

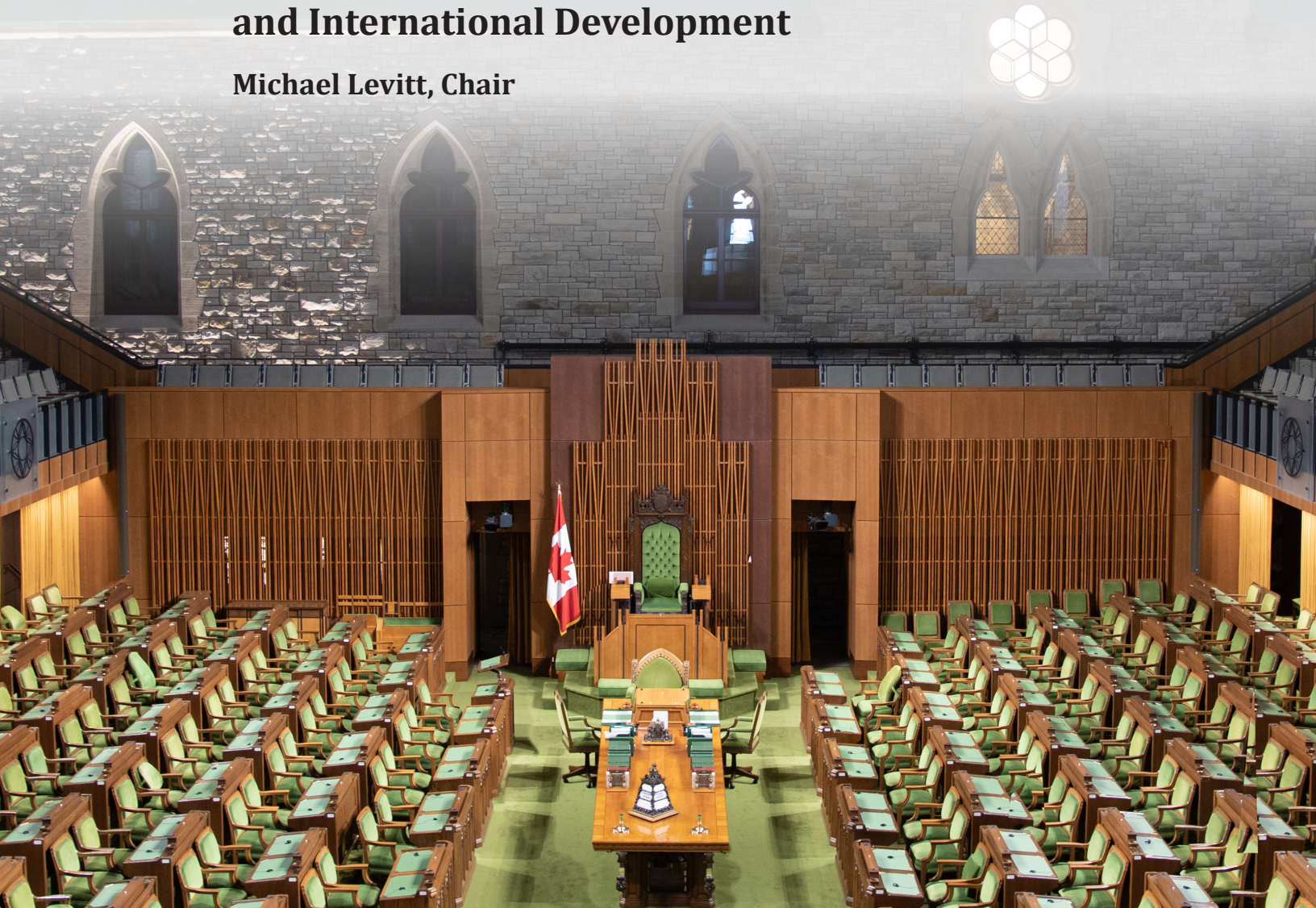


HOUSE OF COMMONS
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES
CANADA

RENEWING CANADA'S ROLE IN INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT FOR DEMOCRATIC DEVELOPMENT

Report of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs
and International Development

Michael Levitt, Chair



JUNE 2019
42nd PARLIAMENT, 1st SESSION

Published under the authority of the Speaker of the House of Commons

SPEAKER'S PERMISSION

The proceedings of the House of Commons and its Committees are hereby made available to provide greater public access. The parliamentary privilege of the House of Commons to control the publication and broadcast of the proceedings of the House of Commons and its Committees is nonetheless reserved. All copyrights therein are also reserved.

Reproduction of the proceedings of the House of Commons and its Committees, in whole or in part and in any medium, is hereby permitted provided that the reproduction is accurate and is not presented as official. This permission does not extend to reproduction, distribution or use for commercial purpose of financial gain. Reproduction or use outside this permission or without authorization may be treated as copyright infringement in accordance with the *Copyright Act*. Authorization may be obtained on written application to the Office of the Speaker of the House of Commons.

Reproduction in accordance with this permission does not constitute publication under the authority of the House of Commons. The absolute privilege that applies to the proceedings of the House of Commons does not extend to these permitted reproductions. Where a reproduction includes briefs to a Standing Committee of the House of Commons, authorization for reproduction may be required from the authors in accordance with the *Copyright Act*.

Nothing in this permission abrogates or derogates from the privileges, powers, immunities and rights of the House of Commons and its Committees. For greater certainty, this permission does not affect the prohibition against impeaching or questioning the proceedings of the House of Commons in courts or otherwise. The House of Commons retains the right and privilege to find users in contempt of Parliament if a reproduction or use is not in accordance with this permission.

Also available on the House of Commons website
at the following address: www.ourcommons.ca

**RENEWING CANADA'S ROLE IN
INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT FOR DEMOCRATIC
DEVELOPMENT**

**Report of the Standing Committee on
Foreign Affairs and International Development**

**Michael Levitt
Chair**

JUNE 2019

42nd PARLIAMENT, 1st SESSION

NOTICE TO READER

Reports from committee presented to the House of Commons

Presenting a report to the House is the way a committee makes public its findings and recommendations on a particular topic. Substantive reports on a subject-matter study usually contain a synopsis of the testimony heard, the recommendations made by the committee, as well as the reasons for those recommendations.

STANDING COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

CHAIR

Michael Levitt

VICE-CHAIRS

Hon. Erin O'Toole

Guy Caron

MEMBERS

Ziad Aboultaif

Leona Alleslev

Frank Baylis

Pamela Goldsmith-Jones (Parliamentary Secretary — Non-Voting Member)

Kamal Khera (Parliamentary Secretary — Non-Voting Member)

Robert Oliphant (Parliamentary Secretary — Non-Voting Member)

Raj Saini

Jati Sidhu

Anita Vandenbeld

Borys Wrzesnewskyj

OTHER MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT WHO PARTICIPATED

Kelly Block

David de Burgh Graham

Gérard Deltell

Linda Duncan

Pat Finnigan

Stephanie Kusie

Larry Maguire

Darrell Samson

Gagan Sikand

Sven Spengemann

Dave Van Kesteren

CLERK OF THE COMMITTEE

Erica Pereira

LIBRARY OF PARLIAMENT

Parliamentary Information and Research Service

Allison Goody, Analyst

Brian Hermon, Analyst

Scott McTaggart, Analyst

**THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON
FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND INTERNATIONAL
DEVELOPMENT**

has the honour to present its

TWENTY-EIGHTH REPORT

Pursuant to its mandate under Standing Order 108(2), the Committee has studied Canada's role in international support for democratic development and has agreed to report the following:

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF RECOMMENDATIONS	1
RENEWING CANADA'S ROLE IN INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT FOR DEMOCRATIC DEVELOPMENT	5
Introduction.....	5
What is Democratic Development?	6
A broad definition of democracy	7
Local context	8
The Purpose of Democratic Development.....	8
Democratic development as an expression of values	9
Democratic development as part of effective development aid.....	9
Democratic development as part of Canadian foreign policy	10
Democracy around the World and Canadian support for Democratic Development	11
The Current Context for Democratic Development	11
History of Canadian Support for Democratic Development.....	13
Canadian Government Support for Democratic Development.....	15
Current funding in context	17
A Renewed Canadian Democratic Development Strategy	20
Elements of an Effective Democratic Development Strategy	22
A long-term and incremental approach	22
Prioritize civil society	23
A gender focus	24
Respect for local context	25
Opportunities and need for Canadian engagement	25
Countries with similar systems to Canada	26
Countries where Canada has existing development ties	27
Women's political empowerment.....	27

Support to political parties.....	28
Implementing A Canadian Democratic Development Strategy	28
Building Democracy Expertise within Global Affairs Canada	29
A Revitalized Partnership with Civil Society	30
A New Canadian Democratic Development Institution.....	31
All-party support and civil society engagement.....	33
Independence from government.....	34
Grant funder versus project implementor	35
Governance	36
Financial Support to Democratic Development	38
Conclusion	39
APPENDIX A: LIST OF WITNESSES	41
APPENDIX B: LIST OF BRIEFS.....	43
REQUEST FOR GOVERNMENT RESPONSE	45
SUPPLEMENTARY OPINION OF THE CONSERVATIVE PARTY OF CANADA	47

LIST OF RECOMMENDATIONS

As a result of their deliberations committees may make recommendations which they include in their reports for the consideration of the House of Commons or the Government. Recommendations related to this study are listed below.

