the most efficient, albeit not perfect, form of government because of its built-in checks and balances.
- But first and foremost, and here I speak from my heart, democracy is the only political system compatible with human dignity.

Respect for human rights and respect for democratic principles are mutually reinforcing and necessary prerequisites for development and poverty reduction. With time, democracy and human rights have become more and more integrated into development assistance as tools for fighting poverty and underdevelopment.

Swedish development cooperation has one single goal – to contribute to an environment that is supportive of poor people's own efforts to improve their quality of life. In addition, two perspectives – the rights perspective and the perspective of poor people on development – are central to all work. First, this means that all decisions and measures must be taken with respect for universally accepted human rights and democratic principles, including equality between women and men. Second, it means that the interests and priorities of poor individuals themselves should be the point of departure for these decisions and measures.

This is equally important when we formulate strategies for democracy building. In order to meet the interests of poor people we need to ask them what their priorities are. In order to assist democratic efforts in non-democratic countries we need to recognize the existence of democratic forces and listen to them.

Having said this, I believe it is time to view democracy and respect for human rights not only as integral parts of the reduction of poverty, but also as political and developmental goals in their own right. Democracy as a developmental goal should be more clearly reflected in common policies. Within the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Development Assistance Committee (DAC) and within the United Nations (UN) family we need to put an even stronger empha-

sis on democracy as a developmental goal in its own right. The new global fund for democracy support, the United Nations Democracy Fund (UNDEF), needs to focus on policy issues as well as its function as a funding mechanism. We need to make sure that the Paris agenda leads to more efficient democracy assistance, not less. And within the EU we need to focus more on democracy as a development goal and sharpen the tools that we have for doing so.

The question is how we do this in the best way possible.

More effective multilateralism is needed. This means that multilateral agencies, in the political and development fields, need to be less afraid of promoting and supporting democracy. Sweden will push for more space for democratic politics in multilateral aid programmes.

While we will push for this in the global UN context, the obvious starting point is the EU. With its democratic success stories, the EU is perhaps better placed than any other actor to support more and better democracy across the globe. This will require the EU to look beyond its enlargement successes, and beyond its immediate neighbourhood. And this will require partnership with other regional actors. The EU needs to define what it wants to achieve for democracy through its development cooperation. This is still, perhaps surprisingly, an area in which the EU has not articulated its strategies and policies particularly well. If any major actor is to carry the democracy agenda forward in the decade ahead, it must be the EU. As a member of the EU, Sweden shares the responsibility to make this happen.

Strengthening the place of democracy on the EU development agenda will be a priority for me in the years leading up to and beyond the Swedish presidency of the Council of the European Union in 2009.

An obstacle to our multilateral efforts is that the concept of promoting democracy has of late come to be politically questioned. Voices are heard criticizing the concept of supporting democracy from the outside, claiming that democracy must grow from within. Many also regard democracy promotion as a threat as they fear that the political system to be exported would be a Western design, an imposed solution rather than a process left to the free decisions of citizens. And of course this is true: democracy processes must be initiated and sustained from within a country and its own citizens. However, it is my firm conviction that democratization processes and democratic actors can and should be supported from the outside.

As I see it we face several challenges as we dedicate ourselves to the struggle for democracy in countries other than our own. Let me share my thoughts on this as a contribution to your coming discussions. Authoritarianism, in all its shapes and forms, is the main challenge to democracy promotion, the threat to and the obstacle for democrats everywhere. The balance between respecting national ownership of political transitions, on the one hand, and providing support to democrats and democratic values, on the other, is a difficult one. We should therefore aim for a strategy of democracy assistance that is based on respectful support for democratic values. Even if the ultimate goal may be regime change, this is not a goal that we should formulate from the outside. Our goal must be democracy.

As external actors, we must always follow the lead of domestic democratic forces and reformers when shaping strategies for democratization. This means that it will sometimes be more effective to work in a quiet way, through dialogue and mediation.

I think it is necessary to work at both macro and micro levels. Institution-building efforts and political pressure for democratic reforms must continuously be on our agenda. At the same time, we must realize that democratization requires political actors capable of mobilizing citizens and institutions to implement essential reforms. Here, we can offer forums for discussion and invite democratic actors for exchanges of knowledge; we can stimulate grass-roots initiatives initiated by civil society and provide moral support.

There is not a single process of democratization or democracy building. Democracy happens in many different ways and is at the same time

global and local – a universal value and a political system supported by various international legal instruments, but also a system which finds a multitude of expressions. Nevertheless, much can be learned from past experiences of successful as well as less successful transitions. This is also a good reason for working closely with those European friends who lived through the transitions of Central and Eastern Europe.

Democracy promotion and the protection of democrats in authoritarian environments involve another challenge of which we must be aware – the risk of strengthening the argument that democrats are not representative of the national community when they are supported from abroad and financed by external interests. This dilemma is only resolved by securing transparency and intelligent democracy assistance.

Democratization is a process which requires a long-term perspective. We must never rest, and we need to be patient. There are no quick fixes, no instant formulas, no magic. Promoting democratic values and building democratic institutions will take time.

Long-term work, building democratic values and institutions, should be complemented with a short-term preparedness to assist when there is a window of opportunity for change. Liberalization or regime change can happen overnight, through the overthrow of a dictator or as a result of popular protest. We must then be ready to act rapidly and competently in a coordinated way to assist democratic forces in times of sudden change.

As politicians, we often run the risk of losing focus in the post-transition phase, of not seeing our role in helping new democracies to consolidate. We cannot rest when a first election has been held, but rather must be prepared to adapt our support to new realities and circumstances. Democracy must be fought for again and again, accompanied by active efforts to institutionalize the rule of law.

Rather than define a process of democratization, many have tried to define the conditions necessary for the creation and success of democracy. There sometimes tends to be confusion between the conditions of democracy itself, such as a free press and political parties, and those of successful democratization. If we understand the latter to mean those conditions that facilitate the creation of democracy and its stability, confusion can be avoided. It is important here to take into account the importance of economic development to democratization.

Democracy promotion requires credibility, consistency and coherence. In this regard, we should distinguish carefully between creating preconditions for democratization as a goal for our development cooperation, on the one hand, and democratic standards as a criterion for this assistance, on the other. There are countries where systematic violations of human rights make it urgent to look for alternative channels for our support than the state.

To be consistent, we must link development cooperation to standards of democratic accountability and transparency. In the EU, we should consider taking this one step further. We have several policy instruments to promote democracy in partner countries. One of these tools has been democracy-related conditionality, promising trade and aid benefits to reward political reforms, within the European Neighbourhood Policy, for example. Frankly, however, the implementation of both negative and positive conditionality has been weak. If democratic development is to take place, we must dare to use the tools we have to hand. While there is a need to recognize the diversity of democratic practices at country level, firmness on principles is still necessary. Sweden should be and will be a voice for democratic principles and practices, and will play this role in multilateral forums as well as in bilateral development cooperation.

This seminar will provide my government with a starting point for these discussions. Thank you very much to all the panellists for agreeing to come and help us in this endeavour, and thank you to all participants. I count on your active participation in this inspiring exchange of thoughts and ideas, which will hopefully contribute to making Sweden a leading nation in the field of democracy assistance.

Part I

Democracy, democracy building and human rights

Definitions of and interlinkages between some 'contested concepts'

Developing democracy: Concepts, measures and empirical relationships

*Todd Landman**

This background paper reviews the extant research and debates on the causes and consequences of democracy to provide guidance to the international donor community on the key conceptual and methodological issues surrounding democracy promotion and aid conditionality. To this end, it examines the conceptual debate surrounding the meaning of democracy and provides three working definitions; reviews the different strategies and efforts to measure democracy; examines the empirical findings on the causes and consequences of democracy; and concludes with a discussion of the dimensions of aid conditionality.

Introduction

The causes and consequences of democracy have long been at the forefront of scholarly research and policy making in an effort to understand and develop the conditions that are supportive of democracy, as well as to work towards demonstrating the tangible benefits that come from establishing democracy around the world – including better and more equitable economic development; the promotion and protection of human rights; and a greater guarantee for human security. Researchers test theories concerning both the *establishment* and the *maintenance* of democratic rule. Another body of work examines the tangible *benefits* of democracy at the domestic and international levels. Across these different areas of work, it appears that democracy features as both an *end* in itself and a *means* to achieving other, related outcomes that benefit humanity.

Democratization studies and comparative democratization programmes have developed throughout the academic world, most notably in Europe and the United States, while attention within the international donor community has gradually shifted from a narrow focus on sound financial management to notions of good governance that include the rule of law and the protection of human rights, and in certain cases democracy. In addition, the foreign policies of powerful states have included support for civil society groups and nascent political party organizations in transitional countries; state building, institutionalization, and the criteria for appropriate and acceptable forms of democratic rule; and, in the case of US and UK policy in Iraq and Afghanistan, armed intervention to depose existing regimes and construct democracy through force.

Defining democracy

Democracy is a classic example of an 'essentially contested' concept (Gallie 1956) since there is not now, nor is there likely to be, a final consensus on its definition or full content. Nevertheless, there are certain features of democracy and examples of democratic *practices* about which there is significant consensus. The idea that democracy is a form of governance based on some degree of *popular sovereignty* and *collective decision making* remains largely uncontested. But it is the concern over the features that are additional to this basic formulation that has produced significant and serious debate about the different definitions of democracy. For the purposes of this paper, these definitions of democracy include *procedural democracy*, *liberal democracy* and *social democracy*, which are now considered in turn.

* This is an abridged version of the background paper Dr Landman presented at the seminar on Challenges to Democracy Building. For the full version see <http://www.idea.int/resources/analysis/developing_democracy.cfm>.

Procedural definitions of democracy, made most notably in Robert Dahl's seminal work of 1971, *Polyarchy*, include the two dimensions of *contestation* and *participation*. Liberal definitions of democracy retain concerns over contestation and participation, but add more explicit references to the protection of certain human rights. Liberal definitions include an *institutional* dimension that captures the idea of popular sovereignty, and include notions of accountability, constraint of leaders, the representation of citizens, and universal participation, but they add a *rights* dimension, which is upheld through the rule of law, and includes civil, political, property and minority rights. Social definitions of democracy maintain the institutional and rights dimensions found in liberal definitions of democracy but expand the types of rights that ought to be protected, including social and economic rights.

- Procedural definitions of democracy: focus on *contestation* and *participation*.
- Liberal definitions of democracy: the procedural definition plus reference to *human rights*.
- Social definitions of democracy: the procedural definition plus reference to a wider set of human rights including *social and economic rights*.

There are 'thin' and 'thick' definitions of democracy, the differences in which are inexorably linked with the degree to which scholars have been able to measure and analyse the patterns in the emergence, maintenance and performance of democracy.

These three definitions of democracy share certain features such as the notion of peaceful competitive politics and some form of participation. Procedural definitions of democracy identify the minimum requirements for upholding participatory competitive politics. Liberal definitions include the full protection of civil, political, property and minority rights, which are meant to curb the possible negative consequences of democratic governance based on majority rule alone. Social definitions include additional protections for economic and social rights, which are seen as essential for the full participation of citizens in the collective decisions that may affect their lives. There are thus 'thin' and 'thick' definitions of democracy, the differences in which are inexorably linked with the degree to which scholars have been able to measure and analyse the patterns in the emergence, maintenance and performance of democracy.

Measuring democracy

With respect to the measurement of democracy, the numerous efforts in political science tend to specify democracy in its minimal and procedural form or to provide indicators for the institutional and rights dimensions that comprise liberal definitions. Fully specified measurements

of social democracy have thus far remained elusive. Social scientists have adopted a number of strategies to measure democracy for empirical analysis, including categorial measures, ordinal scale measures, objective measures, hybrid measures of democratic practices, and perceptions of democracy based on mass public opinion surveys. This quest for comparability and broad temporal and spatial coverage, however, has meant a certain sacrifice of the ability of these measures to capture the context-specific features of democracy. In response, the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International IDEA) has developed an alternative framework for democracy assessment that moves away from country ranking and external judgement towards comprehensive assessment based on national assessment teams led by governments or civil society and academic institutions. This framework incorporates much more context-specific information on the quality of democracy that can then be linked to domestic processes of democratic reform.

Democracy as an 'all or nothing' affair

Seymour Martin Lipset (1959) established the first set of categorial measures of regime type that were used for cross-national quantitative analysis, which ranged across a 'democracy–dictatorship' continuum including stable democracies, unstable democracies, unstable dictatorships and stable dictatorships. More recently, Przeworski, Alvarez, Cheibub and Limongi (2000) developed a dichotomous classification scheme using a set of criteria for judging whether countries are democratic or authoritarian. To qualify as a democracy under their set of criteria, a country must have an elected head of its executive branch, its main legislative body must be elected, and it must have more than one political party. These criteria are quite narrow and specifically exclude questions of accountability, freedom, participation and rights, among others. The categorization also rests on the assumption that democracy is an 'all or nothing' affair.

Democracy scales

Ordinal scale measures of democracy also specify a set of criteria for judging countries but, unlike the categorial measures, they assume democracy to be more a matter of degree and provide scales that range from low to high values. For example, the *Polity* data series takes into account both the *democratic* and the *autocratic* features of countries; its combined score on democracy ranges from –10 for a full autocracy to +10 for full democracy (see Jaggers and Gurr 1995). Freedom House has two separate scales for political and civil liberties that range from 1 (full enjoyment of liberties) to 7 (full restriction of liberties) (see <http://www.freedomhouse.org>; Burkhart and Lewis-Beck 1994; Helliwell 1994). These scales provide for a range in the level of democracy (as opposed to an 'either or' classification), although criticisms have focused on their less than transparent coding rules (especially those of Freedom House), their illogical form of aggregation into single indices that do not take into account trade-offs between the institutional and rights dimensions, their inability to differentiate between the democratic performance of those countries at the extreme ends of the spectrum (i.e. among mature democracies and highly authoritarian regimes), and the possible presence of ideological biases (Freedom House in particular) (see Munck and Verkuilen 2002).

Objective measures of democracy

Objective measures of democracy move away from a fixed set of criteria and judgements about putting countries into categories or locating them along a scale or continuum, and concentrate instead on available indicators of democratic *practices*. Tatu Vanhanen (1997) specifies democracy in a minimal and procedural fashion, providing separate measures of contestation and participation. He uses the percentage share of the smallest parties in the national legislature (100 minus the share of the largest party) as a measure of contestation and uses the percentage turnout in national elections as a measure of participation. These two measures are then multiplied together and divided by 100 to produce an 'index of democratization'. However, while this

measure moves away from subjective and judgemental categories or scales, quite a few problems remain. First, it does not take into account the electoral system, which has a direct relationship on the effective number of parties in the legislature (see Lijphart 1994a, 1999). Second, many countries have compulsory voting laws, which necessarily compromises the validity of turnout as a measure of voluntary participation.

Hybrid measures of democracy

Another strategy is to use objective indicators alongside subjective ones to create a hybrid measure of democracy. Staffan Lindberg (2006: 21–51) adopts this strategy and focuses exclusively on three dimensions of elections – participation, competition and legitimacy. His objective indicators include voter turnout, the winning candidate's share of the vote, the largest party's percentage of seats and the second-largest party's percentage of seats. His subjective and categorial indicators include a measure for the freeness and fairness of the election, the opportunity for the opposition to participate, whether an incumbent autocrat has been removed from office, whether there has been a turnover of power, whether the losers have accepted the outcome, whether the election was peaceful, and whether the newly elected regime survives.

