International IDEA

The International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance

IT'S THE PEOPLE'S OWNERSHIP

WHY THE AID AGENDA NEEDS DEMOCRACY IN THE POST-BUSAN ERA AND HOW TO START SUPPORTING IT

DISCUSSION PAPER

www.idea.int

IT'S THE PEOPLE'S OWNERSHIP

WHY THE AID AGENDA NEEDS DEMOCRACY IN THE POST-BUSAN ERA AND HOW TO START SUPPORTING IT

DISCUSSION PAPER

ANNA LEKVALL

This paper has been prepared to provide input to the policy discussions surrounding the review of the aid effectiveness process at the Fourth High-Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness.

'The authoritarian bargain is a misfit … It's over'

Donald Kaberuka, President, Africa Development Bank,
at the Society for International Development World Congress, 2011

INTRODUCTION

The Fourth High-level Forum on Aid Effectiveness, in Busan, South Korea, in November 2011, takes place as the development landscape is changing. The increased influence of the G20, the role of China as a donor and the failure of the Paris Agenda—only having met one of the 13 targets for 2010 in the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness at the global level[1]—are likely to change the direction of international aid.

Simultaneously, the Arab Spring has brought democracy back into the spotlight and firmly underlined that development without democracy is 'neither bread nor freedom'.[2] In addition, there is an increasing realization that democratic transitions do not happen by themselves and that democratization processes have been cut short in many countries. Finally, there is a sobering realization that behind the failure of the Paris Agenda and poor development results may lie a dysfunctional political environment. The fact that the aid agenda is being reviewed provides a new opportunity for a discussion about how to strengthen the political environment and democratic processes to support development.

Despite the fact that democracy and development are the goals of many donors and partner governments, there is surprisingly little analysis of the opportunities and challenges presented by the aid agenda for democracy building. This paper is an effort to highlight some of the key concerns in this relationship in order to contribute to discussion and debate. The paper argues that functioning political processes are vital for the development agenda, but that, subconsciously and unwillingly, aid processes sometimes undermine democratic processes rather than strengthen them. It also examines how the democratic deficit in many countries affects the aid relationship and has led to the possible failure of the Paris Agenda. Finally, the paper examines how the aid agenda could change this situation, by supporting a healthy political landscape and bolstering development.

1 Bert Koenders and Talaat Abdel-Malek, 'Are we ready to meet today's development challenges?', op-ed in Terraviva, 27 September 2011.
2 Marwan Muasher, 'Arab Myths and Realities', Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 8 March 2010.

UNDERMINING DEMOCRACY

The Paris Agenda for aid effectiveness has changed the international development architecture in the past ten years. An emphasis on ownership and alignment with partner country priorities, harmonization, results and mutual accountability should make aid more effective. New forms of aid modalities such as budget support and sector-wide approaches should strengthen domestic institutions and free up partner government resources to focus more on promoting development than servicing donors. These efforts have gone a long way towards streamlining assistance and emphasizing the importance of national processes as opposed to donor-driven approaches. The Paris Agenda thus provides building blocks for strengthening democratic processes. However, the ways in which aid effectiveness is being interpreted and constructed in practice seem to have some negative effects on democracy.

There are many dimensions of democracy and we cannot cover them all in this paper. What follows is an effort to highlight some key concerns as to how current aid modalities may impact negatively on political institutions and processes.

Aid processes limit political space

One way that external aid flows may undermine democracy is by limiting the space that political and social actors have to outline alternative visions for the development of their country. It skews policymaking processes and limits the choice of a development model which fits the aspirations of different political actors.

Despite the principle of 'increased ownership', donors still seem to heavily influence national development priorities. In practice, ownership is narrowly defined and aid is negotiated based on essentially donor-driven Poverty Reduction Strategies. Donors still indicate priorities in budget reviews and apply conditionalities, even if this process is more indirect than before. The European Network on Debt and Development (EURODAD)[3] for example argues that budget support comes at the cost of greater intrusion and the greater influence of donors in all aspects of national budgets.

