



THE UN DEMOCRACY FUND: *Promoting Human Rights and Freedom Worldwide*

*"The work of democracy is larger than holding a fair election; it requires building the institutions that sustain freedom."
– President George W. Bush*

At the United Nations in September 2005, President George W. Bush and Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh met to welcome the first pledges to the new United Nations Democracy Fund (UNDEF), an initiative proposed by President Bush at the UN General Assembly in September 2004. UNDEF promotes human rights and freedom through international cooperation. The United States and India provided the first pledges, giving \$10 million each. In addition, countries including Australia, France, Indonesia, Qatar, Senegal and Sri Lanka have also given, bringing the total amount available for disbursement to \$50 million. Thus far, the U.S. has given a total of \$18 million to UNDEF.

UNDEF complements other UN programs by focusing on strengthening civil society. In September 2006, UNDEF approved its first grants to 125 applicants, more than 60 percent of which are civil society organizations. UNDEF received applications from 1,300 non-governmental, governmental, regional, and international organizations.

Promoting Civil Society and Free Media Democratic Republic of Congo

In the Congo, which this year held its first democratic election in over forty years, non-governmental organization Femmes Africa Solidarité will train women and men from parliament, the executive, civil society, media, and the private sector on a range of issues including human rights,

UNDEF supports projects in six areas:

- Civil society empowerment
- Strengthening democratic dialogue and support for constitutional processes
- Civic education, voter registration and strengthening of political parties
- Human rights and fundamental freedoms
- Citizen access to information
- Accountability, transparency and integrity

democratic governance, rule of law, and leadership.

Tajikistan

Non-governmental media organization Khoma will provide training for lawyers and journalists in the fundamentals of a free press, focusing on how civil society can use the press to demand government accountability.

Iraq

The International Research and Exchanges Board (IREX) will help

expand the new, independent National Iraqi News Agency to provide a media forum for the discussion and dissemination of a broad range of views and democratic values.

Chile

Non-governmental organization Gender Equality Social Watch will strengthen civil society and support democracy by monitoring President Bachelet's government, focusing on her commitments to gender equality and women's rights.

The Council for Community of Democracies

Globally, the UN's Council for Community of Democracies plans to develop regional networks that will urge civil society groups to become an active constituency within the Community, using a series of regional conferences held over the course of a year in Africa, Asia, the Americas, Europe and the Middle East.

For a full listing of all projects, please visit the UNDEF website at www.un.org/democracyfund.