Perceptions of democracy and trust in institutions

Finally, in addition to these measures of democracy, another measurement strategy avoids making external judgements against pre-established criteria or using the kind of objective measures outlined above and relies instead on public perceptions of democracy through the collection of individual-level survey data. The various 'Barometer' studies, begun in Europe, have subsequently been extended to Latin America and Africa, and are now part of the larger *World Barometer Surveys*. In contrast to the other extant approaches to democracy measurement, these data provide an indication of citizen support for democracy, which exhibits significant variation between and within regions (e.g. Lagos 1997).

Taken together, all these different methods of measuring democracy have sought to establish a direct link with a conceptual definition of democracy, which has tended to be specified in a narrow fashion to include procedural and in some cases liberal democracy. All the measures have aimed to provide comparability across the world and over time. This emphasis on achieving a greater scope of coverage and comparability has, however, meant that these measures are operationalized at a relatively high level of abstraction and are less sensitive to the cultural specificities of the different countries that they purport to measure.

International IDEA and democracy assessment

The weaknesses of these different measurement strategies led to the creation of a different framework for assessing the quality of democracy. In partnership with the UK Democratic Audit and the University of Essex, International IDEA has developed a framework for democracy assessment. Based on the twin principles of public control over decision makers and the political equality of those who exercise that control, the framework comprises a series of mediating values and search questions across four main elements – citizenship, law and rights; representative and accountable government; civil society and popular participation; and democracy beyond the state. The framework has been applied in over 20 countries by government-led and citizen-led teams of assessors across developed and developing countries. The framework has proved to be flexible and adaptable to different country contexts while at the same time providing a systematic method for the collection, organization and analysis of qualitative and quantitative information across a wide-ranging set of democratic features. The framework is different from other efforts to measure and rank democracy in that it uses primarily the citizens of the country under assessment to carry out the assessment and it links the findings of the assessment to an agenda for democratic reform.

Endogenous and exogenous factors for the emergence of democracy

Endogenous explanations argue that changes internal to the process of economic development necessarily lead to a series of social and political changes that culminate in democracy:

- the rise of an enlightened middle class (Lipset 1959);
- the push for inclusion by the working classes (Rueschemeyer, Stephens and Stephens 1992); and
- changes in the relative distribution of land, income and capital (Vanhanen 1997; Boix 2003; Boix and Stokes 2003).

Exogenous explanations argue that factors external to processes of economic development help to establish democracy:

- changes in the relative power and strategic interaction of elites within authoritarian regimes (Geddes 1999);
- the strategic interaction between elites in the regime and elites in the opposition (Przeworski 1991; Colomer 1991; Colomer and Pascual 1994); and
- social mobilization for individual rights of citizenship (Foweraker and Landman 1997).

Causes and consequences of democracy

Since the early work of Lipset, scholars have analysed the economic prerequisites for democracy. Global comparative analysis has consistently shown a positive and significant relationship between high levels of economic development and democracy. Such a consistent finding has led either to the weak claim that the two are *associated* with one another or to the strong claim that economic development *causes* democracy.

'The more well-to-do a nation, the greater the chances that it will sustain democracy' (Lipset 1959).

Despite the statistical robustness of these studies, they beg the crucial question why there is now a large selection of poor countries in which democracy has been sustained. One study argues that the statistically significant relationship between development and democracy accounts for the *survival* of democracy but not its emergence in the first place (Przeworski et al. 2000). The statistical results suggest that once democracy is established in a country with a per capita gross domestic product (GDP) of 5,500 US dollars (USD) (indexed to 1995), then the probability of democratic collapse drops to near zero. This finding holds for existing democratic countries that manage to grow their economy to this size.

Some of the countries that have a GDP of less than 5,500 per capita in 2005 USD but have experienced no democratic breakdown are Costa Rica, Argentina, Uruguay, Brazil, Bulgaria, Jamaica, Namibia, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Paraguay, Bolivia, Nicaragua, India and Mongolia (see the World Bank world development indicators).

However, there are many transitional societies and some 'old' democracies that have nowhere near this kind of per capita GDP. The analysis in Przeworski et al. (2000) suggests that there is still a high probability of democratic breakdown in any one of these countries since they have not achieved the threshold of per capita GDP; however, such analysis offers no hope for policy makers and national leaders who are keen to consolidate democratic achievements, construct democratic institutions, and build long-term cultural attachments to the idea of democracy such that it becomes 'the only game in town' (Linz and Stepan 1996). Indeed, for most of these countries, the achievement of such high levels of per capita income is a long way off.

An additional challenge lies in the quality of democracy itself. The extant analyses on development and democracy have been more concerned with explaining the emergence of democracy, and have had less to say about the *quality or performance* of democracy itself. Efforts to describe the third and fourth waves of democracy using institutional and rights measures have shown that, while the world has witnessed a dramatic growth in the number of democracies, the latest waves have largely comprised 'illiberal' democracies (Diamond 1999; Zakaria 2003). Illiberal democracies are particularly good at establishing the basic institutional mechanisms and protections for holding relatively free and fair elections, maintaining a relatively free press, guaranteeing freedom of expression, and protecting the rights to assembly and association for the development of political parties, civil society organizations and trade unions, but they are less good at protecting citizens from ethnic, religious and gender discrimination, and arbitrary detention, torture, ill treatment and death in custody. There is thus a significant gap between the procedural and institutional dimensions of democracy, on the one hand, and the protection of civil and minority rights, on the other.

Presidential democracies, and especially those with multiparty systems, are inherently more unstable, prone to breakdown, and susceptible to extra-constitutional behaviour of presidents that makes the protection of rights precarious (Stepan and Skach 1994; Foweraker and Landman 2002). Parliamentary systems and so-called 'consensus democracies' perform better across a range of indicators including political stability, economic performance, and the protection of minority and other rights (Lijphart 1994b; 1999).

Scholarly research on the consequences of democracy shows that democracies have significantly better human development records (Ersson and Lane 1996) and are no worse at promoting growth than authoritarian regimes (Przeworski et al. 2000). Despite the problem of illiberal democracy, democracies *are* better at protecting 'personal integrity rights' (Poe and Tate 1994; Davenport 2000). Mature democracies have better human rights records than third- and fourth-wave democracies (Landman 2005). Beyond the propensity for democracies to commit themselves to international human rights obligations, they also show a much lower propensity to get involved in 'international entanglements'. Research on the 'democratic peace' has shown that since the middle of the 19th century pairs of democracies do not go to war with one another (Levy 2002). In addition to democracy lowering the probability of interstate and intra-state conflict, it also appears to be the preferred system for ensuring greater protection of human security (Large and Sisk 2006).

Taken together, the scholarly research on the emergence, maintenance and consequences of democracy has revealed a set of fairly consistent findings that should be of interest to the larger international policy and donor community. Whether one believes that economic development causes or supports democracy and democratic stability, it is clear that an increasing resource base enhances the types of choice available to ordinary people as well to governments in ways that ought in the long run to curb the propensity for conflict and threats to democracy. Support for democratic institutions, particularly those mechanisms for vertical and horizontal accountability that provide for significant oversight and scrutiny of state actors, is the key agenda item to bring political *practices* under the rubric of democracy more into line with the normative expectations that are typical of democratic theory. Finally, the peaceful consequences of democratization, whether in terms of interstate conflict, intra-state conflict or general levels of human security, suggest that, whether one agrees with Churchill's famous dictum or not, democracy is the most preferred form of political regime across the globe.

The dimensions of conditionality

In many ways, the international donor community has increasingly recognized the value of encouraging democratization, although views on how this is to be achieved differ hugely. The United States draws on its contrasting experiences of democracy promotion. On the one hand, it helped to rebuild Europe after the Second World War through the Marshall Plan and attempted

to support democracy in Latin America through the Alliance for Progress and related aid packages. On the other hand, it has a history of interventionism ostensibly on behalf of democracy (especially in Latin America) since the turn of the 20th century.

The European approach – especially that which has developed in parallel with the evolution of the European Union (EU), the process of European integration and the end of the Cold War – is one that saw a great need to 'channel the post-Communist European elites' strong desire to join the EU into a grand project of state reconstruction and establish clear limits on domestic political behaviour' (Kopstein 2006: 91). The focus for democracy building has not been civil society but the state and its many institutions, where political order is in many ways preferred over freedom, at least for the initial period of transition. A constant level of vigilance over institution building has been a means towards providing the foundation for long-term democratic stability in those countries that would eventually become members of the EU.

Since the late 1980s, the international donor community has pursued an alternative set of polices that increasingly link the conditions and structures of governance to the allocation of international assistance. The idea of aid conditionality is based on rewarding countries for making progress in the establishment, maintenance and performance of 'good' political institutions.

law, transparency of decision making, and access to information. This idea was taken on board by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and the EU and integrated into their conditions for development assistance. It was later expanded by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to incorporate a political dimension that includes government legitimacy, government accountability, government competence, and the protection of human rights through the rule of law (see Weiss 2000). National governments have also begun to adopt this form of policy.

These policy developments, whether among the international financial institutions or among national governments, all require some form of governance assessment on which to base aid allocation decisions. Various indices have been used that draw on the measures of democracy outlined in this paper, including expert judgement scales and surveys of public perceptions. For its assessment of 'governing justly', the Millennium Challenge Account uses the Freedom House measures of civil liberties and political rights, alongside the World Bank's measures of voice and accountability, government effectiveness, the rule of law, and control of corruption. A 2006 White Paper by the UK Department for International Development (DFID) pledges to carry out a country governance assessment for all aid-recipient countries, but the method for carrying out such assessments is still being developed. Despite the similarity of these approaches and their need for measuring democracy, good governance and human rights, they take different approaches to developing policy responses on the basis of the results of such assessments.

Aid conditionality as a policy of national governments

- The Millennium Challenge Account since 2002 has allocates US aid on the basis of, for example, good governance, health and education criteria (see <http://www.whitehouse.gov/infocus/developingnations/>).
- In its 2006 White Paper, the UK Department for International Development (DFID) sees good governance as a 'key factor in the struggle to reduce poverty'. The aid relationship is made conditional on, for example, the partner country's commitment to reducing poverty and achieving the Millennium Development Goals, respect for human rights, strengthening financial management and accountability.

Good governance has both an economic and a political dimension. The economic dimension has variously included public-sector management, organizational accountability, the rule of

Developing democracy in the new millennium

International assistance to develop democracy sits alongside scholarly attempts to define, measure and compare democracy in ways that provide policy options for governments. Donor demand for simple rubrics for aid allocation based on a set of governance criteria has led to a sacrifice of validity, reliability and context-specific information on democracy, good governance and human rights, which in turn has led to the persistence of arbitrariness in the allocation of international financial assistance. The reductionism that is inherent in any attempt to rank countries will necessarily lead to an allocation of aid that will be perceived by developing countries as unfair or as unnecessarily punitive. Of the strategies outlined in this paper for developing democracy, the preferred strategy is one that uses some form of measurement that draws on the best available data to provide a performance profile through which areas in need of assistance are identified. Rankings are far too crude a set of instruments to provide the kind of long-term assistance needed to develop the practices, institutions and culture that make modern democracy sustainable.

The reductionism that is inherent in any attempt to rank countries will necessarily lead to an allocation of aid that will be perceived by developing countries as unfair or as unnecessarily punitive.

Discussion

In the discussion following Todd Landman's presentation, questions were raised about democracy assessment in the context of war-torn societies – a subject that is in need of further study – and the follow-up of democracy assessments on a periodic basis. The definitions of democracy and their usefulness were discussed from practitioners' perspectives. Issues related to the analysis of the transition to democracy were brought up, as well as the question of subjecting the results of democracy assessments to broader democratic debate.

Democracy and human rights: Can the human rights mechanisms be used to assess democratic progress?

Thomas Hammarberg

Thomas Hammarberg began his presentation by describing the developments in the United Nations. At the 1993 World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna, US Secretary of State Warren Christopher gave a speech that referred to *democracy* rather than to *human rights*. 'This initiated a lot of discussion in the human rights community', Mr Hammarberg said. 'Many thought he was probably not very positive towards certain rights – in particular economic and social rights.' But the speech also implied a close relationship between democracy and human rights.

The **Council of Europe** was founded in 1949. Its objective is to develop common democratic principles in Europe, based on the European Convention on Human Rights. There are 47 member states.

The Council of Europe should not be confused with the Council of the European Union – the EU's legislative body – or the European Council, which is the council of the EU heads of state and government.

(For more detail, see <http://www.coe.int/>.)

The correlation between democracy and human rights

Free and fair elections could be an important instrument for human rights. However, there are countries which are not democratic but have seen some progress on human rights. Thomas Hammarberg mentioned Cuba as an example where standards of health and education – both seen as human rights – have been fairly well handled. 'There might be problems with the content of education, but at least all children go to school, and health care in Cuba is perceived to be better than in many other Latin American countries', he explained. At the same time there are democratic countries which violate basic human rights – for example, there has been a serious regression in the USA during the last five or six years. There have even been discussions in the USA about allowing torture during the interrogation of suspected terrorists – something that is viewed as very serious indeed by the human rights community.

It is thus not that simple – we cannot say that democracy and human rights always go hand in hand. However, there is clearly some relationship between them, at least in the long run. Human rights are important for the functioning of democracy, for example, freedom of speech and the freedom of the press. According to Thomas Hammarberg, 'it is difficult to see that any other system than the democratic could protect human rights'.

There are some obvious overlaps between the concepts of democracy and human rights. In the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights, article 21, the concept of democracy is seen as

part of the human rights package. The same is clear in the 1966 International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, article 25, as well as the 1990 Convention on the Rights of the Child. Article 12 of that convention establishes that even children should have the right to participation to some degree. This is a democratic dimension translated in the form of human rights.

right to form political parties and to campaign was respected and protected.'

The discussion today is therefore not only about freedom and the possession of certain rights; it is also, and increasingly, about the actual results. For instance, where women's rights are concerned, we are not only talking about women

The **International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, 1966**, article 25:
Every citizen shall have the right and the opportunity […]:

- to take part in the conduct of public affairs, directly or through freely chosen representatives;
- to vote and to be elected at genuine periodic elections which shall be by universal and equal suffrage and shall be held by secret ballot, guaranteeing the free expression of the will of the electors.

(See <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/law/ccpr.htm>.)

The **Universal Declaration of Human Rights**, 1948, article 21(1):
Everyone has the right to take part in the government of his country, directly or through freely chosen representatives.
(See <http://www.un.org/Overview/rights.html>.)

The **Convention on the Rights of the Child**, 1990, article 12:

1. States Parties shall assure to the child who is capable of forming his or her own views the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child, the views of the child being given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child.
2. For this purpose, the child shall in particular be provided the opportunity to be heard in any judicial and administrative proceedings affecting the child, either directly, or through a representative or an appropriate body, in a manner consistent with the procedural rules of national law.

(See <http://www.unhchr.ch/html/menu3/b/k2crc.htm>.)

Since the debates about democracy and human rights have deepened, the overlap between them has become more apparent and the two different concepts have in reality come closer to one another.

holding seats in parliament but also about women really taking part in decision making. Statistics, indicators and human rights have become more important; a lack of progress in equity in a country is seen as a problem.

