DEMOCRACY AND DEEP-ROOTED CONFLICT

THE INTERNATIONAL IDEA HANDBOOK ON DEMOCRACY AND DEEP-ROOTED CONFLICT: OPTIONS FOR NEGOTIATORS

Democracy and Deep-Rooted Conflict

The International IDEA Handbook on Democracy and Deep-Rooted Conflict: Options for Negotiators

Introduction

While most violent conflicts over the course of the twentieth century occurred *between* states, since 1989 almost all major conflicts around the world have taken place *within* states.

Most of these conflicts were propelled by factors other than ideology or the conquest of territory – a major shift in the manifestation of human conflict from the world wars and inter-state conflicts fought over the course of the last century. This shift has not been accompanied by an equivalent shift in our methods of managing such intra-state conflicts. Peaceful management of domestic conflicts needs approaches that recognize the importance of building sustainable *internal* political structures, rather than those designed and implemented primarily by external actors. Traditional approaches all too often fail to address the needs and interests which fuel such conflicts, resulting in attempts to impose unsuitable solutions in ad hoc and inappropriate ways. In part this results from a tendency to rely on well-established *international* mechanisms to either negotiate or force an end to conflict.

The focus of the handbook is thus *not* on the role of the international community, but on the *parties* to the conflict themselves. It offers politicians, negotiators, mediators and other political participants a range of tools and materials needed for the construction of a settlement. It discusses tools and materials for both the negotiation process itself – *how* one works towards an agreement – and in the building of a settlement – *what* one reaches agreement about.

To achieve this, the parties need to design the most effective and appropriate dialogue process to facilitate their negotiations, and then to successfully negotiate a sustainable settlement in the shape of the most effective and appropriate democratic structures and political institutions.

Negotiation, mediation skills and processes have been the subject of a great deal of study in recent years at academic, inter-group, institutional and international levels. In addition, the study of democratization and democracy-building has become a major field of academic interest. This handbook brings these fields of academic study and practice together to produce a practical, policy-oriented approach to the subject.

The Design of the Handbook

Building peace is an immense challenge, and the handbook offers practical support

and guidance, options and examples to those involved in the task. It begins with an examination of the changing nature of conflict in recent decades and a discussion of how democratic values and institutions provide the framework for building effective and lasting settlements. Four important stages of conflict management are then addressed: analysis, process design, outcome design, and sustainability.

Analysis

Any negotiation must be founded on a detailed understanding of the conflict in question: the key issues, themes, actors, dynamics, history, resources, phases, and so on. The handbook provides some insights on the nature of deep-rooted conflict, on various types of conflict, and on the process of analyzing conflict. It offers a range of tools to assist readers in diagnosing their specific conflict. The result should be a rich and informative 'snapshot' of the conflict.

Process

The handbook then addresses some specific factors to be considered in building the process most suitable to the particular conflict. It assists readers to identify and design the basics of their process, such as choice of venue, participants, agenda design, the structure and ground-rules for talks. It offers specific tools for breaking deadlock, and a menu of negotiation/facilitation techniques from which readers can choose the most appropriate ingredients best suited to their specific needs.

Outcome

Once a *process* has been agreed, the next phase is to address the possible *outcomes* of

the process. The handbook describes the forms and functions of the wide range of practical democratic institutions and structures that could be included in a high-quality settlement. It reviews the value of such structures, and the issues involved in their design, and offers a detailed and wide-ranging menu of the possible democratic 'levers' those engineering an outcome can consider, use and adapt. The menu of options ranges from key questions about the structure of the state such as the distribution of power, forms of executives and legislatures, federalism and autonomy, electoral systems etc.; to mechanisms which address specific issues or interests such as truth and reconciliation commissions, language boards and gender commissions.

Sustainability

Finally, the handbook looks at how to sustain the outcome in the long-term, and identifies various obstacles and pitfalls that may affect the implementation of the agreement as well as the specific mechanisms that will sustain and nourish the negotiated settlement. It offers some underlying principles for supporting the implementation phase. The role of the international community in promoting and assisting democratic settlements in post-conflict situations is also discussed.

