



Statement by International IDEA

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Honourable Chair, Madame Minister,
Distinguished Delegates,
Everyone present,

The theme of this year's Bali Democracy Forum: *Democracy for Prosperity* touches the core of many global and regional debates about globalisation, nationalism, and the type of democracy we wish to strive toward. Over the last fifty years, the world has made huge progress in reducing extreme poverty and improving basic welfare around the world. However, rising inequality within countries has become the defining challenge of the century. The way wealth, power and privilege are distributed affects the quality of governance and undermines the sturdiness and resilience of a democracy by limiting social cohesion; political representation; and by driving violence and armed conflict.

There are no easy answers on how to counter inequality and how to increase prosperity for all. However, research suggests that democracy is a necessary even if not sufficient pre-condition for targeting inequality and increasing prosperity. In fact more, not less of democracy is what is needed.

I represent International IDEA, an intergovernmental organization- including Indonesia as its member state- whose mandate is to support sustainable democracy worldwide.



In November 2017 International IDEA published a report ***Global State of Democracy Report, Exploring Democracy's Resilience***, which provided a health check of democracy worldwide and over the last forty years. This year, we have updated the Global State of Democracy Indices to cover data up to 2017 and to have a closer at last 10 years.

Is democracy really in decline? What are the global trends in democracy?

The key findings from the most recent update to the GSoD Indices data are as follows.

1. The global expansion of democracy has come to a halt in the past decade. And worryingly the number of countries experiencing democratic decline is now greater than the number experiencing democratic gains, breaking a trend that stretches back to 1980. Moreover, between 2014 and 2017, for the first time since 1975, there were two or more consecutive years in which more countries declined than improved in any aspect of democracy.

2. Secondly, the highest declines are linked to aspects relating to civic space, such as Civil Liberties, Freedom of Expression, Freedom of Association and Assembly, Civil Society Participation and Media Integrity. In 2017, civil liberties declined in 34 countries, compared to 10 where they advanced. It should be noted that basic welfare or prosperity indicators have not declined, -freedoms have.

Interestingly, when it comes to absence of corruption, there is both good news and bad news. Since 2006, more countries have made significant gains in reducing corruption, but there are also an increasing number of countries where corruption is gaining ground. So increased movement in both directions.



3. Thirdly, Regions with a concentration of so-called established or high-performing democracies (e.g. in North America, Europe, and more recently in Latin America and the Caribbean) have experienced democratic declines in the last five years. This decline in established democracies has been very gradual. *The Global State of Democracy* refers to this as ‘modern democratic backsliding’, characterized by democratically elected parties or leaders using legal means to weaken democracy from within. This democratic decline is not necessarily characterized by a deterioration in the conduct of elections, but more often by a worsening situation with regards to respect for civil liberties, and by restrictions on civil society or the media.

4. Fourthly While all this is cause for concern, it is important to note that the vast majority of countries (around 140) have seen no significant changes in their democratic performance in either direction since 2012. Indeed, if we take a historical approach, we see that democracy has made considerable progress since 1975 in all continents. Today’s situation is far better than what it was forty-two years ago. We have learnt that democracy is resilient, able to recover from societal crisis and backsliding. Yet fragile in a sense that it should not be taken for granted and require constant nurturing. Also for the sake of prosperity.

I wish to express my sincere gratitude to the Indonesian Government, her Excellency Minister of Foreign Affairs of Indonesia and the staff of her Ministry. Initiatives like Bali Democracy Forum are exactly what is needed to support dynamic democracies and foster mutual learning.

Thank you