Human rights indicators used in democracy assessment

In-depth work to promote democracy is increasingly incorporating the debate on human rights. 'Nowadays we are not only observing whether the ballot was free and fair', Mr Hammarberg observed: 'we also monitor whether discussions beforehand could be held freely and whether the

Economic and social rights

One particular dilemma when it comes to the concept of democracy and the concept of human rights has been *economic and social rights*. Had it not been for these rights, the two concepts would probably have been seen as almost totally overlapping. However, economic and social rights have added another dimension to human rights

discourse which is more difficult to link to the concept of democracy.

'When the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was first discussed, the discussion was to a great extent inspired by Franklin D. Roosevelt's State of the Nation speech in 1941', Hammarberg said. In this speech Roosevelt listed the 'four freedoms', including economic and social rights (freedom from want), as one of the major aspects of human rights. These rights were therefore included in the human rights package from the very beginning, and at that stage this was not seen as controversial.

The **International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights** was adopted and opened for signature by UN General Assembly resolution 2200A (XXI), 16 December 1966. It entered into force in March 1976.

The **International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights** was adopted by the same resolution and entered into force in January 1976.

However, soon after the adoption of the Declaration of Human Rights in 1948 discussions started that were to a large and unfortunate extent influenced by the Cold War atmosphere. Economic and social rights were depicted as 'communist rights', while civil and political rights were for the 'free world'. In the end, two covenants were written in 1966, confirming the divide between economic and social rights, on the one hand, and civil and political rights, on the other.

Thomas Hammarberg saw the same division as to some extent still present in the Council of Europe's standards. The *European Convention on Human Rights* includes some but not many social rights; the main part of those rights is guaranteed by the *European Social Charter*, which is a separate document.

Human rights are important for the functioning of democracy and it is difficult to see that any other system than the democratic could protect human rights.

The discussion today is not only about freedom and the possession of certain rights; it is also, and increasingly, about the actual results.

Economic and social rights have added another dimension to the human rights discourse which is more difficult to link to the concept of democracy.

The **European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms** was opened for signature in Rome in 1950.

The **European Social Charter** was adopted in 1961 and revised in 1996. It is monitored by the European Committee of Social Rights (ECSR).

(Read more at <http://conventions.coe.int> and <http://www.coe.int/T/E/Human_Rights/Esc/>.)

According to Thomas Hammarberg it is difficult and destructive to draw a dividing line between the two types of rights, making one package of rights more important than the other. 'If economic and social rights were not recognized, the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the [International Labour Organization] ILO conventions would no longer make sense.'

Repeated decisions in the UN confirm that economic and social rights belong to the human rights package. The argument against these rights has been that they are too expensive. The most expensive rights are the rights to health and education. Thomas Hammarberg clarified that all human rights are expensive: 'to establish a good system of justice or administer police work of course costs money, but health and education are without doubt major headings in every national budget'.

The implementation of economic and social rights has greater budget implications than many of the other rights, and this should be recognized. There are formulations to this effect in some of the human rights documents, establishing that certain human rights cannot be completely implemented if the resources are not available. 'This creates acceptance of failure of implementation and increases the difficulty of being moralistic about non-implementation of human rights', Mr Hammarberg said.

The risk of subjecting the human rights package to new scrutiny

Thomas Hammarberg's main argument for seeing all rights as one package is the fact that we have ratified them all equally. The UN consensus was on human rights *as a whole*.

'Human rights are agreements between governments and there is a fair level of consensus behind these rights. They are the product of discussions and agreements between people. We have today a platform made up of international and European standards as the basis for human rights work', Mr Hammarberg stated. 'If we decided to cease accepting part of the package a potentially destructive discussion would be opened up on what rights should be considered valid.' This would risk destroying all the agreements achieved so far.

Human rights are agreements between governments and there is a fair level of consensus behind these rights. They are the product of discussions and agreements between people. If we decided to cease accepting part of the package a potentially destructive discussion would be opened up on what rights should be considered valid.

Can human rights be voted away democratically?

Another dilemma discussed was cases where the majority of voters do not support human rights. Sometimes surveys show strong popular support for banning gay pride marches or against the abolition of the death penalty. 'Every aspect of human rights work *should* have the support of the majority of the population', Thomas Hammarberg remarked. However, this is not always the case. Political leaders can use such surveys as an excuse for violating human rights. The interesting question is whether the protection of human rights should overrule the opinion of the majority. Mr Hammarberg explained that 'we have abstained from the total sovereignty of public opinion in some specific cases in order to protect certain values such as human rights'. The decision to abstain from total sovereignty has normally been made as part of a democratic order, for instance by the parliament. 'It is a democratic decision, but it means that a court could rule against the majority in the country in some situations', he said.

Consistency and harmonization – the role of the EU

When it comes to democracy and human rights, Mr Hammarberg's experience is that it is very important to be consistent in what is done and in what values we try to defend. The international and European standards are important in supporting consistency. Here, Thomas Hammarberg mentioned the EU enlargement mechanism as an interesting process 'which has pushed quite a number of countries to introduce human rights standards in their legislation and constitution by setting high requirements for [EU] membership'. In his view, it has been the most effective work for democratic and human rights ever achieved in the world so far.

The common court system and cooperation in human rights work further contribute to a harmonization process in the EU.

We have abstained from the total sovereignty of public opinion in some specific cases in order to protect certain values such as human rights.

The EU enlargement mechanism is an interesting process which has pushed quite a number of countries to introduce human rights standards in their legislation and constitution by setting high requirements for membership.

Discussion

The discussion that followed focused on questions of minority rights and the balance between universal human rights and cultural relativism. Other speakers asked for further clarification on the distinction between social and economic rights and other human rights.

Thomas Hammarberg answered that the challenges of balancing different kinds of rights have probably affected the type of discussion we have seen. Our debates are influenced by our different experiences. If the cultural situation is ignored it will be difficult to explain the human rights message. There are interesting theories about the possibilities of respecting religion and culture at the same time, suggesting that the main question relates to the presentation of a message rather than to its substance.

It is impossible to decide what came first – economic and social rights, or political rights. Generalizations cannot be made; the two categories go hand in hand.

Cultural relativism was then discussed. It is not always certain what qualifies as human rights – for example, the right to an abortion. There is an obvious clash between some of the minority rights, for example in the question of gender, and other human rights.

The audience asked about the relationship between human rights and the security of the individual, and the problems in parts of the former Soviet Union of maintaining a strong and independent judiciary.

Karin Höglund, deputy director at the Department for Development Policy of the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs, added that the 'important thing is that democracy and human rights are not only mutually reinforcing, they are also prerequisites for one another'.

Democracy and human rights are not only mutually reinforcing, they are also prerequisites for one another.

Part II

Regional trends, experiences and challenges

Eastern Europe and beyond: Perspectives of the newest EU members

*Pavol Demeš**

The experience of the new EU member states was especially highlighted in this speech. For example, in 1992 Pavol Demeš participated in a project initiated by Sweden, resulting in a dialogue between members of the African National Congress (ANC) and representatives from Eastern Europe, sharing experiences of building institutions from scratch. Democracy building, according to Mr Demeš, is a 'mixture of miracles and technology'.

EU enlargement is probably the best example of democracy assistance ever: the EU was a strong 'pull factor' for the Central and East European countries.

After 1989 – democratization and EU membership

Much has changed since the 1990s. Ten post-communist countries have joined the European Union (EU). Most of the post-communist states are making progress and negotiations are ongoing towards the accession of more countries. The collapse of communism released enormous energies and gave a boost of optimism and inspiration to Europe.

One of the main points raised by Pavol Demeš was the importance of the EU in the process. 'EU enlargement is probably the best example of democracy assistance ever', he said. Within a short period of time some very measurable goals were achieved – complex objectives of social, political and economic transition. Mr Demeš suggested that the atmosphere of optimism helped the new EU members: 'they believed they knew what they had to do, and just did it'.

The EU was a strong 'pull factor' for the Central and East European countries that joined it. The magnetism of EU was the biggest driving force for change – with the EU membership as a 'carrot' the political leaders had to accept the conditions set and the whole package of reforms.

During the 1990s, democracy assistance was something rather natural, not debated and discussed as much as it is now. The process was also

* Pavol Demeš is a national of Slovakia, a country which moved from being a long-time recipient of democracy assistance to becoming active in democracy building and assistance itself after joining the EU in 2004.

There is a huge divergence between the EU and Russia where democracy issues are concerned. Russia has regained economic strength and become an important factor. It is promoting its values and interests, which sometimes clash with European ones. Sometimes this is called a backlash against democracy, but it could rather be seen as just a clash of interests.

helped by a temporary transatlantic unity; the differences between US and European policies were less distinct than they are today.

Challenges and complexity today

Today the scene is more complex – there are a good many conferences, discussions on definitions and differing views on what is to be done. There are numerous challenges and dilemmas. In the post 9/11 world there are also larger transatlantic disagreements on tactics and strategies. New issues include the rise of China as a global player, especially in Africa, and the difficulty of deciding how to approach countries that violate human rights at a time of great and increasing economic interdependence between states. There is also the issue of the EU itself. Today we hear the term 'enlargement fatigue', which was not used during the last decade. 'The EU is unable to agree on internal issues, often blaming those on the outside of the Union. There is today a lack of unity between the EU and the countries beyond, those knocking on the door', Mr Demeš commented.

Many problems may eventually surface from the EU's neighbour countries. Possible wake-up calls include the human rights abuses by Belarus, Russia's control over the energy that is transported across Belarus and Ukraine, people trafficking in Moldova and drug trafficking in parts of the Balkans.

Pavol Demeš described the huge divergence between the EU and Russia where democracy issues are concerned. Russia has regained economic strength and become an important factor. It is promoting its values and interests, which sometimes clash with European ones. 'Sometimes this is called a backlash against democracy, but it could instead be seen as just a clash of interests', he said. 'The EU and Russia view topics such as human rights and democracy in different ways.'

Advice for further change

There is conclusive evidence that it is possible to be ex-Soviet or ex-Yugoslav. The Central and East European countries can reform if there is sensible cooperation with the West to bring them in. Civil society can also play a crucial role. Pavol Demeš offered seven main conclusions on what is needed for good democracy building, from the Central and East European perspective.

There is a need for:

- increased clarity;
- more research and analysis;
- a case-by-case methodology;
- new thinking and a new approach;
- realism instead of efforts towards pan-EU approaches;
- attention to the importance of transatlantic cooperation; and
- making use of the new EU member states' experience and knowledge.

Increased clarity

We have today a period of ambiguity. 'We are not always clear with the countries we are assisting about *why* we do it. If this is not clarified those actors will not be as eager to cooperate and accept our conditions', Pavol Demeš said. He explained that people will react differently if they perceive the democracy assistance to be based on moral values or if they see it as an ideological or business-oriented exercise. 'There are good reasons for this. People are alike but they live in different contexts; their exposure to our assistance will be different as well as their reactions.' Mr Demeš observed that development and democracy assistance are often disconnected, which is why it is particularly inspiring to see the Swedish example of an ambassador for democracy being assigned.

More research, analysis and knowledge-based methodology

There is a need for more research and analysis on Central and Eastern Europe. What has happened, what worked well and what did not work out?

Technical assistance methodologies must be based on knowledge. There is a regular turnover of people in the European Parliament and the European Commission: there is a risk of too much improvization instead of learning.

A need for a case-by-case methodology

'It would be a mistake to try to work with packaged methodologies, as has been done previously. We need to work case by case and we cannot offer block membership to these new and different countries. These states are going through more painful and complicated processes, in which Russia plays an extremely important role', Pavol Demeš explained.

Importance of a new approach

In the post-enlargement excitement the thinking about and approaches to encouraging a stable European neighbourhood must be reshaped. The new approach must be based on self-interest, not only on 'moralistic games'.

Realistic approaches – not pan-EU consensus

Pavol Demeš does not believe that pan-EU or pan-UN approaches to democracy building will work. It would be better to set a general framework and let those countries that have the will, the knowledge and the resources do the job. Subgroups of countries could be used: it might take too long to wait for EU unity.

Attention to the importance of transatlantic cooperation

It would be useful to continue to build transatlantic partnerships, combining the resources and methodologies of non-governmental and other actors in the USA and Europe.

Using the new EU member states' knowledge and experience

The new EU member states have a high degree of sensitivity and knowledge; they have the perspective of having recently been objects of development assistance and experience of what works and what does not. Geographically, they are

People will react differently if they perceive the democracy assistance to be based on moral values or if they see it as an ideological or business-oriented exercise. There are good reasons for this. People are alike but they live in different contexts.

also in the direct neighbourhood of the countries we now aim to assist. Domestic organizations such as the Slovak Agency for International Development Cooperation (Slovak Aid) are doing much work in the region already.

Mr Demeš concluded that Sweden can be a leading nation in democracy building. He advised the ambassador for democracy to make contact with practitioners from political circles and the civil societies of the countries involved, for the initiation of joint ventures.

The new EU member states have a high degree of sensitivity and knowledge; they have the perspective of having recently been objects of development assistance . . . they are also in the direct neighbourhood of the countries we now aim to assist.

Discussion

The open discussion following Pavol Demeš' presentation dealt, among other things, with the issue of the EU as a 'pull factor' for democratization and the influence of the EU on the transition processes in the region. Were not other factors more important? The audience asked what, if not the EU, could be the new 'carrot' for democracy promotion.

It was noted that there is a difference between *transition* and *consolidation*. What would be the distinction between transition and consolidation paradigms, for example, vis-à-vis Belarus as opposed to Ukraine?

Speakers agreed on the importance of a role for civil society and the need for an EU policy that is based on values. It was suggested that it is now time for the EU to reformulate its policies. The European Commission was criticized as a donor because it was too politicized to be able to perform that role.

The difference between results-driven and process-driven work in modern multilateralism was discussed.

The Inter-American Institute of Human Rights and the promotion of democracy: Background and perspectives

*Roberto Cuéllar**

The electoral race has changed the scenery of Latin America. 'Democracy is very new in this region. In 1983 there were only two and a half democracies', Dr Cuéllar explained. These were Costa Rica, Venezuela and Colombia, 'which has always been a democracy with many elections and many violations of human rights'.

The big wave of democratization in Latin America came between 1985 and 1992, creating states that comply with the minimum conditions for democratic electoral processes. From 1992 to 2000 there was a renewal of democracy and the region saw an end to dictatorship, an end to massive violations of human rights and the emergence of peace processes and political negotiations, thus stabilizing the region. Refugees and people in exile returned to their countries, and the media became more free and open.

Sweden was very much involved in these changes, participating in negotiations and following the political processes. Swedish agencies and organizations such as the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) and Diakonia have long been committed to the development of Latin American civil society.

The status of democracy in Latin America

In 2005 and 2006 there were no less than 40 electoral processes in the region. Roberto Cuéllar described this as 'an unprecedented agenda'. He further observed that Latin America seems to believe in democracy. Electoral participation has been comparatively high in recent decades (Figure 1).