Case Studies

The handbook includes a range of case studies from deep-rooted conflicts around the world which offer insights into both successes and failures in peace-building and democracy. Both successes and failures contain important lessons for those attempting to build an enduring settlement to their own crisis. Most of

these case studies – from Bougainville to Bosnia, from South Africa to Northern Ireland – are classic examples of 'intra-state' conflicts, in which a focus on negotiated outcomes based on democratic principles was key to building a lasting peace.

Tools

It includes a number of 'Menus of Options' and factsheets that present the main options, issues, or lessons discussed in each section in a clear and concise manner.

Structure

The handbook is designed to be as accessible and easy-to-read as possible so that it is a handy tool for negotiators and policy-makers in understanding the range of options available to them. The handbook illustrates choices by extensive use of examples and case studies drawn from real situations. Material is organized in an accessible format using figures, graphs, and checklists; menus outline options and the expected advantages and disadvantages of each; and a glossary defines key concepts.

Summary of the handbook's contents (highlights)

Chapter 1 *The Changing Nature of Conflict and Conflict Management*
- Characteristics of Deep-Rooted Conflict
- New Tools for Conflict Management
- The Importance of Democratic Institutions
- Democracy and Conflict Management
- Addressing the Real Causes of Conflict
- Process and Outcome
- Maximizing Women's Participation
- Short and Long-term Planning

Chapter 2 *Analysing Deep-Rooted Conflict*
- Conflict as Both Positive and Negative
- Patterns of Deep-Rooted Conflict
- National and International Factors in Deep-Rooted Conflict
- Difficulties in Managing Identity-Related Conflicts
- Tools for Analysing Conflict

Chapter 3 *Negotiation Processes*
- Key Issues in Process Design
- Pre-negotiation
- Developing a Specific Negotiation Process
- Basic Techniques For Negotiation
- Tools to Break Deadlock
- Third Party Assistance

Chapter 4 *Democratic Levers For Conflict Management*
- Power-sharing Democracy: An Overview
- The Structure of the State: Federalism and Autonomy
- Executive Type: Presidentialism versus Parliamentarism
- Electoral Systems for Divided Societies
- Legislatures for Post-Conflict Societies
- Human Rights Instruments
- Language Policy for Multiethnic Societies
- National Conferences
- Transitional Justice
- Reckoning for Past Wrongs: Truth Commissions and War Crime Tribunals
- Building an Electoral Administration
- National Machinery for Gender Equality

Chapter 5 *Sustaining The Democratic Settlement*
- Basic Principles
- Issues and Concerns
- International dimensions

List of case studies:

- South Africa
- Northern Ireland
- Bosnia-Herzegovina
- Bougainville
- Fiji
- Sri Lanka
- National Conferences in Francophone West Africa
- Guatemala
- The Commission for Gender Equality in South Africa

*Recent years have seen a rapid increase in conflict within states, or **intra-state** conflict, in the form of civil wars, armed insurrections, violent secessionist movements and other domestic warfare.*

Two powerful elements often combine in such conflicts. One is *identity*: the mobilization of people in communal identity groups based on race, religion, culture, language, and so on. The other is *distribution*: the means of sharing out the economic, social and political resources within a society. Where perceived imbalance in distribution coincides with identity differences (where, for example, one religious group is deprived of certain resources available to others) there is potential for conflict. It is this combination of potent identity-based factors with wider perceptions of economic and social injustice that often fuels '*deep-rooted conflict*'.

The Handbook provides tools for the identification and analysis of the issues central to such conflict.

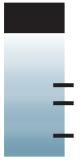## Democracy and conflict management

This handbook places a premium upon the need for negotiated settlements that are based on democratic outcomes. This is not an ideological conviction, but a

pragmatic argument based on wide experience and study. Democracy is presented in this handbook not only as a guiding principle, but as a workable system for the positive management of conflict.

