



Canadian International
Development Agency

Agence canadienne de
développement international

Indicators for Programming in Human Rights and Democratic Development: A Preliminary Study

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July 1996

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INDICATORS FOR PROGRAMMING IN HUMAN RIGHTS AND DEMOCRATIC DEVELOPMENT: A PRELIMINARY STUDY

Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to carry out a preliminary study on the development and use of indicators to track progress towards results in human rights and democratic development programming. The study is **preliminary** for two main reasons: although there is a growing literature on socio-economic indicators, very little work has been done on assessing results in political development; and the principally qualitative nature of political change has tended to make analysts shy away from attempts to measure or quantify it. While much further thinking and experience is needed, this paper suggests that **quantitative and qualitative measurements** of human rights and democratic development, far from being incompatible, can often be used in tandem; and their development and use can be greatly enhanced through **participatory processes** that bring together all stakeholders.

The paper draws **on recent academic and donor reports and on interviews** carried out with CIDA project officers, representatives of CIDA executing agencies, and other governmental and non-governmental donor/research organizations (see appended interview list). The paper begins by briefly outlining the **experience of development organizations** in measuring results in political development. It then examines some of the **methodological issues** relating to performance indicators, generally, and human rights and democratic development programming indicators, in particular. Finally, after suggesting an **approach that integrates qualitative, quantitative and participatory methods** of evaluating political development, the paper examines results-based **indicators at both the (corporate) policy and the project/programme levels**.

Experience of Development Organizations

Over the last decade or so, international development organizations, both governmental and non-governmental, have been supporting a wide range of activities related to human rights and democratic development. Only recently has the issue of results-based management come to the fore, with the consequence that the **development of performance indicators for human rights and democratic development either has not happened or is at best at an incipient stage**. Human rights monitoring is more advanced than democratic development monitoring, but work here is almost entirely restricted to monitoring national trends and human rights treaty violations, as opposed to project monitoring and performance.

A. Governmental and Inter-Governmental Organizations

Of all the donors, **USAID** has probably carried out the most amount of work on the topic. A general approach to performance measurement has been set out under the Program Performance Information for Strategic Management (PRISM). The Agency's Centre for Democracy and Governance has begun to apply this approach to the field of political development, mainly by producing lists of what are deemed to be the essential features of human rights and democratic development (promoting the rule of law,

encouraging free and fair elections, strengthening civil society organizations, etc.) with corresponding results indicators (USAID 1995). In addition, USAID's GENESYS (Gender in Economic and Social Systems) Project has commissioned papers on democracy and gender (USAID 1993) that list important questions concerning women and political/legal power but do not specifically address the issue of performance indicators. However, all of USAID's work tends to overemphasize quantitative indicators, largely ignoring both the qualitative and participatory dimensions of measuring human rights and democratic development results.

w the **Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs** has commissioned a report on donor experiences in support of human rights, which includes a section on evaluation and monitoring (Stolz & Lanting 1995). The report examines lessons learned relating to project/programme effectiveness, programme impact against a background of different political systems, and consultative evaluations of human rights projects.

w the **World Bank** has been making substantial efforts towards results-based management (World Bank 1994). Much of this work has concentrated on deploying (quantitative) indicators for the "traditional" sectors of Bank involvement (agriculture, transportation, etc.), although some important papers have been produced on indicators to monitor such social development activities as poverty reduction (Carvalho & White 1994). The Bank is increasingly concerned with governance issues (mainly public sector management), as well as public participation (in health, education, social forestry projects; see World Bank 1995), but no work on indicators is currently being carried out in either of these domains. The Bank does not engage in human rights & democratic development activities.

w like the World Bank, most other donors (**British ODA, UNDP, Inter-American Development Bank, GTZ**) have been developing performance indicators in socio-economic development but have not yet initiated any work in human rights and democratic development. Among these donors, moreover, only GTZ has been examining the participatory development of indicators (Objectives-Oriented Project Planning - ZOPP; see GTZ 1991).

w the Nordic donor organizations (**SIDA, DANIDA**, etc.) have been active supporters of human rights and democratic development. None of them have carried out work on human rights and democratic development indicators. However, SIDA and DANIDA have been actively involved in the development of participatory project management and evaluations, and in DANIDA's case, especially in poverty and education.

w various **United Nations** organizations have been developing human rights and democratic development indicators. However, all of these are geared towards measuring national trends, not project or programme performance: (i) The UNDP's *Human Development Report 1995* centres around gender issues and contains useful national/regional indicators on women's political participation and gender empowerment (Gender Empowerment Measure; see UNDP 1995: 60-62, 72ff.). The same is true of *The World's Women 1995*, which lists gender indicators relating to a host of socio-economic spheres, as well as women's power and influence in such areas as legislative bodies,

business and the media (UN 1995). On the question of women's rights, **UNIFEM's** Women's Rights Program is in the process of commissioning research on gender rights indicators, to be developed by developing country NGOs. (ii) A number of UN expert bodies are charged with reviewing and assessing the performance of signatories to human rights treaties and conventions (**Commission on Human Rights, Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights**, etc.). Even though there are on-going efforts to tighten treaty monitoring systems, these bodies tend to lack common standards and adequate information management systems with which to evaluate the performance of states.

B. Non-Governmental Organizations

While there are many NGOs/INGOs active in human rights and democratic development advocacy and education, and several others which monitor and document human rights violations across the globe (Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, etc.), very few have been involved in systematically developing performance indicators. Those that have, have restricted their work to human rights indicators at the national level. Of note here are the **International Centre for Law in Development (ICLD)** and the **American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS)**. Both are in the process of gathering and analyzing information on international and regional human rights covenants (especially women's rights covenants, and economic, social and cultural rights covenants) with a view to developing standards, methodologies and mechanisms to monitor the progressive realization of these covenants. Their work complements that of the UN expert human rights bodies outlined above. The AAAS is looking, in particular, into setting up human rights information management systems and internet resources for use and access by NGOs and UN bodies. The main strategy here is to facilitate NGO input to the UN bodies for the assessment of states' performance in promoting rights under signed international conventions, and to enable NGOs to hold states accountable for the implementation and/or violation of these rights (see Chapman 1994, 1995 & 1996).

