

IFES

2002 – 2003 BIENNIAL REPORT



1101 15th Street NW
Third Floor
Washington, DC 20005
Tel: 202.828.8507
Fax: 202.452.0804
www.IFES.org

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EXTENDING THE REACH OF DEMOCRACY

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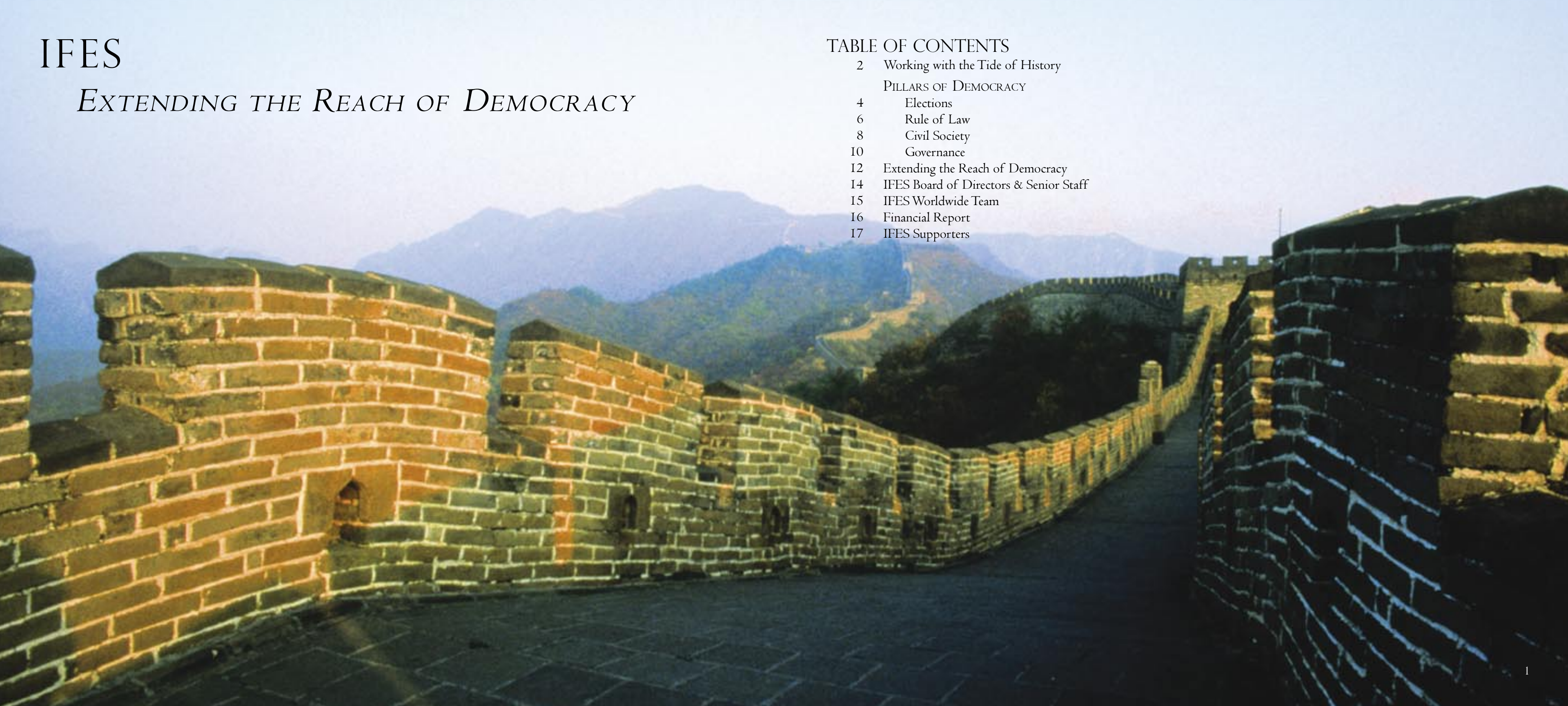
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WORKING WITH THE TIDE OF HISTORY