Two key points need to be made about the approach of the handbook to these issues:

- **The handbook is concerned with *conflict management* as opposed to *conflict resolution*.** This is an important distinction. Conflict resolution suggests the ending or removal of a conflict, with the implication that conflict is a negative phenomenon to be eradicated. The handbook is based on the premise that conflict can be positive as well as negative. While the violent expression of conflict is its destructive side, conflict can equally be a catalyst for beneficial social change and improvement.

- **The handbook views democracy as a means of *managing* and *processing*, rather than resolving, conflict.** Under a democratic system, all outcomes are temporary, as the loser today may be the winner tomorrow. But unlike other systems, democratic government permits grievances to be expressed openly and responded to.

In short, the premise of the handbook is that democracy operates as a conflict management system without recourse to violence by providing a forum to handle conflicts without having to suppress or be engulfed by them. This does not mean that democracy is perfect, or that democratic governance will itself lead to peaceful outcomes. There are a number of cases of democratic institutions being

hastily 'transplanted' to post-conflict societies without taking root, or with a subsequent resumption of hostilities – as in Rwanda, for example, or Cambodia. But it is equally true that while democracy is often messy, incremental, and difficult, it is also by far the best hope of building sustainable settlements to most of the conflicts being fought around the world today.

The factsheet reproduced below is taken from Chapter 2 of the Handbook.

Analysing a Conflict: Three Approaches

There are three ways for actors to analyse their conflict. Typically, the ebb and flow of negotiations will include a range of elements from all three approaches.

Adversarial. Viewing the conflict as "us vs. them", either win or lose, all or nothing.

Reflective. Looking inward and reflecting on the hurt and pain the conflict has caused and considering the best way to achieve real goals.

Integrative. Looking both at one's own side and the need to understand the views of the opponents.

If the design of a conflict resolution process is not appropriate to the context, then it is defeated before it begins.

The fact that an approach works in one place is no guarantee that it would be in any way effective in another. Nonetheless, at a more specific level lessons may be drawn from the elements of a successful ceasefire in one conflict as to how to achieve a cease-fire in another. For all their differences, there are often common or comparable elements to different conflicts. So while respecting the uniqueness of a particular conflict, we can still learn important lessons from other situations.

Even developing an answer to the question, "Why *wouldn't* that work here?" promotes an analysis of the situation which may well assist in identifying what *may* succeed.

The menu on the following pages illustrates the approach taken to these issues in the handbook. It outlines the major issues that need to be pre-negotiated in any negotiation process and presents a menu of options for each. This menu, taken directly from the handbook, provides a good example of the use of these 'menus of options' as a simple way of summarizing and presenting the issues covered in the handbook.

Proceeding on from the issues addressed in the menu, the handbook offers and analyses specific tools for breaking deadlock and addresses important issues in relation to third party interventions in negotiation processes.

Developing a Negotiation Process: A Menu of Options

1. Participants

- open channels of communication, however small or informal, in an attempt to start the contact and communication;
- include all parties with a serious claim to be involved;
- build a sufficient mainstream-based pro-negotiation coalition to open talks with some substantial hope of achieving an outcome, and hope to co-opt abstainers, or persuade excluded parties to adapt their behaviour to fit the rules of entry;
- open negotiations with a less than comprehensive range of parties, with the aim of achieving a settlement that excluded parties can be persuaded to live with;
- limit participation only to those parties who enjoy substantial support, whether that is defined electorally or otherwise;
- allow for different degrees of status in the process (e.g., participant and observer) for different parties;
- distinguish any groupings within the negotiation process who may be opposed on some, possibly major, issues but share positions on others.

2. Preconditions and Barriers to Negotiation

- drop preconditions to negotiations, and accept all comers;

- use the pre-negotiation process to work through preconditions and questions of legitimacy and recognition of spokespersons;
- open out preconditions initially aimed at one party into a principled statement to which all parties can and must agree;
- address preconditions and the commitment to the negotiation process in an unofficial discussion process prior to formal negotiation.

