

DEMOCRACY AND REGRESSION: CHALLENGES FOR THE NEW MILLENNIUM

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Executive Summary

There appears to be a global trend towards democratization and a greater acceptance of democracy as a universal value. However, this trend has not been firmly consolidated and the universality of democracy still begs several questions. These questions relate to the institutionalization of democracy within states to ensure the longevity of the system, the threshold and quality of governance that must be secured before a state can be acclaimed as a "democratic" state as well as the required anticipation of the challenges, paradoxes and contradictions that emerge both within democracies and among democracies that must be addressed.

While there have been waves of democratization and more countries are democratic and more people live under democracy than during any other historical period, we cannot be over-confident that democracy is and will remain the defining and most enduring characteristic of our times. While there have been high expectations that governments elected on the basis of democracy will ensure a better (meaning economically prosperous, politically peaceful, stable, egalitarian and free) world, the post-war record has been mixed in this respect. Although there are expectations, and even statistics that democratic governments are likely to be less corrupt, more compassionate, less likely to go to war with each other or against their own citizens, it is not a universal rule and is poor consolation for countries whose governments do not fall into "most likely" paradigm.

The benefits of democracy are not always enjoyed evenly both within and between states and in this new world order characterized by economic liberalization, income inequalities within and between states are ever increasing. Poverty and illiteracy limit the full exercise of political rights and freedoms and it is to be expected that this will impact negatively on the practice of democracy?

There are further expectations that the trend towards democratization have an impact on international relations and will contribute to greater stability in the world order, a reduction in conflicts and inequalities. Yet, the ability of national democracies to protect the state and its citizens is being challenged. National governments, despite being democratically elected – appear to lack the strength and integrity to maintain their accountability to national electorates in the face of globalization.

Democratically elected governments are both accountable and responsive to their electorates. They are expected to prioritize on their agendas, national stability, human and

social development and economic growth. However, in many transitional regimes, democracy appears to simply provide new space for the contesting of old rivalries and masked antagonisms.

The “democracy wave” must be viewed from the prism of realism. Not all countries undertaking the transition to democracy likely to consolidate their democracies and some, even many of them may simply stagnate in a state of limbo. What is more, some, (perish the thought), will even regress and slide back to authoritarianism, (with feudal or militant nationalists at the helm) or military dictatorships.

The recognition that new democracies are vulnerable calls for a re-definition of the nature and scope of international developmental assistance. The international community must strategize on how it can assist countries effectively in the move towards democratization and in the consolidation of democracy. Countries with weak institutions and disadvantageous historical legacies are better prepared for democracy and this calls for concerted and sustained efforts, both nationally and internationally. These are the emerging challenges for this rapidly democratizing world in the 21st century.

The greatest threat that could halt or reverse the move towards democratic development will be made by ethnic and religious fundamentalism. How the international order with its integrated capital and labor markets and trade flows will respond to the after shocks of a wave of democratic regression remains to be determined. Possible scenarios could include a spate of wars to re-install democracy or the encouragement of national insurrections to capture government by democrats. This begs the question if the reactions will be the same if democracy is reversed by right-wing military dictatorships?

Attempts to limit democracy to a system of majoritarian rule have compromised its definition. The protection of human rights and freedoms on the basis of equality are integral to democracy. The notion that human rights and freedoms include political, civic, cultural, social and economic rights, and they are indivisible is also integral to democratic freedom. Democracy is the only political system that is required to promote human rights as a matter of principle and this perhaps should form the basis of our shared understanding of democratic ideals.

The century-long move towards democracy has yielded a diverse array of democratic practices and institutions. There is no single model of democracy to choose from. There are several types or forms of democratic governments and the "best" choice of government, or the best practice of democracy in the final analysis, is only the "most appropriate" one that works best in the context of a given country. The choice of political systems is vital for the effective transition to and consolidation of democracy. Yet there are no "Rules of Thumb" that can be applied to such choices. While on the one hand, political outcomes cannot be predicted with certainty; it is possible to anticipate the broad implications of institutional choices. However, it is the mix and combination of institutional choices that are most significant. Much more empirical work must be done to understand the implications of various models of government and the combined effect of

political institutions and electoral systems on the working of democracy in a given national context.

While the trends towards democratization paint a promising picture of the world, it is necessary to go beyond global trends and understand regional as well as national situations. It is also necessary to be more realistic. Old patterns of authoritarianism and authoritarian institutions don't vanish immediately with the holding of elections. Democratic transitions may be imperfect. They may stagnate or regress.

Democratic consolidation is not inevitable. The probabilities of states managing the transition to democracy effectively are affected by the unique political experiences and legacies of each state. The impact of communism, imperialism or militarisation on a country, the degree of political democratization that had begun to emerge prior to the transition, the degree of market reforms and the extent to which external factors are available to support the transition. - all these are determining factors.

An assessment of the viability of a democratic transition to consolidate itself may depend on a cluster of factors. These factors include historical experiences of a country, its prevailing political, social and economic realities, the structure of the social forces operating, political, social and economic institutions that were adopted before, and during the transition and thereafter, the political leadership among others. It is a complex brew.

A critical contribution to strengthening democracy could come from periodic, national as well as international efforts to audit the performance of democracy on the ground - to determine how responsive and equal a given political system is, as these are the key elements of democratic legitimacy. This will take us beyond the trends to understand the practice of democracy on the ground. It will also provide a better appreciation of national fault lines - whether countries deliver more effectively on electoral accountability than on post-electoral accountability; whether countries provide political rights that are in effect unenforceable due to social or economic constraints and whether social and economic inequalities skew effective political participation. Such audits or assessments are also an effective basis for national dialogues on reforms to support sustainable democracy.

Democracy is vulnerable to challenges both from outside the system and within the system. It can be undermined by democratically elected leadership or by its mass base. It is vulnerable to a sudden collapse as well as an insidious and incremental erosion of institutions and practices over a period of time. Democracies can be brought down by political events and actors (such as a change in government through elections and its replacement by illiberal political leadership, by coups, etc). They can also be undermined by economic failures and social factors (such as social unrest stemming from inequalities, divisive ethnic and religious conflicts and failures in nation-building).

Not all regression takes place in one fell swoop. In as much as there is movement towards democracy there may be movements away from democracy - a backsliding that does not quite deserve the epitaph of "regression" but is nevertheless a move away from democracy and may require intermediate responses.

The catalytic events that activate a transition to democracy or towards democratic regression can come in varied forms. There is a tendency to see catalysts that support democratization as positive events and catalysts that set in motion a slide to regression as regressive events, although the event itself may be of the same genre. A sudden leadership change due to the death of a leader or electoral results, natural disasters and economic crises may affect the transition to democracy positively or negatively. Although civil wars and coups are often categorized as sudden and unexpected events, the political and other conditions for them (political instability, regime failure, heightening levels of ethnic or religious conflict) may in fact be building up well before the event takes place.