The **Ford Foundation** funds a number of outreach and advocacy NGOs in Latin America, Africa and Asia, especially in the areas of legal aid and legal/civic education and rights awareness. Much of this work is in its infancy, with activities being mainly in the pilot stage. The Foundation's grantee NGOs are beginning to put in place participatory evaluation workshops, which specifically include project target groups. In addition, the Foundation has commissioned/is about to commission research in economic, social and cultural rights from the following organizations: The Human Rights Council of Australia (1995 publication listed in bibliography); the Center for Economic and Social Rights (New York-based); and the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS). Of these, only the AAAS is currently carrying out work on human rights performance indicators (see above).

C. CIDA

w CIDA has put in place a **Policy for Performance Review** which aims at programme, project and institutional assessment at the branch level, and at policy monitoring at the corporate level. The Performance Review Division is currently tabulating lists of indicators for areas in which results are quantifiable. Little research or project activity has been done to date concerning the measurement of results of the qualitative and participatory dimensions of development, including human rights and democratic development. Of late, **three significant steps** in this direction have been: (i) research and reports on **gender-sensitive indicators** (Beck & Stelcner 1995a and 1995b; Beck 1995 and 1994); (ii) an **environmental performance indicator tracking system** established by the Pakistan Programme and the Environmental Policy Division, which focuses on the development of indicators in partnership with local institutions and beneficiaries (CIDA 1994); and (iii) the Pakistan Programme's organization of "**Performance Indicator Workshops**" for two projects (Women Health Professionals Program and Vocational Training Project), bringing together all stakeholders for the participatory development and management of indicators/results.

CIDA currently supports a range of human rights and democratic development activities across the developing world. Most of these activities have not as yet incorporated indicators into project/programme cycles. The Guatemala and Cameroon/Africa Regional Programmes (Democratic Development Funds, only recently set up) have just instituted performance indicators; although it is too early to assess the effectiveness of these indicators, this study draws on some of the Funds' insights.

Methodological Issues¹

This section outlines some of the main methodological strengths and limitations of indicators, as they pertain to development assistance generally, and human rights and democratic development programming in particular.

A. Definition

An indicator is an instrument to tell us **how a project/programme is proceeding**. It is a yardstick to measure results, be they in the form of quantitative or qualitative change, success or failure. It allows managers, but also all the stakeholders involved in a programme, to **monitor desired levels of performance** in a stable and sustainable fashion.

As a marker for results, an indicator can help in assessing the **developmental impact of a programme**. As an intermediate benchmark, it can act as an **early warning system** to identify problems, resolve them, and most of all, learn from them. In this sense, an indicator **differs from an evaluation**: an evaluation offers only a "snapshot" of a programme and measures performance after the fact (ex-post), often when it is too late to make changes; by contrast, an indicator helps

¹ In part, this section is an overview of generic methodological issues pertaining to indicators. For further elaboration, see Beck & Stelcner 1995a & 1995b; Beck 1995 & 1994; Stern 1994; and Britan 1991.

monitor change on an on-going basis (provided it is an integral part of the programme from early on in the programme cycle).

B. Types of Indicators

There are various types of indicators, each serving a different purpose. The following table lists the principal ones and illustrates the differences between them with the help of an example:

<u>Types of Indicators</u>	<u>Example:</u> Training of Election Monitors <u>Purpose and Goal:</u> To provide training to election monitors for the effective monitoring of legislative elections in country X (purpose) in order to contribute to free and fair elections (goal).
Input Indicator: measures the quantity/quality of resources provided for programme activities.	Training of monitors (trainers, training materials, etc.)
Output Indicator: measures the quantity/quality of outputs created through the use of inputs.	Y number of monitors trained.
Outcome Indicator: measures the quantity/quality of direct results achieved through outputs.	Effective monitoring of legislative elections.
Impact Indicator: measures the degree to which wider programme goals are achieved through programme outcomes.	Free and fair legislative elections/Functioning legislature/Greater democratic development.

For the purposes of development assistance, the main rationale for indicators is to measure the **developmental results of programmes/projects**. In this case, results indicators are intended to measure the achievements of support and funding **at the level of purpose or goal** (Brown 1995: 12-13). As a consequence, we shall be focusing in this study **mainly on outcome and impact indicators**.

C. The Challenges of Measuring Political Development

The development of indicators to measure results in human rights and democratic development will need to meet several challenges:

w no comprehensive or "objective" theory/model of democracy or human rights exists against which to measure progress. All mainstream theories/models have tended to grow out of the unique historical circumstances of Western nation-building and are undergirded by corresponding western values and priorities. By imposing any such theories/models, there is a danger of (i) imposing a **foreign and inappropriate yardstick**, thereby risking inaccurate and misleading results information; or (ii) ignoring

contextually- and culturally-specific notions of, say, "freedom", "women's rights", "justice" or "public participation".

The first limitation is particularly relevant in the field of democratic development, as countries vary widely in their political systems: it would be inappropriate to measure the success of development assistance to first-time legislative elections in current-day Haiti using recent Canadian voter participation rates as a benchmark. One way out of this dilemma is to **tailor indicators to appropriate levels of political development**, that is, according to whether a country tends towards an authoritarian regime, is in a transition period towards democracy, or has an established and functioning democracy. This exercise would require that relevant characteristics be assigned to each level of political development. Yet, many of the initial difficulties still remain. The **western liberal democratic system is assumed to be the end stage of political development**, against which the desirable characteristics of each level of political development are measured. And indicators based on this scheme would continue to ignore "**home grown**" **varieties of democracy** that exist throughout the developing world (this is an issue that the participatory development of indicators can address, to some extent at least; see below).

