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October/November 2003

Highlights

- **New Political Party Law in Peru**

On 9 October 2003, Peru's first political party law was approved by 44 votes to 43, with five abstentions. Working since February 2002, IDEA and its partners, Transparencia and the Congressional Constitution Commission, have played a key role in bringing concerned parties together and building a consensus, which led to the adoption of the law. IDEA also gave technical assistance for the drafting of the law. The law provides for party authorities and candidates for public election to be elected in open or closed primaries; for a 30 percent gender quota both in lists of candidates for public election and for senior party positions; for limits on private financing and private media exposure so as to encourage equality between political parties. The law should make parties more democratic and transparent and help towards resolving the present crisis regarding the political party system in Peru.

Read More: (http://www.idea.int/whatsnew/whatsnew_Nov_1.htm)

Other News

- **Latin American Political Parties at work on restoring confidence**

Pursuing its work on political parties, IDEA joined forces with the Latin American Parliament (Parlatino), the Pro Tempore Secretariat of the Rio Group and the Peruvian Congress for the organization of a seminar on 9-10 October in Lima Peru to discuss how to strengthen the effectiveness and legitimacy of political parties and their ability to address the concerns of citizens. Present were members of the Parlatino, representatives of political parties and international party foundations. Issues discussed included building a minimum consensus and governance agreements between governments, political parties and civil society; internal party democracy; transparency in broadcasting laws to ensure freedom of speech, the right to information and retort; transparency and regulation of political finances, democracy education etc. On the table was the notion of a new legal and ethical framework for political parties.

Read more about IDEA's work in Latin America: (http://www.idea.int/geo_la.htm)

- **Working with OHCHR on Justice and Reconciliation**

On 26 September, IDEA and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) organized a policy seminar in Geneva, Switzerland, to explore ways of achieving justice and reconciliation in war-torn countries. The day-long session, entitled 'From Divided Past to Shared Future: Reconciliation in Post-Conflict Societies', examined current trends, recent experiences and challenges to national and international initiatives that focus on truth, justice and reconciliation, especially in post-conflict societies. Particular attention was given to practical lessons gained from promoting reconciliation in post-conflict countries like Peru, Sierra Leone and Timor-Leste, as well as to broader policy issues, such as the role of the international community in supporting local reconciliation processes. IDEA's Handbook on Reconciliation After Violent Conflict was also presented during the seminar by its lead author, Professor Luc Huyse. IDEA Board Member Ambassador Kuniko Inoguchi spoke on Reconciliation and Democratic Development.

Read more (http://www.idea.int/whatsnew/whatsnew_Nov_2.htm)

- **Election Rights for Citizens with Disabilities**

IDEA, in partnership with the International Foundation for Election Systems (IFES), the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) and a number of disability organizations, came together in Geneva on 21-23 September 2003 with a cross disciplinary group of experts to draft model legislative provisions on equal access to electoral and political processes. This was to follow up on the adoption of a Bill of Electoral Rights for people with disabilities in Sigtuna, Sweden in 2002. The Geneva meeting also agreed on a promotion strategy to get action by parliaments around the world. Disability organizations will need to play a leading role in this, while IDEA will address the problems and uncertainties of electoral management bodies (EMBs) about practicalities. IDEA plans to develop a training module targeted at EMBs as part of the BRIDGE curriculum material for electoral administrators (<http://www.bridge-project.org>) with particular attention to the conditions in developing and post conflict countries.

Read more: (<http://www.electoralaccess.org>)

- **More BRIDGE Training for Mozambique Elections**

In preparation for this November local government elections in Mozambique, IDEA organized, in cooperation with the Mozambican Technical Election Administration Secretariat (STAE), a 2 day training course for the country's 11 Provincial Electoral Commissions (CPE) and members of the 33 District Electoral Commissions (CDE). Funded by Finland and Ireland, the initiative used course materials based on the BRIDGE Electoral Administrators' Training Course. This builds on earlier training initiatives with STAE's staff over the past year also using BRIDGE.

- **Electoral Readiness and Credibility in the SADC Region**

On 20-21 October, IDEA and the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Parliamentary Forum hosted a roundtable in Port Louis, Mauritius to review "electoral readiness" in the SADC region, given the important elections due in 2004 in five SADC countries, and more generally to discuss issues of credibility, structure and functioning of EMBs in the region. Participants included senior officials of the electoral management bodies (EMBs) of nine SADC countries as well as NGO representatives of the SADC Election Support Network. The Electoral Institute of Southern Africa (EISA) played a key role as facilitator during the roundtable. IDEA Board Member and former President of Mauritius Mr Cassam Uteem opened the roundtable.

Read more (http://www.idea.int/newsletters/October2003/SADC_elections.pdf).

- **Capacity Building for the Interim Afghan Electoral Commission**

As part of its advisory services and at the request of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), IDEA took part in a joint field mission with IFES and the AEC, in October 2003, to develop a comprehensive capacity-building programme for the six members of the Interim Afghan Electoral Commission (IAEC). Drawing on their existing training materials, such as the BRIDGE and IFES' Basic Election Administration Training (BEAT), a programme addressing the unique needs and priorities of the IAEC was developed, covering election administration, operational procedures as well as generic management. It will be implemented through internships; peer mentoring; regional cooperation and networking of EMBs. The programme will shortly be presented to key donors to Afghanistan.