3. Levelling the Playing Field

- accept, at least within the negotiation context, the right of all sides to be present;
- agree procedures permitting the involvement of previously excluded or restricted persons;
- schedule time and resources to permit all parties to come to the table prepared;
- make contact with, and learn from, counterparts from other contexts;
- look to an external powerful mediator or chairperson both to bestow at least temporary legitimacy on all parties equally for the duration of talks, and to underwrite the equality of all parties at the table.

4. Resourcing the Negotiations

- negotiations which are self-funded by each side;
- negotiations in which one party offers to resource most or all of the negotiations;
- negotiations in which contributions from other domestic actors are sought;
- negotiations funded by international bodies.

5. Form of Negotiations

- Large-scale conferences;
- Summits of key spokespersons;
- Full round-table sessions;
- Shuttle mediation;
- Bilateral discussions;
- A mixed formula of plenaries and subgroups;
- Equal numbers of delegates per party;
- Variable delegation sizes based on electoral strength or status (where elections have been held);
- An electoral or other threshold to restrict or enable participation;
- Acknowledgement of dissenting coalitions by means of minority reports;
- Defining different roles and capacities for negotiators and observers.

6. Venue and Location

- identify a neutral venue, of no particular symbolism or support to any one party;
- agree on a domestic venue acceptable to all parties;
- assure equal accessibility to the venue for all parties;
- supplement official or formal discussion forums by unofficial, off-the-record and possibly deniable channels of communication outside and around the formal table.

7. Communication and Information Exchange

- secret negotiations out of all sight;
- closed negotiation sessions, with occasional or regular progress reports to the outside world, agreed by all parties;

- an agreed press embargo among all participants (with enforcement mechanisms to be negotiated among the parties);
- relations with the media being at each party's discretion;
- ceding the public relations role by agreement to the chairperson or mediator;
- establishing a permanent press secretariat to manage media relations on behalf of all;
- establishing a central secretariat to channel information between the parties;
- forming a subcommittee with responsibility for inter-party communication.

8. Setting the Substantive Agenda

- establish pre-negotiation processes, either public or private, and possibly with a reduced number of delegates, to define the agenda prior to formal negotiation;
- use the formal negotiation process to resolve procedural and agenda matters
- order agenda items according to contentiousness and importance;
- adopt a long-range policy of a series of negotiations, each building on the achievements of the last.

9. Managing the Proceedings

- negotiation of a system of sharing the chair in such a way that no one party can benefit from their chairing either in general or on key specific agenda items;
- selection of a party totally suitable to all concerned;
- selection of a party minimally acceptable to all concerned;
- identification of the key skills necessary for the function;
- selection of a party with authority to overrule all concerned if necessary;
- selection of an unempowered party dependent on continuing consensus among all concerned.

10. Timeframes

- no time limits: participants remain until the job is done;
- a pre-agreed time limit;
- a realistic limit on the goals to be achieved within the time available;
- aiming for a comprehensive settlement of all aspects of the dispute;
- an option for further negotiating period/s following success in the initial period.

11. Decision-making Procedures

- Total agreement: all parties must endorse a point for it to be agreed;
- Simple majority acceptance: more than half the parties or delegates agree;
- Consensus: the point is defined and refined until all can agree to it;
- Sufficient consensus: a certain specified proportion of the parties or delegates must agree the point (the exact proportion or criteria to be pre-agreed, and dependent on the number of parties, their relative sizes, and their ability to 'sell' the agreement to their broader constituencies);
- Secret ballots to discover the degree of consensus;
- An open show of hands to discover the voting preferences;
- Final ratification by parties or endorsement by referendum of the final outcome.

