

The depth of a Canadian democratic development initiative might be determined by answering three questions. First, how influential is Canada in a given country/region? How likely is Canada to affect change in the given country/region through its democratic intervention? How likely is Canada to affect successful outcomes from its democratic interventions?

To be a credible player in the international push for democratization, Canada must be associated with success stories in the developing world. Canada has mechanisms already in place for a concerted "democratic policy" which extend beyond elections and technical assistance. The idea is to choose key countries and target them with high profile initiatives in the area of democracy. Criteria for selection might be agreed upon in consultation; but we suggest three starting points: (i) the given country must have a Canadian presence-- political capital both within that country and in the given region; (ii) the country should ideally have a well developed relationship with Canada, in terms of diplomatic and trade relations (enlightened self-interest); (iii) the country must have constituencies which support Canadian efforts.

To determine which ingredients are required for reinforcing fragile democracies, one must first conceptualize the desired outcome of a democratic process. If the desired outcome is a narrow (or elite-driven) democracy, then elections and elite consensus are primary ingredients. If the desired outcome is more broadly conceived, then reinforcement must also be given to strengthening civil society; legitimizing institutions, and generally distributing power throughout the polity. Respect for rule of law through a legitimate legal system must be reinforced at the local, municipal, state-wide and even regional levels.

#### **4. Canada's Evolving Instruments for Encouraging Democracy**

##### *Organizing Elections*

The promotion of free and fair elections, technical assistance and observer missions are clear signs of support for a democratizing country. The work remaining on elections is in its wider reach: elections are part of a democratic process which avoids zero-sum outcomes, "organized uncertainty". Those who win an election may lose the next one. An election should be seen as one event on a continuum-- not a decisive signal of how power should be distributed within a society.

Free and fair elections are a good indication of the level of democracy or willingness to embark upon democratic reform. A country with questionable or unfair electoral practices is unlikely to have other important elements necessary for democratic development (among these, political will).

---