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After the Arab Spring: Rethinking the Role of Regional Organisations in Supporting Democratic Governance

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After the Arab Spring: Rethinking the Role of Regional Organisations in Supporting Democratic Governance

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

ADB	Asian Development Bank
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
AU	African Union
CARICAD	Caribbean Centre for Development Administration
CARICOM	Caribbean Community
CoE	Council of Europe
CSDP	Common Security and Defence Policy
DRC	Democratic Republic of the Congo
ECOSOC	Economic and Social Council
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
EEAS	European External Action Service
ENP	European Neighbourhood Policy
EU	European Union
ICTs	Information and Communication Technologies
IDEA	Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance
IRDD	Inter-Regional Dialogue on Democracy
LAS	League of Arab States
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
OAS	Organization of American States
OAU	Organization of African Unity
OSCE	Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
PIC	Pacific Island Countries
PIF	Pacific Island Forum
SAARC	South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation
SADC	South African Development Community
SPC	Secretariat of the Pacific Community
UN	United Nations
UNECA	United Nations Economic Commission for Africa
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
UNU	United Nations University
UNU-CRIS	United Nations University Institute on Comparative Regional Integration Studies

INTRODUCTION

The United Nations University Institute on Comparative Regional Integration Studies (UNU-CRIS), the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), and the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA) jointly organised an international conference entitled, *After the Arab Spring: Rethinking the Role of Regional Organisations in Supporting Democratic Governance*, which took place in Brussels, Belgium, during the period 22-23 November 2012.

In these challenging post-Arab Spring times, the Conference offered a timely opportunity to evaluate the profound changes impacting political, economic and social factors in the region and beyond, particularly in the light of the role to be played by regional organisations. During two days, 65 policy makers, senior officials of key regional organisations, leading academics, scholars, practitioners and civil society organisations gathered with the aim of:

- Reviewing the role of regional organisations in supporting democratic governance in their member states;
- Sharing detailed knowledge on how and to what extent regional organisations support democratic governance and values;
- Discussing how regional organisations assist countries in remedying their democracy deficits in post-conflict or regime change situations;
- Facilitating dialogue to strengthen cooperation between regional organisations on matters related to democracy support, stability and improved governance; and
- Developing new regional strategies to consolidate democratic governance.

UNU-CRIS, UNECA and International IDEA will publish a book, which will contain the academic papers prepared for the conference and summaries of the various roundtable sessions (to be published in 2013).

BACKGROUND

The end of the Cold War has witnessed increasing efforts by regional organisations to support democratic governance in their member states. Regional organisations worldwide have embraced the idea that political stability is an important precondition to the attainment of economic and social development and prosperity. They have played a significant role in guarantying peace and security within their region by promoting cooperation and dialogue initiatives in various political, economic and social issues. Some of them have also set norms, standards and frameworks to guide democratic practice in their member-states.

However, with the Arab Spring accompanied by civil unrests and mass protests that swept through several Arab states, it seems apparent that there are fundamental weaknesses in the structure, ability and capacity of the relevant regional organisations to respond to popular protests and the yearnings for democratic change. In many cases, regional organisations do not have the necessary institutional mechanisms and normative frameworks to deal with such democratic issues; and where they do, like in the case of the EU and AU, response to democratic change especially from 'below' may not be swift and decisive as it should be.

This reality underscores the fact that there is more to be done by regional organisations to prevent conflicts and guarantee peace, security, and stability than just adopting multitudinous treaties and encouraging the conduct of democratic elections in their member states. The Arab Spring thus affords the opportunity for regional organisations worldwide to undertake a comprehensive soul-searching reflection and ask themselves the critical question of what exactly should be the role of regional organisations in supporting democratic governance and what should be the strategy to adopt?

Consequently, policies that deal with the support of democratic governance and standards in regional organisations deserve to be closely studied. Prior to this exercise, there is a need to address the continuing questions of what exactly is democratic governance and to what extent regional organisations can support democratic governance on the part of their member states. These controversial issues present serious challenges to regional organisations. In addition, an assessment of the democratic nature of the institutional structures and processes of regional organisations needs to be undertaken. Although regional organisations endeavour to support democratic governance, they often face critiques concerning their own internal democratic deficits. This raises the question of how an organisation can support democratic governance in its member states while it is internally challenged by democracy-related issues.

OPENING REMARKS

The Deputy Secretary-General for the European External Action Service, Maciej Popowski opened the two-day conference by highlighting the important role to be played by regional organisations in establishing a new, just and democratic order in Tunisia, Egypt and Libya. He contended that the European Union, whose history is marked by a pattern of changes, is well-positioned to support democratic transitions in the aftermath of the popular uprisings. By working hand in hand with other regional organisations of the region, it has the potential to demonstrate that comprehensive, locally tailored and regionally supported initiatives are needed to tackle the regional challenges and positively influence the whole region.

In his keynote speech, Youssef Hesham, Former Head of Cabinet and Current Special Adviser to the Secretary-General of the League of Arab States, highlighted five key challenges for Arab states in the aftermath of the Arab Spring:

1. Dealing with fundamental questions, such as the relation between state and religion;
2. Drafting constitutions that are modern, respect basic human rights, deal with minorities, and ensure the independence of and right balance between the executive, legislative and judiciary powers;
3. Building consensus on social justice by including the views of young people;
4. Supporting socio-economic development and regional integration;
5. Promoting peace and stability in Arab states.

In light of the high unemployment rate being among the main drivers of the Arab unrests, he underscored the importance of taking into account the views of young people, severely affected by the socio-economic and employment challenges.