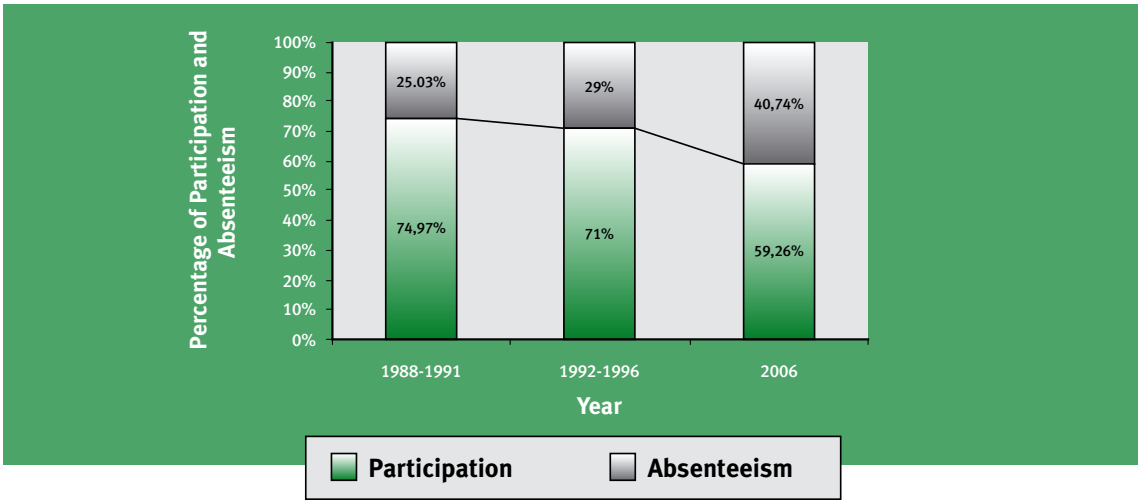
Three waves of democratization and intermediate 'reverse waves'

1820s–1926 First wave: expansion of suffrage in the West
1926–42 First 'reverse' wave: the rise of fascism
1945–62 Second wave: post-Second World War recovery
1962–75 Second 'reverse' wave: the rise of bureaucratic authoritarianism
1975–96 Third wave: Catholic and post-Soviet democratization

(Huntington, S., *The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century* (Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 1991)

* This presentation is based on the Instituto Interamericano de Derechos Humanos (IIDH) publication *Cuaderno de CAPEL 51*, 'Elecciones, democracia y derechos humanos en las Américas: Balance analítico 2006' (IIDH/Center for Electoral Promotion and Assistance (CAPEL), 2007).

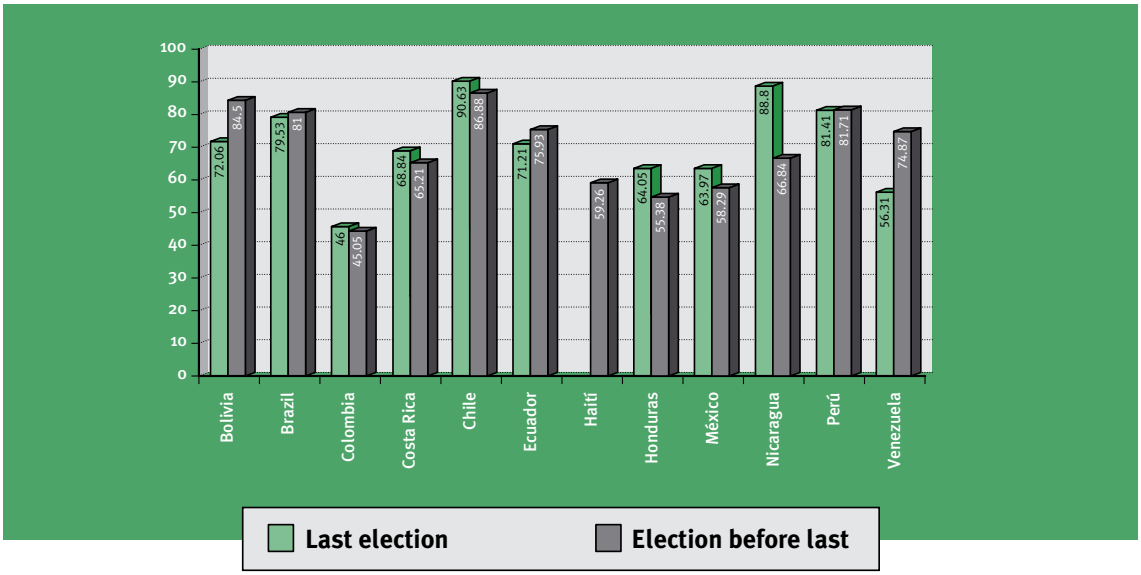
FIGURE 1: AVERAGE PARTICIPATION IN LATIN AMERICA FROM 1988 TO 2006



Source: Instituto Interamericano de Derechos Humanos (IIDH), *Cuaderno de CAPEL 51*, 'Elecciones, democracia y derechos humanos en las Américas: Balance analítico 2006' (IIDH/Center for Electoral Promotion and Assistance (CAPEL), 2007).

However, these results are somewhat skewed by the fact that voting is compulsory in some of the countries. Figure 2 shows the variations between states, with lower participation in for example Colombia and Mexico and higher participation in Chile and Peru.

FIGURE 2: VARIATIONS IN ELECTORAL PARTICIPATION BY COUNTRY, NOVEMBER 2005–DECEMBER 2006*



Source: Instituto Interamericano de Derechos Humanos (IIDH), *Cuaderno de CAPEL 51*, 'Elecciones, democracia y derechos humanos en las Américas: Balance analítico 2006' (IIDH/Center for Electoral Promotion and Assistance (CAPEL), 2007).
**Note*: Figures are percentages of total number of registered electors.

There is an extension of electoral democracy and respect for elected governments; but there is still an institutional fragility as well as high levels of corruption and low credibility for the political parties.

Dr Cuéllar discussed both the positive and the negative aspects of the status of democracy in the region. On the positive side he saw advances such as the extension of electoral democracy, and of respect for election results and for the elected governments. Electoral institutions have been consolidated and for the last 15 years a new electoral network has been functioning in Latin America on the basis of horizontal cooperation with technical expertise. These institutions have been strong enough to withstand national crises, as the cases of Bolivia and Ecuador have shown.

On the down side, Roberto Cuéllar described an institutional fragility in spite of the advances that have been made, for example, in Mexico. Many citizens are disillusioned with their political systems, and there is a lack of opportunities as well as high levels of corruption and of insecurity. Finally, according to public opinion surveys, the credibility of their political parties is at a historically low level.

Challenges and dangers in the new Latin America

The challenges posed by different aspects of the political systems in Latin America were highlighted and discussed. The main issues were (a) the political parties; (b) poverty and the relationship between money and politics; and (c) the participation of young people.

Political parties

Roberto Cuéllar described three main challenges or problems for Latin American political parties. First, the traditional parties have lost their political role and often survive as mere bureaucracies or as 'stairways for political leaders'. There is a problem of correspondence between the way in which the political parties should act and the way in which they do act. Second, there are problems of resource allocation. The financing of party campaigns is open to corruption, contributing to recurring scandals. This is also connected to problems with bad leadership and populist leaders. Third, the parties lack the capacity to adapt to new circumstances.

Three main problems for the political parties in Latin America:

- the loss of the true functions of political parties;
- the resource allocation problem; and
- the adaptability problem.

Political parties in Latin America are characterized in many cases by decadence and by the appearance of 'low-cost' political entities and groups. Traditional parties have largely been displaced, and social movements and parties with a social basis are emerging. Neither opposition nor ruling parties have democratic structures internally.

Latin America today faces a general difficulty in generating national consensus. 'The political discourse is eroding', said Roberto Cuéllar. He also highlighted the lack of clear mandates for the ruling parties – a deficit that makes governance increasingly difficult. Colombia and Venezuela were seen as exceptions in this regard.

In Latin America today there is an emergence of 'New Left' alliances, for example, in Bolivia, Ecuador, Nicaragua and Venezuela. This trend worries many people, Mr Cuéllar observed. The New Left is connected to a generalized anti-US feeling in the region. 'The New Left is not

a uniform phenomenon. The only thing that unites them is their ideal and their sentiment against the USA.'

Roberto Cuéllar concluded that there is a need to create an agenda for the institutionalization of political parties – and there is no time to lose.

Money and politics

Widespread poverty is another major problem. 'Latin America is the most unequal region of the world', Roberto Cuéllar said. The governments have not succeeded in reducing poverty in the region, and this is creating serious obstacles to the process of regional democracy. Dr Cuéllar observed that 'political parties are reluctant to deal with poverty and to speak about poor people'.

The relationship between money and politics is a major topic in Latin America. 'Money dominates electoral processes and politics in the region', Roberto Cuéllar stated. Factious groups can use money to get a say in politics. So-called 'dirty money' comes from drug dealers, criminalizing politics and elections. The efforts to eradicate corruption are few and isolated and there is no real accountability for the finances of the political parties. Dr Cuéllar described accountability in Latin America as a state secret: 'accountability of the political parties' financing is not openly discussed'.

A re-militarization of power has added to the political uncertainty. There is a new military antagonism linked with drug dealing, for example, in Brazil, Colombia and Mexico. The emergence of a new military thinking and an alternative military has also been observed.

The participation of young people

Dr Cuéllar highlighted the fact that young people seem to have lost interest in politics. 'Large numbers of people between 12 and 18 years old express a feeling of not being represented by the political parties.' Young people show little interest in voting and in democracy. This, in his view, is one of the main problems for the future of democracy in Latin America.

Accountability in Latin America is a state secret; accountability of the political parties' financing is not openly discussed.

Conclusions on democracy in Latin America

Dr Cuéllar raised some important questions. How can we get more change without violence? How can we get better conditions without using radicalism and fundamentalism in the region? How can we ensure that the political parties are led by the best people, taking the best people into parliament?

'There are two things to be said about democracy in Latin America', said Roberto Cuéllar. 'Democracy is not functioning well in this region but it is not functioning badly either.' An electoral momentum exists but the democracies are deficient in essential aspects of the rule of law and in the

Democracy is not functioning well in Latin America but it is not functioning badly either.

capacity to bridge social differences. Dr Cuéllar painted a rather gloomy picture, describing a tendency in some countries to rule by decree and a trend towards the personification of extreme power. Many countries face major problems of corruption, clientelism and criminality. Democratic regimes have difficulty in gaining support from a clear majority.

If the citizens have no hope of finding lasting solutions to insecurity, corruption and extreme poverty, they may be reluctant to participate in the electoral process. Several things need to be done: the deterioration of political parties must be stopped, and future voters must be offered education. Participation and education are key words, Dr Cuéllar concluded.

The Inter-American Institute of Human Rights (IIHR)

The IIHR is an international academic institution created in 1980 by the Inter-American Court of Human Rights with the support of the Inter-American Commission of Human Rights. It is located in San José, Costa Rica. The objective of the IIHR is to promote and strengthen respect for human rights. The organization operates across a wide field of human rights, from women's issues to political and electoral rights and the rights of indigenous people. (For more detail, see <http://www.iidh.ed.cr>.)

Discussion

The discussion that followed focused, among other things, on the issue of poverty and especially on the case of Brazil, which was seen as an example of a Latin American country making efforts to fight poverty. Latin America was described as a region which, due to weak new state apparatuses, has problems of delivery and corruption to grapple with. The criminal money coming into politics was seen as a major challenge.

The concepts of the 'New Left' and the role of social democrats in Latin America were highlighted by several speakers, as were the difficulties of the party systems, with a particular focus on the public financing of political parties.

Finally, the role of the UN system was mentioned with regard to the human rights-based approach used in the region.

Regional issues in democracy building: Perspectives on recent trends in Africa and the Middle East

Abdalla Hamdok

The global challenges: The importance of process and context

The enormous challenge of rebuilding functioning states from above and from the outside has absorbed much of the resources and energy of the international community. This is clearly seen in places like Afghanistan and Iraq, and it has alerted public opinion as never before to the complexity of democracy building. 'It is recognized today that democracy building is a non-linear process, which has its ups and downs, going back and forth', said Dr Hamdok. Attention is now being drawn to problems of security, legitimacy, local ownership, and the interplay of cultural, religious and democratic values. We have been alerted to the importance of the *process* as well as the *design* of political institutions, and to the need for a very *long-term perspective*.

The enormous challenge of rebuilding functioning states from above and from the outside has absorbed much of the resources and energy of the international community. It has also alerted public opinion as never before to the complexity of democracy building.

Attention must also be paid to the importance of the *context*. 'Institutions cannot simply be transferred; they will work differently in different political and institutional environments. This becomes very apparent when we look at democracy support and promotion across the globe', Dr Hamdok observed. This means that the approach to democracy building must be based on extensive dialogue and consensus building with local stakeholders. There are no short cuts. There is also a need to compare experiences from different situations. People in Nepal can benefit greatly from exchanging experiences with South Africa; people in Latin America can benefit from learning of experiences from the rest of the world, and not only from experiences from the north, he remarked. 'While the core tenets of democratic governance are universally valid, the type of democracy a nation chooses to develop depends to a large degree on its history and other circumstances. This is a very strong message coming out of the last few decades of work to support democracy.'

Democratic governance must be perceived to be relevant for development in order for stake-

holders to 'buy in' to the culture of democracy. Democracy must be seen to *deliver*. The democracy-building community needs to see and understand this.

Democratic governance must be perceived to have an instrumentalist value and relevance for the improvement of human development in order for the stakeholders to 'buy in' to the culture of democracy. Democracy must be seen to *deliver*.

Africa: diversity and regional trends

Africa, with all its problems of poverty, conflicts, debt and HIV/AIDS, has managed against all the odds to move forward in the last few years. An overwhelming number of countries are now transforming their types of regime. 'Two decades ago, half the continent was owned by the military; today there is a change from authoritarian to more pluralistic variants', Dr Hamdok said. 'The trend is to move from the "African pessimism" towards a strong demand for more and better democracy.'

The establishment of the African Union (AU), and particularly of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) initiative, plays a large part in the development of Africa. The AU and NEPAD have contributed to focusing the minds of the political elites on the business of responsible economic and political governance. Dr Hamdok said that 'a new sense of collective responsibility is developing on the continent'.

The trend is to move from the 'African pessimism' towards a strong demand for more and better democracy.

The African Union

The AU was established by the Sirte Declaration in September 1999, as the successor to the Organization of African Unity (OAU). It was launched in South Africa in 2002 following the adoption of the Constitutive Act of the African Union in 2000. It has 53 member states and works towards objectives of democracy, human rights and sustainable economic development.

The New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) is a strategic framework on socio-economic development in the region, initiated by the heads of state of Algeria, Egypt, Nigeria, Senegal and South Africa. The strategic framework document was formally adopted at the 2001 OAU summit. NEPAD views good governance as 'a basic requirement for peace, security and sustainable political and socio-economic development'.

(See also <http://www.africa-union.org>; and <http://www.nepad.org>.)

NEPAD has several unique features. Abdalla Hamdok highlighted five achievements of NEPAD as the most important and relevant for progress towards good governance in Africa – the interlinkage of governance, security and development issues; a focus on mutual accountability; African ownership; peer reviews; and the demonstration of collective political will.

Five important achievements of NEPAD

1. Recognition of the interlinkage between governance, security and development issues and the recognition that these are necessary preconditions for Africa's development strategy.
2. The African leaders have pledged to be accountable to their people and to each other.
3. NEPAD has put an emphasis on Africa's ownership of the development process.
4. The African Peer Review Mechanism has become an extremely important tool – a mutually agreed instrument for African self-monitoring (for more detail, see <http://www.nepad.org/aprm/>).
5. NEPAD also demonstrates the collective political will and commitment of African leaders to goals such as mutual accountability.

Dr Hamdok painted a rather positive picture of the trends in Africa, describing the creation of constitutionally guaranteed provisions for periodic elections and the commitment to civil and political liberties. 'The continent is increasingly seeing the effective transfer of power and renewal of leadership. In addition, the electoral processes are growing more transparent and the political systems more inclusive: minorities and previously disadvantaged groups have gained access to both elected and appointed offices.'

