

Peruvians must find their own way back to democracy, but, if their leaders provide them with a flawed process for that return, we should not legitimize it.

Canada, for one, will refuse to provide the same level of economic support to a regime that deprives its people of democracy. Humanitarian assistance will continue; but direct support to the government will be suspended until full democracy is restored. It will not be business as usual with this President.

Canada has supported OAS efforts to restore constitutional democracy with a firm -- some would say uncompromising -- stand, but not because we wish to see one particular form or model of democracy imposed on any member state. Such an approach does not offer lasting solutions. We know full well that there is no single, neatly developed model of democracy, which can be shipped from one setting to another.

In this room, we have representatives of presidential and parliamentary systems, federal and unitary systems, with formal and informal channels for national dialogue. No two are exactly alike. Each has served its people well; each has had difficulties.

But, while at times democratic systems can be slow, inefficient and frustrating, undemocratic systems have been shown by history to be far worse.

What cannot vary are the fundamental components of democracy. Some of these are tangible and specific: an independent, credible judiciary; basic liberties such as freedom of expression and association; respect for human rights; women's equality; the rule of law; and honest, reliable law enforcement agencies.

What is also required is a "culture" of democracy, a culture that includes tolerance and trust and respect for the individual. This culture must permeate all the workings of society.

Many have held that there can be no real democracy without economic development. There is an element of truth in this proposition.

But one could also argue that no real economic development is possible -- certainly over the long run -- without the participation of the people, men and women equally, to ensure that both economic effort and gains are equitably shared.

This is what Canada had in mind in 1990 when we proposed the creation of a Unit for the Promotion of Democracy (UPD). We were pleased in 1991 that this assembly passed a further resolution confirming the mandate of the unit.