PANEL I PAST AND PRESENT EXPERIENCES OF DEMOCRATIC SUPPORT BY REGIONAL ORGANISATIONS

The Panel "Past and Present Experiences of Democratic Support by Regional Organisations", was chaired by Said Adejumobi.

Valerio Bosco presented his paper entitled, "UN-AU-LAS, from reaction to prevention: The quest for an effective tripartite partnership in promoting peace and security through democracy and good governance". He highlighted the main features of the African Union (AU) framework for the promotion of peace, security, democracy and good governance. Besides Article 4(h) of the AU Constitutive Act embracing the normative shift from non-interference to non-indifference, the most recent developments are: the creation of the African Governance Architecture aimed at strengthening

coordination among AU institutions with mandate on governance, democracy and human rights, and the entry into force of the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance. The presentation reviewed the performance of the AU with regard to unconstitutional change of governments and popular protests in Northern Africa. The AU has a comprehensive framework for prevention and management of coups d'état. There is, however, no prescription as to how to assess the legitimacy of a popular uprising, how to react to a non-implementation by member states of major instruments developed by the AU to promote democracy and good governance, and how to promote coordination and consistency among the different AU institutions. The presentation further discussed the institutional framework of the League of Arab States (LAS), which – in comparison to the AU – lacks dedicated mechanisms and comprehensive framework for peace, security, good governance and democracy. The strong attachment to sovereignty and unanimity rule constitute barriers to external interventions and common decisions. Valerio Bosco highlighted the common challenges faced by the AU and the LAS, including the strong demands for job creation, youth employment, political participation and good governance. He regards the current period of transitions in North Africa and the Middle East as opening a new era of cooperation between the UN, the AU and the LAS and outline recommendations aimed at strengthening their partnership.

Michael Sivendra presented his paper entitled, "Roles Regional Organisations play in Facilitating Democratic Models of Governance: The Case of Small PICs". He explained the role played and instruments used by the Pacific Island Forum (PIF) in facilitating norms of democratic governance and supporting conflict resolution in the Pacific, by focussing on three case countries: Fiji, Solomon Islands and Tonga. In contrast to the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), the PIF is not a deeply integrated regional scheme owing to its member states' continued attachment to sovereignty and non-interference and reluctance to endorse legally binding measures. The PIF Secretariat has, nevertheless, taken on a diplomatic role in recent years, namely after the 2006 coup d'état in Fiji where it became the central vehicle for legitimising the sanctions against the Fijian military regime. It has further attempted to support good governance in the region in two ways: from the top, by cultivating good governance standards among parliamentarians, leaders and public service officers, and from the bottom, by re-evaluating the "traditional pacific values" and apply ways of changing attitudes of people in the civil service towards good practices. The cross-country analysis suggests that in order to strengthen democratic governance in the Pacific region, a significant shift is required in the approach of the PIF to resolving conflicts. The presentation formulated a number of recommendations to the PIF, including the need: to become more independent in its decision-making process, which is heavily influenced by Australia and New Zealand due to their major financial contributions; to be more assertive towards Pacific leaders; and to be more aspirational in setting its objectives. It concluded that the PIF, as the collective agency of the Pacific region, must derive the legal authority to set the region's security agenda and acquire the capacity to intervene diplomatically to resolve issues.

Ravi Prakash Vyas presented his paper entitled, "South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation: Can it Promote Democracy and Stability in the Region or Is It Too Much to Ask?". He introduced his presentation with a discussion of the concept of democracy with a view to applying it to the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC). The pursuit and support of democracy are priorities of the SAARC, which developed a range of legal instruments, institutions and policies to deal with issues of democracy, good governance and human rights. However, these instruments are purely of consultative nature, and there has consequently been a lack of adequate cooperation, implementation and accountability. Recommendations to the SAARC include: the expansion of the scope of its activities; the adoption of a bottom-up approach that builds up synergies between the SAARC and the people of the region; establishment of a parliamentary assembly as a deliberative and representational body for dialogue; set-up of a research centre dealing with democracy and governance issues; and the creation of human rights mechanisms including a complaint mechanism. To conclude, Ravi Prakash Vyas highlighted that when SAARC was established, South Asian states, deeply affected by poverty and corruption, were individually unable to render their political leaders accountable towards the socio-economic needs of the people. Today, the relevance of the SAARC is however at stake and will depend on the organisation's ability to catch up with the progress made elsewhere and to achieve minimum levels of consensus and understanding of current issues and priorities.

The paper of Edward McMahon entitled, "Regional Organisations and the Promotion of Democratic Governance: The Value of Collective Action" was presented by Kojo Busia. The presentation focused on the key roles that regional organisations both do, and could, play in promoting, translating and contextually shaping universal democracy and human rights norms to enable their acceptance and ownership on the national and sub-national levels. It attempted to identify several key elements of how regional organisations help build democratic culture in their member countries. These include membership requirements for participation in regional organisations, charters and other documents reinforcing democratic governance, emphasis on security and peace maintenance/building, and the increasingly common use of peer reviews and other innovative mechanisms. The presentation further discussed the challenges and obstacles that regional organisations confront in articulating democracy and good governance policies. It underscored that the ability of regional organisations to promote a democracy agenda is, to a significant extent, a function of how much individual member states within each regional organisation support such policies. Further, governments with autocratic tendencies are likely to slow the spreading of democratic norms. The presentation concluded that the continuing trend towards greater political freedoms and representative government is having the effect of empowering regional organisations to become more active and effective in developing democratic norms and procedures in member states. This task is not simple and requires skill, patience, consistency, resources and expertise. It is a process of trial and error that requires continued and sustained vigilance and effort. Regional organisations have the potential to support stability and development in their regions as well as to avoid violence if they can effectively play a democracy support role.

