



**International Follow-up Conference on New and Restored Democracies,  
hosted by the Government of Mongolia with the support of UNDP**

**Ulan Bator Mongolia**

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Honourable Minister,  
Excellencies,  
Ladies and gentlemen,  
Friends,

I have three issues I wish to raise in this introductory statement:

First, some words of the environment in which democracy building takes place today.

Second, some words on the importance of what Mongolia has done together with UNDP, since the ICNRD meeting in 2003.

Third, some words on what IDEA sees happening with the State of Democracy methodology.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Since the end of the cold war democracy has been a buzzword, slowly being filled with substance. During the last ten years democracy has advanced, but it is also increasingly challenged. Challenged because it does not live up to high expectations of rising living standards; Challenged because we confuse principles with institutional choices; Challenged because democracy must be built within countries, by the people who will live by its performance and under its principles.

We have learned that democracy cannot be imported. Neither can it be exported. But we still believe it can, and should be supported. Democracy building is no quick fix. It is essentially a political process. And as such it takes twists and turns, sometimes seem irrational and lacking logic. It takes time. We have instant coffee, but there is no such thing as instant democracy. There is no one way. There has to be more diversity. There is a wide variety of democratic practices throughout the world. They need to be shared. We need more multilateralism in this work and we need some new approaches. An increased South-South cooperation is essential. The ICNRD is the meeting place for sharing experiences for new and restored democracies. Older and established democracies have a duty to be partners in this work – and to support in the process.

Dear friends,

I wish to pay the compliments of International IDEA to the Government of Mongolia in setting an example for others on how to seriously contribute to substantive development of an important international process.

I also wish to commend UNDP for its strong intellectual and financial support in this important process.

Many countries and many actors struggle with the issues of democratic governance. Few have in such short time, with limited resources, few people at hand and a vast country to cover, managed to do what Mongolia has done.

Mongolia sets an example on how to maintain a living process between international meetings. A process that will bring substance and material for debate to the coming conference in Qatar later this year. We can see a solid bridge being built between Mongolia and Qatar in this process.

At the national level, Mongolia also sets an example on how to engage a multitude of actors nationally in assessing the state of democracy in their own country. Consultations have taken place with researchers, parliamentarians, civil society, local representatives and others. The result is an agenda for change: the National Plan of Action.

The adoption of a 9<sup>th</sup> Millennium Development goal for Mongolia on human rights, anti-corruption and democracy is a constructive contribution to further development of the MDGs. It also contributes to the multinational learning process of what it takes to make change happen. This example will show to others the importance of the political dimension of development.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

International IDEA is proud to be associated with the work Mongolia has done on Democratic Governance Indicators. Mongolia chose to use the

State of Democracy assessment methodology produced by IDEA as a guide. The State of Democracy in turn was inspired by what Professors David Beetham (present today) and Stuart Weir did in the UK, pioneering the Democratic Audit. The work has been taken further by IDEA's partner: the Human Rights' Center at Essex university and in particular by Dr Todd Landman (also present today).

The State of Democracy methodology is a global public good in the sense that it is free to use for anyone who wishes to do so. It is flexible, can be used big scale or small scale. It can be used by governments or by civil society organisations. It can be used nationwide or in a local context. It can be use by rich and poor alike. It is in itself a democratising instrument because it encourages consultations among various stakeholders inside a country. The ownership is clearly by those who use it. It is a dynamic instrument as it generates ideas and incentives for change as the assessment goes on. We would very much like to encourage more countries and/or organisations to try this approach.

The SoD methodology has developed through application. Various users add to it. A new trend that we can see is that the methodology is taken up by governments. Mongolia is the first such case. Very recently we learnt that the Government of the Netherlands intends to use the methodology to assess the State of Democracy in the Netherlands. In some countries this strengthens the assessment because information might not be easily accessible. It might also strengthen the commitment to address the issues the assessment brings to the surface. Change is most easily initiated where power is situated.

IDEA will respond to the need for a meeting place for the State of Democracy users by opening a State of Democracy website. This will be part of IDEAs website: [www.idea.int](http://www.idea.int). The purpose is to invite all the various users to share their work and their results. We hope the website will be operational in October.

Dear friends,

Less than a year ago I addressed the national conference on the State of democracy in Mongolia, underlining our proposition that democracy can only be supported from the outside, not imported nor exported. Your work is proof to this proposition. You have taken experiences from others and made them your own. In going from words to action you have enriched all of us.

Your work is a reflection of, and reflects on; the position democracy has as a fundamental principle of human rights in the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*. You have taken seriously the mandate and the responsibility to work for the realisation of sustainable democracy globally.

I wish to express our admiration of your hard work and your achievements. Thank you!