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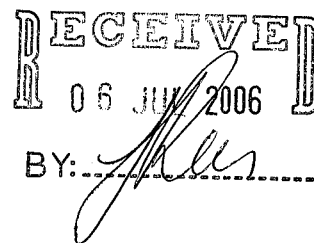
0 5 JUL 2006

Dr Andrew Southcott MP
Chair
Joint Standing Committee on Treaties
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Dr Southcott

I refer to my appearance before the Joint Standing Committee on Treaties' public hearing on 19 June 2006, which reviewed the proposed treaty action: *The International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA) Statutes (as amended at the Extraordinary Council meeting of International IDEA on 24 January 2006).*

At the hearing, the Hon Dick Adams MP requested more information on the activities of the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA) in Indonesia, in particular with respect to Indonesia's 1999 elections. The following addresses this request.

- After the resignation of President Suharto in 1998, International IDEA advised Indonesian political parties and civil society on the options for, and implications of, electoral system choices. In 1999, International IDEA provided technical assistance for the development of civic education programs and to train women to run for public office.

- International IDEA facilitated a democratisation assessment for Indonesia in 2000 that addressed the challenges and opportunities for strengthening the transition to democracy. In October 2001, International IDEA held a conference in Jakarta entitled 'Review of Constitutional Institutions to Promote Sustainable Democracy and Effective Administration in Indonesia.'

- More recently, International IDEA conducted a project in Indonesia supporting the Regional Representative Council (Dewan Perwakilan Daerah, or DPD). The project was completed in May 2006.
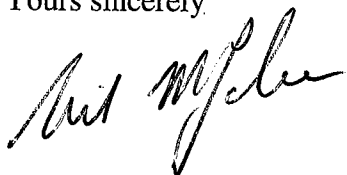
Mr Kim Wilkie MP asked for some examples of the types of activities which International IDEA engages in. The following addresses this request.

- Some recent examples of International IDEA's work include:

  - A 'State of Democracy' assessment methodology – a tool for national actors to assess the condition of their own democracy.

- The Building Resources in Democracy, Governance and Elections (BRIDGE) project which has developed course curriculum for adult training of electoral officials on election planning and management. The curriculum has been translated into a number of languages and used in Australia, East Timor, Indonesia, Papua New Guinea and Fiji.

- Research and data collection on political parties on a global scale. Research has focussed on the internal functioning of parties.

  ⇒ For example, a joint project with Australia's Centre for Democratic Institutions (CDI) and the United Nations University on 'Political Party Development in Conflict-Prone Societies'. The project examines how political parties can be sustained, drawing on the experiences of countries in the Asia-Pacific region.

- Handbooks on various aspects of democracy assistance

  ⇒ For example, the 1998 Women in Parliament: Beyond Numbers publication, that looks at obstacles to women entering parliaments and legislative bodies.

• A new five-year (2006-2011) International IDEA strategy will focus more on practical project-based work and less on publications. IDEA is also planning to develop more expertise and new approaches, taking into account the particular needs of fragmented societies and emerging democracies.

• Activities supported by International IDEA will remain focused on democracy building and conflict management; strengthening electoral processes; developing political parties as actors in democracy; and political equality and participation, including advancing the role of women in politics.

I would be pleased to provide the Committee with further information should it be required.

Yours sincerely

Neil McFarlane
Director, Africa and Multilaterals Section