Recommendation 1

The Government of Canada should make democracy a priority concern within its international policy by putting in place a comprehensive democratic development strategy. Democratic governance, including engagement of local civil society, should be considered a valuable component of every Canadian international assistance program and project. 21

Recommendation 2

The Government of Canada’s international support for democratic development should embrace a long-term and incremental approach with respect to the evaluation of results, and be oriented around consistent engagement with partners. 23

Recommendation 3

When providing assistance for democratic development in other countries, the Government of Canada should engage with civil society and other democratic actors as part of a comprehensive and locally-led approach to fostering sustainable democracy. 24

Recommendation 4

Consistent with *Canada’s Feminist International Assistance Policy*, the Government of Canada’s international support for democratic development should incorporate a gender-perspective and prioritize women’s political empowerment. 25

Recommendation 5

When the Government of Canada provides development assistance for democratic development, it should do so in response to local needs, priorities and norms, and in a way that is adaptable to changes in circumstances on the ground. 25

Recommendation 6

The Government of Canada should engage broadly with all relevant countries on democracy promotion, not only those countries that are typically recipients of other forms of international assistance, but also those that may be seeing regression or stagnation of their democracies..... 26

Recommendation 7

Global Affairs Canada should create a dedicated entity within the department tasked with developing and implementing government policy on democratic governance and coordinating initiatives with partners, both in Canada and internationally. 30

Recommendation 8

A renewed Canadian approach to democratic governance assistance should aim to strengthen the contribution of Canadian civil society through partnerships with the Government of Canada and long-term financial commitments..... 31

Recommendation 9

The Government of Canada should establish a new independent institution dedicated to international democratic development as part of a comprehensive strategy to advance democracy around the world. This new institution should complement government and civil society initiatives, foster innovation, research and knowledge, and provide a dedicated home in Canada to support Canadian expertise..... 33

Recommendation 10

Canada’s new democratic development institution should include the sharing of best practices regarding anti-corruption measures to ensure the emergence and longevity of healthy democratic systems..... 33

Recommendation 11

All Canadian federal political parties and relevant civil society organizations should be engaged in the process of designing the proposed new democratic governance institution, and in the ultimate delivery of its mandate. 34

Recommendation 12

With the objective of ensuring that Canada’s new democratic development institution balances the need for independence with the need for transparency and oversight, the Government of Canada should require that the institution report to Parliament on an annual basis. 35

Recommendation 13

In establishing Canada’s new democratic development institution, the Government of Canada should ensure that the institution is authorized to work directly on the ground with local actors in partner countries..... 36

Recommendation 14

In establishing Canada’s new democratic development institution, the Government of Canada should ensure that the institution’s governance structure reflects a transparent process for selecting its leadership that includes meaningful consultation with all political parties. 37

Recommendation 15

The Government of Canada should allocate new additional development funding, on a predictable, long-term basis, to support democratic development initiatives, and at a level that would enable the realization of the recommendations outlined in this report..... 39



RENEWING CANADA'S ROLE IN INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT FOR DEMOCRATIC DEVELOPMENT

INTRODUCTION

In 2006, the House of Commons Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development (the Committee) undertook a study of Canada's international support for democratic development. Over the course of more than a year, the Committee held 27 meetings, heard from 46 witnesses and conducted two international fact-finding missions, culminating in the publication of a report in 2007 that made 28 recommendations for improving Canada's support for democratic development.¹

Twelve years later, the Committee decided it was time to revisit the issue of democratic development, building on the findings of the 2007 report.² Over four meetings, the Committee heard from Government of Canada officials, international democratic development organizations, and Canadian non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and experts in the field.

Democratic development includes a broad range of initiatives. From supporting the institutions of democracy, like parliaments and electoral commissions, to working with political actors and civil society, to fostering respect for human rights and the rule of law, democratic development efforts seek to promote the adoption of democratic forms of governance while fostering respect for the values that underpin it. This broad scope of initiatives, along with the political and social nature of many of the targeted activities, makes democratic development a unique field of international development assistance.

Witnesses were unanimous that the need for international support for democratic development has only become more important since the Committee's 2007 report. The last 12 years have seen the growth of worrying trends in governance globally. Authoritarian tendencies have emerged in many countries, while others have seen their progress toward democratic consolidation stalled or even reversed. The global nature of this "democratic recession" is evident in the *Freedom in the World* index, which has recorded 13 consecutive years of decline in political rights and civil liberties. The title of

1 House of Commons Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development [FAAE], *Advancing Canada's Role in International Support for Democratic Development*, 1st Session, 39th Parliament, July 2007.

2 FAAE, *Minutes of Proceedings*, 1st Session, 42nd Parliament, 10 December 2018.



Freedom House’s 2019 report, “Democracy in Retreat,” is an apt reflection of current international dynamics.³

The Committee also heard without exception that Canada is well placed to play a larger role in international efforts to promote democracy. International witnesses highlighted key traits, such as Canada’s middle-power status, and experience with federalism, as enabling Canada to play a meaningful role in democratic development. Those views contrasted with the assessments of Canadian witnesses, some of whom conveyed that Canada’s focus has been elsewhere over the last 12 years, and that contrary to the Committee’s recommendations in 2007, Canada is doing less, not more in support of democratic development.

At the core of the Committee’s 2007 report were recommendations for a new approach that would see Canada become a “large-scale actor” in the field of democratic development.⁴ Anchoring this new approach was a proposal to create an independent institution dedicated to democratic development, which was not, ultimately, implemented. At the end of its current study, and following a consideration of the state of democracy around the world and current Canadian efforts, the Committee reaffirms these principal findings. Canada can do more to support democracy around world. To do so, it must put in place a comprehensive strategy for democratic development that will form the basis of a partnership between the Government Canada, civil society and a new institution dedicated to the advancement of democracy.

WHAT IS DEMOCRATIC DEVELOPMENT?

In its 2007 report, the Committee devoted an entire chapter to defining democracy, democratization and democratic development. The chapter canvasses the expert opinions solicited over the course of the Committee’s study and provides a number of comprehensive definitions for democracy and democratic development. The most concise of those is a quote from a previous committee study, which stated that “the notion of democracy ... is quite simply the participation of citizens in the decision-making which affects their lives.”⁵

During the Committee’s 2019 study, discussions of the definition of democracy, and by extension the proper scope of democratic development initiatives, generally revolved

3 Freedom House, *Freedom in the World 2019: Democracy in Retreat*.

4 FAAE, 2007.

5 FAAE, 2007, p. 38.

around two ideas: that democracy should be defined broadly, and that it must account for local contexts.

A broad definition of democracy

During both the Committee's current study and in its 2007 report, experts indicated that democracy should be given a broad definition that incorporates all the elements necessary to a system of governance that is genuinely participatory and just. Christopher MacLennan, Assistant Deputy Minister, Global Issues and Development, Global Affairs Canada (GAC), summarized this concept well when he stated:

A democracy is about popular sovereignty, with a wide understanding of what citizenship means. It means it's constitutional. There is the rule of law that determines how these things take place, how the democratic processes are to unfold. It also includes an open and free media and open and free accountability processes to ensure that governments are held to account.⁶

Other witnesses added elements to this definition. Pearl Eliadis, Human Rights Lawyer, Eliadis Law Office, emphasized that democratic systems of governance must be grounded in a human rights framework. Some witnesses emphasized the inclusion of women in political processes as being fundamental to democracy, while others warned about the corrosive role that corruption plays in undermining democratic systems. In discussing the work of his organization, Christian Lamarre, Senior Programme Officer, United Nations Secretariat, United Nations Democracy Fund (UNDEF), laid out an even broader scope for democratic development initiatives. He said:

UNDEF's thematic areas range from more narrowly political ones, like support for electoral processes, the rule of law and human rights, to more foundational ones, like youth engagement, gender equality, community activism, and strengthening civil society interaction with government.⁷

The common thread of this testimony was that democratic development is about more than elections or individual institutions of governance; it encompasses all of the elements upon which a successful democracy is based. Put differently, democratic development is as much about creating a democratic *society* as it is about creating a democratic system. As Anthony Smith, Chief Executive Officer, Westminster Foundation for Democracy (WFD), put it: "What we're trying to support is a democratic culture."⁸

6 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 1st Session, 42nd Parliament, 5 February 2019.

7 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 1st Session, 42nd Parliament, 28 February 2019.

8 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 1st Session, 42nd Parliament, 19 February 2019.



Such a broad approach recognizes the need to engage with non-governmental actors in order to support the entrenchment of democratic values without ignoring more traditional forms of democratic support that focus on institutional development.

Local context

A broad conceptualization of democracy is also sensitive to local contexts. As Pearl Eliadis testified:

The idea of what democracy means changes depending on where you are. I know that might sound alarming to some, but the reality is that there are lots of different views about what democracy is. There is no single, established international instrument that determines what democracy is, beyond free and fair elections, of course.⁹

Christopher MacLennan argued that expanding an already broad definition of democracy to account for cultural diversity requires a reliance on basic principles. He told the Committee that,

there are certain core principles and elements to what we believe is a democracy, and we believe they're universal. We don't believe simply that democracy is only for westerners. We believe that in fact there are ways to adapt basic, core democratic principles to the local cultures we're working within.¹⁰

Daniel Twining, President, International Republican Institute, among others, noted that democracy continues to evolve in countries like Canada and the United States (U.S.). As such, the promotion of democracy needs to be done with humility. No country, Canada included, has all the answers or a set template to be copied. Rather, democratic development initiatives must recognize the need for local ownership of governance reforms.

THE PURPOSE OF DEMOCRATIC DEVELOPMENT

Why should Canada be engaging in democratic development? Why does it matter to Canadians that other countries adopt a democratic system of government and the values that come with it? The answers to these questions can inform a new Canadian approach to democratic development. To that end, witnesses indicated that the activities associated with democratic development can express a country's values and support partners who share those values, while also making its development assistance more effective and helping to achieve its larger foreign policy objectives.

9 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 1st Session, 42nd Parliament, 7 February 2019.

10 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 1st Session, 42nd Parliament, 5 February 2019.

Democratic development as an expression of values

An emphasis on support for democratic development internationally reflects a fundamental idea: Canada's foreign policy should reflect values that define Canadian society, including democracy. As Thomas Axworthy, Public Policy Chair, Massey College, University of Toronto, stated in summarizing the purposes of democratic development as identified by the Committee in 2007:

First was the critical issue of morality, that freedom, liberty and equality of opportunity are central to Canada's identity and our traditions. But it is not enough for democrats here to enjoy their liberty. It is equally important to try to do our best to ensure that others in the world are in a position to do so. This important finding is that it's not enough to talk about our values; one has to act on them and put the power of government and civil society behind them.¹¹

From this perspective, support for democratic development in other countries is an expression of Canada's own democracy.

Democratic development as part of effective development aid

Engaging in democratic development can also be justified within the context of broader international development assistance. As several witnesses highlighted, the good governance reforms inherent to democratic development are critical to achieving other development outcomes. Anthony Smith, Chief Executive Officer, Westminster Foundation for Democracy, put it succinctly: "democracy is development."¹² For his part, Daniel Twining argued for the supremacy of democratic development over other forms of development, stating: "I would argue that democracy assistance actually should supersede other forms of assistance, because other forms of assistance are not very effective where you have a kleptocratic strongman in power, or a failed state."¹³

While not everyone may agree that democratic development should be prioritized over development efforts in other fields, recognition that governance reforms are an integral part of an overall development strategy is uncontroversial. For example, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) set ambitious targets across a range of issue areas, from health to resource management, none of which are likely to be attained without good governance. In particular, SDG 16, which seeks to "promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build

11 FAAE, *Evidence*, 1st Session, 42nd Parliament, 7 February 2019.

12 FAAE, *Evidence*, 1st Session, 42nd Parliament, 19 February 2019.

13 FAAE, *Evidence*, 1st Session, 42nd Parliament, 5 February 2019.



effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels,” recognizes the importance of governance reforms typical of democratic development.¹⁴

From this perspective, it is important to highlight the connection between democracy and good governance. As Anthony Smith stated:

you cannot promote good governance without thinking about values and democracy. You need to think about the way in which people's voices are heard, and the ways in which accountability takes place, the mechanisms that are needed to prevent the abuse of power by those in the executive and in control.¹⁵

Achieving the SDGs requires good governance, and good governance requires the mechanisms of transparency, accountability and inclusion which only democratic systems can provide.

