



Electoral Integrity INITIATIVE

A Kofi Annan Foundation Initiative

Deepening Democracy:

A Strategy for Improving the
Integrity of Elections Worldwide



“Democracy after all, is not a goal, but a continuous endeavour to strengthen institutions, improve the well-being of people, and foster long-term vision for the country.”

Deepening Democracy: A Strategy for Improving the Integrity of Elections Worldwide

I. Summary of Deepening Democracy	4
Introduction	4
II. Foreword by Kofi A. Annan	6
III. Executive Summary and Recommendations	9
Introduction	9
Definition: Elections with Integrity	10
Major Challenges to Elections with Integrity	11
Strategy for Promoting and Protecting Elections with Integrity	14
Recommendations at the National Level	15
Recommendations to Enhance National Action Through Citizen Empowerment and Transnational Partnerships	16
Recommendations at the International Level	17
IV. The Electoral Integrity Initiative (EII)	20
Introduction	20
What is the EII	20
How does the EII Work	23
Highlights of the EII’s work	23
Composition of the Global Commission on Elections, Democracy and Security	24

I. Summary of Deepening Democracy

In 2010, in concert with the Stockholm-based group International IDEA, the Kofi Annan Foundation convened a group of elder statespersons and international policy thinkers to form the **Global Commission on Elections, Democracy and Security**.

In 2012, the Commission presented its landmark report: **Deepening Democracy: A Strategy for Improving the Integrity of Elections Worldwide**. The commission identified several root causes to elections related instability and violence and created a list of recommendations to address these issues.

A key recommendation emerging from the commission's final report, stressed the central role of integrity in the electoral process, leading the Kofi Annan Foundation to form the Electoral Integrity Initiative.

This publication contains a summary of the report including its key recommendations.

The second part of this publication contains an introduction to the Kofi Annan Foundation's Electoral Integrity Initiative.

Deepening Democracy:

- A Strategy
- for Improving
- the Integrity
- of Elections
- Worldwide

THE REPORT OF THE GLOBAL
COMMISSION ON ELECTIONS,
DEMOCRACY AND SECURITY

September 2012

II. Foreword by Kofi A. Annan

The spread of democracy across the world has been one of the most dramatic changes I have witnessed over the course of my career. In country after country, people have risked their lives to call for free elections, democratic accountability, the rule of law and respect for human rights.

Elections are the indispensable root of democracy. They are now almost universal. Since 2000, all but 11 countries have held national elections. But to be credible, we need to see high standards before, during and after votes are cast. Opposition organizations must be free to organize and campaign without fear. There must be a level playing field among candidates. On polling day, voters must feel safe and trust the secrecy and integrity of the ballot. **And when the votes have been counted the result must be accepted no matter how disappointed the defeated candidates feel.**

When the electorate believes that elections have been free and fair, they can be a powerful catalyst for better governance, greater security and human development.

But in the absence of credible elections, citizens have no recourse to peaceful political change. The risk of conflict increases while corruption, intimidation, and fraud go unchecked, rotting the entire political system slowly from within.

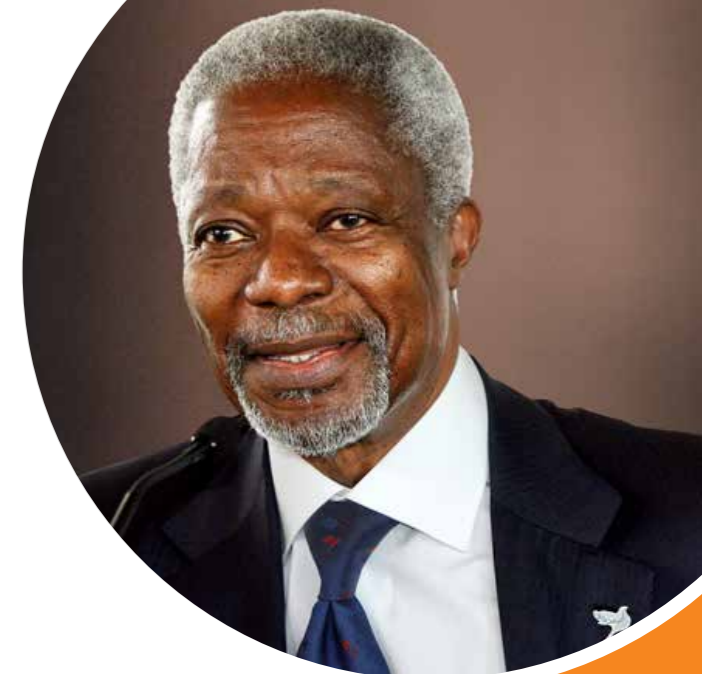
I experienced this first-hand when the flawed presidential elections in Kenya in 2007 led to uncontrolled violence, killing and displacement of people. I have seen, too, how much of Africa's progress in the last decade risks being reversed by the "winner takes all" approach to elections and power, which has been extraordinarily damaging to the continent.

