



Office of the Permanent Observer to the United Nations

**2007 INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON NEW OR
RESTORED DEMOCRACIES MEETING**

**Session on
Lessons Learned and Future Perspectives**

Statement by
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Mr Chair of the ICNRD-6,

Distinguished Delegates,

I thank you very much for the kind invitation of the State of Qatar to address the 2007 ICNRD Meeting, one month after the adoption by the General Assembly of a resolution on support by the United Nations system of the efforts of Governments to promote and consolidate new or restored democracies. The rich and thoughtful debate held in the General Assembly on that occasion confirmed the commitment of Member States to the implementation of the Doha Declaration, and the relevance of the New or Restored Democracy process to the goal of supporting democracy worldwide, a core element of the mandate of International IDEA.

Democracy is strongly linked to key areas of UN's mandate: peace and security, human rights, development. Democracy as a process of expanding political choice plays a role in both achieving each of these goals, and reinforcing their inter-linkages. The fundamental objectives of the UN cannot be achieved without addressing the issue of democracy.

In the long run, democracy building is central to sustainable peacebuilding and state-building efforts. The linkages between democracy, peace and security, and development are key for:

- Preventing conflict as well as getting out of conflict to build a sustainable peace, and strike a balance between the sometimes competing imperatives of peace-making and democracy-building;
- Enhancing accountability in decision-making on resource allocations and service delivery;
- Creating the conditions for democratic politics based on ownership and participation.

Structural issues involved in enhancing the above links are consultation and inclusiveness, institutional design, transition processes, mediation, reconciliation initiatives, establishing rule of law, and building local capacities.

We believe that the strengths of the NRD process are related to its nature of a forum that:

- Brings together governments, parliaments and civil society;
- Understands the diversity dimension and clearly states that there is no single model of democracy;
- Has the support of the UN and hence, draws on the multilateral legitimacy of the UN;
- Is highly sensitive to the issue of the delivery dimension of democracy and to the fact that democracy is not only a set of values, but also a system of governance that needs to deliver in terms of basic services;

- Acknowledges regional efforts, such as the African peer review mechanism and other locally owned processes, including sub-regional initiatives.

We think that the New or Restored Democracies process would further enhance its effectiveness by addressing two issues: follow up between conferences; and experience-sharing on democratization efforts.

The first issue is to ensure effective follow up. There is a need to move beyond conferences and link them to actual democracy building efforts on the ground. The establishment of the Advisory Board of the ICNRD-6 and the adoption of the three years ICNRD Programme of Work for 2007-2009 are important steps in this direction.

An example of follow up actions is the implementation of self-assessments of the state of democracy by member states with the aim of identifying areas for action and entry points for policy reforms. The experience of Mongolia, consisting of the development of nationally-owned Democratic Governance Indicators, and the definition of a National Plan of Action to Consolidate Democracy in the country, is highly relevant in this respect. At the request of Mongolia, International IDEA had the pleasure to provide technical advice to such process, based on the State of democracy assessment methodology.

The IDEA State of Democracy assessment framework raises public awareness about democracy, addresses popular concerns about democracy in a systematic fashion, contributes to public debate, and provides an instrument for the assessment of reforms. The framework is based on the idea that the citizens of the democracy that is being assessed should carry out the democracy assessment to provide local ownership and the political will for democratic reform.

The democracy assessment framework is based on two fundamental democratic principles of popular control over public decision-making and decision makers, and equality of respect and voice between citizens in the exercise of that control. These fundamental principles are realised through seven mediating values, including participation, authorisation, representation, accountability, transparency, responsiveness, and solidarity. The framework has over ninety 'search questions' that are answered through the collection and analysis of qualitative and quantitative information across four main pillars of assessment. Citizenship, Law, and Rights; Representative and Accountable Government; Civil Society and Popular Participation; and Democracy Beyond the State.

The democracy assessment framework has been applied in over fifteen countries including old, new, and restored democracies and has led in certain instances to the institutionalisation of democratic reform.

A possible future endeavour, within the NRD process, could be the replication of Mongolia's experience by other Member States willing to engage in a self-assessment of the state of their democracy, possibly from each region represented at the ICNRD.

The second issue is the sharing of democratization experiences. There is a need for the ICNRD process to make better use of concrete experience

sharing, including in a South-South perspective, on the challenges and successes of democratic reform processes. This could build on a more systematic articulation between the governmental, parliamentary and civil society segments of the ICNRD, based on a multi-year strategy, with a clear definition of roles and responsibilities for all the actors involved in the NRD process. The celebration of the International Day of Democracy will be an excellent opportunity for further fostering dialogue among national actors, thus contributing to democracy building on the ground.

Such an approach could facilitate strategic and operational links between periodic high-level forum, like the ICNRD, and the mainstream work of agencies engaged in democracy building. This would enhance the policy and strategic relevance of the NRD process, by taking fully into account the broader issue of how to pursue a revitalized democracy building agenda at the UN, and how to increase the effectiveness of the UN system in this respect.

IDEA would be pleased to provide inputs to a more operational and targeted way of organizing future ICNRD conferences, in line with the Declarations and Plans of Action adopted in Ulaanbaatar and Doha, by making available to the NRD process IDEA's democracy building knowledge base and capacity building tools, policy advice and experience in supporting democratic reforms.

In its new strategy, International IDEA is fostering South-South cooperation as a pillar of its work. The scope for regional/inter-regional assistance in the area of democracy building is great. The ICNRD may provide a forum for further expanding such exchanges by the active involvement of interested countries, particularly between conferences.

Effective experience-sharing could be based on the following criteria:

- To make use of, and capitalize, existing knowledge bases, practitioners' networks and institutional capacity building tools, particularly those that are already the result of effective partnerships among institutions engaged in the democracy building arena;
- To define focused agendas for the high-level segment of the process, and make sure that action plans originated by them are shaped in clear and measurable frameworks, with responsibilities assigned to relevant actors, both within and outside of the UN, for funding, implementation and follow-up.

A good example of the above is represented by the ACE partnership – the electoral knowledge bank and related expert networks and web-based resources – promoted by International IDEA in collaboration with partners from within the UN (UNDP, UNDESA, UNDP/EADE) and beyond, including election management bodies, think tanks and international democracy building institutions and NGOs. Another good example is the BRIDGE curriculum, developed as a set of “training for trainers” modules to build local institutional capacities in the field of elections that is being further developed to cover other areas of democracy building. Also in the case of BRIDGE, a partnership development strategy has been instrumental for the development

of the tools, and their sustainability (maintenance and update, adjustment to regional variables, etc.).

The NRD process could greatly benefit from the strengthening of such partnerships, the creation of synergies among them and the development of new ones along the same lines.

In conclusion, let me confirm International IDEA's willingness to further contribute to the NRD process. In doing so, IDEA makes available to the NRD movements its public goods:

- An extensive knowledge base, specialized capacity building tools, and practitioners' networks, covering key areas for democracy building, like electoral processes, political parties, constitution building, gender and democracy;
- An assessment methodology based on the principle of local ownership and the practice of democratic dialogue; and
- A substantive body of practical and policy experience at global, regional and country levels.

I thank you for your attention