

# DEMOCRACY



## UNESCO and the promotion of democratic values and principles

1 Fostering comparative analytical research. 2 Organizing dialogues on the future of democracy. 3 Supporting democracy in post-conflict societies. → The Byblos Centre: a catalyst for change.



## Democracy, culture and peace

The last quarter of the 20th century saw successive waves of democratization that affected various regions at different times: Iberian Europe, Latin America, South-East Asia, large swathes of Africa and, finally, Eastern Europe. The end of the cold war appeared to initiate a new age of democracy. However, despite the progress made, the global success of democratization cannot be taken for granted. In some regions, non-democratic forms of rule still exist. In others, a number of successful attempts have yet to become stable democracies. In addition, falling turnout at elections, dissatisfaction with politics and politicians, the strength of new populist movements demonstrate that democracy is never permanently anchored anywhere, but requires constant nurturing and development.

From the outset, UNESCO has played a key role in the promotion of democratic values and principles. Its Constitution upholds the democratic ideals of justice, liberty, equality and solidarity, and considers these principles as fundamental factors in the building of peace. Indeed, the Preamble makes a direct link between “the denial of the democratic principles of the dignity, equality and mutual respect of men” and the “great and terrible war”. The realization of the democratic ideals remains therefore at the core of UNESCO’s actions.

In 2002, UNESCO developed a strategy for an international programme on democracy, to be coordinated by the International Centre for Human Sciences at Byblos, Lebanon (hereafter referred to as the Byblos Centre. See p.3), in close cooperation with members of the International Panel on Democracy and Development (IPDD. See p.3). This new strategy integrates three prior independent strands: the empirical work of the Byblos Centre, the conceptual analysis of the IPDD and the theoretical analysis of the principles of democracy of UNESCO’s earlier programme.

The overall theme of the new democracy programme is Democracy, culture and peace. It contains three main lines of action:

- 1 Fostering comparative analytical research on democracy and its relationship to culture;
- 2 Organizing international dialogues and prospective analysis on the future of democracy;
- 3 Supporting democracy in post-conflict societies.

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### For information

**On the Social and Human Sciences Sector (SHS) of UNESCO**  
- *Strategies and actions* (60 p.)  
- *A guide to partnership* (64 p.)  
- *SHS Newsletter* (quarterly, 24 p.)  
- [www.unesco.org/shs](http://www.unesco.org/shs)

**On UNESCO, United Nations for Education, Culture and Science Organization**  
[www.unesco.org](http://www.unesco.org)

### The International Centre for Human Sciences (ICHS)

Established in 1999 under a convention between UNESCO and the Lebanese Government, the International Centre for Human Sciences is an international social science research institution. By its statutes, it enjoys full academic freedom and diplomatic immunity. The purpose of the Centre is twofold: to contribute to the development of social and human sciences and to promote a culture of peace. In addition to promoting interregional and international cooperation and building up research capacities in different regions, the Byblos Centre works to foster comparative analytical research, disseminate its results and encourage the creation and strengthening of networks of social science institutes.

### The International Panel on Democracy and Development (IPDD)

The International Panel on Democracy and Development was created by UNESCO in 1998 with the objective of analysing the relationship between democracy and development and providing recommendations to guide UNESCO's future programmes on democracy. The IPDD was chaired by Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali and was composed of sixteen leading international figures. In 2002, the IPDD published a report entitled "The Interaction between Democracy and Development". The recommendations made by the panel in this report will guide the implementation of UNESCO's international programme on democracy.



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The widespread democratic progress since 1980 could be considered as the "globalization of democracy" in the world. Indeed, in recent years, demands of political freedom, representation, participation and accountability resonated in various regions. But while there is an emergence of a general consensus on the desirability of democratic societies, there has yet to be a profound understanding on the means to bring about democracy and entrench it. The question as to how democratic systems in various countries are established often remains dominated by the response that democracy is only possible under certain cultural, economic and social conditions, which are not universal. But current empirical research shows otherwise, namely that democracy is possible under diverse and different cultural situations. In order to assess the possibility of democratic practice and to fully comprehend the mechanisms which nurture the development and maintenance of democracy, it is important to encourage the generation of new knowledge which questions the prevailing paradigm and which will endeavour to show that democracy can be nourished everywhere despite the different traditions and cultures which ground societies.