The second limitation pertaining to the need for indicators to be culturally-sensitive, while important, would also benefit from considering that **cultures share many common ethical standards** (i.e. the respect for life, the principle of reciprocity, etc.) and that there exist signed **international treaties and instruments** against which human rights and democratic development results could legitimately be measured.

w political development involves **complex human and institutional processes** that a few indicators will not be able to capture. The problem is compounded by the **small size of donor human rights and democratic development programmes** relative to the magnitude of political change in any given country: it would be almost impossible, for example, to measure the extent to which strengthening civil society institutions affects a country's overall democratic environment. In this case, it would be crucial to choose appropriate and measurable project/programme goals. Note, as well, that when direct results are difficult or too costly to measure, sometimes indirect or **proxy indicators** can help (although, of course, these will need to be taken at their word: they are "approximations", and hence less reliable). The number of women parliamentarians, for instance, can be used as a proxy to measure women's political participation and empowerment.

w political development is a long-term process. Institutional and **socio-political change most often happens slowly and incrementally**. This makes the task of developing indicators arduous, since it is easier and frequently expedient to articulate goals and measure performance in the short-term. Hence the necessity to focus, not on input and output, but outcome and impact indicators that measure results of human rights and democratic development programming in the intermediate and long-term.

D. Quantitative and Qualitative Indicators

Quantitative indicators measure change by way of numerical or statistical facts or physical outputs (i.e. number of polling stations, percentage of "visible minorities" participating in community meetings, etc.). The advantage of quantitative indicators is that the data on which they are based tend to be **easy to collect and calculate**. But these indicators also pose two important **problems**:

(i) collecting and tabulating easily available quantitative data and outputs runs the risk of sacrificing concern for development effectiveness. **Greater quantitative information and measurability are not necessarily better**; what matters is the indicator's usefulness in assessing outcome and impact.

(ii) complex social and political **institutions and processes cannot be reduced to numbers**. Quantitative indicators "fix" their objects in time and space and therefore miss, if not dehumanize, the transformative and qualitative nature of such elements as political culture and values, participation or social creativity.

Qualitative indicators aim at capturing people's socio-economic and political beliefs, opinions, perceptions, narratives. There are two types of qualitative indicators: **quantifiable ones and participatory ones**. Each goes some way in resolving the above-mentioned problems associated with quantitative indicators.

Qualitative indicators can be quantified through such instruments as public opinion polls, attitude surveys and participant observation. These instruments can incorporate some of the qualitative dimensions of political development, and they allow for **greater levels of disaggregation** (by region, gender, political/party affiliation, ethnicity, etc.) than do quantitative indicators. Rather than only counting polling stations and voter registration numbers to measure electoral participation, for example, an opinion survey of voters (viz. asking them whether they believed the elections were unfair/fair) can provide important information on voter credibility and the quality of participation. Similarly, an increase in the number of women attending community meetings over a given period does not necessarily mean that women are more empowered; surveying these women as to whether they believe their attendance at the meetings translated into greater influence in community decisions would provide a more accurate picture.

Yet, because they, too, express change numerically, these qualitative indicators retain many of the **problems** of quantitative indicators listed in (ii) above, namely the difficulty of capturing the complexity and fluidity of political change. What both types of indicators (quantitative and numerically-expressed qualitative indicators) share, and what greatly contributes to their limitations, is their **"top-down" or "blueprint" approach**. On the one hand, they impose a priori measurement criteria, often reflecting the **prejudices of donors or programme managers**, onto local socio-political realities. On the other hand, they impose **artificial and rigid categories** on what are fluid human rights/democratic development processes. It is these issues that participatory indicators tackle.

E. Participatory Indicators

The development of participatory indicators stands currently at an early, and hence experimental, stage. It draws heavily on **Rapid Rural Appraisal and Participatory Rural Appraisal**, techniques developed mainly by NGOs since the mid-to-late 1980s (Chambers 1994a; 1994b; Pretty et. al. 1995). The principle here is to understand and assess socio-political change not only through the eyes of donors and programme managers, but by **including the perspectives of all stakeholders**, especially the programme beneficiaries. **Local knowledge and creativity** is greatly valued. Hence, rather than programme managers unilaterally extracting and categorizing information, all programme stakeholders are empowered to engage in dialogue, mutual understanding, and group learning, sharing and results monitoring. Some of the **main techniques** used are participatory evaluations (including participant self-evaluations), group discussions/workshops, focus groups, recording beneficiary oral histories, and participatory mapping (communities trace socio-economic maps of their villages).

The participatory development of indicators has many **strengths**:

w because the measurement of political development requires collecting data that are not readily observable or expressible, participatory results assessment directly **captures how (i.e. descriptively, not quantitatively) people feel about their rights, freedoms, (dis)empowerment or responsibilities**. Legislative bodies and elections might provide important trappings of democratic development and empowerment, yet translate into little power for local communities in terms of access to and control of resources. Participatory assessments can be more sensitive, therefore, to subtle political change and to outcomes/impacts at the local level.

w local participation and ownership allows programme management and performance to incorporate and be **attuned to "home grown" notions and practices of human rights and democratic development**.

w the **usefulness of indicators is increased**, since all stakeholders and participants, not just donors or executing agencies, choose the relevant criteria and instruments for results measurement and determine the way in which results are to be interpreted. Thus, the development of participatory indicators establishes a relatively **controlled and stable environment**, making channels of communication between stakeholders more **transparent**, while **minimizing unexpected externalities, uncertainty, miscommunication, misinterpretation...**

w impact and outcome assessments are made **more comprehensive** because they include neither single nor simplified, but multiple perspectives.

Participatory instruments are **often criticized** for being based on "**subjective**" and hence prejudicial perspectives. Yet, they are **no more prejudicial** than, say, quantitative instruments which categorize data according to preconceived categories and values; it could even be argued that participatory instruments are less prejudicial than others, as they include the prejudices of all, not just a select few, stakeholders. Participatory instruments are also criticized for promoting an **anarchy of particularistic viewpoints**. But to the extent that participatory indicators are based

on mutual learning and consensus-bound results, they promote neither subjective nor individualistic, but **inter-subjective perspectives**.