ROUNDTABLE I EXPERIENCES FROM THE ARAB WORLD

The Roundtable discussion entitled "Experiences form the Arab World" was chaired by Ayman Ayoub, who provided a brief overview of democracy support challenges in the Arab region.

Monia El-Abed, Lawyer at the Court of Appeal of Tunisia, provided an evaluation of the democratic transition process in Tunisia. A council was established in Tunisia to draft the constitution and monitor the government. However, the first draft of the new Constitution does not respect the principles of the revolution in terms of dignity, equality and democracy. The revolution in Tunisia was sparked by the people willing to exercise their economic rights and have access to employment. It is a citizens-led battle. Unemployment, poverty and exclusion remain core challenges in Tunisia. Moreover, there is no effective will towards enshrining the principles of democracy and equality. Tunisia is at a dangerous turning point today. Political parties and people talk about democracy; its content is debated and points of discussion include: equality between men and women; and the independence of the judiciary (debated today although it was among the main calls of revolutionary groups). There are opportunities for women to access education since the inception of the Tunisian modern state. Paradoxically, women are still harassed, and excision remains practiced in the name of freedom. There is a genuine willingness to see the general opinion expressed and reflected proportionally in the aspirations of Tunisian people. The dramatic spread of political violence since the revolution must also be pointed out. In view of these elements, Tunisia is at an important turning point today; it has to position itself between two models: the conventional, which has no roots in Tunisia, and the modern state.

Khaled Abbas, Member of the Freedom and Justice Party in Egypt, declared that misery and fear, which are spreading in Egypt, constitute an opportunity for the rise of extremist ideas. He believes that there is a need to re-think the relation between the state, as secular authority, and the religion, Islam. The real issue, according to him, is not the identity or the ideological inclination of Egypt, but the problems linked to daily living conditions, education and health. The revolution was driven by social motives, and it was accompanied by strong positions and views on the role of the state. An important post-revolution question relates to the kind of state that Egypt wants. Strong states may be instrumental in restoring order, but may also lead to totalitarism. The best option is a strong (civil) society. Khaled Abbas concluded by enumerating the two main challenges in Egypt today. On the one hand, the resurgence of the salafist movement and its engagement in the democratic sphere constitutes an important step as it reduces the extremist potentials of the movement. This calls for an evaluation of the experience of the Brotherhood government. On the other hand, and most importantly, the economic governance issue must be dealt with. There is a need for democratic transition, and not a blind imitation of the Western practices. Liberalisation needs to be discussed with a view to produce an economic vision that is specific

to the needs of Egypt. To this end, some of the existing institutions need to be supported by states as to effectively perform their democratic role.

Fathi Baja, former member of the Libyan National Transitional Council and Head of the Political Affairs and External Relations Committee in Libya, declared that Libya had engaged in the transition from dictatorship to a democratic government after the Arab Spring. He however highlighted a number of challenges to democratisation in Libya. First of all, the creation of a civil state, as one of the main drivers of the revolution, constitutes an important issue. There has been a political vacuum in Libya since the fall of Ghaddafi's dictatorial regime, and today, an entirely new system has to be designed, as well as institutions and norms of functioning have to be established. Secondly, violence has dramatically risen in Libya. As a consequence of the bloody revolution, arms have spread, and militias have been set up. There is no longer a national army to support the democratic transition and stability. Thirdly, the Libyan economy needs to be stimulated and expanded. The most important source of income is oil. Libya has however not developed the capacity for oil refinery nor a national industry. Corruption is widespread because of the absence of sound institutions. Fourthly, national reconciliation is needed among the current political representatives as it will enable the creation of a political elite that represents the broad spectrum of Libyan citizens' political orientations and aspirations. It implies a discussion with the former representatives of Ghaddafi's regime, but also accountability of human rights violators. Fifthly, the spread of religious extremist groups is also problematic, especially when such groups were created after the revolution and have used their arms to perpetrate killings. Finally, and most importantly, Libya needs to develop its vision as a basis for a new comprehensive system of governance in the country.

Salam Kawakibi, Executive Director of the Arab Reform Initiative in Syria, declared that Syria envies the post-revolution problems faced by Tunisia, Egypt and Libya. Figures of the Syrian uprisings he presented include 42,000 dead and 50,000 disappeared people, 6,000,000 internally displaced, 700,000 refugees and 100 cities and villages destroyed, including Aleppo and Homs. He highlighted a number of misperceptions perpetrated by the media reports. First, the al-Assad regime is often perceived as being at the origin of the ba'athist ideology, although the origins of this movement and the ba'ath regime can be traced back to before the al-Assad period. Second, the al-Assad regime is sometimes presented as a modern state, like Tunisia or Egypt. The Syrian regime is however not secular. On the contrary, it hampers intellectual development, forbid secular and liberal groups and ideas, and hence encourages extremism. The al-Assad regime is also characterised as Alawi. Importantly, the Alawi population does only represent 10 percent of the total Syrian population. The regime is not led by a specific ethnic group - it is not Alawi, nor Sunni, nor Shiite – nor does it protect an ethnic minority. Instead, the regime is using the Alawi identity to increase tensions within the population and divide the country. Salam Kawakibi recalled that the National Council for Syrian Opposition was sparing no efforts to solve the crisis, but that the intervention and approach of the International Community was not reinforcing the endeavour. Moreover, the media portrays the Syrian revolution in a very negative way as it does not properly cover the peaceful revolution movement. In reality, the national army is

acting to contain protests and spontaneous expressions of democratic aspirations, which are taking place on a daily basis and not reflected in the news. It is finally important to point out that documents are currently drafted to prepare the "day after" of the fall of the regime.