The more inclusive the political space becomes, the greater is the likelihood that the gains of democratic governance will be sustained. However, given the socio-political challenges still facing Africa, the question of deepening democracy and ensuring its survival remains a serious concern.

Diversity and regional trends in the Arab world

In the Arab world, there have been concerted efforts in recent years to forge ahead with reforms in, for example, the legislative and constitutional areas, and on issues such as human rights. Electoral processes, women's participation and the role of political parties have emerged as central topics for political reform. More and more countries have sought to liberalize their socio-economic and political systems, creating space for parliaments, and the media and other non-state actors to participate in the national dialogue on governance and democracy. The emergence of the pan-Arabic and transnational radio channels, and the satellite television channel Al-Jazeera, has given unprecedented impetus to internal pressures and advocacy for democratic change.

The more inclusive the political space becomes, the greater is the likelihood that the gains of democratic governance will be sustained. However, given the socio-political challenges still facing Africa, the question of deepening democracy remains a serious concern.

However, not all Arab governments have heeded these calls, and those who seem sympathetic to them have opted for a gradualist approach. 'Elections in the region have taken place only intermittently due to political instability and internal disputes. In many countries elections are non-competitive and are limited to parliaments and municipal councils, thus excluding the executive branch', Abdalla Hamdok stated. It was only recently that Egypt, which is widely considered to be a regional pace-setter, introduced constitutional reform to allow multi-candidate presidential elections. Similarly, Saudi Arabia recently introduced municipal elections for the first time – although women were excluded from participation. Free and competitive elections have also been held in Palestine and Lebanon.

In the Arab world, the last few years have seen concerted efforts to forge ahead with reforms in, for example, the legislative and the constitutional areas, and on issues such as human rights.

The Arab world stands out as a region where democratic progress has been slower and more limited than it has in other parts of the world. Nevertheless, in recent years there has been a gradual appearance of positive signs in the direction of democratization and political liberalization.

Abdalla Hamdok concluded that 'the Arab world stands out as a region where democratic progress has been slower and more limited than it has in other parts of the world. Nevertheless, in recent years there has been a gradual appearance of positive signs in the direction of democratization and political liberalization in a number of Arab countries'.

The major challenges to democratic governance in Africa and the Middle East

Democracy and good governance encompass a wide range of actions aimed at creating more open, participatory societies and promoting greater accountability and transparency in public affairs. In addition, there should be strong adherence to the rule of law in order to protect personal and civil liberties as well as gender equity. The level of political accountability and competition of course increases when the political space is opened up, for example with the introduction of multiparty politics and a free press.

Abdalla Hamdok identified six main clusters of challenges to democracy and good governance which have to be addressed.

Weak democratic traditions and culture

Due largely to a protracted democratic process and the absence of checks and balances, the traditions and culture of democracy have not grown strong. This is seen for example in the dominance of the executive branch and in the inadequate separation of powers between the three branches of government. Parliaments often lack the necessary independence from the executive branch and the judicial system does not have the required credibility.

Weak institutions

The second challenge is the weakness of key institutions. This, according to Hamdok, has a highly negative impact on both local and national governance as well as on political participation

Democracy and good governance encompass a wide range of actions aimed at creating more open, participatory societies and promoting greater accountability and transparency in public affairs.

Six main challenges to democracy and good governance in Africa and the Arab world

- weak democratic traditions and culture;
- weak institutions;
- weak political parties;
- the management of conflicts related to ethnicity, identity and religion;
- transforming the private sector into an engine of development; and
- the gender gap.

and the delivery of services; the civil service in many countries has tended to be supply- rather than demand-driven. 'It lacks the focus on outputs, outcomes and impact.' Growing urban poverty coupled with increasing demand for basic services in the urban slums represents an added challenge to service delivery.

The weakness of institutions is also displayed by the fact that there are too many tiers of decentralized government, with too many districts, regions and provinces.

Weak political parties

'There are several challenges in the parties and party systems, particularly with regard to the internal party governance structures, finance, leadership recruitment and gender representation', Hamdok said. The political parties play an increasingly critical role in the consolidation of democracy, but most political parties lack adequate internal democratic processes. Both ruling and opposition parties need a transformation to democratic politics and traditions.

The management of conflicts related to ethnicity, identity and religion

The most serious leadership challenge lies in the difficulties of managing identity-related conflicts. The issue of the indivisibility of these concepts is highly complex.

Transforming the private sector into an engine of development

Businesses are also affected by issues of good governance. The private sector generally lacks access to both human and financial resources, to knowledge, markets and labour. This has a negative impact on these businesses' ability to promote growth and employment. A lack of predictability in the management of state affairs and the gap between government policy and actual implementation add to the difficulties of the private sector.

The gender gap

Finally, the political playing field is uneven and not conducive to women's participation. 'The political, public, cultural and social environments are often unfriendly or even hostile to women. Enhanced women's participation must be addressed, with instruments such as quota systems', Abdalla Hamdok observed.

Conclusions

It is clear that democratic governance is a process with no short cuts – and that a long-term perspective is requiered. Abdalla Hamdok emphasized particularly the fact that democracy will develop specifically to its context: 'countries will of necessity be differently democratic'. A democracy that really empowers people must be built from the inside; it cannot be imported.

Dr Hamdok highlighted the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance as a useful instrument for Sweden to study when developing its new policy on democracy building. The adoption of this Charter in January 2007 created a positive instrument which, if supported by donors like Sweden, could produce much good work in Africa.

The **African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance** was adopted in January 2007 by the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the African Union.

(See also <http://www.africa-union.org/root/au/Documents/Treaties/text/Charter%20on%20Democracy.pdf>.)

Democracy and development in Africa

*Peter Anyang' Nyong'o**

Professor Anyang' Nyong'o began his presentation with the question of what must be done for the continuation of democratization processes and the project of democracy in Africa. His basic starting point was that if democracy is necessary for development, and Sweden is involved in development, then Sweden also needs to be involved in the democratization process.

The age-old argument advanced by Huntington that you need to develop first and then have democracy does not seem to stand up to the historical evidence in the third world.

Democracy and development – what is the relationship?

In saying that development and democracy are interdependent one does not necessarily mean that the one causes the other. 'The age-old argument advanced by Huntington that you need to develop first and then have democracy does not seem to stand up to the historical evidence in the third world', Professor Anyang' Nyong'o said. 'Indeed, it has often been argued that the countries that allowed too much democracy would dissipate resources and not be able to accumulate enough capital for development, while authoritarian countries could concentrate and accumulate resources in order to have the basic foundation for development.'

Arguments can be advanced to the effect that democracy and development are interdependent: the more you develop, the better your chances for democracy; and the more you democratize, the better your chances for development. Peter Anyang' Nyong'o gave the example of Kenya, which since 2000 has seen more democratic openings and more debate, better control of the government and more opportunities for stopping corruption. If corruption is stopped, the money involved can be used for development instead. 'In the 1980s, there was an intense discussion about the relationship between development and democracy. In the end it was agreed that democracy is good in itself even if it does not lead to development, and if it did lead to development that would be a bonus', he said.

* Although International IDEA is aware of the current events in Kenya and the country's changed situation, the key points introduced by Anyang' Nyong'o in his presentation remain valuable for the purposes of this publication.

The process of democratization in Africa after 1989

After 1989, when the Berlin Wall fell, pro-democracy forces saw their opportunity to seize the moment and challenge authoritarian regimes. A whole series of so-called democratic elections in Africa followed, with many partners and aid donors interested in supporting the enterprise of democratizing Africa. However, the ensuing elections across the continent did not necessarily result in democratic governments. Moreover, these elections were not all truly democratic; several of them should rather be described as semi-competitive elections. Professor Anyang' Nyong'o explained that these semi-competitive elections were not altogether useless; they did change the political atmosphere and they did let new actors into the political arena. 'Some of these actors continued to demand more democratic space and continued to demand changes in the rules of the game that could lead to democratic elections in the future. Political circumstances changed, making the agenda for more democratization much more immediate.'

These semi-competitive elections were not altogether useless; they did change the political atmosphere and they did let new actors into the political arena, some of which continued to demand more democratic space.

For example, in the case of Benin, the first election following the National Conference produced a democratic government under Nicéphore Soglo. After five years another election was held and Soglo was defeated. An old authoritarian ruler called Matthew Kerekou came back to power through a semi-competitive election. However, Professor Anyang' Nyong'o said, 'it was not possible to denounce the process that brought Kerekou back to power, because the same process had produced the Soglo government five years before'.

Another example mentioned was that of Kenya in 1992 and the first election after the democratic opening. The election took place after a change to the constitution which made competitive multiparty politics possible. In this election, the winner was the same government which had ruled under the one-party system. The difference was that it was now perceived to have legitimacy resulting from free elections. In reality, however, the election was only semi-competitive since the president retained tremendous powers under an electoral commission which he controlled and appointed. Nonetheless, Professor Anyang' Nyong'o explained, the election could not be denounced because the politicians had committed themselves to the process and had to participate under the new rules in spite of their deficiencies.

The electoral system in Kenya today

The president is elected in a Two-Round System, to serve a five-year term. The presidential candidate must win the largest number of votes and 25 per cent or more of the votes in at least five of Kenya's seven provinces in order to avoid a run-off.

There are 210 National Assembly deputies elected by popular vote in a First Past The Post system. In addition, 12 members are appointed by the president; six of these seats are reserved for women.

(For more detail, see the International IDEA databases: <http://aceproject.org/>, <http://www.quotaproject.org/> and <http://www.electionguide.org/>.)

The importance of the 'rules of the game'

Professor Anyang' Nyong'o observed that 'the problem for the opposition in authoritarian societies is that they do not have a "morning-after pill"'. The day after elections, the opposition has to swallow the results and live with them for another five years. The difference in Kenya after 1992 was that, unlike the previous era, those five years provided opportunities to mount a struggle to change the ground rules for election. 'Changing the ground rules is part of democratization – democracy is more a fight about the rules of the game than a fight about the regime that is produced as a result of that game. The fighting about the rules of the game is an extremely important part of the democratization process', said Peter Anyang' Nyong'o.

There have been both good and bad effects of the democratization process. 'The good news is that, in certain cases, this process has produced an environment and an atmosphere for further democratization, with regimes willing to engage in the democratization process', Peter Anyang' Nyong'o remarked. Ghana, Madagascar and South Africa are examples of governments which are now willing to engage in the democratization process.

In other cases there have been disappointments and more authoritarian governments have come to power. For example, in Kenya in 2002 the opposition realized that the rules of the game produced an uneven playing field, to the advantage of the incumbents. The opposition then formed a coalition, promising reforms if it won the election. The coalition did win, but the president made use of his tremendous constitutional powers to overrule the reform agenda. Since the president is in office for a term of five years, the opposition must wait some time yet for the next opportunity for change. To change the basic rules of the game in order to create democratic governance can take a long time and patience is needed.

Peer review in Africa

The African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) was – not surprisingly, according to Professor Anyang' Nyong'o – spearheaded by President Thabo Mbeki of South Africa, President Abdoulaye Wade of Senegal and President Abdelaziz Bouteflika of Algeria. Professor Anyang' Nyong'o explained that these presidents come from different backgrounds in terms of democratic states but share a concern and ambition to take the democratization process in Africa further. Their idea was to find ways and means by which to inspire themselves rather than to depend on help from outsiders. The peer review mechanism measures democratic performance in terms of democracy and good governance, cooperative governance and socio-economic development, and it builds on the idea of a horizontal learning process on democracy building in Africa.

Governments may not always like the results of the peer reviews. They may try to manipulate the results of the review or to stifle discussion of the report. In the case of Ghana, the government did not necessarily try to stifle the review process, but the reviewers were chosen by the government and perceived as less independent. Both during and after the review in South Africa the government tried to limit the discussion of the results to within the government.

'The African Peer Review Mechanism is not there to punish the bad boys but to indicate to the bad boys what they could learn from the good boys', Peter Anyang' Nyong'o said. 'It is too early to judge whether it works or not, but the mechanism is at least being put into practice.'

The problem for the opposition in authoritarian societies is that they do not have a 'morning-after pill'. The day after the elections the opposition has to swallow the results and live with them for another five years.

Another regional tool is the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance, which has to handle some very practical issues. One of the issues which should be addressed in connection with the Charter is the financing of political parties in Africa. 'Political parties are very important actors in the democracy process, and unless the financing of them is sorted out this may be a major drawback for democratic elections in Africa', said Professor Anyang' Nyong'o.

Changing the ground rules is part of democratization – democracy is more a fight about the rules of the game than a fight about the regime that is produced as a result of that game.

Sweden's role in the future

So what is Sweden's niche? Professor Anyang' Nyong'o mentioned the contribution by Bo Göransson, the former Swedish ambassador to Kenya, which might be 'a piece of evidence that Swedes can be involved in the agenda with positive results. The more Bo Göranssons we have, perhaps the better partners we shall have'. More practically speaking, Peter Anyang' Nyong'o added that Sweden as a foreign power will have to put up with the problems of being a foreign power, dealing with the issue of manufacturing and exporting democracy. Questions must be asked about whether democracy can be manufactured and exported as a commodity across the globe.

The APRM is not there to punish the bad boys but to indicate to the bad boys what they could learn from the good boys.

Another issue relates to the difference between *democracy* and *good governance*. The concept of good governance was created in the 1980s when the West was afraid to talk about democracy; it persisted in the language of the development agencies and subsequently became confused with the concept of democracy, Peter Anyang' Nyong'o explained. Good governance is essentially an omnibus concept that includes such notions as the rule of law, respect for human rights, the promotion of property rights, transparency and accountability in the public service, low transaction costs in doing business and so on. These are not necessarily co-determinants of democracy. 'While democracy cannot be reduced to good governance, the latter is an important ingredient of democracy. Beyond good governance, democracy raises larger questions of justice, equity and fairness.'

Good governance is essentially an omnibus concept that includes such notions as the rule of law, respect for human rights, the promotion of property rights, transparency and accountability in the public service, low transaction costs in doing business and so on. These are not necessarily co-determinants of democracy. While democracy cannot be reduced to good governance, the latter is an important ingredient of democracy.

Peter Anyang' Nyong'o believes that this is where Sweden has a niche. 'Sweden has a good record

of paying attention to issues of justice, equity and fairness and could therefore complement the discourse of democracy and development on the global scale by educating others that democracy cannot be manufactured and exported – democracy is a way of life that must be culturally rooted and must inspire people to engage in a fairer, equitable development process.'

In terms of the International IDEA network, Professor Anyang' Nyong'o expressed the need for 'engineering democracy'. Democracy and elections require infrastructure, information and technology. There is a need for people who know about how to hold elections and how to manage the practicalities – someone to engineer democracy.

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Discussion

The discussion following the presentations by Abdalla Hamdok and Peter Anyang' Nyong'o focused on issues such as proper benchmarking for peer reviews, local democracy and African voting patterns.

One speaker observed that people in Kenya often vote for reasons other than political ideology. It was suggested that this was a problem, resulting from a lack of civic education. How to combine the traditional systems with the formal system? Peter Anyang' Nyong'o responded that if people defined their interests along tribal lines he did not see a problem in them voting on such grounds. It is not necessarily a choice between tribal interests and ideology; in concrete terms people vote for the concrete results they want to achieve. Abdalla Hamdok added that the role of political parties is to aggregate people's interests. Regional and ethnic interests can indeed be aggregated to federal issues.