Globalization poses distinct challenges as well as opportunities for democracy. It has widened the free access to information and the dissemination of opinion. It promotes economic freedom. Yet, its focus is on an “efficiency” centered model of development as opposed to a “people-centered” model of freedom as development. Democracy is about people’s participation on the basis of equality and is not limited purely to economic efficiency. Those who lack access to information technologies will be severely marginalized in this new environment. Such issues must be addressed as a critical aspect of global democratic governance.

With globalization of trade and finance, the economic sovereignty of nations is rapidly eroding. Global economic market players determine, in the final analysis, the parameters of national economic development. They do so by directing trade and investment flows resulting in potentially destabilizing shifts in unemployment and increased income inequalities. With these directions come rapid and unanticipated shifts in unemployment, increases the prospects for violence and instability. There are realistic fears that communities that are uncompetitive and marginalized in this new paradigm, will retreat into exclusive nationalisms that may even find violent expression.

The challenges in the 21st century require national governments to remain relevant and accountable to their constituencies and deliver basic goods and services in a world dominated by corporations, capital markets and free trade. Major problems of governance in the 21st century will be within democracy. The pressures of race and ethnicity, religious fundamentalism, of technology, capitalism, the anomie and social dislocation created by global society will undermine social and political stability, if unaddressed. How to consolidate democracy in ethnically and culturally divided states; provide for adequate political representation and freedom to sub-national entities even as political and economic integration is taking place at a supra-national level, prevent the rise of illiberal democracies - these will remain real challenges.

For global efforts to support democracy to be effective, it is necessary to develop global partnerships that are committed to working on this over time. Support for democracy is a lifetime commitment. It requires a programmatic approach and cannot be viewed as a project or individual enterprise. Democracy has been advanced through a range of advocacy programs as well as support programs. Democracy support has come in

different and even controversial forms with the use of negative sanctions and positive incentives provided by the promoters of democracy. Originally democracy promotion was seen as a Western enterprise, with the former colonial powers (especially the United Kingdom) and the United States taking the lead. However, the democracy promotion / support network is much wider today. Multilateral agencies and international organizations too have recognized the importance of stable and participatory governments and have contributed to this enterprise. Democracy which was formerly introduced to countries by force, is now tied to bi-lateral and multilateral aid packages that provide governments with incentives to reform their legislation and practices, and it has included training programs, technical assistance and even funds for infrastructure development. A range of private foundations and intergovernmental organizations also provide assistance by way of information on possible democratic options. They work through strengthening networks of national actors, providing comparative information on models and systems as options, and encourage the review and renewal of institutions, and the integration of Democracy in the lives of citizens through education.

Global Trend Towards Democracy

Amartya Sen had no difficulty in determining that the most significant development of the twentieth century was the rise of democracy. According to Sen, democracy has come to be recognized both as a universal value - an intrinsic good in its own right, and as the pre-eminently acceptable form of governance.² Even distinctly undemocratic governments claim either to be "democratic" (*vide* North Korea which goes as the "Democratic Peoples' Republic of Korea") or they claim to strive for democracy, assuring both the international community and their own peoples, that democracy will be "installed" when the conditions are "most appropriate". This is the frequent claim of the Burmese military, in periodic declarations that it is merely a caretaker government seeking a transition to democracy - when the time is deemed to be "ripe" for democracy.

Democracy has become a dominant belief in the contemporary world. The world was described as awash with democracy - the third wave of democracy³ no less - and in the general climate of world opinion, democracy has now achieved the status of being generally right and largely recognized as "the only game in town".

The advance of democracy was thought to be secured largely by the demise of historic ideological rivalries. Absolute monarchies have been dispensed with and have been replaced by parliaments, republics and by constitutional monarchies. The defeat of Nazism, fascism, and the general decline of mass mobilization models have been a contributing force. De-colonization introduced many new entrants into the Democracy Club from Asia, Africa and the Caribbean. Authoritarian and military regimes in Europe (Greece, Spain, Portugal) were replaced in the 1970's by democratically elected governments, as were military regimes in Central America and Latin America. Many of the authoritarian regimes in Asia too, (Taiwan, Philippines, Thailand, Korea and Indonesia) have been replaced by democratically elected governments. The 1980's and 1990's were characterized by the fall of the Berlin Wall that discredited communism as a competing ideology. The dismantling of the Soviet Union created a further rush of democratic states with the Newly Independent Republics opting to choose their governments through popular ballot.

In 1900 there were no countries in the world that had governments elected on the basis of universal franchise through competitive multi-party elections. Today there are 120 governments elected on this basis - the highest number of democracies ever and a gain of three over the last year.⁴

Recognizing the challenges facing emerging democracies

This trend towards democracy, the increase in the mass of people living under some form of democratic rule certainly helps to reinforce the optimistic belief in the pre-eminence of democracy. But as we have seen the waxing and waning of other powerful beliefs and political systems, can we be as confident that democracy is here to stay? We may well ask - does the march of history indicate that democracy will be the defining feature of the World Order? Will it last forever?

Besides the questions of consolidation and institutionalization of democracy, other challenges relate to the performance of democracy on several fronts. Will governments elected on the basis of democracy ensure a better (meaning economically prosperous and politically peaceful and stable) world? Will democratic governments be less corrupt, more compassionate, less likely to go to war with each other or against their own citizens?

Will the benefits of democracy be enjoyed evenly both within and between states? In this new world order income inequalities within and between states are ever increasing, and poverty and illiteracy limit the full exercise of political rights and freedoms. Will this impact negatively on the practice of democracy?

Will the trend towards democratization have an impact on international relations? Will it contribute to greater stability in the world order, a reduction in conflicts and inequalities? Will democracy - which advocates political and economic freedom and rights protect the individual in the face of globalization? How will the strength and integrity of democratic national governments be maintained their accountability to national electorates be maintained in the face of globalization?

Does democracy spell national stability, prosperity and economic growth? Or will democracy simply provide the space for the contesting of old rivalries and masked antagonisms?

Are all countries undertaking the transition to democracy likely to consolidate their democracies or will some, or many of them simply stagnate in a state of limbo? Or, (perish the thought), will some of them even regress and slide back to authoritarianism, (with feudal or militant nationalists at the helm) or military dictatorships?

Can the international community assist countries effectively in the move towards democratization and in the consolidation of democracy? How can countries with weak institutions and disadvantageous historical legacies be better prepared for democracy? What are the emerging challenges for this rapidly democratizing world in the 21st century? If the trend towards democratization is reversed, how will the international order with its integrated capital and labor markets and trade flows respond to the after shocks of a wave of democratic regression? Will there be a spate of wars to re-install democracy or will national insurrections be encouraged to capture government by international supporters of democracy?