Democratic development as part of Canadian foreign policy

Democratic development can also serve to advance Canada’s foreign policy objectives in other areas, including *Canada’s Feminist International Assistance Policy*. For example, witnesses noted the connections between democratic governance and international security. As Derek Mitchell, President, National Democratic Institute, testified:

There is a logic to democracy. It's not simply an ideology. When you don't have accountability of abusive power, lack of transparency leads to corruption, which leads to injustice and tyranny of majorities, which leads to refugee flows and instability that crosses borders. That has monetary impact. It means we have to pay for more in our security services.¹⁶

Making a similar argument, Thomas Axworthy highlighted democracy’s internal facilitation of conflict resolution: “By creating a culture of liberty and pluralism, the system itself allows dissent. Dissent, therefore, does not have to inch over into civil war and violence.”¹⁷ Daniel Twining believes that democratic development activities are “cents on the dollar” compared to the cost of dealing with crises after they occur.¹⁸ Several witnesses highlighted the impact irregular migration flows from the Middle East

14 United Nations General Assembly, [Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#), A/RES/70/1, 25 September 2015.

15 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 1st Session, 42nd Parliament, 19 February 2019.

16 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 1st Session, 42nd Parliament, 5 February 2019.

17 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 1st Session, 42nd Parliament, 7 February 2019.

18 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 1st Session, 42nd Parliament, 5 February 2019.

and North Africa have had on political and social stability in Europe as a powerful example of how crises in other parts of the world can have ramifications for traditional aid donors at home.

In a similar vein, some witnesses observed that democracies were more reliable partners across the spectrum of international issues, from trade to environmental conservation. This argument extends to the international system itself, as Derek Mitchell noted; democracies are more likely to support the rules-based international order.¹⁹

This last point was made by several witnesses in the context of the renewed concern about great power rivalry in global affairs. In arguing for the value of democratic development, Daniel Twining pointed to:

the re-emergence of great power competition, which is real.... Russia and China, in different ways, are projecting authoritarian influence. They are trying to build a world that is more safe for authoritarian forms of government and for their leadership, elements of which are highly inimical to western interests and our way of life.²⁰

From this perspective, increasing the number of democracies around the world is a means of countering such efforts.

DEMOCRACY AROUND THE WORLD AND CANADIAN SUPPORT FOR DEMOCRATIC DEVELOPMENT

A discussion of Canada's international support for democratic development requires a consideration of the state of democracy around the world as well as a review of recent and current Canadian democratic development initiatives. This section discusses these topics in turn.

The Current Context for Democratic Development

While witnesses provided numerous rationales for engaging in democratic development, they were all in agreement that, given the current international environment, democratic development is more important than ever. As noted in the introduction, the state of democracy around the world is widely believed to have deteriorated since the

19 ibid.

20 ibid.



Committee’s 2007 report. Or as Thomas Axworthy put it, “What has happened since? Ladies and gentlemen, it's all straight down.”²¹

Carl Gershman, President, National Endowment for Democracy, summarized well the state of democracy in the world when he testified:

The year 2018 marked the 13th consecutive year, according to Freedom House, in which democracy has declined around the world. This period has seen the rising power and assertiveness of authoritarian states like China, Russia and Iran; the backsliding of once democratic countries like Turkey, Venezuela, the Philippines, Thailand and Hungary; and the rise of populist and nationalist movements and parties in the established democracies. Autocratic regimes have tried to repress independent groups working to promote greater freedom and to cut them off from international assistance.²²

Witnesses noted that threats to democracy in most countries have come from both internal and external sources. The increasing boldness and sophistication with which authoritarian powers like China and Russia are behaving internationally, as previously mentioned, was one important threat identified by witnesses. Equally concerning is what Daniel Twining called the “hollowing-out of democratic order” by domestic actors.²³ This phenomenon has led to a number of states having the “veneer of a democracy,” as Christopher MacLennan put it, but lacking some of its core elements.²⁴

As Derek Mitchell, among others, noted, these threats are exacerbated by the “general perception” among many electorates around the world that democracy “is not delivering.”²⁵ Christopher MacLennan also highlighted the popular discontent that has grown “as a result of the failure of these governments to provide effective solutions to important legitimate domestic issues such as unemployment, a lack of opportunity, inequality and mass migration.”²⁶ For his part, Robert Greenhill emphasized the corrosive role played by corruption. Mr. Greenhill quoted Patricia Moreira, Managing Director of Transparency International, when he noted that “[c]orruption chips away at democracy to produce a vicious cycle, where corruption undermines democratic institutions and, in turn, weak institutions are less able to control corruption.”²⁷

21 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 1st Session, 42nd Parliament, 7 February 2019.

22 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 1st Session, 42nd Parliament, 19 February 2019.

23 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 1st Session, 42nd Parliament, 5 February 2019.

24 Ibid.

25 Ibid.

26 Ibid.

27 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 1st Session, 42nd Parliament, 28 February 2019. See Transparency International, [How Corruption Weakens Democracy](#).

In addition to the growing threats to democracy around the world, witnesses also observed that traditional champions of democracy are playing a diminished role. The U.S. has historically been a primary proponent of democratic development. Nevertheless, Derek Mitchell testified that, despite the worrying global trends, the U.S. “has been AWOL. There has not been leadership.”²⁸ Thomas Axworthy pointed to “an ebb tide in democratic support” as “[p]opulist nationalism is making many countries turn inward. The outward-looking goal of improving others has declined as nations are fighting to maintain their democratic standards at home.”²⁹

The other major trend identified by witnesses is the rise of social media and other information technologies. Witnesses noted that technological advancement has had both positive and negative effects on democracy. As Daniel Twining put it, “the digital revolution ... has done many great things, but has also empowered and amplified extreme voices in our societies, and created new forms of fragmentation.”³⁰ Christopher MacLennan suggested that social media has allowed efforts to subvert democracy to go “into hyperdrive,” with an “ability to subvert on a daily basis the democratic spaces that are so critical to holding parliamentarians to account.”³¹

History of Canadian Support for Democratic Development

The Committee’s 2007 report provides a detailed history of the evolution of Canada’s support for democratic development up to the time of its publication. As that report notes, Canadian interest in the field was influenced by developments in the U.S., where the NED, along with the NDI and the IRI, were created in the early 1980s. In his testimony, Derek Mitchell referred to this as the “first phase of democracy support,” and noted that it “had very much an ideological bent” influenced by the Cold War.

In 1988, the Government of Canada passed legislation to create the International Centre for Human Rights and Democratic Development (“Rights and Democracy”).³² In his

28 FAAE, *Evidence*, 1st Session, 42nd Parliament, 5 February 2019.

29 FAAE, *Evidence*, 1st Session, 42nd Parliament, 7 February 2019.

30 FAAE, *Evidence*, 1st Session, 42nd Parliament, 5 February 2019.

31 Ibid.

32 *International Centre for Human Rights and Democratic Development Act*, R.S.C., 1985, c. 54 (4th Supp.). The government’s decision to create the International Centre for Human Rights and Democratic Development was based in part on the work of the Special Joint Committee on Canada’s International Relations and the Committee, then called the Standing Committee on External Affairs and International Trade, in reports which recommended that a greater emphasis be placed on political and human rights development, including through the creation of an independent institution. See Special Joint Committee on Canada’s International Relations, *Independence and internationalism: report of the Special Joint Committee of the*



testimony, the founding President of Rights and Democracy, the Honourable Ed Broadbent (now the Chair and Founder of the Broadbent Institute), described the organization as “a single institution that would be clearly at arm’s length from the government and would foster in developing countries provisions of the International Bill of Human Rights, and in so doing, would most effectively establish the foundation for a multi-party democracy.”³³

In addition to the work of Rights and Democracy, the Government of Canada began funding democratic development projects as part of its international development assistance program. What was then the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) published the *Government of Canada Policy for CIDA on Human Rights, Democratization and Good Governance* in 1996.³⁴ According to Thomas Axworthy, in the decade that followed the release of the policy, CIDA “dispensed something like \$1.5 billion or so to 900 projects with democratic governance at their heart.”³⁵

At the time of the Committee’s 2007 report, Canada was funding a variety of democratic development initiatives. So many in fact, that the Committee was unable to arrive at a final figure on spending, with estimates ranging from \$466 million to \$900 million depending on which funding commitments were included.³⁶ As part of these efforts, an Office of Democratic Governance was established within CIDA “to enhance Canada’s aid effectiveness by establishing partnerships with key Canadian experts, organizations, institutions and other government departments whose work focuses on democratic governance.”³⁷ The federal government also established a Democracy Council, consisting of government departments and agencies as well as Canadian civil society organizations involved in democratic development. The council acted as an informal forum for sharing information and best practices on democratic development.³⁸

Senate and of the House of Commons on Canada’s International Relations, 33rd Parliament, 1st Session, 1986; House of Commons Standing Committee on External Affairs and International Trade, *For whose benefit?: report of the Standing Committee on External Affairs and International Trade on Canada’s official development assistance policies and programs*, 33rd Parliament, 2nd Session, 1987.

33 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 1st Session, 42nd Parliament, 19 February 2019.

34 Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), [Government of Canada Policy for CIDA on Human Rights, Democratization and Good Governance](#), 1996.

35 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 1st Session, 42nd Parliament, 7 February 2019.

36 FAAE, 2007.

37 CIDA, [Departmental Performance Report](#), 2008

38 FAAE, 2007.

Canadian Government Support for Democratic Development

Since 2007, Canada's support for democratic development has changed significantly. The Democracy Council held its last meeting in 2009.³⁹ Rights and Democracy was shut down in 2012.⁴⁰ The Office of Democratic Governance also seems to have been dissolved.

In addition to these developments specific to democracy promotion, Canada's broader international assistance policy has also evolved. In 2017, GAC introduced *Canada's Feminist International Assistance Policy*, providing a new overarching policy framework for the delivery of Canada's development assistance. According to Christopher MacLennan, the new policy:

emphasizes inclusive governance focused on democracy and political participation, human rights and the rule of law for all citizens, regardless of their gender identity or any other aspect of their identity. This policy underscores the Government of Canada's commitment to provide inclusive and human rights-based development assistance as recommended in the committee's 2007 study.⁴¹

Under the policy, and consistent with SDG 16, inclusive governance is one of six action areas.⁴² The inclusive governance action area is further sub-divided into human rights, rule of law, and democracy and political participation. Government commitments within the inclusive governance action area include objectives focused on women and girls such as helping "advance women's leadership and decision making in governance and public sector management at all levels" and supporting "the efforts and capacity of governments at all levels to ensure public services respond better to the needs and potential of women and girls."⁴³

In his testimony, Christopher MacLennan indicated that GAC channelled approximately \$170 million to democratic development projects in 2017–18, out of \$293 million for inclusive governance as a whole.⁴⁴ In a written follow-up to Committee questions, GAC provided a breakdown of the 2017-18 spending based on the sectoral categories it uses

39 Correspondence from Global Affairs Canada in reply to a letter, dated 20 February 2019, from the FAAE Chair, Michael Levitt, to the Minister of International Development, Maryam Monsef (GAC Letter, 2019).

