ADVANCING DEMOCRACY – $122.31 million*

Global democratic progress in recent decades has been uneven. Despite some progress in countries such as Tunisia, there is an overall trend toward the continued erosion of democracy and freedom around the world.

Democracy enables citizens to hold their governments to account, lead a life of dignity, and participate in the decision making that affects them. Democracy is also a cornerstone of lasting development outcomes, resulting from greater inclusion and increased accountability of governments to their citizens. Canada's long-term prosperity and security interests are best served internationally by fostering the development and maintenance of free, well-governed, pluralistic societies whose governments reflect and respond effectively to the needs of their citizens. Democracy, along with freedom, human rights and the rule of law, constitute fundamental Canadian values.

Canada employs both diplomatic and programmatic actions to advance democracy and strengthen international norms and standards abroad. Democracy requires the participation of people in decision making, the emergence of effective and accountable institutions, rules-based governance and respect for human rights.

Canada's efforts are aimed at supporting four priority areas that are key to sustainable democracy: legislatures, judicial institutions and the respect for the rule of law; elections and electoral processes; civil society, independent media and political party systems; and promotion and protection of human rights. The following sections highlight Canada's work in advancing democracy in 2013–2014.

LEGISLATURES AND THE RULE OF LAW

Legislative and judicial branches of governments play a key role in ensuring accountability and encouraging the rule of law. Legislatures, as representative bodies, play an important role in holding government institutions accountable and providing an additional voice for constituents. Canada helps legislatures and parliamentarians to serve as effective bridges between citizens and their governments.

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The rule of law plays a vital role in protecting the many institutions necessary for democracy. Canada promotes the rule of law and judicial reform through training and technical support to governmental and non-governmental institutions. Canada also supports an impartial, accessible and effective legal system that guarantees the protection of citizens against the arbitrary use of state authority and provides recourse for illegal acts carried out by state and non-state actors.

For example, DFATD's support in Paraguay led to greater government openness and transparency as well as to the development and adoption of the country's access to information law in 2013. It also supported improved transparency awareness and practices among legislators and the executive branch, and bolstered the ability of civil society groups to monitor transparency issues.

In Indonesia, DFATD supported the Government of Indonesia's National Corruption Eradication Commission to prevent corruption at the local level. Public satisfaction with local government procurement, administration (e.g. birth registration) and licensing (e.g. business licenses) has increased substantially in the targeted areas.

Canada also enhanced the individual and institutional capacity of selected government ministries, departments, public sector agencies and associations, and training institutes in Africa and Asia through a DFATD partnership with the Institute of Public Administration of Canada. The program led to a greater focus being put on the impacts of gender equality in public administration, and to the development of tools, processes and policies that improved the ability of 14 public sector institutions in 10 countries to achieve their priorities.