Challenges facing established democracies

While the challenges facing emerging democracies are of one genre, established and well-consolidated democracies face challenges of a different type. Voter apathy and a drift away from active political participation may also undermine the system, leaving government vulnerable to capture by single-agenda groups or other conservative and intolerant forces. Established western democracies that have embraced globalization and

free trade are less enthusiastic supporters of the free movement of labor. Many western democracies, most recently demonstrated by developments in Austria, have strong and enlarging constituencies of illiberal groups, mobilizing against immigrants and around symbols of protective nationalism. The impact of this trend on consolidated democracies must be addressed.

This is surely the most appropriate historical moment and the best forum at which we should ask ourselves - What is the performance and the promise of these waves of democratization? I believe that some "hard" questions should be asked and that the historical records should be reviewed with a dose of realism, if we are to learn anything from the times in which we live.

What Is Democracy?

Too many people (especially governments) view democracy as the equivalent of majority rule. Indeed, this minimalist view of democracy, stressing the absolute sovereignty of the majority, expressed through elections. Many governments resent the scrutiny of their post-election performance in the protection of political and economic rights, the rule of law or in the delivery of public goods. They see it as unwarranted interference. Holding on to the principle of the absolute sovereignty of the people has led to a centralization of power and authority, and the exclusion of political, religious, ethnic and racial minorities. This in turn has led large segments of alienated people to resort to protest outside the "majoritarian / democratic" framework, losing faith in democracy as they know it. Elected governments in Peru, Zimbabwe and Malaysia to name but a few have claimed to represent the will of the majority and have eroded the powers of many political institutions such as the courts and the protections of many other sectors, including ethnic and religious minorities.

The greatest fallacies that underpinned popular notions of democracy include the notions that intemperate majority rule is democratic, that elections alone guarantee a democracy or that the holding of elections are the equivalent of securing democracy. Democracy is more than majority rule. Democracy is a complex phenomenon. It is a process (for constituting a government – through elections based on a range of possible electoral formulae); it includes institutions of representation based on law (parliaments, presidencies, unitary and federal systems of government) and a unique set of values (guaranteeing freedom and equality). Integral to the concept of Democracy is the concept of freedom. Democracy is seen as the only political system guaranteeing human freedom. This includes civic, political, economic, social and cultural freedoms. This freedom is guaranteed on the basis of equality - to men and women, to members of all ethnic, religious groups and to holders of diverse political views - without distinction.

It is not unexpected that there should be varied conceptions and misconceptions of democracy.

It took the United Nations more than 50 years to acknowledge explicitly that the links between the principles enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the founding principles of a democratic society were indissoluble.⁵ It took the UN more than 50 years to acknowledge explicitly that democracy, development and respect for all human rights and fundamental freedoms are interdependent; and that the right to full

participation so firmly upheld in all UN resolutions, in international law and instruments is really democracy by another phrase.

Democracy is the only political system that guarantees as a matter of principle, a range of political, civic, social, cultural and economic rights and freedoms. Historically these rights and freedoms have not been secured in any other political system.⁶ For fifty years the UN felt unable to publicly marry respect for national sovereignty with the rights of the citizens it seeks to protect through universal human rights standards. It did so indirectly through a normative framework packaging the UN Charter, Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples to constitute a type of UN Bill of Democratic Rights and Duties. This was given further expression through international covenants and Conventions guaranteeing political, civic, social, cultural and economic rights. We have indeed come a long way from those cautious times.

The protection of human rights and freedoms on the basis of equality are integral to democracy. The notion that human rights and freedoms include political, civic, cultural, social and economic rights, and they are indivisible is also integral to democratic freedom. Democracy is the only political system that can protect and promote human rights. This perhaps should form the basis of our shared understanding of democratic ideals.

Although 120 countries (or 2/3 of the world's country's) have achieved democratic rule through elections only 85 countries (44 percent) were classified as Free, providing their citizens with a broad range of civil liberties and political rights that come close to the democratic ideals.⁷

This perhaps reinforces the view that elections *per se* do not guarantee freedom in the political and economic realm. Elections are a necessary condition for democracy. They are not however, a sufficient condition for democracy and for political, civic, social, and economic freedom. One of the many challenges in the new millennium will be to broaden and deepen the advance of human freedom through democracy. This requires preserving and improving the democratic freedoms in "Free" countries in the face of new social, political and economic challenges. It requires enabling democratic freedoms to take root in the 48 countries that are "Not Free" and improving the quality and extent of freedom in the 59 countries that enjoy partial freedom may be the most visible challenge. Promotion and support of democracy must go beyond the support of democratic freedom as an ideal to practical assistance that will help communities to realize and experience democratic freedom in their daily lives.

Complacency and apathy is as great a challenge to democracy, because freedom can be lost by neglect as much as it can be taken away by force. In advanced / mature democracies the challenges that undermine the political system include public apathy, low voter turnouts and a decline in participation in political parties. There is a growing view that national governments simply don't matter in the same way in the face of globalization. Governments have less control over the economy, provide fewer services

to the community, cease to be the largest employer and appear to be less able to guarantee the security and welfare of the community.

In partly free democracies, where there is a commitment to democracy, governments may be vulnerable to on-going civil wars, domination by hegemonic institutions and social forces, pervasive violence and corruption.

Models of democracy

The century-long move towards democracy has yielded a diverse array of democratic practices and institutions. There are no single models of democracy to choose from. There are several types or forms of democratic governments and the "best" choice of government, or the best practice of democracy in the final analysis, is only the "most appropriate" one that works best in the context of a given country.

Democratic choices include: presidential as well as parliamentary systems, and governments chosen on the basis of direct representation, proportional representation and even a mix of the two. There are unitary, federal and confederal political systems based on written and unwritten constitutions. Legal systems are equally varied with common law based legal systems and civil code based systems. Political party structures vary in democratic countries and are based on uni-polar, bi-polar and multi-polar party systems. Democracies have activist judiciaries with wide powers of constitutional review and interpretation and judiciaries that have a more restricted role in judicial review. Some democracies set thresholds for parliamentary representation permitting absolute majorities in some cases or qualified majorities in others.

While political outcomes cannot be predicted with the certainty of weather forecasts, it is possible to anticipate the broad implications of institutional choices. However, it is the mix and combination of institutional choices that are most significant. It is not the Presidential system or parliamentary system that are in themselves the critical determinant. For instance, a presidential system in a unitary state with a non-activist judiciary and a legislature chosen on the basis of First-past the post elections will clearly operate differently to a presidential system in a federal or confederal political system, with elections based on proportional representation.