40 CBCNews, "[Troubled Rights and Democracy agency to be closed](#)", 3 April 2012.

41 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 1st Session, 42nd Parliament, 5 February 2019.

42 Government of Canada, [Canada's Feminist International Assistance Policy](#). The other five action areas are gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls; human dignity; growth that works for everyone; environment and climate action; and peace and security.

43 Ibid.

44 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 1st Session, 42nd Parliament, 5 February 2019.



for its annual statistical report on international assistance.⁴⁵ GAC calculates its democratic development based on spending in six sectors:

- Legal and judicial development;
- Democratic participation and civil society;
- Elections;
- Legislatures and political parties;
- Media and free flow of information; and
- Human rights.⁴⁶

Preliminary spending totals in all six sectors for 2017–18 came to \$169.5 million:

Figure 1: Democratic Development spending 2017–18, Global Affairs Canada, by sector

Sector	Amount (millions \$)
Legal and judicial development	50.85
Democratic participation and civil society	46.88
Elections	9.77
Legislatures and political parties	5.80
Media and free flow of information	2.83
Human Rights	53.37
Total	169.5

Source: GAC Letter, 2019.

45 In its submission, GAC emphasized that spending totals for 2017-18 are preliminary. GAC Letter, 2019. Pursuant to the [Official Development Assistance Accountability Act](#), S.C. 2008, c. 17, the Minister for International Development is required to “issue a statistical report on the disbursement of official development assistance within one year after the end of each fiscal year.” The most recent such report is GAC, [Statistical Report on International Assistance: Fiscal Year 2017-2018](#).

46 These sectors are based on lists maintained by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development’s Development Assistance Committee. See OECD, [DAC and CRS code lists](#).

Approximately half of these funds was dispersed through GAC's geographic programs, meaning funds were targeted to a specific country or region.⁴⁷ Most of the remaining funds were allocated through Canada's support to multilateral organizations, and its financing to peace and security initiatives (approximately 17% each). The remainder was allocated to Canadian civil society groups and Canadian representation at international forums.⁴⁸

**Figure 2: Democratic Development spending, 2017–18,
Global Affairs Canada, by channel**

Channel	Funds (millions \$)
Geographic Programs	89.78
Global Issues and Development	29.46
International Security	28.4
Partnerships for Development Innovation	13.44
Strategic Policy and Summits	8.42

Source: GAC Letter, 2019.

In both its oral and written testimony, GAC emphasized that there is no pre-determined level of funding for democratic development. Instead, initiatives are selected based on their “alignment with GAC policy priorities and the effectiveness of the proposal.”⁴⁹ As such, funding for democratic development can fluctuate, based on the types of proposals which are submitted to and selected by GAC in a given year. According to Christopher MacLennan, this approach allows “bilateral programs and other programs to take advantage of opportunities as they arise.”⁵⁰

Current funding in context

Based on testimony from witnesses and submissions from GAC, the Committee believes that the Canadian government should place a greater focus on democratic development.

47 GAC Letter, 2019.

48 The five funding channels are geographic programs, global issues and development (support to multilateral institutions), international security, partnerships for development innovation (support to Canadian civil society), and strategic policy and summits. A description of these channels can be found in the Glossary of GAC, *Statistical Report on International Assistance: Fiscal Year 2017-2018*.

49 GAC Letter, 2019.

50 FAAE, *Evidence*, 1st Session, 42nd Parliament, 5 February 2019.



At \$169.5 million, democratic development represents only 4% of GAC’s development assistance budget for 2017–18. Remove the human rights and rule of law sectors, which are treated as distinct areas under *Canada’s Feminist International Assistance Policy*, and the percentage falls to under 2%.⁵¹ Such funding levels reinforce comments from practitioners who told the Committee that, while the need for democratic development has increased since 2007, Canada has been doing less.

In comments echoed by Jean-Paul Ruskowski, President and Chief Executive Officer, Parliamentary Centre, Paul LaRose-Edwards, Executive Director, CANADEM (Canada’s Civilian Reserve), testified that “Canada has cut back its direct hands-on involvement in international democracy promotion” and “[f]or the last 13 years Canada has actually moved backwards in many different ways.”⁵²

Kevin Deveaux, President, Deveaux International Governance Consultants Inc., made similar comments, stating: “I said it in 2007 and I still think it's the case. Canada is not a serious player in the areas of democratic governance, particularly around political governance.”⁵³ Pearl Eliadis offered the same opinion: “Despite our self-description as champions at the international level, Canada has not been batting even close to average.”⁵⁴

An examination of GAC development assistance statistics since 2007 confirms that there has been declining support for democratic development.⁵⁵ Since 2007–08, funding to the six sectors identified by GAC as being part of democratic development, as well as the broader “government and civil society” group, has declined in absolute terms and as a percentage of international assistance.⁵⁶ In 2007–08, funding for government and civil society totalled \$644.19 million, \$269.6 million of which was spent on the six democratic development sectors identified by GAC. This funding represented approximately 14%

51 Government of Canada, *Report to Parliament on the Government of Canada’s Official Development Assistance 2017-18*.

52 FAAE, *Evidence*, 1st Session, 42nd Parliament, 28 February 2019.

53 FAAE, *Evidence*, 1st Session, 42nd Parliament, 7 February 2019.

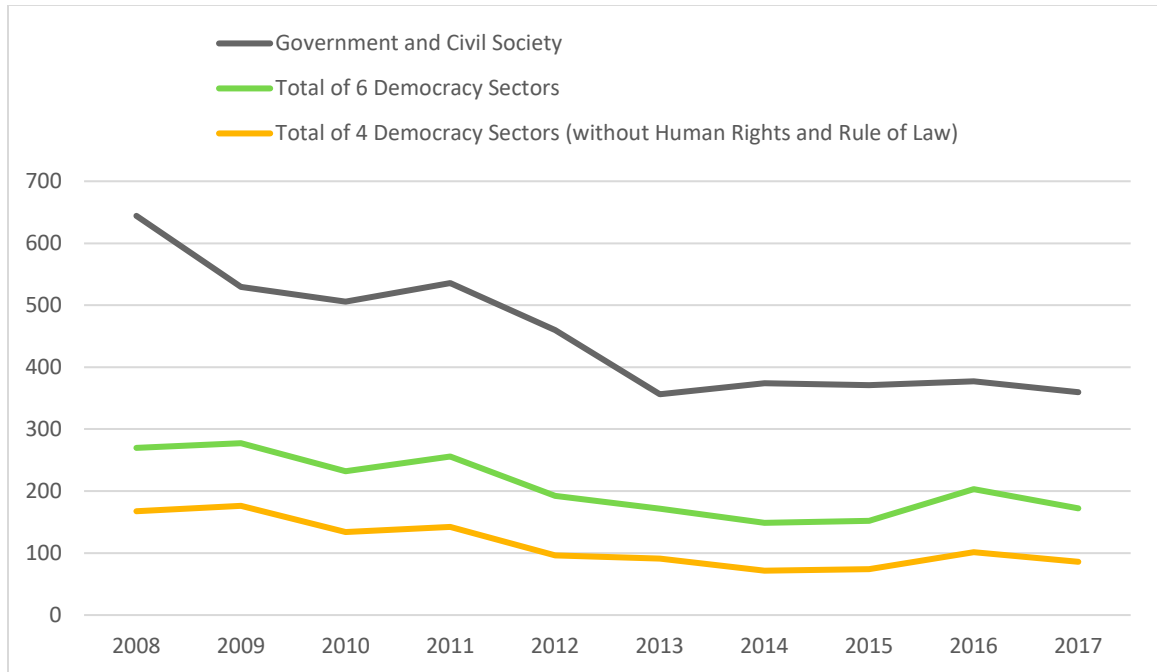
54 Ibid.

55 In its written submission, GAC provided funding totals that differed from those it published in its annual statistical reports. In a subsequent email exchange, it provided an explanation for these discrepancies based on changes made to the list of sectors during the period and the reallocation of funds between sectors after the publication of the reports. For the sake of transparency and the ability to consider data over a longer period, the numbers that follow use only the figures published by GAC (and its predecessor departments) in its annual statistical reports. The relatively small differences in funding totals between the two sources do not affect the overall trend identified by the data presented.

56 These six sectors are the same as those previously listed in paragraph 48: Legal and judicial development; Democratic participation and civil society; Elections; Legislatures and political parties; Media and free flow of information; and Human rights.

and 6% of total assistance, respectively.⁵⁷ By 2016-17, these numbers were \$359.62 million and \$172.15 million, respectively, accounting for approximately 6% and 3% of total assistance.⁵⁸ Funding for government and civil society was at its lowest in 2012-13 at \$356.32 million, while the six sectors' total bottomed out a year later at \$151.83 million.⁵⁹ Removing the human rights and rule of law sectors shows a similar trend for the remaining four democracy sectors, with funding reducing from \$167.65 million in 2007-08 to \$86 million in 2016-17.

Graph 1: Government of Canada international assistance spending on democratic development, 2007-08 to 2016-17 (\$100 millions)



Source: CIDA, [Statistical Report on International Assistance Fiscal Year 2007-2008](#); CIDA, [Statistical Report on International Assistance Fiscal Year 2008-2009](#); CIDA, [Statistical Report on International Assistance Fiscal Year 2009-2010](#); CIDA, [Statistical Report on International Assistance Fiscal Year 2010-2011](#); CIDA, [Statistical Report on International Assistance Fiscal Year 2011-2012](#); DFATD, [Statistical Report on International Assistance Fiscal Year 2012-2013](#); DFATD, [Statistical Report on Canadian International Assistance Fiscal Year 2013-2014](#); GAC, [Statistical Report on International Assistance Fiscal Year 2014-2015](#); GAC, [Statistical Report on International Assistance Fiscal Year 2015-2016](#); GAC, [Statistical Report on International Assistance: Fiscal Year 2016-2017](#).

