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## **INTRODUCTION**

The following report is the first in an annual exercise aimed at highlighting positive and negative developments in the global growth of democracy during the 1995 calendar year. The report is **event-oriented** and is not aimed at providing a report card on the overall state of democracy in a particular country. It is less a catalogue of global democracy than a highlights package of key or interesting developments (from a conceptual or historical perspective) during 1995. While the regional survey focuses on the developing world, events in more established democracies have also been noted as a reflection of the reality that **democracy is, itself, an evolutionary process or concept.**

While the document takes particular note of the important elections which occurred over the course of the year, **democracy is more than the holding of free and fair elections** and the report reflects this broader reality. Where they occurred during 1995, efforts to consolidate democratic gains and deepen its roots or events which set back these efforts have been noted.

## **OVERVIEW OF 1995**

The year 1995 saw a continuation of the rapid spread and broad acceptance of **democracy as the global standard of good governance. Threshold or milestone elections** continued to be held in many countries long thought barren territory for **participatory democracy**, sustaining a five year trend. In all regions, governments of every conceivable political stripe continued to draw attention to their democratic credentials.

Some governments paid only **lip-service to democracy**, while systematically violating all of its basic tenets in practice. For them, democracy is a necessary **precondition to continued aid flows or international approval of the regime** and the depth of their commitment rarely reaches beyond the holding of elections (however restricted they may be). The fact that these regimes felt compelled to at least dress themselves in democratic clothing, however, attests to the growing strength, internationally, of the democratic trend and can be seen as a positive development.

In 1995, elections and the establishment of democracy became key elements of international efforts to resolve long-standing crises or conflicts. In **Bosnia** and West **Bank/Gaza**, free and fair elections were set as cornerstones of the difficult peace plans which were negotiated. In **Haiti**, presidential and legislative elections were carried out in accordance with the agreement to end the crisis which had been affecting the country for years.