So while elections have never been more universal and important, their benefits are by no means assured. Elections are increasingly being used by autocratic governments to wrap themselves in a veneer of democratic legitimacy. New democracies are struggling to consolidate democratic gains, while growing inequality is putting pressure on many older democracies to show that they are relevant to citizens' concerns and well-being.

Across the world, uncontrolled political finance threatens to hollow out democracy and rob it of its unique strengths.

It was to address these concerns and point to solutions that I invited a group of distinguished former leaders and eminent experts to consider how to promote and protect the integrity of elections. The Global Commission was established as a joint initiative of the Kofi Annan Foundation and the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International IDEA). It had full and independent responsibility for its report, and members of the Commission served in their individual capacity. You will find its main findings in this summary document.

To governments, elected officials and citizens around the world, this report presents a strategy to increase the likelihood that incumbent politicians and governments will deepen democracy and improve the integrity of national elections. In doing so, we hope that our Report will help to widen understanding of the requirements for strong, democratic and cohesive societies.



I always felt that the report was as much an agenda for action as an insightful piece of analysis, which is why my Foundation decided to take up the gauntlet in 2013, by setting up the Electoral Integrity Initiative (EII) with a dozen leading organizations and individuals with great experience in managing and observing elections around the world. **Fifteen former heads of state or ministers have since joined us as members of the EII Senior Panel.**

As one of the Kofi Annan Foundation's flagship programmes, the EII seeks to safeguard an election's real and perceived legitimacy so crucial to healthy democratic life and peaceful electoral processes.

Kofi A. Annan
Chair, Kofi Annan Foundation

“Elections are the indispensable root of democracy, they are the legitimate mechanism to manage transfers of power peacefully.”

III. Executive Summary and Recommendations

Since 2000, all but 11 countries in the world have held national elections. Elections can further democracy, development, human rights, and security, or undermine them, and for this reason alone they should command attention and priority. More than 50 countries have embraced democracy in the last 20 years and now struggle to consolidate democratic governance. Global recession and rising economic inequality are putting pressure on many democracies, including older ones, to show that they are relevant to citizens' concerns and well-being. In the Arab world, where democratic aspirations have long been thwarted, citizens now have unprecedented opportunities to realize those aspirations, but also face dangerous pitfalls. The rise of uncontrolled political finance threatens to hollow out democracy everywhere in the world, and rob democracy of its unique strengths — **political equality, the empowerment of the disenfranchised, and the ability to manage societal conflicts peacefully.**

For elections to embody democracy, further development and promote security, they must be conducted with integrity. Where

elections have integrity, the bedrock democratic principle of political equality is honoured; citizens select their leaders, and hold them accountable. Where elections lack integrity, politicians, officials and institutions are not accountable to the public, which is denied equal opportunity to participate in and influence the political process. Public confidence in elections will be weak, and governments will lack legitimacy. In these cases democratic institutions are empty shells, deprived of the ethos and spirit of democracy.

Elections with integrity are important to values that we hold dear—human rights and democratic principles.

Elections give life to rights enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, including freedom of opinion and expression, freedom of peaceful assembly and association, the right to take part in the government of one's country through freely elected representatives, the right of equal access to public service in one's country, and the recognition that the authority of government derives from the will of the



people, expressed in “**genuine periodic elections which shall be by universal and equal suffrage and shall be held by secret ballot.**”

But in addition to promoting democratic values and human rights, elections with integrity can also yield other tangible benefits for citizens. Evidence from around the world suggests that elections with integrity matter for empowering women, fighting corruption, delivering services to the poor, improving governance, and ending civil wars. To be clear, elections with integrity cannot by themselves develop economies, create good governance, or make peace,

but recent research does suggest that improved elections can be a



catalytic step towards realizing democracy’s transformative potential.

When conducted with integrity, electoral processes are at the heart of democracy’s ability to resolve conflict peacefully. The ability of a society to resolve conflicts without violence requires debate, information, interaction among citizens, and meaningful participation in their own governance, all of which have the potential to change people’s minds and allow governments to take authoritative decisions. Elections with integrity can deepen democracy and enhance public deliberation and reasoning about salient issues and how to address them.