### Reinforcement of democracy through a research programme

The generation of new knowledge through analytical empirical research and capacity-building will be coordinated by the Byblos Centre. The initial programme of work will focus on democracy and its relationship with culture. The aim is to conduct comparative empirical research on hypotheses (case studies) about determinants of democracy in order to analyse the compatibility of democracy with the will of the people living under diverse cultural traditions. These studies will be conducted in the field through surveys, opinion polls and analysis of media, focusing on citizens' attitudes to democracy. Hypotheses about the relevance of different determinants – as substantiated, contradicted or modified by comparing several cases of culturally different sub-societies – may provide a new approach to democracy theory.

The focus will later be widened to cover democracy and its relationship to themes such as ethnicity, peace, development, etc. The objective is to achieve a better understanding of the reality of democracy in the world, in particular the way in which democratic principles are understood and practised by the people of different regions.

## Capacity-building action

The Byblos Centre will assist UNESCO's Member States in developing the capacities of researchers, especially young researchers, to conduct empirical research on democracy. Activities will include the following:

- **The Byblos Research Training Programme:** Through the studies conducted in selected countries, teams of young scholars will be chosen to do research under the supervision of the Director of the Centre. The researchers will receive training in methodology of empirical research and in planning and conducting case studies.
- **The Byblos Tutorship Programme:** A limited number of graduate and doctoral students writing on subjects related to the Centre's research objectives will be accepted and tutored for their research. It is expected that the first candidates, who have already joined this programme, will obtain their Ph.D. by the end of 2005.
- **The Byblos Autumn School:** The Centre will continue to organize its yearly Autumn Schools with participants from the wider Middle East, the Caucasian States, Central Asian countries, Latin America and Africa. The Centre has already successfully organized two ten-day Autumn School sessions for close to 40 students on the subject of "Conflict and Peace Research: the state-of-the-art" and "Ethno-religious Conflicts and Modes of their Regulation". The topic of the Third Byblos Autumn School, which will be held in 2005, is "Neo-Realism Confirmed by Facts? Theories of International Relations and International Law under the impact of Unilateralism".



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Opening ceremony for the first Autumn School held at the Byblos Centre from 22 November to 3 December 2002. From left to right: Professor Theodor Hanf, Director of the Byblos Centre; Mr Ghassan Salamé, Minister of Education of Lebanon; and Mr Salim Nasr, Director of the Lebanese Centre for Policies Studies.

## Democracy and its relationship with culture

A first case study on "Cultural change and the perspectives of democracy in post-war Lebanon" was published in 2003 by the Byblos Centre. Other empirical surveys will be carried out in some 12 countries including South Africa, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Georgia, Malaysia, Indonesia, Namibia and Pakistan.

The surveys, which aim at refuting the thesis that certain cultures are incapable of democracy, will involve specialists of the countries concerned. The surveys will lead to a major publication, which is expected to be launched during a meeting of the International Panel on Democracy and Development in New York in 2007.

# 2

## Organizing dialogues on the future of democracy

### The Byblos Letters



The Byblos Centre publishes on a regular basis the "Byblos Letters" which contain selected articles and conference reports. Five issues have been published so far and one is currently under preparation.

**Issue N° 1**  
Harald Müller,  
*Theories of Peace* (Byblos: ICHS, 2003),  
37 pp.  
(English, Arabic)

**Issue N° 2**  
Karin Kneissl, *Culture, Religion and Conflict* (Byblos, ICHS, 2003),  
95 pp. (English, Arabic, German)

**Issue N° 3**  
Iliya Harik, *Democracy and the Paradoxes of Cultural Diversity. Beyond the Veil of Difference* (Byblos: ICHS, 2003), 48 pp.  
(English; Arabic in preparation)

**Issue N° 4**  
Valerie Møller,  
*Peaceful Co-existence in South Africa in the Millennium. A Review of Social Indicators in the 2002 Democracy Study* (Byblos, ICHS, 2004), 40 pp.