*Appropriate democratic
institutions, designed and
developed through fair and honest
negotiation processes, are vital
ingredients in building an
enduring and peaceful settlement
to even the most intractable
conflict.*

Conversely, the international scene is
littered with post-conflict settlements that
broke down in part because of
inappropriate and unsustainable
institutional choices for deeply divided
societies. Selecting unsuitable institutions
can increase the possibility of a conflict
persisting or even escalating.

Experience from around the world
convinces us that democratic structures
can offer an effective means for the
peaceful handling of deep-rooted
difference through inclusive, just and
accountable social frameworks.
Democratic systems of government have a
degree of legitimacy, inclusiveness,
flexibility and capacity for constant
adaptation that enables deep-rooted
conflicts to be managed peacefully.
Moreover, by building norms of behaviour
of negotiation, compromise, and co-
operation amongst political actors,
democracy itself has a pacifying effect on
the nature of political relations between
people and between governments.

While democracy and democratic
solutions are important, the *design* of
appropriate democratic institutions is
crucial to the long-term management of
the conflict. In deeply-divided societies,
for example, political institutions and
elections based upon majority rule can
often make things worse. That is why
basic democratic values such as pluralism,
tolerance, inclusiveness, negotiation, and
compromise are keys to building lasting
settlements to conflicts. Often, the
institutional embodiment of these values
requires institutions that emphasize
different features than simple winner-take-
all majority rule: features such as power-
sharing, autonomy, proportionality, forms
of group recognition, and so on.

The handbook addresses various options
available to domestic political actors in the
design of democratic institutions to
maximize the prospects of democracy in
post-conflict societies. The following
constitutional and policy levers are
discussed, and the advantages and
disadvantages of various options analysed:

■ Power-sharing Democracy
■ Structure of the State: Federalism and
  Autonomy
■ Executive Type: Presidentialism versus
  Parliamentarism
■ Electoral Systems for Divided Societies
■ Legislatures for Post-Conflict Societies
■ Human Rights Instruments
■ Language Policy for Multiethnic
  Societies
■ National Conferences
■ Transitional Justice
■ Truth Commissions and War Crimes
  Tribunals
■ Building an Electoral Administration
■ Gender Commissions

The approach taken to these issues can
be seen in the extracts reproduced below
from the sections of the handbook dealing
with options for executive government and
building an electoral administration.

Options for executive government

There are many ways to examine options for executive government. The handbook explains and analyses the two main alternatives, parliamentary and presidential systems.

The key distinction between these systems is the range of parties and opinions that can be represented in the executive under a parliamentary system, in contrast to the unavoidably singular nature of authority represented by the office of the president. Although this comparison is often over-drawn – presidential executives can and often do have a range of political

and ethnic identities represented in the cabinet, while parliamentary systems are often dominated by a single party alone – it remains central to the debate concerning the relative merits of these systems.

In its analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of each of these systems as an option for the management of deep-rooted conflict, the handbook addresses both the presidential and parliamentary syatems and possible combinations of the two, referred to as 'semi-presidential' systems.

The menu below, taken from the handbook, illustrates the approach to these issues.

A Menu of Options: Constituting an Executive Government

	Parliamentary systems	Presidential systems	Semi-Presidential systems
Advantages	■ inclusiveness (can include all groups within the executive) ■ flexibility (parliamentary coalitions can change without recourse to elections) ■ checks and balances (executive is dependent on the confidence of the legislature) ■ empirically associated with democratic persistence	■ can be a unifying national figure ■ highly identifiable and accountable to voters ■ greater degree of choice for voters ■ stability and continuity of policy making	■ can combine advantages of both presidentialism and parliamentarism ■ 'mutual consensus' requirement
Disadvantages	■ possibility of executive deadlocks, stalemates and immobilism ■ problems of accountability as decisions are taken by the collective cabinet ■ lack of governing stability	■ centralization of authority in one person ■ inherently majoritarian and exclusive ■ empirically associated with democratic failure	■ dangers of deadlock between president and parliament ■ division of governing powers can be unclear

Building an Electoral Administration

Another example of the approach of the handbook is found in the section dealing with building an electoral administration. This is one of the central issues for a country emerging from a protracted conflict. The previous electoral administration may have been damaged or destroyed or, as is more often the case, may lack credibility and legitimacy through its association with the previous regime. It may be simply necessary to alter certain aspects of the existing administration to address particular concerns. These decisions will have significant consequences on a country's democratic process.

