

■ EDITORIAL

The butterfly effect and the Arab Spring

If a butterfly flaps its wings in Cairo, could this cause a hurricane in Beijing? Students of the so-called 'butterfly effect' know that small changes in one place can sometimes lead to enormous events in another. In international relations, well before the dawn of rapid communication, local incidents have set in motion chains of events which led to the outbreak of wars, peace treaties and the foundation of some of our major international institutions.



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Vidar Helgesen

By Vidar Helgesen, Secretary-General

■ FOCUS: ARAB SPRING



The Tahrir Lion, Cairo 2011 - Photo: Sara Staino

The Arab Spring: IDEA's full agenda

Posted: May 25, 2011

The changes sweeping through the Arab region since December 2010 show marked differences. For example Egypt and Tunisia, which ousted long standing undemocratic heads of state after weeks of street protests, are already preparing for their first democratic elections in living memory followed by what most observers hope will be an inclusive constitutional process. Against this backdrop, IDEA reacted quickly by establishing a regional office in Cairo to promote electoral and constitutional reform in countries from Morocco to Oman. A number of initiatives have already occurred in various countries, including in Egypt, Tunisia and Jordan.

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Driving constitutional change in the Arab world

Posted: May 26, 2011

As if to make up for missing out on previous global waves of democratization, the "Arab Spring" has generated a pace and intensity of change that has fired global imagination. Every society undergoing historic transitions soon sees the need to embody change in the constitution. A constitution mandates the use of power and establishes government for the benefit of all citizens, but it is not easy to make one that is truly living.

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The Youth Revolution,
Cairo 2011
Photo: Sara Staino



■ IN THIS ISSUE

- [» Editorial: The butterfly effect and the Arab Spring](#)
- [» Focus: Arab Spring](#)
- [» Other news](#)
- [» New releases](#)

■ SPOTLIGHT ON

- [» IDEA develops new elections and violence resource](#)
- [» The ACE Electoral Knowledge Network in Arabic](#)
- [» Constitutionnet.org – a new online network for constitutional change](#)

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■ OTHER NEWS

Gender equality is good for democracy, but how can democracy best deliver for gender equality?

Posted: May 25, 2011

"Gender equality must be treated as an explicit goal of democracy building, not as an add on", stressed UN Secretary General Mr Ban Ki-Moon during his opening speech at the Round Table on "Democracy and Gender Equality" held on 4 May 2011 in New York.

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Toward a common agenda for the Andean countries and the United States

Posted: May 26, 2011

The Andean – United States Dialogue Forum recently issued a report outlining a common agenda to improve understanding among the nations of the region. This is a citizens' Forum created to identify and contribute solutions to multilateral problems and tensions between the Andean countries (Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru and Venezuela) and the United States.

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Promoting gender parity in Africa

Posted: May 27, 2011

Achieving success in building sustainable democratic systems in countries emerging from conflicts depends on whether new and emerging governance structures are based on the principles of inclusive and effective participation and representation. International IDEA is supporting initiatives spearheaded by women leaders in legislatures, in political parties and in civil society in Liberia and Sierra Leone to promote equality between women and men in political participation and representation.

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Thai political parties sign up to a Code of Conduct before July elections

Posted: May 11, 2011

Following the translation into Thai of IDEA's Code of Conduct for Electoral Campaigning, a Pledging Ceremony was held in May at the Parliament of Thailand. Leaders and representatives of 19 political parties contesting the 3 July elections in Thailand signed a Code of Conduct for these elections in the presence of the Speaker of the Senate, the Secretary-General of the Election Commission, religious leaders and many of Thailand's media.

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II International Forum of Santo Domingo: "Dialogue on Democracy, Development, Social Cohesion and Security in Latin America"

Posted: May 15, 2011

The II International Forum of Santo Domingo entitled "Dialogue on Democracy, Development, Social Cohesion and Security in Latin America" took place at the Global Foundation for Democracy and Development (FUNGLODE) in the Dominican Republic on 9-10 May 2011.

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Constitutional Court: new institution proposed in Nepal's Constitution

Posted: May 30, 2011

Which institution should have the jurisdiction to interpret the constitution? How should dispute settlement between the provinces and the Kathmandu be addressed? These are some of the questions raised as part of the debate on the structure of the judiciary and independence of institutions when drafting the new constitution for Nepal.

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BRIDGE capacity building in Africa

Posted: May 27, 2011

Between 2011-13, International IDEA will organize twenty two BRIDGE courses in Africa targeting forty two Anglophone, Francophone and Lusophone African Election Management Bodies. In May, IDEA's Africa Programme organized a BRIDGE "Gender and Elections" training course in Pretoria.

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The Inter-Regional Dialogue on Democracy: building a regional and global understanding of democracy

Posted: May 1, 2011

Heads of Regional Organizations officially launched the Inter-Regional Dialogue on Democracy on 15 April 2011 at the Organization of American States, Washington DC, USA.

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Women's leadership and political participation in Ecuador

Posted: May 22, 2011

The Multiparty Women's Group formed by members of Ecuadorean political organizations agreed to continue debating the re-registration of political organizations at the provincial level.

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■ NEW PUBLICATIONS

Annual Report 2010 - A record of actions

Highlights International IDEA's objectives and main activities in 2010.

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Toward a Common Agenda for the Andean Countries and the United States. Andean-U.S. Dialogue Forum

Identifies convergences and divergences in priorities among citizens of Venezuela, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia and the US.



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Code of Conduct for Political Parties - Campaigning in Democratic Elections - Now in Thai!

Highlights how parties can negotiate a consensus on the text of the code of conduct and recommendations of core prescriptions that should be included.



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