

Press Release



International IDEA Secretary-General To Step Down in 2002

The Secretary-General of International IDEA Mr. Bengt Säve-Söderbergh has informed the Board of Directors of IDEA that after more than seven years in this job, he would like to step down in 2002. The announcement was made in a letter to the Chairman of the Board of International IDEA, Mr. Thorvald Stoltenberg.

“For me it has been a great privilege to be part of a very special process, of seeing a new intergovernmental institution grow from a vision into an organisation with a great variety of work around the world”, said Säve-Söderbergh. “After a year of change processes almost completed, the Institute should be well prepared for new and complex tasks ahead. I therefore believe that this is the right moment to look for new leadership of IDEA.”

“IDEA has been met with great interest and there is a strong demand for its services. Its work and products have often been praised”, Säve-Söderbergh continued. “The mandate of IDEA is certainly most complex and delicate and there are no quick fixes connected to achieving its objectives. Trying to find a balance between expectations, patience and capacity to deliver has been a great challenge. Setting up the first intergovernmental body with its Headquarters in Stockholm has been another.”

On behalf of the Board, Stoltenberg expressed respect and understanding for Säve-Söderbergh’s decision after many years of demanding service to the Institute.

Stoltenberg said the success and very existence of International IDEA are due to the visionary and energetic contribution of Säve-Söderbergh and he indicated that it has been gratifying and fascinating to observe the evolution of International IDEA into a viable institution. International IDEA enjoys wide international respect and support, and is actually the first and so far the only truly international body of its kind, Stoltenberg went on to note.

The fact that the demand for International IDEA’s services far exceeds its capacity may be regretted, but mostly it demonstrates that the Institute was founded at the right historical time and that its mode of operation meets real needs in newly established democracies, Stoltenberg said. He went on to state that Säve-Söderbergh deserved high credits for his ability to transform an idea, and ideals, into practical and useful reality.

Stoltenberg noted that the Board would ask for Säve-Söderbergh’s co-operation in facilitating the transfer of duties to a new Secretary-General, and requested that he remain in office until a successor is in place.

The full text of both letters is available from the Information Division

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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 of genuine, sustainable response, International IDEA is an intergovernmental organization with a unique mandate - to support the growth of democracy.