



# Press Release

---

## Democracy Forum to Assess Information Revolution's Impact on Democracy

What are the implications of the information technology revolution for democracy and its core values? Will it, as some fear, heighten existing divisions of power and access within and between countries or will it serve as a powerful tool for reducing those inequalities? And what are the opportunities, values and threats of rapid information flow and access for democratic governance?

These and a range of other key issues raised by the IT revolution will in focus at the International IDEA Democracy Forum 2001 to be held in Stockholm 27-29 June, under the title of **'Democracy and the Information Revolution: Opportunities, Values and Threats'**. More than 250 IT specialists and business leaders, election managers, policy makers, development experts and politicians from around the world will gather in Stockholm to participate in the discussions. Keynote speakers at the Forum include: President of Finland **Tarja Halonen**; Deputy Prime Minister of Sweden **Lena Hjelm-Wallén**; EU Commissioner **Erkki Liikanen**; World Bank Vice-President **Mats Karlsson**; Chair of ASP Industry Consortium and Vice President of Citrix Corporation **Traver Gruen-Kennedy**; Spokeswoman of the European Parliament **Lone Dybkjaer**; Grameen Bank President **Muhammad Yunus**; and Harvard University Professor **Pippa Norris**.

Outcomes of the Democracy Forum will include a set of policy recommendations on the use of information and communication technologies (ICTs) to promote democracy. These will be presented to the forthcoming World Economic Forum meeting in Salzburg (1-3 July) and G8 summit in Genoa (15-22 July), in connection with a DOT Force – the G-8 Digital Opportunity Task Force – Report on digital opportunities.

“This year’s Democracy Forum is very timely”, says International IDEA Forum Co-ordinator Jimm Lerch. “In particular, the policy recommendations from the Democracy Forum will serve to compliment and build upon the Plan of Action to be presented by the DOT Force. Issues of e-governance and e-awareness will also be addressed, and the use of them for the promotion of democracy”.

Technology is not the only factor when looking at the impact of ICTs on the promotion of democracy. Issues of access, digital divide and knowledge-sharing must also be considered. “In the modern information society knowledge is the driving force behind the development of whole nations. By bringing the relationship between technological and political development to the forefront, International IDEA's Democracy Forum 2001 is making a timely and welcome contribution to a critical issue for democracy today”, says Lena-Hjelm Wallén, Deputy Prime Minister of Sweden.

The Forum will consist of plenary sessions and a series of five parallel workshops. The workshop themes are:

- **How Governments and Parliaments are Using Information and Communication Technology**
- **Political Expression in the ICT Age - The Role of Political Parties.**
- **Introducing Technology to Elections: A Sustainable Approach**
- **Local Democracy Online**
- **Opening up Authoritarian States**

**Online Discussion Forums** dedicated to each these theme are now running at [www.idea.int](http://www.idea.int)  
In connection with the Forum an **International Media Round Table** is also being held 27-28 June, in association with *the Financial Times* and *Dagens Nyheter*. For details visit [www.idea.int](http://www.idea.int)

### PRACTICAL INFORMATION FOR THE MEDIA

The Forum starts 27 June with an opening ceremony in Stadshuset (Gyllene Salen) and continues 28-29 June at Norra Latin (Stockholm City Conference Centre, Barnhusgatan 14).

#### FORUM PRESS EVENTS

**Media representatives are invited to attend the following:**

\* **Opening ceremony** at 14.30 (Stadshuset, Gyllene Salen) with: **Tarja Halonen**, President of Finland; **Lena Hjelm-Wallen**, Deputy Prime Minister of Sweden; **Thorvald Stoltenberg**, Chairman elect of International IDEA

\* **Press Conferences** at the Norra Latin Conference Centre:

- **Thursday 27 June** 12.30 with: **Traver Gruen-Kennedy**, Chair of ASP Industry Consortium and Vice President of Citrix Corporation; **Lone Dybkjaer**, Spokeswoman, European Parliament; **Muhammad Yunus**, President of Grameen Bank (Bangladesh); **Premesh Chandran**, CEO of *Malaysiakini.com*.

- **Friday 28 June** 12.30 with: **Erkki Liikanen**, EU Commissioner for Enterprise and Information Society; **Bill Drake**, Director, Information Revolution and World Politics Project, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Washington DC; **Patrick Molutsi**, Director of Programmes, International IDEA.

\* **Forum Plenaries & Workshops** (see Forum Programme for details:

[www.idea.int/2001\\_forum/agenda.htm](http://www.idea.int/2001_forum/agenda.htm))

For online media registration: [www.idea.int/2001\\_forum/media/registerMedia.cfm](http://www.idea.int/2001_forum/media/registerMedia.cfm)

**Further details including Forum programme, workshops and plenaries can be found at:**

**[www.idea.int](http://www.idea.int)**

**For more information, contact:**

**Mark Salter, Senior Information Officer**

Tel: 08-698 3714, mobile: 070-429 3750, E-mail: [m.salter@idea.int](mailto:m.salter@idea.int)

**Monika Ericson, Assistant Press and Information Officer**

Tel: 08-698 37 44, mobile: 070-429 3743, E-mail: [m.ericson@idea.int](mailto:m.ericson@idea.int)

---

The International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International IDEA) exists to nurture, sustain and promote democracy around the world. Global in membership and scope, independent of specific national interests, and quick in its response, International IDEA is an intergovernmental organization with a unique mandate - to support the growth of genuine, sustainable democracy.

---

---

**For more information about International IDEA, contact:**

**Mark Salter, Press Officer**

**International IDEA, Strömsborg, 103 34 Stockholm, Sweden**

**Phone +46-8-698 37 00, Fax: +46-8-20 24 22**

**E-mail: [info@idea.int](mailto:info@idea.int) Website: <http://www.idea.int>**