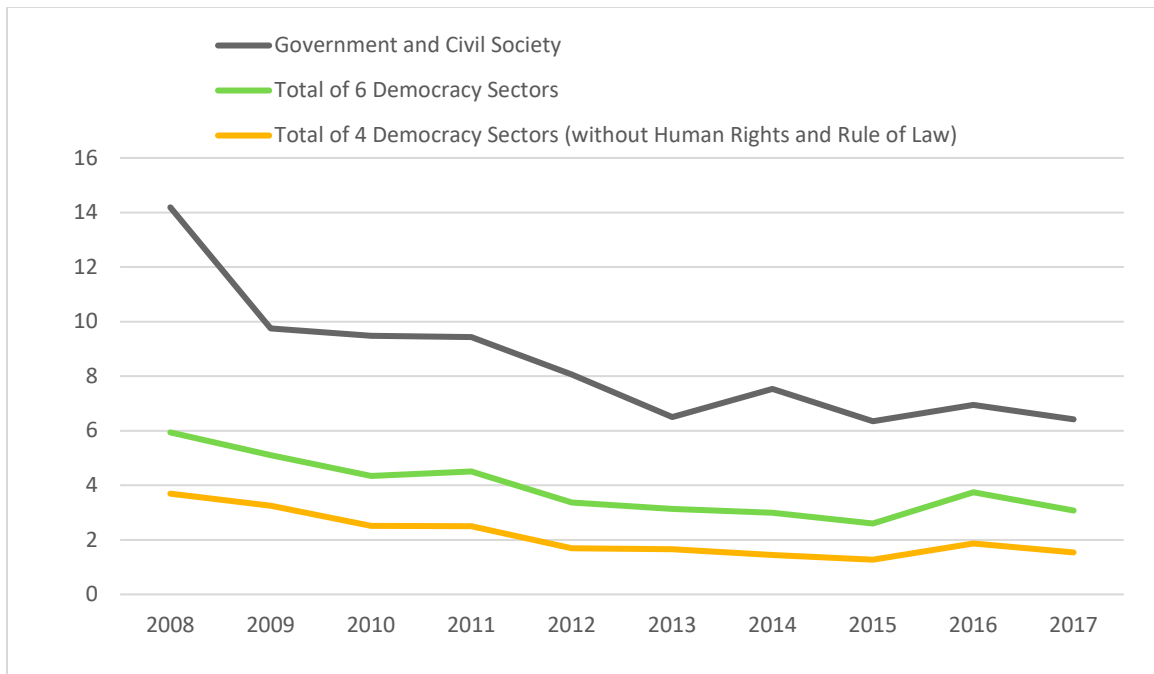
57 CIDA, [Statistical Report on International Assistance Fiscal Year 2007-2008](#).

58 GAC, [Statistical Report on International Assistance: Fiscal Year 2016-2017](#).

59 Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development Canada (DFATD), [Statistical Report on International Assistance Fiscal Year 2012-2013](#); DFATD, [Statistical Report on Canadian International Assistance Fiscal Year 2013-2014](#).



Graph 2: Government of Canada International Assistance spending on democratic development, 2007–08 to 2016–17, as a percentage of total international assistance



Source: CIDA, [Statistical Report on International Assistance Fiscal Year 2007-2008](#); CIDA, [Statistical Report on International Assistance Fiscal Year 2008-2009](#); CIDA, [Statistical Report on International Assistance Fiscal Year 2009-2010](#); CIDA, [Statistical Report on International Assistance Fiscal Year 2010-2011](#); CIDA, [Statistical Report on International Assistance Fiscal Year 2011-2012](#); DFATD, [Statistical Report on International Assistance Fiscal Year 2012-2013](#); DFATD, [Statistical Report on Canadian International Assistance Fiscal Year 2013-2014](#); GAC, [Statistical Report on International Assistance Fiscal Year 2014-2015](#); GAC, [Statistical Report on International Assistance Fiscal Year 2015-2016](#); GAC, [Statistical Report on International Assistance: Fiscal Year 2016-2017](#)

A RENEWED CANADIAN DEMOCRATIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

If there was one overarching message from witnesses during the Committee’s study, it is that the need to support democracy globally has never been greater. As Derek Mitchell put it: “If we are now in a moment of democratic recession, it requires a democratic stimulus. Now is the time for us all to reinvest, recommit, and not succumb to fatalism but to lean forward.”⁶⁰ Within this larger context, witnesses suggested that Canada could be playing an important role. Making his case for increased Canadian engagement

60 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 1st Session, 42nd Parliament, 5 February 2019.

in democratic development, Kevin Deveaux, testified: “Canada is seen as a country with long-standing democratic principles, ones by which we have managed a diverse country, a multilingual country.”⁶¹

After considering the information and perspectives brought to its attention, the Committee became convinced that democratic development should be a priority in Canada’s international policy. The Committee is therefore concerned about the apparent decline in the Canadian government’s financial support for democratic development. There also appears to be a structural and conceptual void. Rights and Democracy was dissolved without being replaced. Mechanisms within the bureaucracy intended to coordinate democracy policy no longer exist. Moreover, *Canada’s Feminist International Assistance Policy* provides little in the way of substantive policy direction towards a gender-focused democratic development strategy, despite inclusive governance being an action area. Given the pressures facing democratic institutions and democratic actors around the world, the Committee feels that a renewed Canadian approach in support of democratic development is needed.

Recommendation 1

The Government of Canada should make democracy a priority concern within its international policy by putting in place a comprehensive democratic development strategy. Democratic governance, including engagement of local civil society, should be considered a valuable component of every Canadian international assistance program and project.

As the remainder of the report will discuss, the Committee is of the view that three things are required for Canada to renew its commitment to promoting democracy around the world. The first is a comprehensive strategy based on best practices identified by experts in the field. Second, the necessary institutional structures must be put in place to effectively operationalize this policy on a sustainable, long-term basis. Finally, consistent and predictable funding must be provided at a level that would position Canada to make a significant contribution to global democracy. Recommendations related to each of these elements are included in the discussion below.

61 FAAE, *Evidence*, 1st Session, 42nd Parliament, 7 February 2019.



Elements of an Effective Democratic Development Strategy

Testimony suggested that one of the biggest lessons that practitioners have learned is that promoting and supporting the development of sustainable democracies is a difficult and complex endeavour. As Derek Mitchell explained:

In some societies, they felt that if they just went democratic, then it would be easy. They would become rich and powerful like the west.

It was evident that it wasn't going to be that simple; it wasn't going to be that easy or short term. Economic inequality emerged. Corruption emerged. Mindsets, we found, changed more slowly than institutions and processes.⁶²

The complex nature of promoting and supporting democracy in other countries is one of the underlying reasons why witnesses advocated for a broad definition of democracy. Encouraging the type of institutional, political and social transformation required for the development of a sustainable democracy defies a one-size-fits-all solution. As such, witnesses – and they were remarkably consistent in this respect – did not provide a specific strategy that Canada should follow, but instead laid out the elements that they believe make for an effective strategy, while also identifying areas in which they felt Canada may be particularly well suited to engage.

A long-term and incremental approach

According to Anthony Smith: “[i]n some ways, time in this work is more valuable than money. Democracy needs modest resources but abundant patience.”⁶³ Witnesses highlighted the need to work incrementally over a long period, so as to foster the type of change necessary to create a sustainable democracy. Kevin Deveaux, among others, used the term “investment” to describe such an approach, which involves committing resources over a long period to achieve results. As he said:

Obviously, if you're going to invest in a country and democratic reform, it will take time. It will take more than one electoral cycle. You'll need to be building champions within Parliament, within parties, within civil society. You'll need to be building independent institutions like electoral commissions. If you're doing all of that, it can't be done in two or four years.⁶⁴

62 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 1st Session, 42nd Parliament, 5 February 2019.

63 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 1st Session, 42nd Parliament, 19 February 2019.

64 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 1st Session, 42nd Parliament, 7 February 2019.

Christopher MacLennan pointed out that, the more difficult the environment, the longer the time required before results can be expected. In specific reference to supporting dissidents who are striving to expand the democratic space in authoritarian countries, he suggested that timelines could run to a decade or longer.⁶⁵

While specific projects will come and go, a long-term and incremental approach involves consistent engagement and investment anchored by democratic values.

Recommendation 2

The Government of Canada's international support for democratic development should embrace a long-term and incremental approach with respect to the evaluation of results, and be oriented around consistent engagement with partners.

Prioritize civil society

Witnesses emphasized that effective democratic development requires engaging with civil society and grassroots organizations to encourage the adoption of democratic values across a society. According to Carl Gershman, such a “bottom-up” approach “responds to and seeks to empower local actors in addressing immediate challenges that they face and developing their capacity to promote reform and institutional accountability over the long term.”⁶⁶

In line with a broad definition of democracy, several witnesses stated that such an approach should be seen as a complement to, and not a replacement of, more traditional forms of institutional capacity building. As Pearl Eliadis testified, “institution-building is important from the top down, but also that it's important to work from the ground up. You need to have both. ...enabling civil society and working in a human rights-based framework to ensure that civil society organizations are supported and enabled.”⁶⁷ This approach ensures that democratic reforms are locally grounded and therefore more likely to be sustainable.

65 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 1st Session, 42nd Parliament, 5 February 2019.

66 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 1st Session, 42nd Parliament, 19 February 2019.

67 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 1st Session, 42nd Parliament, 7 February 2019.



Recommendation 3

When providing assistance for democratic development in other countries, the Government of Canada should engage with civil society and other democratic actors as part of a comprehensive and locally-led approach to fostering sustainable democracy.

A gender focus

The Committee was advised that women’s political empowerment should be promoted as part of any viable democratic development strategy. In considering the state of women’s political representation around the world, Jacqueline O’Neill, Global Fellow, Canada Institute, Woodrow Wilson Center, stated: “[t]he trajectory is roughly good with some exceptions, but the overall pace of change is abysmal.”⁶⁸ As such, she feels that “this is no time to treat inclusion as a side item or merely nice to have.” She recommended both a top-down approach focused on “traditional dimensions of political strengthening, such as building capacities of women candidates and members of Parliament, registering women voters, encouraging women to run and focusing on institutional capacities,” as well as a bottom-up approach that recognizes “the connections between democratization and women’s participation in a broad range of areas that determine governance.”⁶⁹

In her written submission, Gabrielle Bardall, Gender Advisor, International Foundation for Electoral Systems, warned against assuming that democratic development initiatives inevitably improve women’s political status.⁷⁰ According to Dr. Bardall, the reality is more complex as the transition to democracy can politicize women’s rights in counter-productive ways and authoritarian forces can use pseudo-feminist strategies to counter democratization efforts. Dr. Bardall recommended a more nuanced approach to promoting women’s political participation that goes beyond increasing participation numbers and considers broader socioeconomic diversity and the substantive contributions women make to society. There is also the need to tackle underlying problems such as impunity for violence against women in politics and the perpetuation of patriarchal institutions.