The choice of political systems is vital for the effective transition to and consolidation of democracy. Yet there are no "Rules of Thumb" that can be applied to such choices. What turns out, with the benefit of hindsight, to be a "Best Practice" in country "A" may have inimical results in country "B". Poor institutional choices or practices are often the foundations for the unraveling of a democratic government (as demonstrated in the tragic case of Sri Lanka). This is often the most vital arena in which newly democratizing countries require assistance - to understand the need to provide for transitional arrangements to come out of a political morass such as a civil war, prolonged military dictatorship, or communist domination, anticipate the potential implications of longer term choices, and the processes by which to draw in the support of critical segments of the community and follow through on reforms.

Beyond Trends - Understanding the Reality & Facing the Challenges of Democracy Resilience & Pervasiveness of Authoritarian institutions and practices

While there has indeed been a surge in the number of countries that have held elections but not all of these countries have gone beyond that first democratic impulse. In many countries, the governments that were installed by that first election have not been able to dismantle all of the authoritarian institutions that underpinned its non-democratic past and in some instances authoritarians have simply re-cast themselves, re-grouping to contest elections and re-enter the new political paradigm.

Several countries that were part of the third wave of democracy have not gone beyond the gains of their first elections. Elections have not always led to the election of democrats and newly elected governments have often been made up of old authoritarians, who represent their messages of authoritarianism and control through a new idiom. For instance, the communist party remains significant in many post-communist countries (Belarus) and elections in many post communist countries simply brought in old autocrats reconstituted as elected democrats (Croatia under Tjman). Many countries find it difficult to put their authoritarian pasts (or institutions) behind them completely, and these institutions (such as the military in Pakistan) merely wait in the wings for democracy to unravel and provide them with the opportunity to intervene in the political process - yet again. Even more disturbing is the tendency in many multi-ethnic states, for electoral democracy to lead to the marginalisation and complete exclusion of minority religious or ethnic groups, sowing the dragon's teeth for further political instability.

Democratic Consolidation is Not Inevitable

It is necessary to be aware that the collapse of authoritarian regimes does not necessarily and inevitably lead to democracy or democratic consolidation any more than a holding of elections leads to democracy. A consolidated democracy is only one among the possible outcomes of the collapse of an authoritarian regime.

Even if democracy is established through an election it may not necessarily be consolidated. Under certain conditions, democratic institutions may systematically generate outcomes that cause some politically important forces to opt for authoritarianism. For instance, weak parliaments that are unable to deal effectively with poverty and underdevelopment or ethnic and religious conflicts may give way to ultra-nationalist leaders or military control (directly or indirectly) or oligarchic control of major political institutions.

A transition to democracy must be distinguished from a consolidation of democracy. Often, authoritarian regimes give way to democratization without a pervasive democratic culture and democratic institutions may be uneven and incomplete. Important elements vital for a democracy may be badly impaired or missing (e.g.. Freedom of the press, assembly etc) or democratic institutions may be spread unevenly across the country, present in some regions and extremely weak or non-existent in others. Representative institutions may be so ineffectual that the chief executive makes all-important decisions. In such cases, authoritarian rule is replaced by "delegative democracy". This has been the

case in countries such as Argentina, Peru, Brazil and Bolivia. In many cases, communism was replaced through elections by ultra-nationalist authoritarianism.

Need to develop realistic expectations of democracy

Democracies are not homogeneous and can be graded and distinguished.⁸ Doing so may develop realistic expectations of the potential and performance of these systems. The strengths of democracies vary. Democracies range from the well-consolidated democratic regimes (Norway, Sweden, Denmark) to "semi democratic"⁹ and to "low quality democracies"¹⁰. They include democracies with hegemonic party systems,¹¹ and pseudo democracies¹² that have formally democratic institutions, but where the political behavior of its leadership reveals authoritarian tendencies. There are also totalitarian regimes that repress all forms of autonomous structures and processes but claim nevertheless, to be committed to democracy and securing the rights of its people. The lowest common denominator that all these regimes rely on is the resort to periodic elections to constitute their national legislatures. Looking behind the façade may help make the initial determination of what is likely to prevail, and what will not.

Democratic elections usher in regimes that could fall into one of three categories: i.e. stable, partially stable and unstable regimes. Democracy does not always guarantee regime stability and while it opens up many possibilities of wider participation and inclusion it may also create political uncertainties in the short term. Democratic elections may provide a stable regime, whose institutionalization; level and breadth of popular legitimacy make it highly likely to persist. Democratic elections may also install a partially stable regime that is neither fully secure nor in danger of imminent collapse. The institutions of a partially stable regime may acquire over time, some measure of depth, flexibility and value but not enough to ensure secure passage through severe challenges. Democratic elections may also install an unstable regime, which is highly vulnerable to breakdown or overthrow in periods of uncertainty and stress.

Not all transitions ridding the third wave of democracy will consolidate. Some will, others may stagnate and yet others may regress. However, there are factors besides the laws of tide and nature that may explain these events and this does have implications for a world that has come to accept democracy as the only game in town.

As a matter of policy, it is important to assess the starting block from which the process of democratization began, by analyzing the process of democratic transition and consolidation. This process of assessment helps to identify the fault lines of weak democracies, anticipate reversals and provide strategic assistance and measures to stem the tide - where possible.

The recent waves of democratization have been from post-colonial states (e.g. Nigeria, Indonesia), from post Communist Eastern Europe (e.g.. Poland, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary), the Soviet Union and its former Republics (Georgia, Belarus, Ukraine etc) from military dictatorships in Central and Latin America and from Asian authoritarianism (Taiwan, Korea, Thailand, Indonesia). While they may have ridden a

common wave to democracy through elections, they have done so - to stretch the metaphor somewhat - on differing surf boards and they will surely experience the ride differently.

The probabilities of these states managing the transition to democracy (even those that are transiting to democracy from the same region (e.g.. From Eastern Europe) and from similar experiences - from post communism) are affected by the unique political experiences and legacies of each state. The impact of communism or imperialism or militarization on a country, the degree of political democratization that had begun to emerge prior to the transition, the degree of market reforms that were undertaken in the given state and the extent to which external factors are available to support the transition. - all these are determining factors that signify if a transition to democracy may eventually lead to a consolidation of democracy.¹³ There is greater confidence that the ex-GDR, the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland will consolidate their transitions to democracy. Their relatively higher levels of economic development, effective political organizations and support from Germany (in the case of the GDR) and the European Community for these respective countries, combined to support the transition to democracy more effectively.