But before any legislative provision is made, the principles and procedures of a free and fair electoral process must be made absolutely clear. In addition, the most appropriate institution to manage this process, as well as its level of autonomy and location, must be decided. Depending on these decisions, specific provisions relating to an electoral administration should be enshrined in the appropriate legislation.

This section of the handbook examines the three essential questions that need to be addressed in structuring an electoral administration system:

- Who or what body should be charged with the responsibility of supervising and organizing an election?
- What form should that body take?
- Where should that body be located?

The text box on the following pages, extracted from the handbook, demonstrates the breadth and depth of the coverage of these issues in the handbook.

Electoral Administration: International Trends

In established democracies, national and local government officials usually handle electoral administration; ordinary courts settle disputes, as they have a tradition of fairness and neutrality and generally enjoy the confidence of the electorate.

In emerging democracies, on the other hand, there is an increasing trend to establish an independent electoral commission. This is seen as an important step in building traditions of independence and impartiality, as well as in building the confidence of the electorate and parties in the electoral process. Most new democracies in the post-war period have adopted independent electoral commissions. Their positive contribution in difficult or transition situations can be seen, for example, during the 1991 parliamentary elections in Bangladesh, the 1992 presidential election in Ghana, as well as during the first democratic elections in Namibia, South Africa and Mozambique.

Africa: The trend in Africa is also towards establishing independent electoral commissions, which have varying degrees of autonomy in terms of their relationship with the government of the day (e.g., South Africa, Namibia, Ghana, Malawi, Mauritius and Mozambique).

Asia: Independent electoral commissions are a long-standing feature of a number of Asian democracies, including India and Sri Lanka. Emerging democracies, such as Thailand and the Philippines, have also followed the route of establishing an independent electoral commission.

Commonwealth countries: Commonwealth countries, such as Australia, Canada and India as well as a number of African Commonwealth states tend to favour the adoption of an independent electoral commission as the vehicle for the administration of their electoral processes.

Latin America: In Latin American countries there is a long history of electoral administration which pre-dates similar reforms in Spain. As a consequence, the influence of the colonizing states on election administration practice, generally, has been limited and has led to the development of a wide variety of approaches in Latin America. Furthermore, the liberalization of political systems in the last decade has led to substantial changes in the electoral system and major electoral reforms. Specific examples include Nicaragua and Costa Rica where the national electoral authorities have status as a 'fourth power'.

In Argentina, Brazil, Chile and Uruguay, legislation defines the electoral authority as an independent institution, but operating within the judiciary. In Panama, the electoral tribunal has complete autonomy to manage its own budget once funds have been allocated for this purpose by the executive and approved by the legislative assembly. The budgets of most of the electoral authorities are prepared to cover ongoing operating costs, often related to the permanent register and for the conduct of periodic elections. The budgetary authority generally requires the approval of the executive. In Mexico, a permanent electoral council, the Federal Election Institute (IFE) was established to organize the national electoral process; a second body, the Federal Electoral Tribunal, adjudicates electoral complaints. In addition, an independent special prosecutor to prosecute electoral crimes (ranging from excess campaign expenditures to intimidation or vote buying) was also created.

Western Europe: The majority of countries locate the electoral administration within a government ministry, usually the Ministry of Interior; a permanent department within the ministry is established to manage elections. In the majority of these countries the organization and the resources of the established political parties allow them to conduct sophisticated and detailed monitoring exercises to ensure an impartial administration of the election process.