Fifteen years ago, F. Clifton White created IFES, an organization dedicated to performing the practical tasks necessary for the spread, support and strengthening of democracy. With dust from the fallen Berlin Wall still settling, he wrote: "The collapse of communism has ushered in an era of tremendous opportunity, and great risks as well. In the years and decades ahead, we may witness an explosion of freedom and democracy on a scale unprecedented in human history, or be victimized by a long period of civil, political and economic upheaval." Wholeheartedly believing in the benefits of freedom, Mr. White wanted to do more than hope for the triumph of democracy.

During 15 years of carrying out its mission, IFES has worked in more than 100 countries with a vast diversity of people and cultures. In our initial efforts, we concentrated on providing the basic tools needed to hold elections. IFES encouraged electoral commissions, helped design get-out-the-vote campaigns, advised legislatures on drafting new electoral codes, trained poll workers, procured ballots, equipped polling stations and did everything we could to make sure that, come Election Day, the essential mechanisms of democracy would be in place.

Elections, it turns out, are often merely the most visible manifestations of a democracy.

As the idea of elections gained a secure foothold and new democracies began to mature, their needs naturally became more complex. Other, less visible elements must be present in a society if democracy is to take root. These elements include an active civil society, a just rule of law and public officials capable of honest and competent governance. As we pursue our mission to extend the reach of democracy worldwide, we are now working in four areas—rule of law, civil society, governance and elections—which we see as the necessary pillars of democracy.

Today we face the same challenge F. Clifton White spoke of 15 years ago. Just as Mr. White was not content to merely hope for the triumph of democracy, so the organization that he created is not content to watch this struggle from the sidelines. The key to the success of IFES has always been our people and their respectful and cooperative approach to fostering freedom in emerging democracies across the globe. IFES has labored long for freedom and democracy, and we are committed to continue our efforts to extend the reach of democracy worldwide.

William J. Hybl
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F. Clifton White is a genuine pioneer in the technologization of the democratic art.

William F. Buckley, Jr.



ELECTIONS

Elections are the cornerstone of democracy, and over the past 20 years the practice of regular elections has become ever more widespread around the world. Nevertheless, it is possible to have the mechanics of democracy without the substance. Problems persist, both in mature democracies and in nations emerging from authoritarianism, oligarchy or ethnic strife. IFES has witnessed how technical fixes—for instance, adopting a new voting technology or electoral code—may be important first steps, but are rarely effective alone. The ongoing problems in the United States illustrate that the conduct of elections is not a task that can be achieved and perfected once and for all. Rather, it is more of an art, requiring the constant assessment and reevaluation of technique and approach. The success of the enterprise often rests on its nontangible elements: the attitudes, motivations and understandings of voters and election officials.

That is why IFES has always placed great emphasis on the human side of the electoral process. Much responsibility rests on the shoulders of election officials, and fostering a sense of professionalism, collegial loyalty and ethical principle among them is the front line for the advancement of democracy in many nations. To address this need, IFES has helped launch several professional associations of election officials worldwide, including the Association of African Election Authorities, the Association of Asian Election Authorities, the Association of Caribbean Electoral

Organizations, the Association of Central and Eastern European Election Officials and the Association of Election Officials in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

In Albania, international observers noted after recent parliamentary elections that the principal source of irregularities was political party interference with local election commissions. IFES' response has been to assist the Central Election Commission to launch an association of Albanian election officials. Commission members are trained in election law, administrative procedures and voting technologies. They also learn to promote public confidence in the electoral process by displaying independence and impartiality in their relations with civil society groups, political parties and the media.