Participatory indicators do, however, have **other limitations**:

It is sometimes difficult to determine which participants to **include and exclude** in group meetings, workshops, etc. Yet, inclusion of the appropriate interlocutors can be crucial. For example, an assessment of community decision-making and participation would need to **ensure representation from traditionally excluded groups** (women, lower classes and castes, ethnic minorities, disabled, etc.) and safeguard against the **domination of established elites**. This, in turn, would require devising ways of circumventing institutional and social barriers such as patriarchy, racism, etc.

Participatory instruments are **not always appropriate**: (i) measuring electoral behaviour often necessitates contact with **too many people to make extensive consultation possible or even affordable**; opinion polls might therefore be more germane; (ii) a group or community forum might further **silence disempowered/disadvantaged people** if they do not see the forum as constituting a "safe" space to express their views. In this case, one-to-one interviews or opinion surveys might be more suitable.

Substantial contact between stakeholders is essential. Hence, setting up a participatory process to develop indicators can be **drawn-out and sometimes arduous**.

Because participatory-based results are context-bound, reflecting local political change and impact, they can be **less amenable to generalization** than quantitative or other qualitative indicators (although, for their part, these can often be too general and indiscriminate).

An Approach to Human Rights and Democratic Development Indicators

A **two-pronged approach to human rights and democratic development indicators** emerges from the methodological issues outlined in the previous section. First, the development of human rights and democratic development indicators necessitates **using both quantitative and qualitative measures**, thereby benefiting from both statistical data and information on public beliefs and perceptions. Several **composite indexes** have been developed combining these measures (the UNDP's Human Development Index "checklist" for measuring political freedoms and the Carter Centre's Quality of Democracy Index, for example), but they tend to be biased towards numerical measurement or based on "expert" political assessments that reflect raters' ideological perspectives. The point, nonetheless, is not so much to arrive at a flawless indicator as to identify the most suitable one or use a **range of different ones** (a process called "**triangulation**"²). For, **single indicators can often be inadequate or meaningless**: a measure

² Triangulation is a term appropriated from surveying and mapping; in the literature on participatory development, it refers to the use of plural sources, investigative methods and disciplines for the purposes of cumulative learning and appraisal. For our purposes, it means the combination of different indicators (i.e. complementing "traditional" quantitative measures with "alternative", participatory ones) to provide for a clearer and more comprehensive assessment.

of electoral change would need to assess not just free and fair elections but also the power and influence of the elected legislature; and an indicator of civil society's political contributions would need to examine not only the number of NGOs strengthened but also the extent of their interactions with, say, parliamentarians and various levels of government.

Second, **putting into place the mechanisms for all the stakeholders (viz. CIDA, Canadian/local executing agency, ultimate programme beneficiaries) involved in the human rights and democratic development programme to reach a consensus on indicators is critical.** These mechanisms can ensure ownership and joint responsibility for results by all parties concerned from the start. The mechanisms can facilitate mutual agreement on roles and responsibilities, on which indicators are appropriate, and how they are to be collected, interpreted and reported. Thus, the establishment of **an inclusive mechanism in the development of indicators is at least as important as the content of the indicators.**

This manner of generating indicators brings with it a **new type of management style**, wherein the human rights and democratic development programme becomes a **means rather than a fixed goal**. It is a style that stands in stark opposition to the "**traditional**" **blueprint style** characterized by rigid, top-down channels of communication, donor-driven priorities and procedures, and the pressure to produce short-term results. The point here, by contrast, is to set up a process that gives stakeholders the power and incentive to come up with their own objectives and results. As one analyst writes, in this regard, "[e]mpowerment will not emerge from the data, but from the process around the generation and analysis of information" (Pretty et. al. 1995: 67). This is a manner of proceeding that demands **programme flexibility** to learn from experience, revise targets, refine strategies and reallocate resources. What ensues is less a sense of finality about indicators than a sense of meaningfulness and ownership of results and impact; less the pressure to adopt a single set of generic indicators as the incentive to develop ones most suited to shared objectives.

Policy Level Human Rights and Democratic Development Indicators

The previous section suggests a two-pronged approach to the development of indicators, involving, on the one hand, the establishment of an **inclusive and participatory programme management process**, and on the other, the **development and use of both quantitative and qualitative indicators**. Accordingly, human rights and democratic development programming at the corporate level can be tracked by way of the following two mechanisms:

(i) **Establishment of a CIDA human rights and democratic development consultative team.** The Agency has at least two experiences to draw on here: the WID Directorate's reporting to the President's Committee during the 1980s, which was the Agency's first experience at rigorous policy monitoring; and the Environmental Policy Division's current "environment forum" aimed at addressing environmental policy/programme issues, problems and performance. Following these examples, the Agency could establish an human rights and democratic development consultative team, made up of representatives from all Branches. The team would adopt an **iterative approach** to tracking, say over a 2-year period, human rights and democratic development programming within the Agency, identifying common issues, coordinating lessons learned, and modifying activities and goals as required.

Some of the team functions could include:

- (a) tracking the extent to which the Agency human rights and democratic development **policy objectives are coherent and can be implemented**;
- (b) identify **common/uncommon problems and lessons learned** at the project/programme level;
- (c) tracking the extent to which country programme frameworks include and implement **Agency human rights and democratic development priorities and procedures**;
- (d) encourage the **development of participatory indicators** and their incorporation early in the programme/project cycle;
- (e) ensure **staff values and training** is compatible with Agency objectives; and
- (f) assist in **coordinating policy and information exchange** with other government departments, Canadian and developing country partners, other international donors, etc. An important activity here would be tracking information from UN expert bodies (Commission on Human Rights, Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, etc.) regarding the extent to which states are implementing/violating their international human rights obligations.