For countries dependent on outside budget resources—in Mozambique, Uganda and Malawi, for instance, aid can be up to half the budget—it is a constant challenge to create the space for politics. If there is only one policy option for development expressed by those who control the resources, political actors will not bother to develop a range of policy platforms. What is the point of developing policies when the World Bank and bilateral donors decide anyway? What is the point of arguing for private sector-led development or the nationalization of natural resources if donor governments disagree or decide that the social sector is the priority? The result is that the national politician, who may not have strong incentives to make policy in the first place, is now almost entirely out of a job.

Donor influence does not stop at the level of national politics. It may also affect the choices of civil society. The space for social actors to decide key priorities for themselves or obtain funding for activities in a given area is limited by donors' agendas. Donors sometimes set the agenda by coming in with a preconceived idea about what the concerns are, and these can change over time or with new trends. It is possible to see the same civil society organization work with HIV/AIDS for a while and then shift to good governance, only for it a few years later to start work on climate change. This is unlikely to have happened due to a change in priorities linked to a new situation in the country. There is thus a risk that when donors prioritize new areas, organizations have little choice but to follow the money.

Aid processes by-pass political institutions

At Accra, it was recognized that representative institutions such as parliaments are often by-passed in

aid negotiations. They are not regularly informed and invited to discuss what aid is being accepted, which loans are being taken up or what the national development strategies are. This includes loans with a 20–40 year payback period—decisions that will influence economic choices for several elections and possibly generations. Representative institutions are more often than not excluded from these discussions or simply cannot absorb the information.

The Accra Agenda took an important step forward by recognizing the need for inclusive ownership and the role of some political and social actors such as parliaments, local government and civil society in development. However, a role for the fundamental institutions which represent people and shape national development agendas—political parties and electoral processes—is completely absent from the agenda. These institutions are at the core of 'inclusive ownership' and when they are weak and ill-functioning, the rest of the system is likely to fail as well.

In addition, parliaments and civil society organizations are almost treated as equals in the Accra Agenda. Both are supported 'to take an active role in dialogue on development processes'.[4] While both actors play an essential role in democratic and developmental societies, there is a need to distinguish between the constitutional role of parliaments and the advocacy role of citizen interest groups. It is inconceivable that a Western government in a domestic policy sphere would place its own parliament alongside the national audit office, civil society organizations, and so on, and give each an equal opportunity to contribute to the planning and implementation of a national reform programme. In development assistance, however, the roles and functions of representative institutions are blurred with the roles and functions of civil society organizations.

Thus far, consultative processes on Poverty Reduction Strategy Programmes (PRSPs) to engage parliament, civil society and local government have been ineffective at best, and harmful at worst. Asking parliamentarians and civil society actors to participate in PRSP processes conflicts with the roles and mandates of the actors, delegitimizing both, and does not give any of them genuine power or space to pursue their political goals and issues. Many actors have felt 'coerced into consultation systems that gave them little voice'.[5] It is increasingly recognized that this approach has not been effective at enhancing ownership. There are many reasons for this, including limited time, the limited capacity of actors to make substantive contributions to technical development plans, the lack of parliamentary will to critique the executive's plans, and so on.

Aid processes disrupt policy development

While donors engage to strengthen public financial management, budget and procurement processes, there seems to be a lack of understanding of policy processes. Policy development is at the heart of creating and agreeing on development issues in any country. This includes the annual process in the political institutions and the policy process during the four- or five-year tenure of the legislative and the executive. The point at which aid agreements are signed can make a significant difference to the two policy cycles. For example, if aid comes at the very beginning of a new legislative period it can strengthen the democratic policymaking process by enabling the newly elected government to be involved and included in the entire four- or five-year policy cycle, starting with planning and prioritizing. If it is dealt with only by the executive, however, it can easily exclude actors and undermine democratic processes.