A similar problem recently confronted IFES in Nigeria, Africa's most populous nation. Election officials in Nigeria's 774 local districts had to be trained to conduct a voter registration exercise and prepare for state and federal elections in 2003. The logistics and expense of the task seemed prohibitive until IFES, with support from USAID, designed the *Basic Election Administration Training (BEAT)* course, which was delivered in each of Nigeria's state capitals over a two-week period. The course covered the basic elements of the election administration profession, with particular emphasis on ethical principles for a fair electoral process.

Election administrators everywhere face the critical challenge of expanding the franchise—making sure that women, minorities, people with disabilities and other traditionally marginalized groups are able to exercise their electoral rights. Under a disabilities project funded by the governments of Finland and Sweden, IFES has launched several initiatives to promote the electoral rights of people with disabilities. In Sierra Leone, IFES helped design a tactile ballot guide that enabled blind voters to vote in secret for the first time in Africa. A new website, www.electionaccess.org, features such model programs as well as articles, links and other resources on the voting rights of people with disabilities.

The passage of landmark electoral reform legislation in the United States in 2002 opens the door for IFES to apply its extensive international experience in efforts to improve elections at home. IFES has already taken steps in this direction. We joined the Center for Democracy to conduct assessment and observation missions in Miami-Dade County for the November 2002 general elections, and we delivered long-term recommendations for improving elections in the county. We conducted a similar mission to the City of St. Louis prior to the November 2002 election. We are eager to continue contributing our expertise to make the U.S. electoral system a model of which we can be proud.

The well-being of democracies regardless of their type and status is dependent on one small technical detail: the right to vote. Everything else is secondary.

José Ortega y Gasset



RULE OF LAW

IFES has learned that efforts to promote justice must be homegrown and include the grass roots. Elites who benefit from the status quo can rarely be counted on to carry out significant judicial reforms without strong civil society engagement and oversight. A good case in point is the situation in Haiti. Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, hundreds of millions of dollars were spent in reform efforts focused on a narrow agenda and a small cadre of government officials. Today, although the Haitian constitution enshrines the principle of judicial independence, the judiciary continues to be subservient to the other branches of government. The consequences are felt throughout Haitian society. The inconsistent application of the law jeopardizes investment security, contractual enforcement, property rights and other fundamental human rights.

Judicial independence cannot be achieved without a strong constituency for reform among judicial professionals and civil society organizations. With this in mind, USAID and IFES have launched a project to build broad coalitions across Haitian society to generate popular demand for judicial reform and the rule of law. The initiative's name in Creole, *Konbit pou Mamman Law—a 2004* (Come Together for the Constitution in 2004), draws on popular anticipation of Haiti's bicentennial of independence in 2004.

The integrated, participatory approach applied in Haiti is the outcome of intensive research

and analysis, which IFES has organized and compiled into a Rule of Law Toolkit, a set of programmatic tools, checklists, working papers and other resources designed to foster the independent, impartial and professional functioning of the judiciary. The materials are geared to a variety of audiences, including members of the judiciary, advocacy groups, academics, policy makers, the media, donors, business associations and the general public. The Toolkit provides citizens with strategies and resources to protect and exercise their legal rights, develop coalitions and broaden the base of support for judicial reforms. It also assists reformers and donors to assess, prioritize, design and monitor reform efforts.

The Toolkit is based on a global research program conducted by IFES in partnership with USAID to identify, organize and strategically assess the essential components of judicial impartiality. The research program resulted in the publication in January 2002 of *Guidance for Promoting Judicial Independence and Impartiality*, a compendium of consensus findings, best practices, global and regional norms, lessons learned and comparative data gleaned from surveys, thematic papers, roundtables and the contributions of numerous pro bono advisors. IFES and others are now using this Toolkit as a guidepost for judicial reform programming in locations as diverse as Haiti, Egypt, Malawi, Peru and the Caucasus.

Justice also requires equitable enforcement of laws, regulations and court decisions. As a complement to *Guidance for Promoting Judicial Impartiality*, IFES is currently preparing a second global report on the barriers to judicial enforcement in developing countries. It will outline the high costs of arbitrary, cumbersome enforcement procedures and will identify emerging enforcement norms required to effect long-overlooked reforms in this area.