68 FAAE, *Evidence*, 1st Session, 42nd Parliament, 19 February 2019.

69 Ibid.

70 Gabrielle Bardall, *A Feminist Approach to Supporting International Democracy: Canada’s Contribution*, written submission to FAAE, 22 February 2019 (Bardall, 2019).

Recommendation 4

Consistent with *Canada's Feminist International Assistance Policy*, the Government of Canada's international support for democratic development should incorporate a gender-perspective and prioritize women's political empowerment.

Respect for local context

As previously discussed, the effective promotion of democracy requires an approach that respects local cultural and social norms in partner countries. Witnesses cautioned repeatedly against creating even the perception of trying to impose a one-size-fits-all model from the outside and instead emphasized the need to encourage and support the domestic evolution of democratic values. As Daniel Twining put it: "We're not trying to impose anything, but just those foundational building blocks of a successful democracy and a successful civil society are things that we know something about in America, in Canada, and we can help other countries establish them."⁷¹

Christopher MacLennan placed similar emphasis on local context when discussing current GAC programs. He said that the department is "keenly aware that every place we're working in has its own culture and its own approach to governance, and you have to be respectful of these." In his words, "There is no monolithic way to have a democracy."⁷²

Recommendation 5

When the Government of Canada provides development assistance for democratic development, it should do so in response to local needs, priorities and norms, and in a way that is adaptable to changes in circumstances on the ground.

Opportunities and need for Canadian engagement

During the Committee's study, witnesses pointed to a number of areas where they believe Canada is well placed to play a meaningful role in democratic development. Witnesses referenced particular Canadian characteristics and experiences that may be of value in promoting democracy. As Christopher MacLennan noted, "there is a Canadian model. We're all a part of that model and a product of that model. I can tell you, when

71 FAAE, *Evidence*, 1st Session, 42nd Parliament, 5 February 2019.

72 Ibid.



we're interacting with our developing country partners there is a great thirst for many aspects of the Canadian model.”⁷³

Countries with similar systems to Canada

Witnesses highlighted that the manner in which Canada practices democracy may provide useful insight for other countries transitioning to democracy. Christopher MacLennan, among others, highlighted Canada’s experience with federalism as another area where countries, especially conflicted-affected countries, may be interested in the Canadian experience.⁷⁴ Pearl Eliadis, using the specific example of support to Cameroon, pointed to Canada’s bilingual, bijural system as potentially providing useful insight.⁷⁵

The underlying idea informing these suggestions is that Canada should better leverage its domestic success in the practice of democracy to improve its support for democracy internationally. As Jean-Paul Ruszkowski put it: “Why would Canada not want to benefit from the Canadian brand? We're world renowned for our excellence in public service, in the justice system, legislative bodies, and civil society, including political parties. Our Canadian way is pluralistic and inclusive.”⁷⁶

In determining the countries where Canada is best placed to provide support, Robert Greenhill warned against ignoring those countries that have “graduated” from other development programs. He noted that many countries that have had challenges with their democratic transitions or present opportunities for increased support are “outside the box of traditional development.”⁷⁷

Recommendation 6

The Government of Canada should engage broadly with all relevant countries on democracy promotion, not only those countries that are typically recipients of other forms of international assistance, but also those that may be seeing regression or stagnation of their democracies.

73 Ibid.

74 Ibid.

75 FAAE, *Evidence*, 1st Session, 42nd Parliament, 7 February 2019.

76 FAAE, *Evidence*, 1st Session, 42nd Parliament, 28 February 2019.

77 Ibid.

Countries where Canada has existing development ties

While witnesses said that Canada could be playing a larger role in promoting democracy writ large, it was acknowledged that Canada is already playing a significant role in certain countries. Recent Canadian support to Ukraine was the most often mentioned example. Haiti and Afghanistan were two other countries where witnesses felt that Canada has played an important role. From this perspective, witnesses recommended that Canada should seek to build on the relationships it has fostered through previous development work to engage with partner countries on democratic development specifically.

For their part, both Kevin Deveaux and Thomas Axworthy recommended that a renewed Canadian democratic development agenda should have a limited geographic scope. That would involve picking a group of countries, such as those where the Canadian experience is particularly relevant or where Canada has a well-established partnership, to focus its democratic development efforts. Implicit to this suggestion is the reality that, given the type of approach that is required, Canada's resources will not allow it to operate everywhere.

Women's political empowerment

Supporting women's political participation was an area where witnesses felt that Canada was well placed to play a meaningful role. As Jacqueline O'Neill put it:

I think Canada's far better placed to do this than almost any other country I have worked with. I mean, we have members of the Canadian Armed Forces who know how to do gender-based analysis plus. The national action plan [on Women, Peace and Security] was generated through your committee, overseen through this committee, and done with massive consultation across the country. There are people who have the expertise on this and who can do more than say that women's rights are important and we must protect those as a means of ensuring inclusion.⁷⁸

Similarly, Gabrielle Bardall noted that, while Canada's international assistance policy has only recently become officially feminist, "gender equality and women's empowerment are bedrocks of Canadian values and have been at the heart of Canadian foreign policy for decades."⁷⁹

78 FAAE, *Evidence*, 1st Session, 42nd Parliament, 19 February 2019.

79 Bardall, 2019.



Support to political parties

One area of democratic development that witnesses highlighted as being in need of greater support, a recommendation that echoed the Committee’s 2007 report, was support to political parties. Thomas Axworthy noted that support to political parties is critical to a comprehensive democratic development agenda. He told the Committee: “Parties are the essence of democracy everywhere. They're sometimes unpopular with the broader public, but to have well-functioning democracies, you need fairly run parties...One area that [Canada is] good at, but very few work on, is the management of parties, in particular how one encourages gender equity in parties.”⁸⁰ Derek Mitchell made a similar comment when he observed that “political parties need help.” He expressed his view that Canada has “very strong political parties and activists who can share skills and strategy.”⁸¹

According to Christopher MacLennan, the recent focus on political parties in the democratic development field is in part a product of practitioners’ growing recognition, as previously discussed, that democratic development efforts must extend beyond traditional institutional support. As he explained to the Committee:

In the early 2000 period we were still on that high of what's called the third wave in democratization and a belief that all countries were on a track to eventually become democratic. In the 2000s came the first signs that maybe that wasn't quite true. That's why you saw an uptick in the recognition that we needed more political approaches, for example, support to political parties.⁸²

As will be discussed further below, such a political approach can prove difficult for governments to implement in the context of official, diplomatic relations with partner countries. Working with political parties can expose donors to accusations of interference in domestic politics more readily than democratic development initiatives in other areas.

IMPLEMENTING A CANADIAN DEMOCRATIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

As in 2007, the Committee believes that an independent institution dedicated to democratic development should be an important element of a renewed emphasis on democratic development. That said, its creation must not be seen as an end unto itself.

80 FAAE, *Evidence*, 1st Session, 42nd Parliament, 7 February 2019.

81 FAAE, *Evidence*, 1st Session, 42nd Parliament, 5 February 2019.

82 Ibid.

As other models – such as those practiced by the United Kingdom and the United States – have shown, a range of actors and initiatives, all fulfilling complementary roles, are required to effectively promote democracy internationally.

Implementing a renewed democratic development strategy will require a partnership between the Government of Canada, Canadian civil society and the proposed new democratic development institution. Each has an important role to play in pursuing a comprehensive Canadian strategy to democratic development.

Given that it must provide broad policy direction and deliver Canada's development assistance, GAC requires dedicated capacity and specialized expertise in democratic development. The institutional emphasis that was accorded to democratic development in 2007 does not appear to exist within GAC today. That institutional capacity will, therefore, need to be rebuilt.

Similarly, the role of the Canadian civil society sector needs to be reconsidered. As testimony from CANADEM and the Parliamentary Centre made clear, Canada already possesses significant expertise in democratic development. A new approach must recognize the indispensable role these organizations can play in Canada's overall democratic development efforts.

Even with a more capable department and a revitalized partnership with Canadian civil society groups, the Committee believes that a new independent institution is necessary. Testimony indicated that, within a broad approach to democratic development, there are certain, often politically sensitive, tasks and environments that are difficult for either a government department or a small civil society organization to fulfill or to access. This reality has long been recognized by other countries, like the United Kingdom and the United States, which have supported independent democratic development institutions for decades. Additionally, an independent institution would provide a valuable complement to government and civil society-led initiatives, allowing for innovative practices and ideas to flourish within the broader policy framework established by government, while also providing a dedicated home for Canadian expertise in the democratic development field.

Building Democracy Expertise within Global Affairs Canada

Testimony provided by GAC, as well as a reading of its departmental reporting, suggest there is significantly less capacity devoted to democratic development today than was



the case with CIDA in 2007.⁸³ Christopher MacLennan indicated that policy coordination for democratic development is the responsibility of his office within Global Affairs Canada (Global Issues and Development), but made no reference to a dedicated office or program specifically focused on democratic development. Similarly, GAC's departmental reports commit to the principal of democratic development – often stated in combination with other priorities such as human rights or international peace and security – but make no reference to any dedicated entities or funding envelopes within the department that are specifically focused on democracy promotion.

The Committee believes that advancing a new Canadian approach to democratic development will require the dedication of specific resources within government and the development of in-house expertise. To be comprehensive, this approach must be based on a partnership between government, civil society, and a new independent institution; nevertheless, policy leadership can only come from government, which must set the broad direction for Canadian initiatives.

Recommendation 7

Global Affairs Canada should create a dedicated entity within the department tasked with developing and implementing government policy on democratic governance and coordinating initiatives with partners, both in Canada and internationally.

A Revitalized Partnership with Civil Society

Testimony from CANADEM and the Parliamentary Centre suggested that the Government of Canada has significantly reduced its support to Canadian NGOs working on democratic development since 2007. According to Paul LaRose-Edwards “[f]unding for democracy work by Canadian NGOs, like the Parliamentary Centre or CANADEM, was reduced to almost zero” over the last decade.⁸⁴ For CANADEM specifically at least, such claims appear to be an exaggeration as funding totals reported to the Committee by GAC indicate that the department disbursed \$8.08 million to CANADEM in 2018–19, and between \$1.99 million and \$3.72 million in each of the previous four years.⁸⁵

Nonetheless, the Committee believes that the approach it is proposing requires a revitalization of government support to civil society organizations promoting democracy around the world. As Jean-Paul Ruskowski highlighted in his testimony, such funding

83 GAC, *Departmental Results Plan 2017-18*; GAC, *Departmental Plan 2019-20*.

84 FAAE, *Evidence*, 1st Session, 42nd Parliament, 28 February 2019.

85 GAC Letter, 2019.

should allow for the possibility of longer-term commitments, including funding for core operations, to provide civil society organizations with the stability necessary to engage in the type of patient work associated with democratic development. The Committee also agrees with Paul LaRose-Edwards that the existing capacities of Canadian civil society organizations should be better utilized, and even amplified.