Aid processes undermine accountability

The Governance Network of the Development Assistance Committee of the Organisation for European Co-operation and Development (OECD DAC) has indicated that aid weakens domestic accountability by: (i) primarily engaging with the executive branch of government; (ii) its lack of transparency, which makes it hard for parliaments, audit institutions and civil society to monitor how aid resources are use; and (iii) over time, making governments more accountable to donors than to their own citizens.[6]

3 Interview with EURODAD, April 2011.
4 Accra Agenda for Action, 2008.
5 'Strengthening Broad-Based Inclusive Ownership and Accountability: A Synthesis of key findings and Messages for the Working party on Aid Effectiveness and High Level Forum 4', OECD/DAC (working document for the High Level Forum 4).
6 Alan Hudson, Background Paper for the Launch of the Workstream on Aid and Domestic Accountability, OECD/DAC GOVNET, 2009.

Engagement with the executive alone risks weakening accountability actors—be they opposition parties, parliamentarians, media outlets or social actors. Civil society organizations and opposition parties often argue that the increasing amounts of aid being channelled through government budgets give more power to the executive and weaken their own power. Furthermore, to the extent that donors have engaged with accountability this has often been concentrated on supporting civil society actors. Relying on social actors alone is harmful. Elections and political parties aggregate the views of all citizens, while social organization only represent special interests. A political process is therefore fundamental to achieving a balance of views and to capturing the views of minorities and disempowered groups.

Off-budget aid is a concern as it skews accountability towards the donor and reduces the capacity of parliaments to play an oversight role. Although the new aid modalities are improving budget transparency, a significant proportion remains off-budget.

Aid processes are used for political control

Donor-funded programmes and services may be used by local level government actors to pressure people into supporting the ruling party. Local officials who control access to land, fertilizers, food aid, teachers' salaries, credit and other benefits may use this access politically to 'control the population, punish dissent and undermine political opponents'.[7] There is a great deal of anecdotal evidence for this but few studies have explored the issue in depth. The Human Rights Watch study 'Development without Freedom'[8] is one study which shows how public services in Ethiopia are used to control people politically. Instead of empowering people through aid, people are being disempowered and their rights are being undercut. This has detrimental effects on democracy as well as human rights as people who depend on the ruling party for survival will not engage in opposition or cast a free vote in an election.

Aid processes reinforce concentration of power

Democracy requires the separation of powers, but providing aid through the executive alone risks strengthening the concentration of power. Development assistance channelled through the state in hybrid regimes risks reinforcing clientilistic politics. Some aid resources may be used by incumbents to stay in power and to strengthen the status quo at all levels, as '… leaders enjoy broad latitude in the use of public resources, procuring political support through ad hoc redistribution rather than by furnishing collective goods such as the rule of law, infrastructure, or social services. … Authoritarian rulers commonly divert state revenues in order to maintain the support bases of their regimes, and governments serve as gatekeepers for access to resources, jobs and market opportunities.'[9]

They are largely successful. In electoral authoritarian regimes, incumbents retain power in 93 per cent of the elections they contest.[10] In the absence of a functioning democratic system, channelling large scale aid resources through the state gives the sitting regime a massive advantage. According to Raquel Alvarez,[11] in the absence of strong political mechanisms to ensure that African countries are accountable to their own people, large scale aid flows that go directly to the recipient country's coffers can widen the gulf between the state and society. By financing incumbent governments, donors may be preventing healthy domestic accountability mechanisms from developing, potentially propping up anti-development regimes.

When there is only one source of income in a country everyone is dependent on that single source. In developing countries where government funds are the one source of finance, jobs and capital, control over these resources gives power over not only the general population, but also the opposition, parliamentarians, lawyers, the private sector and the security sector. Democratic checks and balances, and accountability institutions—even if formally in place—will not be able to provide an alternative power base. When even opposition political actors are dependent on the executive to provide for their constituencies or political campaigns, this skews their incentives to act as opposition and their motivation to hold the executive to account is marginal. International aid ends up reinforcing a perverted system instead of creating conditions for the popular control of government and a democratic, developmental society.