Another significant study, to be released in 2003, is being prepared for the Inter-American Development Bank on the legal and financial obstacles to small business development in developing countries. Taking Peru as a case study, this report will outline the key cost and access issues that must be addressed in order to formalize property and contract rights, promote economic growth and investment, and establish a rule-of-law culture.

Other recent or ongoing rule-of-law efforts include a project to train and mentor public defenders in East Timor, a series of commercial law seminars for Moroccan administrative and commercial tribunals, a two-year project to enhance popular awareness of the ongoing peace process and its impact on the rule of law in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and regional conferences on judicial independence in Honduras, Malawi and Egypt.

Justice, sir, is the great interest of man on earth.
It is the ligament which holds civilized beings
and civilized nations together.

Daniel Webster



CIVIL SOCIETY

Over the last two decades, the widespread diffusion of knowledge and the technical means for its dissemination and analysis have opened potent new channels for political expression by previously marginalized sectors of society. Large segments of the world's population, once inert in the face of social, political and economic forces beyond their control, are now discovering the power of their collective will and their own innate capacity to drive change. The transformation of the peoples of the world—their growing self-awareness and political maturity—is in turn transforming the practice of international development. Whereas 20 years ago Western “experts” drove the development agenda, with mixed results, today's leaders are emerging from the matrix of their societies and giving voice to a rich diversity of development concepts and approaches.

IFES has watched civil society come of age with a mixture of wonder and pride. At the heart of IFES' efforts around the world has always been the goal of passing on the torch to a new generation of leaders in the countries in which it works. Many IFES field offices have matured into autonomous and self-sustaining organizations. Examples include CENTRAS, the successor of the IFES field office in Romania, which now provides technical assistance to Romanian NGOs and organizes an annual NGO forum; ADEPT, a similar organization that emerged from a five-year IFES project in Moldova; IESD, the successor to the IFES field office in Russia; the Global-Kontakt

Foundation, an NGO in Bosnia founded by former staff of an IFES civic education project that ended in mid-2001; and the Association of Election Officials in Bosnia and Herzegovina (AEOBiH), a professional association founded by IFES that now operates independently.

We have learned along the way to achieve results by giving people access to the tools and resources they need—and standing aside. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, we have opened Democracy Resource Centers to support the transition to sustainable peace. Freely open to everyone, these centers offer print and electronic resources on all aspects of civil society and democracy building. More importantly, they are serving as gathering places for civil society groups to meet and strategize about their collective efforts. IFES has opened nearly a dozen other similar centers from Eastern Europe to Central Asia.

In Armenia, IFES civic education instructors travel the country, organizing citizen groups and providing the training and resources they need to engage effectively in the political process. By providing guides to laws and government agencies, and linking these to local needs and issues, IFES is helping to unleash the power of an informed and proactive citizenry. Our London-based affiliate, IFES Limited, conducted a similar project in Kosovo, reaching out to ethnic

communities and training women, youth and the disabled to advocate for their own interests under Kosovo's new government.

Recognizing that an attitude of pluralism and civic participation must be imbued from youth, IFES has focused its efforts in Central Asia on introducing civic education curricula in secondary schools. Under an agreement with the Ministry of Education of Kazakhstan, IFES produced a civic education textbook and teachers' guide for the nation's secondary schools. After pilot testing, the textbook was introduced in schools nationwide in both the Kazakh and Russian languages. The school curriculum is supplemented with a number of extracurricular activities. Each year, IFES organizes several Democracy Summer Camps, ten-day retreats that provide intensive, hands-on training in civic participation. The outcome of these summer camps has been the creation of Student Action Committees, organizations through which students themselves initiate, develop and administer projects to address concerns in their local communities.