Recommendation 8

A renewed Canadian approach to democratic governance assistance should aim to strengthen the contribution of Canadian civil society through partnerships with the Government of Canada and long-term financial commitments.

A New Canadian Democratic Development Institution

As in 2007, the Committee believes a renewed Canadian focus on democratic development requires the creation of a new institution dedicated to democratic development. Such an institution would complement and augment efforts by government departments and Canadian civil society organizations, filling gaps between the approaches taken by both and the roles they can and should play. The Committee believes the clearest evidence for the necessity of a new institution was the testimony from similar organizations based in other countries. The Committee was impressed with the testimony provided by U.S.-based organizations, IRI, NDI and NED, as well as the British organization, WFD. Together they made a compelling case for an independent, government-supported, institution dedicated to democracy promotion as an integral part of a comprehensive national strategy for international democratic development.

Central to this argument is the idea that such independent institutions are best placed to address the politically sensitive matters inherent to the work of democratic development. Christopher MacLennan conceded that it can be difficult for GAC to engage on politically sensitive matters in the context of Canada's broader bilateral relations with partner countries. He observed:

Democratic development assistance differs significantly from other sectors because it involves political aspects. As part of our bilateral relationship, it is very easy for a department to provide support to a developing country, whether it is to set up audit offices or to provide assistance in the training of judges. What is much more difficult, however, is to offer highly political things, such as support to opposition parties and organizations.⁸⁶

86 FAAE, *Evidence*, 1st Session, 42nd Parliament, 5 February 2019.



Daniel Twining made the same point from the perspective of the IRI, noting how being at arms-length from government can be beneficial. He said:

As all of you think about your institutional structures here, one thing that has helped us is that the IRI, NDI and the National Endowment for Democracy, are one and two degrees removed from the government, from the executive branch and from the Congress.

Governments do have to walk a diplomatic fine line with sensitive relationships: Russia, China, Saudi Arabia, Iran, etc. ... Our government is supporting [the IRI], but in a removed way that does not complicate diplomatic relations unduly.⁸⁷

According to Ed Broadbent, speaking about his former work with Rights and Democracy, an institution that receives a funding appropriation through parliament, but is operationally independent from government, can achieve a useful balance between purely government-led or civil-society-led initiatives. He emphasized,

how unique the structure, independence and importance of Rights and Democracy were up until nearly the end of its existence. In operating independently of the government, it gained credibility both with international NGOs and foreign governments. At the same time, as a creation of the federal government with its president appointed by Privy Council and having the institutional support of the Department of Foreign Affairs, I as president had more access to heads of government than almost any other international NGO.⁸⁸

An independent institution also allows for policy innovation within the broader approach established by government. With the proper balance of independence and oversight, Canada's new democratic development institution can be a valuable complement to other Canadian initiatives. Such an approach has proven successful elsewhere. The International Development Research Centre (IDRC), a Crown corporation with an international development mandate and one that is focused on research and technical assistance, has demonstrated for decades how an operationally independent institution can complement government-led development initiatives in pursuit of Canadian foreign policy objectives.⁸⁹

Additionally, witnesses suggested that a specifically Canadian approach to democratic development requires a dedicated home to harness and support Canadian expertise. On that point, the Committee heard that Canadians are already well represented within democratic development organizations around the world. As Thomas Axworthy put it: "we have tremendous capacity in Canada. Canadians everywhere are advising on a

87 Ibid.

88 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 1st Session, 42nd Parliament, 28 February 2019.

89 See testimony of Arjan de Haan, Director, Inclusive Economies, International Development Research Centre, FAAE, [Evidence](#), 1st Session, 42nd Parliament, 7 February 2019.

charter of rights, on the court system, on federalism, on party development. The whole world is employing Canadians on this except Canada. We haven't brought them together in a dedicated instrument to work.”⁹⁰

The Committee believes strongly in the idea that there should be a place in Canada for Canadian democratic development practitioners to hone and apply their expertise in the implementation of a uniquely Canadian approach to democracy promotion. Witnesses throughout the Committee’s study were emphatic that Canada has an important perspective to offer in the field of democratic development. That perspective could, in the Committee’s estimation, be projected more widely, consistently and effectively if a stand-alone institution existed that was dedicated to those values, experiences and expertise, as a complement to government and civil society efforts.

Recommendation 9

The Government of Canada should establish a new independent institution dedicated to international democratic development as part of a comprehensive strategy to advance democracy around the world. This new institution should complement government and civil society initiatives, foster innovation, research and knowledge, and provide a dedicated home in Canada to support Canadian expertise.

Recommendation 10

Canada’s new democratic development institution should include the sharing of best practices regarding anti-corruption measures to ensure the emergence and longevity of healthy democratic systems.

Because it feels strongly about the need for consultations with Canadian political parties and civil society, as is recommended below, the Committee does not feel that its role is to offer prescriptive guidance on the design and operation of this new institution at a granular level. Instead, in the sections that follow, the Committee is putting forward its views on the general parameters and core characteristics that it believes should define the institution.

All-party support and civil society engagement

Witnesses emphasized that, in order for the new institution to be effective and sustainable over the long-term, and seen as legitimate, it must have the support of all federal political parties. The political nature of the institution’s proposed work abroad

90 Ibid.



means that it cannot be a political issue at home. Ed Broadbent highlighted cross-party support as one of the reasons for the initial success of Rights and Democracy. Speaking of his appointment by then-Prime Minister Brian Mulroney, he stated:

To be quite candid, I had discussions with Mr. Mulroney when he offered to appoint me as the founding president. For reasons everybody will understand, the board in a broad sense had to be accepting of me going into that position. There were very good and frank discussions about membership on the board that ended up reflecting, as I said, all parties, and which Mr. Mulroney, of course, as prime minister and ultimately responsible for the act, readily agreed to, as did the successor government, the Liberal government with Mr. Chrétien.

As Mr. Broadbent emphasized, this all-party support was an important factor contributing to the success of Rights and Democracy.⁹¹

Testimony from international democratic development institutions similarly emphasized the importance of having broad domestic political support built into the governance and working methods of the institution. In the American example, the NDI and IRI were created to represent both sides of the political spectrum, under the bipartisan umbrella of the NED. In the UK, cross-party collaboration in the work of the WFD was ensured by reserving seats on the institution's board for political party representatives.

In addition, given the role they play as implementing partners and the specialized expertise they bring to the table, the Committee is of the view that the government should also consult with relevant Canadian civil society groups to determine how best to represent the sector in the new institution's structure, and to gain input on its design and mandate.

Recommendation 11

All Canadian federal political parties and relevant civil society organizations should be engaged in the process of designing the proposed new democratic governance institution, and in the ultimate delivery of its mandate.

Independence from government

As mentioned previously, independence from government is essential to the justification for creating a new democratic development institution. The degree of such independence, however, depends on the structure put in place. A number of possible options exist. One approach would see the government endow a new and independent

91 FAAE, *Evidence*, 1st Session, 42nd Parliament, 19 February 2019.

non-governmental organization with sufficient funds to operate on a sustainable and autonomous basis. Such an approach would maximize the new institution's independence but would not allow any avenue for government oversight or any alignment with official Canadian policy. Another option would be an approach similar to that in the U.S., where independent NGOs receive public funding on a project-by-project or annual basis. This approach provides for greater accountability while still allowing the institution to remain independent. A Canadian approach could see the creation of a new Crown corporation, like IDRC or the former Rights and Democracy, independent in its day-to-day operations but responsible to Parliament through a designated cabinet Minister. In all cases, this independence would allow the institution to seek funding from other donors as well as private sources.

Regardless of the specific model chosen, the Committee believes that the new institution should balance the need for accountability and transparency with the need for independence. As part of this balance, the Committee believes that, given the need for all-party support, the new institution should be required to report to Parliament. Such reporting provides a valuable means of oversight while also engaging parliamentarians in the institution's work.

Recommendation 12

With the objective of ensuring that Canada's new democratic development institution balances the need for independence with the need for transparency and oversight, the Government of Canada should require that the institution report to Parliament on an annual basis.

Grant funder versus project implementor

There are two general models for how Canada's new institution could operate. One would see the new institution act as a grant-providing entity, such as NED or UNDEF, funding projects around the world executed by other organizations, including both local groups in partner countries and other international and Canadian entities. The other option would be to implement projects directly in the field, working alongside local partners, as is the case with the NDI and the WFD.

Witnesses identified advantages to both approaches. In his testimony, Carl Gershman described how NED's grants-based approach allows it to be "nimble ... acting swiftly, flexibly and effectively in providing vital assistance to activists working in the most



challenging environments.”⁹² Christian Lamarre highlighted the cost-effectiveness of a grants approach in his testimony, stating that UNDEF runs its entire program with a permanent staff of only seven.⁹³

The other perspective emphasizes the knowledge that can only be gained by engaging directly on the ground in the partner countries. Derek Mitchell testified that NDI’s “50-plus offices around the world” provide it with the “unique opportunity to take what we know of context on the ground, then feed what's going on there back through Washington.”⁹⁴ Thomas Axworthy made a similar argument when advocating that an envisioned new Canadian institution should set up field offices in key partner countries. He said: “One of its cores should be working locally. You can't make democracy work by having consultants come in and out. You really need people on the ground.”⁹⁵

In practice, Canada’s new democratic development institution could decide to follow a mix of both strategies, providing grants in some cases while implementing projects directly in others. The Committee believes that the new institution should be given the flexibility to determine the best way of implementing a Canadian approach to democratic development. As such, it should be provided with authority to implement projects on the ground and engage directly with local partners.

Recommendation 13

In establishing Canada’s new democratic development institution, the Government of Canada should ensure that the institution is authorized to work directly on the ground with local actors in partner countries.

Governance

The process by which the new institution’s composition is determined, and the criteria by which executive and other senior positions are filled, was also highlighted by witnesses as an important factor that would determine the direction that the new institution would take. The WFD and the NED offer examples of two contrasting approaches.⁹⁶ According to Anthony Smith, WFD’s board is appointed by the U.K.

92 Ibid.

93 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 1st Session, 42nd Parliament, 28 February 2019

94 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 1st Session, 42nd Parliament, 5 February 2019.

95 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 1st Session, 42nd Parliament, 7 February 2019.

96 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 1st Session, 42nd Parliament, 19 February 2019.

government, with 6 of 10 seats reserved for members of the U.K.'s political parties (which may or may not held by sitting parliamentarians).

