

Despite growing challenges to democracy, data reveals that globally democracy is not in decline, according to new International IDEA publication

13th December 2017 | COLOMBO –The world has experienced continued and steep democratic progress, however this progress has slowed down over the past decade. Challenges and threats have emerged in specific countries and regions, according to the first edition of *The Global State of Democracy* publication from The International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International IDEA). Now, democracy is at a crossroads and continuous actions must be taken to safeguard and protect it.

International IDEA's [Global State of Democracy publication](#), based on the new [Global State of Democracy indices](#), highlights that almost all aspects of democracy have advanced over the past four decades. Most electoral democracies established in this period survived, and the number and proportion of countries holding elections have increased. Governments are now more representative of (and responsive to) their constituencies, more countries respect the fundamental rights of their citizens, and social rights and equality feature sharp improvements. More importantly, governments are more constrained by checks from parliaments, the judiciary and the media. In addition, according to International IDEA's analysis, the value people give to democracy is strengthened when democratic backsliding occurs. The most difficult aspects for democracies to tackle are corruption and rule of law, which have not improved since 1975.

The first edition of *The Global State of Democracy* publication analyses and assesses emerging challenges and threats. It is based on a new set of indices that collect data on key attributes of democracy across 155 countries from 1975 to 2015. The starting point of 1975 coincides with the ratification of the United Nations Conventions on Civil and Political Rights as well as Economic and Social Rights and the so-called 'Third Wave of Democracy'. Zooming-in on some of the most pressing crises for democracy today, the publication provides insights into the future of political parties and representation, corruption and money in politics, inequality, migration, and post-conflict peacebuilding. The publication provides actionable recommendations for citizens, politicians and technocrats worldwide in their efforts to combat these threats.

"We see the challenges to our democracy in our daily news. There are cases of national leaders attempting to retain power beyond constitutional limits, attacks on human rights, and the rollback of civil liberties and freedom of the press", said **Yves Leterme, International IDEA Secretary-General**. *"International IDEA is concerned about the rise of challenges to democracy. Our role—every citizen's role—is to protect democracy."*

A regional launch of *The Global State of Democracy: Exploring Democracy's Resilience* is being held at the Asia-Pacific Conference on Resilience of Democracy: "21st Century Solutions for 21st Century Challenges to Democracy", organised at Mövenpick Hotel, Colombo, Sri Lanka on 13-14 December 2017. The conference brings together policymakers, experts, academics, civil society groups and young professionals from across the Asia-Pacific region to discuss innovative, actionable solutions to the challenges of democracy as identified in the *Global State of Democracy* publication.

The conference will focus on three themes: 1) democracy's resilience to backsliding, 2) influence of money in politics, corruption, and 3) inclusive peacebuilding in conflict-affected states. A special panel session composed of high-level officials and experts highlights the second day of the conference bringing state of democracy in Sri Lanka on focus as well.

The regional launch is organized by International IDEA, the Center for Policy Alternatives (CPA), and Democracy Reporting International (DRI).

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The Global State of Democracy publication

[The Global State of Democracy](#) is a biennial publication analysing and assessing the state of democracy around the world based on data from the [Global State of Democracy indices](#). The publication includes an overview of global and regional democracy trends and developments, current challenges and crises, as well as evidence-based and actionable recommendations for policy makers and democracy practitioners worldwide.

The International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance

The International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International IDEA) is an intergovernmental organization that supports sustainable democracy worldwide. International IDEA's mission is to support sustainable democratic change by providing comparative knowledge, and assisting in democratic reform, and influencing policies and politics. International IDEA produces comparative knowledge in its key areas of expertise: electoral processes, constitution-building, and political participation and representation, as well as democracy as it relates to gender, diversity, and conflict and security. For more information, visit www.idea.int