



European Commission United Nations Development Programme International IDEA

International Commitments for Democratic Elections

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Organized within



In collaboration with





International Commitments

- International commitments for democratic elections stem from political rights and fundamental freedoms established by universal and regional treaties and political pledges.
- They provide the legal basis for the provision of electoral assistance in a spirit of partnership and cooperation. The overall aim of electoral assistance to support the partner countries requesting assistance to meet the international commitments and obligations they have adhered to.
- These commitments also represent the principles upon which independent assessments of electoral processes by both international and domestic election observers are made.



International Legal Instruments

Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) of 1948

- The will of the people shall be the basis of the government (Art 21.3)
- Much of it has acquired force of int. customary law

International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) of 1966

- Right to participate in public affairs and equal access to public service (Art 25)
- Legally binding on over 160 states that ratified it



International Legal Instruments II

International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD) of 1966

Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) of 1979

Convention on the rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPWD) of 2006



Regional Legal Instruments

- African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance (2007) and African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (1981)
- ECOWAS Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance Supplementary to the Protocol Relating to the Mechanisms for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peace and Security (2001) - SADC Principles and Guidelines Governing Democratic Elections (2004)
- OAS Charter and American Declaration of the Rights and Duties of Man (1948)
- American Convention on Human Rights (1969)
- CoE Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (1950)



Other Regional Instruments

- Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE - e.g. the Document of the Copenhagen Meeting of the Conference on the Human Dimension of the OSCE of 1990)
- Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS - the Convention of the Commonwealth of Independent States on Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms of 1995)
- League of Arab States (LAS - the Arab Charter on Human Rights of 1994)
- Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC - the Cairo Declaration on Human Rights in Islam of 1990) and
- Commonwealth (the Harare Commonwealth Declaration of 1991).



Commitments

1. The right and opportunity, without any distinction or unreasonable restrictions, for citizens to participate in government and public affairs through:
 - Periodic elections
 - Genuine elections
 - Universal suffrage
 - Equal suffrage
 - The right to stand for election
 - The right to vote
 - The right to a secret ballot
 - The free expression of the will of voters



Commitments

- 2. The freedom of expression**
- 3. The freedom of association**
- 4. The freedom of assembly**
- 5. The freedom of movement**
- 6. The freedom from discrimination**
- 7. The right to an effective legal remedy**



The EC Compendium

INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS NORMS AND THE RIGHT TO PARTICIPATION

	EU	UN	UNDP	OSCE	IB	CD	UN	IC	CommOH	IE	EU	EU	IC
Chile	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Paraguay	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
The Netherlands A. Authoritativity of the Charter B. Right to self-determination C. Civil Society	INT ^a	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Philippines	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Qatar	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Republic of Korea	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Swaziland	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Singapore	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Sri Lanka	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Syrian Arab Republic	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Tajikistan	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Thailand	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Venezuela	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Timor-Leste	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Tunisia	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Uganda	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
United Kingdom	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
United States	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Yemen	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

^a a. The Parliamentarian Authority of the World Bank and G8 countries is a member state of the United Nations, but it has observer status.

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Commitments vs Standards

The definitions:

Standard - a required or agreed level of quality or attainment. A criterion for measuring acceptability, quality and accuracy. More used to justify election observation activities

Commitment - the state or quality of being committed to a cause, or to a policy. A pledge or undertaking to which a sovereign country has adhered to. More used to justify electoral assistance activities

Beyond the mere interpretation of these definitions, the legal references underpinning both instruments are the same, and the ultimate goal is the same – promotion of sustainable and continued democratic development in the partner countries



The New Approach

Electoral Support





The EC-UN cooperation with partner countries

Electoral assistance projects provide a requested and agreed support to partner countries

The aim is to assist the requesting country to organise electoral events that are aligned or as close as possible to the commitment and obligations signed by the specific partner country.



The ultimate goal of election observation

The assessment of an electoral process should not be limited to the reporting of what international obligations are breached

The independent evaluation and analysis of the reasons why certain obligations cannot be met provides the basis for the future programming of electoral and democracy assistance



Linking the Commitments to Democratic Elections to Public International Law

- The Carter Center is leading an effort to identify and articulate obligations and commitments for democratic elections arising out of existing public international law sources.

The primary aims of this work are:

- to establish consistent and objective criteria for the assessment of elections as well as for the provision of long-term electoral assistance
- to provide guidance to national election administrators in their work with living up to international commitments and obligations their respective states have adhered to.



Commitments and Good Practices

- In the provision of assistance, EC-UNDP electoral assistance projects take also into account the good practices for democratic elections coming from all different areas of the world.

International Commitments



Establish the principles by which elections should be conducted (e.g. periodically, in a free and fair manner etc.)

Good Practices



Identify best methods for implementing the principles established by international commitments.

The ACE Electoral Knowledge Network

www.aceproject.org



provides comprehensive and authoritative information on nearly any aspects of electoral processes and systems

promotes effective and sustained networking among reputable election professionals from across the world

A screenshot of the ACE website. The top navigation bar includes links for Home, About ACE, ACE Electoral Knowledge Network, ACE News, ACE Events, ACE Publications, ACE Resources, ACE Tools, ACE Services, ACE Partners, ACE Contact, and ACE Log In. The main content area features the ACE logo and the text 'PROJECT | PROJET | PROYECTO'. Below this is a banner with a photo of people at a meeting. A sidebar on the left lists 'About ACE', 'ACE Electoral Knowledge Network', 'ACE News', 'ACE Events', 'ACE Publications', 'ACE Resources', 'ACE Tools', 'ACE Services', 'ACE Partners', 'ACE Contact', and 'ACE Log In'. The central content area shows a 'About ACE' page with text about the project's mission and a 'ACE Electoral Knowledge Network' page with sections for 'Electoral Today', 'The ACE Electoral Knowledge Network', 'Comparative Data', 'Electoral Materials', 'Electoral Advice', and 'Regions & Countries'. At the bottom, there are logos for various partners and a footer section.

places special emphasis on issues of costs, sustainability, professionalism and trust in the management of elections

offers professional capacity development services and specialised electoral advice and support

dynamic online facility