Youssef Hesham, Special Adviser to the League of Arab States Secretary-General and Egyptian, referred to the title of the conference "After the Arab Spring", to which he prefers the terminology "Awakening", as entailing a diffusion of democratic ideals. According to him, the Arab Awakening is still underway. Arab citizens remain ready to sacrifice their lives in the name of dignity and freedom. He also pointed out that international and regional organisations were not established with a view to deal with democracy issues, and were not endowed with adequate tools to deal with such issues. Nevertheless, the LAS has a number of democracy-related activities in countries that have not been affected by the Arab Awakening. These include constitution-drafting support in Palestine and Iraq, judiciary reform in Sudan, conflict settlement in Lebanon, mediation efforts in cooperation with the AU in Somalia and Darfur, and the signature of a modernisation and reform initiative in Tunisia. The Arab League, as most of its regional counterparts, lacks global vision or strategy to deal with democracy issues and transformation. Therefore, interventions are dependent on the willingness of Arab states, which is an issue to be dealt with in the near future. Although there was an absence of political will for such transformation before, the post-Arab spring environment is conducive to change. Youssef Hesham concluded by declaring that the Arab awakening represents a genuine cry from a new generation who deserves their place, dignity and freedom. It is a human responsibility of all, including regional organisations and the international community, to support this young generation.

PANEL II ISSUES, LESSONS LEARNED AND COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVES ON SUPPORT OF DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE

The Panel "Issues, Lessons Learned and Comparative Perspectives on Support of Democratic Governance" was chaired by Stephen Kingah.

In his introductory remarks to the panel discussion, Andrew Bradley, Director of the Office of Int. IDEA to the EU, presented democracy as a universal human aspiration. Int. IDEA developed its approach to democracy taking into account that it is context-specific; has multiple forms that are in constant evolution; and that there is no single definition or model of democracy. Democracy is a home-grown process and citizens are the drivers of democratic change.

Tripathi Dhananjay presented his paper entitled, "Regionalisation and Democracy: Conceptual Complementarity and Practical Complications: A Comparative Study of Europe and South Asia". The presentation highlighted the proportional relationship between regionalisation and democratisation. Regionalisation represents a democratic, progressive process where states voluntarily concede part of their sovereignty for higher normative considerations. It argued that, although regionalisation cannot in itself be carried out for the sole purpose of supporting democracy in the region, it can be a catalyst for such endeavour. Regional integration with other democracies indisputably contributes to spreading democratic ideals. The European Union (EU), which has kept functioning democracy as one of the primary criteria for membership, is a unique case in this regard. It successfully led former communist states to democracy. Nevertheless, the complementarity between regionalisation and democratisation may be difficult to validate in other regions as there is a number of interrelated elements influencing the advancement of democracy in a region. The nature and character, as well as the objectives and aims, of regional organisations are important factors. In South Asia, democratisation does not seem to be a priority on SAARC's political agenda. As the largest democracy in the world, India is regarded as having a pivotal role to play in creating sub-regional groups to lead the way, but might be reluctant to share its position of regional hegemon. The presentation concluded by recalling that democratisation importantly depends of the intensity of regional integration, but also of the specificities of the region in terms of democratic situation. Still regionalisation opens opportunity for democratisation and will ultimately leads to positive outcomes if good politics is practiced.

Andreas Stensland and Joel Ng (and Walter Lotze) presented their paper entitled, "An Early Arab Spring? Regional Responses to Crisis in Côte d'Ivoire and Authoritarianism in Myanmar". The presentation underlined the importance of the context in which the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) were created and the ensuing attachment of recently independent states to the defence of their sovereignty and the development of the norms non-interference and regional security. Although they were primarily intended to serve as security-oriented safeguards against external interference, the AU and ASEAN have – over the past decade – taken notable

steps towards developing, internalising and applying human rights and security norms within their region. The case studies of Côte d'Ivoire and Myanmar contributed to highlight the institutional and political tensions faced by the organisations when addressing conflict situation, especially if widespread violations of human rights are involved. The tensions that arise when balancing human rights and security concerns in these situations are the consequence of weighing concerns for stability against the rights of individuals. Based on the analysis, strong similarities could be identified in how conflict situations are framed and responded to. Both the AU and ASEAN tend to frame conflicts and their solutions as primarily political in nature, and address human rights concerns under the rubric of "political engagement", as opposed to utilising a more strongly interventionist approach. The presentation concluded that the capacity of the AU and ASEAN to deal with the tensions at the nexus between regional human rights and security architectures will be central to their legitimacy as primary actors in their regions and their ability to develop responses to conflict within member states and hence guard against external interference.

ROUNDTABLE II TAKING STOCK OF REGIONAL EFFORTS TO SUPPORT DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE

The Roundtable discussion "Taking Stock of Regional Efforts to Support Democratic Governance" was chaired by Luk Van Langenhove.

Rita Marascalchi, Senior External Co-operation Officer, Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), described the Organization's multidimensional and comprehensive concept of security, covering both hard and soft aspects falling within its three areas of actions, namely the politico-military, the economic-environmental and the human dimensions. The OSCE had developed a significant experience in supporting its own member States in their path to democracy, including through the provision of policy advice, institutional capacity-building, electoral monitoring, mediation, post-conflict recovery and trust-building, exchange of experience and best practices, promotion of law enforcement, minority rights and legislative reform. Importantly, any operations are established at the invitation of the host country. As far as its relationship with the Arab Spring countries is concerned, the OSCE has institutionalised dialogue with its "Mediterranean Partners for Co-operation", including Egypt, Morocco and Tunisia, based on the principle of interconnectedness, which implies that the security in Europe is influenced by the security environment in the Mediterranean. Actions taken under this framework are demand-driven and also reflect the OSCE's comprehensive approach to security. The Organization provides a platform for dialogue, confidence-building and cooperation through exchanges of experience, expertise and lessons learned.