Local democracy was discussed as an essential feature: unless there was democracy at the local levels of a society, it would be impossible for the national members of parliament to take responsibility and be locally accountable. Professor Anyang' Nyong'o and Dr Hamdok agreed about the importance of local democratic governance. Abdalla Hamdok described the International IDEA assessment tool DLL – Democracy at the Local Level. This has been used in pilot programmes in Botswana, Kenya, Tanzania and Zambia. This programme looks at issues of local democracy, for example, service delivery, accountability and transparency. The linkage of outcomes to the local level is relevant to the democratization process; and local governance provides a training ground for future elected leaders.

International IDEA has developed several tools for assistance to practitioners in supporting democratic development at the local level. One example is the Local Democracy Assessment Methodology, a qualitative evaluation of the state of democracy, made by those directly involved in the policy process.

In 2001 it published the Handbook *Democracy at the Local Level: The International IDEA Handbook on Representation, Participation, Conflict Management and Governance* as guidelines for local authorities, civil society and the international donor community on the purposes, forms and methods of local democracy.

(Learn more at <http://www.idea.int/democracy/dll.cfm>.)

The democracy process in the Middle East was also discussed. The Arab Gulf states were thought to be at the bottom of most democracy rankings, although this might depend on the definition of democracy used. What was the reason for the lack of democracy in that region? Abdalla Hamdok highlighted oil revenues as a key aspect – the Gulf states have not needed economic support from the West and therefore have not heeded the West's calls for democracy. There is also a history of contradictions and double standards employed by the West in this region.

The discussions on the creation of a joint AU electoral commission were raised. Different views were expressed on the possible benefits of such a commission.

It was noted that peacekeeping forces can have a role to play in democratization processes; for example, the elections in the Democratic Republic of the Congo in 2006 would not have been successful without the help of peacekeepers. This might be one niche for Sweden.

Challenges to democracy builders: What can Sweden learn from the EU?

Richard Youngs

Richard Youngs offers some reflections on the European Union (EU) approaches to democracy building, describing how these have evolved in recent years, and discussed possible areas for improvements with regard to EU policy at both the micro and the macro levels.

The **Fundación para las Relaciones Internacionales y el Diálogo Exterior** (FRIDE) is a think tank based in Madrid, seeking to provide innovative thinking and undertaking research on Europe's role on the international stage. It was established in 1999 and is currently headed by Director-General Pierre Schori. The focus areas are democratization; peace, security and human rights; and humanitarian action and development.
(See <http://www.fride.org/page/5/about-fride>.)

The EU commitment to democracy promotion has been strengthened in recent years. The EU approaches to democracy support have become more comprehensive and more sophisticated; some lessons have been learned from the 15–20 years of European support for democratization processes. However, in many crucial senses there is still considerable room for improvement.

The EU's conceptual approach includes:

- the relationship between development and internal political change;
- a long-term approach linking internal political change to social and economic change; and
- the recognition that democracy cannot be brought about coercively from the outside.

There is at the moment much ongoing activity in Europe. A number of European governments, including Sweden, talk about or have begun to elaborate new strategies for supporting democratic governance. There are also attempts at joint deliberations at the EU level.

'The EU has, in a broad sense, a fairly good conceptual approach to supporting democratic reform', said Richard Youngs. This approach includes the relationship between development and internal political change; a long-term approach linking internal political change to social and economic change; and the recognition that democracy cannot be brought about coercively from the outside.

However, there is a need to fine-tune the EU approaches. Dr Youngs observed that 'there are a lot of potentially useful activities in the area of democracy support, but they tend to be rather

There are a lot of potentially useful EU activities in the area of democracy support, but they tend to be rather ad hoc and rather disparate. The challenge is to make sure that all the different European actors lock their activities together into something more coherent and cohesive.

ad hoc and rather disparate.' The challenge is to make sure that all the different European actors lock their activities together into something more coherent and cohesive, creating a common approach with the capacity to have a tangible impact.

When discussing practical policy proposals, Richard Youngs suggested that it would be useful to distinguish between improvements needed on two different levels of democracy policy – at the *macro level*, which has to do with the way the EU frames its overarching political commitment to democracy promotion, and at the *micro level*, which relates to the way the EU manages its democracy projects and initiatives.

The macro level

Richard Youngs described four aspects of democracy policy where improvements were needed at the macro level.

Four things that need to be improved at the EU macro level:

- clarity;
- consistency;
- more sophisticated and precise use of sanctions; and
- better cooperation with regional organizations.

Clarity about commitment and intention – improving EU credibility

'The EU clearly enjoys a favourable image in some areas, and certainly when compared to the USA. At the same time it would be inadvisable to be over-confident in what is routinely presented as the EU's "democracy brand name" compared to other actors', said Richard Youngs. In some cases in some parts of the world the EU still has some very basic work to do in order to convince local populations of its commitment to democratization.

The Middle East is probably the best example of this. Local democrats and civil society activists in places such as Egypt seem to believe that the EU is primarily committed to dealing with the regime, supporting only modest degrees of political change. In recent years the EU has stressed, correctly, that democracy cannot be imposed from the outside; however, this message has often been confused with an ambivalence towards democracy building per se. In the Middle East in particular this has been interpreted to the EU's disadvantage. Greater clarity is needed within EU policies and EU approaches: this was suggested as a basic but important point for Sweden to reflect on.

Richard Youngs described how this fairly fundamental point has engendered divisions and discussions in the EU. There have been attempts to create a new EU strategy on democracy promotion within which a statement of principle would be spelled out, stating the EU's support for democracy in a less ambivalent fashion. However, the member states could not agree; some governments pushed the issue quite actively, while others argued that democracy support is better done in a less po-

Greater clarity is needed within EU policies and EU approaches.

liticized fashion, in a way less linked to the EU's overarching geo-strategic foreign policies. As a result, that attempt to find a common EU approach failed. 'This reflects the fact that, because of EU enlargement, it seems today more difficult to achieve a consensus on basic principles of dealing with democracy and human rights support than it did some years ago', commented Dr Youngs.

Consistency instead of perceived double standards

A second point relating to the macro level is that there is a clear need for greater consistency in EU policies. Richard Youngs explained that many actors perceive the EU to be tough on small countries that are of little strategic importance while at the same time overlooking democracy and human rights violations when strategic issues such as oil are involved. 'From a realist angle such double standards might seem inevitable, but inconsistency does rebound against the EU when other actors reach the conclusion that democracy support is only used for strategic reasons', Dr Youngs said. 'It becomes harder for the EU to speak with credibility and legitimacy about supporting democratic change in Belarus or Morocco if it is at the same time perceived to be shoring up authoritarian regimes in the Persian Gulf.'

Many actors perceive the EU to be tough on small countries that are of little strategic importance while at the same time overlooking democracy and human rights violations when strategic issues such as oil are involved. It becomes harder for the EU to speak with credibility and legitimacy about supporting democratic change in Belarus or Morocco if it is at the same time perceived to be shoring up authoritarian regimes in the Persian Gulf.

Sanctions as a democracy promotion tool – must be used in a more precise and sophisticated way

In some cases punitive action has been used as a tool by the EU, particularly through article 8 of the Cotonou Agreement. However, since political sanctions under the Cotonou Agreement were used on only ten occasions between 2000 and 2007, sanctions cannot be said to be systematically used as a democracy promotion tool in the EU. From the cases where sanctions have been used, some lessons can be learned. Richard Youngs explained that 'sanctions have more of an impact where they take the form of targeted responses to specific setbacks in democratic rights. Specific trade or aid measures are linked to modest but achievable improvements on the part of the governments in question'.

The Cotonou Agreement
The relations between the European Union and the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) states have been regulated by partnership agreements since 1963, first under the Yaoundé Convention and later by the Lomé Agreements. In 2000 a new ACP–European Commission (EC) agreement was signed in Cotonou, Benin. The Cotonou Agreement was concluded for a 20-year period from March 2000 to February 2020. It has been signed by 79 ACP states and entered into force in 2002.

At the moment there is a debate in Brussels about whether the EU should be tougher or softer. The question, according to Richard Youngs, is not about the EU being tougher per se, but rather about when and how to use democracy-related conditionality in a more precise, more sophisticated way. 'It is a question about how to be a bit more agile in the way the EU relates to political processes on the ground. So far the EU has been rather weak in that regard.'

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Cooperation with regional organizations

There are clear limitations to what the EU can achieve on its own, especially in the more difficult cases. When the EU has debated international cooperation on democracy building it has mainly been with the focus on a transatlantic dimension. This is a rather limited cooperation strategy. 'The challenge of moving forward is to think about ways to incorporate what we may call "democracy promotion diplomacy" into the regional organizations that might have some influence in different regions of the world', Richard Youngs said. The EU needs to improve in this regard.

The micro level

The micro level concerns the detailed ways in which the EU operates its assistance policies. At this level as well there are ways in which EU approaches could be significantly improved.

Critical assessment of the effectiveness of an indirect approach

One fundamental characteristic of EU democracy support is the adherence to what might be called a philosophy of *indirect* support for political change. The EU invests much of its support for democratization in areas such as technical development assistance, economic cooperation and sector support. The idea is to provide a favourable context for democratization. Richard Youngs describes this as a good approach in principle; however, 'the evidence of an actual and positive spillover effect of this indirect approach has been disappointing. There is little evidence that this EU policy has had an identifiable, tangible impact resulting in democratic change at the political level'. Some kind of democracy audit or other analysis tool to assess the democracy-related impact of the indirect policy initiatives is needed.

Richard Youngs even observed that 'the indirect policy approach has not weakened authoritarian regimes but instead shored them up, giving them a firmer foundation of support'. An example might be the pre-privatization processes in the Middle East supported by the EU under the philosophy that decentralized economic power will spill over to political liberalization. These policies have instead strengthened the position of regimes in this region.

The indirect approach is good in practice but there needs to be a more critical scrutiny of the instances where it is not working or where it is arguably having a counterproductive effect.

One fundamental characteristic of EU democracy support at this level is the adherence to what might be called a philosophy of *indirect* support for political change.

Democracy definition, indicators and the EU approach

The EU is perceived in most places to be concerned with whether things are moving or not rather than to be working towards a pristine end definition of democracy. The success of EU policy is defined in terms of whether a recipient state is moving in the right direction. The EU, it has been argued, tends to be relatively good in situations where things are already moving in more or less the right direction, but it is not very good at making the indirect approaches work where there is not already a political commitment or political will to change. Richard Youngs considers that 'the problem is that the EU uses governance and human rights indicators rather than democratization indicators in measuring the direction of change. This creates the appearance of the EU supporting a kind of liberalized autocracy rather than democracy'.

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Richard Youngs gave the example of the European Neighbourhood Policy action plans. These plans identify the areas where the EU sees its own support as being potentially most useful, resulting in an ad hoc list of 200–300 areas where cooperation on political reform can be built. However, the plans do not provide any understanding of the underlying sequencing, or of the nature of the political process in the partner countries.

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The European Neighbourhood Policy action plans

The European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) was developed in 2004 as a complement to the Barcelona process and in order to strengthen regional prosperity, stability and security. Neighbouring countries can, by mutual agreement, sign so-called action plans concerning a number of issues such as trade, the environment, transport, energy and human rights.

At present the participant states are Algeria, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Egypt, Georgia, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Moldova, Morocco, the Occupied Palestinian Territory, Tunisia and Ukraine.

(For more detail, see <http://ec.europa.eu/world/enp/index_en.htm>.)

Inflexible funding procedures

One often-discussed weakness is the inflexibility of EU funding procedures. There have been some modest improvements to enable EU funds to be released more quickly. 'However, the EU still places self-imposed restrictions on its ability to fund the most useful civil society organizations', Dr Youngs stated. One recent example is Belarus, where the EU simply could not get funding to those organizations that had any degree of autonomy from the regime of President Lukashenko. At the moment, the EU only funds civil society actors that are officially recognized by their own governments; many of the most promising actors can therefore not be considered for funding. There is a need for better guidelines on what type of partners the EU should be able to support in non-democratic states.

A lack of focus on the 'middle level'

Richard Youngs expressed the opinion that the EU approach to democracy assessment has so far focused on two levels – on the one hand, the political elite and the institutional, state-building level, and, on the other hand, the funding of grass-roots civil society actors. The amount of funding going to this latter level of support has increased quite significantly in recent years.

Four things to improve at the EU micro level:

- a critical assessment of the indirect approach;
- a discussion on the definition, indicators and approach used;
- the inflexible funding procedures; and
- a focus on the 'middle level' between the state and the grass roots.

The EU thus has both a top–down approach and a grass-roots bottom–up approach; what is missing is attention to the middle level that could offer the articulation between grass-roots civil society organizations and a commitment to political reform at the state level. 'There should be more parliament and party support, and support for the countervailing powers of democracy building. This has been the most obvious weak point in the EU's democracy profile so far', Richard Youngs concluded.

The EU is still under self-imposed restrictions to its ability to fund the most useful civil society organizations.

The EU has both a top–down approach and a grass-roots bottom–up approach; what is missing is attention to the middle level that could offer the articulation between grass roots civil society organizations and a commitment to political reform at the state level.

Discussion

During the discussion that followed, the audience asked about the EU's principles and priorities for the selection of recipient countries for democracy support. What importance had the strategic allocation of resources, and what trade-offs were being made between the norms of human rights, in their absolute sense, and of democratization, seen as political liberalization? Should the EU use qualitative or quantitative data for its assessments, and was it useful to connect aid to conditions of good performance in terms of governance? The indicators for the selection of recipient countries were described as neither firm nor objective. In relation to this, the seminar discussed the dilemma for the EU in either setting some difficult political priorities or else having too wide a range of projects – a limited amount of funding scattered over a very large number of countries.

Another main issue that was discussed related to the inconsistency between democracy-building policies and other big EU policies such as trade or the Common Agricultural Policy. There is a huge disconnect between the areas of policy in the EU for which it is routinely criticized. The challenge of coordination in the EU is great and 'the joining of development, security, conflict and governance policies is still more noticeable by its absence than by its existence'. The conflicting internal agendas within the EU were discussed, and especially the discrepancy between the development offices' policies and those of the external relations and foreign policy offices. However, the EU is not alone in having these tensions between the various strands of its external relations; the same tensions and contradictions exist in the US Government at national policy level.

In regard to this perceived discrepancy, the seminar discussed the contradiction between the democracy-building agenda and foreign policy regarding the EU's reaction to the election of Hamas in the Palestinian elections of 2006. How can the EU have a credible democracy-building policy when it is seen to work with such double standards? However, there are also signs of improvement. Richard Youngs observed that 'most development ministries are recognizing the need to have a more political dimension to development'.

When discussing clarity and consistency, Dr Youngs explained the need for a clearer set of guidelines or principles for an EU approach to democracy. 'If you look at the evidence there is some doubt in my mind that the EU's ultimate objective is actually democratization – it rather seems to be seeking a degree of political liberalization', he said. 'The EU argues that its concern is internal reforms; therefore, where there is potential to work on particular issues of reform, there may be bad performance overall in terms of democracy and human rights. One interesting outcome of this is that, although we talk about common European approaches to democracy, the donors' decisions display quite significant differences.'