Definition: Elections with Integrity

We define an election with integrity as any election that is based on the democratic principles of universal suffrage and political equality as reflected in international standards and agreements, and is professional, impartial, and transparent in its preparation and administration throughout the electoral cycle and administration throughout the electoral cycle.

Major Challenges to Elections with Integrity

Five major challenges must be overcome to conduct elections with integrity:

- Building the rule of law to substantiate claims to human rights and electoral justice;
- Regulating uncontrolled, undisclosed, and opaque political finance.

- Building professional, competent Electoral Management Bodies (EMBs) with full independence of action to administer elections that are transparent and merit public confidence;

- Creating institutions and norms of multiparty competition and division of power that bolster democracy as a mutual security system among political contenders;

- Removing barriers—legal, administrative, political, economic, and social—to universal and equal political participation; and

Starting with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights,

there are well-defined principles, standards, rights, and rules that governments commit to on behalf of conducting elections with integrity. These principles are fundamental, but in the absence of what is loosely referred to as the rule of law—the capacity and norms that ensure that governments are accountable by law, that citizens are equal under the law, that lawmaking and enforcing are not arbitrary, and that laws respect human rights—standards, principles, legal frameworks, and indeed rights themselves, cannot be substantiated.

Second, for elections to have integrity, they must be conducted competently in a professional, non-partisan, and transparent manner, and just as importantly, voters must have confidence in their conduct.

This requires professional EMBs with full independence of action. EMBs are responsible for ensuring that elections are both technically credible and perceived to be free, fair, and credible. Their work includes a diverse range of activities, from determining voter eligibility, registering eligible voters, conducting polling, and counting and tabulating votes, to campaign regulation, voter education, and electoral dispute resolution. The competency and credibility of EMBs can thus shape overall perceptions of, and confidence in, the integrity of the election.

Third, elections with integrity produce legitimate authority for those who win, and political and physical security for those who lose.

Elections with integrity are but one play in a repeated game, in which short-term loss can be overcome through long-term organization and mobilization. The challenge here is to build institutions and norms of multi-party competition and

division of power that bolster *democracy as a mutual security system* among political contenders and ensure that elections resolve conflict, rather than exacerbate it.

Fourth, throughout the world, in both newer and older democracies, barriers to universal and equal political participation still exist.

In many countries, women, minorities, and other groups face ongoing obstacles to participation in democratic processes. Holding elections with integrity necessitates the removal of these obstacles. Indeed, elections with integrity should promote the broadest participation possible, to encourage the civic engagement and debate that is at the heart of electoral competition and deliberative democracy.

Fifth, uncontrolled, undisclosed and opaque political finance poses a fundamental threat to the integrity of elections.

In some countries, direct campaign contributions and other forms of financial support are the dominant form of political influence. This means that low-income voters have less and less influence over political outcomes. In some countries, organized crime has found that campaign





financing can buy it political influence and protection. In some older democracies, finance practices have undermined public confidence in democracy and elections. In order to halt these corrosive effects on the integrity of elections and democratic governance, democracies must regulate rigorously and control political finance.

Strategy for Promoting and Protecting Elections with Integrity

Governments, elected officials and citizens can take specific actions to promote and protect the integrity of elections. To increase the likelihood that incumbent



politicians and governments will strengthen the integrity of national elections, we advocate a series of mutually reinforcing commitments and actions:

- **Between governments and citizens;**
- **Among like-minded governments;**
- **Among professional, competent and non-partisan EMBs;**
- **Between domestic and transnational civil society organizations;**
- **Among aid donors, recipient governments, political opposition, international and domestic election observers, and civil society organizations.**

Recommendations at the National Level

1. To promote and protect the integrity of elections, governments should:

- Build the rule of law in order to ensure that citizens, including political competitors and opposition, have legal redress to exercise their election-related rights;
- Create professional and competent EMBs with full independence of action, including the assurance of timely access to the necessary finances to conduct elections, and mandates to organize transparent elections that merit public confidence;
- Develop institutions, processes, and networks that deter election-related violence and, should deterrence fail, hold perpetrators accountable;
- Reform and design electoral systems and pursue policies to diminish winner-take-all politics;
- Remove barriers to the participation of women, youth, minorities, people with disabilities and other traditionally marginalized groups, and take affirmative steps to promote the leadership and broad participation of women, including through the judicious use of quotas; and
- Control political finance by regulating donations and expenditures, public financing of political campaigns, disclosure and transparency of donations and expenditures, and sanctions and penalties for non-compliance.