Youssef Hesham, Special Adviser to the Secretary-General, League of Arab States (LAS), recalled that the promotion of democracy is not among the main aims of regional organisations. Regional organisations were initially established during the colonial or early decolonisation period with a view to protect their

member countries and their sovereignty. These organisations are driven by their member states, traditionally pushing for their objectives, and not aiming to produce paradigm shifts. As the LAS is currently undergoing a process of reform, it will be interesting to see the kind of proposals that emerge from the process and the reactions from Arab countries, especially when it comes to the sensitive issues of democracy and human rights, and the sovereignty implications. The LAS does not have mechanisms specifically aimed at tackling democratic deficits, and it must be pointed out that there does not exist any UN body responsible for democracy promotion. In line with Kissinger's question, we could therefore ask what number to call for democracy issues?

Nicola de Santis, Head of the Mediterranean Dialogue, North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), foregrounded the adherence of NATO to the principles of freedom, democracy, human rights and the rule of law. The collective defence Organisation did create – in Europe and beyond – the conditions for peace, security and stability, which are essential pre-requisites to democratic developments. The relations between NATO and the Middle East countries operate with the Partnership for Peace. This programme was established with the aim of engaging NATO member states with other European and Soviet Union states. The aims of the Partnership for Peace are to promote stability, reduce potential threats to peace and foster security relations between NATO and its neighbouring partners.

Humbert de Biolley, Deputy Director, Brussels office of the Council of Europe (CoE), underlined the important role of the CoE in democracy support. The Council gathers virtually all European democracies with a view to discuss fundamental principles and values of democracy, human rights and rule of law. These are regarded as the necessary foundations to stability and development in society. In 2005, the CoE established a Forum for the Future of Democracy to strengthen democracy, political freedoms and citizens' participation. The Forum brings together high-level representatives of governments, parliaments, local and regional authorities and civil society with a view to enable exchange of ideas, information and best practices in the field of democracy. In the aftermath of the Arab Spring, this year's Forum involved North African and Middle East countries with the aim of engaging in a democratic debate that takes their experiences and aspirations into account.

Ingrid Wetterqvist, Senior adviser on democracy support, European External Action Service (EEAS) of the European Union (EU), expressed the preference of the EEAS for the terminology 'democracy support', instead of democracy promotion or democracy building. She raised the important question of whether or not the EU is a regional organisation, to which she outright replied positively. The EU can be regarded as a regional organisation along, at least, three dimensions: its identity; supra-national nature; and inter-governmental functioning. The internal values of the EU are reflected in its external action, which is guided by the fundamental principles of human rights, democracy, the rule of law and good governance. Increasing attention is devoted to human rights support since the appointment of Lady Ashton. In 2012, the EU adopted a Human Rights Strategy and appointed Mr. Lambrinidis as Special Representative for Human Rights. Actions undertaken by the EU in support of democracy include electoral monitoring, political dialogue, bilateral cooperation, multilateral relations, and Common

Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) missions. Ingrid Wetterqvist concluded by highlighting the merits of the young EEAS, which was created in 2011 and had already produced a proposal for a new European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) in May 2012. The ENP is based on civil and political aspects of democracy, participation of civil society, higher education and involvement of women.

PANEL III PEACE, SECURITY AND CITIZENSHIP ISSUES IN DEMOCRATIC SUPPORT AND PARTICIPATION

The Panel "Peace, Security and Citizenship Issues in Democratic Support and Participation" was chaired by Ademola Abass.

Linnéa Gelot (and Jan Bachmann) presented her paper entitled, "The African Union and the Protection of Civilians: Mediating Ownership and Sovereignty". She introduced the notion of 'Protection of Civilians' (PoC) and the wide-encompassing nature of the concept. The Protection discourse is regarded as a powerful instrument as it can help justify international intervention and organise a very diverse set of actors and interests behind an ostensibly benign and humanitarian agenda. The concept of protection has played an important role in recent interventions of the AU, which has its own understanding of its content. The definition of the concept becomes an issue of particular significance when tensions arise between the AU's interpretation of the Protection of Civilians and its implementation. Drawing on the AU's use of the discourse of protection in regard to the 2011 popular uprising in Libya, it is argued that, as a result of the different and coexisting interpretations of protection within the AU, challenging questions arise in relation to the questions of ownership and sovereignty. The Libya case illustrates a trend whereby African governments and regional actors have claimed ownership over the discourse of protection to enhance the AU's ability to frame the concept in a way that exhibits a more 'traditional', or state-centred, understanding of sovereignty and that resists a predetermined protection path as favoured by the UN Security Council (UNSC). The presentation concluded that the ostensibly universal norm of protection and the power of the UNSC to mobilise knowledge and authority in its name are challenged by contextual interpretation, in Africa or elsewhere.

The paper of Bonnie Ayodele entitled, "In the Service of Democratic Governance: The African Union Normative Framework on Unconstitutional Change of Government and ECOWAS Protocol on Good Governance and Democracy in the Post Arab Spring" was presented by Basiru Ajibola. The presentation recalled that the underlying idea behind the AU normative framework and the ECOWAS Protocol was to provide a (sub-) regional platform of support to democratic governments and to deter any forms of unconstitutionalism. However, recent events, especially in the post-Arab Spring, have put to test the political will as well as capacity of these organisations to uphold the sanctity of the Normative Framework and the Protocol supportive of democratic processes. In the case of AU, the outburst of revolutionary movements in the North African countries of Tunisia, Egypt and Libya provided a platform for a thorough assessment of the AU's Normative Frameworks related to constitutionalism and

democracy. The AU and ECOWAS have been challenged and pulled along two parallel forces: the need to ensure respect for the principle of rejection of unconstitutional changes of government, and the necessity to recognise the reality on the ground. The AU Framework, in particular, has demonstrated the shortfall and gap in the definition of unconstitutional changes of government, which prevented adequate response to the crises in Egypt and Tunisia, and a late reaction in Libya. On the contrary, ECOWAS' particularly proactive, early and decisive stance on unconstitutional change of government has made West Africa a locus of democratic reform. The presentation concluded that the continental and sub-continental bodies' jurisprudence against unconstitutionalism needed to be reviewed and that regimes and mechanisms of sanctions have to be designed to make the violators of theses legal frameworks accountable.