Support to democracy is negligible

While massive support is channelled through the state in the form of budget or programme support, direct engagement with political processes and institutions is almost negligible. Calculated on the basis of the OECD DAC Creditor Reporting System:[12]

- Only 2 per cent of all official development assistance (ODA) flows goes to key democratic institutions: civil society, elections, political parties and legislatures.
- Once civil society is excluded, 1 per cent remains for the core political processes of elections, parties and legislatures
- At the far bottom of the list, 0.09 per cent of total ODA flows goes to political parties and legislatures. More aid goes to 'solar energy' and 'tourism policy'.

That is not to argue that financial resources are the key to resolving all problems. It does, however, beg the question whether aid has sufficiently engaged with democratic actors, recognizing them as development institutions, and whether this support is well-balanced.

7 Human Rights Watch, 'Development without Freedom: How aid underwrites repression in Ethiopia', 2010.
8 Ibid.
9 Peter Lewis, 'Growth Without Prosperity in Africa', *Journal of Democracy*, 19/4 (2008).
10 Gideon Maltz, 'The Case for Presidential Term Limits', *Journal of Democracy*, January 2007 referred to in Nic Cheeseman, 'African Elections as Vehicles for Change', *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 21/4 (October 2010).
11 Raquel Alvarez, 'The Rise of Budget Support in European Development Cooperation: A False Panacea', *FRIDE Policy Brief* no. 31 (January 2010).
12 OECD DAC, Creditor Reporting System, 2009.

DEMOCRACY AND THE AID RELATIONSHIP

Democracy is not only important in its own right, it also affects development and the aid relationship. For the Paris Agenda to succeed—with its principle of ownership, use of country systems and new aid modalities which channel resources directly through the state—a basic, functioning democratic system is essential.

Donors realize this and use 'underlying principles' in aid agreements to cover commitments to promote peace, free and fair electoral processes, the independence of the judiciary, respect for human rights, good governance, and the fight against corruption. In reality, however, the democratic deficit is often underestimated and this may be a key reason for the shortcomings in fulfilling the Paris Agenda. A recent study of Tanzania, Zambia and Mozambique found that governance issues were fundamental to the failure to implement the Paris Agenda.[13]

Both donor and partner countries tend to focus on the existence of formal institutions—whether there is an independent judiciary and if elections are held. There is often a recognition that institutions are weak, but there seems to be an implicit assumption that respect for human rights and the fight against corruption will move in the 'right direction' or can be fixed with capacity building. There even seems to be an implicit assumption that democracy will develop and strengthen by itself—that as long as there is a formal multiparty democracy, the rest will take care of itself. This is of course far from reality. Tom Carothers threw the transitional paradigm out of the window in 2002[14] and Marina Ottaway showed that many newly democratized countries had in reality stopped at the 'semi-authoritarian' stage[15]. Positive democratic movement was not happening—and there was even some backtracking.

Donors and their partners alike seem to have difficulties in grasping the real political situation and the extent to which the lack of policymaking and accountability processes negatively affect development and aid relationships. They thus agree on general budget support or a sector programme but without the underlying principles being put in place. This creates major challenges for implementation when there is a 'sudden' realization that there is corruption in a sector or there are democratic 'setbacks' in the form of manipulated elections or new laws to limit civil society. Corruption and electoral violence are not part of the game plan, so this seems to come as a surprise. In such cases, aid is suspended temporarily until measures have been taken by the government, and then aid is disbursed again until the next 'surprise' comes along. This stop-go disbursement of aid creates frustration and confusion among both donors and partners. It reduces predictability and does not help to alter the situation that created the problems in the first place. The very foundation that the new aid agenda rests on—channelling funds through a government's own systems—should be adjusted with eyes that are open to the realities of the political situation—and support an improved democratic landscape.

Despite its huge implications for development and aid effectiveness, the political landscape is not likely to be addressed in Busan. It seems to be too sensitive. It is quite understandable that partner governments do not want international actors 'meddling' in internal political affairs and call for sovereignty to be respected, and that donor governments are uncomfortable about meddling in politics as their primary aim is to pursue good state-state relationships. Yet, not dealing with the political issues will only lead to failed aid relationships and ineffective development processes. Furthermore, in a year when citizens have come to the fore more than ever in reshaping dysfunctional relations, the aid agenda should not go untouched.