2. Citizen organizations should monitor government performance in meeting the challenges of electoral integrity through impartial and systematic election monitoring, in accordance with international principles; through civic action to prevent electoral violence; through monitoring media accountability, diversity, and independence; and through demanding that political parties are responsive to citizens' needs.

Recommendations to Enhance National Action Through Citizen Empowerment and Transnational Partnerships

3. Citizen election observers should commit to global standards for domestic election monitoring with the Global Network of Domestic Election Monitors and adhere to its Declaration of Global Principles and code of conduct. Donors should invest in building the capacity and credibility of domestic election observation and support the Global Network and its members.
4. Governments should join with like minded states and partner with their own civil society organizations to embrace specific commitments on electoral integrity, the financing of elections, and the protection of free media through the Open Government Partnership—an international initiative that encourages governments to improve their performance on transparency, accountability, and inclusion.

5. National EMBs should organize and create a global certification process to evaluate and grade EMBs on their professionalism, independence, and competence, including developing a voluntary declaration of principles and code of conduct for administering elections with integrity.
6. Foundations and democratic shareholders should create and fund a new transnational civil society organization—Electoral Integrity International—dedicated to bringing global attention to countries that succeed or fail in organizing elections with integrity. Such an organization could be to electoral malpractice what Transparency International is to corruption. It would fill a key niche in helping to promote accountability on electoral issues by providing information, analysis, and other avenues for increasing normative pressure on governments that fall short of elections with integrity.

Recommendations at the International Level

7. Donors should prioritize funding activities, highlighted in this report, to promote and protect elections with integrity, giving priority to helping countries overcome the challenges of holding elections with integrity and investing in building the capacity and effectiveness of domestic election observation.
8. High-level international and regional attention should be directed, and appropriate measures taken, to address the growing threat to democracy posed by the financing of political campaigns, parties, and candidates by transnational organized crime.
9. Democratic governments, regional organizations, and international organizations should stand up for electoral integrity before elections take place.





To do so, they must be more proactive and engaged throughout the electoral cycle of countries with problematic elections.

If mediation is needed, it should be undertaken well before voting takes place, and aim to ensure that in divided societies elections do not yield winner-take-all results. Follow-up should not focus solely on technical improvements to elections but should seek to open the dialogue and citizen participation required for the democratic political process, which elections with integrity both need and serve to create.

10. Regional organizations should create and communicate clearly their ‘red lines’—egregious electoral malpractices that, if violated, would trigger multilateral condemnation and sanction. These organizations must then take action if these lines are crossed.

11. Long-term donor assistance should be explicitly linked to recommendations by election observers, starting at the beginning of the electoral cycle rather than shortly before new elections. It should become common practice that there is in-country, post-election dialogue among international and domestic observer groups, electoral authorities and political actors to identify areas for reform efforts, consider potential international assistance for such reforms, and improve preparedness for the next elections. Subsequent electoral observation and revised recommendations can then form the basis for changes in assistance strategies to ensure that fundamental principles of electoral integrity are respected.

12. Donors should better integrate democracy and the integrity of elections with development and security assistance. Development should contribute to building political pluralism as well as modes

of democratic governance and political culture that lower the stakes of elections in insecure environments. Donors and partner countries should give priority to strengthening the full range of political actors involved in a country’s democratic process, including parliaments, political parties in opposition and in government, independent media and independent electoral management bodies. International security cooperation needs to give far greater consideration to policies and programs that foster political pluralism and competition, in order to sustain stability and democracy in the long run.

13. As governments, international organizations, and civil society consider the post-2015 development framework, greater priority should be given to political freedom as a building block of development and the need to provide much greater scope and capacity for people everywhere to participate in the political decisions that affect them.

The post-2015 framework should include specific programs and goals for delivering elections with integrity, with an emphasis on inclusion, transparency, and accountability.



IV. The Electoral Integrity Initiative (EII)

In 2013, acting on a recommendations of the Global Commission on Elections, Democracy and Security the Kofi Annan Foundation launched the Electoral Integrity Initiative (EII).

Under the auspices of the Kofi Annan Foundation, the EII is an informal network of organisations and individuals who share a common concern for the unaddressed political challenges that undermine elections, especially in countries that have recently emerged from, or are experiencing, prolonged political instability.

What is the EII?