Carl Gershman contrasted the WFD's approach with that of the NED's private board of directors, in which the government plays no role in selecting directors. Despite it being a private institution, the NED nonetheless accounts for changes in political leadership in the U.S. government, as the chair of the organization must be from the party in power. That is the only change that accompanies a change in government. As Mr. Gersham emphasized, "We do nothing else. The board remains the same. The policies of the institution don't change. We adjust to the conditions in the world, to what's happening in the world, and we are able to pursue a consistent long-term policy." He said that there is "kind of a bipartisan and even labour-business balance built into the [NED]," something that he feels is "critically important."⁹⁷

Ed Broadbent recommended that the board governing a Canadian institution should include representatives from across the Canadian political spectrum and that appointments should be made after meaningful consultation with opposition parties, even if the final decision would remain with the government.⁹⁸ He also recommended that as many as a quarter of the seats on the board should be reserved for non-Canadians from the institution's partner countries, a suggestion that was seconded by Jacqueline O'Neill.⁹⁹

Regardless of the exact structure and procedures put in place, the Committee believes that the governance of the new institution should be transparent and representative of the Canadian political spectrum and the field of democratic development.

Recommendation 14

In establishing Canada's new democratic development institution, the Government of Canada should ensure that the institution's governance structure reflects a transparent process for selecting its leadership that includes meaningful consultation with all political parties.

97 Ibid.

98 Ibid.

99 The enabling legislation of an existing Canadian Crown corporation, the International Development Research Centre, requires that a majority of its governors be Canadian citizens and allows for two governors to be sitting parliamentarians. See [International Development Research Centre Act](#), R.S.C., 1985, c. I-19.



Financial Support to Democratic Development

As the preceding sections have made clear, the Committee believes that Canada should take a more ambitious and strategic approach to democratic development. One that reflects Canadian values and the contributions that Canada can make in support of the model of governance that has led to the country's own enduring success. Doing so requires a more coherent policy grounded by institutional structures. It also requires a financial commitment commensurate with such an ambitious vision.

Fortunately, the incremental approach required of effective democratic development does not require a “big bang,” as Paul LaRose-Edwards called it, of immediate large budget increases.¹⁰⁰ As previously quoted, Anthony Smith emphasized that “[d]emocracy needs modest resources but abundant patience.”¹⁰¹ That was evident in the testimony from Mr. LaRose-Edwards, among others, who called for increased funding, provided on a predictable, long-term basis.

An increased financial focus on democratic development should also not be seen as detracting from, or competing with, *Canada's Feminist International Assistance Policy*. As witnesses highlighted, Canada is already well placed to lead on the issue of women's political empowerment. Doing so within a renewed policy framework for democratic development would be entirely consistent with the government's policy in other areas.

How much new funding is required for Canada's new democratic development institution will depend on the scale of operations envisioned and the scope of the institution's mandate. A significant range of possibilities exists. The former Rights and Democracy, as one example, had an annual budget of approximately \$10 million per year.¹⁰² In his written submission, Thomas Axworthy referenced a panel he had chaired in 2009 that investigated the possible establishment of a Canadian democratic development institution. The panel ultimately recommended a new institution with a budget ranging from \$30 to \$70 million.¹⁰³ IDRC, a Crown Corporation with a broader international development mandate, had revenues of approximately \$200 million in 2017-2018, \$140 million of which came via a parliamentary appropriation.¹⁰⁴ Any of

100 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 1st Session, 42nd Parliament, 28 February 2019.

101 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 1st Session, 42nd Parliament, 19 February 2019.

102 See for example, International Centre for Human Rights and Democratic Development, [Annual Report 2009-10: Partners First](#).

103 Thomas S. Axworthy, [Now More Than Ever: The Case for Canada Advancing Democracy and Human Rights Abroad](#), written submission to FAAE, 7 February 2019.

104 International Development Research Centre, [Annual Report 2017-2018](#).

these examples could represent a possible model in determining the scale of operations of the new democratic development institution.

Regardless of the decisions taken on the new institution, the Committee believes that an effective democratic development strategy requires a financial commitment equal to the ambition of its mandate.

Recommendation 15

The Government of Canada should allocate new additional development funding, on a predictable, long-term basis, to support democratic development initiatives, and at a level that would enable the realization of the recommendations outlined in this report.

CONCLUSION

Twelve years after the Committee recommended that Canada increase its support for democratic development internationally, it has reached the same conclusion, but with a heightened sense of urgency and resolve. Engaging in the work of democratic development allows Canada to support like-minded partners, whether it be a government, parliament, institution, organization or individual, and advance the broader foreign policy objective of seeing a world that is characterized – to the greatest degree possible – by peace, justice, dignity, inclusion and prosperity. It is clear to the Committee that Canada is capable of making significant contributions to the advancement and reinforcement of democracy around world, but it needs to be bold enough to do so and humble enough to recognize the challenges involved, without wavering from the overall path.

While the Committee's conclusions are similar to those of 2007, the Committee recognizes that much has changed since that time. The global political environment has become more fraught, and democracy is facing threats and pressures that were mostly unforeseen a decade ago. The field of democratic development has also changed, as practitioners have adapted to and learned from best practices and the evolving state of democracy around the world. The Committee believes the observations and recommendations outlined in this report reflect the world of 2019.

At the heart of democratic development remains the simple idea of helping all citizens participate in the decision-making that affects their lives. Achieving this result requires a complex, nuanced approach that recognizes that democracy is as much about values and people as it is about institutions, and that each country is defined by unique characteristics. Just as Canadian democracy itself continues to evolve, so too must Canadian support for democracy abroad.



HOUSE OF COMMONS
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES
CANADA

Transforming an ambitious Canadian democratic development strategy into practice requires a clear, comprehensive policy grounded in the evidence accumulated by experts working in the field. Once in place, this policy needs to be supported by institutional structures capable of carrying it out. The Committee believes, as it did in 2007, that those structures should include an independent Canadian institution dedicated to international democratic development. Such an institution would be an important, complementary policy tool for the implementation of a uniquely Canadian approach to democratic development and provide a home for the dedicated Canadian practitioners who are already demonstrating leadership around the world.

APPENDIX A LIST OF WITNESSES

The following table lists the witnesses who appeared before the Committee at its meetings related to this report. Transcripts of all public meetings related to this report are available on the Committee’s [webpage for this study](#).

Organizations and Individuals	Date	Meeting
Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development Christopher MacLennan, Assistant Deputy Minister Global Issues and Development Shelley Whiting, Director General Office of Human Rights, Freedoms and Inclusion	2019/02/05	125
International Republican Institute Daniel Twining, President	2019/02/05	125
National Democratic Institute Les Campbell, Regional Director Derek Mitchell, President	2019/02/05	125
As an individual Thomas S. Axworthy, Public Policy Chair, Massey College University of Toronto Pearl Eliadis, Human Rights Lawyer Eliadis Law Office	2019/02/07	126
Deveaux International Governance Consultants Inc. Kevin Deveaux, President	2019/02/07	126
International Development Research Centre Arjan de Haan, Interim Director Inclusive Economies	2019/02/07	126
Broadbent Institute Hon. Ed Broadbent, Chair and Founder	2019/02/19	127
National Endowment for Democracy Carl Gershman, President	2019/02/19	127

Organizations and Individuals	Date	Meeting
Westminster Foundation for Democracy Anthony Smith, Chief Executive Officer	2019/02/19	127
Woodrow Wilson Center Jacqueline O'Neill, Global Fellow Canada Institute	2019/02/19	127
As an individual Robert Greenhill, Executive Chairman Global Canada	2019/02/28	131
CANADEM (Canada's Civilian Response Corps) Paul LaRose-Edwards, Executive Director	2019/02/28	131
Parliamentary Centre Maureen Boyd, Chair Board of Directors Jean-Paul Ruszkowski, President and Chief Executive Officer	2019/02/28	131
United Nations Democracy Fund Christian Lamarre, Senior Programme Officer United Nations Secretariat	2019/02/28	131

APPENDIX B LIST OF BRIEFS

The following is an alphabetical list of organizations and individuals who submitted briefs to the Committee related to this report. For more information, please consult the Committee's [webpage for this study](#).

Axworthy, Thomas S.

Deveaux International Governance Consultants Inc.

International Foundation for Electoral Systems

REQUEST FOR GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

Pursuant to Standing Order 109, the Committee requests that the government table a comprehensive response to this Report.

A copy of the relevant *Minutes of Proceedings* ([Meetings Nos. 125, 126, 127, 131, 134, 143, 145 and 146](#)) is tabled.

Respectfully submitted,

Michael Levitt
Chair

Democratic Development Supplementary Report

Conservatives welcome the engagement of the Foreign Affairs Committee with the issue of Democratic Development. We believe that Canada can play a much greater role in democratic development, and we share the finding of the committee that the current government's lack of action in this area has been a disappointment. While we agree with the goals of this report in engaging in democratic development, we also believe that the report should have included discussion about how inclusive democratic development must include particular attention to the challenges faced by religious, ethnic, and linguistic minorities.

This report argues that Canada would be well-served by a government-funded organization operating independently of government, which has the resources to fund activities which relate to democratic development. It argues in this context that democracy and democratic development should be broadly defined, including such things as support for political parties in other countries. Although reporting to Parliament, this organization would operate independently. Although consultation with opposition parties is encouraged, the majority report still proposes that appointments to this body be made by the government.

Many Canadians would be concerned about the possible implications of this particular framework. In practical effect, it would give license to a small group of government appointees to distribute taxpayer funds to foreign advocacy groups and political parties, without clearly defined objectives and without meaningful political accountability. An annual report to Parliament is not going to be that effective if Parliament does not have a meaningful mechanism through which to instruct the entity in response to a report and on an ongoing basis.

Should a council of "wise people" be able to distribute taxpayer funds to political parties and advocacy groups outside of Canada, with limited meaningful accountability? We would suggest that they should not.

A better alternative model would be an entity within the Department of Global Affairs, with its own ambassador-at-large and some independent stature, but ultimately accountable to the Minister and aligned in their actions with the priorities of government. This was the model used for the Office of Religious Freedom. An office embedded within government can speak publically on issues related to its mandate, inform the rest of government operations, and fund its own projects on the ground in other countries. It is not at risk of "going rogue", and it operates within a clear line of accountability for its spending and actions.

One major issue in the area of democratic development around the world involves the challenges faced by religious, ethnic, and linguistic minorities. Ultra-majoritarian movements which deny the fundamental rights of minority communities and seek to limit their security and their participation are a growing problem everywhere and a key driver of democratic decline. Even without these movements, intercommunal tensions can contribute to democratic decline by leading some people to see undemocratic political structures as the best or the only way to protect their communal interests. The majority report discusses the gender dimension, but it fails to delve into the particular challenges involving any other marginalized communities. We recommend that this committee hear testimony about and delve more deeply into these issues in the future.

