

## **Annual Democracy Forum 2014**

### ***Fostering Democracy and Development through Sound Management of Natural Resources***

Gaborone International Convention Centre  
Gaborone, Botswana  
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#### **Synthesis by International IDEA Secretary-General Yves Letrerme**

[Her Excellency Pelonomi Venson-Moitoi, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, Republic of Botswana,] Ministers, Representatives of Member States of International IDEA, Panelists, Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen.

I have now the hard task of attempting to make a synthesis of the important and engaging discussions that took place in the past two days. In line with that, allow me to thank all of the panelists for their interesting presentations, as well as the moderators for their management of the various sessions. I also would like to thank the audience for their active participation and excellent questions, comments and interventions.

I think we can all agree that this last day and a half has been a productive and engaging forum--the tone for which was aptly set by our keynote speaker, Professor James Robinson, who untangled the relationship between democracy, development and natural resources.

His message – which is: *democracy is necessary for political institutions to be inclusive—and that inclusivity in government is the key to sustainable development.* Professor Robinson also put forth a clear, compelling narrative about capacity and capacity-building within any

state. Inclusive political institutions also lead natural resource wealth to promote development. We see this clearly here in Botswana. Thus, democracy and development do not contradict each other.

Quite the contrary.

Democracy and development reinforce each other.

This relationship between democracy and development was further discussed in the first session of the forum. In particular, we were presented with how the African Union and Mongolia promote the principles of democracy alongside their respective regional and development objectives. We were introduced to International IDEA's approach to democracy building which brings the interplay between democracy and development to bear through its *democratizing development* work.

We admire and acknowledge the many countries here on the continent that have acknowledged that democracy is a universal value -- exemplified by their charters and declarations. We also recognize and support the express commitment to democracy of the government of Mongolia. In highlighting experiences from the African continent, Norway, as well as Mongolia, we have clear evidence of how democracy enables inclusive and sustainable development and how development can broaden and deepen democracy. .

Challenges, however, remain, particularly in terms of implementation. Efforts at ensuring better implementation are thus a policy priority. In the case of the African Union, this is undertaken through the African

Governance Architecture ---a mechanism that tackles issues related to elections, constitution building, good governance and rule of law in African Member States.

For its part, International IDEA believes that democracy has an intrinsic value in and of itself.

Democracy also is an enabler of development. As such, while democracy may not appear in the current draft of the post-2015 development framework, its realization and effective implementation hinges on democratic processes, which promote transparency, people participation and accountability. It should be accompanied by inclusive and nationally led and owned accountability mechanisms. This is International IDEA's approach to the ongoing negotiations of the post-2015 development framework at the UN.

The second session highlighted the importance of legal frameworks and international standards that ensure good governance of natural resources. These include the UN Convention against corruption, the OECD, AU, OAS convention against bribery and the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative. While they function as important references and guides by which countries could operate, their effectiveness once again depends on domestication and implementation; how they are realized and applied in the countries that are party to them.

This effectiveness is best reinforced when stakeholders are involved and equally committed. Beyond transparency as advocated by Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative EITI, accountability should also be

promoted by civil society, safeguarded by politicians, parliamentarians and political parties and practiced by implementers.

In line with that, the management of natural resources should allow for equitable distribution of the returns. These returns should be factored in poverty reduction programmes such as in the form of heritage funds.

Botswana's consultative mechanism in developing its climate change policy provided us with an example of how countries domesticate international standards. Its people-centered approach could only lead to a more sustainable approach to policy development and thereby translate to better implementation.

In the third session, we highlighted the importance of multi-sector engagement in natural resources management. It is thus apt that we had a national perspective through the case of Norway; a perspective that advances the role of parliaments and political parties; the perspective of local governments; the perspective of environmental conservation; and finally the perspective of private sector. These presented us with various examples of initiatives and good practices of public-private partnerships, corporate social responsibility, as well as local government partnerships and initiatives.

Among the key messages during this session is the need for a clear understanding of the roles that each stakeholder should play. Governments set the enabling environment for good investment and management of natural resources. Private sector handles the business aspects of natural resources. Civil society facilitates transparency and promotes accountability. Citizens understand the management of natural

resources and enjoy the benefits of natural resources. This clarity promotes trust among all parties and paves the way for a successful multi-stakeholder partnership.

What all your interventions had in common was the emphasis on how revenues from natural resources should be channeled and translated into human development benefits. This can only happen when effective policies, nationally-led and owned accountability mechanisms, and inclusive democratic governance systems are in place.

You also underlined the importance of marginalized groups such as women and youth—not only in terms of including them in the governance of natural resources; but more importantly in allowing them equal access to the benefits of natural resources endowments.

Democracy—a governance system anchored on the principles of **popular control** of decisions and decision makers and **political equality** in the exercise that control is the only system of governance capable of guaranteeing equitable access to development for the diversity of groups within its polity. This is because democracy is designed not only to protect the civil and political rights of the people but also to ensure equal access and protection of their social, economic and cultural rights. In this context, real democratic governance would necessarily ensure inclusion of a variety of stakeholders in the planning, policy-making and management of natural resources as well as in the enjoyment of the benefits from such resources. Empowering citizens to understand, claim and enjoy the benefits they are entitled to is critical—as is the assistance that both governments, the private sector and the international

community can provide in creating conducive environments for them exercise their rights.

Because the enabling environment matters to investments - domestic and international, establishing a transparent, inclusive and principle-based system of governance is important.

International IDEA has produced comparative knowledge resources that bring to light these issues and present policy-makers and practitioners with ideas and lessons from peers in all parts of the world.

I would like to highlight today one of these resources “*Democratic Accountability in Service Delivery: A Practical Guide to Identifying Improvements through Assessment*”. This publication provides a citizen-led assessment framework to analyze accountability mechanisms from a democratic point of view and define/design reforms for ensuring that democratic accountability mechanisms are better at facilitating rather than impeding service delivery. It allows countries both at the national and sub-national levels to put into practice the principles of inclusion and accountability discussed at this forum.

As you may have noticed, this year we have partnered with DEVEX, a media organization that specializes in international development. Some of you have been interviewed by the DEVEX team. Their work at this event will be developed into an online campaign called DEMOCRACY MATTERS. They will launch this campaign on December 1<sup>st</sup> and it will go through to December 19<sup>th</sup>. This means we can, and should continue the dialogue online. If you want to see some of the work that is online now, you can use the Twitter hashtag, **#democracymatters**.

Finally, I also am happy to announce that International IDEA will continue to work on democratic accountability, especially in the context of next year's Democracy Forum which is the focus of the Swiss Chairship of International IDEA. The working theme is "Legitimizing the State: Accountability for a Democracy that Delivers".

Ladies and Gentlemen, we are probably the first generation that has the means and the tools to support the consolidation and establishment of sustainable democracies worldwide. We can do it together as local, national and international actors. Through coordinated efforts and support we can make sure the blessing of natural resources comes to the benefit of all. And because we can, we must do it!

Thank you!