The EII concentrates on two areas in particular:

1. Political engagement with selected countries with potentially fraught elections. The Initiative focuses on a small number of potentially violent national election processes where it believes it can make a decisive difference. It identifies critical moments and the right actors from its network to engage political leaders on the ground well in advance of the actual elections in order to defuse tensions and address underlying political risks.
2. Policies for electoral reform. The Initiative works on policy issues that have far-reaching and practical implications for electoral processes. Where possible, the Initiative selects themes that it can advance when engaging with individual elections, while simultaneously promoting policy discussions with the large number of practitioners and organizations who engage in support of elections with integrity.

“Threats to electoral integrity are not limited to poor, divided or war-torn countries. They can be found in every democracy.”



The EII is guided by a panel of senior statesmen and women, convened by the Kofi Annan Foundation. The eminent group, which includes former heads of state and government such as Madeleine K. Albright (United States of America), Gordon Brown (United Kingdom), Olusegun Obasanjo (Nigeria), and Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono (Indonesia), works to support credible and peaceful elections in selected countries around the world.

How Does the EII Work?

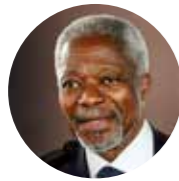
The project is managed by a small team within the Kofi Annan Foundation. A group of individuals from around the world and from organizations with expertise and experience in improving electoral integrity make up the steering group for the project. Membership of the group is by invitation and informal. The group of senior public figures; former statesmen and women have agreed to lend their support to the Initiative, and to engage, where requested, with individual countries where the risks of fraught and possibly violent elections are high.

Highlights of the EII's Work

In the run-up to the 2015 elections in Nigeria, the EII brokered an agreement, known as the Abuja Accord, which facilitated the peaceful transition of power between the incumbent president and his leading rival.

The EII is currently working in several countries in Africa, South America and Asia, to reinforce the legitimacy of their electoral processes. The EII continues to add countries to its watch-list based on the likelihood of violent, destabilizing elections and our capacity to play a constructive role.

Composition of the Global Commission on Elections, Democracy and Security:



Kofi Annan was the 7th Secretary General of the United Nations. The Nobel Peace Laureate is the founding Chair of the Kofi Annan Foundation and also serves as Chair of the EII Panel of Senior Figures.



Madeleine K. Albright served as the 64th Secretary of State of the United States, from 1997 to 2001. She is currently Professor in the Practice of Diplomacy at the Georgetown University School of Foreign Service, Chair of Albright Stonebridge Group and Chair of Albright Capital Management.



José Manuel Barroso served as Prime Minister of Portugal from 2002 to 2004 and President of the European Commission from 2004-2014.



Carl Bildt served as Sweden's Foreign Minister from 2006 to 2014, and was Prime Minister from 1991 to 1994, when he negotiated Sweden's EU accession.



Gordon Brown is former Prime Minister of the United Kingdom serving from 2007 to 2010.



Joaquim Chissano served as President of Mozambique from 1986 to 2004. He is Chairperson of the Joaquim Chissano Foundation and the Africa Forum of Former African Heads of State and Government.



Joe Clark was the 16th Prime Minister of Canada serving from 1979 to 1980. He served as Secretary of State of External Affairs of Canada from 1984 to 1991.



Ruth Dreifuss served as President of the Swiss Confederation in 1999, the first woman to hold that office. 21st Century Advisory Council of the Berggruen Institute on Governance.



Ricardo Lagos is the former President of Chile, he served from 2000 to 2006. He is the founder and President of the Fundación Democracia y Desarrollo (Foundation for Democracy and Development).



Olusegun Obasanjo served as President of Nigeria from 1999 to 2007. Currently he serves on the board of the Africa Progress Panel.



Surin Pitsuwan is the former Foreign Minister of Thailand and Secretary General of ASEAN from 2008 to 2012.



José Ramos-Horta served as President of Timor L'Este between 2007 and 2012.



Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono was the sixth President of Indonesia, serving two terms from 2004 to 2014. Mr. Yudhoyono is presently chairman of Global Green Growth Institute (GGGI).



Ernesto Zedillo served as President of Mexico from 1994 to 2000. He currently serves as the Chairman of the Board of the Natural Resource Governance Institute, the 21st Century Advisory Council of the Berggruen Institute on Governance.



Heidemarie Wiczorek Zeul served as Germany's Federal Minister for Economic Cooperation and Development from 1998 to 2009.



Carlos Mesa was the President of Bolivia, serving from 2003-2005.



Hassan Wirajuda served as Foreign Minister of Indonesia from 2001 to 2009. He currently sits on the council of presidential advisors of the Republic of Indonesia. Fundación Democracia y Desarrollo (Foundation for Democracy and Development).

For more information about our projects visit

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Published by