Some countries undertake the transition with relatively homogeneous populations (Hungary) whereas others undertake the transitions with bleeding and open ethnic antagonisms that undermine both the state and the fledgling democracy as is the case in Nigeria and Russia. Many of these countries had fragile or no political institutions that could support a transition to, and eventual consolidation of democracy. Many are challenged with managing an overloaded agenda for transformation. This includes reconciling divisive ethnic and national rivalries, fending off threats from oligarchies and vested interests such as the military or communist party. Besides coping with a lack of democratic leadership and lack of supportive democratic institutions (such as a free media, political parties, an independent judiciary and a well-organized or supportive civil society) they are challenged to manage a transition to democracy with a fragmented polity, an institutional deficit as well as a financial deficit. The events in the Balkans and in Russia have laid bare the fragility of the transition process in countries faced with these problems. Comparisons can be drawn of the process in India, which embarked on institutionalising the state and democratic government after Independence while coping with the human devastation caused by Partition. India though weakened by the religious and ethnic conflicts had strong democratic political leadership and state institutions that could tide it through the process - phenomena that many of the post communist countries appear to lack.

All this points to the fact that an assessment of the viability of a democratic transition to consolidate itself may depend on a cluster of factors that include historical experiences of a country, its prevailing political, social and economic realities, the structure of the social forces operating, political, social and economic institutions that are adopted during the transition and thereafter, the political leadership among others. It is a complex brew.

Democratic consolidation at its very minimum requires two electoral cycles to establish a tentative pattern of alternating power. Even so, a democracy may not be secure after a period of 10 years, any more than a marriage is safe from the passing of "the seven year itch!" Patience in working with, as well as in assessing the process of democratization is vital. Consolidation is rarely a linear movement that follows a neat upward trajectory.

Providing support for emerging democracies

Support for emerging democracies and countries in transition must be strategic and sustained. By this, it is necessary to understand that the support must be structured around the unique conditions and political, social and economic realities that define the countries context and situation. Any assistance must be based on an assessment of the country's situation, the strength and capacities of its national actors and be tuned with the country's priorities and national agenda for reform. Half measures are as useless and perhaps more destructive than no assistance. Democracy support must be committed for a realistic period of time, balancing the needs to prevent permanent dependencies but avoiding equally, the dangers of pulling out support before a degree of consolidation has taken place.

Assessing Democracy

A critical contribution to strengthening democracy could come from national as well as international efforts to audit the performance of democracy on the ground - to determine how responsive a given political system is, and what degree of political egalitarianism it supports as these are critical elements that engender democratic legitimacy. This will take us beyond the trends to understand the practice of democracy on the ground.

Quantitative standards are often used (frequency of election, votes cast, legislative seats secured) to describe whether a country has a democratically elected government. Clearly this quantitative approach must be supplemented by a comprehensive, qualitative analysis and assessment of the nature of legal and political institutions and processes, the historical and political context in which the institutions are rooted and from which they continue to evolve, as well as their societal impact.

A "Democratic Audit" or "Democracy Assessment" to review a country's "state of democracy" is a useful prerequisite before a declaration is made that country X is a democratic country, or is a country in danger of regressing from democracy. Such an audit would ideally require the complex appraisal of the country's performance along a comprehensive set of indices ¹⁴. It would also require "hearing the voices" of the people who live within those systems - their views, perceptions and expectations of their political system. A comprehensive assessment of the state of democracy within a country has the added advantage of shifting the beam of scrutiny away from the deficiencies of the existing regime to demand analysis of more fundamental and systemic issues. The most useful feature of such an exercise is that it may jolt many countries, including "established democracies" to re-appraise their own institutions and performance in the light of these indicators.

Popular control of government through elections is most commonly associated as the critical indicator of democratic government. However, it is vital to assess the degree or extent of the popular control by probing the reach of the electoral process, its inclusiveness, in-built protections to preserve fairness in electoral competition and, independence from the government of the day. The integrity and impartiality of the electoral system, how governmental outcomes actually reflect the choices made through the electoral process, how much effective choice it offers citizens as well as how it treats its citizens, are critical.

But popular control of government in a democracy goes beyond elections. A government must be "open and accountable" to public opinion and to their constituencies. Governments must remain politically accountable for their policies to Parliament or the legislature, legally accountable to the courts for its conduct and execution of policies, and financially accountable both to the courts and Parliament for the handling of public resources. This accountability is integral to the democratic process and goes beyond the elections.

Popular control of government can be exercised only where citizens have secured political and civil rights or liberties that includes the right or freedom to dissent. In addition, it requires effective institutions (such as the press and courts) through which citizens can air their dissenting views individually or through organized groups and associations. Along with free citizens, independent societal groups are also critical to the functioning of an effective democracy, and these groups too require legal protection and political space within an effective democracy. How representative of the media, access to the media by different social groups, the ability of the media to operate as a balanced forum for informed political debate, support for basic democratic principles from the traditions and culture of the society, people's confidence in the ability of the political system to solve the main problems confronting society and their own ability to influence it – are explanatory factors revealing the state and dynamics of democracy.

Democracy audits / assessments have to be periodic to make a meaningful contribution to our concerns whether there is a trend towards democratization, whether this is leading to democratic consolidation or merely a series of elections around the globe, and whether there is also a trend towards regression. It will also provide a better appreciation of national fault lines –whether countries deliver more effectively on electoral accountability than on post-electoral accountability; whether countries provide legal recognition of political rights that are in effect unenforceable due to social or economic constraints and whether social and economic inequalities skew effective political participation.

Democracy and Regression

Democracy is vulnerable to challenges both from outside the system and within the system. It can be undermined by democratic leadership or by its mass base. It is vulnerable to a sudden collapse as well as an insidious and incremental erosion of institutions and practices over a period of time. Democracies can be brought down by

political events and actors (such as a change in government through elections and its replacement by illiberal political leadership, by coups, etc), it can be undermined by economic failures and social factors (such as social unrest stemming from inequalities, divisive ethnic and religious conflicts and failures in nation-building).

The most visible sign of "regression from democracy" is the usurpation of political power from an elected government by non-elected leaders. Military coups, armed insurrections against an elected government clearly fall into this genre. However, recent developments in Pakistan and the Ivory Coast have demonstrated that while the international community was unequivocal in its condemnation of the military coups, the local populations, including civil society organizations, appear to view these developments differently. Clearly the coups do not support a movement towards democracy, but neither were they viewed as particularly regressive, since the regimes they replaced no longer enjoyed widespread legitimacy. They were riddled with corruption, violence and systemic failures. Sadly, the institutional alternatives to replace the corrupt and inefficient regimes were also lacking. Weak political parties organized along ethnic lines and based on feudal privilege have not contributed to the development of a political culture that supports democracy. The military remained in these and similar societies, the only coherent and stable institutions. The erosion of democracy by democratic actors may lead to an undermining of popular belief in democracy as a system of government that can effectively deliver public goods and is one that is capable of renewal and self-correction.