(ii) **Establish and track human rights and democratic development implementation targets.** The work of the consultative team will assist in establishing **performance benchmarks**, which would need to be revised over time in the light of new experience. These benchmarks would involve:

- (a) tracking the **overall funding and/or number of human rights and democratic development projects/programmes**;
- (b) **comparing** overall support for human rights and democratic development to support provided to other Agency priority areas;
- (c) track **distribution of overall human rights and democratic development support**: between Branches; among priorities within Agency human rights and democratic development priorities (i.e. % of support to elections versus NGO capacity development); by type of Canadian/developing country executing agency.
- (d) tracking how much **human rights and democratic development-related research** is being carried out/commissioned within the Agency and assess how effective/relevant it is to the realization of human rights and democratic development objectives; and
- (e) track the number of staff who have received **training** (in human rights and democratic development, in participatory development, etc.).

Of course, tracking human rights and democratic development implementation and effectiveness at the corporate level will help in strengthening programming at the **project/programme level** and vice versa. The intra-Agency consultative team will be a crucial conduit in this process.

Project/Programme Level Indicators

In keeping with the approach to the development of indicators mentioned earlier, this section suggests the establishment of an inclusive and flexible project management process before going on to outline the features and types of human rights and democratic development indicators at the project/programme level.

A. Participative and Iterative Management Process

Like policy level indicators, project/programme level human rights and democratic development indicators would benefit greatly from **tying the identification and content (quantitative/qualitative/ participatory) of indicators to an inclusive and iterative project management process**. As emphasized earlier, negotiation between stakeholders from the start of the project cycle helps all parties to buy into the project and builds continued understanding and consensus on performance results. Stakeholder participation can assist in tailoring the number, purpose and type of indicators to the varying needs of all those involved in the project (managers, executing agency/NGO, clients, funders). It can also assist in delineating the roles and responsibilities for collecting and compiling data and making it available on a timely and regular basis. While this process might be arduous and time consuming, it is likely to **contribute in the long-run to overall project/programme sustainability and effectiveness**. The section on "group workshops" below sketches what is entailed in the participatory design of human rights and democratic development indicators.

The increasingly complex and uncertain environment in which projects function today means that **long-term project objectives are seldom clear from the start**. Hence the need for an **iterative, flexible performance management process** in which project staff can update or change indicators with experience and in consultation with stakeholders. Both clarity and an iterative management process, needless to say, will tend to be accelerated as communication between stakeholders increases.

B. Rules-of-Thumb

The literature and project experience to date suggest the following rules-of-thumb for the development and use of human rights and democratic development indicators:

w to repeat an earlier point, **both quantitative and qualitative/participatory indicators** should be used in human rights and democratic development projects, although the selection and mix of indicators will depend on project needs, subject to the consensus of stakeholders.

w performance is difficult to measure unless the programme goal/purpose and key results are defined as **precisely** as is possible. The choice and appropriateness of indicators will follow from this precise definition.

w monitoring and evaluating change over time can require the collection of **baseline data**, usually prior to project implementation (e.g. initial levels of women's participation at community meetings; capacity of human rights organization to deliver legal counselling programmes at the beginning of capacity development project ["capacity mapping"], etc.). While baseline studies may be too costly for projects with modest

funding, **donor collaboration and pooling of resources** could make such studies worthwhile and justifiable. In addition, participatory workshops/self-evaluations may **obviate the need for baseline data**, resorting instead to the subjective assessments and comparisons of project clients (see next section).

w human rights and democratic development indicators need to eschew being **overly technical** and aim instead for **clarity**. These indicators should use **levels of aggregation appropriate to measuring project results** or else risk being too abstract to impart any meaningful information. They should also be **measurable**, that is, based on information that is available relatively easily and cheaply. On the other hand, it is important to ensure that indicators measure **what is critical for project monitoring, not what is simply quantifiable**.

w choosing a **small number of human rights and democratic development indicators** will make decision-making and performance monitoring manageable. Large numbers of indicators can be confusing; they can also generate **excessive paperwork and reporting pressures for executing agencies**, thereby taking valuable time away from the project *per se*.

w the development of human rights and democratic development indicators must be sure to consider project **impacts on women** by collecting and reporting sex-disaggregated data; in addition, where appropriate, such data should be culturally and historically sensitive, as well as attentive to people's changing socio-economic positions.

w human rights and democratic development indicators will need to keep alert to the fact that most development objectives are only measurable in the **intermediate or long-term** (outcome/impact indicators). Indicators monitoring short-term change will most likely only be able to measure the implementation of project procedures (input/output indicators).

w every project involves **risks**; it is important to identify these from the start and to keep track of which ones are controllable (pertaining to project implementation), which ones are not (natural disasters, unforeseen socio-economic and political circumstances, etc.), how they may affect critical project players (individuals, communities, organizations, etc.), and to what degree they may change project outcomes/impacts.

w although it might be advantageous for donors to specify project performance **indicators in contracts with partner executing agencies**, these executing agencies would probably be reluctant to agree for fear of having to accept all project risks. It might be more appropriate and beneficial for all parties concerned if project contracts specify the necessity of developing performance indicators **in consultation with all stakeholders** from the start of the project, indicators which will need to be revised as the project progresses. This process would imply **joint responsibility and accountability** of all stakeholders for the achievement of results.

C. Participatory Indicators

Several participatory methods of project/programme monitoring have been developed, **each serving different purposes**. This section outlines three particularly suited to the development of human rights and democratic development indicators. However, experience here is uneven and, where it exists, still requires considerable documentation. As a result, this section will concentrate on group workshops, a participatory method for which CIDA and its partners have begun to build experience (see section on Experience of Development Organizations, p. 4).