Finally, while democracy building remains surprisingly controversial in the aid relationship, it is worth

remembering that there is a firm commitment to democracy in Africa, the major recipient of aid. Most African states are parties to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), which states that: every citizen has the right to participate in the conduct of public affairs through freely chosen representatives; to vote in periodic elections, which shall be by universal suffrage; to equal suffrage held by secret ballot guaranteeing the free expression of the will of the electors; and to access to public services in the country. The African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights recognizes similar rights, and 38 African Union member states are signatories to the relatively new African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance.

Donors and recipients thus need to discuss how to build substantive democracy and how to avoid undermining it. A key aspect is to break the pattern of clientilistic politics by building a substantive democracy adjusted to the historical, cultural and political realities of each country. (Exporting solutions from the developed countries in the North is not effective.) To borrow from Wollack and Hubli:[16]

Sustaining socioeconomic development over the long term requires a political system whose incentive structures make it more likely that responsive, reform-minded, accountable politicians will become ministers in the first place. It requires governments that have popular support and legitimacy to sustain development policies over the long term. It also requires mechanisms for orderly alternation of power in order to reduce the incentives for corruption that inevitably affect governments with no fear of losing office. It requires strengthened policy-development and evaluation capacity within political parties and intermediary political institutions in order to help raise the level of political discourse. It requires effective legislatures—with significant roles of opposition voices and the means to build broader consensus on development policy—in order to avoid policy reversals if governments turn over. It requires greater voice and power for citizens, including women, young people and historically marginalized communities, in order to complement increased economic empowerment with increased political participation.

13 Bertil Odén and Lennart Wohlgemuth, 'Where is the Paris Agenda Heading? Changing Relations in Tanzania, Zambia and Mozambique', ECPDM, Briefing Note no 21, February 2011.

14 Thomas Carothers, "The End of the Transition Paradigm", *Journal of Democracy*, Vol 13 No 1, 2002

15 Marina Ottaway, *Democracy Challenged—The Rise of Semi-Authoritarianism*, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2003

16 Kenneth Wollack and K. Scott Hubli, 'Getting Convergence Right', *Journal of Democracy*, 21/4, October 2010.

OOZING AROUND THE D-WORD

Concerns about politics are not new to development actors. Corruption and a lack of results from development initiatives have led aid providers increasingly to address governance and to 'take politics into account'. As more and more aid resources are channelled through government systems, development actors have begun to realize the importance of accountable governments, politics and the range of issues that flow from the 'd-word'.

The governance debate encompasses some key features of democracy such as ownership, accountability, transparency and participation. Governance efforts, however, are often more concerned about efficient administration, rather than the separation of powers and building a substantively democratic government.[17] Governance efforts primarily focus on public financial management, administration and procurement processes. Governance support comprises 10 per cent of total ODA flows. Within governance support, 52 per cent goes to the public sector on programmes such as financial management and administration, including decentralization.

Donors also engage in 'voice and accountability' efforts. Efforts are focused on voice, however, with little engagement on substantive accountability.[18] Aid engages with social actors, but not with political processes or non-traditional civil society actors such as trade unions, religious groups and other social movements. However, the best results are obtained when voice and accountability are strengthened simultaneously in a joined-up manner.

Political economy analysis has become more common and is often a useful tool, and might explain why political incentives influence a particular development issue. But it does not provide advice on how to build democracy or a functioning political system. Nor does it have much impact in terms of changing the way aid is organized and disbursed in response to the political landscape. Many other efforts impinge on the democracy arena, such as the effort to increase 'participation' in Poverty Reduction Strategy Programmes. Unfortunately, these can create parallel processes and lead to only token inclusion.

Furthermore, when aid engages with institutions it often ignores the processes. If and when aid engages with political institutions, for example, it does not engage with political policy processes. More often than not aid interferes with one or more of the phases in the policy process—either initiation, deliberation, decision making, prioritizing, implementation, monitoring, revision, evaluation, reporting, accounting or auditing.