“Democratic actors” from within the system can also undermine democracy. The decision of a regime not to hold an election and further perpetuate itself in power, or the continued use of exceptional powers such as emergency rules, suspending ordinary Parliamentary procedures, the civil liberties of individuals as well as political actors marks a regression. In addition, a democratically elected leaders decision to violate constitutional requirements forbidding re-election would also undermine the democratic system. This creates a paradox, because the electorate is free (in theory) to reject the unconstitutional bid for an additional term in office. In reality however, the choice is often couched in terms of effective political leadership versus a cumbersome constitutional impediment. Peru may soon be faced with the choice of re-electing an authoritarian President, who seeks an additional term despite a constitutional prohibition on his running for an additional term. Likewise in Venezuela, the democratic devise of a “referendum” was used to constrain institutions that could exercise countervailing power over the presidency.

Democracy depends on popular support for its institutions. Yet paradoxically, an over-politicized electorate can also undermine the effectiveness of the regime by bringing continuous pressure to bear on its representatives. In the context of ethnically divided societies, popular pressures can undermine elite negotiations to accommodate ethnic diversity and bring down vulnerable coalition governments. Pressures on elected representatives may induce them to adopt populist and illiberal policies that undermine the democratic consensus.

An over-centralized party leadership, the complete absence of political opposition at the parliamentary level may lead to an unresponsive and isolated political leadership, creating greater incentives for extra-parliamentary struggles that will eventually undermine democracy.

Not all regression takes place in one fell swoop. In as much as there is movement towards democracy there may be movements away from democracy - a backsliding that does not quite deserve the epitaph of "regression" but is nevertheless a move away from democracy and may require intermediate responses. There is often a build up over time that includes a populist rhetoric, or (in the case of multi-ethnic societies) a build-up of ultra-nationalist and exclusionary rhetoric, accompanied by discriminatory or centralizing legislation, hostile acts of violence etc that set the stage for more drastic forms of control of the political system.

These movements can be detected only if the international obsession with elections and the formal aspects of constituting a democratically elected government give way to more painstaking analysis of national situations. This analysis must surely review the legal framework that regulates political competition (constitutions, electoral laws, citizenship laws, equality provisions, access to the courts,) the social and economic conditions and opportunities for major political actors, a review of the expectations of major political actors and groups, and their perceptions of how well (in terms of proportionality) and effectively (in terms of powers) they are represented in the political structure. It is necessary to assess the nature and content of pre-election commitments made and post-election performance in fulfilling these promises. However, these are sensitive activities that many governments resent as a violation of their sovereignty.

Building Sustainable Democracy – Coping with the Impact of Sudden and Unexpected events

The catalysts that activate a transition to democracy as well as democratic regression can come in varied forms. There is a tendency to see catalysts that support democratization as positive events and catalysts that set in motion a slide to regression as regressive events although the event itself may be of the same genre.

The death of a leader (as in the case of Nigeria and Croatia), a sudden regime collapse (as in Indonesia) may create a positive incentive for democratization. It may create the opportunity for an election and for post-election support to a country committed to make a transition to democracy. Failure to act to assist in a timely and sustained way may lead to an opportunity lost irretrievably. In the case of Indonesia and in the case of Nigeria, such opportunities were indeed created. However, the untimely death of a leader in an unconsolidated democracy may yield negative results. In this respect, transitions to democracy are most vulnerable to leadership changes and it is important to build and reinforce multiple levels of democratic leadership to support the process.

Unexpected electoral victories may also derail the system. The un-anticipated electoral victory of the Islamic party in Algeria caused the army to void the elections drove the

Islamic groups underground and created a spiral of violence. It discredited the military and has confounded the prospects of democratic transition.

Natural disasters such as hurricanes and earthquakes can derail all national efforts to build up a sustainable economy and leave a transitional democracy extremely vulnerable. To cope with these disasters, governments often resort to emergency powers that quickly become institutionalized.

Economic crashes have had the unusual effect of derailing authoritarianism in Indonesia, but on the other hand, the economic turbulence in Russia has left its Duma weakened and a growing nostalgia for the certainties and security under the Communist regime.

Although civil wars and coups are frequently categorized as sudden and unexpected events – in reality many of them could be anticipated with the only uncertainty relating to the date and time. Analysts had long commented on the erosion of public confidence in the regime of Nawaz Shariff that stemmed from his own violation of democratic norms, his control of the judiciary, the rise in corruption, ethnic as well as political violence and the economic failures associated with his democratically elected regime. The military coup in Pakistan was not viewed with shock although it could not have succeeded without the element of surprise. Similarly, the genocide in Rwanda was followed by a series of political events that increased the predictability of this disaster. Likewise, the civil war in Bosnia, and later in Kosovo followed a steady erosion of minority rights, heightened militant nationalism and a general breakdown in ethnic accommodation.

Democratization and Globalization

In is as much as there is a trend towards democratization, there is also a growing trend towards economic integration and liberalization. The integration of capital markets, the free flow of trade and private investments is now a feature of our world. The process has been greatly assisted by revolutionary advances in communications that have broken down barriers to the access to information and communication. There have been several distinctive developments that are outcomes of globalization that have affected the nature and role of the state both in relation to markets as well as their own citizens.

Globalization is viewed as the zenith of economic freedom. Globalization has encouraged direct foreign investment, created economies of scale and rationalized labor markets. It promotes economic freedom through an “efficiency” centered model of development as opposed to a “people-centered” model of freedom as development. Many countries have diminished control of their economies as a result of these trends. National governments have lost control of their currencies, and the security and welfare of labor is threatened by an ever-increasing search for global efficiency. Weaker economies that have been required to restructure to be more competitive have had to follow policy prescriptions meted out by international financial institutions that have not received the support of national legislatures. Paradoxically, while the trend towards democratization is increasing, there is also erosion at the supra-national level, of democratic values of transparency and accountability, especially as it relates to macro economic policies.

The Internet revolution is viewed as a positive feature of globalization, breaking down monopolistic controls over information that many governments acquired. However, many still depend on traditional instruments of communications and the mass media for information. Globalization has increased the divide, including income inequalities both within and between countries, because not all communities have access to these opportunities.

However, globalization has also contributed to monopolistic control over the dissemination of information by large conglomerates. This monopolistic control is being used to advance and promote capitalism and the market rather than the human values necessary for long-term stability. There is no inevitable correlation between economic freedom and political freedom. There is, apparently, no obvious or automatic link between macro-economic development and broad-based human development. Some countries are more effective than others in converting the income from the GDP and the GNP into broad-based human development and increasing the quality of life for all its citizens. This reinforces the view that while competitive market economies and economic freedom may create the necessary conditions in which democracy can take root and advance, but they are not sufficient conditions.¹⁵

In the short term, globalization has led to frustration and despair among peoples who are rendered uncompetitive in the globalised world, with unemployment rising and income inequalities rising, so are the prospects for violence and instability. There are realistic fears that communities that are uncompetitive in this new paradigm will retreat into exclusive nationalisms that may even find violent expression.