(i) **Performance Indicator Group Workshops**

There are several sources upon which this section draws, and which should be consulted when organizing performance indicator group workshops: the minutes of CIDA's Pakistan programme performance indicators workshop for women's vocational training (CIDA 1995c), which provides helpful pointers on how to manage results; workshop-based participatory project management methods developed by GTZ, the World Bank and others (see GTZ 1991 & 1988; World Bank 1995; Cracknell 1989; Team Technologies 1991; Smith 1991; Salmen 1992); and the community-based, Participatory Rural Appraisal techniques mentioned earlier (Chambers 1994a & 1994b; Pretty et.al. 1995). The World Bank's *Participation Sourcebook* (1995) provides a useful summary and comparative analysis of many of these methods/techniques.

Group workshops can be used for (a) **designing and reaching consensus on human rights and democratic development indicators/results**; and (b) **beneficiary monitoring of projects**. Workshops are held over **3-4 days** (based on CIDA experience, a minimum of 3 days is usually required) and involve between **10 to 40 participants** (numbers will vary according to projects and to the requirements of workshop organizers/facilitators). An **initial workshop** enables participants to set priorities and design human rights and democratic development results indicators; it is usually **followed by other workshops** held regularly throughout the project cycle to review and monitor progress. Even though group workshops are most effective if instituted early in the project cycle, their collaborative approach to problem-solving and results management **can help salvage a failing project in mid-stream**.

The workshops are meant to **include all the project/programme stakeholders**: local project participants/beneficiaries (workshop location will need to be accessible to them); local executing agency, NGO and/or government department; front line programme managers; local government decision-makers; Canadian executing agency; and CIDA programme staff from headquarters and in the field.

Sometimes, government counterparts can be **skeptical about participation** and may need to be convinced of its benefits. Their inclusion in the workshops can help in alleviating skepticism, while at the same time allowing them to take ownership and responsibility for the project.

Often, project stakeholders will be **too numerous** to include in a workshop. This can make the politics of **who is included/excluded** a delicate process. There is the question of whether to include not merely those **directly affected** by the project, but also those **indirectly affected**. There are no easy answers here: much will depend on assessing the sensitivities of the individuals and organizations concerned and on a process of trial and error. As far as those directly affected are concerned, an important issue is choosing candidates from a large pool of

project beneficiaries. Encouraging **nominations by consensus or election** might be one way out. This can be done in tandem with the selection of **focus groups** (women/men, poor people, minorities, managers/field workers, senior/junior staff) to ensure equal representation from all those affected by the project, including disadvantaged groups.

Central to the workshop is the **workshop facilitator/organizer**, who coordinates and guides the proceedings. Although the CIDA project manager or consultant can act as facilitator, a more sustainable solution might be to appoint a **local consultant** (especially a representative from the target community/organization/village). The local consultant might require prior training, but her/his experience will prove valuable to the community and provide continuity for future workshops. In either case, it will be critical for the facilitator to be **in close touch with the CIDA project manager** in order to make sure that the workshop outputs meet **CIDA reporting and accountability requirements**, while at the same time meeting the needs of all other stakeholders.

The workshop is intended to help create a **safe space** for participants and build **trust** between stakeholders. The facilitator will need to refrain from lecturing or imposing pre-set formulae, stimulate discussion between all participants (perhaps by alternating between larger plenary sessions and smaller teams/study groups). S/he will also need to encourage participation from less experienced public speakers and make sure that decisions grow out of genuine consensus and dialogue.

One way of inviting participation is to prompt people to begin discussions by **defining problems**, rather than offering solutions or pre-set decisions. Stating an issue in the form of a problem sets in motion a **non-threatening and inclusive process of deliberation** and gives participants the incentive to seek answers collectively. Another "empowering" technique is to foster **visual dialogue**, allowing participants to draw diagrams, maps or charts in order to develop arguments, make comparisons, or rank or score judgments. Participants can thus show and see what is said (Chambers 1994b: 1256-7).

It is important for agreements reached among the workshop participants to be written down in order to clarify common understanding and delineate responsibilities and commitments. In this regard, the central focus of the workshop is usually to work out or revise the project **Logical Framework Analysis (LFA)**, or to use the LFA to assess results (GTZ 1991 & 1988). Hence, participants define or re-state the project purpose and goal, design or modify appropriate results/indicators/risks, and/or assess project performance on the basis of previously agreed-upon indicators. Due attention would need to be given to choosing indicators **useful to front line managers** directly responsible for project performance.

The main **workshop outputs** are:

w trust- and team-building among project stakeholders; and the creation of **incentives for stakeholders to collaboratively achieve results and "own" programme performance;**

w for an initial project workshop: design of the LFA, including the creation/selection of performance indicators, based on the consensus and according to the needs of all stakeholders; an understanding that indicators will need to be **revised** (usually after a

year); and a clear **delineation of roles, responsibilities, budget and timing for data collection and reporting.**

w for a follow-up workshop: **assessment of progress** based on a previously agreed-upon LFA, re-design of the LFA, and the **revision** of targets, risks, budget and accountability as required.

(ii) **Participatory self-evaluations:** these involve direct project clients, who are encouraged to engage in **discussions** around questions pertaining to project objectives, problems and impacts. The discussion is then followed by an **assessment exercise** using simple scoring systems (Marsden & Oakley 1990). For example, on a project aimed at increasing participation in community decision-making, the scoring exercise measures the extent to which the project enabled all/most/some/few community members to participate. The discussion preceding the scoring exercise helps better evaluate the qualitative changes induced by the project, i.e. the impact of increased participation on participants' lives.

(iii) **Client Surveys/Studies:** these are intended to survey clients on project impacts and/or record oral testimonials. The surveys/studies are particularly useful when it is unfeasible or too costly to organize group workshops, or when clients do not feel comfortable/safe in partaking in public discussions of sensitive issues. The surveys/studies can be undertaken by the project clients themselves.

D. Illustrative List of Human Rights and Democratic Development Indicators³

The list of indicators given in Appendix I is subject to several **cautionary notes**. First, the **list is illustrative, not exhaustive**, in both the breadth and depth of indicators mentioned. There are many other measures available (with lesser/greater levels of aggregation), and often these will depend on programme goals. Choosing indicators of participation, for example, will depend on the way in which "participation" is defined. This leads to the second cautionary note. The list in Appendix I should not obviate the **need to design and select indicators according to the requirements of the project and in consultation with stakeholders**. Thus, continuing with the same example, the definition of "participation" and choice of indicators would stem from this consultation process.