Katherine Kirkby (and Omer Awan, Anthony Ming, Naveed Somani) presented the joint paper entitled, "The Role of Regional Organisations in Promoting e-Governance". She characterised the Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) as providers of new digital pathways for collection and diffusion of ideas and practices, enabling collaboration among diverse interest groups, intensifying the voice of communities and creating an environment to encourage digital democracy. It has been evidenced that ICTs have the potential to enable democratic governance by modernising and reengineering government processes, but also rendering them transparent, enabling oversight and strengthening social accountability. She compared e-Government to e-Governance, which is a wider concept that incorporates the public sector's use of ICTs to not only improve information and service delivery, but to encourage citizen participation in the decision-making process and make governments more accountable, transparent, democratic and effective. Many regional organisations have embraced the importance of promoting good governance and political stability, and have developed regional e-Government frameworks to promote the use of ICT in the public sector in their regional blocks. The role played by regional organisations in promoting the use of ICTs for democratic governance in their member states was illustrated by four case studies from the Southern African Development Community (SADC), Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC), Caribbean Centre for Development Administration (CARICAD) and Asian Development Bank (ADB). The presentation however argued that regional organisations' role could be extended from acting as a resource base on e-Government to more dynamically promoting e-Governance in their regions. This involves directing their influence and capabilities to actively work with member governments to develop and implement e-Governance initiatives that encourage citizen participation and government accountability. This also necessitates facilitating South-South networking for the transfer of e-Government technology and knowledge between member countries, while maintaining their role in managing unique regional requirements of e-Governments.

André Mbata B. Mangu (and Anne Marie Nsaka Kabunda) presented the joint paper entitled, "The Contribution of African Union, the Southern African Development Community and the International Conference on the Great Lakes region: Lessons from the 28 November Elections in the Democratic

Republic of Congo". In view of their similarities with the Arab uprisings, he suggested to refer to the African movements as the "African Spring". These movements both share the necessity to revisit the concept of democracy and governance. He contended that although democratic governance cannot be reduced to elections, regular, free, fair, competitive and transparent elections constitute a clear indicator of the democratic level of a political regime. The elections in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) of 28 November 2011 constitute a case of reversal and non-compliance with regional, sub-regional and domestic norms and principles governing democratic elections. The AU and African regional organisations nevertheless declared them free, fair, and credible. This case demonstrates the need for the AU and other African organisations to rethink their role in supporting democratic governance in Africa. Although they have undoubtedly contributed to democratic governance by adopting several instruments, the practice of these organisations has generally run against the lofty principles entrenched in their solemn instruments. Without denying the role of external pressure, in many countries, progress in terms of democratic governance has mainly depended on the commitment of the political leadership to democracy, respect for human rights and the rule of law, and on the determination of the people themselves. The presentation concluded that, in order to solve this confidence crisis, African leaders within these organisations needed to listen to the demands for democracy formulated by their people. The ratification and enforcement of the existing African human rights instruments by all member states and the application of effective sanctions to the violators would send a clear message that African leaders are fully committed to democratic governance.

SIDE EVENT INTERNATIONAL IDEA'S INTER-REGIONAL DIALOGUE ON DEMOCRACY

Andrew Bradley, Director of the Office of Int. IDEA to the EU outlined the process leading up to the establishment of the Inter-Regional Dialogue on Democracy (IRDD) and introduced Raul Cordenillo, Head of Inter-Regional Democracy Resource Centre, of International IDEA. Raul Cordenillo in his presentation provided an overview of the newly established IRDD, which was launched in April 2011 as a platform for engagement on democracy and related issues. It involves the Association of Southeast Asian States (ASEAN), African Union (AU), European Union (EU), League of Arab States (LAS), Organization of American States (OAS), Pacific Island Forum (PIF) and the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), with International IDEA acting as a facilitator. The underlying idea behind this endeavour is that regional organisations have a role to play in building democracy. Dialogue and sharing of knowledge and experiences among peers are regarded as be beneficial as they may contribute to a policy diffusion of democracy across regions. The IRDD therefore creates a neutral space for dialogue, advance mutual understanding and collaboration at the inter-regional level, promote information exchange and dialogue on governance agendas facilitated by democratic processes and institutions. Annual high-level meetings are hosted on a rotating basis, by the OAS in April 2011, ASEAN in May 2012, and the EU in May 2013. Other outputs of the process include workshops, publications as well as the set-up of a resource centre.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the paper presentations, the roundtable discussions and the ensuing debates, the Conference organisers formulated the following policy recommendations aimed at enhancing policy approaches to democratic governance

① Adopt a multi-level approach to democratic governance encompassing both vertical and horizontal interactions of regional organisations *inter se*, and with other actors;

② Promote an inclusive conceptualisation of and holistic approach to democratic governance, including an analysis of the political economy of democratic processes;

③ Support the democratisation of regional organisations, their institutions and processes in pursuit of democratic governance, which would further enhance their credibility and legitimacy;

④ Explore the implications of democratic governance concomitantly with seeking a comprehensive understanding and awareness of the directions in which regional organisations steer their member states;

⑤ Address the reasons for the low level of requests for support to regional organisations from their member states;

⑥ Conduct research into the democratic deficits in the decision-making processes of regional organisations in regions where member-states lack or do not lack democratic governance practices. An example is to seek an understanding of the impact that the democratic deficits in the European Union has on the organisation's relationship with its member states;

⑦ Identify the role of the United Nations (UN) in ensuring coherence in its, and regional organisations' efforts at supporting democratic governance; and

⑧ Understand the limits of regional organisations' efforts at supporting democratic governance, while not overlooking the need to articulate success stories of regional organisations' support of democratic governance.