- **Afghans meet East Europeans**

As part of the above initiative, IDEA coordinated a visit to London for three of the six newly appointed members of the IAEC for an introduction to the work of election commissioners and EMBs. The visit was planned to coincide with the annual conference of the Association of Central and Eastern European Election Officials (ACEEEO), giving the commissioners from Afghanistan the opportunity to meet and discuss with EMB members and election experts from different parts of the world.

- **Networking on practicalities - Thailand hosts election officials**

IDEA participated in the 'Second Electoral Officials International Conference' co-organized by the Election Commission of Thailand and the AEC, on 'election strategies for free and fair elections', with a particular focus on the practical work of EMBs. The conference, held on 2-3 October in Chiang Mai, devoted to networking and exchange of experience, looked at voter registration, civic/voter education and the use of technology in election administration. IDEA gave an overview of voter registration, presenting IDEA tools in this context, such as ACE (<http://www.aceproject.org>), EPIC (<http://www.epicproject.org>), and the IDEA Guidelines for Reviewing the Legal Framework of Elections. (http://www.idea.int/publications/guidelines/intl_elec_standards_2002_11.pdf).

- **Academics puzzle over electoral behaviour - CSES-IDEA meeting**

On 3-4 October 2003, IDEA hosted a plenary meeting, in Bålsta, Sweden for the academic research network constituted by the Comparative Study of Electoral Systems (CSES), a collaborative programme of cross-national research on elections and electoral behaviour conducted in over 50 countries around the world. Drawing on its work on electoral system design (<http://www.idea.int/esd/index.cfm>) and voter participation (<http://www.idea.int/vt/index.cfm>), IDEA chaired a session on the issue of declining voter turnout worldwide, the underlying factors and possible responses, with papers by Pippa Norris, Jon Pammet, Andrew Russell and Richard Rose. IDEA plans to form a group of experts to be tasked with promoting further research in the field of voter turnout, as a first step towards the development of practical tools for legislators, EMBs and other stakeholders

Read more: (<http://www.umich.edu/~cses/plancom/module3/2003plenary/2003plenary.htm>)

- **Women in parliament - IDEA's Handbook makes waves with regional editions**

In Caracas ...

At the initiative of IDEA Board Member Ms Lourdes Flores Nano, IDEA hosted an event on gender and politics on 23 October 2003, with a panel of six Venezuelan experts and other experts from the region. Organized with the Mujeres Demócrata-Cristianas de América (MUDCA), the meeting aimed at highlighting the Venezuelan and Latin American experiences on the issue of female participation in politics. The case of Argentina was presented by Ms Elisa Carrió, an Argentinean MP and co-author of the new Spanish version of IDEA's handbook on Women in Parliament (http://www.idea.int/gender/wip/spanish_regional.htm)

In Buenos Aires ...

IDEA participated, at the invitation of the Instituto Social y Político de la Mujer (ISPM) of Argentina, in the 'Women's Citizenship Week of 2003'. The week's activities sought to commemorate Women's Citizenship Day (on 6 September). IDEA Board member, Ms Lourdes Flores Nano, presented the Spanish version of the handbook and IDEA's project on gender quotas (<http://www.idea.int/quota>).

In Dakar...

The 2002 French version of the Women in Parliament (http://www.idea.int/gender/wip/french_regional.htm) was presented and discussed in a meeting co-chaired by IDEA and the Institute for Multiparty Democracy (IMD). The meeting, held as part of the Liberal International's annual conference in Dakar, Senegal, focused on the political representation of women, the issue of quotas and role of political parties in enhancing female political participation.

- **How to assess democracy in West Africa**

On 27 and 28 October, International IDEA and the Center for Democratic Governance (CDG) in Burkina Faso co-hosted a workshop in Ouagadougou on Comparative Experiences on Democracy Assessments in West Africa. The event, held in cooperation with UNDP, was attended by representatives of UNDP, United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) and the EU as well as speakers from the Center for Democratic Development (CDP) in Ghana, the Nigeria Development Policy Center (DPC) and CAPE Benin [Cellule D'Analyse de Politique Economique]. Issues discussed included the findings of the democracy assessments done in Benin, Nigeria, Ghana and Burkina Faso, the difficulties of evaluating democracy in West Africa and the adaptation of methodologies for democracy assessment to the West African context without compromising universal standards. The workshop, sponsored by the Government of Finland, served to raise awareness on the trends, prospects and threats to democracy at national and regional levels and provided an input to larger dialogue initiatives at continental level such as the African Peer Review Mechanism of NEPAD (New Partnership for African Development).

...Did You Know?

- IDEA and the Pro Tempore Secretariat of the Rio Group has just released a publication on Democratic Governance and Political Parties in Latin America. The full publication is available at (http://www.idea.int/publications/Latin_America/Political_Parties.htm)
- IDEA is publishing Democracy at the Local Level: a guide to the South Caucasus. A PDF file is available on IDEA's website at (http://www.idea.int/publications/democracy_at_local_level/DLL_in_SC/dll_in_SC.htm).