**Issue N° 5**  
Tamirace Fakhoury,  
*Ethno-Religious Conflict and Modes of its Regulation* (Byblos, ICHS, 2004) 60 pp.

Globalization is a major phenomenon which is influencing the state of democracies throughout the world. It has intensified international exchange and given rise to new actors. It has strengthened the extent to which international factors influence democratizing movements, and has opened the way to the internationalization of the democratic struggle. It is therefore necessary to re-examine the setting for democracy, and to examine the ways in which globalization impacts on democracy, and how it could, or should, become an opportunity for the full realization of democracy in the world.

For this purpose, the Byblos Centre will conduct prospective analyses and foster international dialogues in cooperation with members of the IPDD. The dialogues will be grounded on reflection and research on democratic norms, values and principles and their relationship to the key issues of globalization and development. This action will include the production of concept papers and the holding of international conferences in different regions of the world with members of the IPDD, decision-makers and researchers.

### Reinforcement of democracy through international dialogues

In the coming years, the Byblos Centre and UNESCO will organize a series of public conferences to promote international dialogue on democracy. The first conference, entitled "Democracy and Peace", was held in Beirut, Lebanon, in 2003 and gathered key members of the IPDD, Lebanese policy-makers, and the local community of academia, civil society, diplomacy and students. The series will continue with international conferences scheduled on the following topics:

- Democracy and Social Justice (2005).
- The Impact of Globalization on Democratic Development (2006).
- The Juridical Conditions of Democratic Development (2007).
- Democracy and Culture (2008).

The outcome of these conferences will be published in a series developed by the Byblos Centre with leading world institutions.



Hisashi Owada,  
Member of the International  
Panel on Democracy  
and Development

## Capacity-building action

The capacity-building element will be part and parcel of the international dialogues. The following activities will be organized around the conferences in order to build capacities in different countries:

- seminars with academics on such themes as the universality of democratic principles;
- seminars with policy-makers to raise awareness of the current and future challenges to democracy and to foster ethics of leadership for democratic governance;
- seminars with business leaders to explore the relationship between economic development and democracy;
- seminars with journalists to foster better knowledge of the challenges of globalization and the role of communication in democratic development.



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**Peace and Democracy: Benchmarking**  
by Alain Caillé  
Introduction by Boutros Boutros-Ghali  
UNESCO, 2004

This first publication to come out of the series of conferences on democracy was written by French sociologist Alain Caillé, who attended the Peace and Democracy meeting held in Beirut in June 2003. In it, he identifies some of the problems the world currently faces with relation to democracy, and proposes a form of benchmarking that might make it possible to better formulate questions regarding peace and democracy. After defining democracy, the author offers his personal

view on the following questions: Does democracy prevent conflicts? Is democracy intrinsically pacifist? Does democracy make it possible to avoid war? He ends with a concrete suggestion for UNESCO's role in the democratization process.



**The Interaction between Democracy and Development**  
Boutros Boutros-Ghali (Ed.), UNESCO, 2002

This Report presents the debates which took place during the three meetings of the International Panel on Democracy and Development and the Panel's recommendations. See box page 3.

A meeting on democracy in post-conflict societies was organized in the Byblos Centre in 2004. Three panels were organized with experts from Afghanistan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Iraq.

# 3

## Supporting democracy in post-conflict societies

### Identifying obstacles to democracy in post-conflict societies

During the March 2004 meeting in the Byblos Centre, experts on democracy in Afghanistan, Iraq and the Democratic Republic of the Congo gave a historical overview of democracy and described the current obstacles to democratic development in their respective countries. Key issues were addressed such as human security, fragmentation of society, lack of understanding among citizens of the meaning and ramifications of the concept of democracy, scepticism of the people towards the State and the political process, the relationship between democracy and economic development, corruption, and the need to consider the domestic context and cultural, religious, ethnic and linguistic specificities.