How has democracy been promoted? ¹⁶

Democracy has been advanced through a range of advocacy programs as well as support programs. Democracy support has come in different forms with the use of negative sanctions and positive incentives provided by the promoters of democracy. Originally democracy promotion was seen as a Western enterprise, with the former colonial powers (especially the United Kingdom) and the United States taking the lead. Multilateral agencies and international organizations too have contributed to this enterprise. Democracy has been introduced to countries by force, tied to bi-lateral and multilateral aid packages that provide governments with incentives to reform their legislation and practices. It has included training programs, technical assistance and even funds for infrastructure development – for example to optimize the workings of the courts, human rights commissions, strengthen national legislatures among others.

Historical model of force

The historical record on democracy promotion is mixed. The value of democracy, and eventually democratic institutions were introduced to much of Asia and Africa by colonial governments that clearly did not practice what they preached. However, in many cases colonial governments introduced democratic values (universal franchise, elimination caste and gender discrimination) that were resisted by conservative local elites. They also introduced democratic institutions and electoral systems that were

carbon copies of their own political systems, often inappropriate to their subject territories, and were systems that unraveled shortly thereafter.

Democracy was thrust on a defeated Germany and Japan that did not appear to have a supportive democratic culture or any local institutions or traditions that could assist in the transition. Yet democracy has prevailed over time in these countries. International efforts in supporting post war re-construction were intense and unstinting with the emphasis on integrating these countries politically and economically into the international order. More recently, efforts to bring democracy and freedom to the Balkans have included the use of bombs, trade sanctions and other punitive measures but the jury is still out on the success of these efforts.

While the forcible export of democracy does stand out as a historical prototype it may not be the one that gains the greatest currency. Democracy can be advanced most realistically if there is significant national support for it. That support may come from the government or it may come from national groups in opposition to the government representing significant and effective social groups in the country.

Democracy Support

Strengthening networks of national actors

Democracy is an inter-generational affair. It is a long-term project and requires the support of a variety of actors and institutions. It requires the support of its political leaders, political parties, the court system, bureaucracy, media, civil society actors and most of all, the support of its citizens. Consequently, the promotion of democracy will require the promotion of these various actors and institutions. This critical group needs to think conceptually of democracy and be empowered to act to support democracy. They will do so only if they see their personal interests tied to democracy. If major social groups (ethnic or religious minorities, political parties, social classes) are excluded, they will be disinclined to appreciate the intrinsic value of democracy not will they have incentives to support democracy.

Providing comparative information on models and systems as options

Knowledge of comparative models and systems, their implications and the practical operation of these systems are always useful to national actors. Yet they require this support and assistance as an integrated group. In many instances, democracy actors are trained or supported in isolation. For instance, political parties are trained on the workings of democratic political parties and journalists are trained to operate a free media. There is a need for greater cross training and less role differentiation of democracy actors.

Encourage review and renewal of institutions

Democratic systems need to be reviewed and renewed periodically. Appropriate institutions mean that they must be appropriate for the national circumstances - reflecting the changing needs and realities of the community, and at a practical level, they must be affordable, enforceable and comprehensible to the local community. Countries such as Lebanon and Nigeria based their representative political institutions on census records

that were hopelessly outdated and irrelevant to the existing realities. Consequently these institutions faced fierce challenges from their constituents.

Integrating Democracy in the lives of citizens through education

Democracy promotion efforts should focus on educating people for democracy and integrating democracy as an aspect of their daily lives. This requires a significant and long-term investment in people - in critical education, in their human development, ensuring that they make their political and economic choices from a threshold where their basic needs are met. It goes beyond civic education programs targeting electoral cycles. One of the paradoxes with our world today is that democracy promotion has grown to be a thriving industry with money and training spent on institutional development. Yet, structural adjustment policies call for the reduction of public spending on education, cuts in jobs create angry, dissatisfied ex-workers while parallel calls are made for the mobilizing of an engaged citizenry.

Who can advance Democracy effectively

As pointed out before, external actors have promoted democracy (such as colonial powers, dominant super powers or medium powers) by force, and also by more benign means such as linking democracy related reforms to conditionality clauses for aid or trade concessions. Multilateral agencies such as the World Bank and the United Nations have also supported democracy programs through good governance programs, providing technical assistance, training, and infrastructure development aid. International Foundations¹⁷ and other international organizations¹⁸ have also provided national actors with assistance that has included support on the design of political institutions, electoral systems and election management bodies, providing options for more inclusive forms of political representation, management of conflict through democratic institutions and processes etc.

National leaders too have been powerful agents of democratization "bringing" democracy to their countries even in the face of conservative resistance. The commitment of Nelson Mandela to democracy remains a powerful example of such a leadership paradigm. In Indonesia, it was the relentless demands of citizens, students no less, who pushed and pressed for *Demokrasi* and *Reformasi*. The process has also required and even depended on the active support of political parties, civil society groups and associations and the media.

Promoting democracy (as a value especially where it does not exist) calls for different measures from Support for Democracy where it is struggling to take root. Support for democracy requires a practical approach, working with national partners, assisting them to make for themselves the choices most appropriate for their situation. National partners should not be limited to governments but to a broader range of political actors both within and outside government. National partnerships should represent the political as well as demographic face of the country. This support may include providing them with options and choices on political institutions and systems that can create an effective national government. It may include comparative experiences, strategies and options to be used by

national actors on overcoming social, ethnic and religious cleavages to consolidate nation-building strategies.

Democracy promotion and support is a long-term challenge and it is most effectively served by the sustained support of multiple actors (national as well as international, governmental and well as non-governmental groups) over time. Democracy is best promoted when it is integrated into national educational programs, media policies and strategies, through the promotion of civil society as well as targeted initiatives to specifically political actors and institutions such as national parliaments, political parties

Challenges for Democracy in the 21st century

The major challenges in the 21st century will include ensuring that national governments will remain relevant and accountable to their constituencies and deliver basic goods and services in a world dominated by corporations, capital markets and free trade. The supra state does not have a form as yet, it remains unregulated, unaccountable and its obligations are not clearly defined. It is vital that the democratic freedoms of the individual, and of communities are protected and that development will include human development as opposed to commercial development alone.

Major problems of governance in the 21st century will be within democracy, making it more difficult to handle as it is wrapped in a mantle of legitimacy. Democracy in the 21st century must cope with the pressures of race and ethnicity, religious fundamentalism, of technology, capitalism, the anomie and social dislocation created by global society. How to consolidate democracy in ethnically and culturally divided states and prevent the rise of illiberal democracies will remain a challenge.

Communities have high expectations of democratic government. The technologies of registering dissatisfaction as well as the technologies for violent and destabilizing protest are more readily available today than in the past. Governments are increasingly challenged by secessionist wars that have ballooned from unmet community needs and there is a rising demand from sub-national groups for democracy vis-a vis dominant national groups. While globalization and integration takes place at one level there is an increasing demand for fragmentation into micro-units at another level.