The most effective model depends upon the relative maturity of the national political system. In cases where election administration previously was in government hands with a one party or other authoritarian system with no opposition, voter confidence is only likely to be inspired if opposition party representatives or nominees are co-opted into election administration, or if the commission is seen to be independent from government and political influence. The process of appointment of commissioners is important and should be as inclusive and participatory as possible.

Also, the adoption of an election system that meets international principles is not, in itself, sufficient to ensure a free and fair process. Provisions must be made to ensure it is credibly implemented and administered. Achieving this objective requires that election officials are impartial and independent and that the electoral contestants and the public perceive them as such. Where impartiality is in doubt, election commissions and review bodies comprising representatives from diverse political interests may provide a remedy by achieving balanced composition. Similarly, a system of checks and balances, whereby the electoral commission is subject to review by independent legislative, judicial and monitoring bodies enhances the credibility of the process.

From Chapter Five: Sustaining the Democratic Settlement

*The degree of **transparency**, **accountability** and **participation** provide three crucial benchmarks to evaluate the continuing health of a settlement.*

The overriding determinant of whether a peace agreement will endure is the extent to which the parties to the conflict continue to be motivated to avoid a return to bloodshed. If any one of the parties thinks that violence will reap greater rewards than a continued commitment to a democratic settlement, the settlement will fail.

Democracy offers a positive and useful model for managing conflicts, but the complex issues involved in managing deep-rooted conflicts mean that no negotiated settlement can be absolutely guaranteed to hold. Previous chapters of the handbook have sought to demonstrate that interim devices such as power-sharing arrangements may be essential to keep the conflicting parties committed to democracy during the crucial early months and years of a settlement. Such arrangements are, however, no substitute for an ongoing commitment to democratic values in the long-term.

In some countries, after agreement has been reached and violent conflict ended, failure to properly implement the agreement has placed great strain on the settlement. Any consequent failure of such a settlement may result in a further breakdown of trust and the apportioning of blame between the parties and jeopardize the prospects of further negotiations.

The nature of the problem is illustrated by one analyst quoted in the handbook:

It is therefore imperative to ensure that the settlement persists and is sustained, particularly in the early transitional stage when the process is at its most vulnerable.

In this section, the handbook analyses issues concerning the sustainability of the negotiated outcome in the long-term, and identifies various obstacles and pitfalls that may affect the implementation of the agreement as well as the specific mechanisms that will sustain and nourish the negotiated settlement. It also offers some underlying principles for supporting the implementation phase. The role of the international community in promoting and assisting democratic settlements in post-conflict situations is also discussed.

The handbook posits three crucial benchmarks in evaluating the health of a settlement: *transparency*, *accountability* and *participation*. It analyses the key issues, concerns and obstacles which arise in relation to each of these benchmark issues.

About International IDEA

Objectives

Established in 1995, International IDEA aims to:

- promote and advance sustainable democracy
- improve and consolidate electoral processes world-wide
- provide a forum for discussion and action among individuals and organizations involved in democracy promotion.

Global in membership and scope, independent of specific national interests, and quick in its response, International IDEA is an intergovernmental organization with a unique mandate - to support the growth of genuine, sustainable democracy.

Members

International IDEA currently has 19 member-states, drawn from all four contintents, and five international NGOs as associate members. The Institute also has formal agreements and co-operates closely with a number of intergovernmental organizations and multilateral agencies.

In Action

International IDEA:

- Helps countries build capacity to develop democratic institutions
- Provides a meeting-place for and facilitates dialogue between democracy practitioners around the world
- Increases knowledge about elections and election observation
- Promotes transparency, accountability, professionalism, and efficiency in elections in the context of democratic development.
- Develops and promotes norms, rules and guidelines that apply to multi-party pluralism and democratic processes.

International IDEA
Strömsborg
103 34 Stockholm, Sweden
tel: + 46 8 698 3700
fax: + 46 8 20 24 22
e-mail: info@idea.int
Website: http://www.idea.int