Regarded as too sensitive to address directly, development actors seem to ooze around the d-word—but democracy and respect for basic rights are at the heart of what is needed to achieve country ownership and accountable states. To pick and choose individual principles or dimensions of democracy will at best be ineffective, and at worse do more harm than good. Accountability cannot be separated from policymaking or substantive electoral processes. Transparency cannot be supported in isolation from the viable and dynamic actors which need it to pursue accountability. Marginalized, poor people cannot have a voice when, for instance, they are dependent on local government actors for their livelihood.

17 Lisa Horner and Greg Power, 'Democratic Dimensions of Aid: Prospects for democracy building within the contemporary international architecture of development cooperation', unpublished literature review commissioned by International IDEA, March 2009.

18 This paragraph draws on Alina Rocha Menocal and Bhavna Sharma,'Joint Donor Evaluation of citizens, voice and accountability—Synthesis Report', Overseas Development Institute, 2008 as well as 'International IDEA Synthesis paper 'Democratic Accountability in Service Delivery' (forthcoming 2011).

TOWARDS SUPPORTING DEMOCRACY IN THE AID AGENDA

Poverty is about lack of political as well as economic power. It is about having choices and living with dignity. It is now many years since the World Bank adopted this multidimensional poverty definition. Democracy opens up space for poor people to participate in and define the development agenda and this is what aid processes should support. Involving the political institutions—parliaments, political parties and electoral processes—is of course not a panacea. These institutions are extremely weak and ill-functioning in many countries, but the long-term effect of excluding them is unquestionably detrimental to both democracy and development. This section outlines some preliminary thoughts for further discussion on how the Paris Agenda can be adapted to build both democracy and development.

- **Ownership by the people**

  The aid effectiveness agenda could first and foremost agree that ownership is defined as 'ownership by the people'. An agreement that ownership begins and ends with the people would mean that a new aid system could be developed. From this bottom-up perspective, key processes and actors which aggregate and represent the voice of citizens in national policymaking and development processes can be identified and become part of the aid system. These will include representative actors and electoral processes as well as civil society movements and institutions, but with a clear differentiation between their respective roles and responsibilities. Consideration of incentives and the realities of politics is a must to avoid defining systems based on assumptions. The various actors that need to be part of the different stages of the policy process could be empowered to play their democratic roles.

- **Open up the political space**

  Instead of prescribing certain policies, donors could commit to supporting the frameworks and conditions for inclusive, democratic politics. Donors could then relax their preconceived ideas about development, allow for alternative visions and provide support for the political space to develop such visions. Political as well as social actors need incentives to engage in policymaking and in development debates. Donors need to restrain their influence over the development agenda and reduce the number of conditionalities.

- **Support accountability systems**

  Aid providers could support systems of accountability rather than piecemeal inputs. Supporting demands for accountability means building people power through the whole range of actors that channel their views and hold their representatives to account. In the political sphere these are political parties, parliament and the executive. It is important to include all three political institutions in this triangle and not to disturb or undermine any of the three either individually or collectively. Electoral processes are of course the most important institution for accountability and need to be supported throughout the electoral cycle. In the social sphere there is a whole range of civil society organizations, think tanks, social movements, special interest groups, user groups, and so on. In addition, the media needs to stand on its own as both a channel for views and an actor holding governments to account.[19]

  The OECD DAC has provided some basic guidance on how to strengthen accountability—

19 See also International IDEA 'Democratic Accountability in Service Delivery: A Toolkit for Self-Assessment' (forthcoming 2012).

including strengthening political parties, electoral processes and parliaments.[20] It takes a system-wide approach to building a holistic system of accountability, rather than piecemeal approaches. There is also a recognition that regional and local political and social processes need space and the opportunity to contribute to accountability—as they are the ones closest to the service and should therefore make a large impact.