### Reinforcing research and training institutions in post-conflict areas

The role of the local centres working with the Byblos Centre could include the following:

- Training and capacity-building with the new legislators, civil servants and leaders of civil society in order to foster consensus around the need to protect and promote human rights, gender equality, and the rule of law.
- Development of training programmes for magistrates, army officials, police and security forces in cooperation with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and with NGOs.

The objective is to use the window of opportunity created by a new peace settlement to invest significantly in the dissemination of universal human rights principles and democratic norms.

A large number of countries in different regions of the world have been or are affected by violent conflicts, in which the international community is making efforts to restore peace. Subsequent peace agreements will invariably involve attempts at setting up new democratic institutions, establishing power-sharing arrangements and entrenching a culture of human rights. In this new dispensation, United Nations Agencies are often called upon to contribute to the reconstruction and reconciliation processes. Further, the 2002 resolution of the General Assembly of the United Nations calls for the relevant specialized agencies and bodies of the United Nations system to contribute actively in assisting countries to promote and consolidate democracy, namely by the strengthening of democratic institutions and the rule of law.

In the recent past, UNESCO has joined forces with other UN Agencies to participate in programmes of reconstruction and reconciliation. Most recently, the Organization has been engaged in Afghanistan, Israel/Palestine, Iraq and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. UNESCO's contribution has focused principally on the rehabilitation of the education system, the development of human resources, the promotion of independent media, and the rehabilitation and protection of cultural heritage. By means of the integrated strategy on democracy UNESCO will contribute more directly to the restoration and/or establishment of democracy through a programme of research and capacity-building.

### Supporting democracy in post-conflict societies through research

The immediate aftermath of ethnic and factional conflict may pose the strongest challenge for implementing democracy. Since each country comes with its own history, cultural traditions, ethnic make-up, etc., there is no "ready-to-use" model. Rather, there is a need in each context for domestic, social and political scientists to identify solutions that have worked elsewhere and suggest modifications to make them applicable in other settings, based on a realistic appreciation of the nature and power of the interests involved. The aim here is to encourage the promotion of democracy by local actors in the academic community who will make use of the results of the analytical research produced by Byblos and the debate generated by UNESCO.

In March 2004, during a joint meeting of the Scientific Committee of the Byblos Centre and members of the IPDD, several general recommendations were made for UNESCO's work in three post-conflict countries: Afghanistan, Iraq and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. These included a mapping exercise for each country of existing studies and research on the promotion of democracy in post-conflict societies and research on democracy and culture with special focus on the challenges posed by cultural traditions. These recommendations are being considered carefully during the elaboration of the Centre's programme of work.

## Capacity-building action

The experts who participated in the meeting on Democracy in post-conflict societies recommended that UNESCO undertake capacity-building activities such as seminars for decision-makers on the functioning of a democratic State, training for administrators on various operational skills, and seminars for judges, magistrates and prosecutors in order to reinforce an independent judiciary system. They also suggested the use of education and advocacy to foster democratic values and principles.

Another activity under consideration is the establishment of new research and training centres and the strengthening of existing ones in the post-conflict areas. Working closely with the Byblos Centre in Lebanon, these centres would conduct research, disseminate information, and interact with policy-makers and civil society in the building-up of the new democracies.



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## The Byblos Centre: a catalyst for change

The Byblos Centre is unique. Through research, capacity-building, networking and awareness-raising actions, its ambition is to act as a catalyst for democracy and democratization processes worldwide. In addition to its research programme to compare democratization processes in different settings, the Centre will receive young scholars, organize Autumn Schools for students from all over the world, and hold public lectures and international conferences. It will work to produce and promote cutting-edge research and generate public debate about key issues relevant to democracy. By soliciting a broad spectrum of potential partners ranging from research institutions, international organizations and NGOs to individual scholars, decision-makers and activists on democracy, it will create new synergies among a variety of actors working for democracy and help build capacities, notably in post-conflict areas.

By these means, the Byblos Centre will produce knowledge to inform policies and inspire democratization processes. It is hoped that the work of the Centre will contribute to reinforcing the rule of universal human rights principles and democratic norms in today's society.