Richard Youngs also noted that significant amounts of EU funding and resources to support political change have gone to what the EU calls the Twinning technical harmonization projects, which are basically trying to build institutions and to incorporate into them an adherence to EU-type processes and procedures. Looking at a large number of cases, it is clear that the EU's focus has been too much or too exclusively on this kind of technocratic area of governance and not enough on understanding the political dynamics of civil society that affect countries going through political change.

The definition and aspects of democracy building were discussed, and Richard Youngs observed that when democracy building is debated we tend to debate a narrow set of activities that are recognizable as democracy promotion activities. It is arguably just as important, if not more so, to understand the democracy impact of non-democracy-building policies.

Conditionality in democracy building was said to have a role in some cases, but it must be used on a case-by-case basis. Positive conditionality was seen as being linked to governance rather than to democracy.

Democracy assessment and democracy promotion from the US perspective

Thomas Melia

At the seminar, Thomas Melia gave his perspective on the US engagement in democracy promotion in both the USA and the broader international democracy movement.

Democracy promotion initiatives by previous US governments

Thomas Melia gives his perspective that, contrary to what many people in Washington, and in universities, seem to believe, democracy promotion, even just the US variety, was not invented by George W. Bush. The US Government and an array of institutions both inside and outside that government have been involved in promoting or strengthening democracies, by different means, for several decades. Quite a substantial infrastructure has been built up over the years, and even some expertise.

> 'My fellow citizens of the world, ask not what America will do for you, but what together we can do for the freedom of man' (President John F. Kennedy, inaugural address, 20 January 1961).

Thomas Melia gave a number of examples of US initiatives – Woodrow Wilson talking about the rights of small nations; the 'four freedoms' invoked by Franklin D. Roosevelt as part of the US rationale for entering the Second World War; and John F. Kennedy's inaugural address focusing on the US mission to combat communism and to strengthen democratic allies in the world. Other examples are the special interest in human rights taken by Jimmy Carter, and the Reagan administration's creation in the 1980s of a bipartisan initiative called the National Endowment for Democracy (NED). This endowment had long been championed by the US trade union movements, who wanted something like the German *Stiftungen* – non-governmental party-based civil society actors, organized to defend certain interests.

Franklin D. Roosevelt's four freedoms

- Freedom of speech and expression;
- freedom of religion;
- freedom from want; and
- freedom from fear.

(Address to Congress, 6 January 1941; see *Congressional Record,* 1941, Vol. 87, Pt. I.).

After 1989, with the fall of the Berlin Wall and the collapse of the Soviet Union, everyone was in favour of supporting democracy promotion. 'When the largest perceived obstacle – the Soviet Union and its network of global alliances – was gone, democracy promotion became less controversial in the US', Thomas Melia said, 'until the present moment, when it has to some extent become controversial again'.

Organizations such as the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI) and the International Republican Institute (IRI) 'got their sea legs' during the 1980s, beginning to give grants and training to groups in other countries. The NDI used a model whereby it 'borrowed' non-Americans to be its presenters, talking about democratic politics. The idea was that some aspects of US politics might translate well and be useful for people in other countries – although certainly not all. As Thomas Melia observed, 'by integrating foreign expertise into its programme, the NDI became in many ways more multinational than American in its presentation'.

In the Clinton administration, democracy promotion became one of the three pillars of the overall US development strategy. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright articulated the notion that there were some key countries in the world which the USA for strategic reasons needed to help through a democratic transition because they were (as they remain) linchpins in their respective regions. Countries such as Nigeria, Indonesia, Ukraine and Colombia were seen as critical states where a democratic transition was central to security and prosperity and other aspects that were important to the USA in the world.

A plethora of democracy organizations and programmes

Many of the previous US governments created new kinds of democracy promotion projects, programmes, agencies, institutions and bureaus. These are not usually closed down. The funding for one or another may decline for a while, or they may change their purpose or mission, but they never go away. This means that the USA today has a rather sprawling democracy bureaucracy within and outside the government. Mr Melia described the roles of the new Middle East Partnership Initiative and the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor (DRL) within the State Department.

State Department-supported initiatives related to democracy have received funding of about 75–100 million US dollars (USD) a year. The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) may spend 1 billion USD on democracy promotion worldwide, depending on what one considers proper to include in a discussion of 'democracy promotion'. There is thus a great deal of money involved and the democracy bureaucracy continues to proliferate.

The USA today has a rather sprawling democracy bureaucracy within and outside the government.

The Bush administration: a changed direction after 9/11

At the beginning of 2001 the Bush administration came into office after an election which according to Thomas Melia 'might have given some US citizens cause to think about the level of refinement of the domestic democratic system'. President Bush could have adopted a modest approach to democracy promotion, acknowledging that all countries can and should do better. At this time, he had a good opportunity to choose a policy of information sharing and mutual learning, and of seeing democratic procedures in all countries as a work in progress. Instead, Mr Melia describes President Bush as having pursued a strategy of 'never apologize, never explain', so to speak pulling up the drawbridges. Indeed, the early Bush administration began to reverse much of the US involvement in democracy promotion – although this posture lasted only nine months.

This policy of disengagement from the world had to change after 9/11 when the US Administration realized that a badly governed country like Afghanistan could be a harbour for people doing great damage to the USA. This discovery triggered an interest in the nature of political systems in far-off parts of the world. Thomas Melia does not agree that the invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq were about democracy promotion: 'rather they were labelled as such in retrospect by the Bush administration and by its critics. These invasions were not about democracy promotion but about perceived security threats to the US'.

Mr Melia concluded that 'it is important to realize that US efforts of post-conflict democracy promotion, for example in Germany and Japan, or more recently in Panama, Afghanistan and Iraq, never began as democracy promotion exercises. They were initiated as military exercises to deal with real or imagined threats. In the aftermath of these events, however, there has been a great deal of investment in support for democratic institutions in those places'.

An increased focus on the Middle East – at what cost?

More generally the Bush administration has invested a great deal of money and diplomatic energy in trying to promote democratic change across the Middle East. This priority is reflected in many organizations that now have huge Middle East departments, tiny Asian departments, and non-existent Latin America departments, and where attention to the region of Russia and the former Soviet Union is fast dwindling. The focus on democracy promotion in the Middle East, according to Thomas Melia, represents a significant change from previous administrations, which almost universally ignored the Arab world because it was perceived as too difficult an area. 'The Arab world had earlier been an exception to US democracy promotion, because of the uncertainties on what culture would be produced in that region and a concern about the Arab–Israeli issues.' 'It is not a bad thing that President Bush wanted to bring the Arab region into the global discussion of democratic change. It is, however, too bad that the way Iraq has unfolded has made it harder to get more "buy-in" – in the US, in Europe in particular, and even in the Arab world.'

Thomas Melia approves of the Bush administration taking on democracy promotion issues in the Middle East. However, one of the consequences has been decreased attention to democratic development interests in other parts of the world. There also seems to be another, recent wrinkle in the way the policy has developed: Freedom House recently issued a critique of the US Administration's budget proposal for democracy and human rights promotion because funding for human rights assistance, civil society and political processes would all be reduced in the proposed budget for the next fiscal year, whereas aid to the democracy and governance arena, focusing on government institutions such as judiciaries and parliaments, would increase. 'This reflects a strategy of working primarily with state institutions in governments friendly to the US. Prestige and money would then be less invested in human rights defenders and civil society issues', Thomas Melia said. It should be noted, however, that the US Congress, which for the last six years has been fairly compliant to the administration, is today more inclined to push back as a result of the reinvigoration of the democratic process. Mr Melia therefore expected the US Congress to rewrite the president's budget proposals to a substantial degree. The final allocations of funding are still wide open.

The focus on democracy promotion in the Middle East is a significant change from previous administrations, which almost universally ignored the Arab world because it was perceived as too difficult an area.

Challenges for the USA

The Bush administration seems to have lost energy after the first five or six years. The exception is the continued commitment along with much funding to democracy promotion in the Arab world. Thomas Melia remarked that 'the USA seems to have reached a point where it has promised too much and is now underfunding and under-delivering on those promises made by the president and the secretary of state. The country is also being pushed back, partly due to the failure in Iraq, which has discouraged the US Government, giving the administration cause to doubt its capacities.'

Moreover, Mr Melia observed that the USA today has forgotten some of the things learned in the 1980s and 1990s, especially the multilateral approach to information sharing and training. As democracy promotion became a focus issue in the administration's foreign policy in the Middle East, it became much more directive and much less tolerant of diversity. Thomas Melia described the Bush administration as delegating responsibility for decisions and judgement on what is best and right for foreign countries to a middle level of political officers and contract managers. 'There is today less room for non-US participation and perspectives in US Government-funded projects and programmes. A distinction between "acceptable" and "not acceptable" parties has been adopted in a restrictive and unhelpful way. The US Government today seems to be too confident that they know the answers on how the US should engage in the world and how other countries should respond to US offers of assistance', he said.

Finally, there is much less room for genuine diversity of approaches by non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to find their own ways and their own partners. This is reflected in the shift away from grants to NGOs and towards contacts with contractors who are perceived as quicker to respond to direction from the US Government.

Freedom House

Freedom House was launched in 1941 by Eleanor Roosevelt and Wendell Wilkie with the objective of getting the USA to become part of the democratic struggle of the day – the battle with the fascists and Nazis. The name was chosen as a reply to the Brown House, the Nazis' ideological centre in Munich. After the Second World War Freedom House became an enthusiast for the United Nations and has been ever since.

Its main mission is advocacy directed towards governments and research undertaken to back up that advocacy with analysis to make it be more persuasive.

In the early 1950s a variety of reports about the state of political liberties around the world were produced and since 1972 there have been annual reviews of the political rights and civil liberties of every country in the world, including the USA. According to Thomas Melia, these are standard works used by scholars and journalists to look for trends in political freedom over the past few decades.

Discussion

In the discussion that followed Maria Leissner pointed out the difference between seeing democracy promotion as a *reason* for the US deployment in Iraq, and understanding the developments in Iraq as the USA *using a window of opportunity* to engage in democracy promotion.

Questions were asked about what Thomas Melia saw as good or less good working methods. Is any kind of democracy support seen to have better impact? Mr Melia answered that governments have a role to play even though the US Government is criticized for its current relationship with civil society and human rights groups. Governmental institutions must help their counterparts to be more professional – more transparent, accountable and accessible. It is more properly the function of NGOs and others to help counterparts to became stronger in their roles.

There are, furthermore, things to be improved in the decision-making processes. Thomas Melia said that civil society should approach projects with a long-term perspective; they should not just set up one-year projects, declare victory and leave; but instead create lasting relationships of trust and cooperation. Democracy engagements are really about shared experience.

Summary and conclusions: Some recommendations for a new Swedish policy on democracy building

Ingrid Wetterqvist

The participants at this seminar contributed an overview of regional trends and challenges from Africa, the Middle East, Latin America, the European Union (EU) and the USA. The result is a diverse picture with both positive and negative aspects for democracy builders. While the overall trend has been towards more solid institutions, more competitive elections and an increased public awareness of democracy-building issues, there are still plenty of challenges to be faced.

As became apparent during these discussions, the relevant definitions and concepts need much thought and deliberation. Which values and aspects are generic and universal, and which are context-specific? The democracy-building community must engage in this discussion, trying to find a good balance in the processes in order to support local and national efforts. Several of the speakers emphasized the importance of recognizing the difference between *good governance* and *democracy*. The new Swedish policy should, judging from this seminar, strive to reach beyond the concept of good governance.

Some keywords can be extracted from the two days of brainstorming:

- empowerment;
- capacity building;
- the importance of a non-prescriptive approach; and
- democracy, accountability and such values as *global public goods*.

It was widely acknowledged that democracy might be supported from the outside but that it cannot be simply 'manufactured and exported', to use Peter Anyang' Nyong'o's words. The context is absolutely crucial, and sustainable democracy must be locally rooted. Regional knowledge should be used to a greater degree. There are different levels of multilateral cooperation to be kept in mind – from the transatlantic dimension highlighted by Pavol Demeš to a larger cooperation structure involving the UN and the EU – but also closer contacts with local and regional networks and organizations. The new EU members with experience and knowledge of particular relevance for Central and Eastern Europe are one example; the African Union (AU) and the APRM are another. There is much capacity in regional cooperation, such as the South–South projects.

The seminar discussed some of the tools that might be used in democracy building. Peer review mechanisms such as the one used by the AU were widely praised. The use of sanctions must be viewed more cautiously. This reflects a trend towards preferring positive, supportive measures before punitive action. It also mirrors a view held by many of the seminar participants that the regional setting, regional knowledge and regional cooperation networks are of the utmost importance to true and effective democracy building. In this regard analysis of the regional democracy tools such as the democracy charters becomes interesting – as well as increased cooperation be-

tween Sweden and such regional actors in the democracy-building community.

Speakers emphasized the importance of *democracy's capacity to deliver* if local democracy is to take firm root. The linkages between development and democracy are many and complex but the two concepts obviously cannot be completely separated. Weak institutions with weak capacity to deliver for human development undermine the legitimacy of democracy in the eyes of the populations concerned. Development, poverty and related issues such as education affect aspects of democracy – the financing of political parties; corruption as a threat to the institutions of democracy; and the risk of 'dirty money' being used to influence politics in an improper manner. A new Swedish policy must take all these correlations into consideration in order to be as effective as possible.

What, then, are the main challenges in democracy building as illustrated by the participants at this seminar? One major conclusion is the need for research, analysis and a knowledge-based foundation for democracy-building efforts. What, for example, will be the 'pull factor' for the states that are currently in the process of democratization?

Democracy is a complex issue and it would be counterproductive to move towards definitions and categorizations that are too simplistic. Methodologies must be subjected to critical scrutiny. This is the conclusion reached by Todd Landman and Richard Youngs, among many others. Connected to this are the ongoing processes in many national agencies and international organizations towards *results-based* work instead of a focus on *process*. To complicate matters further, the seminar also clearly pointed to the importance of values and values-based work. Sweden and other democracy-building actors must consider carefully what values are their starting-points, as well as what values might be perceived as their starting-points.

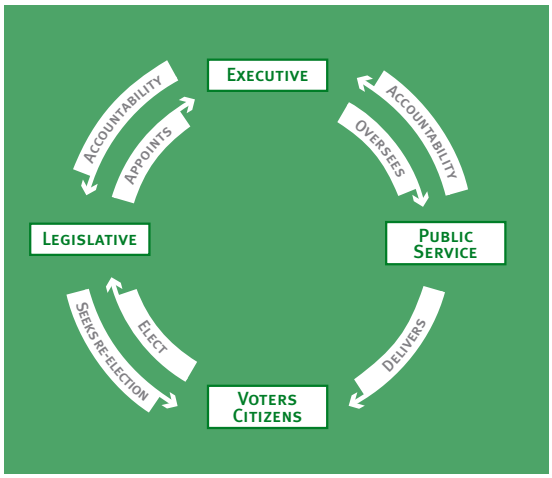
This relates to the second main conclusion, namely the need for greater clarity and consistency that was mentioned by most of the speakers during the seminar. Although this might seem obvious and easy enough to demand, it is not always that easy to achieve in multilateral cooperation. As Pavol Demeš observed, to wait for pan-EU or pan-UN consensus is very time-consuming. The use of 'creative ambiguity' is often the only way to reach a joint decision in the larger international organizations – the decision is taken at the expense of clarity and consistency. How can this dilemma be resolved? Clarity and consistency are of course vital to the credibility, legitimacy and predictability of democracy-building support. The perceived use of double standards was highlighted as one reason why the Arab world has institutions that are less democratic and fewer free and competitive elections than any other region. An open discussion on this problem is needed within Sweden as well as in the EU.