- **Engage with the policy process and all the actors in it**
  Aid providers need to engage with and respect the annual policy cycle in the legislative and the executive, often linked to the budget cycle in which each of the political institutions, civil society and other democracy actors have specific roles and responsibilities to perform. There is a similar policy cycle in the four- or five-year tenure of the legislative and the executive. At the centre of this cycle are the political parties' manifestos, the government's policy platform and the continuous contribution from the parties and the other actors in a democracy. It is essential that efforts are made to break clientilistic patterns and identify opportunities to support political actors in the transition to programmatic approaches.[21]

- **Strengthen mechanisms for political cooperation**
  Aid often has a long term perspective that cuts across elections. Political stability and political consensus on issues of national importance could contribute to both the democracy and the development agendas. Including mechanisms for political cooperation and/or supporting such multiparty initiatives—or at least not excluding or undermining such mechanisms where they exist—is important. Such a focus must in particular appreciate inter-institutional mechanisms and procedures.

- **Take a holistic approach**
  With a stronger focus on processes, it is important to take a holistic approach that appreciates that aid either has or can contribute to or influence one or more of the following: 1) *The legislative framework*. Every democracy has or needs adequate laws, rules and regulations. 2) *Institutions*. Democracy is upheld not by a single democratic institution, but by a fabric of different institutions with relevant skills and capacities. 3) *The actors*. In every democracy there are the individuals with personal skills and capacities and, equally or more important, a democratic understanding and approach. 4) The *processes* by which legislation is implemented and enforced.

- **Recognize the critical role of political parties**
  The weakness of political parties worldwide is a critical problem which cannot be resolved by ignoring or side-lining them. Representative democracy needs political parties and will not deliver without functioning institutions. The role of parliaments, civil society actors and local government in development was recognized at Accra, but political parties still need to be acknowledged as key development institutions that perform fundamental tasks.

- **Focus on people**
  People are central and the end game is to empower people with rights, political freedom, knowledge, resources and economic power to lift themselves out of poverty. Aid should be channelled to build alternative sources—and a redistribution—of power, and to directly strengthen poor people economically and politically. Aid negotiations take place at the national level, but there is a need to engage with and monitor what happens at the local level—in the delivery of public services, political processes at the local level and respect for basic rights.

- **Step-by-step.**
  Perhaps most importantly, in hybrid political regimes it will be necessary to adopt a limited step-by-step approach. Donors should not channel money through the state if democratic accountability systems are not working and there is political capture by the ruling elite of such processes. Budget or programme support on a limited scale may be possible if it is connected with strengthening the involvement and role of democratic actors in a joined up and systematic manner. Taking it slowly, while staying engaged to support countries in building the system from the ground up, may be the only option.

20 OECD DAC , 'Draft Synthesis of Guidance on Aid, Accountability and Democratic Governance', July 2011.
21 See also International IDEA, 'Programmatic Parties' (forthcoming 2012).

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This paper has been prepared with substantive input from Bjarte Tørå,
former Senior Programme Manager of International IDEA's Political Party Programme.
Thanks are also due to Andrew Mash for his professional input in editing this paper.

WHAT IS INTERNATIONAL IDEA?

The International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International IDEA) is an intergovernmental organization that supports sustainable democracy worldwide. International IDEA's mission is to support sustainable democratic change by providing comparative knowledge, and assisting in democratic reform, and influencing policies and politics.

WHAT DOES INTERNATIONAL IDEA DO?

In the field of elections, constitution building, political parties, gender in democracy and women's political empowerment, democracy self-assessments, and democracy and development, IDEA undertakes its work through three activity areas:

- providing comparative knowledge derived from practical experience on democracy building processes from diverse contexts around the world;
- assisting political actors in reforming democratic institutions and processes, and engaging in political processes when invited to do so; and
- influencing democracy building policies through the provision of our comparative knowledge resources and assistance to political actors.

WHERE DOES INTERNATIONAL IDEA WORK?

International IDEA works worldwide. Based in Stockholm, Sweden, it has offices in Africa, Asia and the Pacific, Latin America, and West Asia and North Africa.

INTERNATIONAL IDEA

Strömsborg
SE-103 34 Stockholm
Sweden
Phone + 46 8 698 37 00
Fax + 46 8 20 24 22
E-mail: info@idea.int
Website: http://www.idea.int