UNU-CRIS, UNECA and Int. IDEA will publish a book, which will contain the academic papers prepared for the conference and summaries of the various roundtable sessions (to be published in 2013).

For further details, refer to the Conference website: http://unu-uneca.com (valid until June 2013).

ANNEX I - PROGRAMME

Thursday, November 22, 2012

8:15–8:45 Registration

8:45–9:00 Welcome address by the Conference organisers

Said Adejumobi, Director of UNECA's Governance and Public Administration Division

Luk Van Langenhove, Director of the UNU Institute on Comparative Regional Integration Studies

Andrew Bradley, Director of the Office of International IDEA to the European Union

9:00–9:30 Keynote speeches

Maciej Popowski, Deputy Secretary General for Inter-institutional Affairs, European External Action Service

Youssef Hesham, Former Head of Cabinet of the Secretary-General and Special Adviser to the Secretary-General, League of Arab States

PANEL I PAST AND PRESENT EXPERIENCES OF DEMOCRATIC SUPPORT BY REGIONAL ORGANISATIONS

9:30–11:30

Chair

Said Adejumobi, Director of UNECA's Governance and Public Administration Division

Panellists

Valerio Bosco – UN-AU-LAS, from reaction to prevention: The quest for an effective tripartite partnership in promoting peace and security through democracy and good governance

Michael Sivendra, Sunil Kumar and Karishma Devi – Roles Regional Organizations play in Facilitating Democratic Models of Governance: The Case of Small PICs

Ravi Prakash Vyas – South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation: Can it Promote Democracy and Stability in the Region or Is It Too Much to Ask?

Edward R. McMahon (paper presented by Kojo Busia) – Regional Organizations and the Promotion of Democratic Governance: The Value of Collective Action

ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION EXPERIENCES FROM THE ARAB WORLD

11:45–13:00

Chair

Ayman Ayoub, Director of the West Asia and North Africa Regional Programme, International IDEA

Discussants

Monia El-Abed (Tunisia), Lawyer at the Court of Appeal, Member of the Independent High Authority of Elections (ISIE), and Founder and former President of the Tunisian Association of Female Lawyers

Khaled Abbas (Egypt), Member of the Freedom and Justice Party

Fathi Baja (Libya), Former member of the Libyan National Transitional Council, Head of the Political Affairs and External Relations committee

Salam Kawakibi (Syria), Executive Director of the Arab Reform Initiative

Youssef Hesham (Egypt), Former Head of Cabinet and Current Special Adviser to the League of Arab States Secretary-General

PANEL II **ISSUES, LESSONS LEARNED AND COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVES ON SUPPORT**

14:00-16:00 **OF DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE**

Chair

Stephen Kingah, Research Fellow at the UNU Institute on Comparative Regional Integration Studies

Introductory remarks

Andrew Bradley, Director of the Office of International IDEA to the EU –Perspectives on Democracy Support

Panellists

Tripathi Dhananjay - Regionalisation and Democracy; Conceptual Complementarity and Practical Complications: A Comparative Study of Europe and South Asia

Andreas Stensland, Joel Ng and Walter Lotze – An Early Spring? Regional Responses to Crisis in Côte d`Ivoire and Authoritarianism in Myanmar

ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION **TAKING STOCK OF REGIONAL EFFORTS IN SUPPORTING DEMOCRATIC**

16:30-17:45 **GOVERNANCE**

Chair

Luk Van Langenhove, Director, UNU Institute on Comparative Regional Integration Studies

Discussants

Rita Marascalchi, Senior External Co-operation Officer, Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe

Hesham Youssef, Special Adviser to the Secretary-General, League of Arab States

Nicola de Santis, Head of the Mediterranean Dialogue, North Atlantic Treaty Organization

Humbert de Biolley, Deputy Director Brussels Office, Council of Europe

Ingrid Wetterqvist, Senior adviser democracy support, European External Action Service

Friday, November 23, 2012

PANEL III PEACE, SECURITY AND CITIZENSHIP ISSUES IN DEMOCRATIC SUPPORT AND PARTICIPATION

8:30–10:30

Chair

Ademola Abass, Head of Regional Peace and Security programme, UNU Institute on Comparative Regional Integration Studies

Panellists

Linnéa Gelot and Jan Bachmann – The African Union and the Protection of Civilians: Mediating Ownership and Sovereignty

Katherine Kirkby, Omer Awan, Anthony Ming and Naveed Somani – The Role of Regional Organisations in Promoting e-Governance

André Mbata B. Mangu and Anne Marie Nsaka Kabunda –The Contribution of African Union, the Southern African Development Community and the International Conference on the Great Lakes region

Bonnie Ayodele (paper presented by Ajibola Basiru) – In the Service of Democratic Governance: The African Union Normative Framework on Unconstitutional Change of Government and ECOWAS Protocol on Good Governance and Democracy in the Post Arab Spring

SIDE EVENT INTERNATIONAL IDEA'S INTER-REGIONAL DIALOGUE ON DEMOCRACY (IRDD)