Policy proposals to support the consolidation of democracy

Focus on developing appropriate institutions and processes at an appropriate pace

Support for democracy must be firmly rooted in the national context and linked to national needs, capabilities and agendas. Democracy supporters do a disservice if they overload the agenda (with demands for speedy elections, speedily conceived peace treaties or electoral pacts) or pull out of the process too early.

Developing democracy for and within sub-national groups

Democracy has too often been viewed as an issue of and for governments. While democracy is a relation between the state and the individual it is also a relation between social groups *vis a vis* the state and *vis a vis* each other. In many countries, democratic

politics failed to accommodate the relevance of nationalism as an organizing basis for democratic government. While nationalism can become divisive and exclusive it can also be a legitimate organizing principle for communities. The suppression of nationalism has in many cases led to prolonged conflicts, whereas the recognition of nationalism through political arrangements for regional autonomy, or through an effective Bill of Rights, political representation in national legislatures etc defuses the intensity of nationalism as a sole principle of political mobilization. However, nationalism poses other challenges. Few groups have considered issues of internal democracy or their own democratic relations with other national groups. If nationalism is another cry for democracy for the group, it is qualitatively different to nationalism based on the exclusivity of the group. The former offers greater prospects for democratic stability.

Consensus building as a democratic value

There is no doubt that developing a democratic consensus on institutions, processes, on the distribution of resources, and on non-material issues such as identity and recognition is an exhausting, time and resource-draining endeavor. In the case of ethnically and religiously divided societies it is more so. Nevertheless the process of such consensus building has value in itself, irrespective of its outcomes and is at the heart of the democratic struggle.

Use new technologies to develop appropriate democratic institutions and processes

The power of the media could be used to develop support for democratic norms, both among citizens and political leadership. If some of the energies used to develop insatiable appetites for consumerism are used instead to promote democratic freedom as a value, there is likely to develop over time a political culture more supportive of democracy.

The ever-increasing use of the Internet and other means of communication are tools that can be used in deepening the democratic process. Institution building and nation building could perhaps develop at a different pace if we harness these new technologies effectively to support the process.

Integrating emerging democracies into international relationships and partnerships

Democracy support does not only require financial and material support. Integrating emerging democracies into international relationships and partnerships may also integrate the country more fully into the informal Democracy Club and provide it with additional support. The wish to join the European Union has had a positive effect on the transition processes of many emerging democracies in Eastern Europe, and, for instance in Turkey. Membership in the European Union requires a standard of compliance with democratic norms and does single out any particular country. It has created positive incentives for membership.

Supporting democracy: challenges for the United Nation

The UN has come a long way by linking its fundamental charter and covenants to democracy. It continues to have to deal with governmental resistance to efforts to maintain democratic accountability as unwarranted interference. Yet it is the United

Nations that is eventually called upon to intervene when political failures lead to humanitarian crises. This in itself creates greater leverage for the UN to require more accountable and responsive government at the national level.

The United Nations has a spread and depth of field presence, and access to governments and non-governmental organizations. By widening its mandate to include issues of assistance in the transition from post-conflict situations, governance, and public sector reform it is well placed to work on supporting national democratization efforts. Clearly the UN should make strategic partnerships with organizations that have focused expertise in these areas, and play an important role in co-coordinating democracy support to ensure that a coherent and consistent national programme of democracy support is developed as opposed to ad hoc democracy projects that do not contribute to a larger endeavor.

For the United Nations to be able to support democracy globally, the United Nations too must be supported by global democrats and would be democrats. This would require financial as well as moral support for the programmes undertaken by the United Nations, as well as a willingness to accept reviews of national policies that support or undermine democracy without rejecting such reviews as challenges to national sovereignty. In the final analysis, securing this support may be the ultimate challenge.

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¹ The views expressed in this paper are those of the author and do not necessarily represent the views of International IDEA.

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² Amartya Sen, Democracy as a Universal value, keynote address at The Global Conference on Democracy, New Delhi, February 1999 p. 4.

³ Huntington, S. (1991) *The Third Wave of Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century*, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma University Press.

⁴ Freedom House 1999-2000 Survey of Freedom.

⁵ The UN Human Rights Commission adopted on 27th April 1999, Resolution No. 57 "Promotion of the Right to Democracy".

⁶ These include the rights to freedom of opinion and expression, freedom of thought, conscience and religion. These include the right to peaceful assembly and association; the right to freedom to seek, receive and impart any idea through any media; the right to the rule of law, legal protection and the independence of the judiciary, the rights to universal and equal suffrage, free voting in periodic free elections; the right to political participation and equal opportunity for all citizens to be political actors; transparent and accountable government institutions, the right to equal access to public services in one's own country.

⁷ Fifty-nine countries (31 percent) are classified as Partly Free and 48 countries (or 25 percent of the world's total) was considered to be Not Free. See Freedom House Survey, 1999-2000.

⁸ See Diamond, Linz & Lipset - *What makes for Democracy* pp. 1-66 at p. 7.

⁹ In "semi democratic" countries the effective power of elected officials is very limited and or political party competition is restricted, or the fairness and freedom of the process is compromised (e.g. Singapore, Malaysia, Senegal, Mexico, Turkey);

¹⁰ Low quality democracies include low intensity democracies, poor democracies and delegative democracies, where there are fair and competitive elections, authentic power for elected officials, freedom of press and expression, independent organizations and media but nevertheless they lack accountability, responsiveness, institutional balance and effectiveness between elections. This is the case with the unconsolidated democracies of the Third Wave (such as Argentina, Brazil) and to longer-functioning systems such as India / Venezuela) that have entered into a period of decay and stress. See Diamond, Linz & Lipset - *What makes for Democracy* pp. 1-66 at p. 8.

¹¹ Such as is the case in Malaysia and Mexico.

¹² Pseudo democracies are less institutionalized, more coercive, personalized and unstable. (E.g. Kenya, Cameroon, Gabon and most of Central America in the 70's).

¹³ See Alexander J. Motyl's introduction to "Nations in Transit", New York, Freedom House 1997 cited in Allen Lynch, *Nations in Transit: The Year in Context*, Freedom House 1999-2000.

¹⁴ Daavid Beetham, "Key principles and Indices for a Democratic Audit," in Beetham, David (ed.) *Defining and Measuring democracy*, Sage 1994, pp 25-43.

¹⁵ See Human Development Report 1999, UNDP.

¹⁶ See Carothers, T. *Aiding Democracy Abroad: The Learning Curve*, Washington DC. Carnegie Endowment for Peace.

¹⁷ For example, National Endowment for Democracy (NED), National Democratic Institute (NDI), Westminster Foundation etc.

¹⁸ International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International IDEA)