Third, it will be important to **use more than one indicator, as well as a mix of quantitative, qualitative and participatory indicators**. Relying on only one type of indicator may be insufficient or even misleading. For instance, a qualitative survey might find a positive increase in legislation protecting minorities over a given time period, whereas a participatory workshop with minority groups might reveal no change in the extent of violations over the same period. Taken individually, the indicators would yield widely differing conclusions; taken together, however, they might point to the need for the project to ensure better legal enforcement.

Fourth, measuring change with indicators will be difficult unless projects set **modest, as well as context-bound, outcomes and goals**. As mentioned earlier, the comparatively small size of donor human rights and democratic development programme interventions makes it unrealistic to measure progress relative to the size and scope of a nation's democratic and human rights

³ The list provided in Appendix I draws in part on the following sources: Beck 1994; Stolz & Lanting 1995; Taylor 1980; and USAID 1995.

institutions. In addition, the political context of a country will constrain the pace of change: ethnic tensions or civil wars will limit the extent to which human rights abuses can be reduced.

Finally, most CIDA support to human rights and democratic development activities takes place through institutional strengthening/capacity development. Thus, many of the **results indicators listed in Appendix I will need to be complemented with indicators for capacity development**. These measure such elements as the impact of training and financial/technical assistance on the organization's sustainability after the end of donor support, strategic and policy management, joint action and networking with other organizations, incentive systems, access to the public/government/media, etc. (for details, refer in particular to Morgan & Qualman 1996). A possible indicator for a human rights advocacy group, for example, would be its ability to hold the government accountable for the implementation/violation of, say, socio-economic rights. This could be measured by the quantity and quality of the group's research and documentation, its submissions and participation in government human rights assessments, or its written/oral contributions to the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

Conclusion and Recommendations For Further Action

Although there are some programming experiences from within and outside CIDA to draw upon, the development of indicators in the domain of human rights and democratic development remains at an incipient and experimental stage. Much more thought and practice is required before a more comprehensive picture than the one provided in this study can be traced. But for the moment, two areas, in particular, require attention. (i) In order to make project management and implementation more democratic and effective, there is a need, at both the corporate/policy and project levels, for **more and better consultative mechanisms**. By bringing together all stakeholders to collectively institute and assess performance indicators, these mechanisms can minimize programming risks, while maximizing trust, information and a wider range of experience. And (ii), in order to be able to monitor both quantitative and qualitative change in human rights and democratic development, there is a need for **greater and better design and deployment of a mix of human rights and democratic development indicators (quantitative, qualitative and participatory)**.

In this spirit, the following are recommendations for further action. The Agency should consider:

(1) **establishing a corporate human rights and democratic development consultative team**, along the lines described on pp. 11-12 and based on past and present experience within the Agency (i.e. the WID Directorate's reporting to the President's Committee during the 1980s and the Environmental Policy Division's current "environment forum"). This team would track corporate policy and programming goals, priorities, performance and funding; it would coordinate policy/programming information, lessons learned, research and staff training; and it would liaise with national and international, and governmental and non-governmental, agencies active in human rights and democratic development.

(2) encouraging, by way of the consultative team, the **institution of more iterative and participative management processes** in human rights and democratic development programming.

(3) promoting the **design and deployment of more and better human rights and democratic development indicators -- quantitative, qualitative and participatory.**

Some concrete steps in this direction would be:

(a) a **study** assessing the specific needs and priorities within the various branches of the Agency concerning human rights and democratic development indicators.

(b) the organization of a series of **workshops** drawing on individuals from development organizations with experience and expertise on indicators generally, and human rights and democratic development indicators in particular; and on the benefits and pitfalls of such participatory programming mechanisms as group workshops, client surveys and self-evaluations. These workshops will contribute towards both better information-exchange and staff training.

(c) a **field study** documenting the specific steps and experiences taken by executing agencies and NGOs active in developing countries in the organization of group workshops, the collective design of LFAs, and other tools that can contribute to designing human rights and democratic development indicators.

(d) based on the knowledge and experience gained from steps (a) to (c) above, the development of a **manual on indicators for programming in human rights and democratic development.**

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Appendix I

HUMAN RIGHTS AND DEMOCRATIC DEVELOPMENT INDICATORS

Illustrative List⁴

(i) Support to Electoral Processes

w freer and fairer elections:

- two or more independent parties contesting elections
- increased # of people who run for public office
- increase in % of voters registered
- increase in % of eligible voters who vote
- public opinion polls that elections are free/fair/open
- increased % of voters knowledgeable about election issues/rights/responsibilities/procedures
- increased # of polling stations
- increased public access to polling stations
- fairness ratings by independent election monitors
- extent of political party boycott
- existence of/strengthened independent election commission
- extent of acceptance of results by public/political parties
- decreased # of violent incidents
- regularity of elections

w support to political parties:

- improved party platforms
- more effective organization at local/national level
- increased membership
- increased coalition building
- existence of/strengthening of internal party decision-making/democracy
- greater access to media
- greater campaign financing

⁴ See cautionary notes on pp. 17ff. regarding this list.