10:45–11:30

Andrew Bradley, Director, Office of International IDEA to the EU

Raul Cordenillo, Head of Inter-Regional Democracy Resource Centre, International IDEA

CLOSING REMARKS THE WAY FORWARD: RECOMMENDATIONS

11:30–12:15

Ademola Abass, Head of Regional Peace and Security Programme, UNU Institute on Comparative Regional Integration Studies

ANNEX II – LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

AAVATSMARK, Paal Ivar Mørkved	Permanent Representation of Norway to the European Union
ABASS, Ademola	UNU Institute on Comparative Regional Integration Studies
ABBAS, Khaled	Freedom and Justice party (Egypt)
ADEJUMOBI, Said	United Nations Economic Commission for Africa
ARCODIA, Alessandra	Italy
AYOUB, Ayman	International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance
BAJA, Fathi	International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance
BASIRU, Ajibola Surajudeen	Nigeria
BENZ, Balthasar	European External Action Service
BIOLLEY (DE), Humbert	Council of Europe Liaison Office with the European Union
BOSCO, Valerio	United Nations Economic Commission for Africa
BRADLEY, Andrew	International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance
BRAGA, Matteo	UNU Institute on Comparative Regional Integration Studies
BUSIA, Kojo	United Nations Economic Commission for Africa
CORDENILLO, Raul	International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance
CORDES (DE), Jean-Charles	Council of Europe Liaison Office with the European Union
DE SANTIS, Nicola	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
DHANANJAY, Tripathi	South Asian University
DOMINGUEZ ALVARES, José	UNESCO Liaison Office to the European Union
EL-ABED, Monia	Court of Appeal & Independent High Authority of Elections
GALLO, Alessandro	Italy
GARCIA, Irene	United Nations Development Programme
GELOT, Linnéa	Nordic Africa Institute
HAMZA, Khaled	International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance
HASSAN, Hamdi	International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance
HESHAM, Youssef	League of Arab States
HULSE, Merran	Radboud University Nijmegen
KASASA, Aya	International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance
KAWAKIBI, Salam	Arab Reform Initiative
KINGAH, Stephen	UNU Institute on Comparative Regional Integration Studies
KIRKBY, Katherine	Commonwealth Secretariat
KNUDSEN, Morten	European External Action Service
NG KUANG JONG, Joel	S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies
LOPEZ, Stéphane	Organisation internationale de la Francophonie
LUKYAMUZI, Joseph	Union of African Parties for Democracy and Development

MAES, Léonie	UNU Institute on Comparative Regional Integration Studies
MANGU, André Mbata B.	University of South Africa
MARASCALCHI, Rita	Organization for Security and Co-Operation in Europe
MEDINILLA, Alfonso	European Centre for Development and Policy Management
MOHAMED-RAJA'I, Barakat	Independent Economic Expert
NICULESCU, George	European Geopolitical Forum
OSMAN, Rascha	Permanent Representation of Switzerland to the EU
PAPANAGNOU, Georgios	UNU Institute on Comparative Regional Integration Studies
POPOWSKI, Maciej	European External Action Service
PRAKASH VYAS, Ravi	Kathmandu School of Law
ROUDIL, Marie Paule	UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
SIVENDRA, Michael	University of the South Pacifics
STENSLAND, Andreas	Norwegian Refugee Council Capacity
TISSI, Nicola	European Centre for Development and Policy Management
VAN LANGENHOVE, Luk	UNU Institute on Comparative Regional Integration Studies
VARELA, Miguel	Brussels, Belgium
VLEUTEN (VAN DER), Anna	Radboud University Nijmegen
ZIQUI, Zoubida	League of Arab States
ZWARTJES, Marieke	UNU Institute on Comparative Regional Integration Studies

ANNEX III – CONFERENCE ORGANISERS

The **United Nations University Institute on Comparative Regional Integration Studies** (UNU-CRIS) is a research and training institute of the United Nations University. UNU is a global network of institutes and programmes engaged in research and capacity development to support the universal goals of the UN. It brings together leading scholars from around the world with a view to generate strong and innovative knowledge on how to tackle pressing global problems. The Institute UNU-CRIS focuses on the study of processes of regional integration and cooperation and their implications. It acts as a resource for the UN system, with particular links to the UN bodies dealing with regional integration, and works in partnership with institutes and initiatives throughout the world that are concerned with issues of integration and cooperation. UNU-CRIS is based in Bruges, Belgium.

The **United Nations Economic Commission for Africa** (UNECA) was established by the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) of the United Nations in 1958 as one of the UN's five regional commissions. Its mandate is to promote the economic and social development of its member States, foster intra-regional integration, and promote international cooperation for Africa's development. UNECA's dual role, as a regional arm of the UN and a part of the regional institutional landscape in Africa, positions it well to make unique contributions to member States' efforts to address their development challenges. Its strength derives from its role as the only UN agency mandated to operate at the regional and sub-regional levels to harness resources and bring them to bear on Africa's priorities. UNECA is based in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

The **International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance** (Int. IDEA) is an intergovernmental organisation with the mission to support sustainable, effective and legitimate democracy worldwide. International IDEA produces comparative knowledge in its key areas of expertise: electoral processes, constitution building, political participation and representation, and democracy and development, as well as on democracy as it relates to gender, diversity, and conflict and security. It brings this knowledge to national and local actors who are working for democratic reform, and facilitates dialogue in support of democratic change. International IDEA is based in Stockholm, Sweden, but has regional offices in Africa, Asia and the Pacific, Latin America and the Caribbean, and West Asia and North Africa regions. It has an Office to the EU in Brussels and to the AU in Addis Ababa.