Among the other challenges discussed were, the gender gap and the problem of creating a level playing field for women, as well as the issues of youth participation and education. These are examples of *empowerment challenges* relating to the extension of democracy to encompass as many as possible. The issue of violence and violent conflicts is also highly relevant. As Roberto Cuéllar said, the big question in many contexts is 'how to change without violence?'.

The seminar reflected to a great degree on specific challenges for the EU. Many areas where improvements are called for were highlighted. The EU needs to find its role, and the role of the various European bodies might be further discussed. The seminar concluded that the EU is in need of a new approach – a common, cohesive approach adapted to dealing efficiently with today's challenges. This EU approach to democracy building needs to be elaborated in dialogue and close cooperation with all relevant EU bodies in order to find a solution which minimizes the inconsistencies between different work areas of the EU – development, trade, agricultural policy. In the meantime, the democracy and development offices can do much to improve the guidelines for funding and to create proper assessment tools for the critical evaluation of methodologies and principles used. Not only is Sweden a member of the EU; it is very likely to hold the first presidency of the Council of the European Union after the

Treaty of Lisbon, and could take that opportunity to influence the agenda setting of the EU.

Figure 3: The political accountability cycle



For Sweden to be on the front line of democracy building it would be useful to take into consideration the whole political accountability cycle (see figure 3). In this figure, the ultimate accountability is towards the electorate, who close each cycle with an election, giving their opinion on the performance of the last political cycle. Democracy and development assistance have often focused on the civil service part of this cycle while, in fact, efficient democracy building must involve the full process with all its actors. As Richard Youngs said, it is important to address the leadership, the grass roots and the middle level. The political actors in parliament and political parties are important building blocks for sustainable improvements. A strengthened role for parliaments, better financing structures for political parties and an open discussion of accountability for the political actors are needed. There seems to have been an information gap in the democracy-building community on crucial aspects such as constitution building, electoral systems and the role of political parties. However, competence on these issues exists and is available, for example in the knowledge bases of International IDEA. Sweden could benefit greatly in the development of its new policy by making use of these resources.

Sweden has all the prerequisites to become an integrated front-line actor in democracy-building support. This seminar provided some food for thought and many good ideas and recommendations. The next step is to create a new and well-adapted policy preparing and enabling Sweden to meet these challenges and contribute to the largest possible extent to the enterprise of democracy – at home as well as in support for and cooperation with others.

Twelve main recommendations

1. Democracy must be seen to deliver. The nexus of democracy and development is ever more important and should provide the starting point for democracy-building policies.
2. Democracy building should be knowledge-based. There seems to be a need for research and analysis on some key issues – such as possible 'pull factors' for democratization.
3. Supporting democracy is about engaging local actors and securing ownership, real support requires to be engaged for the long term.
4. Discuss the need for clarity on democracy definitions and concepts vis-à-vis the difficulty of reaching agreement on such definitions within the international institutions.
5. Support an approach that takes into account the need to build stable foundations for future democracy even in situations of perceived urgency, such as a post-conflict setting.
6. Reach beyond the concept of 'good governance'.
7. Design a policy open for supporting different democracy developments in different local contexts. There is no 'one size fits all' in democracy building.
8. Democracy must grow from within. Support internally driven change, respect the local context and act within it.
9. Democracy and respect for universal human rights are closely interlinked and can even be seen as prerequisites for one another. Coordinate efforts to further these goals.
10. Make use of regional knowledge, resources and networks. Regional organizations can provide the key to understanding local conditions and needs. They can also be useful in helping shape EU policies on democracy support.
11. Approach the political accountability cycle as a whole. The political parties and parliaments are important actors between the citizens and the executive.
12. Work through and with the EU – perhaps in the coming presidency. Encourage Sweden's role in assisting the continued efforts for an improved European approach to democracy building.

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Annex A: About the contributors

Maria Leissner was the president of the Swedish Liberal Party between 1995 and 1997. She has been adviser to the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) and the Ambassador of Sweden to Guatemala. In 2004–5 she was head of an international project on democracy in Iraq, organized by the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI). Maria Leissner has also been involved in multiple election observation missions around the world. Since 2006 she has chaired the Delegation for Roma issues in Sweden, and in January 2007 she was appointed Ambassador for Democracy in development cooperation.

Vidar Helgesen was the Norwegian deputy minister of foreign affairs between 2001 and 2005, with a portfolio including human rights, democracy, refugee issues, peace and reconciliation processes, and UN policy. He has also served as special adviser to the president of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies. He is the author of publications such as *Kosovo og folkeretten* [Kosovo and International Law] (Norwegian Institute for Defence Studies, 1999) and *Til krig for menneskerettighetene* [Waging War for Human Rights] (Institute of Public and International Law, University of Oslo, 1999). Since January 2006 he has been the Secretary-General of International IDEA.

Gunilla Carlsson has been Sweden's minister for international development cooperation since September 2006. Between 1995 and 2002 she was a member of the European Parliament for the Swedish Moderate Party. In 2002 she was elected to the Swedish Parliament and has been first vice-chair of the Moderate Party since 2003. Between 2004 and 2006 she was vice-chair of the European People's Party (EPP) and deputy chair of the Swedish Parliament's Committee for Foreign Affairs, and she has also been a member of the Committee on EU Affairs.

Roberto Cuéllar is the executive director of the Inter-American Institute of Human Rights (IIHR) in San José, Costa Rica. He served earlier as the director of the legal aid office of the Archdiocese of San Salvador, working under Monsignor Oscar Romero. In 1986 he was a visiting researcher at Harvard University Law School and in 1988 a founder member of the Institute of Legal Studies of El Salvador. He has served as a special adviser to the World Council of Churches and the UN General Secretariat for the peace processes in Central America, is a member of the International Council of Americas Watch, and chaired the international conference of Amnesty International on the protection of human rights defenders (Bogotá, 1996). For 14 years he worked for various IIHR programmes and was the director of two of its main areas (civil society, and research and development). He has received several awards for his contributions to human rights work, including the Letelier Moffitt Human Rights Prize.

Pavol Demeš was a key actor in the 1989 'Velvet Revolution' in Czechoslovakia, later becoming minister of international relations and foreign policy adviser to the president of the Slovak Republic between 1993 and 1997. He has been executive director of the Slovak Academic Information Agency (SAIA), a Slovak NGO committed to civil society empowerment. Today he is the director of the German Marshall Fund's Bratislava office, working on the promotion of civil society and democracy values in Slovakia and other Central and East European countries.

Abdalla Hamdok is currently the director for Africa and the Middle East at International IDEA. He has long experience of governance challenges in Africa, carrying out policy-oriented analysis and research. He was technical adviser in the preparation of the first *Regional Human Development Report* on the Southern African

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Thomas Hammarberg has worked for many years on the advancement of human rights in Europe and worldwide. He has been the Secretary-General of Amnesty International, of Save the Children Sweden, and of the Olof Palme International Center. He was the Swedish Ambassador for Human Rights between 1994 and 2002 and has served as adviser to the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights. Between 1996 and 2000 he was special representative of UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan for human rights in Cambodia. Since October 2005 he has been the Council of Europe's commissioner for human rights.

Todd Landman is senior lecturer in the Department of Government, co-director of the Human Rights Centre, and director of the Centre for Democratic Governance at the University of Essex, UK. He is the author of, among other works, *Protecting Human Rights: A Comparative Study* (Georgetown University Press, 2005); *Issues and Methods in Comparative Politics: An Introduction* (Routledge, 2000 and 2003); (with Joe Foweraker and Neil Harvey) *Governing Latin America* (Polity Press, 2003); and (with Joe Foweraker) *Citizenship Rights and Social Movements: A Comparative and Statistical Analysis* (Oxford University Press, 1997). Dr Landman regularly publishes articles in journals such as the *British Journal of Political Science, International Studies Quarterly, Human Rights Quarterly, Democratization* and *Political Studies*.

Thomas Melia has been the deputy executive director of Freedom House since 2005. He was associate director of the Free Trade Union Institute of the American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO) and legislative assistant on foreign and defence policy to US Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan. He held several senior posts at the NDI, for example as its vice-president for programmes. He managed the NDI programmes in Central and Eastern Europe as well as in the Middle East. He was also director of research at the Institute for the Study of Diplomacy and adjunct professor in the School of Foreign Service at Georgetown University in Washington, DC.

Peter Anyang' Nyong'o is a professor in political science and the author of publications such as *Arms and Daggers in the Heart of Africa: Studies on Internal Conflicts* (Nairobi: Academy Science Publishers, 1993); *Industrialization at Bay: African Experiences* (Nairobi: Academy Science Publishers, 1991); and 'State and Society in Kenya: The Disintegration of the Nationalist Coalitions and the Rise of Presidential Authoritarianism', *African Affairs*, 88 (1989), pp. 229–51. He is a former minister for planning and national development in Kenya and the Secretary-General of the Orange Democratic Movement – Kenya.

Richard Youngs has worked on a number of democracy promotion initiatives. He is the author, for example, of *International Democracy and the West: The Role of Governments, NGOs and Multinational Business* (Oxford University Press, 2004) and *The European Union and the Promotion of Democracy* (Oxford University Press, 2001). He was an EU Marie Curie research fellow from 2001 to 2004 and previously worked as an analyst at the British Foreign and Commonwealth Office. Today he is coordinator of the Democratization Programme at the Fundación para las Relaciones Internacionales y el Diálogo Exterior (FRIDE) in Madrid, Spain, and a lecturer at the University of Warwick, UK.

Ingrid Wetterqvist has been director for governance and external relations at International IDEA since 2004. She is on leave from the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs, where she worked from 1990 to 2004, mainly on policy issues in development cooperation assistance relating to democracy and human rights. She has been posted to Tanzania and Zambia and has represented Sweden in OECD's governance network, and the Human Rights and Democracy committee of the EU.

Annex B: The conference programme

Challenges to Democracy Building: a seminar to inspire a new Swedish policy

Monday 28–Tuesday 29 May 2007
Norra Latin conference centre, Stockholm

Monday 28 May 2007

09:00 **Welcome to the participants, introduction to the topic and objectives of the seminar**

• Ambassador for Democracy Maria Leissner, Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Sweden

09:15 **Supporting democracy: highlighting the political dimension of international development cooperation**

• Minister for Development Cooperation Gunilla Carlsson, Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Sweden

09.45 **Challenges to democracy building globally and regionally: an International IDEA analysis and response**

• Vidar Helgesen, Secretary-General, International IDEA

11:00 **Regional panel I: Challenges and actors: Eastern Europe and beyond – perspectives of the newest EU members. Democracy's future in Latin America. Presentations and open discussion**

(Moderator: Goran Fejic, head of programme, International IDEA)

• Pavol Demeš, director, German Marshall Fund, Bratislava

• Roberto Cuéllar, executive director, Inter-American Institute for Human Rights, Costa Rica

14:00 **Keynote speech: 'Democracy and human rights: Can human rights mechanisms be used to assess democratic progress?'**

• Thomas Hammarberg, commissioner for human rights, Council of Europe

15:30 **Regional panel II: Challenges and actors: The Middle East and Africa**

(Moderator: Vidar Helgesen, Secretary-General, International IDEA)

• Abdalla Hamdok, director, Africa and Middle East Programme, International IDEA

• Professor Peter Anyang' Nyong'o, former minister of planning, Kenya

17:00 **Conclusions of the day**

• Ingrid Wetterqvist, director of governance and external relations, International IDEA

TUESDAY 29 MAY 2007

09:00 **Panel I: Conceptual challenges and tools**

Keynote speech: 'Can democratic progress be measured? On assessments from within and from the outside'

• Todd Landman, director, Centre for Democratic Governance, University of Essex, UK

11:00 **Panel II: Conceptual challenges and tools**

'Challenges to democracy builders: What can Sweden learn from and add to the ambitions of the European Union and other actors?'

(Moderator: Karin Höglund, deputy director, Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Sweden)

• Richard Youngs, director of democratization, FRIDE, Spain

• Thomas Melia, deputy executive director, Freedom House, USA

14:00 **Panel III: What works and what doesn't work in democracy building? Lessons learned and next steps – recommendations for a new policy**

(Moderator: Ingrid Wetterqvist, director of governance and external relations, International IDEA)

• Ambassador Bengt Säve-Söderbergh, Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Sweden

• Erik Jennische, former director, Swedish Liberal Center, Sweden

• Richard Youngs, director of democratization, FRIDE, Spain

• Thomas Melia, deputy executive director, Freedom House, USA

15.30 **Conclusions of the seminar**

• Ambassador Maria Leissner, Sweden

• Vidar Helgesen, Secretary-General, International IDEA

About International IDEA

What is International IDEA?

The International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International IDEA) is an intergovernmental organization that supports sustainable democracy worldwide. Its objective is to strengthen democratic institutions and processes. International IDEA acts as a catalyst for democracy building by providing knowledge resources, expertise and a platform for debate on democracy issues. It works together with policy makers, donor governments, UN organizations and agencies, regional organizations and others engaged in the field of democracy building.

What does International IDEA do?

Democracy building is complex and touches on many areas including constitutions, electoral systems, political parties, legislative arrangements, the judiciary, central and local government, and formal and traditional government structures. International IDEA is engaged with all of these issues and offers to those in the process of democratization:

- knowledge resources, in the form of handbooks, databases, websites and expert networks;
- policy proposals to provoke debate and action on democracy issues; and
- assistance to democratic reforms in response to specific national requests.

Areas of work

International IDEA's notable areas of expertise are:

- *Constitution-building processes.* A constitutional process can lay the foundations for peace and development, or plant seeds of conflict. International IDEA is able to provide knowledge and make policy proposals for constitution building that is genuinely nationally owned, is sensitive to gender and conflict-prevention dimensions, and responds effectively to national priorities.
- *Electoral processes.* The design and management of elections has a strong impact on the wider political system. International IDEA seeks to ensure the professional management and independence of elections, adapt electoral systems, and build public confidence in the electoral process.
- *Political parties.* Political parties form the essential link between voters and the government, yet polls taken across the world show that political parties enjoy a low level of confidence. International IDEA analyses the functioning of political parties, the public funding of political parties, and their management and relations with the public.
- *Democracy and gender.* International IDEA recognizes that if democracies are to be truly democratic, then women – who make up over half of the world's population – must be represented on equal terms with men. International IDEA develops comparative resources and tools designed to advance the participation and representation of women in political life.
- *Democracy assessments.* Democratization is a national process. International IDEA's *State of Democracy methodology* allows people to assess their own democracy instead of relying on externally produced indicators or rankings of democracies.

Where does International IDEA work?

International IDEA works worldwide. It is based in Stockholm, Sweden, and has offices in Latin America, Africa and Asia.

"Challenges to Democracy Building: A Seminar to Inspire a New Swedish Policy" was held in Stockholm, Sweden, in May 2007. It was organized by the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs, through the Swedish Ambassador for Democracy, Maria Leissner, in cooperation with International IDEA. Its overarching purpose was to provide inspiration and input for the process of creating a new Swedish policy on democracy building and human rights undertaken by the Ambassador for Democracy. Participants were invited to point out the main challenges, highlight areas where improvements could be made and give advice with regard to getting the new policy under way.

This publication, produced by International IDEA with support from the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs, includes accounts of all the presentations made at the seminar and summarizes its main conclusions.

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