IFES also organizes Student Local Government Days for students to spend a day observing local government officials on the job and an annual Civic Education Olympiad to recognize top-performing students and teachers. These integrated programs are being successfully implemented throughout Central Asia and provide a model for nurturing a new generation of citizens and leaders in democracy.

I know of no safe repository of the ultimate power of society but the people. And if we think them not enlightened enough, the remedy is not to take power from them, but to inform them by education.

Thomas Jefferson



GOVERNANCE

Governance refers to the sum total of institutions, laws, mores and principles that enable human societies to flourish. IFES has helped governments at all levels—national, regional and local—to streamline and professionalize all aspects of public administration, including civil registration, decentralization, institution building and delivery of public services.

Corruption, the misuse of public influence or resources for private gain, is perhaps the most prevalent obstacle to good governance throughout the world. IFES has responded to this challenge by promoting transparency and access to information as the cornerstone of efforts to improve the quality of governance. In Indonesia, IFES was instrumental in the creation of a 24-hour television channel carrying live proceedings of the Indonesian parliament. Known as *SWARA*, an Indonesian acronym for *Voice of the People's Representatives*, the channel and a companion website have revolutionized public awareness and understanding of the workings of government. The Indonesian media draw extensively on *SWARA* for their public affairs and news programming.

One area where disclosure of information is critical is political finance. Although it affects elections most directly, integrity and transparency in political financing is ultimately a cross-cutting issue that lies at the core of good governance. In many countries, the relevant data, scattered in official bulletins

and publications, is difficult to compile and analyze. Through its *Money and Politics* (MAP) program, IFES is developing new tools to track the money, using Microsoft Access and the dot-net platform for a model database that can be customized for use in any country. IFES works with an implementing partner to adapt the database to each country's particular legal and regulatory environment. Political parties, civil society organizations and the media are offered training on how to use the database to monitor political finance. To date, the program is being implemented in Bolivia, Lithuania, Romania and other countries.

To be effective, governance must be adaptable. The evolving conditions of a society often require the design and implementation of new procedures, institutions and legal frameworks. This was the case in Azerbaijan, where an entirely new municipal level of government was created in 1999. The newly elected councils lacked a clear mandate, a complete legal framework, and the skills to provide effective services to their constituents. IFES helped address these deficits in municipal development at the national level by advising Azeri officials on how to improve the legal framework for the municipal councils. On the local level, IFES works closely with nine targeted municipalities to promote a model of community development that engages both the councils and citizen stakeholders.

Some of the most heart-wrenching failures of governance in recent years have involved the collapse of whole societies in a maelstrom of ethnic or tribal violence. At the heart of many post-conflict peacekeeping operations has been the effort to create new political processes and patterns of governance to which the parties in conflict can subscribe. Elections have been considered important elements of this effort, and IFES has offered technical assistance for post-conflict elections in Angola (1992), Mozambique (1994), El Salvador (1994), Haiti (1995), Bosnia and Herzegovina (1996), Liberia (1997), Eastern Slavonia (1997), Kosovo (2000) and Sierra Leone (2002).

But post-conflict governance involves much more than elections. Other mechanisms are often required to prevent a relapse of violence, including truth commissions and new systems of local governance in areas of dispute. IFES is making post-conflict governance a dedicated field of study, combining the best of its extensive field experience with the latest academic research to develop comprehensive strategies for post-conflict interventions. This approach is being put to the test in Afghanistan. In 2002, IFES joined the Consortium for Response to the Afghanistan Transition to assess ways for the international community to support the Afghan transition. In 2003, IFES is providing technical assistance to the UN Assistance Mission to Afghanistan (UNAMA) and the Afghan government to prepare for general elections slated for 2004.

My notion of democracy is that under it the weakest shall have the same opportunities as the strongest.