(ii) **Legislative Assistance**

w strengthening of/steps towards democratically elected federal/provincial/local legislatures:

- increased # of functioning legislatures/legislative committees
- more timely legislative work
- greater legislative control over government decisions/budgets/appointments, etc.

w increased laws drafted/enacted by legislatures (# of bills, hearings, etc.) regarding civil and political rights, and socio-economic and cultural rights (see below)

w increased ratification and implementation of international human rights treaties

w regular government assessments (in collaboration with NGOs) of country's human rights situation and submissions to UN human rights treaty bodies (Commission on Human Rights, Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, etc.).

w greater parliamentary/legislative consultation with citizens:

- parliamentary commissions
- # of citizen groups being consulted
- survey of citizen/NGO opinions on draft laws
- % of citizens/NGOs who believe they are being represented by/have access to MPs/MLAs

w increased opposition party power and independence in legislature:

- extent of debate
- review of legislation
- inclusion on legislative committees

(iii) **Enhancing Democratic Culture and Public Dialogue**

w increased dissemination of legal information and education

w change in population believing in equal rights

w better public understanding of rights and responsibilities (surveys, focus group evaluations, etc.)

w increased citizen participation in civil society associations and local/national bodies:

- increased membership in organizations
- greater participation on boards

w increased tolerance for dissent, for minority groups (polls, focus group evaluations, etc.):

- less anti-minority incidents reported
- degree of minority participation in public life

w improved/increased public access to state programmes and services (polls, service delivery surveys, etc.)

w increased public debate and dialogue on key political/development issues (extent of NGO/citizen/media involvement in debates)

w increased non-violent conflict mediation among government/citizens/minority groups

w increased public fora/roundtables on controversial public issues

(iv) **Legal/Human Rights Support**

w increased parliamentary ratification of and support for universal human rights (# of bills/statutes, expert/citizen evaluations, etc.)

w strengthened/better functioning government human rights institutions:

- existence of/strengthened national human rights commission
- existence of/strengthened ombudspersons offices investigating citizens' complaints
- greater alternative dispute mechanisms such as justices of the peace
- increased legal support, especially for disadvantaged groups

w increased investigation/prosecution of human rights violations:

- cases investigated/prosecuted
- # of arbitrary arrests
- stories in media
- public hearings/task forces
- participation of citizens' groups in hearings and reforms
- increased organization/lobbying of citizens' groups/independent human rights organizations

w increased independence of judicial system:

- increased investigations of abuse by police and military/civilian courts
- judicial review of state/government laws
- survey of lawyers/judges/legal experts

- judicial system reform implementation
- judge hiring/promotion based on merit
- strengthened independence of Bar Association

w increased/improved due process rights:

- decrease in arbitrary arrests, detention, exile
- equality before the courts and the right to a fair trial
- rights of accused upheld

w decrease in abuses by police or military personnel (less cases reported)

w more effective functioning of police and prison systems:

- better police-citizen relations/increased consultations
- increased police/prison staff awareness of laws/citizen rights
- increased ability to track dangerous offenders

w less corruption in judicial system and police force:

- increased corruption cases brought to court
- survey of lawyers/legal experts re corrupt practices
- increased corruption prosecutions
- independent corruption/ethics body
- ethics reform implementation
- equitable/competitive salaries
- improved human resources systems, management-employee relations

w increased effectiveness and popular access to judicial system/courts:

- increase in # of court cases
- increase in cases tried
- decrease in time period for cases brought to trial
- survey of judges' knowledge of laws

w increased public perceptions of personal freedom and security (public surveys, focus group evaluations, etc.)

w decreased abuses of members of disadvantaged groups i.e. women, children, minorities, indigenous peoples, poor people, political prisoners:

- increased cases brought to court
- increased prosecutions

w improved self-organization of disadvantaged groups:

- increased # of organizations
- greater influence on public authorities
- increased respect for human/democratic rights

w increased government support for human rights abuse investigations by independent human rights organizations/"watch-dog" organizations

(v) Women's Rights and Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

w increased participation by women in socio-economic and political life:

- increased # of women legislators/local councillors
- increased women's employment
- reduced gender wage/income gaps
- increased access by women to education
- increased access of women to managerial positions in government and private sector
- increased anti-discrimination legislation pertaining to pay/employment/property ownership/loans/inheritance
- increased % of women in media
- increased # of registered women voters

w increased protection for women (legislation, institutional services, etc.) against violence, dowry systems, etc.

w increased/improved legislation and enforcement (better resources, regulatory frameworks, institutional arrangements, etc.) for:

- the protection and enhancement of employment
- working conditions
- right to equal pay for equal value
- trade unionism, collective bargaining
- access to land/resources
- adequate standard of living
- education

- food
- health (mental, physical, reproductive)
- housing
- rest and leisure
- participation in the cultural life of the community
- freedom in scientific research and creative activity
- protection of authorship and copyright

(vi) **Support to Civil Society Organizations**

w increased citizen participation and influence in public policy-making:

- survey/assessment of changes in policy resulting from citizen advocacy
- increased # of legislative initiatives introduced after public deliberations
- increased government commissions/parliamentary committee consultations with the public
- # of hearings/public debates attended by NGOs
- reduced government legislative discrimination against formation/operation of NGOs/trade unions
- less bureaucratic/financial impediments to NGO/trade union formation/operation

w increased citizen/NGO activity:

- greater diversity and # of NGOs/community organizations
- greater networking/contact/coalitions between citizens/NGOs
- greater participation at the local/community level

w more effective management of NGOs/community organizations:

- financial sustainability/transparency
- increased # of clients served
- increased participation in government policy-making/legislation
- increased media access and coverage
- increased coalition-building
- increased studies/research
- increased communication between communities

w increased participation in community decision-making:

- greater and broader representation in community bodies
- greater communication/interaction between community workers/project staff/village leaders/community members/community women, etc.

w increased community empowerment:

- better access to community/local government decision-making
- greater control over allocation and use of local agricultural/forest/aquatic resources
- greater access to health and education
- increased freedom from debt

w freer NGO/community organization/trade union access to government, media, funding:

- tax exemptions
- incentives to the public to make contributions

w increased freedom and effectiveness of media:

- relaxed censorship laws
- less government interference in media
- heightened editorial independence of state media
- less harassment of journalists
- less state/private monopolisation of media
- increased privately-owned media (without private monopolies or cartels)
- decreased legal proceedings taken against censorship
- increased % of professionally trained journalists
- existence of/strengthened professional journalist association

Appendix II

LIST OF INTERVIEWS

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