Gandhi



EXTENDING THE REACH OF DEMOCRACY

After 15 years of making democracy work, IFES has refined its focus. This year, our Board of Directors approved a staff-led strategic plan to make IFES, currently the world's leader in election assistance, the global leader in democracy promotion. To reach this goal, IFES will broaden its programming, produce cutting-edge research and information resources, and forge partnerships with new constituencies.

IFES upholds democracy as the preferred form of government, yet we recognize that its precise forms and mechanisms will continue to evolve according to time, place and culture. As highlighted in this report, we are building four interdependent program areas that comprise the foundation of healthy, functioning democracies: elections, rule of law, civil society and governance. The IFES strategic plan calls for consolidating our well-established expertise in electoral assistance while increasing the number, breadth and capacity of programs in each of the three other areas.

After being focused almost entirely overseas from the time of our founding, IFES is now rendering a real service in the United States. Following the passage of the *Help America Vote Act of 2002*, we are eager to help jurisdictions across America with the challenges of adopting new technologies, meeting federal standards, and educating voters and poll workers.

Another new focus for IFES is the Arab world, a region of tremendous human potential

that will benefit greatly from releasing the power of its citizenry through more open political systems. IFES has a track record as a trusted advisor in this region. We have worked in Yemen since 1993, where we helped form the Arab world's only permanent independent electoral commission. We are opening a field office in Bahrain, and we continue to build on our relationships in West Bank/Gaza, Qatar, Oman and Morocco.

With the F. Clifton White Resource Center and a team of experienced senior advisors on staff, IFES is poised to establish itself as a primary source of cross-cutting research and policy analysis in democracy development. Efforts are underway to design strategies for post-conflict governance, to promote the political participation of people with disabilities, and to produce a Toolkit of rule-of-law programs and strategies. Our senior advisors also mentor graduate students who come to IFES each summer under the Hybl and Manatt Democracy Studies Fellowship Programs.

IFES extends democracy's reach through outreach programs targeting international media, international NGOs, U.S. government staff, and an extensive network of election officials and democracy advocates. We sponsor panel discussions and other events that enable democracy advocates to reach a wide audience and speak frankly about

issues they could not discuss in their own countries.

IFES websites and publications are another platform for democracy leaders. These publications include our quarterly magazine, *Elections Today*, a White Paper series, and Web-based products like the *Arab Election Law Compendium*. Other IFES products, such as the *IFES Buyer's Guide to Election Suppliers* and the *Administration and Cost of Elections (ACE) Project*, have become standard reference works for election officials around the globe. These and other resources are made available to the public through our regional democracy resource centers, which also serve as meeting places for local democracy advocates.

Finally, under the leadership of our Strategic Business Development division, we are committed to broadening our valued partnerships with USAID, DFID, SIDA, FINNIDA, the UNDP and other funders. With our new strategic plan in place, IFES will offer more products with the same independent, responsive, research-based project development on which our partners have come to rely. While the challenges to democracy may seem daunting at times, we are confident that the irrepressible human longing for freedom and self-determination will find its expression. We at IFES feel a deep solidarity with those who are seeking a better way of life, and ultimately, we feel a sense of balanced optimism. We are working with the tide of history.

Did you, too, O friend, suppose democracy was only for elections, for politics, and for a party name?
I say democracy is only of use there that it may pass on and come to its flower and fruit in manners, in the highest forms of interaction between [people], and their beliefs—in religion, literature, colleges and schools—
democracy in all public and private life.

Walt Whitman



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Patricia Hutar stepped down after two years as chair of the board. IFES deeply appreciates her vision and leadership, and we are grateful that she will continue to serve on the board and as chair of IFES Limited, the IFES affiliate in London. IFES is also very grateful for the services and contributions of our departing board members, Barbara Boggs, Sharol Siemens and William Sweeney, Jr.

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IFES recognizes the hard work and dedication of Juliana G. Pilon, former Vice President for Programs and Senior Advisor on Civil Society, and David Tikkala, former Vice President for Finance, during their long and valued tenure at IFES.

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